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Voices from the Threshold: General Education Teachers' Readiness for Implementing Inclusive Education in Mandaue City

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Abstract:

This study examined the perceived readiness and self-reported classroom practices of general education teachers at Umapad Elementary School, Mandaue City, during the pre-implementation phase of the local Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) initiative, as a basis for an evidence-based capacity-building plan. It described respondents' profile; assessed readiness in inclusive instruction, behavior management, and collaboration; examined reported practices in differentiated instruction, classroom management, assessment adaptations, and learner engagement; tested the relationship between readiness and practices; and identified perceived challenges. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used with 30 general education teachers who answered a structured questionnaire. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations summarized the data, and Pearson's correlation tested the relationship. Overall readiness was high (M = 4.03, SD = 0.62): collaboration was highest (M = 4.07, SD = 0.55), followed by inclusive instruction (M = 4.04, SD = 0.65), while behavior management was lowest but still high (M = 3.97, SD = 0.66). Overall reported practices were always practiced (M = 4.22, SD = 0.70): classroom management was highest (M = 4.37, SD = 0.71) and assessment adaptations lowest (M = 4.13, SD = 0.81). Readiness and practices were moderately and positively correlated (r = .553, p = .002). Teachers agreed that inclusion makes orderly management more challenging and that they may lack sufficient knowledge and skills; 96.67% reported no training related to special education. Findings support Project I-CARE, a phased plan focused on differentiation, behavior support, assessment adaptation, collaboration, coaching, and evaluation. Because data are self-reported and pre-implementation, results describe perceived readiness and reported practices, not observed performance or causal effects.

Keywords: inclusive education; teacher readiness; classroom practices; general education teachers; descriptive-correlational; capacity-building; Mandaue City

Introduction:

Inclusive education has become a defining direction of educational reform worldwide, emphasizing equitable access, participation, and meaningful learning for all learners, including learners with disabilities. The United Nations (2015), through Sustainable Development Goal 4, calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Earlier, the UNESCO (1994) Salamanca Statement affirmed that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are among the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building welcoming communities, and responding to learner diversity. These commitments have shifted the policy conversation from mere placement, putting learners with disabilities in the same classroom as their peers, to the quality of participation, support, and learning that takes place inside that classroom.

That shift places teachers at the center of inclusion. Teachers need knowledge, confidence, instructional repertoires, collaborative relationships, and institutional support to respond to wide differences in readiness, language, behavior, sensory and physical access, and pace of learning. Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy offers a useful lens: teachers' beliefs about their capabilities influence the tasks they undertake, the effort they exert, and their persistence when difficulties arise. A teacher who feels capable of differentiating a lesson, calming a disruptive situation, or working with a parent is more likely to attempt, sustain, and refine those practices. Conversely, low perceived efficacy can lead to avoidance, reliance on whole-class routines, or referral of responsibility to specialists. Research on attitudes toward inclusion similarly points to preparation, professional learning, and support as conditions that shape inclusive

practice (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer et al., 2011; Forlin et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2022). Readiness, therefore, is not a single trait but a configuration of perceived capability, reported practice, and perceived support.
In the Philippines, the legal and policy foundations for inclusion are well established. The 1987 Constitution affirms the State's responsibility to protect and promote every citizen's right to quality education. Batas Pambansa Blg. 232 (Education Act of 1982) and Republic Act (RA) No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities), as amended, provide bases for equal educational opportunity. RA No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001) and RA No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) require a learner-oriented, responsive basic education system. More recently, RA No. 11650 (2022) instituted a policy of inclusion and services for learners with disabilities in support of inclusive education. At the operational level, Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 044, s. 2021 provides policy guidelines for learners with disabilities in the K to 12 program, while DepEd Order No. 045, s. 2021 sets the selection and minimum requirements for converting certain schools with SPED Centers into Prototype Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs). Together, these instruments establish direction, but they do not by themselves guarantee classroom readiness. Implementation depends on what teachers know, believe they can do, actually report doing, and what support they can access (Department of Education, 2021a, 2021b; UNICEF Philippines, 2024).

In Mandaue City, the Mandaue City Central School SPED Center, established in 1986, underwent validation and met the minimum requirements under DepEd Order No. 045, s. 2021 for conversion into a Prototype ILRC. That local development provides the institutional context for this study. Umapad Elementary School in Barangay Umapad, Mandaue City, was the research locale because it offered a defined school-level setting in which to examine readiness and practices before the planned expansion of inclusive services. The pre-implementation period is analytically valuable: it yields baseline evidence about perceptions, reported practices, and anticipated concerns before new arrangements are fully in place, so that capacity-building can be targeted rather than generic. The study does not claim that Umapad represents all schools in Mandaue City, nor that the ILRC arrangements had already been fully implemented there during data collection.

Local studies confirm that inclusion in Cebu and Mandaue is already being examined from several angles. Gonzaga et al. (2024) investigated readiness and challenges of general education teachers in selected SPED centers in Cebu Province. Maglinte (2026) explored elementary teachers' experiences and insights at Umapad Elementary School. Banate (2026) examined challenges and management effectiveness in inclusive classrooms at Mandaue City Central Elementary School. Honteveros et al. (2025) linked training and support to readiness for inclusive education of diverse learners. Building on this work, the present study contributes a focused, quantitative, school-level, descriptive-correlational examination that brings together three readiness domains, four practice domains, a statistical test of their relationship, and teachers' perceived challenges in one pre-implementation sample. This study therefore asked: What is the profile of the respondents? What is their level of perceived readiness? What is the level of their reported classroom practices? Is there a significant relationship between readiness and reported practices? What challenges do they perceive? The findings served as the basis for the proposed Project I-CARE, a capacity-building plan that requires appropriate review, resources, and implementation support before it can be judged effective.

Literature Review:

This review is organized around five strands: (a) inclusive education as policy and practice, (b) teacher readiness and self-efficacy, (c) classroom practices that make inclusion work, (d) challenges and supports in inclusive classrooms, and (e) the Philippine and local evidence base. Together they justify the variables, instruments, and proposed output of this study.

Inclusive education as policy and practice. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and SDG 4 (United Nations, 2015) frame inclusion as a rights-based and quality agenda, not merely an administrative placement decision. In this framing, regular schools are expected to welcome learner diversity, adapt curricula and assessment, and remove barriers to participation. UNESCO (2024) and UNICEF Philippines (2024) continue to emphasize leadership, teacher capacity, and system support as conditions for that vision. In the Philippines, RA No. 11650 (2022) and DepEd Orders No. 044 and No. 045, s. 2021 translate the vision into mandates for programs, services, and ILRCs. Yet policy texts cannot teach a lesson, calm a classroom, or adapt an assessment. Kilag et al. (2024) systematically reviewed special

education in the Philippines and underscored gaps between inclusive ideals and classroom realities, including preparation and resources. The present study therefore treats policy as context and examines the school-level human side of implementation: what general education teachers perceive they can do and report they do.

Teacher readiness and self-efficacy. Readiness is often operationalized as perceived efficacy to implement inclusive practices. Sharma et al. (2012) developed and validated a measure of teacher efficacy to implement inclusive practices, distinguishing efficacy for inclusive instruction, collaboration, and managing behavior. That three-factor structure is used in this study because it maps directly onto the daily work of a general education teacher: designing accessible instruction, working with others, and maintaining a safe, orderly learning environment. Bandura (1977, 1997) argued that efficacy beliefs are built from mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states. Professional learning that provides guided practice, modeling, feedback, and coaching should therefore strengthen efficacy more than lecture alone. Sharma and Sokal (2023) and Sharma et al. (2022) reviewed recent evidence that teacher self-efficacy, attitudes, and concerns are interrelated and responsive to training and collaborative experience. Loreman et al. (2013), in a four-country study, found that pre-service teachers' sense of readiness varied with preparation and practicum experience, reinforcing the idea that readiness is malleable rather than fixed. In the Philippine context, Masongsong et al. (2023) and Minandang (2025) reported that training in inclusive education is associated with teachers' sense of efficacy and preparedness, while Honteveros et al. (2025) linked training and support to readiness. The consistent implication is that high perceived readiness should not be read as a reason to withhold support; it is a starting point that focused professional learning can deepen, especially where formal special education training is scarce.

