



Learning Disabilities in an Inclusive Setting: Teachers' Experiences

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11258931>

Maria Estrella B. Entice

University of the Visayas, Cebu City, Philippines

<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3281-854X> | enticeangelheart@gmail.com

Abstract:

The teaching system of today's world is changing, and it must need to meet the 21st century learners. While much research exists on the implementation on inclusivity benefits for teachers, further research is needed to explain the teacher's experiences and their perspective about inclusivity in order also to investigate effective and successful life dealing with learners with disabilities in an inclusive set up. Using a phenomenological methodology, I explored teacher's lived experiences and their perspective on inclusivity. Those six themes were as follows: Theme 1: Diversified Teaching Strategies; Theme 2: Harmonized Environment for Regular and Special Children; and Theme 3: A Touch of Success and Fulfillment. Teachers expressed appreciation for every framework that would give them an encouragement to continue teaching even in an inclusive set up. Further research should look into the implications of differentiated professional development among teachers. Teaching is a job that allows you to move around. This is evidenced by teachers' current median tenure in their current professions, as well as the severe teacher shortages that exist across the country. An inclusive program that was developed more than a century ago to explicitly address the needs of a mobile educational profession should provide insight into what will work now for plan administrators especially for teachers with learners with disabilities in an inclusive set up.

Keywords: Teachers, Preparedness, Inclusivity, Financial, Environment, Diversity, Strategies, Disabilities, Attachment

Introduction:

Education is fundamental to every right of a learner, which is designed to give all students access to the knowledge, skills, and information they need to participate in their communities and industries in the modern period. Inclusive Education (hence referred to as IE) has recently become crucial, necessitating increased preparation from the specific administration. Inclusive education has become one of the most important educational issues in practically every nation. No matter their socioeconomic background, all school-going children will eventually become citizens of the country (UNESCO, 2009a; 2009b; UN, 1993).

Inclusive education in the Philippines aims to address the lack of special education schools. Public schools have integrated the 2013 curriculum, including traditional schools for students with disabilities. However, Order No. 72 of the Department of Education, s. 2009, influences the use of inclusive education. Many schools are underequipped, including City Central Elementary School in Cebu City, which implements programs like "Inclusive Education for All."

Teacher has a main role in an inclusive set up. Teachers should learn about inclusive pedagogy to facilitate the learning of all children. They also require sufficient experience instructing a variety of student groups in general education classes, since this will enhance their effectiveness and improve their attitudes toward inclusivity. Teachers are expected to accommodate a diverse student body, but most teachers frequently feel unprepared, which makes them wary of including kids with special education needs in regular classes.

This study discusses their experiences working with students with disabilities at City Central Elementary School, highlighting the challenges educators face in promoting a productive environment, developing differentiated teaching strategies, and dealing with multiple intelligences. The study provides a fact-based analysis of Cebu City's inclusive education system, highlighting the need for understanding these issues to improve Inclusive Education. This study also examines the current situation of primary school teachers in City Central Elementary School, focusing on students with learning disabilities. Teachers emphasize the importance of treating each student as unique, as minority students are more prevalent in general education classrooms. Inclusive learning environments and developing bonds between students and teachers are crucial for academic success.

I, as a researcher, wish to create an instructional guide/program to support teachers' ability to modify and adapt lessons for kids with learning difficulties. It is anticipated that teachers will be competent to handle students with learning difficulties in line with their circumstances and requirements after completing an in-service training program. Prior information and experience that teachers perceive will impact their conduct when doing their professional obligations, guiding, and providing special needs students with educational opportunities. After some research, I decided on phenomenology as an appropriate exploratory approach that would prevent or limit my personal biases. I hope to learn the lived experiences of teachers dealing with learners with disabilities in an



inclusive set up and their strategies in dealing with those learners. I intend to develop a framework within which I can develop a curriculum for our teachers dealing with learners with disabilities in an inclusive set up.

Literature Review:

One of the most important foundations for ensuring that people with disabilities may fully participate in society is the creation of inclusive education systems. Until far, special education teachers, students with disabilities, and the role of law have received most attention in studies on inclusive education. Teachers on the other hand are another crucial component in the implementation of a fully inclusive education system. Despite efforts spanning a huge body of literature, inclusive education as a scholarly topic does not seem to have a universally accepted definition. Shyman (2015) asserts that it is much more than just intellectually difficult to convey the idea of IE as a practical application and an educational principle. It is one of the most tedious assignments of any academic endeavor in the world of education. In addition to being more accountable for accommodating students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in ordinary classes, teachers are currently expected to teach classes that are becoming more and more diverse in terms of ethnicity and language (OECD, 2012).

Muego stated in 2016 that inclusive education acceptance in the Philippines is still urgently needed. There was not much information available at the time about inclusive education practices in the Philippines. In their analysis, Muego and Echavia (2011) found that some schools lack the necessary number of teachers to provide inclusive education. Inclusionary education, according to Booth and Ainscow (2011), is the process of putting inclusive principles into practice and lowering bias, exclusion, and learning obstacles in ways that treat everyone fairly. Regular teachers are considered essential to the mainstreaming process since they make a substantial contribution to the suitability of inclusive education. The Philippine education department is collaborating with teachers, students, parents, and the community to reach its aim of enrolling more children, irrespective of their requirements. According to Ecoben (2019), the "Magna Carta for Disabled Persons" guarantees that individuals who are less fortunate should have equal access to good education and sufficient chances to help them develop their skills. The implementation of inclusive education is acknowledged to require government-subsidized teachers in the education department.

