

**Inclusive teaching practices and challenges encountered
among mainstream elementary teachers in public school**

Friesy Mel G. Recaldo*

Cebu Technological University - Main Campus, Cebu City, Philippines

Genesa B. Avenido

Cebu Technological University - Main Campus, Cebu City, Philippines

Email: genbarits@gmail.com

Jocelyn S. Fuentes

Cebu Technological University - Main Campus, Cebu City, Philippines

Email: seblojocelyn6@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study determined the relationship between the inclusive teaching practices employed by mainstream elementary teachers and the challenges encountered in implementing inclusive education at Mainggit Elementary School in the Division of Toledo City during the School Year 2025–2026, as a basis for a proposed Teachers' Development Plan. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed from 36 teachers using a validated 4-point Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale developed by Sharma, Forlin, and Loreman (2012). Descriptive and inferential statistics at a 0.05 level of significance were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that in terms of the profile of the respondents, the majority of the teachers were aged 31–40 years (38.38%), female (83.33%), teaching for 21 years and above (33.33%), with a Bachelor's degree and masteral units in education (77.78%). The majority of teachers are teacher III (72.22%), and 36.36% have not attended seminars or training on inclusive education. In addition, the teachers' teaching practices are categorized at a "very high" level, while the challenges encountered in implementing inclusive education are rated at a moderate level. Further, pointed out that there is a significant relationship at $\alpha=0.05$ in teachers' profiles and inclusive teaching practices. There is a strong negative relationship between inclusive teaching practices and the challenges encountered; thus, it is recommended that teacher development plans, training, and seminars be implemented to reduce teachers' burden with large class sizes, lack of teaching materials or adaptive tools, and limited SPED resource teachers.

Keywords: Special education, inclusive education, teaching practices, challenges, instructional strategies, classroom management, assessment practices, Cebu, Philippines.

Date Submitted: June 26, 2026

Date Accepted: July 2, 2026

Date Published: July 9, 2026

*Corresponding author / Email: gonzalesfriesymel@gmail.com

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS05031353>

Recommended citation:

Recaldo, F. M. G., Avenida, G. B., & Fuentes, J. S. (2026). Inclusive teaching practices and challenges encountered among mainstream elementary teachers in public school. *Pantao (International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences)* 5 (3), 1618-1633. <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS05031353>

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive teaching is a pedagogical approach that addresses the diverse needs, backgrounds, and identities of all learners to ensure equitable access to education and meaningful participation in the classroom. It goes beyond physical inclusion by promoting active engagement and reducing barriers to learning (García-Barrera, 2022). This approach involves differentiated instruction and intentional strategies that address learners' varied abilities, interests, and cultural backgrounds (Qorib, 2024). Moreover, inclusive teaching seeks to eliminate systemic inequities, where all students, including those with disabilities and learning difficulties, are valued and given opportunities to succeed (UNESCO, 2020).

In the Philippines, the implementation of inclusive education has been reinforced by national policies such as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533) and the Inclusive Education Policy Framework, which mandate that learners with diverse needs, including those with disabilities, be supported within regular classroom settings. Despite these policy commitments, challenges persist in implementing inclusive education, particularly in supporting mainstream learners; thus, effective teaching practices should be considered to improve learning outcomes.

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing defines “all children” as students who may exhibit a wide range of learning and behavioral characteristics, including disabilities, dyslexia, intellectual or academic advancement, and differences based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, and/or geographic origin (CTC, 2016). Thus, according to Warnes et al. (2022), mainstream teachers face various problems, including a lack of resources, higher skill demands in handling diverse learners or children with a wide range of learning and behavioral characteristics, and the need for greater funding to support the prevailing organization of education and the provision for children with SEND. In addition, Larios & Zetlin (2023) and Slee (2018) found that inclusion must involve more than placing students with disabilities in mainstream classes; it also requires accompanying structural changes, such as functional educational management, curriculum, and teaching and learning strategies.

Research suggests that mainstream teachers are inadequately prepared for inclusive education, particularly in teaching practices and in appropriate intervention strategies for mainstream learners (Nwoko et al., 2019; Macabenta et al., 2023). Most teachers rarely receive formal training in inclusive practice before commencing teaching and only acquire skills through teaching experience. Thus, it is of significant importance that administrative support, human resources, regular in-service training, changing mindsets, and addressing barriers to effective practices, including teaching undiagnosed learners, were major highlights emphasized by participants.

Although inclusive education has been widely promoted through international and national policies, several gaps remain in the literature regarding its actual implementation in mainstream classrooms. Existing studies often emphasize policy frameworks and theoretical discussions on inclusion; however, there is limited empirical research that closely examines how mainstream teachers apply inclusive teaching practices in real classroom contexts, particularly in elementary schools. Many studies also focus primarily on learners with diagnosed disabilities, while less attention is given to the broader range of diverse learners who may experience learning difficulties, behavioral challenges, or cultural and linguistic differences within regular classrooms. In addition, there is limited research examining the relationship between inclusive teaching practices and the problems encountered by elementary teachers, as most studies focus only on describing practices or challenges in isolation (Mole et

al., 2026). Additionally, few studies are conducted in specific local contexts, underscoring the need for more context-specific and data-driven investigations.