Collaboration as a readiness domain deserves separate attention. Inclusive education is inherently collaborative: general education teachers work with SPED teachers, school heads, parents, paraprofessionals, and allied professionals. Sharma and Sokal (2023) emphasized that collaboration is not an add-on but a core inclusive competency, because identification of needs, adaptation of materials, behavior planning, and family communication all require shared work. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2022) similarly framed inclusive teacher professional learning as collaborative and school-based. In this study, collaboration obtained the highest readiness mean, suggesting relational strengths that a capacity-building plan can build on, for example through collaborative planning, role clarification, and communication templates, rather than treating teachers as isolated implementers.

Classroom practices that make inclusion work. Four practice domains structure this study. First, differentiated instruction and curricular accommodations involve modifying materials, presenting concepts through multiple modalities, integrating learners' interests and backgrounds, and using assistive or specialized aids (Tomlinson & Moon, 2022). Differentiation is often reported more readily than it is enacted with precision, because it requires planning time, materials, and knowledge of individual needs. Second, classroom management in inclusive settings involves organizing physical space for mobility and sightlines, teaching social skills and routines, fostering a culture that celebrates diversity, using positive behavioral interventions rather than purely punitive discipline, and arranging flexible seating (Council for Exceptional Children, 2022; Garwood et al., 2023). Third, assessment adaptations involve adjusting time, length, and pacing; judging growth against individualized benchmarks alongside grading scales; and giving regular diagnostic feedback (Brookhart, 2022; Tomlinson & Moon, 2022). Assessment is frequently the most technical domain, because it requires balancing fairness, standards, and individual progress. Fourth, learner engagement involves multi-sensory and interactive activities, cooperative learning and peer tutoring, relevance to interests and culture, self-advocacy, and an inclusive classroom culture (Hattie, 2023). Engagement is both an outcome and a strategy: when learners participate actively, teachers gain evidence about understanding and can adjust instruction in real time. The present study measures these practices as self-reported frequency, which captures teachers' accounts of their routines, not direct observation of those routines.

Challenges and supports in inclusive classrooms. The literature consistently identifies a cluster of challenges: diverse learner needs that strain planning and attention, disruptive or challenging behavior, workload and stress, limited knowledge and skills, limited materials and specialist support, and concerns about acceptance and progress (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer et al., 2011; Forlin et al., 2011; Garwood et al., 2023). The Job Demands-Resources perspective (Demerouti et al., 2001) helps interpret these challenges: when job demands such as differentiation, behavior support, and individualized assessment rise without a matching increase in resources such as training,

materials, specialist guidance, and collaborative time, strain and concerns increase. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Hall et al., 1977) adds a developmental reading: when an innovation is introduced, teachers' concerns vary, from self-concerns about adequacy and workload to task concerns about management and, later, impact concerns about learner outcomes. In a pre-implementation phase, self- and task-concerns are expected to be prominent, and they should inform support rather than be dismissed as resistance. DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024 on rationalization of teachers' workload is relevant here, because workload is not only a perception but a structural condition that shapes whether differentiation and collaboration are feasible. Villar and Marcia (2025), Jimenez (2025), and Del Carmen et al. (2026) documented Philippine receiving and junior high school teachers' experiences of navigating implementation and challenges, underscoring that inclusive practice is learned in context, with mentoring and school support, not only in one-off seminars.

Philippine and local evidence. Gonzaga et al. (2024) found readiness and challenges among general education teachers in selected SPED centers in Cebu Province, providing a nearby quantitative reference point. Maglinte (2026) offered qualitative insight from Umapad Elementary School itself, emphasizing teachers' lived experiences and the need for usable resources. Banate (2026) examined management effectiveness in Mandaue City Central Elementary School, highlighting classroom management as a pivotal inclusive competency. Karaan et al. (2025) examined awareness and preparedness for Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), a concrete collaborative and assessment task that general education teachers often find demanding. Ditan and Turiano (2026) examined classroom management practices of receiving teachers handling learners with disabilities, again placing management at the center of inclusive work. Taken together, the local literature suggests that teachers are willing and often report inclusive routines, but they need specific, practice-based support in differentiation, behavior support, assessment adaptation, IEP-related collaboration, and access to specialists and materials. The present study extends this literature by quantifying readiness and practices in one school at one implementation moment, testing their association, and translating the pattern into a phased, verifiable capacity-building plan. Its theoretical anchors are Bandura's self-efficacy (1997), the Job Demands-Resources Model (Demerouti et al., 2001), and the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Hall et al., 1977), used as interpretive frameworks rather than as variables directly measured in full.

A final strand concerns measurement and interpretation. Self-report scales of readiness and practice are useful for baseline planning because they are efficient, school-friendly, and sensitive to teachers' confidence, but they share method variance: teachers who rate themselves highly on one scale may rate themselves highly on another, partly because both use similar formats and partly because both reflect a general sense of professional confidence. That shared variance can inflate correlations, which is another reason the present $r = .553$ should be read as moderate and associational, not causal. Triangulation with lesson-plan artifacts, adapted assessment samples, behavior-support plans, and classroom observation would strengthen future claims about whether reported frequency corresponds to quality. Similarly, the absence of reliability coefficients in the extracted manuscript data means that future replications should report Cronbach's alpha for each subscale and examine whether any item, such as the assessment-variety item that reached Very High Readiness, behaves differently from the rest of its domain. These measurement cautions do not weaken the study's planning value; they clarify what kind of evidence it provides and what kind of evidence a follow-up evaluation of Project I-CARE should collect.

Methodology:

Research design

This study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. The descriptive component summarized the respondents' profile, perceived readiness, reported classroom practices, and perceived challenges. The correlational component tested whether perceived readiness was significantly related to reported classroom practices. The design is appropriate for baseline, school-level evidence before full ILRC implementation, but it cannot establish causality, and it cannot verify whether reported practices were observed in classrooms.

Research environment and respondents

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The study was conducted at Umapad Elementary School, Barangay Umapad, Mandaue City, Cebu, during the pre-implementation phase of the local ILRC initiative for School Year 2026–2027. The respondents were 30 general education teachers. Distribution by grade level was: Grade 1, 6 (20.00%); Grade 2, 6 (20.00%); Grade 3, 6 (20.00%); Grade 4, 4 (13.33%); Grade 5, 4 (13.33%); and Grade 6, 4 (13.33%). No sampling formula was applied because the study covered the available general education teachers in the school who met the inclusion criterion and consented to participate. Findings are therefore school-specific and should not be generalized to all schools in Mandaue City or Cebu Province.

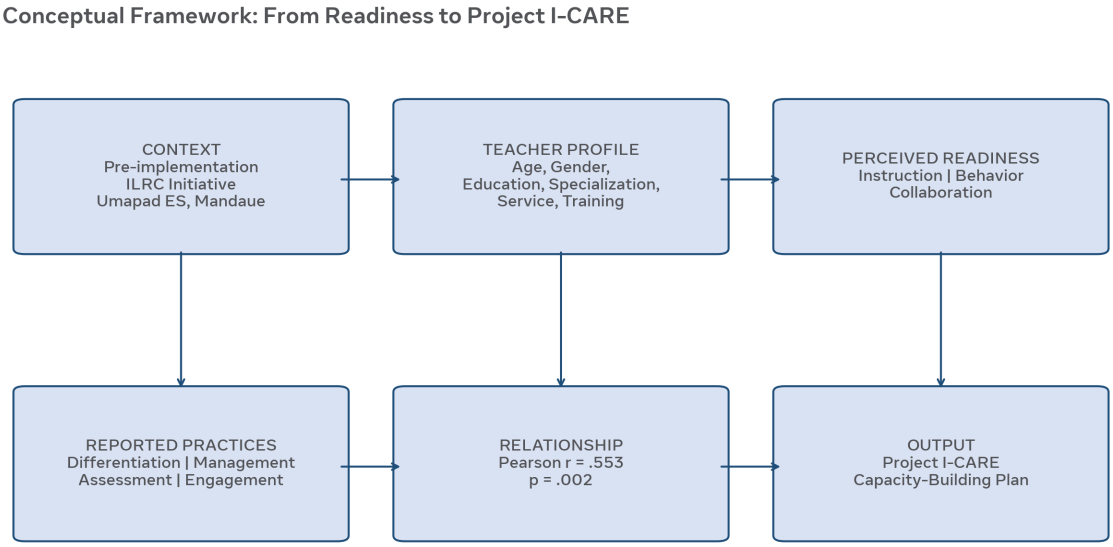

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study: context, profile, readiness, practices, relationship, and proposed output (Project I-CARE).