It is necessary to consider the usual teacher level of readiness for inclusive education. Professional readiness refers to an educator's ability to teach and manage inclusive education, their familiarity with the proper use of technology in the classroom, their grasp of psychological and correctional pedagogy, their awareness of individual differences and the diversity of their students' needs, their ability to create engaging lessons for students with a range of needs, their ability to incorporate diversity into the teaching and learning process, their comprehension of the unique traits or qualities of children with a variety of impairments, and their readiness to participate in professional development activities (Perschina et al., 2018). In line with the research that Ecoben, M. E. According to the Department of Education, regular teachers who have worked for the organization for more than ten (10) years are professionally prepared to teach inclusive education as of 2019. However, the majority of regular teachers in this study were not experienced in including students with special needs in general education. To guarantee the effectiveness of inclusive education, regular teachers and special education teachers must work together to provide a productive learning environment for children with special needs in the inclusion classroom (Hallan, 2012).

Methodology:

Design

The study utilizes descriptive phenomenology. It is widely used in social science research as a method to explore and describe the lived experiences of individuals. It is a philosophy and a scientific method and has taken many variations as it has. The intention of the study is to explore the lived experiences of teachers dealing with learners with disabilities in an inclusive set up. This is to fully understand their lived experiences and what are the different modifications they employ in teaching their learners. It is important to know their point of view as it may be beneficial not only for a teacher but to a learner. The general focus of the present study was on listening to the teachers about their experiences and the strategies they employ in modification to make sure there is adaptation of every learner with disabilities in an inclusion environment.

Descriptive phenomenology was used in this study. It is a popular method for exploring and describing people's lived experiences in social science. It is both a philosophical and a scientific approach that has undergone several transformations. Researchers can collect data from numerous people who have had the same experience and build a common description of the experience from all the participants to describe the genuine substance of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology is built on a set of common underpinnings. They are "the study of individuals' lived experiences, the notion that these experiences are conscious experiences, and the depiction of these experiences at their core, rather than explanations or analyses of the experiences" (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990).

Locale



The study was conducted in the North District I of Cebu City Division specifically in City Central Elementary School. Cebu City Division comprises 16 districts. It has 8 districts from the North and 8 districts from the South. North District I has 8 schools namely, City Central Elementary School, City Central High School, Ermita Elementary School, Lusaran Elementary School and Pit-os National High School. City Central Elementary School is one of the big schools in the North District 1. It consists of 112 teachers including administrators and non-teaching staff. Teachers come from various towns with similar economic factors such as culture diversity. 100% of the schools cater to millennial teachers and retirees at every level, while also adopting a diverse mission and vision for the school and fostering long-term relationships between students and colleagues. The researcher selects and interviews two teachers coming from City Central Elementary School from Grade 1-6. This will make 12 participants for the study. The appropriate sample size for qualitative research studies is dependent on a few variables, including the study objectives, research design, theoretical saturation, and the nature of the phenomenon being studied, even if there is no widely accepted number of participants. While it is difficult to provide a thorough study specifically supporting the use of 8–12 participants in qualitative research, I can offer some insights on sample size considerations in qualitative studies. Creswell (2013): In his book "Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design," Creswell contends that smaller sample sizes are more common for qualitative research than for quantitative ones. The final number depends on the study issue and the level of analysis desired, but he notes that sample sizes of 5–25 individuals are typical in qualitative research. In their work "How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability," Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) make the case that the number of participants in qualitative investigations should be determined by data saturation rather than a predetermined sample size. They claim that theoretical saturation, the point at which fresh data no longer offers meaningful new information, can frequently be reached in just 12 interviews. They also emphasize that the complexity and topic of the research may affect how many interviews are required. Lastly, Morse (2000): In the piece "Determining Sample Size," Morse makes the case that studies including qualitative data often have sample sizes between one and fifty participants. She underlines that rather than depending exclusively on sample size issues, researchers should concentrate on the quality and depth of their data.

Informants

Ten experienced teachers in City Central Elementary School participated in the study. The following standards/criteria were utilized to perform this study: volunteers must have the highest teaching experiences, regardless of gender. Physically, psychologically, and intellectually healthy, as well as willing to engage in the study and have signed the consent form. Those potential informants who do not meet any of the above criteria immediately rejected from the study. The study has twelve participants because the researcher used purposive sampling to identify informants. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling. It is also known as judging, selective, or subjective sampling, and it is a type of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment in selecting people to participate in the study. In this investigation, the saturation principle used. Data saturation occurs when no new information is discovered in data analysis, signaling to researchers that data collecting should be stopped. Saturation occurs when a researcher may be relatively certain that additional data gathering will produce similar results and confirm established themes, and conclusions. When researchers can claim that they have collected enough data to achieve their research purpose, they should report how, when, and to what degree they achieved data saturation.

Instrument

The researcher was the primary instrument of the study. The researcher uses a semi-structured interview guide. The researcher asked informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions. The interview guide was specific, with very carefully worded questions and a list of topics to be covered. In addition, the researcher used an interview guide that included pre-interview, developmental, and wrap-up questions. The interview was face-to-face. The research ethics committee and a team of assessors checked and validated this tool.

