



Stories from The Junior High School Corridor: Receiving Teachers' Narratives in Teaching Learners with Special Needs in Mainstreamed Classes

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Abstract:

This narrative inquiry study explored the shared experiences of Junior High School Primary Receiving Teachers who teach learners with special needs in mainstream classes at the Kalibo Integrated Special Education Center (KISEC) during School Year 2025–2026, using a qualitative narrative inquiry research design. Ten Primary Receiving Teachers were purposively selected to participate in the study, all of whom were directly handling learners with special needs. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews that captured their real-life classroom experiences, including their teaching practices, challenges, and ways of coping in an inclusive setting. The findings showed that teachers used various inclusive strategies such as differentiated instruction, assistive technology, classroom routines, and group activities that help build empathy among learners. At the same time, they faced many difficulties, including managing different learning needs, large class sizes, limited resources, behavioral concerns, and a lack of specialized training for inclusive education. To deal with these challenges, teachers relied on peer support, reflection on their practice, emotional management, continuous learning, and adjustments to their teaching methods. Their stories clearly pointed to the need for ongoing and well-designed professional development specifically for Primary Receiving Teachers. In response, this study proposes a Teacher Upskilling Program that focuses on inclusive teaching, behavior support, assistive technology, collaboration, and policy awareness to help strengthen the effective delivery of inclusive education in mainstream classrooms.

Keywords: *Special Education, Narrative Inquiry, Inclusive Teaching Practices, Cebu, Philippines*

Introduction:



The Philippines has legal provisions and regulatory frameworks that guarantee every student a right to quality, inclusive, and equitable education. These frameworks also include special needs education as a basic human right. One such law, the Enhanced Basic Education Act (RA 10533), mandates that curricula should focus on learners and be responsive to them. In 2022, the government further approved Republic Act No. 11650, a bill, which explicitly puts a school at the center of the meeting of the needs of differently-abled students by equipping the institution with the necessary infrastructure, assistive technology, and providing reasonable accommodations. These laws will integrate students with special needs into the regular classes through elimination of educational, behavioral, and physical barriers. At the same time, it will promote social inclusion, holistic development, and equity for all Filipino students (DepEd policy materials, 2022).

When implementing inclusive education, general education teachers that receive students with special needs in mainstreamed classes are usually seen as going through a tough time. The teachers who teach exceptional students alongside usually developing ones, thus, experience a wide range of challenges. Research carried out recently in the Philippines shows that teachers make adjustments in their assessments, give more time, change the materials, and use differentiated instruction to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners. The implementation of these good practices is often limited by the major obstacles of large class sizes, heavy workloads, lack of institutional support, unavailability of specialized training, deficiency of resources and assistive technology, and irregular parent-teacher communication (Sumagang & Balano, 2025). Besides, qualitative research on the experiences of the teachers reveals that they went through feelings such as tension, uncertainty, and sometimes frustration (Sumagang & Balano, 2025).

There is still a gap in literature despite its growth: few research, particularly in integrated special education centers, have thoroughly examined the shared experiences of receiving teachers from several grade levels (primary, intermediate, and junior high) in one location. Additionally, little is known about how teachers on the ground are affected by current legislation demands like RA 11650, how support differs by level, and how problems are sustained while achievements are managed. Instead of providing in-depth accounts of how teachers view, adjust, and develop via their inclusive practice, previous publications have tended to concentrate on a single level (e.g., elementary), categories of disabilities, or the numeric magnitude of problems (e.g. Patina & Bolongaita, 2024).

According to the researchers' firsthand observations at the Kalibo Integrated Special Education Center, receiving teachers at the primary, intermediate and junior high school levels are working hard to modify their lessons, form unofficial partnerships with experts, and create inclusive learning environments. These educators are creative in how they use scarce resources, modify the tempo of their lessons, and enlist the help of their peers. However, there are noticeable barriers such as a lack of professional development designed especially for mainstream instructors working with special needs students, a lack of assistive technology, inadequate administrative support, and uneven enforcement of inclusive policies.