Research instrument

Data were gathered with a structured questionnaire in four parts. Part I gathered profile data: age, gender, highest educational attainment, field of specialization, length of service, and training or seminars related to special education. Part II measured perceived readiness, adapted from the efficacy-to-implement-inclusive-practices tradition (Sharma et al., 2012), with 18 items across three domains: efficacy to use inclusive instructional strategies (6 items), efficacy in managing behavior (6 items), and efficacy in collaboration (6 items). Part III measured reported classroom practices with 17 items across four domains: differentiated instruction and curricular accommodations (4 items), classroom management (5 items), assessment adaptations (3 items), and learner engagement (5 items). Part IV measured perceived challenges and concerns with 7 items. Readiness and challenge items used a 5-point agreement scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Practice items used a 5-point frequency scale (1 = Never to 5 = Always). The instrument was reviewed for content relevance and face validity by the thesis advisory committee and was pilot-tested and refined before full administration, consistent with the procedures reported in the thesis manuscript. Reliability evidence from the original efficacy scale and the pilot administration should be reported in future replications with Cronbach's alpha per subscale.

Scoring and interpretation

Readiness means were interpreted as: 4.21–5.00 Very High Readiness (Strongly Agree); 3.41–4.20 High Readiness (Agree); 2.61–3.40 Moderate Readiness (Undecided); 1.81–2.60 Low Readiness (Disagree); and 1.00–1.80 Very Low Readiness (Strongly Disagree). Practice means were interpreted as: 4.21–5.00 Always Practiced; 3.41–4.20 Frequently Practiced; 2.61–3.40 Sometimes Practiced; 1.81–2.60 Rarely Practiced; and 1.00–1.80 Never Practiced. Challenge

means used the same agreement bands as readiness. Domain means are averages of item means; the overall mean is the average of domain means. Standard deviations describe dispersion around each mean.

Data gathering procedure

After approval of the thesis proposal and advisory committee, the researcher secured permission from the Schools Division Office and the school head of Umapad Elementary School through a transmittal letter. Informed consent was obtained from each respondent, explaining the purpose, voluntary nature, confidentiality, and right to withdraw without penalty. Questionnaires were personally administered, with time for clarification, and retrieved after completion. Responses were checked for completeness, coded, and encoded for statistical analysis. No learner data, classroom observation, or learner assessment data were collected.

Statistical treatment

Frequencies and percentages described the profile. Means and standard deviations described readiness, practices, and challenges. Pearson's product-moment correlation (r) tested the relationship between overall readiness and overall reported practices at the .05 level of significance. The strength of correlation was interpreted using conventional bands, with r = .553 described as moderate positive. The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between teachers' readiness and their classroom practices. All analyses were conducted with the data as reported in the thesis manuscript.

Ethical considerations

Participation was voluntary, with informed consent and the right to withdraw at any time. Names were optional, and responses were kept confidential and reported only in aggregate. Data were stored securely and accessible only to the researcher and adviser. No known risks were associated with participation, and no deception was involved. The study followed the ethical procedures approved for the thesis.

Results and Discussion:

This section presents the profile of the respondents, the level of perceived readiness, the level of reported classroom practices, the test of relationship, and the perceived challenges. Each table is followed by interpretation and discussion in light of the literature, the theoretical anchors, and the pre-implementation context. A central caution applies throughout: the data are self-reported. High means indicate that teachers perceive themselves as ready and report frequent inclusive practices; they do not prove that those practices were observed, that they were implemented with fidelity, or that they produced learner gains.

Profile of the respondents

The profile matters because it describes who was standing at the threshold of inclusion at Umapad Elementary School and what preparation they brought to that moment. Age, gender, education, specialization, service, and training do not determine readiness, but they shape the kinds of support that are likely to be useful, credible, and feasible. A faculty that is experienced but untrained in special education, for example, needs different support from a novice faculty that is recently trained but still building classroom routines. The profile below should therefore be read as a planning profile, not as a set of predictors tested in this study.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Grade Level (n = 30)

Grade Level	f	%
Grade 1	6	20.00
Grade 2	6	20.00
Grade 3	6	20.00
Grade 4	4	13.33
Grade 5	4	13.33

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Grade 6	4	13.33
Total	30	100.00

Source: Thesis manuscript, Table 1.

Table 1 shows an even spread across grade levels, with six teachers each in Grades 1 to 3 and four each in Grades 4 to 6. The balance is important because inclusive demands differ by grade: early-grade teachers often manage foundational literacy, routines, and socialization, while upper-grade teachers manage more complex content, longer tasks, and assessment expectations. A capacity-building plan that speaks only to one band would miss the other. The even distribution also means that the overall means are not driven by a single grade level, although the small cell sizes (n = 4 to 6) prevent meaningful grade-level comparisons in this study. Future work with a larger sample could test whether readiness and practices vary by grade assignment, but the present data do not support that inference.

Table 2. Age of the Respondents

Age Bracket (years)	f	%
20–29	5	16.67
30–39	9	30.00
40–49	10	33.33
50–59	6	20.00
Total	30	100.00

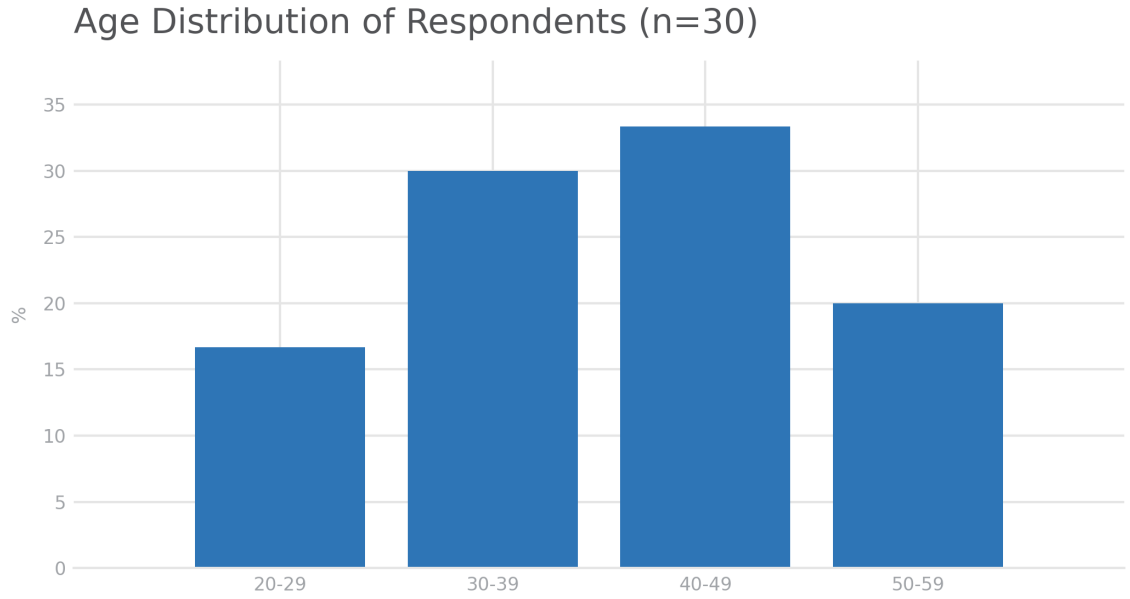

Figure 2. Age distribution of respondents (n = 30). The modal group is 40–49 years.