Procedures

In this procedure, the researcher followed a step-by-step process in conducting the study and collecting the data. This contained pre-data collection, actual data collection and the post data collection. Each phase is discussed in detail.

Pre- data collection. Pre-data collection is the gathering of raw data obtained at the source. It is the process of gathering original data gathered by a researcher for the aim of a certain study project. In this technique, the researcher looks for solutions that served as the foundation for the study. The first stage was to come up with research titles. Following permission from the authorized body assigned in a design hearing, the researcher continued to enhance the study. Following that, the project was forwarded to the IRB department for further review. Finally, the researcher produced a letter from the Division of Cebu City addressed to the Superintendent of Schools for approval of the interview to be done in respective schools. In accordance with the authorized interview protocol, the researcher contacted the individuals who were the participants of the study.

Actual data collection. Accurate data collection is required to maintain the integrity of research. The use of appropriate data collection instruments (existing, modified, or newly developed) as well as well-defined instructions



for their proper use reduces the likelihood of errors. During this process, the researcher has the list of participants. Each participant was given an Informed Consent Form (Appendix B) outlining the purpose of the study, the criteria for selecting participants, the data collection, and analysis method. IRB contact information and my contact information were also given prior to the completion of the interview and online survey and schedule an interview for at least one hour between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. in the participants' most convenient period or available time. This was face-to-face interview. The interview was recorded, and my data was managed on a computer that is solely accessible to me. My transcriptions, field notes, and survey findings were all stored there. This allowed me to access my data at any time and from any location. Password protection and backup to "cloud services" with password protection were used to keep the data safe. To limit the number of persons who had access to the computer, I kept it at my home and to safeguard their identities, all participants were assigned pseudonyms (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The IRB statement also stated that anyone who was a participant in this study had the ability to withdraw at any moment with no repercussions. When the tenth participant declared his or her desire to withdraw from the study, I deleted her data. Furthermore, the informed consent form mentioned the limited dangers associated as well as the benefits of participating due to the addition to existing educational research surrounding one-to-one study. It was agreed that all information would be kept private. All password-protected data from the laptop computer, as well as all hard copies stored in a locked cabinet, will be destroyed three years after the study is completed. A set of follow-up questions will be offered to ensure that all the information required for the study is collected. All the data will be collected and organized.

Post data collection. This was the stage in the process where all the data was processed and grouped to produce a meaningful theme for the study. This will also serve as the foundation for developing a conceptual framework for the study. Only minor issues in data collection and organization arose during the research. Participants were specific in their responses and opinions to the interview questions. After the data was collected, participants were given a token, which could be money or a load, as a thank you for taking part in the study.

Data Analysis

The Colaizzi method of data analysis was used in this investigation. The researchers employed Colaizzi's (1978) approach of data analysis, which is a rigorous and robust qualitative method, to find, interpret, explain, and illustrate the experiences of teachers as they experience them, as well as uncover emergent themes and their interwoven linkages. The application of Colaizzi's data analysis method revealed fresh information and provided insights into the teachers' lived experiences. The first step a researcher must take in this study is to define the questions, as each participant will be asked a series of questions during the interview. All the data gathered during the interview, as well as the findings of the checklists and questionnaires, were collected and analyzed. This was recorded and transcribed to ensure that the data is thoroughly examined.

Step one. To get a feel of the entire content, each transcript was read numerous times. During this time, any thoughts, feelings, or ideas that came during the study process because of the researcher's previous work with teachers were recorded in the bracketing journal. This allowed researchers to investigate the phenomenon from the perspective of the participants.

Step two. Significant remarks and phrases about body image are examined at this stage. Each transcript was analyzed for alterations and coping methods. The researchers compared their findings and came to an agreement after selecting the relevant statements from transcripts and coding them based on their "transcript, page, and line numbers.

Step three. The significant statements were used to build meanings. Each underlying meaning is different. They were grouped into one category since they provide a comprehensive description. In the same way, both Researchers compared the developed meanings to the original meanings to ensure that descriptions were consistent.

Step four. After all the stated meanings have been agreed upon, the process of categorizing all of them begins. The process of categorizing these created meanings into categories that reflect a distinctive structure of clusters of themes began. Each theme cluster was coded to contain all defined meanings associated with that group. Then, to establish a separate construct of topic, groupings of clusters of themes that express a certain vision issue were combined. Indeed, all these themes are internally convergent and externally divergent, which means that each "formulated meaning" belongs to a single theme cluster that is distinct from other structures in terms of meaning (Mason, 2002).

Step five. All emergent themes were defined into an exhaustive list at this level of the analysis description. Following that, the researcher sought out an expert researcher to review the data. comprehensive description and to provide sufficient findings in terms of depth and completeness confirm that our teachers' lived experience. Finally, the research supervisors certified that this detailed description was accurate.



Step six. This step is a bit like the previous step, but no exhaustive meanings were sought. In this step a reduction of findings was done in which redundant, misused, or overestimated descriptions were eradicated from the overall structure. It seems that such an attempt was made to emphasize the fundamental structure. Some amendments were applied to generate clear relationships between clusters of themes and their extracted themes, which included also eliminating some ambiguous structures that weaken the whole description.

