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# Teachers' Perspectives, Attitudes, and Preparedness toward the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Classrooms

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**Abstract:**

This study examined teachers' perspectives, attitudes, and preparedness in managing learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms at Zapatera Elementary School, Division of Cebu City, during School Year 2025–2026, as a basis for an intervention plan. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered through an adapted structured questionnaire administered to 30 purposively selected teachers handling inclusive classes, comprising Special Education (SPED) teachers and receiving or general education teachers. Perspectives were measured through inclusive understanding, learner beliefs, inclusion benefits, and inclusion challenges; attitudes through inclusive openness, instructional willingness, teaching confidence, and professional commitment; and preparedness through pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies. Data were analysed with frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation at the 0.05 level. Respondents were predominantly female and experienced, yet many had limited specialised training. Teachers reported very positive perspectives (aggregate weighted mean = 4.37) and very positive attitudes (4.28), but only prepared preparedness (3.72). Pedagogical knowledge was the weakest area (3.20, moderately prepared), while instructional strategies were strongest (4.23, highly prepared). Teaching confidence was also comparatively low (3.79, positive). Perspectives were moderately and significantly related to preparedness ($r = 0.583$, $p = 0.001$), and attitudes were strongly and significantly related to preparedness ($r = 0.725$, $p < 0.001$). The findings indicate that favourable mindsets do not automatically translate into full instructional readiness, and that targeted training in pedagogical knowledge, confidence building, and differentiated and behaviour-support strategies is needed. An evidence-based intervention plan is proposed to strengthen teachers' competence, collaboration, and classroom support for inclusive education.

*Keywords:* inclusive education; teacher perspectives; teacher attitudes; teacher preparedness; special needs education; descriptive-correlational

## Introduction:

Inclusive education remains a major direction of Philippine basic education. The Department of Education (DepEd) continues to uphold the right of every learner to access quality, responsive, and equitable learning opportunities in regular schools. This commitment is expressed in DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009, which promotes inclusive education as a strategy for increasing the participation of children with special needs, and in Republic Act (RA) No. 11650, which institutionalizes a policy of inclusion and services for learners with disabilities in support of inclusive education. Together with RA No. 10533, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, RA No. 7277, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, and RA No. 10968, the Philippine Qualifications Framework Act, these policies place the classroom teacher at the centre of inclusion. Laws can open school doors, but teachers decide, day by day, whether a learner with special needs is genuinely welcomed, taught, assessed, and supported.

Despite these policy commitments, implementation continues to face persistent challenges. National reports show that many learners with disabilities remain underserved, and a significant number of those enrolled encounter barriers related to large class sizes, limited instructional materials, insufficient specialist support, and uneven teacher preparation. In many schools, inclusion is practised without a fully developed system of assessment, differentiated instruction, individualised planning, and collaboration among general education teachers, SPED teachers, parents, and school leaders.

This tension is especially significant in the local context of Cebu City. The Schools Division of Cebu City serves a wide network of public elementary schools, including Zapatera Elementary School, where learners with diverse abilities are accommodated in regular classrooms. Teachers there are expected to manage diversity, maintain a positive classroom environment, adapt instruction and assessment, and collaborate with colleagues and families, often with limited time and resources. Understanding how these teachers think, feel, and prepare is therefore not an abstract concern. It is a practical question that affects lesson planning, classroom management, learner participation, and the everyday experience of learners with special needs.

Three constructs are central to this question. Perspectives refer to teachers' beliefs, awareness, and understanding of inclusive education, including what inclusion means, what learners with special needs can do, what benefits inclusion brings, and what challenges it poses. Attitudes refer to teachers' evaluative and affective dispositions, including openness to teaching learners with special needs, willingness to adjust instruction, confidence in their own capability, and professional commitment to inclusive practice. Preparedness refers to teachers' actual readiness and competence, including pedagogical knowledge of learner characteristics and teaching approaches, access to professional development, the adequacy of the classroom environment, and the use of effective instructional strategies. Theory suggests that these constructs are linked. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) proposes that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control shape intention and behaviour. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) emphasises self-efficacy and reciprocal influences among person, behaviour, and environment. Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) reminds us that teacher practice is shaped by classroom, school, division, family, and policy contexts.

However, favourable perspectives and attitudes do not automatically guarantee preparedness. A teacher may welcome inclusion, believe in learners' potential, and commit to fair treatment, yet still lack specific knowledge about differentiated instruction, behaviour support, assistive strategies, and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Likewise, a supportive school environment and occasional training may improve general readiness without closing gaps in pedagogical knowledge for particular disabilities. When confidence lags behind commitment, teachers may avoid challenging instructional tasks, rely on whole-class teaching, or depend heavily on SPED colleagues, even when they value inclusion. Identifying where the gap lies, and how strongly mindset relates to readiness, is therefore essential for designing interventions that are targeted rather than generic.

This study was conducted to generate localized empirical evidence from Zapatera Elementary School during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it described the demographic profile of teacher-respondents; determined the levels of their perspectives, attitudes, and preparedness; tested whether perspectives and attitudes were significantly related to preparedness; and used the findings as the basis for an intervention plan. The study is significant for school administrators, SPED teachers, receiving teachers, learners with special needs, parents and families, policymakers and stakeholders, future researchers, and the researcher herself. For administrators, it provides evidence for planning training, allocating resources, and strengthening support systems. For teachers, it identifies concrete areas for growth rather than a vague call to be more inclusive. For learners and families, it points toward more responsive classroom practice, stronger collaboration, and more equitable participation.

**Literature Review:**

Perspectives on inclusive education. Teachers' perspectives shape how inclusion is interpreted and enacted. Inclusive understanding involves knowledge of the principles, goals, rights, and practices of inclusive education, including equal learning opportunities, learner rights, and the teacher's role in adapting instruction. When understanding is strong, teachers are more likely to plan for diversity rather than treat it as an exception. Learner beliefs concern expectations about what learners with special needs can learn, participate in, and achieve. Growth-oriented beliefs encourage teachers to provide scaffolding, celebrate small gains, and maintain high but attainable expectations.

Inclusion benefits refer to perceived positive outcomes, including acceptance, reduced discrimination, social relationships, belonging, cooperation, and a supportive learning environment for learners with and without special needs. Inclusion challenges refer to perceived difficulties, including managing diverse needs, additional planning, time constraints, large class sizes, limited resources, lack of specialised support, and learner behaviour. High awareness of challenges is not necessarily negative; it can reflect realistic experience and readiness to seek support.

Research in Philippine and international settings consistently reports that teachers generally hold positive views of inclusion while simultaneously reporting substantial practical challenges (Bugani et al., 2025; Cola et al., 2025; Salvaña & Protacio, 2025). The present study extends this literature by measuring perspectives as four distinct components and by examining how each component contributes to an overall profile in one school.

Attitudes toward inclusion. Attitudes are often distinguished from perspectives because they include affective and motivational elements: openness, willingness, confidence, and commitment. Inclusive openness is the readiness to accept and welcome learners with special needs in regular classrooms. Instructional willingness is the readiness to modify lessons, vary strategies, adapt assessment, provide individualised support, collaborate, attend training, and spend extra time when needed. Teaching confidence, closely related to self-efficacy, is the belief that one can teach, communicate, manage behaviour, and maintain a positive environment in inclusive settings.

Professional commitment is dedication to fairness, policy adherence, continuous growth, parental collaboration, and promotion of inclusive practices. Studies applying the Theory of Planned Behavior show that attitudes and perceived self-efficacy predict teachers' intention and behaviour toward inclusive education (Amponteng et al., 2026; Urton et al., 2023). Woodcock et al. (2023) found that teachers with stronger efficacy beliefs were more able to implement inclusive practices, while Mucherah et al. (2024) reported that attitudes and perceived preparedness were closely linked in Kenya. Penales (2024) similarly found that receiving teachers' attitudes shaped their educational practices in the Division of Bacoor City. A recurring pattern is that openness, willingness, and commitment are often high, whereas confidence is comparatively lower. This pattern matters because confidence influences whether teachers attempt differentiated tasks, persist when behaviour is challenging, and seek help rather than withdraw.

Preparedness for inclusive teaching. Preparedness is multidimensional. Pedagogical knowledge includes understanding learner characteristics, learning needs, teaching methods, and instructional approaches for learners with cognitive delays, communication difficulties, emotional and social challenges, hearing impairment, difficulties in daily living skills, and gaps between mental and chronological age. Professional development includes training, seminars, in-service programmes, administrative support, district opportunities, time to attend learning activities, collegial assistance, and specific preparation for IEPs.