Table 2 and Figure 2 show that the faculty is predominantly in the middle-career age bands. The largest group is 40–49 years (33.33%), followed by 30–39 years (30.00%), 50–59 years (20.00%), and 20–29 years (16.67%). In other words, more than six in ten respondents were aged 30–49, and more than half were 40 years or older. This pattern aligns with the length-of-service data below and suggests a faculty with substantial life and teaching experience. From a self-efficacy perspective (Bandura, 1997), mastery experiences accumulated over years can strengthen confidence, especially in classroom management and parent communication. At the same time, age and experience do not automatically confer specialized knowledge about disability, differentiation, or behavior support, particularly if formal special education training has been limited. The profile therefore cautions against two opposite errors: assuming that experienced teachers need no support, and assuming that they are resistant to new practices. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Hall et al., 1977) would predict that experienced teachers in a pre-implementation phase may have well-formed routines and legitimate task concerns about how a new initiative will fit workload, materials, and existing responsibilities. Support that respects existing expertise while providing concrete, practice-based tools is more likely to be accepted than support that treats experience as a deficit. The age distribution also has a mentoring implication:

the mix of younger and older teachers creates a natural structure for peer mentoring, demonstration, and collaborative planning, if that structure is intentionally organized rather than left to chance.

Table 3. Gender of the Respondents

Gender	f	%
Female	28	93.33
Male	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00

Table 3 shows a pronounced gender imbalance: 28 females (93.33%) and 2 males (6.67%). This reflects the well-documented feminization of elementary teaching in the Philippines and is not, by itself, an explanatory variable in this study. No gender comparison is made, because the male cell is too small for meaningful statistical comparison and because the study did not hypothesize a gender effect. The imbalance is reported for transparency and for accurate description of the sample. It also reminds readers that any future replication that wishes to test gender differences would need a much larger, more balanced sample and a clear theoretical rationale. In practical terms, the gender composition does not change the capacity-building priorities, but it does reinforce that the plan should be designed for the actual faculty, not for a hypothetical balanced group.

Table 4. Highest Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	f	%
With Master's Degree (units)	15	50.00
Bachelor's Degree	12	40.00
Master's Graduate	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 4 shows a faculty that is educationally advancing: half of the respondents (50.00%) had master's degree units, 40.00% held a bachelor's degree, and 10.00% were master's graduates. The high proportion with graduate units suggests exposure to advanced coursework, research, and reflective practice, which may support openness to inclusive ideas and to evidence-based planning. However, graduate units in general education or administration do not necessarily include special education content. A master's degree, in other words, is not a proxy for inclusive preparation. The finding is therefore best read as an asset and a caution: the faculty has academic momentum that a capacity-building plan can build on, but the plan must still supply the specific content that general graduate study may not have covered, namely differentiated instruction for learners with disabilities, positive behavior support, assessment adaptation, and IEP-related collaboration. The presence of three master's graduates also identifies potential in-school resource persons or peer mentors, if they are willing and if their expertise aligns with inclusive practice.

Table 5. Field of Specialization

Field of Specialization	f	%
General Education	12	40.00
English	5	16.67
Early Childhood Education	5	16.67
Home Economics	2	6.67
Administration and Supervision	1	3.33
Mathematics	1	3.33
Others / Not specified*	4	13.33
Total	30	100.00

*Note: *Residual category computed to complete n = 30 from the thesis manuscript's reported frequencies; the manuscript's specialization table is incomplete in the extracted copy.*

Table 5 shows that the largest specialization group was General Education (40.00%), followed by English and Early Childhood Education (16.67% each). This pattern is consistent with elementary staffing, where generalist preparation is the norm. Generalist preparation is a strength for inclusion because it emphasizes whole-child development, classroom organization, and literacy and numeracy foundations, but it may leave gaps in specialized assessment, behavior analysis, and assistive approaches. The English and Early Childhood Education groups bring complementary strengths: language and literacy expertise and knowledge of early development and play-based learning, both of which

are valuable for differentiation. The small numbers in Mathematics and Administration and Supervision prevent any specialization comparison, and the study does not claim that specialization determines readiness. The practical implication is that capacity-building should not assume a common specialist vocabulary. It should define terms, model adaptations with concrete examples from Grades 1 to 6, and provide templates that generalist teachers can use without first becoming specialists.

Table 6. Length of Service

Length of Teaching Experience	f	%
Less than 1 year	3	10.00
1–5 years	8	26.67
6–10 years	3	10.00
11–15 years	6	20.00
16 years and above	10	33.33
Total	30	100.00

Table 6 shows a bimodal pattern: one third of respondents (33.33%) had 16 years or more of service, while more than a third (36.67%) had five years or fewer. The middle bands were smaller: 11–15 years (20.00%), less than one year and 6–10 years (10.00% each). This distribution creates both an opportunity and a design challenge. The highly experienced third brings deep classroom routines, parent relationships, and school knowledge that can stabilize an inclusive initiative. The newer third brings recent pre-service exposure, flexibility, and possibly recent coursework on inclusion, but less accumulated mastery. A single, one-size-fits-all seminar would likely bore the first group and overwhelm the second. The phased Project I-CARE design responds to this by combining whole-group workshops with coaching, demonstration, peer feedback, and guided application, so that experienced teachers can contribute artifacts and mentor, while newer teachers can observe, practice, and receive feedback. The data do not test whether length of service predicts readiness, and no such claim is made here; the profile is used to justify differentiated professional learning, not to rank teachers by experience.

Table 7. Training and Seminars Related to Special Education

Training	f	%
With Training	1	3.33
Without Training	29	96.67
Total	30	100.00

Table 7 is the most striking profile finding and the most important for interpretation of all that follows. Only one respondent (3.33%) reported training or seminars related to special education, while 29 (96.67%) reported none. This single statistic reframes the high readiness and practice means: teachers perceive themselves as ready and report frequent inclusive practices despite, not because of, formal special education training. Several explanations are possible and should be held together rather than reduced to one. First, teachers may be drawing on general teaching experience, graduate coursework, informal learning, and school-based collaboration to manage diverse classrooms, and they may indeed be doing many inclusive things well. Second, self-report measures can be inflated by social desirability, by a broad understanding of inclusion as good general teaching, or by limited exposure to the specific demands of supporting learners with disabilities, which can lead to overestimation of readiness before those demands are fully encountered. Third, the pre-implementation context matters: teachers were rating readiness for an initiative that had not yet fully reshaped their daily work, so their ratings may reflect anticipated rather than tested capability. The literature supports all three readings. Training is consistently associated with efficacy and preparedness (Masongsong et al., 2023; Minandang, 2025; Honteveros et al., 2025), and the absence of training is a recognized barrier (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer et al., 2011). The implication is not to dismiss teachers' self-perceptions, but to treat them as a baseline that targeted, practice-based training can refine and verify through coaching and observation. The 96.67% figure is, in effect, the strongest justification for Project I-CARE: the faculty's willingness is high, but its specialized preparation is thin, and that gap is addressable.

Taken together, the profile describes a predominantly female, mid-career, educationally advancing, generalist faculty with substantial teaching experience but almost no formal special education training. That combination helps explain the pattern that follows: high perceived readiness and frequent reported practices, alongside real concerns about

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knowledge, behavior, workload, and attention. It also clarifies why the capacity-building plan must be concrete, classroom-embedded, and collaborative, rather than purely theoretical.

Level of perceived readiness. Readiness was measured as perceived efficacy to use inclusive instructional strategies, manage behavior, and collaborate. The overall mean was 4.03 (SD = 0.62), interpreted as High Readiness. That overall figure is not a claim that teachers are fully ready for every inclusive demand; it is a summary of how they rated their own capability on the 18 items. The domain pattern, item pattern, and dispersion all matter for planning, and they are examined below.

