PANTAO
(International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences)
Volume 5, Issue 3
ISSN 3028-0877 | DOI 10.69651/2022PIJHSS

Utilization of Learning Action Cell to intensify teachers' awareness and practices of differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms

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ABSTRACT

The Learning Action Cell (LAC) is a crucial and collaborative tool and a bridge between policy requirements and classroom practice on Differentiated Instruction (DI) in inclusive education. Although legal frameworks and practice are in place to assist a diverse student base, frontline educators can face pedagogical challenges, resource constraints and instructional hesitation while dealing with the diverse learning styles, readiness levels and student profiles. The research results in an organized and data-driven LAC Action Plan designed to address these challenges. This specific framework is more than a passive administrative routine; it is structured peer observation, coaching and shared strategy sharing. It is an approach that is in line with professional growth of teachers from the ground up and makes them better in practice and better at what they do in the classroom. In the end the study shows that when LAC sessions are intentional and are specifically targeted at inclusive learning, they are very effective in boosting teacher self-efficacy. This intervention has the potential to transform the school culture into an environment for continuous peer-led growth into a sustainable environment where diversity of practice is embedded in the school culture. So, the LAC is a crucial and scalable mechanism for equity and student-centered learning for all students in inclusive classrooms.

Keywords: Learning action cell (LAC), differentiated instruction, inclusive education, teacher awareness, professional development, inclusive classrooms.

Date Submitted: June 24, 2026
Date Accepted: June 30, 2026
Date Published: July 5, 2026

INTRODUCTION

The increasing emphasis on inclusive education has transformed the responsibilities of teachers by requiring them to address the diverse abilities, learning styles, languages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and multiple disabilities of learners within a single classroom. As educational systems become more inclusive, differentiated instruction has emerged as an essential pedagogical approach that recognizes learner diversity by adapting content, instructional processes, and learning environments according to students' individual needs, abilities, and interests rather than adopting a uniform approach to teaching. Subban and Sharma (2020) emphasized that differentiated instruction ensures equitable access to learning by

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DOI: http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS05031287

Recommended citation:
Aquino, J. P. P. (2026). Utilization of Learning Action Cell to intensify teachers' awareness and practices of differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms. Pantao (International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences) 5 (3), 548-571. http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS05031287

acknowledging that one instructional strategy cannot effectively address the varying needs of all learners. Within the Philippine educational context, inclusive education has evolved from a policy initiative into a moral and professional obligation. This commitment is reinforced through Republic Act No. 11650, otherwise known as the Inclusive Education Act of 2022, and DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009, both of which affirm that all learners, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, have the right to equitable and meaningful educational opportunities. These policies emphasize that inclusive education is founded on equity, respect for learner diversity, and the belief that every learner is capable of achieving meaningful educational outcomes. Despite these policy directions, studies have consistently shown that many teachers remain insufficiently prepared to implement differentiated instruction effectively, particularly within inclusive classrooms where diverse learner needs require flexible and responsive teaching practices (Bernardo, 2021; Macatangay, 2020).

This challenge is likewise evident within the public schools under the Tuy Sub Office in Batangas, where teachers are expected to deliver high quality instruction to all learners, including those with special educational needs. However, anecdotal interviews, school records, and classroom observations indicate that some teachers continue to experience difficulties in implementing differentiated instruction because of limited preparation, insufficient confidence, or reluctance to modify traditional teaching approaches (Gregory, 2020). These observations highlight a persistent gap between inclusive education policies and actual classroom implementation. Although teachers recognize the principles of inclusive education, translating these principles into effective classroom practices remains a significant challenge. The researcher, drawing from personal experience in a private inclusive educational setting, likewise observed that managing the behavioral, cognitive, and instructional diversity of learners frequently overwhelms conventional teaching strategies. Such experiences demonstrate that while teachers are expected to serve as facilitators of inclusive learning, they often lack sustained and collaborative professional support that enables them to transform theoretical knowledge of differentiated instruction into consistent classroom practice. This disconnects between policy expectations, theoretical understanding, and practical implementation underscores the continuing need for school based professional development initiatives that directly address the realities encountered by teachers in inclusive classrooms.