Step seven. Using the "member checking" technique, this phase intended to validate study findings. Returning the research findings to the participants and discussing the findings with them is how this is done. The opinions of participants on the study's findings were acquired immediately through phone calls. The principal researcher took care of this stage because she obtained consent from the participants ahead of time during the first interview. Finally, all the participants expressed satisfaction with the results, which accurately reflected their feelings and experiences.

Rigor of the Study

Essentially, qualitative research must exhibit credibility by offering rigor and strength to study validity and reliability at all stages, including data collection, analysis, and descriptions (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007; Vivar, McQueen, Whyte, & Armayor, 2007). Throughout the research process, trustworthiness approaches such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were used. To add rigor to the study, a few strategies were used, including "a participant examining. This accomplished by obtaining consensus among the participants on the outcomes (Creswell, 2003; Creswell 2009; Marshall & Rossman 2006; Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). In addition, the researcher used bracketing to represent her own preconceptions about altered body image judgments and coping techniques. As previously stated, bracketing eliminates any inherent bias in researcher beliefs and attitudes (Creswell 2009; Marshall & Rossman 2006). The emergent concepts were also subjected to peer evaluation through talks with the study supervisor and an independent researcher. According to Creswell (2009), hiring an external auditor who examined the entire study procedure and performed additional coding checks was beneficial. It was also used in the procedure and analysis. Finally, the research supervisor double-checked the entire analysis procedure.

Credibility. The level of trust that can be placed in the research findings' accuracy. The research findings' credibility is determined by whether they represent believable information derived from the participants' original data and whether they are a correct interpretation of the participants' original opinions.

Prolonged engagement. Several different questions were posted on mastery. The interviewer urged participants to back up their claims with examples, and the interviewer offered follow-up questions. The researchers analyzed the data from their raw interview tapes until they came up with a theory that explained the extent of the phenomenon they were studying.

Triangulation. By combining several methodologies, triangulation tries to improve the qualitative research process. The numerous data sets that formed throughout the analysis process were used to ensure data triangulation: raw material, codes, concepts, and theoretical saturation.

Consistent observation. The development of the codes, concepts, and core category aided in the examination of the data's features. The researchers read and reread the data on a regular basis, examined it, speculated about it, and updated the concepts as needed. Codes, concepts, and the core category were all recoded and relabeled. The researchers looked at the data until they found a theory that gave them the level of understanding they needed.

Dependability. The consistency of results throughout time. Dependability refers to participants' assessments of the study's findings, interpretations, and recommendations, all of which must be backed by the data collected from study participants. Consistency is a feature of dependability. The analytical process must be checked to see if it adheres to the approved criteria for a certain design. Confirmability is concerned with the neutrality aspect. You must ensure that the data is inter-subjective. The interpretation should not be based on your personal likes or perspectives, but rather on the evidence itself. The emphasis here is on the interpretation process, which is a part of the analysis process. An audit trail is a mechanism used to ensure reliability and confirmability. Researchers are responsible for keeping detailed records of all decisions made during the study process, research team meetings, reflective thoughts, sampling, research materials used, conclusions, and data management information. This allows the auditor to examine the research path's transparency.

Confirmability. The extent to which the research study's conclusions could be confirmed by other researchers. Confirmability is concerned with demonstrating that the data and interpretations of the findings are clearly drawn from the data and are not the result of the inquirer's imagination.

Transferability. The extent to which qualitative research findings can be applied to various contexts or settings with different respondents. A potential user's ability to judge transferability is aided by the researcher's



detailed description. It also has to do with the issue of application. A researcher's role is to provide a "rich description" of the participants and the study method so that the reader may determine whether your findings are transferable to their own context; this is known as the "transferability judgment." Because you do not know their precise circumstances, this indicates that the reader, not you, makes the transferability decision. The researchers in the study, "LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN AN INCLUSIVE SETTING: TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES," presented a wealth of descriptive data. such as the study's setting, sample, sample size, sample strategy, demographic, socioeconomic, and clinical characteristics, inclusion and exclusion criteria, interview procedure and topics, changes in interview questions based on the iterative research process, and excerpts from the interview guide.

Findings and Discussion:

To help future schools and districts improve the quality of education and on instruction while avoiding the negative effects on the teaching-learning process, it is important to study the experiences of other teachers who had an encounter with students with special needs in an inclusive setting. This is because more and more schools and districts are looking to implement efficient teaching-learning processes. Studying other teachers' experiences who worked with students with special needs in inclusive settings can aid educators in raising the standard of instruction and education while preventing detrimental effects on the teaching-learning process. This is a result of the growing number of schools seeking to adopt inclusive teaching practices and efficient teaching-learning procedures. One of the hardest things for teachers to do is control the classroom, especially when they are working with students who have impairments in an inclusive environment.