Classroom environment includes availability of materials and teaching resources, colleague and administrator support, specialised assessment, appropriate classroom arrangements and aids, information and communication technology resources, respect and acceptance, and school-community collaboration. Instructional strategies include collaboration with colleagues and SPED teachers, administrative support for behavioural and learning challenges, collaborative teaching, teaching learners with special needs in regular classrooms when possible, guidance for learners with IEPs, and inclusion of learners with verbal aggression or depression when appropriate. Literature emphasises that preparedness depends not only on individual knowledge but also on school climate, resources, leadership, and collaborative structures (Kenny et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2025). Tomlinson (2021) highlights differentiated instruction as a central practice, while Schildkamp et al. (2022) emphasise assessment and data use in tailoring instruction. Gillespie et al. (2023) link inclusive climate and peer relations to participation, and Warnes (2022) underscores materials, funding, and assistive infrastructure as foundational. In the Philippines, Dela Fuente (2021) and Judilla et al. (2022) document both promising practices and persistent gaps in support and implementation.

Relationships among perspectives, attitudes, and preparedness. The central proposition of this study is that perspectives and attitudes are not merely desirable dispositions; they are associated with readiness to act. The Theory of Planned Behavior provides a mechanism: positive attitudes and perceived control strengthen intention, which supports behaviour. Social Cognitive Theory adds that self-efficacy influences effort, persistence, and resilience, and that mastery experiences, modelling, feedback, and supportive environments build efficacy. Ecological Systems Theory adds that school leadership, administrative support, division training, parental involvement, and community collaboration shape what teachers can do, even when their personal attitudes are positive.

Empirical findings support these links. Woodcock et al. (2022) demonstrated that teacher self-efficacy and inclusive beliefs were core drivers of pedagogical readiness and classroom execution. Forlin and Sin (2021) and Loreman (2021) emphasised that continuous professional development, exposure to inclusive practices, and supportive school culture strengthen both perceptions and preparedness. Yang and Zhou (2025) examined inclusive school climate, teaching

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efficacy, and burnout under ecosystem theory, suggesting that context and efficacy jointly affect teacher functioning. In the present study, these ideas imply two testable expectations: teachers with more positive perspectives will report higher preparedness, and teachers with more positive attitudes will report higher preparedness, with attitudes potentially showing the stronger association because attitudes are closer to motivation and self-efficacy.

Synthesis and research gap. Taken together, prior studies show that teachers often endorse inclusion, recognise its benefits, and commit to it professionally, yet report gaps in pedagogical knowledge, confidence, specialised training, and resources. What remains less clear is how these patterns appear together in a single Philippine elementary school, how the four components within each construct compare, and how strongly perspectives and attitudes each relate to preparedness in that setting.

Most available studies examine one or two constructs, use larger or more varied samples, or focus on secondary or higher education. There is a need for school-level evidence that can inform a concrete intervention plan rather than general recommendations. This study addresses that gap by examining perspectives, attitudes, and preparedness together, using a common measurement approach, in Zapatera Elementary School, and by translating the pattern of strengths and gaps into targeted strategies for pedagogical knowledge, confidence, professional development, environment, and instructional collaboration. The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.

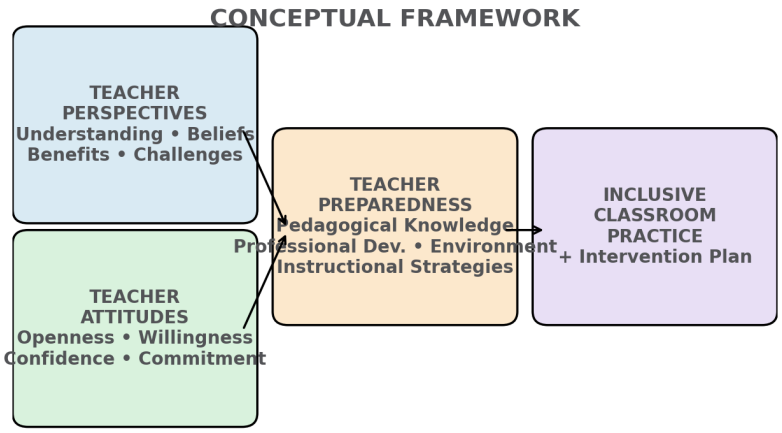



*Figure 1. Conceptual framework linking teachers' perspectives and attitudes to preparedness and inclusive classroom practice.*

The literature also points to the importance of school leadership and collaborative structures in translating teacher beliefs into practice. Kenny et al. (2023) proposed a whole-education approach in which planning, policy, and provision are integrated, so that inclusion is not left to individual teachers alone. In this view, school leaders create time for collaboration, ensure access to specialists, monitor implementation, and align resources with learner needs. Zhang et al. (2025) found that school climate, self-efficacy, instructional practice, and perceived professional development needs are interconnected, suggesting that a supportive climate can strengthen efficacy and practice together.

For Zapatera Elementary School, this implies that leadership actions, such as organising Learning Action Cell sessions, facilitating co-planning between SPED and receiving teachers, and ensuring that assessment results inform intervention, are not administrative extras but core instructional supports. When leaders signal that inclusion is a shared responsibility, teachers are more likely to seek help, share strategies, and sustain new practices.

A second gap in the literature concerns the measurement of preparedness as a single, undifferentiated score. Many studies report an overall preparedness mean without examining whether teachers are strong in collaboration but weak in pedagogical knowledge, or strong in environment but weak in professional development. The present study addresses this limitation by reporting four components separately and by showing that the overall mean can hide a substantial internal spread.

This component-level view is essential for intervention design, because it allows the school to build on strengths, such as instructional strategies and collaboration, while targeting the weakest component, pedagogical knowledge. It also allows future researchers to test whether different components respond differently to training, coaching, and resource provision, and whether improvements in pedagogical knowledge mediate the relationship between attitudes and classroom practice. Future work should therefore retain component-level reporting and, where possible, use classroom observation and learner outcome data alongside self-report questionnaires to triangulate teachers' perceived readiness with observed practice.

**Methodology:**

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component described the demographic profile of teacher-respondents and the levels of their perspectives, attitudes, and preparedness. The correlational component tested the relationships between perspectives and preparedness and between attitudes and preparedness. This design was appropriate because the researcher did not manipulate variables or assign participants to conditions; instead, relationships were examined as they naturally occurred in an inclusive school setting (McBurney & White, 2009). The study followed an Input-Process-Output flow: inputs comprised respondents' profile and the three constructs; process comprised questionnaire administration, organisation, tabulation, and statistical analysis; and output comprised findings, conclusions, and a proposed intervention plan.

The study was conducted at Zapatera Elementary School, a public urban elementary school in the Division of Cebu City, where inclusive education is gradually implemented within regular classrooms accommodating learners with diverse abilities. The school provided a relevant setting because it included both SPED teachers and receiving or general education teachers handling learners with special needs. Respondents were 30 teachers handling inclusive classrooms during School Year 2025–2026, selected through purposive sampling. Inclusion criteria required that participants be actively teaching learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms and have direct experience in implementing inclusive education. This ensured that responses reflected lived classroom experience rather than abstract opinion.

The primary instrument was an adapted structured questionnaire with four sections. Section 1 gathered demographic profile: age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and number of relevant trainings related to special needs education. Sections 2 to 4 measured perspectives (32 items across four subscales of eight items each), attitudes (30 items across four subscales), and preparedness (32 items across four subscales), using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach's alpha, and the instrument was reviewed for content relevance before administration. Mean score ranges were interpreted as 4.21–5.00 Very Positive / Highly Prepared, 3.41–4.20 Positive / Prepared, 2.61–3.40 Moderate / Moderately Prepared, 1.81–2.60 Low, and 1.00–1.80 Very Low, with wording adapted to each construct.

Data gathering followed three stages. In the preliminary stage, permission was sought from the Schools Division Superintendent of Cebu City and the school principal, and coordination was made with teachers. In the data gathering stage, questionnaires were distributed with clear instructions, and respondents answered voluntarily. In the post-data gathering stage, responses were checked for completeness, organised, coded, and analysed. Ethical principles were observed throughout. Informed consent was secured, participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw without consequence. No personal identifiers were collected, responses were stored securely, and confidentiality was maintained in accordance with RA No. 10173, the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The questionnaire was respectful and non-intrusive, and honesty and transparency were maintained in reporting.

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Data were analysed with frequency and percentage for demographic profile, weighted mean and standard deviation for levels of perspectives, attitudes, and preparedness, and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) for relationships. All inferential tests were conducted at the 0.05 level of significance; a p-value less than or equal to 0.05 was considered statistically significant. The weighted mean was used to interpret overall levels for each subscale and for the aggregate of each construct, while the standard deviation indicated dispersion and consensus among respondents.