Table 8. Efficacy to Use Inclusive Instructional Strategies (EII)

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Use a variety of assessment strategies (portfolio, modified tests, performance-based)	4.27	0.52	Very High
Craft good questions, including for learners with difficulties	4.10	0.61	High
Provide alternate explanation or example when students are confused	4.03	0.72	High
Accurately gauge every student's comprehension	4.03	0.49	High
Design learning tasks so individual needs of learners with disabilities are accommodated	3.90	0.66	High
Provide appropriate challenges for every learner	3.90	0.92	High
Overall EII	4.04	0.65	High Readiness

Table 8 shows that efficacy for inclusive instruction was high overall (M = 4.04, SD = 0.65). The highest item was using a variety of assessment strategies (M = 4.27, SD = 0.52), the only item in this domain to reach Very High Readiness, and its relatively low standard deviation suggests comparatively consistent confidence. Teachers also felt capable of crafting good questions (M = 4.10) and of providing alternate explanations (M = 4.03) and gauging comprehension (M = 4.03). The lowest items, both at 3.90, were designing learning tasks so that individual needs of learners with disabilities are accommodated and providing appropriate challenges for every learner. The latter had the largest standard deviation in the domain (SD = 0.92), indicating the widest disagreement among teachers. That dispersion is instructionally meaningful: some teachers feel confident about challenge and differentiation, while others are much less sure. In discussion terms, the pattern suggests that teachers are most confident in general pedagogical moves, assessment variety, questioning, and re-explaining, and least confident in the more specialized, individualized work of designing tasks for learners with disabilities and calibrating challenge for every learner. That is precisely where differentiation training, worked examples, and lesson-plan coaching should focus. The finding aligns with Tomlinson and Moon (2022), who emphasize that differentiation is not a single technique but a planning discipline that requires knowledge of learner needs, curricular goals, and flexible grouping. It also aligns with the profile finding that 96.67% lacked special education training: general instructional confidence is high, but individualized design confidence is the relative weak point within an otherwise high domain.

Table 9. Efficacy in Managing Disruptive Behavior (EMB)

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Get students to follow classroom rules	4.10	0.66	High

Clearly communicate expectations for behavior	4.07	0.52	High
Prevent disruptive behavior before it occurs	4.03	0.72	High
Calm a disruptive or noisy student	3.93	0.64	High
Deal with physically aggressive students	3.87	0.68	High
Direct classroom activities seamlessly when dealing with difficult behaviors	3.83	0.75	High
Overall EMB	3.97	0.66	High Readiness

Table 9 shows that efficacy in managing behavior was the lowest readiness domain (M = 3.97, SD = 0.66), though still within High Readiness. The highest items were getting students to follow classroom rules (M = 4.10) and clearly communicating expectations (M = 4.07), both of which reflect preventive, routine-based management that experienced teachers often master. Preventing disruptive behavior before it occurs was also high (M = 4.03). The lowest items were dealing with physically aggressive students (M = 3.87) and directing classroom activities seamlessly when dealing with difficult behaviors (M = 3.83), with calming a disruptive student in between (M = 3.93). This gradient, from communicating expectations to managing aggression and maintaining instructional flow under pressure, is theoretically coherent. Communicating rules is a low-intensity, high-control task; managing aggression and sustaining instruction during a behavioral incident are high-intensity, low-control tasks that require de-escalation, safety planning, and collaborative support. Garwood et al. (2023) and the Council for Exceptional Children (2022) emphasize that behavior support is not only about teacher skill but about systems: clear routines, positive behavioral interventions, functional understanding of behavior, and access to specialist consultation. The finding that behavior management is the lowest readiness domain, combined with the challenge data below, where orderly classroom management and disruptive behavior rank high, makes behavior support the clearest priority for Project I-CARE. Training should move beyond general classroom management to case-based practice in de-escalation, preventive design, and behavior-support planning, with coaching and specialist consultation rather than a single lecture.

Table 10. Efficacy in Collaboration (EC)

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Make parents feel comfortable coming to school	4.23	0.43	Very High
Assist families in helping children do well in school	4.17	0.46	High
Accurately identify when a student needs specialist intervention	4.07	0.58	High
Clearly articulate expectations from paraprofessionals / teaching assistants	4.00	0.59	High
Work jointly with professionals and support staff	4.00	0.64	High
Collaborate with other professionals (SPED teachers, speech pathologists, etc.)	3.97	0.56	High
Overall EC	4.07	0.55	High Readiness

Table 10 shows that collaboration was the highest readiness domain (M = 4.07, SD = 0.55) and the most consistent, with the smallest domain standard deviation. The standout item was making parents feel comfortable coming to school

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(M = 4.23, SD = 0.43), the only Very High item in this domain and the most consistently rated item in the entire readiness scale, suggesting a shared relational strength across the faculty. Assisting families was also high (M = 4.17, SD = 0.46). Identifying when a student needs specialist intervention was high (M = 4.07). The lowest items, both at 4.00 or 3.97, were articulating expectations for paraprofessionals, working jointly with professionals and support staff, and collaborating with other professionals such as SPED teachers and speech pathologists. The pattern is instructive: teachers feel most confident in family-facing collaboration, which they practice daily, and somewhat less confident in interprofessional collaboration, which depends on access to specialists, role clarity, and scheduled collaborative time. That distinction aligns with Sharma and Sokal (2023) and the European Agency (2022), who treat collaboration as a system competency, not only an individual disposition. A teacher can be willing to collaborate, but without a consultation process, shared planning time, and available specialists, collaboration remains aspirational. Project I-CARE therefore includes collaborative planning, role clarification, communication templates, and documented consultation processes, so that the faculty's relational strength with families can be extended into structured interprofessional work. The low dispersion in collaboration also suggests that this domain can serve as an entry point: early capacity-building activities that build on parent communication and family partnership are likely to be well received and can model the collaborative routines needed for specialist work.

Table 11. Summary of Level of Readiness

Domain	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Inclusive Instruction (EII)	4.04	0.65	High
Behavior Management (EMB)	3.97	0.66	High
Collaboration (EC)	4.07	0.55	High
Overall Readiness	4.03	0.62	High Readiness

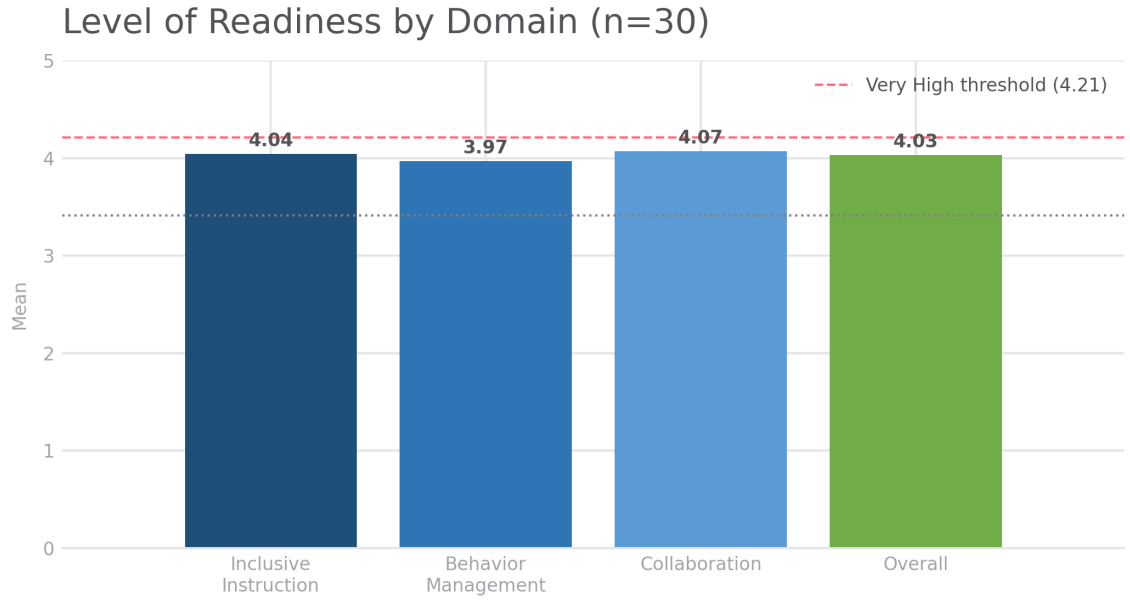

Figure 3. Level of perceived readiness by domain (n = 30). All domains fall in the High Readiness band (3.41–4.20); collaboration is highest, behavior management lowest.

Table 11 and Figure 3 summarize the readiness pattern: collaboration (4.07), inclusive instruction (4.04), behavior management (3.97), and overall (4.03). The range across domains is only 0.10, which means the domains are not dramatically different. The practical significance lies not in ranking but in the shared message: teachers perceive themselves as ready, but no domain reaches Very High Readiness, and behavior management is the relative priority. The standard deviations (0.55 to 0.66) indicate moderate dispersion; teachers are not unanimous, and the plan should accommodate variation through differentiated coaching. Compared with Gonzaga et al. (2024) and Honteveros et al. (2025), who also found readiness alongside training and support needs, the present pattern is consistent: willingness and general confidence are present, but specialized preparation is thin. The high readiness finding should therefore be

reported with the training finding held alongside it, otherwise readers may conclude that no support is needed. The correct inference is the opposite: high perceived readiness plus low formal training is a favorable moment for targeted professional learning, because teachers are willing, experienced, and relationally strong, and they have identified where they feel least sure.