Teacher's Profile

Teacher	School	Gender	Age	Educational Qualification
Marcela	City Central Elementary School	F	40	Grade 1
Florencia	City Central Elementary School	F	53	Grade 1
Janet	City Central Elementary School	F	54	Grade 3
Rosa Maria	City Central Elementary School	F	55	Grade 3
Rosenda	City Central Elementary School	F	53	Grade 4
Mila	City Central Elementary School	M	58	Grade 4
Jean	City Central Elementary School	F	50	Grade 5
Labrador	City Central Elementary School	F	48	Grade 5
Rejane	City Central Elementary School	M	40	Grade 6
Grace	City Central Elementary School	M	53	Grade 6

The data from the research participants was displayed in the above figure. I thanked each participant as the interview got underway for taking part in my study. Following this, I reiterated the goal of my research, asked if any additional explanation was required (which none was), and went over the anonymity explanation once more. I went on to discuss the value and application of pseudonyms and made it clear that every participant would get a copy of the interview transcript to verify that the remarks were, in fact, made fairly and accurately and to enable member checking (Creswell, 2007). The following are the pseudonyms: Marcela, Florencia, Janet, Rosa Maria, Rosenda, Mila, Jean, Labrador, Rejane and Grace and were provided to ensure confidentiality.



Marcela is an elementary school teacher who experienced teaching every subject. She has spent more than 20 years enjoying herself while teaching first graders. She has experience teaching a variety of subjects, such as first-grade reading, writing, and counting. When she had some free time, she conducted the interview at City Central Elementary School, and she appreciated talking about her experiences and the responses to the study questions. The duration of her interview was 45 minutes.

Florencia has been teaching in grade one for about thirty years, and he has a wealth of teaching expertise. She has a wide range of pupils and teaches a variety of courses. She enjoyed teaching since she could build relationships with her students more easily in smaller classrooms with fewer individuals. Her interview was conducted at City Central Elementary School before the start of the in-service training program for teachers. This took place in her classroom and lasted for sixty minutes.

Janet is a veteran educator who started working with third graders a long time ago. She discovered that teaching in one-on-one settings was both fascinating and extremely familiar. She was thrilled to be a part of this study, and her interview took place in the school during her students' last period of instruction.

Rosa Maria, an elementary school teacher who teaches third grade, expressed her excitement in participating in the study. She feels she knows her students intimately, which is why she has liked teaching for so long. Every time she met a new group of pupils, she was reminded of her youth and eagerness. Midway during her preparation time, she had an interview in the school.

Rosenda, a fourth-grader teacher, enjoys spending her teaching days with her students. For her whole career, she has been a teacher in the same classroom, students. After school, she was interviewed in her classroom.

Mila started her work in the business sector before becoming a mentor and grade four teacher. When she realized she wanted to be around children and help them succeed in the world, she made the decision to alter her line of work. She believed that being a teacher truly makes her happy. She was interviewed late in the morning at City Central Elementary School during her planning period.

Teaching is not only a career, but it is also a passion that **Jean**, a grade five teacher, has discovered while working with students. Her employment as a teacher was enjoyable, especially working with students. During her break at school, she was interviewed.

Labrador, elementary school teacher of fifth grade. She loved being a teacher. She instructed her students in a variety of subjects. She enjoys teaching in her daily life and gets along well with her coworkers. She is constantly appreciative of their assistance to her in her teaching. She takes pleasure in each other's companionship. She mentors teachers of fourth grade as well. During her free period, the interview was conducted at City Central Elementary School.

Grace is a grade six teacher that follows national curriculum criteria when instructing children in her areas of expertise. Her responsibilities encompass distributing assignments, evaluating assessments, recording advancement, and monitoring correspondence with parents. She assesses and communicates with each student to make sure they are pushed but not overburdened by the content being taught. She has been a teacher for a very long time and has encountered a wide range of students. She was interviewed while she had some free time.

Rejane, the final study participant, teaches sixth grade as well. She always enjoys giving thorough lectures here and audiovisual aids to make studying easier. Additionally, she integrates technology into her teaching and encourages participatory learning, which gives each student tailored teaching. The interview took place during her afternoon snack period at City Central Elementary School.

Emergent Themes

The aim of this study was to comprehend teacher's actual experiences working in an inclusive environment. This has piqued my curiosity about trying to comprehend the viewpoints of other educators working in settings like mine. The best method for my study was qualitative design since I was interested in the viewpoint and experience of a teacher when instructing in a one-to-one setting. To assist future heads of schools and districts in enhancing the quality of life for teachers in an inclusive setting while averting the potential negative effects that such an environment may have on both teachers and students, it is crucial to research the various programs that are being implemented by schools and districts.

Three themes emerged from my interviews with teachers about their experiences working in an inclusive environment and how it affected their ability to teach. These themes were shared by twelve teachers. Readers of this research will be able to understand teachers' lives in inclusive settings by examining these three themes namely: Theme 1: Diversified Teaching Strategies; Theme 2: Harmonized Environment for Regular and Special Children; and Theme 3: A Touch of Success and Fulfillment. These themes helped us clarify the experiences teachers had when working one-on-one with students who had disabilities and the effects this type of environment had on teaching.

Theme 1: Diversified Teaching Strategies

Embracing diversity is an indication of inclusive education. Teaching for equality enables diversity to change the way we act, think, learn, and teach so that all experiences and modes of being are treated justly and fairly. We frequently get to a point in our lives when we start thinking and talking about figuring out our life's direction and purpose or looking for something else entirely. We may then start the process of figuring out what our purpose is.