**Table 1. Scoring guide and interpretation of weighted means.**

| Scale | Mean range | Interpretation (Perspectives / Attitudes) | Interpretation (Preparedness) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **5 – Strongly Agree** | 4.21–5.00 | Very Positive | Highly Prepared |
| **4 – Agree** | 3.41–4.20 | Positive | Prepared |
| **3 – Neutral** | 2.61–3.40 | Moderate | Moderately Prepared |
| **2 – Disagree** | 1.81–2.60 | Low | Low |
| **1 – Strongly Disagree** | 1.00–1.80 | Very Low | Very Low |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

**Results and Discussion:**

*This section presents, analyses, and interprets the data gathered from 30 teacher-respondents. It is organised into five parts: demographic profile; level of perspectives; level of attitudes; level of preparedness; and tests of significant relationships. Each table is followed by interpretation and discussion in relation to theory and prior research. Together, the results describe a school in which commitment to inclusion is strong, understanding is solid, and collaborative instructional practice is evident, but where pedagogical knowledge and teaching confidence remain the most important areas for improvement.*

***Demographic Profile: Age, Sex, Educational Attainment, Experience, and Training***

The demographic profile provides the context for interpreting perspectives, attitudes, and preparedness. Teachers do not enter inclusive classrooms as blank slates; their age, experience, education, and training shape what they know, what they have practised, and what support they still need. Tables 2 to 6 present this profile.

**Table. Demographic Profile: Age, Sex, Educational Attainment, Experience, and Training**

| Profile | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 51 and above | 10 | 33.33% |
| **Age** | 41–50 | 7 | 23.33% |
| **Age** | 31–40 | 8 | 26.67% |
| **Age** | 21–30 | 5 | 16.67% |
| **Sex** | Female | 29 | 96.67% |
| **Sex** | Male | 1 | 3.33% |
| **Highest educational attainment** | With master's units | 16 | 53.33% |
| **Highest educational attainment** | Bachelor's degree | 13 | 43.33% |
| **Highest educational attainment** | Master's degree | 1 | 3.33% |
| **Years of teaching experience** | 20 and above | 12 | 40.00% |
| **Years of teaching experience** | 15–19 | 6 | 20.00% |
| **Years of teaching experience** | 10–14 | 1 | 3.33% |
| **Years of teaching experience** | 5–9 | 3 | 10.00% |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Years of teaching experience** | 0–4 | 8 | 26.67% |
| **Relevant training** | 1–2 trainings | 12 | 40.00% |
| **Relevant training** | 3–5 trainings | 10 | 33.33% |
| **Relevant training** | 6–9 trainings | 4 | 13.33% |
| **Relevant training** | None | 4 | 13.33% |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

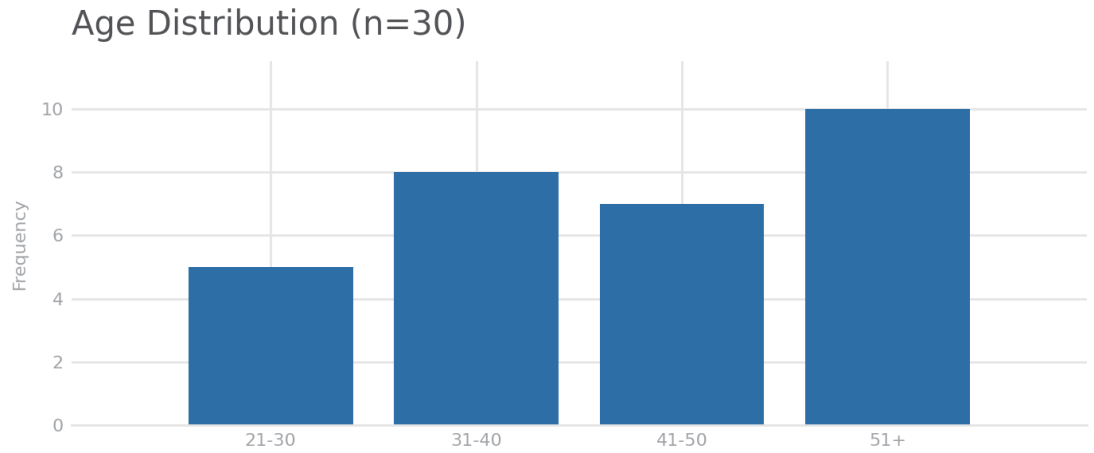



*Figure 2. Age distribution of respondents (n = 30).*

The age distribution shows a mature and experienced workforce. One third of respondents were aged 51 years and above, and more than half were aged 41 years and above when the 41–50 group is included. This suggests that the school benefits from long professional socialisation, familiarity with curriculum and classroom management, and accumulated experience with diverse learners. At the same time, the presence of five younger teachers aged 21–30 years, together with eight teachers aged 31–40 years, creates a mix of fresh perspectives and seasoned practice. Such diversity can support mentoring, peer learning, and the sharing of newer inclusive strategies alongside established routines. The pattern also implies that professional development should not assume a single starting point; older teachers may need updating on newer approaches such as differentiated instruction, assistive strategies, and IEP processes, while younger teachers may need classroom-management and behaviour-support experience that comes from guided practice.

The sex distribution is markedly imbalanced, with 29 female teachers and only one male teacher. This reflects the long-standing feminisation of elementary teaching in the Philippines and is not, by itself, a measure of teaching quality. It does, however, describe the social composition of the inclusive teaching workforce in this school and underscores the need to support and empower the predominantly female staff who carry most inclusive classroom work. It also cautions against generalising gender comparisons from a single male respondent; no meaningful sex-based inference can be drawn from this sample, and future studies with larger and more balanced samples would be needed for such analysis.

Educational attainment shows strong orientation toward graduate study: 16 teachers had master's units, 13 held a bachelor's degree, and only one had completed a master's degree. The high proportion with master's units indicates motivation for professional growth and exposure to advanced educational ideas, which may contribute to the positive perspectives reported later. Yet the very small number who had completed a master's degree suggests that many teachers are still in progress, possibly constrained by workload, cost, time, and family responsibilities. Institutional support for completing graduate studies, such as flexible schedules, study support, and recognition, could help convert units into completed qualifications and deeper expertise.

Teaching experience is polarised in a productive way. Twelve teachers had 20 or more years of experience, six had 15–19 years, and eight had 0–4 years, while the middle bands were thin. This creates opportunities for mentoring: experienced teachers can model classroom management, learner handling, and collaboration, while beginning teachers can bring recent training, openness to innovation, and energy. The gap in the 10–14-year band may reflect staffing

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history rather than a substantive finding, but it reinforces the value of structured mentoring so that expertise is not lost when senior teachers retire. The most striking training finding is that 40.00% had only one to two relevant trainings, 33.33% had three to five, 13.33% had six to nine, and 13.33% had none. This means that more than half had limited specialised exposure, and four teachers had no relevant training at all. This gap is central to the later finding that pedagogical knowledge was only moderately prepared. General teaching experience does not automatically provide specialised knowledge about disabilities, differentiated instruction, behaviour support, and IEPs. Targeted, sustained, and practice-based training is therefore a priority, not an optional enrichment.

