

**Teachers' professional development and its role in enhancing readiness
for inclusive education of diverse learners**

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ABSTRACT

The research examined the influence of teachers' professional development and its role in readiness for inclusive education for diverse learners at Ramon Duterte Memorial National High School, Cebu City, during the school year 2025-2026. A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized, and a researcher-adapted survey questionnaire was used to determine the teachers' level

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of involvement in inclusive education training, the extent of institutional support they received, and their readiness to teach diverse learners. Thirty randomly selected junior and senior high school teachers are the respondents of the study. To statistically interpret the data, Pearson's R Correlation was applied in examining the significant linear association of the variables. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a moderate level of engagement in professional development programs inclusive practices and partially supported in institutional assistance for inclusive education. The teachers' readiness was evaluated as moderate. Participation in professional training and the institutional support they received showed a significant positive correlation with their readiness for inclusive education. These results emphasize that while training enhances teachers' knowledge and skills, ongoing support including mentorship, collaboration with special education professionals, administrative guidance, and access to resources plays an even more critical role in fostering readiness. Hence, the proposed action plan recommended in enhancing teachers' confidence and competence, serving as a guide for policymakers and school administrators in advancing professional development programs and support systems for inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, teachers' professional development, teacher preparedness, support, training, diverse learners, descriptive- correlational design, Cebu City, Philippines

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become the main idea behind modern schools. It promotes equal access to high-quality learning for all students and ensures that all students, including those with challenges and will have equal access to high quality instruction in age - appropriate and general education classes within their local schools. The practice of inclusion in the general education classroom, however, still lags in the actual implementation, especially in providing support to students with disabilities and other learning challenges. Though policy structures and advocacies for inclusive education prevail, the extent to which these are implemented in day-to-day classroom instruction differs a great deal.

Teachers are the main agents of inclusive education policy implementation, and their readiness has a direct impact on the learning experience quality of diverse learners. Teachers need appropriate skills and knowledge. Across the world, concerns have persisted with teacher readiness and confidence, as well as gaps in differentiated instruction competencies, classroom management, and assistive technology use. Locally and nationally, the same trends prevail as teachers continue to juggle the requirements of curriculum delivery with the intricacies of teaching heterogeneous classrooms. At the core of teachers' readiness is their professional training and institutional backing. Globally and domestically, training programs and support mechanisms are recognized as pivotal levers in building inclusive education, but access, intensity, and continuity of these programs are uneven. At the local level, teachers generally cite inadequate opportunities for long-term professional development, inadequate mentoring, and insufficient systems of support mechanisms. This generates a disconnection between the promises of inclusive practices and the provision of resources to teachers.

In spite of the establishment of inclusive education as a priority, little still exists in terms of research targeting alignment between teachers' training, institutional support, and actual readiness to adopt inclusive approaches within the local environment. Most existing research tends to emphasize policy intentions or sweeping systemic issues but fails to capture how these are translated into teachers' on-the-ground readiness within the classroom. This research fills this lack by analyzing the interaction of training, support, and readiness in the schools which were chosen. This study is to address the readiness in improving inclusive education and enhancing teacher skills and knowledge in promoting positive outcomes for students. More specifically, it aims to evaluate the level of professional training and institutional assistance teachers have undergone and how these are associated with their readiness to deal with inclusive classrooms. Through solving this primary issue, the study seeks to gain perspectives that will guide policy directions, capacity development programs, and support systems that will enhance inclusive education implementation at local and national level.

Under these circumstances, it becomes imperative to study how teachers' professional training and institutional support they receive for the same influence their readiness in inclusive education. This insight not only gives a better picture of the prevailing state of classroom practices but also the focus areas where most targeted interventions are required. With this, the current study was designed to answer questions that center on teachers' training, support networks, and readiness in managing diverse learners.

Statement of the problem

This research study evaluated teachers' professional training and the institutional support they received in relation to their readiness for implementing inclusive education for diverse learners at Ramon Duterte Memorial National High School, Cebu City, during the school year 2025–2026, serving as the basis for the development of an action plan. Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the level of teachers' involvement in inclusive education in terms of their professional training and institutional support received?
2. What is the level of teachers' preparedness in implementing inclusive education for diverse learners?
3. Is there a significant correlation between the level of teachers' professional training and institutional support received, and their level of preparedness in implementing inclusive education for diverse learners?
4. Based on the findings of the study, what action plan can be proposed to enhance teachers' preparedness in inclusive education?