The need to clarify how receiving teachers view their jobs, what resources they believe are necessary, and what supports are effective or ineffective is further supported by these first-hand observations. Since these common experiences serve as a crucial body of evidence for creating a successful upskilling program, it is essential to investigate the best practices, difficulties, and coping mechanisms of instructors who work with students who have special needs in mainstreamed classrooms. According to research, knowing how teachers educate and the challenges they encounter can assist identify which competences require improvement (Sakarneh & Abu Nair, 2022). In addition, research highlights the importance of teachers' coping strategies, including reflective practice, peer collaboration, and emotional self-management, in maintaining inclusive pedagogy (Brackenreed, 2024; Lipayon, 2023). The suggested upskilling program will directly address real-world teacher requirements, enhance instructional quality, and promote teacher retention and well-being by firmly establishing professional development in the reality of the classroom.

The primary aim of this research is to capture the experiences of receiving teachers in teaching special needs students in mainstreamed classrooms. The research is particularly interested in finding out how receiving teachers across different grade levels cope with teaching special needs students and what changes they have made, as well as identifying the challenges faced by teachers in special needs students in mainstreamed classes, and finally, suggesting



an upskilling program that will enhance support systems (like training, resources, and policy implementation) which will lead to more effective, sustainable, and equitable inclusive education in the Philippines.

Literature Review:

This research is based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework of Anne Meyer and David Rose as its main theory, supplemented by Albert Bandura's Social Learning theory and John Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory. The framework of the laws such as Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) and Republic Act No. 11650 (Inclusive Education Act of 2022), besides these theories, provide a perspective to be used for the common experiences of teachers receiving students with special needs when they are instructing mainstreamed classrooms.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) views education as a system that should be designed from the very beginning to cater to a wide range of learners through providing various representational, engaging, and expressive means (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014; Rao et al., 2017). When receiving teachers adapt their instruction to make it easier for students with special needs while at the same time continuing to meet the needs of other students in the mainstreamed classrooms, they are indeed following the UDL principles. This theory, therefore, offers a guide to how teachers can design and implement inclusive education in a way that can be assessed. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory gives priority to the methods of learning, through modeling, imitation, and observation (Bandura, 2018). Peer modeling and instructor demonstration are useful tactics for developing social and intellectual abilities in students with special needs. Receiving teachers helps students learn from one another in cooperative learning environments in mainstream classrooms. Since instructors themselves pick up inclusive behaviors by watching colleagues and exchanging professional experiences, the notion is equally applicable to them.

Because students have limited working memory, education should avoid unnecessary burden and concentrate on critical processing, according to John Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 2019). This idea is especially helpful in special education settings where students with disabilities might need work to be divided into smaller, more manageable chunks using scaffolding and visual aids.

The tenets of this approach are reflected in receiving teachers' methods for streamlining lessons and lowering cognitive demands.

According to this law (Republic Act No. 10533 or The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013), the curriculum shall be inclusive, learner-centered, and developmentally appropriate. It provides the legal ground for the integration of students with special needs in regular classrooms by stipulating that schools must adopt inclusive practices and provide individualized instruction. RA 10533 also legitimizes the requirement of receiving teachers to carry out measures that will support students with different abilities in mainstreamed settings.

The Inclusive Education Act of 2022 is also known as Republic Act No. 11650. Students with disabilities' rights to inclusive education are now officially acknowledged by this latest law. Accessibility has to be ensured in the preparation of the programs, reasonable accommodations should be provided, and Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs) must be set up (Republic Act No. 11650, 2022). RA 11650 gives the receiving teachers a strong legal support, which means that the government provides them with the necessary resources and policies to facilitate the mainstreaming of students with special needs and also promotes equity.

Collectively, these principles and theories provide a thorough basis for this research. The laws provide the legal mandate and the necessary framework for inclusive education in the Philippines, whereas the theories shed light on the pedagogical and psychological aspects of how inclusive teaching practices can be effectively implemented. On this basis, the study looks into the common experiences of receiving teachers in instructing students with special needs in mainstreamed classrooms, thus, recognizing the legal requirements as well as the theoretical underpinnings that affect their ways. The findings of the research will be a valuable tool for the development of a teacher upskilling program, thus increasing their capability to effectively deliver inclusive education.