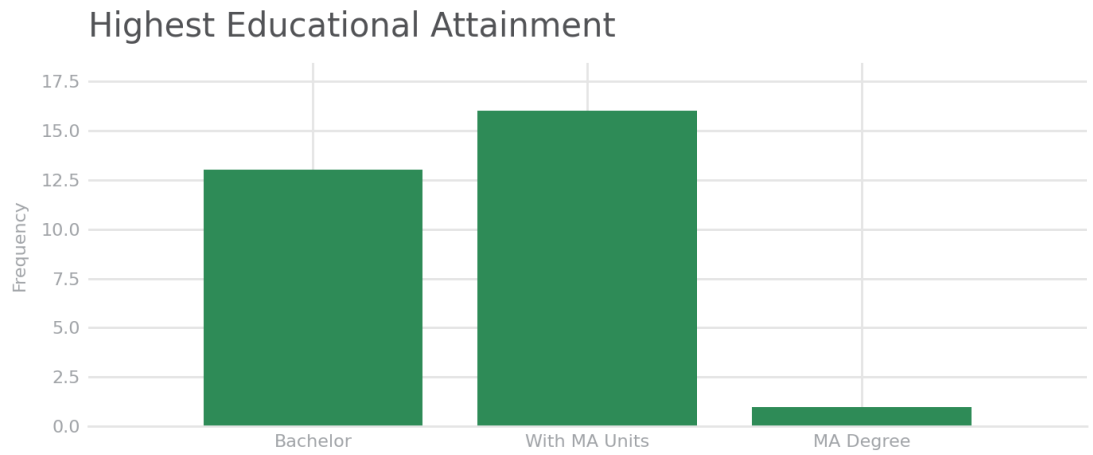



*Figure 3. Highest educational attainment of respondents.*

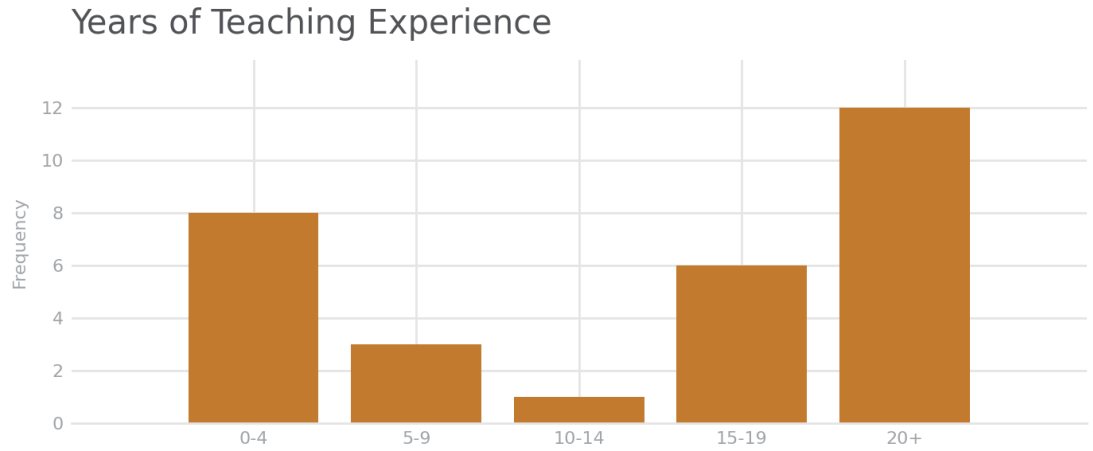



*Figure 4. Years of teaching experience.*

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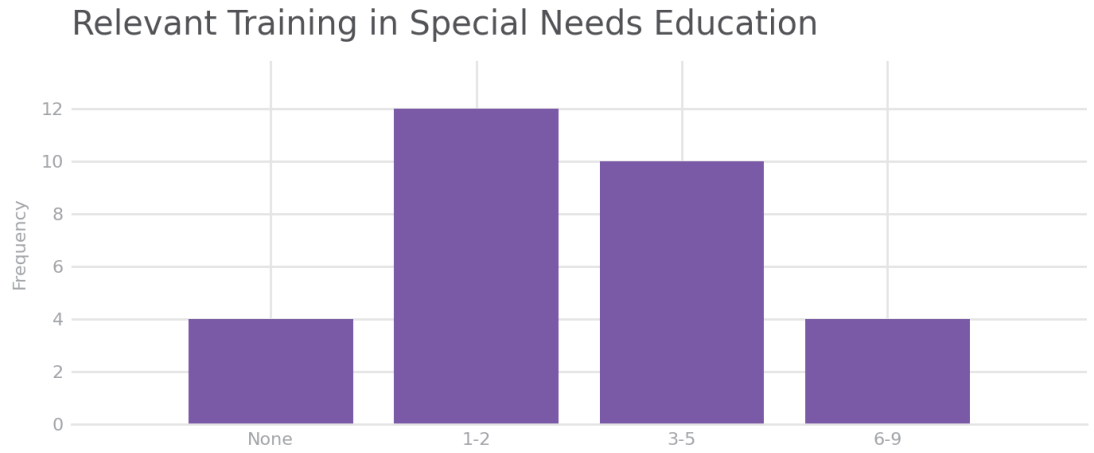



*Figure 5. Number of relevant trainings in special needs education.*

***Level of Perspectives: Inclusive Understanding***

Inclusive understanding refers to awareness and comprehension of the principles, goals, rights, and practices of inclusive education. Table 7 presents the eight indicators for this subscale.

**Table. Level of Perspectives: Inclusive Understanding**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Understand concept of inclusive education in regular classrooms | 4.20 | 0.85 | Positive |
| **2** | Aware of goals of inclusive education for learners with special needs | 4.37 | 0.81 | Very Positive |
| **3** | Understand rights of learners with special needs to learn alongside peers | 4.37 | 0.76 | Very Positive |
| **4** | Familiar with basic principles of managing inclusive classrooms | 4.10 | 0.84 | Positive |
| **5** | Understand importance of adapting instruction | 4.20 | 0.81 | Positive |
| **6** | Aware of different types of special needs | 4.20 | 0.81 | Positive |
| **7** | Understand role as teacher in supporting inclusive education | 4.30 | 0.84 | Very Positive |
| **8** | Understand how inclusive education promotes equal learning opportunities | 4.40 | 0.81 | Very Positive |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Aggregate mean | 4.27 | 0.82 | Very Positive |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The aggregate mean of 4.27 (Very Positive) indicates a strong and favourable level of inclusive understanding. The highest indicators were understanding how inclusion promotes equal learning opportunities (4.40), awareness of goals (4.37), and understanding of learners' rights to learn alongside peers (4.37). These results suggest that teachers have internalised the ethical and legal foundations of inclusion, not merely its procedural requirements. When teachers understand rights and equal opportunity, they are more likely to view inclusion as a matter of justice and belonging rather than as an administrative burden. This aligns with the legal bases of the study, including RA No. 11650 and RA No. 7277, and with the Theory of Planned Behavior, in which beliefs and attitudes shape intention.

The lowest indicator, familiarity with basic principles of managing inclusive classrooms (4.10, Positive), remains favourable but is comparatively weaker. This is an important nuance: teachers understand why inclusion matters more than they are certain about how to manage it day by day. The gap between why and how reappears throughout the study, especially in pedagogical knowledge and teaching confidence. It suggests that professional development should move from general orientation about inclusion to concrete classroom management, lesson design, assessment adaptation, and behaviour support. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.76 to 0.85, indicate moderate consensus; responses were not identical, but they clustered around positive to very positive levels, suggesting shared understanding with some variation in depth. Sustaining this understanding through Learning Action Cell sessions, case discussions, and demonstration teaching could help convert general understanding into operational skill.

***Level of Perspectives: Learner Beliefs***

Learner beliefs refer to convictions about the abilities, potential, and capacity of learners with special needs to learn, participate, and succeed in inclusive settings.

**Table. Level of Perspectives: Learner Beliefs**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Learners with special needs can learn in inclusive classrooms | 4.10 | 0.88 | Positive |
| **2** | Can improve academically with proper support | 4.17 | 0.87 | Positive |
| **3** | Can participate meaningfully in class activities | 4.07 | 0.91 | Positive |
| **4** | Can develop social skills in inclusive settings | 4.20 | 0.85 | Positive |
| **5** | Can benefit from interaction with peers | 4.20 | 0.85 | Positive |
| **6** | Have strengths that can be developed | 4.23 | 0.77 | Very Positive |
| **7** | All learners can learn at their own pace | 4.47 | 0.78 | Very Positive |
| **8** | Inclusive classrooms help learners reach full potential | 4.17 | 0.83 | Positive |
| | Aggregate mean | 4.20 | 0.84 | Positive |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

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The aggregate mean of 4.20 (Positive) is the lowest among the four perspective components, though still favourable. The highest indicator was belief that all learners can learn at their own pace (4.47, Very Positive), followed by belief that learners have strengths that can be developed (4.23, Very Positive). These beliefs reflect a growth-oriented and asset-based view: learners are seen as capable of progress, not defined by deficits. Such beliefs are important because they influence expectations, patience, scaffolding, and willingness to differentiate. Teachers who believe in strengths are more likely to look for what a learner can do, provide appropriate support, and celebrate progress.

The lowest indicators were belief that learners can participate meaningfully (4.07) and can learn in inclusive classrooms (4.10). While still positive, these scores suggest some hesitation about actual participation and learning in real classroom conditions, as distinct from abstract potential. This may reflect experience with large classes, limited materials, and behaviour challenges that make meaningful participation difficult to achieve consistently. The gap between belief in potential and belief in participation points to the need for strategies that make participation visible and achievable: structured peer interaction, visual supports, adapted tasks, choice, and clear routines. Social Cognitive Theory is relevant here: when teachers see learners succeed through supported participation, their efficacy and beliefs are strengthened, creating a positive cycle. Professional development that includes classroom observation, video examples, and guided practice could help teachers see how participation can be scaffolded for learners with different needs.

***Level of Perspectives: Inclusion Benefits***

Inclusion benefits refer to perceived positive outcomes of inclusive education for learners with and without special needs.

**Table. Level of Perspectives: Inclusion Benefits**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Promotes acceptance among learners | 4.37 | 0.72 | Very Positive |
| **2** | Reduces discrimination | 4.30 | 0.75 | Very Positive |
| **3** | Helps develop social relationships | 4.30 | 0.75 | Very Positive |
| **4** | Benefits both learners with and without special needs | 4.23 | 0.68 | Very Positive |
| **5** | Builds supportive learning environment | 4.27 | 0.74 | Very Positive |
| **6** | Encourages cooperation among learners | 4.30 | 0.84 | Very Positive |
| **7** | Helps learners with special needs feel valued | 4.33 | 0.76 | Very Positive |
| | Aggregate mean | 4.30 | 0.75 | Very Positive |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The aggregate mean of 4.30 (Very Positive) shows that teachers strongly recognise the benefits of inclusion. The highest indicator was promotion of acceptance (4.37), followed by feeling valued (4.33), reduced discrimination, social relationships, and cooperation (each 4.30). These results indicate that teachers view inclusion as a social and moral good, not only as an academic arrangement. Acceptance, belonging, and reduced discrimination are central to inclusive culture, and teachers' recognition of these benefits supports a classroom climate in which learners with special needs are respected and included in peer life. The comparatively low standard deviations (0.68 to 0.84) indicate relatively strong consensus on benefits.