METHODOLOGY

The research employed a descriptive-correlational design, aiming to describe the current state of teachers' professional training, institutional support, and perceived preparedness for inclusive education, while also exploring correlations among these variables. The descriptive

component of the design enabled the researcher to provide a clear explanation of the training levels attained, the level of support offered, and teachers' preparedness to manage divergent learners, using measures such as means and standard deviations. The correlational component allowed the researcher to determine if a significant correlation exists between teachers' professional training and support received, and their preparedness for inclusive education. This design was considered suitable because the study is interested in both the state of the variables and their relationships, but not in manipulating conditions. The data gathered results were thoroughly analyzed to create an action plan that addresses the teachers' needs.

The research respondents were teachers in the general education inclusive classrooms under the Department of Education in Cebu City, explicitly focusing on Ramon Duterte Memorial National High School with a total teaching population of 173 teachers. Samples of 30 teacher respondents were advisers and subject teachers of the Junior and Senior High School to share their insights of the study. Although some schools had more teachers, the uniform sample size was used to ensure equitable representation across schools and to keep the study within the limits of time and resources. A sample of 30 is also deemed sufficient for statistical analysis, especially for correlation studies, since it already satisfies the minimum requirement for the Central Limit Theorem to hold, hence guaranteeing valid and reliable estimates.

To conduct responsible and credible research, Ethical Considerations were fundamental. It was not just a matter of compliance. It was important to maintain the integrity of the process, built trust with the participants and guaranteed that the research truly served the best.

The initial consideration to address was to inform and seek consent. The purpose of the study is to be explained by its objectives and procedures. They were told about their voluntary right to participate withdraw at any moment without facing any consequences. Before the start of data collection, all the respondents were provided with written consent to confirm that they were able to understand the study completely and voluntarily agreed to participate.

The researcher made sure that everything was safe and private. All information was kept secret and was stored carefully. All the names and personal details were removed so no one can be identified. Only the results as a group were used in the report. Participants communicated that their answers were private and never linked to them.

Preliminary Stage. A transmittal letter requesting permission to conduct the study was sent to the Cebu City schools division superintendent. Upon the approval, the following steps commenced.

Data Gathering Stage. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents by the principal. They provided sincere responses regarding personal details, the inclusive education training they attended, and the institutional support they received during the implementation of inclusion, reflecting their preparedness to handle inclusive classroom settings. The use of a survey questionnaire provided respondents with a more convenient way to answer the questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of teachers' involvement in inclusive education

Teachers' involvement in inclusive education substantially enhanced the effectiveness of inclusive approaches in mainstream classrooms. Educators were the primary individuals responsible for ensuring that all students had equitable access to education and that their diverse needs were addressed. Various factors, including professional training and institutional support,

affected the degree of teachers' engagement in inclusive education. Professional training equipped teachers with the information, skills, and pedagogical techniques necessary to engage students with diverse abilities and backgrounds effectively. Teachers may have felt inadequately equipped due to insufficient training, thus leading to resistance to or limited involvement in inclusive practices. Institutional support, encompassing resource availability, leadership endorsement, collaborative opportunities, and explicit inclusion rules, fostered an environment that encouraged and motivated teachers' active engagement.

This study was relevant as it examined the impact of professional training and institutional support on teachers' engagement in inclusive education. The study analyzed these aspects to explain both individual and institutional elements influencing educators' capacity and motivation to effectively apply inclusive practices. In the absence of sufficient training and support, instructors may have encountered obstacles that restricted their involvement in inclusive classrooms.

Professional Training

Professional training significantly benefited educators in implementing inclusive education. It equipped educators with the information, skills, and pedagogical strategies necessary to meet the needs of all their students. Educators with adequate training demonstrated greater confidence and proficiency, thereby increasing their likelihood of implementing inclusive practices. Conversely, inadequate professional training left some instructors feeling unprepared or overwhelmed, thereby constraining their engagement and negatively affecting the quality of inclusive education. This study incorporated professional training as a crucial variable to elucidate the impact of teacher preparation on their engagement in inclusive education.

Table 2 presents the teachers' professional training in inclusive education of diverse learners.