According to inclusive practice research, students learning in regular classes of students with special needs can be most effectively achieved through a combination of collaborative models, intentional curriculum development, and flexible teaching methods. A co-teaching method in which a general education teacher and a special educator work as a team to cater to the different needs of the students has been identified as one of the most effective strategies. For



example, Sparks (2022) points out that students with disabilities get an improved opportunity to interact with and understand the content of their grade level when co-teaching is implemented with the joint sharing of planning and instructional roles. Additionally, studies highlight that co-teaching may not reach its full potential in the absence of sufficient preparation time, precise job definition, and administrative support (Alnasser, 2021; Sparks, 2022).

A second core set of best practices focuses on proactive lesson planning and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). In order to minimize obstacles up front rather than retrofit them later, UDL encourages teachers to create classes with different modes of representation, expression, and interaction. In mixed-ability classrooms, teachers who implement UDL tactics report improved differentiation and increased learner engagement (Grafe-Lugo & Delos Reyes, 2024). Differentiated instruction (DI) has a close relationship with UDL. According to qualitative research, teachers who employ DI techniques—like tiered assignments, flexible grouping, and scaffolded support—are better at adapting their lessons to the interests and readiness of their students (Jamil Suprihatiningrum et al., 2022).

Continuous evaluation and progress tracking are also identified as crucial teaching strategies. According to research, teachers who routinely implement formative assessment procedures, such as brief exit tickets, visual signal cards, and rapid oral probes, are better equipped to identify misunderstandings early on and offer special needs pupils timely support (Vergara et al., 2025). By taking a proactive stance, differentiated education is made to be more responsive than reactive.

An additional set of best practices for inclusive classrooms includes social behavior assistance and effective classroom management. To control disruptive behavior and improve engagement for students with special needs, teachers use peer-mediated strategies (e.g., peer tutoring, cooperative learning), visual schedules, clear routines, and positive behavioral supports (Indonesian Journal of Community & Special Needs Education, 2024). Learners with special needs who are mainstreamed engage more completely in classroom activities when these tactics are combined with explicit training in social skills and emotional control.

Collaborative problem solving and teacher capacity building are also essential for successful mainstreaming. According to research, instructors must get focused professional development on behavior management, differentiation, and inclusive practices. Classroom practices significantly increase when coaching, co-planning time with experts, and resource availability support this kind of professional development (Benemerito et al., 2024). Effective inclusive teaching is frequently cited as being facilitated by system-level supports, such as assigning roles, granting access to specialists, and scheduling co-planning.

Lastly, it is becoming more widely acknowledged that integrating technology with assistive services is an excellent practice. Receiving teachers gives students with special needs alternative ways to acquire knowledge and demonstrate learning through the use of both low-tech assistance (such as visual clocks and cue cards) and high-tech resources (like text-to-speech and multimedia presentations) (Ty et al., 2024). However, teacher preparation, alignment with learning objectives, and deliberate integration—rather than haphazard deployment—are necessary for the effective use of assistive technology.

Research from primary, intermediate, and junior high schools agrees on a logical set of interrelated best practices: cooperative co-teaching arrangements; proactive, adaptable curriculum design (UDL and DI); regular formative evaluation and progress tracking; structured behavioral and peer-mediated supports; ongoing professional development and capacity building for teachers; and careful use of assistive technology. When supported by school policies that offer professional development opportunities, planning time, and expert assistance, these strategies work best. The lesson for receiving teachers is that inclusion is a planned set of activities that collectively make classrooms for students with exceptional needs accessible, interesting, and manageable.

There still exists a worldwide problem of the lack of inclusive education, especially among mainstream teachers who have to give fair access to top-notch instruction and simultaneously take care of diverse learning needs. According to research, teachers frequently feel unprepared to deal with the diverse spectrum of emotional, behavioral, and learning difficulties among kids with special needs. Many general education teachers report having little training in special education techniques, which leaves them unsure about how to modify lessons and handle behavior, according to Sharma and Loreman (2018). Similarly, Al-Makahleh (2020) discovered that teachers' nervousness and diminished



confidence while dealing with individualized education plans (IEPs) are caused by a lack of professional preparation and understanding. These results show that continuing professional development and teacher preparation are still major concerns in inclusive education.