We might need to locate or construct a road to accomplish this purpose. On our walk, we might reach out and grab pots of gold, or we might follow various paths that lead us to our mission. Teachers are defined by their actions and responses from the past, which directly affect their experiences now and have an identity-building effect. According to Bruner (2002), the narrative serves as a means of providing one's own life and experiences with significance. This is the process of comprehending reality. In addition to offering direction and coaching during the learning process, the teacher guarantees the caliber of the work (Prensky, 2012). Many participants concurred that learning experiences are valuable and can greatly benefit them in their day-to-day life. To create inclusive practices that support children, participants showed flexibility and open-mindedness (Maciver et al. Citation 2018; Lyons, Thompson, and Timmons Citation 2016). They also showed teamwork by collaborating with other staff members to overcome challenges that arise in the classroom (Florian and Black-Hawkins Citation 2011).

To create a clear understanding of her role in various areas, Rejane also described how she collaborated with her students daily to support kids both inside and outside of the classroom for intervention groups that needed extra practice with math or spelling.

"Addressing the unique needs of students with disabilities presents many challenges like adopting teaching methods, creating accessible materials, and providing additional support. It demands patience, flexibility, and continuous learning." Rejane

"My significant teaching experiences with my regular students, I can say that it's a very challenging one part, I must think ways how to deal with them. I want them to be good, but it needs extra effort, sometimes I can say, If I win a lotto, immediately I will resign but I should think that Jesus put me in this profession because there is a purpose. Teaching is easy, but the hard part is how to shape a certain individual to be good." Florencia

"In my extensive career, I've engaged with diverse groups of students, those regular and those with disabilities. I tailored lessons to accommodate individual needs." Rejane

"My teaching experience in handling regular students in a heterogeneous grouping is not as difficult to handle because my teaching strategy is to identify first what level of learning ability they may have and by identifying the learning ability and capacity of my pupil that is where I start looking for the appropriate strategies that is fitted to each kind of learner, based on their learning ability and capacity I can plan what method/strategies that I have to use to ensure that no one is left behind or no one is lost." Labrador

"My significant teaching experience when it comes to regular students. I've noticed that building a strong rapport is essential by creating a positive and supportive learning environment. Engaging teaching methods such as interactive activities, multi-media resources and real-world examples can help students grasp and retain information effectively. Now, when it comes to students with disabilities, patience and understanding is the key." Jean

"Engaging students with creative lessons, adapting to different learning styles, and collaborating with colleagues and parents have been essential aspects of my journey." Rosa Maria

"Seeing my students engaging or interacting



actively in my class. It showed that they were interested to learn.” Rosenda

“I used the Differentiated Instruction to diverse learning styles and abilities to address the needs of individual students and, I used the positive support for my learners as a second parent so that the learner may feel how important they are in the classroom. As an elementary teacher, my experiences have been both rewarding and challenging. I've encountered the joy of witnessing young minds absorb new knowledge and develop crucial skills. However, it comes with the responsibility of addressing diverse learning needs and maintaining a positive classroom environment. Engaging students with creative lessons, adapting to different learning styles, and collaborating with colleagues and parents have been essential aspects of my journey.” Rosa Maria

All 10 participants clearly identified a common theme: they enjoy teaching and are at ease in the classroom. A few felt at ease instructing their pupils. Most of them said that their student's knowledge satisfied them. Because they love what they are doing, there has been increased teamwork. Their experiences are also broad enough to teach them how to cope with a variety of learners, including those who have disabilities, using a variety of methodologies.

Theme 2: Harmonized Environment for Regular and Special Children

A teacher's creation and encouragement of a certain classroom atmosphere can have a positive or negative impact on a student's capacity to learn and feel at ease in the group. As much as the educational strategies used in the classroom should promote cooperation and acceptance, the classroom environment teachers make use of. This article offers some strategies to assist educators in organizing and setting up a classroom that accepts and supports all students. One of the most important strategies for integrating special needs kids into regular classes is the support provided by teachers. A significant contributing component to student learning is the teacher (Hattie, 2013; Timperley et al., 2007; Tamm et al., 2019). teachers are expected to understand how different people learn, remove barriers, and design adaptable learning environments (Jensen, 2017; Spencer, 2011). Collaborative growth is beneficial when educators examine procedures in the classroom and school in a methodical manner (Lewis, 2015).

Creating a secure learning atmosphere in the classroom helps foster equity. An excellent place to start is by encouraging inclusivity and receptivity to the thoughts and opinions of others. Having frank conversations about how to respect other people's beliefs, views, and values can promote equity. Teachers should also educate pupils how to dispute politely while also encouraging them to disagree with one another. Equity will flourish in these classroom environments once students feel secure in the knowledge that their thoughts, opinions, and values will be valued. Establishing this will require patience, forethought, and perseverance. Participants share their opinions on this, and while some of them consider teaching challenging, they nevertheless try their hardest to help students, particularly those with impairments.

“Some challenges or difficulties that I encountered as a teacher in dealing with learners with disabilities in inclusive set up is maintaining an inclusive classroom environment, it is very difficult to manage the behavior of the students with learning disabilities. Two, emotional support because students with disabilities need to provide additional emotional support. I must maintain and regular communication with parents, give some positive reinforcement to the students.” Jean

“The strategies I had employed to cope up with these difficulties were to have a reward



system for good behavior. It can be a better way to help motivate the pupils to act more appropriately at school. I had given them positive attention. It can help behavior problem pupils see that they can still get the attention they're seeking when they too listen and follow the rules and make sure that the pupils feel safe. I emphasized routine tasks and activities and provide a calm environment. I had frequently used praise and the praise should be specific rather than vague or in general." Janet

To give every kid a sense of security and comfort as well as the flexibility to utilize the resources at their disposal, educators designed warm and inclusive school environments. In her fourth year of teaching, Rosa Maria emphasized the value of fostering an atmosphere in which all students, regardless of ability, race, or religion, feel respected and at ease sharing ideas. She also defended the importance of whole-class discussions during lessons as a means for students to express themselves.