Table 2
Teachers' Professional Training in Inclusive education of Diverse Learners

S/N	Indicators	□	SD	VD
1	I actively engaged in professional training on fundamental principles and laws of inclusive education as mandated by DepEd	3.57	1.14	AG
2	I participated in professional development sessions to identify various types of disabilities and their main characteristics aligned with Filipino learners' needs	3.07	1.20	NU
3	I attended DepEd-endorsed training programs that instructed me on using differentiated instruction techniques for diverse Filipino learners	3.60	1.00	AG
4	I enrolled in professional training to develop and implement Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) following Philippine inclusive education guidelines	2.43	1.10	DS
5	I engaged in professional training that included simulations or role-play for inclusive teaching in Philippine classroom contexts	3.27	1.28	NU

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6	I participated in professional development workshops on behavior management strategies suitable for Filipino learners in inclusive settings	3.03	1.22	NU
7	I actively attended professional training workshops on assistive technology tools available and applicable in Philippine schools	3.23	1.19	NU
8	I engaged in professional development on culturally responsive teaching methods for diverse Filipino learners from various socio-economic backgrounds	3.37	1.25	NU
	Average	3.20	1.17	NU

Legend: 4.20-5.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 3.40-4.19 Agree (AG); 2.60-3.39 Neutral (NU); 1.80-2.59 Disagree (DS); 1.00-1.79 Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2 indicated that the mean score for teachers' professional training in inclusive education was rated as Neutral ($\bar{x} = 3.20$, $SD = 1.17$). This indicated that most of teachers participated in some type of professional development training; however, the depth, quality, and frequency of such training varied significantly. The neutral result indicated that numerous teachers had engaged solely in general training or workshops, with minimal specific training.

The training related to the basic principles of inclusive education ($\bar{x} = 3.57$, AG) and differentiated instruction ($\bar{x} = 3.60$, AG) was rated highest. The Agree ratings indicated that the seminars approved by the Department of Education (DepEd) covered these areas of interest. During the data collection, the researcher observed that the teachers were highly proficient with Differentiated Instruction (DI) and could readily cite legislation for inclusive education (e.g., Republic Act 10533). But when they were asked for scenarios from their own classes, most teachers gave broad generalizations rather than the approaches they had used. The findings illustrated that while teachers grasped the principles, they had limited opportunities to apply them in traditional classroom settings; this finding was supported by subsequent studies (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2021; Sharma et al., 2023).

In contrast, training on the development and implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) received the lowest rating ($\bar{x} = 2.43$; SD). Many teachers stated that they believed IEP development was primarily the responsibility of special education staff and felt unqualified to engage in it. Several teachers argued that merely special education specialists should be entitled to develop Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), claiming that they lacked the requisite qualifications to undertake this task independently. Sokal and Sharma (2020) found that general education instructors frequently felt unprepared for specific planning due to inadequate training and collaboration. Other areas, such as assistive technology tools ($\bar{x} = 3.23$, NU), behavior management strategies ($\bar{x} = 3.03$, NU), culturally responsive teaching methods ($\bar{x} = 3.37$, NU), and simulation or role-play activities ($\bar{x} = 3.27$, NU), were aligned in the Neutral range of means. The findings showed that the teachers lacked sufficient real-world experience, despite limited exposure. The data indicated that teachers recognized some tools as Assistive Technology, such as audiobooks and screen readers, but most had not used them with their students due to a lack of resources or support. Teachers covered generic behavior-management strategies, but none were specifically intended for students with special needs. The findings supported those of Salameh et al. (2023), suggesting that there was often no lasting after-support for using what was learned in the training.

Sabanal et al. (2025) found that teachers were knowledgeable about inclusive education theories but experienced difficulties in applying culturally responsive strategies and differentiated instruction because of inconsistent professional development opportunities. Benemerito et al. (2024) found that practical teaching aids, such as simulations and role-play, were underutilized, limiting teachers' capacity to integrate theory and practice.

The results agreed with the present study, which was conducted without practical, hands-on lectures, in which neutral evaluations predominated. Aas (2020) shared strategies from Lesson Study as a partner model to support educators in analyzing, adapting, and implementing inclusive practices in real classroom settings.