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The lowest indicator, that inclusion benefits both learners with and without special needs (4.23), remains very positive but suggests slightly less certainty about mutual benefits. Some teachers may worry that attention to learners with special needs could reduce time or resources for other learners, especially in large classes. This concern is understandable and should be addressed directly, not dismissed. Professional development can show how differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and universal design for learning can benefit all learners, not only those with special needs. When teachers experience strategies that improve participation and learning for the whole class, their belief in mutual benefits is likely to strengthen. The findings align with prior literature emphasising acceptance, belonging, and cooperation as core outcomes of inclusion (Kenny et al., 2023; Gillespie et al., 2023).

***Level of Perspectives: Inclusion Challenges***

Inclusion challenges refer to perceived difficulties and barriers in implementing inclusive education.

**Table. Level of Perspectives: Inclusion Challenges**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Managing diverse learning needs can be challenging | 4.63 | 0.67 | Very Positive |
| **2** | Requires additional planning and preparation | 4.73 | 0.58 | Very Positive |
| **3** | Time constraints affect ability to support learners | 4.70 | 0.60 | Very Positive |
| **4** | Large class sizes make inclusion more difficult | 4.73 | 0.64 | Very Positive |
| **5** | Limited resources affect implementation | 4.73 | 0.58 | Very Positive |
| **6** | Learner behaviour challenges affect management | 4.73 | 0.58 | Very Positive |
| **7** | Lack of specialised support affects teaching | 4.73 | 0.58 | Very Positive |
| **8** | Requires continuous teacher adjustment | 4.77 | 0.57 | Very Positive |
| | Aggregate mean | 4.72 | 0.60 | Very Positive |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The aggregate mean of 4.72 is the highest among all perspective components and among all subscales in the study. In this subscale, a high mean indicates high awareness of challenges, not satisfaction with them. Teachers very strongly agreed that inclusion requires continuous adjustment (4.77), additional planning, large-class difficulty, limited resources, behaviour challenges, and lack of specialised support (each 4.73), and time constraints (4.70). The low standard deviations (0.57 to 0.67) indicate strong consensus: teachers share a vivid sense of the demands of inclusive teaching. This awareness should be read as realism, not negativity. Teachers who experience inclusion daily are well placed to identify what makes it difficult, and their agreement provides a credible basis for intervention.

The pattern has two implications. First, it validates the need for systemic support. If teachers consistently report that planning time, class size, resources, and specialist support are constraints, then interventions focused only on teacher mindset will be insufficient. School leadership, division support, resource provision, and collaborative structures must be part of the response. Second, high challenge awareness alongside high benefit awareness suggests a balanced perspective: teachers value inclusion and are honest about its costs. This balance is a strength for intervention, because teachers are likely to engage with practical solutions rather than abstract advocacy. Ecological Systems Theory captures this well: teacher practice is shaped by classroom, school, and system contexts, and improving preparedness requires attention to those contexts as well as to individual competence.

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***Summary of Perspectives***

Table 11 summarises the four perspective components and the overall level.

**Table. Summary of Perspectives**

| Component | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Inclusive understanding** | 4.27 | 0.82 | Very Positive |
| **Learner beliefs** | 4.20 | 0.84 | Positive |
| **Inclusion benefits** | 4.30 | 0.75 | Very Positive |
| **Inclusion challenges** | 4.72 | 0.60 | Very Positive |
| **Aggregate mean** | 4.37 | 0.75 | Very Positive |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

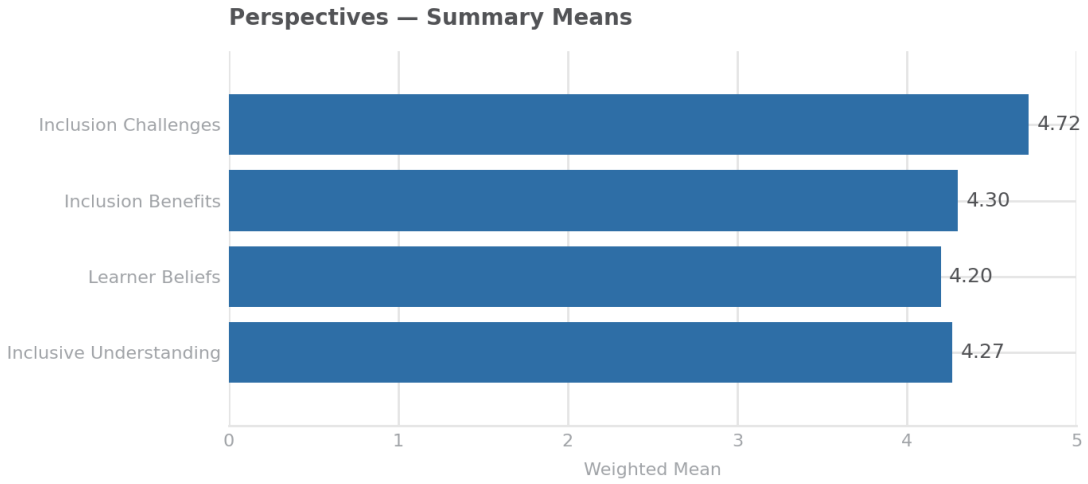



*Figure 6. Summary means for teachers' perspectives.*

The overall perspective mean of 4.37 (Very Positive) confirms a strong foundation. Teachers understand inclusion, recognise its benefits, hold positive learner beliefs, and are acutely aware of challenges. The ordering is instructive: challenges (4.72) > benefits (4.30) > understanding (4.27) > learner beliefs (4.20). The lowest component, learner beliefs, is the most direct target for belief-strengthening work, especially beliefs about meaningful participation and learning in inclusive classrooms. The highest component, challenges, is the most direct target for support-system work. An intervention that only celebrates benefits without addressing planning time, resources, and specialist support would miss what teachers are most clearly signalling. Conversely, an intervention that only provides resources without strengthening beliefs about learner capability would miss the motivational core of inclusive teaching. The present study therefore proposes a balanced intervention that addresses both beliefs and systems.

***Level of Attitudes: Inclusive Openness***

Inclusive openness refers to willingness to accept, welcome, and embrace learners with special needs in regular classrooms.

**Table. Level of Attitudes: Inclusive Openness**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Open to teaching learners with special needs | 4.43 | 0.73 | Very Positive |
| **2** | Welcome learners with special needs | 4.50 | 0.63 | Very Positive |
| **3** | Willing to adjust teaching to meet diverse needs | 4.50 | 0.68 | Very Positive |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4** | Feel comfortable having learners with special needs | 4.30 | 0.75 | Very Positive |
| **5** | Accept learners as part of regular classes | 4.43 | 0.68 | Very Positive |
| **6** | Open to learning more about inclusive education | 4.50 | 0.68 | Very Positive |
| **7** | Show respect toward learners with special needs | 4.67 | 0.55 | Very Positive |
| | Aggregate mean | 4.48 | 0.67 | Very Positive |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The aggregate mean of 4.48 (Very Positive) shows highly favourable openness. The highest indicator was showing respect (4.67), followed by welcoming learners, willingness to adjust teaching, and openness to learning more (each 4.50). Respect is foundational: it signals dignity, equality, and positive regard, and it shapes how learners are spoken to, grouped, and assessed. The lowest indicator, feeling comfortable (4.30), remains very positive but is comparatively lower, suggesting that acceptance and respect are stronger than comfort in practice. Comfort may depend on experience, confidence, and support, and it may grow with successful inclusive teaching experiences. The low standard deviations, especially for respect (0.55), indicate strong consensus. These results align with prior findings that openness is often high among teachers who have direct contact with learners with special needs (Salvaña & Protacio, 2025; Cola et al., 2025).

***Level of Attitudes: Instructional Willingness***

Instructional willingness refers to readiness to adjust teaching practices, strategies, time, and effort to support learners with special needs.

**Table. Level of Attitudes: Instructional Willingness**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Willing to modify lessons | 4.37 | 0.67 | Very Positive |
| **2** | Willing to use varied teaching strategies | 4.30 | 0.75 | Very Positive |
| **3** | Willing to spend extra time assisting learners | 4.27 | 0.74 | Very Positive |
| **4** | Willing to collaborate with other teachers | 4.40 | 0.67 | Very Positive |
| **5** | Willing to attend training | 4.50 | 0.63 | Very Positive |
| **6** | Willing to adapt assessment methods | 4.37 | 0.67 | Very Positive |
| **7** | Willing to provide individualised support | 4.30 | 0.70 | Very Positive |
| **8** | Willing to improve inclusive teaching practices | 4.43 | 0.63 | Very Positive |
| | Aggregate mean | 4.37 | 0.68 | Very Positive |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

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The aggregate mean of 4.37 (Very Positive) indicates strong readiness to act. The highest indicator was willingness to attend training (4.50), followed by willingness to improve practices (4.43) and to collaborate (4.40). This is encouraging for intervention: teachers are not resistant to learning; they are asking for it. The lowest indicator, willingness to spend extra time (4.27), remains very positive but reflects real time constraints already identified in the challenges subscale. Teachers may be willing in principle yet limited by workload, class size, and competing responsibilities. Interventions should therefore protect time for planning, collaboration, and individualised support, rather than simply adding tasks. The pattern also suggests that willingness is not the bottleneck; capability and support are. When willingness is high but pedagogical knowledge is moderate, the appropriate response is skill-building, modelling, and guided practice, not motivational persuasion.