In the Philippine context, previous research has highlighted the problems that teachers face in implementing inclusive education, including inadequate training, limited resources, and insufficient institutional support. However, there remains a lack of in-depth qualitative studies exploring how teachers navigate these challenges in practice and how their experiences influence the effectiveness of inclusive teaching strategies. Most existing studies rely on survey-based methods, which may not fully capture the difficult realities of classroom interactions and the instructional adaptations required for diverse learners (Kitchens et al., 2025). Thus, this study aims to determine the inclusive teaching practices employed by mainstream elementary teachers and the problems encountered in implementing inclusive education at Mainggit Elementary School in the Division of Toledo City, during the School Year 2025–2026, as a basis for a proposed Teachers’ Development Plan.

Statement of the problem

The study determined the significant relationship between inclusive teaching practices employed by mainstream elementary teachers and the challenges encountered in implementing inclusive education at Mainggit Elementary School in the Division of Toledo City during the School Year 2025–2026, as a basis for a proposed Teachers’ Development Plan.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the mainstream elementary teacher respondents in terms of age, gender, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, teaching position, and inclusive education trainings and seminars attended?
2. What is the level of inclusive teaching practices among mainstream elementary teachers in terms of instructional strategies, classroom management, assessment practices, and collaboration with parents and school personnel?
3. What are the challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of inclusive education?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the level of inclusive teaching practices and the challenges encountered by the respondents?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' profile and their level of inclusive teaching practices implemented, as well as between the level of inclusive teaching practices implemented and the challenges encountered?
6. Based on the findings, what Teachers’ Development Plan can be proposed for inclusive education?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design to examine mainstream elementary teachers' inclusive teaching practices and the challenges encountered in implementing inclusive education. A descriptive design is appropriate in this study because the objective is to determine teaching practices and the problems encountered in implementing inclusive education, instructional modifications, classroom realities, and perceived challenges, without manipulating variables or introducing experimental conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design enabled the researcher to assess teachers' classroom inclusion practices, including differentiated instruction, scaffolding, classroom management modifications, and the implementation of learner support strategies, and it also enabled the systematic identification

of challenges encountered by teachers, including large class sizes, behavioral difficulties, insufficient instructional materials, and limited training in inclusive education (UNESCO, 2017).

The research locale was Mainggit Elementary School in Toledo City, Cebu, one of the largest schools in the municipality. The selected school has students from different strata of society, including rural and economically disadvantaged groups. Mainggit Elementary School is a public primary school in the Division in which the practices of inclusive education, which is the education of students with different needs, including but not limited to learning challenges, behavioral problems, mild disabilities, language variations, and academically diverse students, are carried out within the regular classroom.

The study's respondents were the 36 mainstream elementary teachers in Mainggit Elementary School in Toledo City during the School Year 2025 to 2026. The respondents handled managing heterogeneous classrooms composed of learners with varying degrees of academic achievement, diverse learning needs, different cultures, and multiple behavioral patterns. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling, primarily among teachers experienced in managing learners with special needs, including diverse educational, behavioral, and academic needs. In addition, the selected respondents were currently teaching during S.Y. 2025 to 2026 in Mainggit Elementary School.

The research instrument for this study was an adapted version of the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale developed by Sharma, Forlin, and Loreman (2012). In addition, it underwent face and content validity checks by an expert, a master teacher specializing in special education, to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the study objectives. The research instrument comprises inclusive teaching practices and the problems experienced by mainstream elementary teachers and consists of three parts. The first part presents the demographic profile of the teacher respondents, including age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, grade levels handled, and training attended related to inclusive or special education. The second part measures the level of implementation of inclusive teaching practices across instructional strategies, classroom management, assessment practices, and collaboration with parents and school personnel. The last part consisted of the various problems teachers encountered in implementing inclusive teaching practices. The research instrument is a five-point scale.

In this study, the data gathering process followed strict ethical and systematic steps to ensure the reliability of responses and the anonymity of the respondents. Before administering the questionnaire, the researchers obtained permission from the school principal of Mainggit Elementary School and the Schools Division Superintendent of Toledo City. Once approval was granted, informed consent forms were prepared, and the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of all information were explained to the selected respondents. The survey questionnaire was validated and reviewed by experts in SPED and educational research to ensure clarity, and content validity and reliability were also assessed through pilot testing. After validation, the survey questionnaire was distributed to all mainstream elementary teachers in either a printed or an online format, depending on their preference and availability. The researchers gave the respondents several days to answer the questionnaire independently at a convenient time. Completed questionnaires were collected personally or through the designated digital submission link, and upon retrieval, all responses were checked for completeness, coded, and encoded into a computer spreadsheet for statistical analysis. Throughout the study, adherence to the country's Data Privacy Act was ensured, as this law mandates individuals and agencies to carefully consider the disclosure of critical or sensitive information, and this principle was upheld throughout the research process to maintain ethical standards and protect the respondents' data.