Teachers must be ready to overcome obstacles to promote educational fairness, even while they are under pressure to manage diverse classrooms to assure student achievement. A few educators expressed worry regarding challenges they faced in overseeing the variety of needs and thought they were always in need of finding methods to assist every student.

"As an elementary teacher, my experiences have been both rewarding and challenging. I've encountered the joy of witnessing young minds absorb new knowledge and develop crucial skills. However, it comes with the responsibility of addressing diverse learning needs and maintaining a positive classroom environment. Engaging students with creative lessons, adapting to different learning styles, and collaborating with colleagues and parents have been essential aspects of my journey. Peer assistance differentiated instruction and behavioral support to create an environment where all students, regardless of their abilities, can access the curriculum and succeed in their learning journey." Rosa Maria

"I make sure my classroom environment clean and safe, and their seating arrangement must change now and then." Grace

"Implementing universal design for learning and offering personalized support plans. Professional development on inclusive practices enhances educator capabilities fostering a supportive learning environment. Teaching experience in City Central Elementary School and with learners with disabilities means fostering inclusivity, adopting methods and providing personalized support for diverse learning needs. Teaching learners with disabilities is a journey of empathy, innovation and individualized approaches, cultivating an inclusive and enriching the educational environment." Rejane

These techniques give kids the chance to develop the kind of alliances and trustworthy relationships that are essential to an inclusive classroom (Maciver et al. Citation2018).



"There are many challenges and difficulties I have encountered in dealing with learners with disabilities in an inclusive set up like, like preparing different activities which are suited to his/ her capabilities, understand their mood swings or tantrums, spent more time to finish their activities and simplify instructions that are easy for them to comprehend." Florencia

"In teaching students with learning abilities is a big challenge to me especially my learning to handle pupils with learning abilities is not fully gained, I did not master that much to handle than still, I'm going to identify what learning disabilities do they have so that I can plan implement the best teaching strategies that is suited to their learning gaps. And to cope up with them in capability to learn as a normal pupil who have that ability to learn." Labrador

An educator's effectiveness is demonstrated by the way she completes tasks, organizes her lessons, and uses her time. A teacher who consistently arrives at class on time, has a lesson plan that is well-prepared, instructional resources, engages students in the content, and has everything organized—including the teaching and learning process—is exhibiting efficiency.

Theme 3: A Touch of Success and Fulfillment

Education systems must be all-encompassing, active for all types of learners (Dakar Framework for Action 2000). Teacher attitudes "reflect feelings and influence behaviors related to a particular object" (Triandis Citation 1971), making them a crucial facilitator in fostering an inclusive environment. According to Leatherman and Niemeyer 2005, educators who had previously worked well with students who had special educational needs had higher levels of optimism because they created more inclusive and friendly learning environments. Teachers must feel well-trained and exhibit a favorable attitude toward it. Brennan, King, and Travers (Citation 2019) observed that after teacher participants attended support sessions, they adopted more flexible tactics in the normal classroom, which resulted in an increase in positive views toward student achievement.

To function flexibly within the environment, teachers must also choose and carry out highly successful tactics (UNESCO 2009). Students' participation in all facets of learning depends on the decisions and tactics teachers use in their increasingly diverse classrooms (Molbaek 2018). These could include adaptable grouping techniques, allowing kids to move about the classroom, and differentiating instruction through tasks that most participants completed while instructing their students.

Every participant had a positive attitude on students' growth and accomplishment, noting that all kids, regardless of ability, may succeed in their own unique way in the correct setting (Florian and Black-Hawkins Citation 2011), even if they are working below age-expected results.

"Teaching learners with disabilities for me means self- sacrifice and an achievement as well. It is a self- sacrifice because we sometimes take for granted our own personal needs and want just to make sure that our learners can read, write, count and most of all a disciplined learner. It is an achievement because we go far beyond what we thought the best for them. We do a lot of things ensuring them that they will graduate with honor, pride, and a student with good character to be a better individual in the future." Marcela

"For me it is a rewarding and fulfilling role where you can shape young minds and make a positive impact on students' lives. When working with learners with



disabilities, it's important to provide accommodations to ensure their learning needs are met." Jean

As an elementary teacher, my experiences have been both rewarding and challenging. I've encountered the joy of witnessing young minds absorb new knowledge and develop crucial skills. However, it comes with the responsibility of addressing diverse learning needs and maintaining a positive classroom environment. Engaging students with creative lessons, adapting to different learning styles, and collaborating with colleagues and parents have been essential aspects of my journey. Grace

"Teaching means an engagement with learners to enable their understanding and application of knowledge, concepts, and processes. In an inclusive classroom, it is important to use language that prioritizes the student over his or her disability. Teacher ensures that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as student's w/o disability." Rosenda

"Teaching means to me as I touch their emotions where they can express what they feel to validate and explained them why they felt it is one of my greatest achievements. Their emotions and feelings must be heard by us so that they themselves feel lighter when they go out in our classroom. I believe learning will happen at the same time. Face our challenge by handling different student and behavior." Grace

Even though educators employed a few inclusive teaching practices, it was discovered that inclusive practice was hampered by the ongoing difficulty of guaranteeing that every student received equal opportunity. It was challenging to make sure they were routinely and consistently applied. Teachers recognized the importance of additional support in overcoming obstacles, such as additional programs and training that assist and enable them to instruct students in an inclusive environment.