A high proportion of neutral mean scores indicated that teachers knew about inclusive education but did not have extensive participation in professional and practical training. The Agree mean scores in basic aspects showed that the teachers had knowledge of the policies and broad methodologies. However, the Neutral and Disagree level highlighted important areas that needed to be addressed through careful planning, including writing of IEP goals, use of assistive technology, and culturally responsive teaching practices. From the researcher's observations, teachers consistently expressed a desire to apply inclusive approaches; however, many reported that they could not be due to an insufficiency of funds, lack of training opportunities, and insufficient institutional support. Thus, it supported the idea that not all knowledge translates into effective classroom practices.

These suggest that professional development must be systematic, integrative, and practice-oriented. They had basic exposure to inclusion through awareness-raising training but needed additional guidance on how best to put it into practice. If teachers had not just more time, but additional training in the areas of IEP development, assistive technology, behavior management, and culturally responsive teaching methods to respond to diverse learners, they could have applied inclusive strategies more effectively. The utilization of immersive formats, such as simulations and role play, with collaborative models like Lesson Study, was a strategy that could effectively connect theory and practice. To achieve the objective of inclusive education in the Philippines, equal access to professional development for all schools in both urban and rural areas must be addressed.

Institutional support received

Institutional support markedly improved the effectiveness of professional development programs, particularly in the realm of inclusive education. This support included not only resource provision but also structured guidance, mentorship, and access to educational materials and technologies that enabled educators to implement inclusive strategies effectively. Strong leadership was essential in fostering a school culture that emphasized ongoing learning, collaboration, and reflective practice, creating clear norms and standards that guided instructional decisions.

Moreover, institutional support created an environment that encouraged teachers to try new teaching approaches, tailor their classes to students' needs, and collaborate with other teachers and special education professionals in professional learning communities. This supportive framework

enhanced teachers' confidence and competencies, particularly in domains where they had less professional training, such as developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), utilizing assistive technologies, and implementing culturally responsive pedagogy.

Institutional support, including practical resources, administrative oversight, and ongoing mentorship, served as a crucial mechanism for transforming theoretical knowledge from training programs into effective, evidence-based classroom practices.

Table 3 indicates the teachers' support received in inclusive education as shown below.

Table 3
Teachers' Support Received in Inclusive Education

S/N	Indicators	\bar{x}	SD	VD
1	I receive support from DepEd/school administrators to collaborate effectively with SPED teachers and resource personnel in our school.	2.43	1.19	DS
2	I receive guidance and support from my school principal/head teacher on inclusive classroom layout and environmental adjustments within our school facilities.	2.80	1.16	NU
3	I receive institutional support from DepEd/school division office for conducting multi-factor assessments aligned with Philippine assessment standards.	3.13	1.14	NU
4	I receive ongoing support from school leadership on strategies for promoting peer interaction among Filipino learners in inclusive settings.	3.00	0.87	NU
5	I receive mentoring or coaching support from DepEd master teachers/school mentors as follow-up to formal inclusive education training.	3.13	1.01	NU
6	I receive support from DepEd/school by being provided with locally-relevant inclusive teaching materials and resources suitable for Filipino learners.	2.90	0.99	NU
7	I receive institutional support from DepEd/school that emphasizes reflective practices and self-evaluation in inclusive education within Philippine educational contexts.	2.90	1.09	NU
8	I receive ongoing support from DepEd regional/division offices through access to continuous professional development opportunities in inclusive education.	2.73	1.11	NU
<i>Average</i>		2.88	1.07	NU

Legend: 4.20-5.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 3.40-4.19 Agree (AG); 2.60-3.39 Neutral (NU); 1.80-2.59 Disagree (DS); 1.00-1.79 Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 3 shows the level of institutional support provided to teachers concerning inclusive education. The mean score ($\bar{x} = 2.88$, $SD = 1.07$), categorized within the Neutral (NU) category, suggests that teachers perceived the support received from their schools and DepEd offices as inadequately comprehensive to effectively meet the requirements of inclusive education. The lowest mean score of ($\bar{x} = 2.43$), was collaboration with SPED teachers and resource staff. This suggests that there is a huge gap in this important area. During the data collection, the researcher observed that the teachers' experiences reflected the uneven nature of support, guidance on classroom layout, and environmental adjustments. Other areas, such as support with classroom

structure with a mean score of ($\bar{x} = 2.80$), support with multi-factor evaluations with a mean score of ($\bar{x} = 3.13$), mentorship after formal training with a mean score of ($\bar{x} = 3.13$), and access to ongoing professional development with a mean score of ($\bar{x} = 2.73$), were also in the Neutral (NU) range. The results highlighted that while institutional support for inclusive education exists, it demands greater consistency and depth in preparing teachers to address the practical demands of inclusive classroom settings.