In analyzing the collected data and validating the results, various statistical tools, including descriptive and inferential statistics, were used to determine the significant relationship between inclusive teaching practices employed by mainstream elementary teachers and the challenges encountered in implementing inclusive education at Mainggit Elementary School in the Division of Toledo City during the School Year 2025 to 2026, as a basis for a proposed Teachers' Development Plan. The statistical tools used were frequency counts, percentage, standard deviations, weighted mean, and Pearson's *r* correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study gathered data from 36 mainstream elementary teachers of Mainggit Elementary School in Toledo City during the School Year 2025 to 2026, employing a descriptive correlational research design and a purposive sampling technique to select respondents experienced in managing learners with diverse educational, behavioral, and academic needs. Data were collected using an adapted version of the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale developed by Sharma, Forlin, and Loreman (2012), a five point scale instrument validated through expert review, and were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations, as well as Pearson's *r* correlation to determine the significant relationship between inclusive teaching practices employed by mainstream elementary teachers and the challenges encountered in implementing inclusive education. The discussion that follows is grounded entirely in the data gathered from these 36 respondents, and the results are interpreted in direct relation to the study's objectives of describing teachers' demographic profile, determining the level of inclusive teaching practices and challenges encountered, and testing the significant relationships among these variables as a basis for a proposed Teachers' Development Plan.

The gender distribution of respondents was considered essential for understanding the inclusive teaching practices employed by mainstream elementary teachers. The results revealed that the majority of the teacher respondents are female, comprising 30 mainstream teachers (83.33%) of the total respondents, while the remaining six (6), or 16.67%, are male. In terms of age distribution, the 51-year-old and above age bracket comprises the majority of respondents, with 15 (41.67%), followed by the 31-to-40-year age bracket with 14 (38.89%) of the respondents. There are seven (7) teacher respondents, or 19.44%, in the 41-to-50-year age bracket, and no respondents were in the 25-year age group or below. The results imply that teachers' professional maturity helps reduce problems in implementing inclusive education and promotes positive attitudes toward teaching. In terms of educational profile, results revealed that a significant majority of 77.78% ($f=28$) have earned a Bachelor's Degree supplemented by earned units at the Master's level, while only a small fraction have completed a Bachelor's Degree alone (19.44%) or progressed to Doctoral units (2.78%), and none of the respondents have fully completed a Master's or Doctoral degree. This suggests that while there is a strong personal and professional drive among the teachers to pursue continuing education, systemic or personal barriers may prevent them from completing advanced degrees. Regarding length of teaching experience, the largest segment of respondents consists of those with 21 years or more of service at 33.33% ($f=12$), followed by those with 11 to 20 years at 30.56% ($f=11$) and those with 6 to 10 years at 27.78% ($f=10$), while early career educators are the least represented, with only 5.56% ($f=2$) in the 0 to 2 years bracket and 2.78% ($f=1$) in the 3 to 5 years bracket. This distribution indicates a highly stable and seasoned faculty, where over 90% of the staff have more than five years of classroom experience, suggesting a deep well of institutional knowledge and pedagogical practice. In terms of teaching position, the majority of respondents

hold the position of Teacher III at 72.22% (26), followed by Teacher II at 11.11% (4), while both Teacher I and Master Teacher I have the lowest percentages in the population at 8.33% (3) each. This distribution indicates a workforce that has largely progressed beyond the entry level phase but is bottlenecked at the Teacher III level, with very few individuals advancing to the highly specialized Master Teacher status. Finally, the respondents' profile in terms of training and seminars attended revealed that the highest percentage of respondents reported having "None," or no training at all, in inclusive education, at 36.36% (16). Among those who have received training, Differentiated Instruction Training is the most common at 22.73% (10), followed by SPED Basic Training and Behavior Management Training, which both stand at 13.64% (6), while the least attended training and seminar were Assessment Accommodation Training and Others, each accounting for only 6.82% (3) of the total. These results reveal that while some teachers have been introduced to general strategies like differentiation, a plurality of the staff lack the formal training necessary to effectively manage an inclusive classroom environment.

The goal of inclusive education is to address the diverse needs of learners and create a positive learning environment, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities (Poly & Harishma, 2023), and it has become a foundation of modern educational policies around the world, aiming to provide students with meaningful learning opportunities in the general education classroom. The results revealed a "Very High" level of inclusive teaching practices among the respondents, as evidenced by an Aggregate Weighted Mean of 3.56. The results reveal that teachers demonstrate the highest proficiency in adapting tasks so all learners can participate (WM=3.78) and providing scaffolding strategies (WM=3.72), which suggests a high level of commitment to physical and cognitive accessibility. These are followed by the use of visual aids and hands on activities (WM=3.61), the use of diverse learning materials (WM=3.47), and the modification of lesson objectives (WM=3.39). The lowest weighted mean, though still interpreted as "Very High," is for the use of small group instruction for targeted support (WM=3.36), which may indicate that, while teachers are willing to adapt content, the logistical management of differentiated grouping remains their most significant area of difficulty. The high self-assessment of instructional strategies for implementing inclusive education suggests that teachers possess a strong foundational mindset for inclusivity; however, when contrasted with the lack of formal training noted earlier, this implies that these practices may be based more on intuitive pedagogy than on evidence based SPED frameworks. The results were consistent with the study by Abdullayev and Hamroyev (2021), which found that teaching practice plays a significant role in teacher preparation, particularly in knowledge of instructional strategies, as it involves applying the knowledge and skills acquired through various experiences; thus, it represents an essential element of both teacher training and effective professional development practice (Poly & Harishma, 2023).