One promising mechanism for addressing this need is the Learning Action Cell (LAC), a school based professional development program institutionalized through DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016. The Learning Action Cell provides teachers with structured opportunities to engage in collaborative learning, reflective practice, and professional dialogue aimed at improving instructional competence. It serves as a venue for sharing teaching experiences, discussing innovative pedagogical approaches, and strengthening instructional strategies such as differentiated instruction (Tablatin, 2020; Buenviaje et al., 2021). Recent studies have demonstrated that focused and well-organized Learning Action Cells contribute significantly to teacher professional growth and instructional improvement by encouraging collaboration, reflection, and collective problem solving (Tablatin, 2020). Similarly, contemporary educational literature continues to affirm that school-based communities of practice play a critical role in strengthening teachers' instructional competence and confidence in implementing differentiated instruction within inclusive classrooms (Subban & Sharma, 2020). De Jager et al. (2020) likewise emphasized the positive relationship between teacher collaboration and the successful implementation of differentiated instruction, suggesting that sustained professional interaction enhances teachers' readiness to address learner diversity. Within the Philippine setting, Santos (2019) further argued that Learning Action Cells become most effective when they directly respond to authentic classroom challenges, enabling teachers to develop a deeper understanding of differentiated instruction and inclusive education. Nevertheless, despite the widespread implementation of Learning Action Cells across many

schools, limited empirical evidence exists regarding their effectiveness in increasing teachers' awareness and practical application of differentiated instruction, particularly within the Tuy Sub Office. This research gap highlights the need to investigate how Learning Action Cells contribute to strengthening teachers' competencies in inclusive educational settings.

The present study is anchored on three complementary theoretical perspectives that collectively explain how Learning Action Cells may enhance teachers' awareness and practices of differentiated instruction within inclusive classrooms. Constructivist Theory, developed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, posits that knowledge is actively constructed through experience, reflection, and social interaction. Within the context of this study, Learning Action Cells function as collaborative professional learning communities where teachers actively construct knowledge through shared experiences, reflective dialogue, problem solving, and collective inquiry into differentiated instructional practices. Rather than serving as passive recipients of information, teachers become reflective practitioners who continuously refine their instructional approaches based on authentic classroom experiences. This theoretical perspective supports the view that professional learning becomes more meaningful and sustainable when it is grounded in teachers' real life instructional challenges and successes within inclusive classrooms.

Complementing Constructivist Theory is Malcolm Knowles' Andragogy, or Adult Learning Theory, which emphasizes that adult learners acquire knowledge most effectively when learning experiences are directly relevant to their professional contexts and build upon their existing experiences. Since teachers are adult learners who possess diverse teaching backgrounds, professional experiences, and contextual knowledge, their responses to new instructional approaches are shaped by these prior experiences. Learning Action Cells therefore provide an ideal environment for adult learning by offering goal oriented, collaborative, and job embedded opportunities for teachers to examine differentiated instructional strategies that are directly applicable to their classroom responsibilities. Furthermore, this theoretical perspective explains why teachers' awareness and implementation of differentiated instruction may differ according to age, years of teaching experience, professional training, and prior exposure to inclusive education, highlighting the importance of contextualized and experience based professional development.

The Inclusive Pedagogy Framework developed by Florian and Black Hawkins (2020) further strengthens the theoretical foundation of the study by emphasizing that teaching should be intentionally designed to address the learning needs of all students from the outset rather than accommodating differences only after difficulties arise. The framework recognizes learner diversity as an inherent characteristic of every classroom and promotes equitable participation by integrating inclusive instructional practices into regular teaching. Within this study, the framework provides a basis for examining how teachers conceptualize and implement differentiated instruction while recognizing that successful inclusive education depends not only on teachers' awareness and instructional competence but also on supportive educational policies, professional values, and institutional commitment. Collectively, Constructivist Theory, Andragogy, and the Inclusive Pedagogy Framework establish a comprehensive theoretical foundation by illustrating how collaborative professional learning, adult learning principles, and inclusive educational philosophies interact to strengthen teachers' awareness and implementation of differentiated instruction. These complementary perspectives also guide the development of a sustainable, evidence-based plan of action that supports inclusive educational practices through enhanced professional collaboration.

Consistent with these theoretical foundations, the conceptual framework positions differentiated instruction as a critical instructional strategy for addressing learner diversity within inclusive classrooms while recognizing that effective implementation depends on teachers' professional knowledge, awareness, and sustained instructional support. Research has consistently demonstrated that teachers' competencies in differentiated instruction are influenced by both personal and professional factors, including educational attainment, teaching experience, specialized training, and access to ongoing professional development (De Jager et al., 2022; Tablatin, 2020). The framework therefore recognizes that teachers' demographic and professional characteristics influence their awareness and classroom implementation of differentiated instruction. Awareness encompasses teachers' understanding of instructional strategies that regulate content, learning processes, and classroom contexts according to learners' needs, together with knowledge of inclusive education principles and educational policies that promote equity and learner diversity (Valiandes & Neophytou, 2020). Such awareness serves as the foundation for making instructional decisions that genuinely reflect acceptance of learner diversity. However, Cruz and Andaya (2021) observed that many Filipino teachers continue to possess limited familiarity with differentiated instruction within inclusive educational settings, indicating the need for strengthened professional learning opportunities.