The dearth of resources and support services is another significant issue facing receiving instructors. According to studies, inclusive classrooms frequently lack the necessary paraprofessional assistance, assistive technology, and instructional materials (Avramidis et al., 2021). Large class sizes, little instructional time, and poor access to learning resources are some of the reasons why teachers report having trouble implementing differentiated instruction. For example, without institutional support or extra funds, teachers in inclusive settings frequently bear the burden of implementing changes in many poor nations, including the Philippines (Villanueva & Dizon, 2022). Teacher burnout, a decline in the quality of instruction, and difficulties maintaining inclusive education are all consequences of this lack of resources, both human and material.

Classrooms that are inclusive are further complicated by behavioral and social issues. Classroom management and the learning environment can be negatively impacted by the disruptive behaviors and social adjustment problems that receiving instructors often confront among students with special needs (Smit & Humpert, 2021). Agbenyega and Klibthong (2019) claim that many teachers are forced to use punitive rather than supportive techniques because they lack the necessary training in behavioral interventions, which can compromise student motivation and inclusion. Additionally, teachers frequently experience stress and role conflict as a result of juggling the demands of children with disabilities with those of students who are usually developing (Forlin & Chambers, 2017). Teachers have more emotional strain because of this dynamic, which can result in compassion fatigue and job discontent.

There are still some conflicts in cooperation and communication between general and special education staff. According to Mngo and Mngo (2018), lack of coordination and collaboration among teachers, school principals, and specialists hinders the effective inclusion process in schools. When it comes to aligning educational goals for kids with special needs, teachers are frustrated by the absence of clear communication channels and preparation time. Furthermore, because of financial limitations or a lack of knowledge regarding inclusive education, parental involvement is frequently low (Santos & De Guzman, 2023). Gaps in intervention continuity and support systems arise when stakeholders do not actively collaborate.

Systemic and contextual impediments exacerbate the difficulties in the Philippine context. According to studies, public school instructors face challenges such as crammed classrooms, dilapidated infrastructure, and restricted access to special education specialists (Reyes & Tolentino, 2021). Without proper training or institutional support, teachers frequently serve as both general and special educators. To improve their proficiency and adaptability in inclusive classrooms, receiving teachers in Kalibo and comparable districts indicates a need for specialized training and mentoring programs. In order to strengthen inclusive education, these contextual issues highlight the significance of responsive educational policy and school-level initiatives.

According to the literature, receiving teachers experience a variety of difficulties in mainstreamed classrooms, from poor preparation and inadequate resources to behavioral problems and a lack of institutional support. Even if a majority of people are in favor of having students with special needs included, the teachers' struggles can be seen as a mirror of the deep-seated issues of the lack of collaboration, proper training, and resource distribution. A comprehensive strategy that empowers educators via ongoing professional development, legislative changes, and a collaborative culture among educators, families, and administrators is needed to address these issues.

It is common for teachers who are working with special needs students in inclusive classrooms to experience challenging situations that require them not only to have pedagogical skills but also to use the right coping strategies so that they are able to maintain their mental health as well as their teaching skills. According to studies, teachers can better manage stress and maintain motivation by implementing adaptive coping methods like teamwork, professional growth, and emotional regulation (Forlin & Chambers, 2017). Teachers who use proactive coping strategies, such as creating lessons that incorporate varied instruction and establishing reasonable goals, are more equipped to keep things balanced and productive in inclusive classrooms, claim Sharma and Loreman (2018). This illustrates how crucial self-efficacy and a positive outlook are to conquering everyday educational obstacles.



Peer support and teamwork are key coping mechanisms among inclusive educators. To exchange instructional materials and behavioral management techniques, teachers frequently turn to their peers, special education coordinators, and school officials for support (Avramidis et al., 2021). Programs for team teaching and mentoring have been shown to be successful in improving competence and lowering professional isolation (Smit & Humpert, 2021). Similarly, Mngo and Mngo (2018) emphasized that collegial collaboration reduces burnout and improves teaching effectiveness by providing mainstream teachers with access to professional guidance and emotional support. By encouraging shared responsibility in providing inclusive education, strong teacher networks inside schools in the Philippines help solve the lack of specialized professionals, according to Villanueva and Dizon (2022).