***Level of Attitudes: Teaching Confidence***

Teaching confidence refers to self-belief in the ability to teach, manage, and support learners with special needs effectively.

**Table. Level of Attitudes: Teaching Confidence**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Confident teaching learners with special needs | 3.67 | 0.71 | Positive |
| **2** | Confident maintaining positive classroom environment | 3.93 | 0.74 | Positive |
| **3** | Confident using basic inclusive teaching strategies | 3.83 | 0.79 | Positive |
| **4** | Confident communicating with learners with special needs | 3.77 | 0.82 | Positive |
| **5** | Confident handling behavioural concerns | 3.67 | 0.80 | Positive |
| **6** | Confident maintaining positive environment (duplicate item in source) | 4.00 | 0.79 | Positive |
| **7** | Believe can teach effectively in inclusive settings | 3.67 | 0.76 | Positive |
| | Aggregate mean | 3.79 | 0.77 | Positive |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The aggregate mean of 3.79 (Positive) is the lowest among attitude components and the clearest confidence gap in the study. The highest indicator was confidence in maintaining a positive environment (4.00 in one item, 3.93 in another), while the lowest were confidence in teaching learners with special needs, handling behavioural concerns, and teaching effectively in inclusive settings (each 3.67). This pattern is consistent with Social Cognitive Theory: general classroom-management confidence does not automatically transfer to specialised inclusive teaching confidence. Teachers may feel able to keep a classroom positive and orderly, yet uncertain about how to teach specific learners, adapt instruction for particular disabilities, or respond to behaviour that challenges. The standard deviations (0.71 to 0.82) show moderate variation, suggesting that some teachers are more confident than others, possibly due to training, experience, or mentoring. The implication is direct: confidence-building must be specific, not generic. Demonstration teaching, peer mentoring, coaching, case conferences, and supervised practice with feedback are more likely to build

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confidence than lectures alone. Mastery experiences, in Bandura's terms, are the strongest source of efficacy, and the intervention plan therefore emphasises mentoring, observation, and demonstration.

***Level of Attitudes: Professional Commitment***

Professional commitment refers to dedication and responsibility in supporting inclusive education through actions, ethical practice, collaboration, and continuous growth.

**Table. Level of Attitudes: Professional Commitment**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Committed to supporting inclusive education in school | 4.43 | 0.63 | Very Positive |
| **2** | Take responsibility for learning of learners with special needs | 4.30 | 0.79 | Very Positive |
| **3** | Committed to improving skills in inclusive teaching | 4.43 | 0.68 | Very Positive |
| **4** | Committed to treating all learners fairly | 4.60 | 0.62 | Very Positive |
| **5** | Committed to following inclusive education policies | 4.57 | 0.63 | Very Positive |
| **6** | Committed to continuous professional growth | 4.53 | 0.68 | Very Positive |
| **7** | Committed to working with parents | 4.60 | 0.62 | Very Positive |
| **8** | Committed to promoting inclusive practices | 4.47 | 0.68 | Very Positive |
| | Aggregate mean | 4.49 | 0.67 | Very Positive |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The aggregate mean of 4.49 (Very Positive) is the highest attitude component. The highest indicators were commitment to treating learners fairly and working with parents (each 4.60), followed by following policies (4.57) and continuous growth (4.53). These results show that teachers see inclusion as a professional and ethical responsibility, not as a favour or optional extra. Commitment to parental collaboration is especially important, because parents provide knowledge about learners' strengths, needs, and strategies that work at home, and because consistency between home and school supports learner progress. The lowest indicator, taking responsibility for learning (4.30), remains very positive but suggests that responsibility may be shared with SPED teachers, specialists, and parents, rather than felt as solely the receiving teacher's. Clarifying roles in collaborative teaching, IEP implementation, and shared accountability can strengthen this sense of responsibility without creating blame. Overall, professional commitment provides a strong foundation for intervention: teachers are willing to engage, grow, and collaborate.

***Summary of Attitudes***

Table 16 summarises the four attitude components.

**Table. Summary of Attitudes**

| Component | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Inclusive openness** | 4.48 | 0.67 | Very Positive |
| **Instructional willingness** | 4.37 | 0.68 | Very Positive |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Teaching confidence** | 3.79 | 0.77 | Positive |
| **Professional commitment** | 4.49 | 0.67 | Very Positive |
| **Aggregate mean** | 4.28 | 0.70 | Very Positive |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

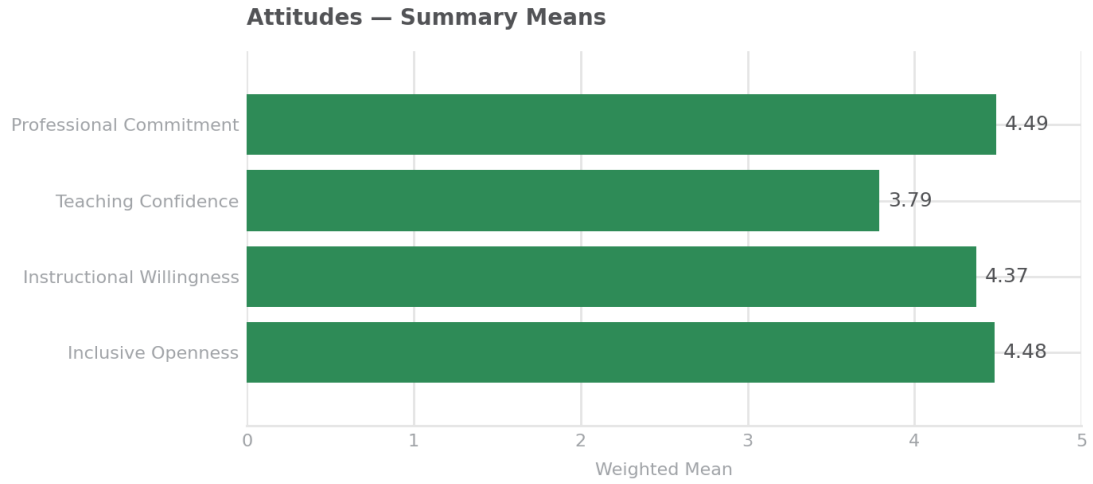



*Figure 7. Summary means for teachers' attitudes.*

The overall attitude mean of 4.28 (Very Positive) confirms that teachers' dispositions toward inclusion are strongly favourable. The ordering, commitment (4.49) > openness (4.48) > willingness (4.37) > confidence (3.79), is diagnostic. It shows that the affective and ethical foundations of inclusion are strong, while the efficacy foundation is weaker. This is the classic pattern described in the literature: teachers want to include, are willing to adapt, and are committed to fairness, but are less sure they can do it well for learners with complex needs. The gap between commitment and confidence (0.70) is larger than the gap between any other pair of attitude components, and it is the gap that interventions must close. The Theory of Planned Behavior helps explain why this matters: perceived behavioural control influences intention and behaviour. If teachers doubt their capability, they may avoid challenging strategies, even when they value inclusion. Building confidence through targeted, practice-based learning is therefore not a secondary goal; it is central to translating attitudes into effective classroom practice.

***Level of Preparedness: Pedagogical Knowledge***

Pedagogical knowledge refers to understanding of teaching methods, learner characteristics, and instructional approaches for learners with special needs.

**Table. Level of Preparedness: Pedagogical Knowledge**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Equipped to teach learners with cognitive delays / daily living difficulties | 3.20 | 0.92 | Moderately Prepared |
| **2** | Prepared to handle learners with behavioural difficulties | 3.20 | 0.89 | Moderately Prepared |
| **3** | Prepared to teach learners whose mental development is below grade level | 3.23 | 0.90 | Moderately Prepared |
| **4** | Prepared to teach learners with gaps | 3.27 | 0.91 | Moderately Prepared |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | between mental and chronological age | | | |
| **5** | Prepared to teach learners with communication difficulties | 3.20 | 0.96 | Moderately Prepared |
| **6** | Prepared to teach learners with emotional and social challenges | 3.23 | 0.90 | Moderately Prepared |
| **7** | Prepared to teach learners with hearing impairment | 3.10 | 0.92 | Moderately Prepared |
| **8** | Understand specific needs of learners with special needs | 3.20 | 0.89 | Moderately Prepared |
| | Aggregate mean | 3.20 | 0.91 | Moderately Prepared |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The aggregate mean of 3.20 (Moderately Prepared) is the lowest among all preparedness components and the most important finding for intervention. All eight indicators fell in the moderately prepared range, from 3.10 to 3.27, with standard deviations around 0.89 to 0.96 indicating considerable variation. The lowest indicator was teaching learners with hearing impairment (3.10), which often requires knowledge of assistive technologies, visual supports, and basic sign language. The highest indicators, gaps between mental and chronological age (3.27) and mental development below grade level and emotional/social challenges (each 3.23), were still only moderate. This flat, moderate profile suggests that teachers have general awareness but lack depth and specificity. They know that learners differ, but they are less sure how to teach particular learners with particular needs.