Effective teacher management and effective teaching begin with a teacher who has completed a significant degree in the classroom setting, treats the students as individual human beings, and enjoys the opportunity to make a difference in their lives, and when classroom management strategies are implemented effectively, there will be a reduction in behaviors that impede learning for both individual students and groups, while maximizing those that facilitate learning (Oommen, 2021). In terms of classroom management, a "Very High" level of inclusive teaching practices was reflected, with an Aggregate Weighted Mean of 3.83. The results show that teachers excel most at establishing rules that promote respect and inclusion (WM=3.97), indicating strong mastery in setting a positive socio emotional tone. This is followed by a three-way tie in high performance for teaching social skills, using fair behavior strategies, and encouraging peer support, all of which earned a WM of 3.86. The lowest rated indicator, though still interpreted as "Very High," is the use of peer buddy systems or collaborative seating

(WM=3.58). This suggests that while teachers are highly successful at managing the classroom through direct authority and moral guidance, they are slightly less likely to use structural, student led collaborative arrangements. The results imply that the teachers' extensive years of service equipped them with strong traditional classroom management skills; however, to further reduce challenges in inclusive education, professional development should transition from teacher centered management to structural inclusive management, specifically targeting the lower scoring area of peer buddy systems and strategic seating charts, as these are evidence based tools that alleviate the teacher's individual burden by leveraging the classroom community. The results align with the idea from Deeptim (2024), that a positive learning environment derived from effective classroom management can help teachers manage students effectively and create positive learning opportunities for their students, and that effective classroom management reduces students' behavioral issues. Furthermore, the study by Ganji and Musaie (2022) emphasized that classroom management plays an important part in facilitating effective learning, making it a persistent concern for teachers and researchers alike, noting that one area warranting further consideration is the exploration of how personal and other factors influence teachers' classroom management.

Special education teachers continuously evaluate students, using various learning assessments to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, and this assessment informs the adaptation of instructional strategies to ensure an optimal learning experience (Kumari, 2023), allowing teachers to modify the curriculum and adapt the instructional plan to learners' interests, learning styles, and needs through differentiated assessment that embraces various assessment practices, flexible timing, adaptive technology, tiered assignments, and constructive feedback. Results reflect a "Very High" level of inclusive teaching practices in assessment, as evidenced by an Aggregate Weighted Mean of 3.61. Teachers demonstrate the greatest proficiency in modifying assessment directions to improve understanding (WM=3.81) and in using formative assessments to guide instruction (WM=3.78), indicating a strong focus on real time instructional adjustment. These are followed by the use of alternative assessments (WM=3.61) and the provision of extra time or breaks for learners (WM=3.56). However, the lowest weighted mean, which also shows the highest level of inconsistency among respondents (SD=2.12), is the documentation of accommodations in class records (WM=3.28). This suggests that while teachers are actively adapting their assessment methods in practice, they struggle significantly with the formal administrative tracking and record keeping of these inclusive measures, implying that teachers may be overwhelmed by the clerical demands of inclusive education or lack a standardized system for reporting accommodations. To reduce challenges, professional development should move away from general assessment theory and toward technical training in inclusive documentation and data management. The results of Kumari's (2023) study indicated that mainstream teachers should frequently use a variety of assessment practices and strategies to accurately measure students' learning, such as modifying content and delivery based on students' needs, so that learning can take place. Moreover, according to Levy Feldman (2025), assessment practices are a core element of the educational process, particularly within the learning teaching assessment scheme, influencing learning and teaching, with its impact extending beyond these core elements to shape decisions that affect students, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and the wider community.

Collaboration emerges as an essential element of teachers' daily routine, as close partnerships between teachers and parents, and among support staff and other professionals, ensure a unified approach to student support, and these collaborative efforts facilitate a holistic and integrated educational experience in which adapted instruction takes center stage, employing specialized teaching techniques tailored to the diverse needs of its students. The

results indicated a "Very High" overall level of collaboration, supported by an Aggregate Weighted Mean of 3.16. When examining the indicators from highest to lowest, the most frequent practice is regular communication with parents about learner progress (WM=3.58), followed by sharing teaching strategies with colleagues (WM=3.39) and collaborating with guidance staff (WM=3.25). However, there is a notable drop in scores for more specialized collaborative tasks, namely participating in IEP or learner support meetings (WM=2.81) and consulting SPED or resource teachers (WM=2.75), with the latter receiving the lowest mean in the set. This pattern suggests that while teachers are proactive in general social and professional communication, they are less engaged in the technical, multidisciplinary teamwork required for formalized inclusive education, suggesting the need to establish structured, mandatory time for regular consultation among general education teachers and to provide training on teachers' specific roles during IEP meetings. Effective collaboration among teachers, parents, and stakeholders is therefore crucial for improving both teacher effectiveness and student success in inclusive settings. Smith et al. (2020) found that strong family school partnerships contribute to improved student outcomes, including higher academic achievement and enhanced social emotional skills, and active involvement of families and the community enables teachers to foster a more positive learning environment that benefits all students (Tabilin & Tombali, 2023).