Reflective practice and ongoing professional development are two more tactics that educators frequently employ. Teachers who actively participate in training, workshops, and reflective conversations gain more self-assurance and flexibility in managing a varied student body, claims Al-Makahleh (2020). Teachers can evaluate classroom practices, share inclusive teaching tactics, and improve their methods by participating in professional learning communities (PLCs). Additionally, Forlin and Chambers (2017) noted that reflective teaching improves competence and resilience when teachers evaluate their experiences, acknowledge their shortcomings, and modify their approaches accordingly. Teachers can better align with inclusive education objectives and adjust to changing educational frameworks with the support of ongoing learning.

Coping also heavily relies on emotional and stress management techniques. Teachers frequently use mindfulness, relaxation techniques, and positive reframing to preserve psychological well-being because teaching students with special needs can be emotionally exhausting (Jennings & Greenberg, 2019). Teachers who develop empathy and patience through emotional regulation report feeling less frustrated when handling difficult behaviors, according to Agbenyega and Klibthong (2019). Similarly, it has been discovered that self-care practices including preserving work-life balance and looking for social support lower stress and increase teachers' emotional resilience. In inclusive classrooms, these coping strategies are essential for maintaining dedication and avoiding compassion fatigue.

Flexibility and adaptation in instruction are also essential coping strategies. Teachers employ individualized assistance, altered tasks, visual aids, and adjusted instruction to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities (Sharma & Salend, 2016). Teachers may manage diversity in the classroom and keep all students engaged by emphasizing learner-centered approaches. To make classes accessible to students with different skill levels, teachers in the Philippines commonly modify the pace of their lessons, employ peer tutoring, and integrate real-world applications, according to Reyes and Tolentino (2021). This pedagogical adaptability shows how teachers can transform obstacles into chances for creativity and development.

Additionally, obtaining community and administrative assistance has been emphasized as a useful coping strategy. Teachers exhibit greater levels of work satisfaction and perseverance when they perceive that school administrators are supporting them through encouragement, resource supply, and acknowledgment (Santos & De Guzman, 2023). In addition to lessening teachers' workloads, community partnerships and family involvement promote a sense of shared accountability. According to Avramidis et al. (2021), inclusive education flourishes when educators believe that their work is valued and that there are systems in place to help them deal with both emotional and instructional difficulties. According to the reviewed literature, receiving teachers in mainstreamed classes use a variety of coping mechanisms that include collaborative, pedagogical, and emotional aspects. The most successful methods for handling the challenges of inclusive teaching are peer collaboration, professional development, and reflective practice. Maintaining teachers' motivation and lowering stress levels also heavily depends on their ability to control their emotions and on the community's and administrators' support. All things considered, these coping strategies show how resilient and flexible educators are when addressing the complex issues of inclusion. The success of inclusive education can be further increased, and the welfare of both teachers and students can be guaranteed by fortifying institutional and structural support for these tactics.

Statement of the Problem

This study is geared toward collecting the shared experiences of Junior High School receiving teachers who are teaching learners with special needs that are part of the mainstreamed classes at the Kalibo Integrated Special Education Center, District of Kalibo II, in the Division of Aklan for the School Year 2025-2026.



Specifically, it inquired about the following questions:

1. What are the best practices employed by Junior High School receiving teachers in teaching learners with special needs enrolled in mainstreamed classes?
2. What are the challenges encountered by Junior High School receiving teachers in teaching learners with special needs enrolled in mainstreamed classes?
3. What are the coping strategies adopted by Junior High School receiving teachers in addressing the challenges they encountered in teaching learners with special needs enrolled in mainstreamed classes?
4. What upskilling program can be proposed to capacitate receiving teachers in teaching SNED in mainstreamed classes?

Materials and Methods:

The study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry design to explore the lived experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms at Kalibo Integrated Special Education Center (KISEC) during the School Year 2025–2026. Guided by Creswell's framework, the research focused on collecting and analyzing teachers' personal stories to understand their best practices, challenges, and coping strategies. The study followed an Input–Process–Output model, where inputs included selected participants and interview data, the process involved data collection and thematic analysis, and the output aimed to develop an upskilling program for teachers. KISEC, as the only SPED center in the Division of Aklan offering comprehensive inclusive education programs, served as an ideal setting for examining real-life inclusive teaching experiences.