Level of reported classroom practices. Practices were measured as self-reported frequency across four domains. The overall mean was 4.22 (SD = 0.70), interpreted as Always Practiced. That overall figure sits just above the 4.21 threshold for Always Practiced, so it should be read as borderline rather than comfortably high. Two domains reach Always Practiced, and two fall in Frequently Practiced, a pattern that mirrors the readiness pattern but with a clearer priority: assessment adaptations.

Table 12. Differentiated Instruction and Curricular Accommodations

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Present core concepts using multiple modalities	4.20	0.66	Frequently
Modify lesson materials (simplified text, larger fonts, audio)	4.17	0.75	Frequently
Integrate student interests, backgrounds, strengths	4.13	0.63	Frequently
Leverage assistive technologies / specialized aids	4.10	0.55	Frequently
Overall	4.15	0.64	Frequently Practiced

Table 12 shows differentiated instruction at 4.15 (SD = 0.64), Frequently Practiced. Presenting concepts through multiple modalities was highest (M = 4.20), just below Always Practiced, suggesting that multi-modal presentation is a familiar routine. Modifying materials was next (M = 4.17), followed by integrating interests and backgrounds (M = 4.13) and leveraging assistive technologies or specialized aids (M = 4.10). The gradient is again from general to specialized: multi-modal teaching and material modification are general differentiation moves that many teachers use, while assistive technology is more specialized and depends on availability, knowledge, and technical support. The finding aligns with Tomlinson and Moon (2022) and with the readiness finding that designing tasks for individual needs was relatively low. The implication is that differentiation training should be concrete and artifact-based: teachers should leave with adapted lesson plans, modified materials, and examples of assistive or low-cost aids that fit their grade level, rather than with a general exhortation to differentiate. The standard deviation of 0.64 indicates moderate variation, so peer sharing of adapted materials can be a useful mechanism, allowing teachers who have developed effective modifications to model them for colleagues.

Table 13. Classroom Management

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Organize furniture for safe mobility and clear sightlines	4.47	0.57	Always
Explicitly teach social skills, routines to prevent bullying/isolation	4.43	0.68	Always
Employ positive behavioral interventions rather than punitive discipline	4.40	0.67	Always
Arrange flexible seating for whole-class / small-group / independent work	4.30	0.65	Always
Foster culture where diversity is celebrated, every student valued	4.27	0.94	Always

Overall	4.37	0.71	Always Practiced

Table 13 shows classroom management as the highest practice domain (M = 4.37, SD = 0.71), Always Practiced, with all five items in the Always band. Organizing furniture for mobility and sightlines was highest (M = 4.47, SD = 0.57), followed by teaching social skills and routines to prevent bullying and isolation (M = 4.43), using positive behavioral interventions (M = 4.40), flexible seating (M = 4.30), and fostering a culture where diversity is celebrated (M = 4.27). The last item had the largest standard deviation in the domain (SD = 0.94), indicating the widest disagreement about how consistently a celebratory, inclusive culture is enacted, even though the mean remains high. The high management mean is consistent with the faculty's experience profile: organizing space, establishing routines, and using positive strategies are core elementary competencies that experienced teachers practice daily. It also creates an apparent tension with the readiness finding that behavior management was the lowest readiness domain and with the challenge finding that orderly management becomes more challenging with inclusion. That tension is not a contradiction; it is a distinction between general management routines, which teachers report doing consistently, and specialized behavior support for learners with disabilities, which they feel less ready to provide. A teacher can be excellent at organizing furniture and routines and still feel unsure about de-escalating aggression, planning a behavior-support plan, or sustaining instruction during a behavioral incident. The discussion should therefore avoid the inference that high management practice means behavior support is solved. Instead, the plan should build on the strong general management base and add the specialized layer: preventive design, functional understanding, de-escalation, and collaborative behavior planning. Ditan and Turiano (2026) and Garwood et al. (2023) support this layered reading, emphasizing that receiving teachers' management practices are a foundation, not a substitute, for individualized behavior support.

Table 14. Assessment Adaptations

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Provide regular, diagnostic feedback step-by-step	4.23	0.77	Always
Evaluate growth using individualized benchmarks alongside grading scales	4.10	0.84	Frequently
Adjust time limits, assignment lengths, pacing	4.07	0.83	Frequently
Overall	4.13	0.81	Frequently Practiced

Table 14 shows assessment adaptations as the lowest practice domain (M = 4.13, SD = 0.81), Frequently Practiced, with the largest domain standard deviation among the four practice domains. Providing regular diagnostic feedback was highest (M = 4.23), reaching Always Practiced, suggesting that feedback is a familiar, valued routine. Evaluating growth against individualized benchmarks alongside grading scales was lower (M = 4.10), and adjusting time, length, and pacing was lowest (M = 4.07). The two lowest items share a common demand: they require teachers to make formal, documented adjustments to assessment conditions and criteria, not only to give feedback. That work raises questions about fairness, standards, documentation, and consistency across teachers, which is why it is often the most sensitive domain for general education teachers. Brookhart (2022) and Tomlinson and Moon (2022) emphasize that assessment adaptation is not about lowering expectations but about providing valid evidence of learning, which requires clear criteria, varied evidence, and professional judgment. The large standard deviations (0.77 to 0.84) indicate that teachers vary considerably in how often they make these adaptations, which may reflect differences in knowledge, in access to specialist guidance, or in confidence about what is permitted and appropriate. The implication for Project I-CARE is that assessment needs its own workshop, with sample adapted tasks, scoring guides, and IEP-related examples, plus coaching on documentation and on communicating adaptations to families and colleagues. Assessment is the priority practice domain, just as behavior management is the priority readiness domain, and the plan should treat them as linked: behavior support and assessment adaptation both require individualized planning, specialist consultation, and documentation.

Table 15. Learner Engagement

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation

Incorporate cooperative learning and peer tutoring	4.33	0.55	Always
Maintain inclusive culture where efforts and abilities are celebrated	4.23	0.68	Always
Tap interests, backgrounds, strengths to make topics relevant	4.20	0.61	Frequently
Foster self-advocacy: monitor goals, ask for assistance	4.20	0.61	Frequently
Integrate multi-sensory, interactive activities	4.13	0.68	Frequently
Overall	4.22	0.62	Always Practiced

Table 15 shows learner engagement at 4.22 (SD = 0.62), Always Practiced, but again borderline, just above the 4.21 threshold. Cooperative learning and peer tutoring was highest (M = 4.33, SD = 0.55), the most consistent item in the domain, suggesting that peer-mediated structures are a familiar routine. Maintaining an inclusive culture where efforts are celebrated was next (M = 4.23), followed by tapping interests and fostering self-advocacy (both M = 4.20), and integrating multi-sensory and interactive activities (M = 4.13). The pattern suggests that teachers are most confident in social, peer-based engagement and somewhat less consistent in multi-sensory design, which may require materials and technology. Hattie (2023) emphasizes that engagement must be coupled with feedback and visible learning, otherwise activity can be busy but not instructive. The self-advocacy item (M = 4.20) is particularly important for inclusion, because teaching learners to monitor goals and ask for assistance is a transferable skill that supports participation beyond a single lesson. The plan should therefore strengthen engagement not by adding more activities, but by linking activities to learning goals, feedback, and self-advocacy routines, and by providing multi-sensory examples that are feasible with available materials.