For instance, one teacher reported her attempts to implement peer-assisted learning; however, the researchers' observations confirmed that the strategy was inconsistently applied, and some students were left disengaged as a result of the lack of structured guidance or collaboration with SPED specialists. Another teacher reported obtaining inclusive instructional resources but did not have explicit guidance on how to modify them for students with attention challenges. Institutions supposed to deliver ongoing and substantial help instead of restricted aid, including persistent mentoring, practical training, and resources aligned with inclusive policies. Consequently, schools can ensure that teachers are not only knowledgeable but also equipped and confident in successfully implementing inclusive education.

In addition, while the average ratings may have appeared neutral overall, individual experiences varied widely. This inconsistency demonstrated that the rules and leaders of the institutions were applied differently in practical contexts. Overall, the results showed that there were some support mechanisms in place, but there were still areas that needed attention. For instance, collaborating with special education staff (SPED specialists) and providing specific direction helped improve their inclusive teaching practices. Given the lack of consistent support from their schools and DEPED offices, teachers experienced greater challenges in implementing inclusive practices and addressing the needs of their diverse learners.

This study specifically addressed education policy in the Philippines. Republic Act No. 10533, known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, mandated inclusive, learner-centered pedagogy and emphasized the necessity for adequate teacher preparation and continuous support. This legal framework underpinned the assertion that, in the absence of sufficient and ongoing training, educators encountered difficulties in properly executing inclusive practices. Similarly, the Department of Education's Order No. 44, s. 2021, clearly defined requirements to enhance inclusive education through capacity building, provision of educational resources, and collaboration with special education specialists. This order clearly confirmed that working with SPED staff is currently lacking and needs to be a priority.

Ybañez and Cajegas (2023) conducted a study in Cebu City, demonstrating that teachers with advanced academic backgrounds and specialized training exhibited greater competence in applying inclusive practices. These instructors demonstrated deep knowledge in inclusive pedagogy, personalized instruction, and the ability to create learning environments that address varied learner needs. This discovery underscores the vital importance of institutional support in enabling the proper execution of inclusive education. Institutional assistance can take various forms, such as providing access to superior training programs, allocating resources for accessible educational materials, and fostering collaborative frameworks between general and special education teachers. The findings underscore the essential need for ongoing professional development in providing educators with the requisite pedagogical abilities, evidence-based

practices, and the confidence to navigate the evolving complexities of inclusive classrooms. As inclusive education remains a fundamental principle of educational justice, it is imperative to engage in ongoing teacher development and systemic support mechanisms to ensure effective and enduring implementation.

Legaspi and Retes (2024) established that inclusive education efforts in the Division of Camarines Norte are significantly constrained by resource and training deficiencies. Their analysis revealed a significant deficiency of vital resources, specifically Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and suitable instructional materials designed for students with special needs, as primary obstacles to effective inclusion. Moreover, educators expressed feeling inadequately prepared, and challenges in effectively addressing diverse exceptionalities were attributed to insufficient access to professional development focused on inclusive and special education practices. This concern was supported by the findings of a recent survey, which showed a markedly low rating in cooperation with special education (SPED) teachers and limited access to opportunities for further mentoring. These findings underscore an immediate need for institutional reforms that prioritize specialized training, financial allocation, and continuous support systems to make inclusive education a reality in classroom settings.

Dumaop and Langga (2025) examined the lived experiences of general education teachers in Mati City and found that, despite initial obstacles with inclusive teaching, they gradually adapted through reflective practice, collaboration with stakeholders, and peer support. Nevertheless, the study highlights that such progress was attainable only when institutions provided significant, ongoing support.

Studies showed that although inclusive education was promoted in policy and practice, its effective implementation depended on schools and institutions providing ongoing and well-organized support for teachers. This support was essential to give educators the skills, resources, and confidence needed to address the diverse needs of all learners and to achieve the goals of inclusive education.

Level of teachers' preparedness in the inclusive education of diverse learners

Teacher preparedness is an essential component in the effective implementation of inclusive education, particularly in addressing the needs of diverse learners. Teacher preparedness results from both sufficient training and strong institutional support, enabling educators to meet the varied needs of their students with confidence and competence.