Teachers in the Philippines face unique challenges in their professional roles, particularly in implementing inclusive education, arising from systemic issues, resource constraints, societal attitudes, and personal stressors; despite these obstacles, teachers utilize various strategies to manage their responsibilities and ensure that diverse learners receive quality education (Kilag et al., 2025). Furthermore, Kaur et al. (2023) observe that, although inclusive education has gained global attention, it continues to present significant challenges within the international educational system. The results revealed that respondents encounter a moderate level of difficulty across all identified categories, as reflected by an Aggregate Weighted Mean of 2.96. Ranking the challenges from most to least severe, large class size emerges as the primary obstacle (WM=3.19), followed by limited time for planning individualized instruction (WM=3.11) and low parental involvement (WM=3.08). Additional significant challenges include insufficient training (WM=3.03) and inaccessible or crowded classroom environments (WM=3.00). The challenges considered least severe, though still moderate, are the lack of teaching materials and the difficulty of managing diverse behavioral needs, both at WM=2.72. The high standard deviation in the training and behavior management categories (SD=2.12) indicates that, while these challenges are moderate on average, a subset of teachers experiences them much more acutely than others. The results imply that teachers' challenges related to large class sizes and limited teaching materials suited to diverse learners may affect the consistency and effectiveness of inclusive education implementation; despite these difficulties, the moderate level indicates that teachers are still managing to cope and implement inclusive practices to a certain extent. These findings are consistent with Du Plessis's (2019) study, which emphasizes the importance of school administrators addressing teachers' difficulties in implementing inclusive education, an attention essential for the educational system to effectively manage students' diverse needs in the classroom. Additionally, Johns and Mumthas (2020) found that teachers in special education experience higher rates of burnout and face more significant challenges than those in most other professions, an elevated burnout rate driven by multiple factors that often leads teachers to leave their positions, with an estimated 75 percent of special needs educators leaving their jobs within ten years of starting, a high turnover that contributes to a shortage of special education teachers and a lack of inclusive programs for students. Teachers play a vital part in ensuring the quality of student inclusion in educational institutions, and to strengthen inclusive education

at the community level, awareness raising campaigns that involve and mobilize the community are necessary (Poly & Harishma, 2023).

Teaching practices refer to strategies aimed at developing key competencies in students, including communication, flexibility, curiosity, empathy, intercultural understanding, and self-awareness, competencies that prepare students for future careers and enable them to contribute meaningfully to both local and global communities, with students acquiring these competencies and developing as global leaders within classroom environments that are welcoming, relevant, connected, and empowering (Hindin, 2024). To examine whether teachers' demographic profile relates to their use of inclusive teaching practices, Pearson's r correlation was computed for each demographic variable against the level of inclusive teaching practices. The results revealed that the respondents' demographic profiles relate to their use of inclusive teaching practices, showing that almost all profile variables matter for teaching, but some are more important than others. Attending inclusive education trainings and seminars has the strongest link ($r = 0.62$), showing a moderate positive correlation that is highly significant ($p = 0.00$). Years of teaching experience ($r = 0.54$) and highest educational attainment ($r = 0.52$) also have a significant effect. Age ($r = 0.39$), gender ($r = 0.35$), and teaching position ($r = 0.18$) have weak correlations but remain significant ($p < 0.05$), so the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected for these factors. The main takeaway is that targeted training is the best predictor of success in inclusive teaching, even more than experience, and because of this, teacher development programs should focus on ongoing, specialized workshops rather than relying solely on general experience or advanced degrees to improve inclusive teaching skills. In summary, the results show that gender, education, teaching experience, and position do affect inclusive teaching practices, but their impact is small because the correlations are weak; however, participating in inclusive education training and seminars makes a significant difference in teachers' skills, highlighting the need for ongoing professional development to help teachers improve inclusive practices in schools. Findings are similar to those of Du Plessis (2019), which showed that teachers' skills and practices shape diverse learning environments, also finding that real inclusion comes from developing educational programs that support students socially, emotionally, ethically, and academically. Karaiskos et al. (2024) also found that professional development, including years of service, training, and seminars, helps teachers support learning, noting that feedback from experienced educators is important for empowering teachers, and that this feedback is often gained through different levels of training in inclusive education.