Table 16. Summary of Reported Classroom Practices

Domain	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Differentiated Instruction	4.15	0.64	Frequently
Classroom Management	4.37	0.71	Always
Assessment Adaptations	4.13	0.81	Frequently
Learner Engagement	4.22	0.62	Always
Overall Practices	4.22	0.70	Always Practiced

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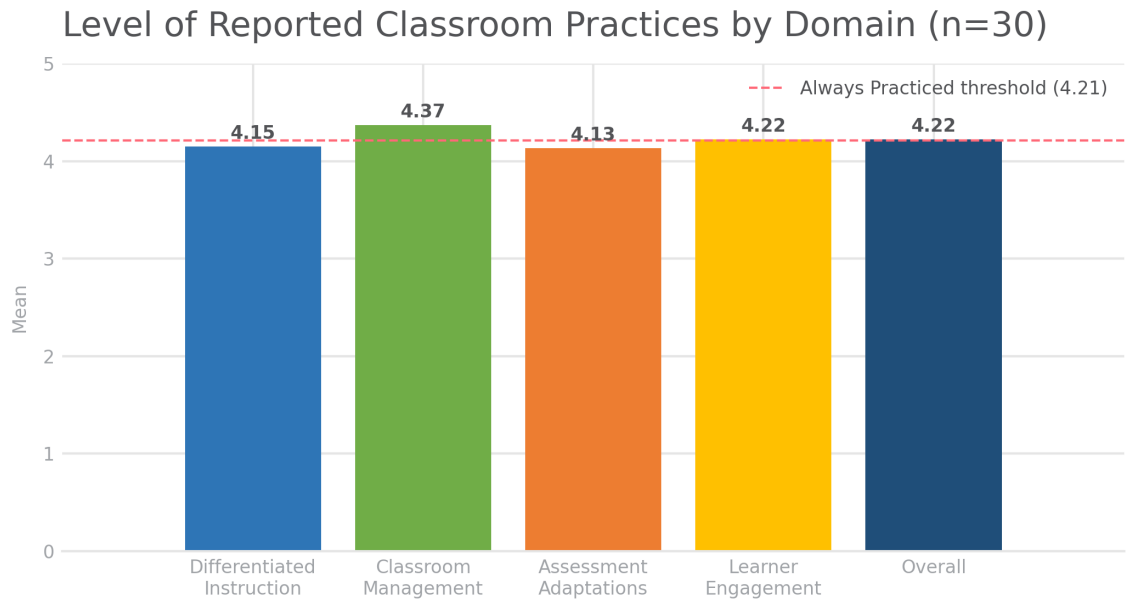

Figure 4. Level of reported classroom practices by domain (n = 30). Classroom management is highest; assessment adaptations is lowest and most variable.

Table 16 and Figure 4 summarize the practice pattern. The overall mean of 4.22 is Always Practiced, but the domain range (4.13 to 4.37) and the dispersion (SD = 0.62 to 0.81) caution against a celebratory reading. The faculty reports strong general management and engagement, frequent differentiation, and the least frequent and most variable assessment adaptation. That pattern is coherent with the readiness pattern: teachers feel ready and report frequent practices in general pedagogical areas, and they are least sure and least consistent in the specialized, individualized areas of behavior support and assessment adaptation. The convergence of readiness and practice patterns strengthens the case for a focused plan, rather than a generic inclusion seminar. A plan that treats all domains equally would waste the faculty's strengths and miss the two priority domains. A plan that starts from strengths, classroom management and collaboration, and then moves to the priority domains, behavior support and assessment adaptation, with coaching and artifacts, is more likely to be credible and useful. The self-report limitation remains: future work should triangulate self-report with classroom observation, artifact review (lesson plans, adapted assessments, behavior plans), and, where appropriate and consented, learner outcome data, to verify whether reported frequency corresponds to observed quality.

Test of relationship between readiness and reported practices. The correlational analysis is the inferential core of the study. It asks whether teachers who perceive themselves as more ready also report more frequent inclusive practices, or whether the two are unrelated. The answer matters for planning: if readiness and practices move together, then strengthening readiness through professional learning may be associated with more frequent practices, and the plan should target both together rather than treating them as separate.

Table 17. Relationship Between Teachers' Readiness and Classroom Practices

Variables	Pearson r	Strength	p-value	Decision
Readiness and Classroom Practices	0.553	Moderate Positive	0.002	Reject H0; Significant

Table 17 shows a moderate positive correlation (r = .553, p = .002), significant at the .05 level, so the null hypothesis of no relationship is rejected. In practical terms, teachers with higher readiness scores tended to report higher practice scores, and vice versa. The coefficient of determination (r-squared = .306) indicates that about 30.6% of the variance in reported practices is shared with readiness, leaving about 69.4% associated with other factors, such as training, materials, specialist access, workload, class size, learner needs, school support, and measurement error. That is a moderate, meaningful association, not a deterministic one. It does not prove that readiness causes practices, nor that

practices cause readiness. The relationship could be bidirectional: feeling capable may encourage a teacher to try inclusive practices, and successful practice may strengthen perceived capability. It could also reflect a third factor, such as experience, training, or a supportive school climate, that influences both. The study's design cannot disentangle those possibilities, and no causal claim is made. The finding is consistent with Bandura (1997) and with Sharma et al. (2022), who argue that efficacy and practice are linked, and with the broader literature that training and support are associated with both. For planning, the correlation supports an integrated approach: professional learning that builds readiness (knowledge, confidence, and skills) and guided application that builds practices (lesson plans, adapted assessments, behavior plans, collaborative routines) should be delivered together, with coaching that links the two. It also supports evaluation that measures both readiness and practices, rather than only satisfaction or attendance, so that the plan can be judged by whether both move together over time.

Perceived challenges and concerns

Challenges were measured with seven agreement items. All seven fell in the Agree band (3.41–4.20), meaning teachers, on average, agreed that each concern is present. The pattern, not just the level, matters: the highest concerns are about order, progress, and behavior, while the lowest, though still Agree, is about attention. The challenges should be read alongside the readiness and practice data, not in isolation, because they reveal the tensions that teachers experience even when they report high readiness and frequent practices.

Table 18. Perceived Challenges and Concerns

Rank	Challenge Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1.5	Maintaining an effective and orderly classroom becomes more challenging when learners with disabilities are included	4.07	Agree
1.5	Learners with disabilities are likely to make better academic progress in special classrooms than in regular classrooms	4.07	Agree
3	Inclusion may negatively affect the emotional development of learners with disabilities	3.83	Agree
4.5	Learners with disabilities are likely to exhibit behaviors that disrupt learning in regular classrooms	3.80	Agree
4.5	I may not have sufficient knowledge and skills to teach learners with disabilities effectively	3.80	Agree
6	Including learners with disabilities may increase workload and stress	3.73	Agree
7	It can be difficult to provide adequate attention to all learners in an inclusive classroom	3.67	Agree

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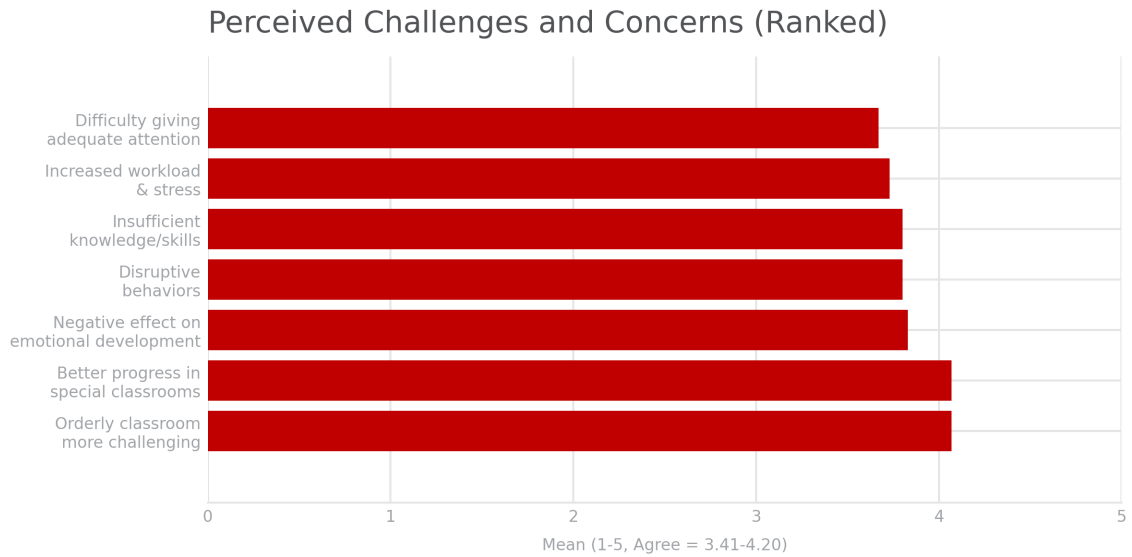

Figure 5. Perceived challenges and concerns, ranked by mean (n = 30). All items fall in the Agree band.