This finding is consistent with the training profile: many teachers had limited specialised training, and general experience does not automatically provide specialised pedagogical knowledge. It also explains why confidence was comparatively low. In Social Cognitive Theory, knowledge and mastery experiences build efficacy; without them, confidence remains tentative. The implication is that pedagogical knowledge must be the first priority of the intervention plan. Training should be differentiated by disability and need, not only by general inclusive principles. It should cover cognitive delays, communication difficulties, emotional and behavioural needs, hearing impairment, daily living skills, and mental-age gaps, with concrete strategies, visual supports, task analysis, differentiated tasks, and behaviour-support techniques. It should include demonstration, practice, and feedback, not only lectures, so that knowledge becomes usable skill.

***Level of Preparedness: Professional Development***

Professional development refers to continuous learning opportunities, training, seminars, and institutional support that enhance competence in inclusive teaching.

**Table. Level of Preparedness: Professional Development**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Training prepared me to teach learners with IEP / special needs | 3.23 | 0.90 | Moderately Prepared |
| **2** | Administrators organise seminars / conferences | 3.57 | 1.17 | Prepared |
| **3** | Administrators open to addressing concerns | 3.80 | 1.16 | Prepared |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4** | District provides training outside district | 3.43 | 1.10 | Prepared |
| **5** | District conducts in-service training | 3.80 | 1.19 | Prepared |
| **6** | Allowed enough time to attend seminars / workshops | 3.50 | 1.07 | Prepared |
| **7** | Colleagues willing to assist when attending seminars | 3.50 | 1.07 | Prepared |
| **8** | Seminars helped understand / manage behaviour | 3.60 | 1.10 | Prepared |
| | Aggregate mean | 3.55 | 1.10 | Prepared |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The aggregate mean of 3.55 (Prepared) indicates that professional development support is generally present, but with important variation. Standard deviations above 1.00 for most indicators indicate that teachers' experiences of support differed considerably, possibly due to grade assignment, scheduling, or access to division activities. The highest indicators were administrators' openness to concerns and district in-service training (each 3.80), suggesting that leadership and system support are perceived as responsive. The lowest indicator was training for IEPs and special needs (3.23, Moderately Prepared), which mirrors the pedagogical knowledge gap. General seminars may improve awareness and behaviour management, but they may not provide the specialised, hands-on preparation needed for IEP development, implementation, and monitoring. This suggests that professional development should be more targeted and sustained: workshops on IEPs, differentiated instruction, behaviour support, and assessment adaptation, followed by coaching and Learning Action Cell sessions where teachers apply, reflect, and refine. The willingness of teachers to attend training, already high in the attitudes section, means that such opportunities are likely to be well received if they are relevant, practical, and scheduled with protected time.

***Level of Preparedness: Classroom Environment***

Classroom environment refers to physical, social, and institutional conditions that support inclusive learning, including resources, support systems, and culture.

**Table. Level of Preparedness: Classroom Environment**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Enough materials for accommodations | 3.70 | 1.06 | Prepared |
| **2** | Colleagues ready to help when challenges arise | 3.80 | 0.85 | Prepared |
| **3** | Administrators provide support | 3.87 | 0.73 | Prepared |
| **4** | Specialised assessments available | 3.83 | 0.70 | Prepared |
| **5** | Classroom arrangements / aids appropriate | 3.80 | 0.89 | Prepared |
| **6** | Teaching materials including ICT provided | 3.63 | 0.93 | Prepared |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **7** | Classroom promotes respect and acceptance | 4.27 | 0.69 | Highly Prepared |
| **8** | School and community work together | 4.23 | 0.68 | Highly Prepared |
| | Aggregate mean | 3.89 | 0.81 | Prepared |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The aggregate mean of 3.89 (Prepared) shows a generally supportive environment. The highest indicators were promotion of respect and acceptance (4.27, Highly Prepared) and school-community collaboration (4.23, Highly Prepared). These social and cultural strengths are valuable: a classroom that promotes respect, and a school that works with the community, creates belonging and participation. The lowest indicators were ICT and teaching materials (3.63) and materials for accommodations (3.70), suggesting that material and technological resources remain the most constrained aspect of the environment. Colleague support (3.80), administrator support (3.87), specialised assessment (3.83), and classroom arrangements (3.80) were all in the prepared range, indicating that human and organisational support is stronger than material support. The implication is that environment interventions should focus on concrete resources: visual aids, adapted materials, assistive devices, ICT access, and organised classroom arrangements, alongside continued strengthening of collaborative culture. Ecological Systems Theory reminds us that environment is not background; it is part of what enables or constrains teacher practice.

***Level of Preparedness: Instructional Strategies***

Instructional strategies refer to methods, approaches, and collaborative practices used to deliver instruction to learners with special needs.

**Table. Level of Preparedness: Instructional Strategies**

| No. | Indicator | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Work collaboratively with colleagues | 4.33 | 0.76 | Highly Prepared |
| **2** | Administrators support when facing behavioural challenges | 4.23 | 0.73 | Highly Prepared |
| **3** | Collaborate with SPED teachers | 4.23 | 0.77 | Highly Prepared |
| **4** | Efforts to teach learners in regular classrooms | 4.23 | 0.77 | Highly Prepared |
| **5** | Collaborative teaching is effective | 4.17 | 0.79 | Prepared |
| **6** | Learners with IEP should be guided by SPED teachers | 4.43 | 0.73 | Highly Prepared |
| **7** | Regular and SPED teachers should work together | 4.30 | 0.70 | Highly Prepared |
| **8** | Administrators support when facing learning challenges | 4.23 | 0.82 | Highly Prepared |
| **9** | Learners with verbal aggression can still be included | 4.03 | 0.96 | Prepared |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **10** | Learners with depression but not disruptive can be included | 4.13 | 0.90 | Prepared |
| | Aggregate mean | 4.23 | 0.79 | Highly Prepared |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The aggregate mean of 4.23 (Highly Prepared) is the highest preparedness component and a notable strength. Teachers reported strong collaboration with colleagues and SPED teachers, strong administrative support for behavioural and learning challenges, and strong endorsement of teaching learners with special needs in regular classrooms. The highest indicator was that learners with IEPs should be guided by SPED teachers (4.43), followed by collaboration with colleagues (4.33) and joint work of regular and SPED teachers (4.30). These results suggest that collaborative practice is already a lived reality, not only an ideal. The lowest indicators, inclusion of learners with verbal aggression (4.03) and learners with depression who are not disruptive (4.13), remain prepared but indicate that behaviour and mental-health-related inclusion is more challenging than general collaboration. This aligns with the pedagogical knowledge finding that behaviour support is only moderately developed. The implication is that instructional-strategy strengths should be leveraged: collaborative structures can be used as the delivery mechanism for pedagogical-knowledge training. Peer mentoring, co-planning, demonstration teaching, and case conferences can turn collaboration into a learning system, where SPED teachers model differentiated and behaviour-support strategies for receiving teachers in real classrooms.

***Summary of Preparedness***

Table 21 summarises the four preparedness components.

**Table. Summary of Preparedness**

| Component | WM | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pedagogical knowledge** | 3.20 | 0.91 | Moderately Prepared |
| **Professional development** | 3.55 | 1.10 | Prepared |
| **Classroom environment** | 3.89 | 0.81 | Prepared |
| **Instructional strategies** | 4.23 | 0.79 | Highly Prepared |
| **Aggregate mean** | 3.72 | 0.90 | Prepared |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

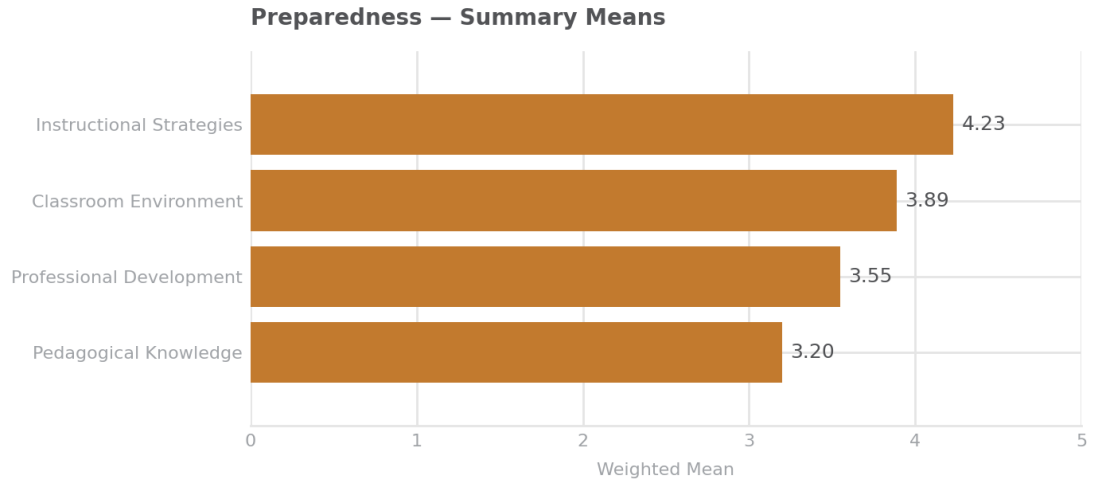



*Figure 8. Summary means for teachers' preparedness.*

The overall preparedness mean of 3.72 (Prepared) masks a wide spread of 1.03 between the highest and lowest components. Teachers are highly prepared in instructional strategies, prepared in environment and professional development, but only moderately prepared in pedagogical knowledge. This uneven profile is the central diagnostic finding of the study. It suggests that teachers can collaborate, maintain a supportive environment, and access some