Inclusive education in the Philippines promotes equal learning opportunities for all students by fostering a supportive and accommodating environment (Tagyamon, 2025), and various initiatives have been implemented to ensure that students with disabilities are included in mainstream education, enabling them to participate in a range of school activities that meet their needs; however, not all schools are fully inclusive due to a lack of resources, teacher training, awareness, and appropriate learning tools, which hinder effective implementation (Kaur et al., 2023). To determine whether a significant relationship existed between the level of inclusive teaching practices and the challenges encountered by the respondents, Pearson's r correlation was computed, with the null hypothesis (H_{02}) stating that no significant relationship existed between these two variables. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of -0.78 with a p value of 0.000 , resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{02}). Although the results indicated a "positive" correlation label, the numerical value of -0.78 confirms a moderate negative relationship. The p value of 0.000 indicates that this result is highly significant, meaning the probability that this relationship occurred by chance is nearly zero. This inverse relationship suggests that as the level of inclusive teaching practices

increases, the challenges encountered by mainstream teachers significantly decrease. The results imply that when teachers are more skilled at using inclusive teaching practices, they perceive fewer challenges in delivering lessons in classroom settings, whereas a lack of these practices tends to amplify the difficulties of implementing inclusive education. The implications for professional development suggest that schools must prioritize hands on, skills-based training to boost teacher confidence, as increasing mastery of inclusive techniques directly reduces the perceived burden of classroom challenges; furthermore, addressing these challenges is crucial for teacher well-being, as reducing the daily friction of implementation can prevent burnout and foster a more efficacious and positive professional mindset. The results align with the study by Jardinez and Natividad (2024), which emphasizes the importance of embracing diversity and promoting acceptance of students with diverse needs through effective teaching practices to reduce challenges in implementing the curriculum. Furthermore, Dayso et al. (2025) found that although teachers made positive adaptations to their teaching practices, various factors hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education, including relationships among students, attitudes toward inclusivity, inherent biases, and the overall school environment, all of which contribute to significant challenges that can create barriers preventing students with diverse learning needs from fully engaging in the classroom.

Taken together, the findings drawn from the 36 mainstream elementary teachers of Mainggit Elementary School reveal a faculty that is predominantly female (83.33%), professionally mature, with 41.67% aged 51 and above, largely engaged in graduate level study without full completion (77.78% holding a Bachelor's Degree with Master's units), highly experienced (33.33% with 21 years or more of service), concentrated at the Teacher III rank (72.22%), yet substantially underprepared in formal inclusive education training, with 36.36% reporting no training at all. Despite this training gap, the respondents demonstrated a "Very High" level of inclusive teaching practices overall, with Aggregate Weighted Means of 3.56 for instructional strategies, 3.83 for classroom management, 3.61 for assessment practices, and 3.16 for collaboration with parents and school personnel, while simultaneously reporting a moderate level of challenges in implementation, with an Aggregate Weighted Mean of 2.96, led by large class size (WM=3.19) and limited time for planning individualized instruction (WM=3.11). The test of significant relationships confirmed that demographic factors, particularly attendance in inclusive education training and seminars ($r = 0.62$, $p = 0.00$), years of teaching experience ($r = 0.54$), and highest educational attainment ($r = 0.52$), are significantly associated with the level of inclusive teaching practices, while age ($r = 0.39$), gender ($r = 0.35$), and teaching position ($r = 0.18$) showed weaker but still significant associations ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) for these variables. Furthermore, the significant moderate negative correlation between the level of inclusive teaching practices and the challenges encountered ($r = -0.78$, $p = 0.000$) confirmed the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{02}) and established that stronger inclusive teaching practices are associated with significantly fewer perceived implementation challenges. These results directly address the study's objectives by demonstrating that while Mainggit Elementary School's teaching force possesses considerable experience and an intuitively strong inclusive teaching disposition, this disposition is not yet fully anchored in formal, evidence based SPED training, particularly in the areas of small group instructional management, peer buddy systems, accommodation documentation, and multidisciplinary collaboration such as IEP participation and consultation with SPED or resource teachers. The findings contribute to the field by empirically reinforcing, within a Philippine public elementary school context, that targeted professional development in inclusive education training is a stronger predictor of effective inclusive practice than experience or educational attainment alone, and that strengthening such

practices yields a measurable reduction in the challenges teachers face in implementation. These results, encompassing the demographic profile, the levels of inclusive teaching practices and challenges, and the significant relationships among these variables, provide the empirical foundation for the proposed Teachers' Development Plan to be presented in the succeeding chapter, which translates the identified training gaps and the demonstrated link between inclusive competence and reduced challenges into targeted, sustainable interventions for mainstream elementary teachers at Mainggit Elementary School.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concludes that mainstream teachers at Mainggit Elementary School demonstrate a very high level of inclusive teaching practices despite having limited formal training and participation in seminars on inclusive education. Although they experience moderate challenges in implementing inclusive education, their strong commitment to instructional strategies, classroom management, assessment practices, and collaboration supports effective inclusive learning environments. Furthermore, the significant relationships among teachers' profiles, inclusive teaching practices, and the challenges encountered highlight the need for a teacher development plan to strengthen teachers' competence, readiness, and the sustained implementation of inclusive education. These challenges can create barriers that prevent students with diverse learning needs from fully engaging in the classroom, underscoring the need for systemic changes to ensure educators have access to appropriate resources and training programs. The findings suggest that mainstream teachers are encouraged to actively implement the proposed Teacher Development Plan to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and confidence in handling learners with diverse needs through effective, inclusive teaching practices. School principals should provide continuous instructional support, monitoring, and opportunities for collaboration among teachers, parents, and school personnel to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education, and attend seminars initiated by the National Educators' Academy of the Philippines (NEAP).