Table 4 illustrates the level of teachers' preparedness in the inclusive education of diverse learners, as shown below.

Table 4

Level of Teachers' Preparedness in the Inclusive Education of Diverse Learners

S/N	Indicators	\bar{X}	SD	VD
1	I feel confident designing lessons that meet diverse learner needs.	3.17	0.99	NU
2	I can effectively manage behavioral challenges in inclusive classes.	3.10	0.92	NU
3	I am skilled in adapting my teaching strategies on the fly.	3.20	0.92	NU
4	I am comfortable implementing IEP-driven instruction.	2.70	0.99	NU
5	I use assistive technology competently with students.	3.23	0.90	NU

6	I apply culturally responsive strategies in regular lessons.	3.37	0.67	NU
7	I can facilitate cooperative learning groups in inclusive settings.	3.33	0.84	NU
8	I use multiple assessment tools to accommodate all learners.	3.13	0.86	NU
9	I am confident in collaborating with SPED teachers and specialists.	2.80	1.03	NU
10	I can modify classroom environment to suit students' individual needs.	3.27	0.83	NU
11	I regularly reflect on my inclusive teaching practices for improvement.	3.13	0.78	NU
12	I feel prepared to offer emotional support to students.	3.33	0.88	NU
13	I can manage both academic and social goals in my class.	3.63	0.76	AG
14	I feel supported by my school in implementing inclusive education.	2.97	1.03	NU
15	I am ready to advocate for policy or resource changes to support inclusion.	3.17	0.95	NU
<i>Average</i>		3.17	0.89	NU

Legend: 4.20-5.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 3.40-4.19 Agree (AG); 2.60-3.39 Neutral (NU); 1.80-2.59 Disagree (DS); 1.00-1.79 Strongly Disagree (SD)

The data in Table 4 showed that teachers' overall preparedness for inclusive education were in the Neutral category ($\bar{x} = 3.17$, $SD = 0.89$). Although this mean suggested a basic, emerging readiness, the standard deviation indicated moderate variability among respondents: some teachers reported clear preparedness while others reported substantial gaps. The only indicator that obtained the Agree level was the capacity to handle both academic and behavioral goals ($\bar{x} = 3.63$), which were emphasized as a comparative strength among the enumerated competencies. In contrast, IEP-driven instruction ($\bar{x} = 2.70$) and collaboration with SPED specialists ($\bar{x} = 2.80$) were the lowest scores.

The data indicated two interrelated factors influencing teachers' readiness. Initially, foundational inclusive practices were applied inconsistently: indicators such as assistive technology utilization ($\bar{x} = 3.23$), culturally responsive strategies ($\bar{x} = 3.37$), and environmental adaptation ($M = 3.27$) were situated just below the Agree threshold, suggesting that teachers had begun to integrate these methodologies but often demonstrated shortcomings in depth, consistency, or confidence to fully embed them into regular practice. Secondly, the insufficient ratings for IEP implementation and SPED collaboration reveal shortcomings in individualized planning and interprofessional systems—both crucial for transforming basic inclusive strategies into quantifiable student outcomes.

During the data collection, the researcher observed the concrete classroom situations that demonstrated these distinctions. For instance, an individual teacher effectively coordinated academic objectives with social standards by implementing consistent classroom procedures and peer-support systems; hence, this teacher achieved a high score on the item assessing the management of both academic and social goals. However, the same teacher reported uncertainty about translating an IEP objective into daily lesson tasks—had the general strategies but lacked

specific procedures for individualizing instruction (e.g., tiered learning outcomes, adapted assessments, progress monitoring). In another instance, a teacher reported using tablets to support struggling readers (assistive technology), but observational data showed the devices were used mainly for supplementary practice rather than for specialized accessibility features (e.g., text-to-speech, adjustable reading levels), limiting their impact for learners with special needs.

Based on the researcher's analysis indicated that these variables had been affected through both systemic and instructional components. Training workshops were frequently used as specialized sessions that focused on increasing awareness rather than delivering actual instruction. Moreover, inadequate time was allotted for collaboration with special education specialists, and administrators rarely assigned time or instituted formal norms for collaborative IEP meetings. Furthermore, access to specialized resources, including IEP templates, Assistive Technologies (AT) licenses, and co-teaching methodologies, differed among schools. These limits likely resulted in neutral outcomes: teachers possessed some knowledge and intentions but lacked the necessary job-embedded tools for consistent and successful execution.