Table 18 and Figure 5 show the two highest challenges tied at 4.07: maintaining an effective and orderly classroom becomes more challenging when learners with disabilities are included, and learners with disabilities are likely to make better academic progress in special classrooms than in regular classrooms. The first item directly connects to the readiness finding that behavior management was lowest and to the practice finding that general management was high but specialized behavior support was the gap. Teachers are, in effect, saying: we manage our classrooms well in general, but inclusion makes order more challenging. That is a task concern in CBAM terms (Hall et al., 1977) and a demands concern in JD-R terms (Demerouti et al., 2001): the demand has increased, and the resource, specialized behavior support, has not yet caught up. The second item, about better progress in special classrooms, is more complex. It may reflect a genuine belief that some learners need more intensive, specialized instruction than a general classroom can provide, or it may reflect limited exposure to well-supported inclusive models where learners with disabilities do make progress in regular classrooms with appropriate adaptations. The item should not be read as opposition to inclusion; it should be read as a signal that teachers need evidence, models, and specialist support that make progress in inclusive settings visible and feasible. The plan should therefore include demonstration, case examples, and collaborative planning that show how progress can be monitored in inclusive settings, rather than dismissing the concern.

The next items, inclusion may negatively affect emotional development (M = 3.83), learners may exhibit disruptive behaviors (M = 3.80), and teachers may lack sufficient knowledge and skills (M = 3.80), form a coherent cluster. The emotional-development concern may reflect worry about peer acceptance, bullying, or isolation, which connects to the classroom management item about teaching social skills and preventing isolation (M = 4.43). Teachers report doing that work, yet they still worry about emotional outcomes, suggesting that they need more specific strategies for peer acceptance, social inclusion, and monitoring of social-emotional well-being. The disruptive-behavior concern reinforces the behavior-support priority. The knowledge-and-skills concern is the most direct validation of the training finding: teachers themselves say they may lack sufficient knowledge and skills, and 96.67% report no special education training. That self-identified gap is the clearest mandate for capacity-building, and it should be quoted in planning discussions, because it comes from teachers, not from an external judgment.

The lowest challenges, increased workload and stress (M = 3.73) and difficulty providing adequate attention to all learners (M = 3.67), are still in the Agree band and should not be minimized. Workload and attention are structural concerns: they depend on class size, planning time, availability of support staff, and access to materials, not only on teacher skill. DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024 on workload rationalization is relevant, because a capacity-building plan that adds tasks without addressing time and support may increase strain even as it builds skill. The plan should therefore be designed to reduce, not add to, planning burden where possible, by providing templates, sample materials, and collaborative planning time, and by scheduling activities within existing professional learning time. The attention

concern also connects to differentiation and assessment: when teachers have practical tools for grouping, peer tutoring, and adapted tasks, they can distribute attention more effectively, but tools alone cannot solve a structural ratio problem. The discussion should therefore distinguish between challenges that training can address (knowledge, behavior strategies, assessment adaptation) and challenges that require system support (specialist access, materials, time, staffing). Both are needed, and the plan should be explicit about which it can deliver and which requires school and division support.

Integration and implications for Project I-CARE

The integrated pattern is: high perceived readiness, frequent reported practices, moderate positive correlation between them, and real, agreed-upon challenges, all in a context of almost no formal special education training. That pattern points to a capacity-building plan that is strengths-based, practice-focused, and verifiable. Project I-CARE, as proposed in the thesis, is phased over six months: Phase 1 needs assessment and baseline; Phase 2 resource preparation; Phase 3 inclusive instruction; Phase 4 behavior and assessment; Phase 5 collaboration; Phase 6 guided application through coaching and demonstration; and Phase 7 evaluation. Each phase has objectives, activities, persons involved, resources, time frame, success indicators, and means of verification, such as lesson-plan outputs, behavior-support plans, adapted assessment tasks, collaborative planning records, coaching logs, and an evaluation report. The plan's strength is its emphasis on artifacts and coaching, not only attendance. Its limitation, which must be stated clearly, is that it was not tested in this study. Its effectiveness, feasibility, and sustainability are proposals to be reviewed, resourced, piloted, and evaluated, not findings. Future evaluation should use pre- and post-measures of readiness and practices, artifact review, and, where appropriate, observation, to determine whether the plan changes both perceived readiness and observed practice, and whether those changes are sustained. The plan should also include a feedback loop: if behavior and assessment remain the lowest domains after Phase 4, additional coaching and specialist consultation should be provided, rather than moving on as if the workshop alone sufficed.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that bound its interpretation. First, the sample is small (n = 30) and school-specific, so findings cannot be generalized to other schools, divisions, or grade levels. Second, all data are self-reported, so social desirability, recall, and differing interpretations of items may have influenced responses. Third, the design is correlational, so no causal inference is warranted. Fourth, the study did not include classroom observation, learner data, or specialist or parent perspectives, so it cannot verify practices or learner outcomes. Fifth, the specialization table and some manuscript tables were incomplete in the extracted copy, and reliability coefficients for the present sample were not reported in the extracted data, so future replications should report Cronbach's alpha per subscale and ensure complete demographic tables. Sixth, the pre-implementation context means that readiness was rated before the full demands of the ILRC initiative were experienced; post-implementation follow-up is needed to see whether readiness and practices change when those demands are fully present. These limitations do not invalidate the findings, but they require that the findings be used as baseline, school-level evidence for planning, not as proof of effectiveness or as a basis for ranking teachers.

Conclusion:

This study examined the perceived readiness and self-reported classroom practices of 30 general education teachers at Umapad Elementary School, Mandaue City, during the pre-implementation phase of the local ILRC initiative. The faculty was predominantly female, mid-career, and educationally advancing, with substantial teaching experience but almost no formal training related to special education, as 96.67% reported no such training. That profile is the essential context for all that follows: teachers brought experience, relational strength, and willingness to the threshold of inclusion, but they had thin specialized preparation for the specific demands of supporting learners with disabilities in general classrooms.

Perceived readiness was high overall (M = 4.03, SD = 0.62). Collaboration was highest (M = 4.07), followed by inclusive instruction (M = 4.04), while behavior management was lowest but still high (M = 3.97). Reported classroom practices were rated as always practiced overall (M = 4.22, SD = 0.70), with classroom management highest (M = 4.37), learner engagement next (M = 4.22), differentiated instruction (M = 4.15), and assessment adaptations lowest

(M = 4.13). Readiness and reported practices were moderately and positively correlated (r = .553, p = .002), so the null hypothesis was rejected. Teachers nevertheless agreed that inclusion makes orderly management more challenging, that learners with disabilities may progress better in special classrooms, and that they may lack sufficient knowledge and skills, alongside concerns about behavior, workload, attention, and emotional development.

The conclusion is therefore nuanced, not celebratory. Teachers perceive themselves as ready and report frequent inclusive practices, but their readiness is strongest in general and relational areas and weakest in the specialized, individualized areas of behavior support and assessment adaptation, where training is most needed. The moderate correlation suggests that strengthening readiness and practices together, through professional learning linked to guided application, is a promising strategy, but it does not prove that one causes the other. The findings support Project I-CARE as a phased, artifact-based, coached capacity-building plan focused on differentiation, positive behavior support, assessment adaptation, collaboration, and evaluation, with clear success indicators and means of verification. The plan should be reviewed, resourced, piloted, and evaluated before it is judged effective. Future research should use larger, multi-school samples, triangulate self-report with observation and artifact review, include specialist and parent perspectives, report reliability per subscale, and follow teachers through implementation to determine whether perceived readiness translates into observed, sustained inclusive practice and learner progress. For Umapad Elementary School, the immediate next step is not to assume readiness, but to build on it, deliberately, in the two priority domains where teachers themselves have said they need support.

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