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training, yet still lack the specific knowledge needed to teach particular learners with particular needs. This unevenness also explains the confidence gap: teachers may feel able to collaborate and manage the classroom, but less able to design and deliver specialised instruction. Interventions should therefore be differentiated: build on instructional-strategy strengths, improve material resources and IEP training, and prioritise pedagogical knowledge as the core learning goal. A generic intervention that treats all preparedness components as equally weak would waste the school's collaborative strengths and miss the specific knowledge gap.

***Test of Relationship: Perspectives and Preparedness***

Pearson's r was used to test the relationship between perspectives and preparedness at the 0.05 level.

**Table. Test of Relationship: Perspectives and Preparedness**

| Variables | r | Strength | p | Decision | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Perspectives and preparedness** | 0.583 | Moderate positive | 0.001 | Reject H0 | Significant |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The computed r of 0.583 indicates a moderate positive correlation, and the p-value of 0.001 is below 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected. The relationship is statistically significant and not due to chance. In practical terms, teachers with more positive and informed perspectives tended to report higher preparedness. This supports the Theory of Planned Behavior and Social Cognitive Theory: beliefs and understanding shape readiness to act. The moderate strength suggests that perspectives matter, but they are not the sole determinant of preparedness. Other factors, including training, resources, environment, and experience, also influence readiness, as Ecological Systems Theory predicts. The finding implies that strengthening perspectives, through orientation, exposure, case discussion, and reflection on learner strengths, can contribute to preparedness, but it should be paired with skill-building and support. Perspectives alone, without pedagogical knowledge, may produce goodwill without competence. The intervention plan therefore pairs belief-strengthening activities with concrete instructional training.

***Test of Relationship: Attitudes and Preparedness***

Pearson's r was used to test the relationship between attitudes and preparedness at the 0.05 level.

**Table. Test of Relationship: Attitudes and Preparedness**

| Variables | r | Strength | p | Decision | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Attitudes and preparedness** | 0.725 | Strong positive | <0.001 | Reject H0 | Significant |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

The computed r of 0.725 indicates a strong positive correlation, and the p-value of less than 0.001 is below 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected. Teachers with more positive attitudes reported substantially higher preparedness. Compared with perspectives (r = 0.583), attitudes show the stronger association, suggesting that attitudes, which include openness, willingness, confidence, and commitment, are closer to readiness than perspectives alone. This is theoretically coherent: attitudes include motivational and efficacy elements that directly influence whether teachers attempt, persist, and adapt inclusive strategies. The strong correlation does not prove causation, and the cross-sectional, single-school design with 30 respondents limits generalisation. It is possible that preparedness also strengthens attitudes, creating a reciprocal relationship: as teachers gain skills and experience success, their attitudes improve, which in turn supports further preparedness. This reciprocal possibility strengthens the case for practice-based interventions that create mastery experiences. It also highlights the importance of fostering positive attitudes through professional development, support systems, and inclusive school culture, as supported by Forlin (2021), Loreman (2021), and Woodcock et al. (2022). The combined correlational evidence leads to a clear conclusion: interventions that strengthen both perspectives and attitudes, especially attitudes and confidence, are likely to support preparedness, provided they also build pedagogical knowledge and provide systemic support.

Overall, the results tell a coherent story. Teachers at Zapatera Elementary School bring strong values, openness, willingness, and commitment to inclusion, solid understanding and appreciation of its benefits, and strong collaborative practice. They also bring honest awareness of challenges, moderate pedagogical knowledge, and tentative confidence in specialised teaching. The significant correlations confirm that mindset and readiness move

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together, with attitudes moving most closely with preparedness. The task for the school is therefore not to convince teachers that inclusion matters; they already believe it. The task is to equip them with the knowledge, strategies, resources, and coaching that allow their commitment to become confident, differentiated, and sustained classroom practice. The intervention plan in the next section is designed for that task.

***Evidence-Based Intervention Plan (Summary)***

**Table 24. Summary of the proposed intervention plan based on study findings.**

| Area | Objective | Key strategies | Indicative budget | Time frame |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pedagogical knowledge** | Strengthen knowledge for specific needs | In-service training on differentiated instruction, behaviour support, IEPs; demonstration teaching | Php 8,000 | First quarter |
| **Teacher confidence** | Improve confidence and competence | Peer mentoring, classroom observation, demonstration teaching, coaching | Php 5,000 | First to second quarter |
| **Professional development** | Enhance continuous learning | Workshops, Learning Action Cell sessions, division training participation | Php 6,000 | First to third quarter |
| **Classroom environment** | Improve supportive conditions | Provide visual aids, adapted materials, ICT support; organise classrooms | Php 7,000 | Second quarter |
| **Collaboration** | Strengthen collaboration | Parent orientation, SPED–receiving teacher coordination, case conferences | Php 4,000 | Second to third quarter |
| **Monitoring** | Assess preparedness and effectiveness | Classroom observation, learner progress monitoring, feedback | Php 3,000 | Third to fourth quarter |

*Note: n = 30. WM = weighted mean; SD = standard deviation.*

**Conclusion:**

This study examined teachers' perspectives, attitudes, and preparedness in managing learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms at Zapatera Elementary School during School Year 2025–2026. It found that teachers held very positive perspectives (aggregate weighted mean = 4.37) and very positive attitudes (4.28), but only prepared preparedness (3.72). The pattern within each construct was diagnostic. Among perspectives, awareness of inclusion challenges was highest (4.72) and learner beliefs were lowest (4.20). Among attitudes, professional commitment (4.49) and inclusive openness (4.48) were highest, while teaching confidence was lowest (3.79). Among preparedness, instructional strategies were highest (4.23, highly prepared) and pedagogical knowledge was lowest (3.20, moderately prepared). Teachers were predominantly female, mostly experienced and pursuing graduate study, yet many had limited specialised training. These findings show that the school's strength is its people's commitment and collaboration, and its most urgent need is specialised pedagogical knowledge and confidence.

Both hypothesised relationships were supported. Perspectives were moderately and significantly related to preparedness ($r = 0.583$, $p = 0.001$), and attitudes were strongly and significantly related to preparedness ($r = 0.725$, p

< 0.001). The null hypotheses were therefore rejected. The stronger attitude–preparedness link underscores that openness, willingness, commitment, and especially confidence are closely tied to readiness. It also suggests a reciprocal process in which positive attitudes support preparedness and successful preparedness experiences strengthen attitudes. The study concludes that favourable mindsets are necessary but not sufficient for inclusive teaching; they must be paired with concrete knowledge, strategies, resources, and coaching.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that the Department of Education and school administrators provide targeted training on pedagogical knowledge, differentiated instruction, behaviour management, and individualised support, with specific attention to IEPs, communication difficulties, hearing impairment, and emotional and behavioural needs. School administrators should implement a school-based professional development plan that protects time for training, mentoring, and collaboration. SPED teachers and receiving teachers should strengthen collaboration through peer mentoring, co-planning, case conferences, and sharing of effective strategies. Teachers should actively participate in seminars, workshops, and Learning Action Cell sessions focused on inclusive practice. Teacher education institutions should strengthen curricula with practical exposure and field-based inclusive experiences. Future researchers should conduct similar studies with more schools, larger samples, and additional variables such as school leadership, parental involvement, support services, and learner outcomes, and should use longitudinal or mixed-methods designs to examine how interventions change preparedness over time. By acting on these recommendations, Zapatera Elementary School can convert its teachers' strong commitment into confident, knowledgeable, and sustained inclusive practice, so that learners with special needs are not only present in regular classrooms but are genuinely taught, supported, and included.

Finally, the study's limitations should be acknowledged. It used a single school, a purposive sample of 30 teachers, a self-report questionnaire, and a cross-sectional design, so causal claims and broad generalisation are not warranted. Even so, the pattern of strong commitment, moderate pedagogical knowledge, tentative confidence, and significant mindset–readiness relationships provides a credible, school-specific basis for action. If the proposed intervention is implemented with monitoring and feedback, the school can learn what works, adjust its strategies, and build a more inclusive culture in which every learner is genuinely supported.

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