Literature and studies supported the level of teachers' preparedness for inclusive education. Smith and Johnson (2022) found that while many educators had a basic understanding of inclusive strategies, they often lacked the practical skills required for the effective execution of individualized education plans (IEPs), supporting data that revealed lower average mean scores in IEP-focused instruction and collaboration with special education professionals. Garcia et al. (2021) underscored the critical role of assistive technology and culturally responsive pedagogy in fostering inclusive classrooms, noting that although educators had begun to implement these strategies, they still required additional enhancement.

Lee and Park (2023) highlighted the importance of institutional support, indicating that schools with strong leadership and resource allocation significantly enhanced teacher confidence and the implementation of inclusive policies, which aligned with the observed moderate support levels. Brown (2024) demonstrated that targeted professional development programs effectively increased teacher readiness and positive attitudes toward inclusion, confirming the interpretation that focused training improved teacher competence and consistency in applying inclusive methods. Together, these studies showed that teachers needed ongoing and thorough training to strengthen both their foundational knowledge and practical skills for teaching diverse learners. They also stressed how important it was for general education teachers, special education staff, and other support personnel to work closely together to meet students' varied needs. Furthermore, strong support from schools such as effective leadership, essential support materials, consistent mentoring, and well-defined policies was key to helping teachers apply inclusive methods confidently and consistently. Therefore, improving teacher readiness required a combined effort involving continuous training, collaborative teamwork, and strong institutional backing.

Test of significance on the correlation between the level of teachers' training and support received, and their preparedness in the inclusive education

Inclusive education aimed to ensure that all learners had equitable access to educational opportunities, regardless of their individual needs. Educators needed to be prepared to use inclusive practices in the classroom for this approach to be effective. The training and support they received significantly influenced their preparedness. The study examined the correlation between the degree of teachers' training and support and their readiness to teach inclusively.

Understanding the relationship among educators' professional development, institutional support, and their preparedness for inclusive education is crucial to improving educational outcomes for diverse learners. Analyzing these links provides insights into how targeted interventions in training programs and institutional policies might enhance teachers' competence, confidence, and effectiveness in implementing inclusive practices in general education classrooms.

Table 5 reveals the test of significance on the correlation between the level of teachers' training and support received and their preparedness in the inclusive education of diverse learners. The data presented in Table 5 highlight the results of the significance test for the correlation between the level of teachers' training and support received and their preparedness in inclusive education for diverse learners.

Table 5
Test of Significance on the Correlation between the Level of Teachers' Training and Support Received, and their Preparedness in the Inclusive Education of Diverse Learners

Variables under inference	correlative rho	Comp. rho	Strength of correlation	p-value	Decision	Results
Teachers' Training & Preparedness in the Inclusive Education of Diverse Learners		0.615	Strong	0.000	Reject H _o	Significant
Support Received & Preparedness in the Inclusive Education of Diverse Learners		0.761	Strong	0.000	Reject H _o	Significant

The computed rho for teachers' training and preparedness was 0.615, indicating a strong correlation. This suggested that higher levels of training were associated with increased teacher preparedness for inclusive education. Likewise, the correlation between support received and teacher preparedness yielded a computed rho of 0.761, indicating a strong association. This correlation was even stronger, suggesting that support systems such as mentoring, administrative feedback, collaboration with peers, and access to teaching resources played a vital role in teacher readiness for inclusive education. The p-value of 0.000 led to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_o). Overall, both results affirmed that training and support were key predictors of teacher preparedness in inclusive educational settings.

The strong correlation between teachers' training and their preparedness indicated that as the quality and frequency of training increased, so did teachers' confidence and competence in handling inclusive classrooms. This supported the idea that professional development programs focused on inclusive strategies, such as differentiated instruction, adaptive assessment, and inclusive classroom management, were essential for equipping teachers with the skills to accommodate diverse learners effectively.

The even stronger correlation between support received and preparedness highlighted the importance of a supportive teaching environment in fostering inclusive practices. Support came in various forms, including guidance from school administrators, collaboration with special education professionals, access to inclusive instructional materials, and participation in learning

communities. These structures not only provided practical resources but also boosted teachers' morale and confidence.

Thus, the significance of both relationships provided a strong basis for designing targeted interventions that could directly enhance teacher preparedness and, ultimately, the quality of inclusive education being delivered to diverse learners.