REFERENCES

- Aglazor, G. (2017). The role of teaching practice in teacher education programmes: Designing framework for best practice. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 16(2), 101. <https://doi.org/10.4314/gjedr.v16i2.4>
- Alhudithi, N., & Al-Tarawneh, M. (2022). Teacher self-efficacy and its influence on instructional adaptability in special education settings. *Journal of Special Educational Needs*, 35(2), 145–160.
- Al-Momani, I., Al-Kaabi, Y., & Obeidat, M. (2021). Challenges of implementing individualized instruction for students with disabilities: A global perspective. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(14), 1620–1635.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Irvine, C. K. S., & Walker, D. (2014). *Introduction to research in education* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Aquino, J. P., & Salonga, M. R. M. (2023). Teacher training and behavioral management in special education under the K to 12 program. *Philippine Journal of Education Research*, 19(1), 55–70.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice Hall.

Bania, S. (2021, June 10). Integrating inclusive and constructivist pedagogy in inclusive education. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15379810>

Bulilan, R. (2022, October 16). Educational attainment and teaching competencies of university faculty. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364338818_Educational_Attainment_and_Teaching_Competencies_of_University_Facult

Call, M.-K. (2018). The impact of teachers with differing levels of degree attainment on student performance in mathematics. <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2733&context=doctoral>

Cinzia Referza. (2023). Generative artificial intelligence and inclusive codesign: A study on cognitive and metacognitive scaffolding in the training of special education teachers. *Italian Journal of Educational Research*, 35, 177–192. <https://doi.org/10.7346/sird-022025-p177>

Commission on Teacher Credentialing. (2016). California teaching performance expectations. <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/educator-prep/standards/adopted-tpes-2016.pdf>

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Dack, H. (2018). Structuring teacher candidate learning about differentiated instruction through coursework. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 69, 62–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.09.017>

Dela Cruz, R. O., & Perez, R. C. P. (2024). Effect of seminar on teaching on the performance of teachers in higher education. *Pan-African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 5(1), 112–119. <https://doi.org/10.56893/pajes2024v05i01.09>

Department of Education. (2009). *Inclusive education as a strategy for increasing the participation rate of children* (DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009). Department of Education, Philippines.

Department of Education. (2019). *Policy guidelines on the K to 12 basic education program* (DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019). Department of Education, Philippines.

Department of Education. (2021). *Guidelines on the implementation of the individualized education program (IEP)* (DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021). Department of Education, Philippines.

Dotimas, J. V. G. (2022). Level of work-related stress and coping mechanisms of special education teachers. *AIDE International Research Journal*, 4(1), 55–70.

Empowering education: The crucial role of teacher professional development | DepEd Division of San Jose City. (2024, August 7). Deped.gov.ph. <https://region3.deped.gov.ph/sanjose/empowering-education-the-crucial-role-of-teacher-professional-development/>

Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2019). *How to design and evaluate education research* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

García-Barrera, A. (2022). Barriers to the implementation of inclusive education: A review of WoS literature. *Curriculum and Teaching*, 37(1), 31–54. <https://doi.org/10.7459/ct/37.1.03>

Gore, J., Rosser, B., Jaremus, F., Miller, A., & Harris, J. (2023). Fresh evidence on the relationship between years of experience and teaching quality. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-023-00612-0>

Kilag, O. K., Torres, J. L., Mira, J. P., Ramas, G. P., & Peranco, R. E. (2025). The state of special education in the Philippines: Challenges and opportunities for inclusive practices. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)*, 2(2), 116–122. <https://risejournals.org/index.php/imjrise/article/view/955>

Kini, T., & Podolsky, A. (2016, September 27). Teaching experience and teacher effectiveness. American Federation of Teachers. <https://www.aft.org/ae/fall2016/notebook>

Habib Syukri Nasution. (2025). Inclusive education innovation: Building learning spaces for all. *Indonesian Journal Education*, 4(2), 37–42. <https://doi.org/10.56495/ije.v4i2.1215>

Hindin, H. (2024, November 18). How global teaching practices support career readiness | Participate Learning. Participate Learning. <https://www.participatelearning.com/blog/bringing-global-teaching-practices-into-your-classroom/>

Ilham Syah, Oman Sukmana, Gonda Yumitro, & Nurudin. (2026). Analysis of Vygotsky's social constructivism theory in collaborative learning based on digital technology. *International Journal of Economics Management and Social Science*, 9(1), 365–376. <https://journal.salewangang.net/ijemss/article/view/53>

Labelle, A., & Petrucka, P. (2025). Social constructivist considerations for teaching registered nurses with specific learning disorders: A discussion paper. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 88, 104531. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2025.104531>