Conclusion:

The exploration of diversified teaching strategies, harmonized environments for both regular and special children, and the touch of success and fulfillment in the educational journey illuminate the essence of inclusive education.

Through embracing diverse teaching methods, educators not only cultivate inclusive practices but also foster an environment where every student feels valued and supported. The narratives shared by the participants underscore the importance of flexibility, collaboration, and empathy in addressing the unique needs of each learner, whether they have disabilities or not. By tailoring lessons, creating accessible materials, and providing additional support, teachers demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that every student can succeed.

Furthermore, the creation of a harmonized environment for both regular and special children is pivotal in fostering equity and inclusivity. Educators play a central role in shaping classroom atmospheres that promote cooperation, acceptance, and respect for diverse perspectives. By implementing strategies such as differentiated instruction, positive reinforcement, and fostering open communication, teachers strive to create safe and supportive learning environments where all students can thrive.



The journey of education is marked by moments of success and fulfillment, as educators witness the growth and achievement of their students. Despite the challenges encountered along the way, teachers remain dedicated to their role in shaping young minds and making a positive impact on students' lives. Through self-sacrifice, determination, and a belief in every student's potential, educators exemplify the transformative power of inclusive education.

The narratives presented underscore the ongoing commitment of educators to embrace diversity, foster inclusivity, and empower every student to reach their full potential. Through collaborative efforts, ongoing support, and a shared dedication to inclusive practices, educators continue to pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive educational landscape.

References:

- Ainscow, M., & Miles, S. (2008). Making Education for All Inclusive: Where Next? *Prospects*, 38(1), 15–34.
- Ainscow, M., & Sandill, A. (2010). Developing inclusive education systems: What are the levers for change? *Journal of Educational Change*, 11(1), 45–61.
- Ainscow, M., & Messiou, K. (2018). Engaging with the views of students to promote inclusion in education. *Journal of Educational Change*, 19, 1–17.
- Allodi, M. W. (2000). Self-concept in children receiving special support at school. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 15(1), 69–78.
- Alcosero, A., et al. (n.d.). Preparedness of Regular Teachers in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in the Philippines: A Meta-synthesis. ISSN (Online): 2320-9364, ISSN (Print): 2320-9356.
- Armington, D. E. (1969). A plan for continuing growth. Newton, MA: Educational Development Center. ED 046 493.
- Azorín, C., & Ainscow, M. (2020). Guiding Schools on Their Journey Towards Inclusion.
- Bailey, S. K. (1971). Teachers' centers: A British first. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 53(3), 146–149.
- Beckett, A. E. (2009). Challenging disabling attitudes, building an inclusive society: considering the role of education in encouraging non-disabled children to develop positive attitudes towards disabled people. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 30, 317–329.
- Dell'Anna, S., Pellegrini, M., & Ianes, D. (2021). Experiences and learning outcomes of teachers dealing with without special educational needs in inclusive settings: a systematic review. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25, 944–959.
- Devarakonda, C., & Powlay, L. (2016). Diversity and Inclusion. In *A Guide to Early Years and Primary*.
- Doyle, M. B. (2002). The guide to the inclusive classroom: Working as a team. Cloucester, Vermont: Paul Brooks Publishing Co.
- Eskay, M. (n.d.). Learners with Disabilities in an Inclusive Education Setting in Nigeria: Implications for Administrators.
- Farrell, P., Dyson, A., & Kaplan, I. (2007). The impact of placing pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools on the achievement of their peers. *Educational Research*, 49, 365–382.
- Florian, L., & Black-Hawkins, K. (2011). Exploring inclusive pedagogy. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(5), 813–828.
- Ford, J. (2013). Educating students with Learning Disabilities in an Inclusive Classroom.



- Friend, M., & Bursuck, L. (2002). Including students with special needs: A practical guide for classroom teachers.
- Gould, P., & Sullivan, J. (Year). The Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom: Easy Ways to Adapt Learning Centers for All Children.
- Heacox, D. (2002). Differentiating instruction in the regular classroom: How to reach and teach all learners, grades 3-12. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.
- Moore, J., & Fine, M. J. (1978). Regular and special class teachers' perceptions of normal and exceptional children and their attitudes toward mainstreaming. *Psychology in the Schools*, 15, 253-259.
- Muega, M. (2019). Inclusive Education in the Philippines: Through the Eyes of Teachers, Administrators, and Parents of Children with Special Needs.
- Rudiyati, S. (2017). Teacher's Knowledge and Experience Dealing with Students with Individual Learning Disabilities in Inclusive Elementary School.
- UNESCO. (2017). Inclusion in Education: An Analysis of Trends and Challenges.
- Wang, M. (1992). Adaptive education strategies: Building on diversity.
- Williams, R. J., & Algozzine, B. (1979). Teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming. *The Elementary School Journal*, 80(2), 63-67.