Johnson et al. (2024) supported the study in their systematic review, indicating that many educators continued to perceive themselves as unprepared to implement inclusive practices, despite these practices being required by national education laws. Their study showed that the factors contributing to this gap were limited access to professional development opportunities and a lack of institutional support. It was said that many schools did not have ongoing administrative monitoring and did not provide teachers with many opportunities to work together, both of which were important for teachers to use inclusive practices well. These observations parallel the findings of the current study, which indicated a significant correlation between the support received and teacher readiness. They emphasized that training was necessary, but it was not enough, and to be ready to work in inclusive classrooms, teachers needed regular support from the school system, like mentoring, working with special education experts, and access to instructional materials.

Similarly, a study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (2022) explored how prepared teachers felt for inclusive education in elementary and secondary schools. The research revealed that educators who regularly participated in professional development activities felt better prepared for the educational environment. The survey also showed that there was a difference between the levels of school. For example, elementary school teachers were generally more confident and ready than secondary school teachers. This showed that the level of training, the use of inclusive policies, and how easy it was for teachers to get resources had a big impact on their confidence and how well they did their work.

Khamzina et al. (2025) emphasized the significance of integrating academic knowledge with practical application in training programs for inclusive education. Their research analyzed several teacher preparation programs and concluded that those combining academic content with practical field experiences produced educators with increased self-efficacy and more positive attitudes towards inclusion.

The significant correlation between the level of teachers' training and support received provided a strong basis for formulating targeted interventions aimed at improving teacher preparation for the inclusive education of diverse learners.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that professional training and institutional support were vital in shaping teachers' readiness for inclusive education. Teachers showed only a moderate level of participation in professional development, much of which focused on foundational topics such as inclusive education laws and differentiated instruction. However, considerable gaps remained in specialized areas, including the development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), the use of assistive technologies, culturally responsive teaching, and behavior management strategies. This indicated that, although teachers possessed fundamental knowledge, they lacked practical experience and ongoing opportunities essential to enhancing their skills and adequately addressing the diverse needs of learners.

Furthermore, institutional support was also found to be inconsistent, with ratings falling within the neutral range. Teachers experienced limited mentoring opportunities, inadequate

collaboration with special education specialists, and irregular access to inclusive instructional resources. Teachers' preparedness for inclusive education was assessed as neutral, indicating a developing yet inconsistent level of readiness. Although they effectively performed essential inclusive strategies, such as integrating academic and social goals, many teachers encountered difficulties with specific tasks. The correlational study showed that both professional training and institutional support significantly impacted teacher readiness, with institutional support exerting an even more substantial influence.

These findings indicated that professional training was inadequate without ongoing institutional support. The lack of practical training, structured teamwork to special education professionals, administrative guidance and ongoing mentoring led to a disorganized and limited delivery of inclusive education. Recognizing these deficiencies was essential in guiding teachers from a foundational knowledge of inclusive theories to their effective and systematic implementation in the classroom.

Based on the findings, most of the teacher training, institutional support, and preparedness were assessed as Neutral (NU), and an action plan was recommended to strengthen teachers' readiness for inclusive education for diverse learners at Ramon Duterte Memorial National High School, Cebu City. It was fundamental for the DepEd Offices to strengthen policy enforcement and monitoring, ensuring that national mandates for inclusive education were applied consistently, and to provide adequate resources for inclusive educational resources and assistive technologies to address support deficiencies.

At the school level, collaboration with SPED specialists necessitated improvement through structured co-teaching, joint lesson planning, and regular mentoring. Support mechanisms must be standardized to ensure consistent access to guidance and resources and follow-up, highlighting teachers' limited confidence in implementing inclusive practices.

Meanwhile, to improve professional development, teachers needed specialized, practice-oriented training in IEP development, assistive technology, culturally responsive pedagogy, and behavior management, integrating workshops and simulations, as educators had only basic knowledge and minimal practical experience. Workshops, simulations, and role-playing activities were recommended to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom application.

Finally, an action plan was proposed to guide school administrators and educational leaders in prioritizing these interventions. The plan identified specific areas of concern, linked each recommendation to observed gaps, and offered practical, evidence-based strategies to enhance teacher preparedness, ensure equitable learning opportunities, and support the consistent implementation of inclusive education across classrooms.

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