The participants consisted of ten junior high school teachers selected through purposive sampling based on their direct experience teaching learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms and having at least two years of service. Data were gathered using a validated semi-structured interview guide covering three key areas: best practices, challenges, and coping strategies. The research followed a structured data collection procedure, including securing permissions, conducting focus group discussions or individual interviews, and recording responses for accuracy. Ethical standards were strictly observed, ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

For data analysis, the study utilized Creswell's narrative inquiry framework, involving transcription, coding, categorization, and theme development. The researcher carefully examined participants' narratives to identify recurring patterns and meaningful insights, which were then organized into coherent themes aligned with the study's focus. Through processes such as restorying and interpretation, the findings were connected to existing theories and policies, including inclusive education frameworks. Ultimately, the analysis provided a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences and served as the basis for proposing a contextualized upskilling program to enhance inclusive teaching practices.

Results:

The study explored the experiences, challenges, and coping strategies of teachers handling learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms. Data were analyzed thematically, and the results were organized into four major areas: emotional and behavioral coping, instructional management, seeking support and collaboration, and personal motivation. These areas reflect teachers' holistic approach to managing inclusive classrooms while addressing the needs of diverse learners.

Theme 1: Emotional and Behavioral Coping

Teachers consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining calmness, patience, and emotional regulation when handling learners with special needs. The data showed that participants deliberately use strategies such as deep breathing, pausing before reacting, and refocusing on students' needs to manage stress. Urie described how taking short breaks and redirecting attention to the learner helped him regain composure, thus preventing escalation and creating a more positive classroom atmosphere. Pearl highlighted reflective practices, careful preparation of lessons,



and seeking advice from colleagues to remain confident and composed during stressful moments. Similarly, Rona and Renna reported that controlling emotional responses ensured a stable and productive classroom environment while modeling emotional regulation for learners.

Teachers recognized that communication and collaboration with peers, parents, and administrators also reinforced their emotional coping. Joeli stressed that discussing classroom issues with students, principals, and parents allowed for problem-solving and shared responsibility. This approach minimized teacher stress while enhancing students' educational outcomes. Overall, emotional self-regulation emerged as a protective factor against burnout and a foundation for sustaining positive teaching environments.

Summary of emotional coping strategies:

- Staying calm, patient, and reflective.
- Using breaks and deep breathing for composure.
- Seeking support from colleagues, parents, and administrators.
- Focusing on student-centered solutions rather than reacting emotionally.

Theme 2: Instructional Management

Teachers utilized structured routines, clear expectations, differentiated instruction, and positive reinforcement to manage classrooms effectively. Urie implemented fixed routines and explicit expectations, providing predictability and safety for learners. Task modification, use of visuals, and breaking lessons into manageable steps helped learners of varying abilities understand content and remain engaged. Pearl incorporated PowerPoint presentations, lending books, and simplified instructions to enhance comprehension and independent learning.

Consistency in rule enforcement combined with sensitivity to students' individual circumstances was emphasized by Joeli as essential for classroom order. Rona's approach of dividing complex lessons into smaller, simpler tasks and providing short, guided activities reduced frustration and increased motivation, particularly for students with processing difficulties. Renna highlighted reflective practices after challenging sessions and seeking guidance from colleagues and administrators to improve instructional strategies. These strategies collectively facilitated inclusive teaching by:

1. *Reducing classroom disruptions and confusion.*
2. *Supporting diverse learning needs through task adaptation.*
3. *Promoting engagement, motivation, and cooperative behavior.*
4. *Ensuring that learners with special needs are supported while the classroom remains orderly.*

Theme 3: Seeking Support and Collaboration

Collaboration was highlighted as a critical mechanism for handling inclusive classrooms effectively. Teachers actively sought support from colleagues, special education coordinators, administrators, parents, and specialists. This provided both emotional support and practical solutions. Junebeth emphasized consulting SPED coordinators and co-teachers for specialized strategies while maintaining open communication with parents. Pearl's approach involved consulting colleagues for effective teaching methods and coordinating with advisers to involve parents in the learning process.

Joeli, Cassie, and Renna echoed the value of professional dialogue and joint problem-solving, noting that collaboration enhanced their confidence, reduced feelings of isolation, and improved instructional outcomes. This network of support enabled teachers to share responsibilities, gain new perspectives, and implement more effective inclusive practices.