Larios, R. J., & Zetlin, A. (2023). Challenges to preparing teachers to instruct all students in inclusive classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 121(1), 103945. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103945>

- Macabenta, J. M., Manubag, C. V., Tabanag, J. C., Villegas, N. B., Villegas, T. M., & Cabanilla, A., Jr. (2023). Inclusive education: Lived experiences of 21st century teachers in the Philippines. *International Journal for Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology*, 11(4), 454–462. <https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2023.48982>
- McCallum, F., & Price, D. (2023). Teacher resilience and self-efficacy in special education contexts. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 120, 103966.
- McKenzie, R., Ferreira, J., & Singh, P. (2021). Constraints and possibilities of applying Vygotskian pedagogy in inclusive classrooms. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 36(5), 675–691.
- McLeskey, J., Barringer, M.-D., Billingsley, B., & Brownell, M. (2022). High-leverage practices in special education: Challenges and opportunities. *Exceptional Children*, 88(4), 451–468.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2014). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry* (7th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Meyer, A. (2024, December 9). CAST. <https://www.cast.org/about/board/anne-meyer/>
- Nwoko, J. C., Crowe, M. J., Malau-Aduli, A. E. O., & Malau-Aduli, B. S. (2019). Exploring private school teachers' perspectives on inclusive education: A case study. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 26(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1629122>
- Padillo, G. G. (2024). Special education modalities in the Schools Division of Toledo City. *European Journal of Special Education Research*, 9(3), 45–59.
- Paisun, Syarifah, & Masuwd, M. (2024). Investigating the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement. *Andragogi: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 4(2), 98–104. <https://doi.org/10.31538/adrg.v4i2.1303>
- Pantao, L. (2024). The interplay of teachers' profile, workload and self-efficacy: A correlational study. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8, 301–316. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8100025>
- Poly, N., & Harishma, K. R. (2023). Inclusive education: Strategies and challenges. *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, 11(S1), 93–98. <https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v11iS1-Nov.7095>
- Qorib, M. (2024). Analysis the impact of differentiated instruction on critical diversity literacy in inclusive education. *Aksaqla International Humanities and Social Sciences (AIHSS) Journal*, 3(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.30596/aihss.v3i1.502>
- Republic Act No. 10533. (2013). Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines.
- Republic Act No. 7277. (1992). Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph>

Republic Act No. 11650. (2022). An act instituting a policy of inclusion and services for learners with disabilities. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph>

Reyes, J. P., & Santos, M. L. (2021). The impact of teacher demographics on classroom behavior management in inclusive schools. *Journal of Educational Psychology and Practice*, 12(3), 210–225.

Richey, R. C., & Klein, J. D. (2007). *Design and development research: Methods, strategies, and issues*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Shahini, G. (2025). The role of pedagogical practice duration in developing pre-service teacher competencies. *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research*, 7(2), 73–90. <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcsr.2025.12>

Smale-Jacobse, A. E., Meijer, A., Helms-Lorenz, M., & Maulana, R. (2019). Differentiated instruction in secondary education: A systematic review of research evidence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 2366. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02366>

Sreekumar, D. (2024, October 29). What is correlational research: Definition, types, and examples | researcher.life. *Researcher.life*. <https://researcher.life/blog/article/what-is-correlational-research-definition-and-examples/>

Systematic Literature Review Team. (2024). Issues and challenges in implementing the SPED curriculum in the Philippines: A systematic review. *Philippine Journal of Education Studies*, 7(2), 98–120.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners* (2nd ed.). ASCD.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). Differentiated instruction. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 279–292). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315639987-26>

Toropova, A., Myrberg, E., & Johansson, S. (2020). Teacher job satisfaction: The importance of school working conditions and teacher characteristics. *Educational Review*, 73(1), 71–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2019.1705247>

UNESCO. (2017). *A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education*. UNESCO Publishing.

UNESCO. (2017). *A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education*. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254>

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Warnes, E., Done, E. J., & Knowler, H. (2022). Mainstream teachers' concerns about inclusive education for children with special educational needs and disability in England under pre-pandemic conditions. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 22(1), 31–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12525>

Woodcock, S., Sharma, U., Subban, P., & Hitches, E. (2022). Teacher self-efficacy and inclusive education practices: Rethinking teachers' engagement with inclusive practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 117(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103802>

Wu, M., DeWitt, D., Mohamad Nazry, N. N., Alias, N., & Jiao, Y. (2024). Factors influencing the teaching practices of in-service teachers in inclusive education: A systematic review. *Journal of Quran Sunnah Education & Special Needs*, 8(1), 76–90. <https://doi.org/10.33102/jqss.vol8no1.204>

Yang, H., & Gong, J. J. (2025). Years in the classroom: Association between teaching experience and teacher competence in early childhood education in Japan and South Korea. *Early Education and Development*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2025.2484851>

Zuñiga, L. (2025). Coping or surviving? Exploring the work-life balance of special education teachers. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 9(2), 118–134.