Summary of collaboration strategies:

1. *Consulting SPED coordinators and colleagues.*
2. *Communicating with parents for consistent support.*
3. *Sharing experiences and problem-solving collaboratively.*
4. *Utilizing professional guidance to refine teaching methods.*



Theme 4: Personal Motivation-*Teachers' intrinsic motivation was driven by student progress, small victories, and professional commitment. Urie highlighted that recognizing incremental improvements in learners sustained his energy and patience. Pearl maintained motivation by working closely with parents and colleagues while celebrating even minor achievements. Joeli reframed challenges as opportunities for professional growth, strengthening her resilience and positivity. Paulo and Renna emphasized celebrating small successes to reinforce commitment and foster a supportive learning environment.*

Teachers recognized that maintaining a positive attitude not only enhanced their own well-being but also promoted a constructive and inclusive classroom climate. Motivation was fueled by a cycle of student progress, professional satisfaction, and peer/parent support, which collectively strengthened teacher resilience and effectiveness.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that effective inclusive education relies on teachers' holistic approaches involving emotional management, instructional strategies, collaboration, and motivation. Teachers' emphasis on emotional regulation aligns with prior research (Forlin & Chambers, 2017; Sharma & Loreman, 2018) that highlights self-control and reflection as critical for sustaining classroom harmony and reducing burnout. Calm and composed teachers not only manage challenging behaviors but also model emotional regulation for their students, promoting positive social-emotional development.

Instructional management strategies identified in this study reflect principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction. Structured routines, task modification, and visual support cater to multiple learning modalities, facilitating comprehension for diverse learners. The emphasis on clarity, stepwise instruction, and short guided activities reflects teachers' responsiveness to cognitive processing differences and attention challenges, consistent with Al-Makahleh (2020) and Villanueva & Dizon (2022). These strategies demonstrate that inclusive teaching requires deliberate planning, flexibility, and ongoing adaptation to student needs.

Collaboration emerged as a central pillar of effective inclusive education. Teachers' proactive engagement with colleagues, administrators, parents, and specialists enhances problem-solving capacity, provides emotional support, and ensures continuity of care across home and school settings. This network strengthens teachers' professional confidence, aligns with best practices in collaborative teaching (Jennings & Greenberg, 2019; Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2019), and contributes to a cohesive learning environment where all learners are supported.

Personal motivation, driven by student progress and professional dedication, was a recurring theme. Recognizing small achievements fosters perseverance and resilience, helping teachers maintain a positive outlook despite challenges. This is particularly important in inclusive classrooms where teaching demands are heightened due to varied abilities and complex needs. Motivation functions as a feedback loop: student progress fuels teacher engagement, which in turn enhances student outcomes. Such findings echo the importance of positive teacher mindset in sustaining inclusive practices (Smit & Humpert, 2021; Villanueva & Dizon, 2022).

Despite these strengths, the study identified key challenges that remain barriers to full inclusion. Large class sizes, time constraints, insufficient resources, and lack of specialized training hinder teachers' ability to implement effective strategies consistently. Behavioral issues, communication barriers, and diverse learning abilities require targeted interventions and continuous professional development. Addressing these gaps will require systemic support, including policy implementation, resource allocation, and structured capacity-building programs for educators.

Overall, this study provides evidence that teacher resilience, proactive instructional strategies, collaboration, and motivation are integral to effective inclusive education. By addressing emotional, instructional, and social challenges, teachers can create supportive learning environments that promote equitable participation, academic success, and social inclusion. These findings underscore the importance of supporting educators with professional development, adequate resources, and collaborative networks, which ultimately benefit both teachers and learners in inclusive classrooms.



1. *Teachers effectively manage inclusive classrooms using emotional regulation, structured routines, differentiated instruction, and positive reinforcement.*
2. *Collaboration with colleagues, parents, and coordinators enhances problem-solving, emotional support, and classroom effectiveness.*
3. *Personal motivation, fueled by student progress and professional commitment, sustains teacher resilience.*
4. *Challenges including class size, time constraints, lack of resources, and need for training continue to impact inclusive teaching.*
5. *Comprehensive support systems, professional development, and resource allocation are essential for optimizing inclusive education outcomes.*

Summary

The study that was done based on narrative inquiry was aimed at deeply comprehending the experiences of Junior High School receiving teachers at Kalibo Integrated Special Education Center who were entrusted with the task of teaching students with special learning demands in a common classroom. The research recognizes that these teachers experience different kinds of problems complexly and intricately in their line of work. It is a narrative of the challenges they have in handling a vast range of learning abilities and behaviors and adapting instructional methods to meet different needs. Also, teachers are required to face the obstacles in communication, dealing with behavioral issues that come suddenly, and making endeavors to construct an inclusive community of learners in which all students are given equal opportunities to develop. They need to be incredibly patient, be inventive, and carry out a thorough planning. In terms of the best practices, the following themes were generated: Differentiated Instruction, Inclusive Management, Use of Assistive Instructional Materials and Collaborative Learning. In terms of the Challenges they encountered, the following themes were generated: Managing Diverse Needs, Class Size & Time Issues, Lacking Resources and Need for Specialized Training. In terms of the Coping Strategies, the following themes were drawn: Emotional and Behavioral Coping, Instructional Management, Seeking Support and Collaboration and Personal Motivation.

To address such problems, the "Enhancement Program to Empower Junior High School Receiving Teachers in Teaching Special Needs in Mainstreamed Classes" was created as a focused intervention. The program manager was given the necessary skills, materials, and support systems to be able to concisely and efficiently handle the wide range of students' needs. The program features include training of teachers on differentiated instruction, providing strategies for inclusive classroom management, procuring assistive technologies, and learning materials, giving professional development opportunities, and initiating teacher well-being activities. It is a program that tackles the key issues in an attempt to equip teachers with the necessary skills, provide special needs students with better educational experiences and outcomes, and foster a more supportive and fair school community.

Findings:

The research findings significantly highlight the necessity of differentiation in teaching, the implementation of inclusion in the management of the classroom, as well as the provision of resources for the valuable teaching of students with special requirements in learning via common educational settings. Differentiated instruction alters the means of teaching based on the requirements of every single student, whereas inclusive management helps in establishing a classroom environment that is loving and respectful. Besides that, the learners' participation through assistive devices and cooperative learning not only lifts the students' spirits but also, they feel more accepted. Anyway, teachers must deal with situations like handling students with different learning abilities, those who are showing behavioral problems, and communication difficulties among students. Besides that, structural elements such as large class sizes and lack of resources make the situations more severe. In order to be able to create truly inclusive and effective learning environments, teachers have to be equipped with various means to handle such problems. These include mastering emotional regulation skills, having a robust support system, being continuously professionally developed, and providing the necessary resources.

Conclusion:

To effectively include special needs students in regular classes, it is necessary to go beyond just differentiated instruction, inclusive management, and providing the right resources. In addition to these things, the teacher's well-



being must be cared for, there must be enough support staff, and structural problems need to be addressed. This is vital because successful mainstreaming is not only about carrying out certain methods, but also about establishing a support network for both students and teachers and, thus, highlighting the interdependence of teacher well-being, resource availability, and administrative support. The creation of truly inclusive classrooms entails the empowerment of teachers through the acquisition of skills, provision of resources and support, bringing about systemic change and a sustainable and effective approach to inclusive education which guarantees that all students will have the opportunity to thrive.

Recommendation:

From the findings, the researcher proposes several measures to enhance inclusive education and support teachers in mainstreamed classrooms. First, there should be a commitment of funding to extensive and continual teacher development programs that focus specifically on inclusive educational strategies tailored to various disabilities. Class sizes should be reduced, and the number of support staff increased to ensure that the diverse needs of students are effectively met. Equitable access to essential resources, such as assistive technologies and accessible learning materials, must be provided to all learners. Teachers' health and well-being should be given the highest priority through initiatives such as stress-reduction programs, support groups, and accessible mental health services. Furthermore, strong and collaborative relationships should be cultivated among teachers, specialists, school leaders, parents, and community organizations to foster a cohesive support system. Finally, the comprehensive upskilling program recommended by the researcher should be adopted to equip, empower, and capacitate teachers, enabling them to deliver inclusive education more effectively.

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