Beyond awareness, the conceptual framework recognizes that the practical implementation of differentiated instruction is influenced by teachers' preparedness, collaborative support, and opportunities for continuous professional learning. Subban and Sharma (2020) emphasized that successful differentiated instruction requires both individual teacher readiness and sustained peer collaboration, reinforcing the role of Learning Action Cells as mechanisms that translate theoretical understanding into classroom practice. Guided by Guskey's (1986) perspective on teacher professional development, the framework assumes that purposeful Learning Action Cell sessions focused specifically on differentiated instruction have the potential to strengthen teachers' awareness, instructional decision making, and classroom implementation. Nevertheless, the model also acknowledges that barriers such as insufficient instructional resources, limited time, inadequate administrative support, and lack of teaching experience may constrain effective implementation even among teachers who possess high levels of awareness (Pellegrino, 2020; Bernardo, 2021). Consequently, the framework examines how teachers' demographic characteristics interact with Learning Action Cell participation to influence their awareness and practices of differentiated instruction while identifying contextual factors that facilitate or hinder implementation.

Although inclusive education has already been institutionalized within the Philippine educational system, empirical evidence examining the effectiveness of Learning Action Cells in enhancing teachers' awareness and implementation of differentiated instruction remains limited, particularly within the Tuy Sub Office. Existing literature consistently supports the importance of collaborative professional learning, differentiated instruction, and inclusive pedagogy; however, studies investigating how these concepts converge within school based professional development programs remain scarce. Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to determine the extent to which Learning Action Cells intensify teachers' awareness and practices of differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms, identify the challenges encountered during implementation, and develop a responsive, evidence-based action plan that supports teachers in transforming individual instructional challenges into sustained professional growth. Ultimately, the study contributes to the continuing advancement of inclusive education by providing practical evidence that may strengthen teacher development initiatives and improve equitable teaching practices for diverse learners.

Statement of the problem

This research aimed to examine the utilization of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) to intensify teachers' awareness and improve their practices of differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms. The study sought to explore how LAC sessions contribute to enhancing teachers' knowledge, strategies, and classroom application to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the teacher respondents in terms of age, sex, teaching position, highest educational attainment, and number of years utilizing the Learning Action Cell?
2. What is the level of teachers' perception regarding the effectiveness of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) in improving their capability in the areas of student diversity and inclusivity, content and pedagogy, curriculum contextualization, assessment and reporting, and 21st century skills?
3. What is the level of teachers' awareness and practice of differentiated instruction in inclusive education in terms of familiarity with differentiated instruction strategies, awareness of students' diverse needs, knowledge of policies supporting inclusive education, content differentiation, process differentiation, and learning environment differentiation?
4. What challenges do teachers face when implementing differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the demographic profile of the teacher respondents and their level of perception regarding the effectiveness of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) in improving their capability?
6. Is there a significant difference in the level of teachers' perception regarding the effectiveness of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) when grouped according to their profile variables?
7. Based on the results of the study, what plan of action may be proposed to strengthen teachers' awareness and practices of differentiated instruction in inclusive education through the Learning Action Cell?

METHODOLOGY

To implement the Learning Action Cell (LAC) for teachers' awareness and practices of differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms, a quantitative research design was used in this study. As Creswell (2018) states, the quantitative design of this research provides a numerical representation of respondents' awareness and practices, while Fraenkel and Wallen (2020) ensure statistical validity of the analysis of data. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect objective data to describe and quantify how teachers understand and implement instructional strategies. In the statistical analysis, clear patterns were identified indicating that the LAC enhances inclusive teaching practices in the Tuy Sub Office, providing an objective assessment of its impact.

Based on community-based research, public elementary teachers from different schools in the Tuy Sub Office were selected for the study. Teachers were selected based on their experience in inclusive classrooms or their interest in learning more about differentiated instruction. Teachers with experience and various grade levels were recruited to ensure the study is representative of the different perspectives and needs of different generations.

Simple random sampling was used, a probability sampling technique in which the researcher randomly selects a subset of participants from a population. Each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. Data is then collected from as large a percentage as possible of this random subset. The respondents of this study were 167 selected public elementary school teachers from the Tuy Sub Office. The participants were using Learning Action Cells (LAC) to increase awareness and practice of differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms. The survey questionnaires were used to interpret the data from Chapter 4. Moreover, the researcher proposed an action plan to enhance teachers' knowledge of differentiated instruction in inclusive education. To determine the sample size, Slovin's formula was used for the 167 teachers of the Tuy Sub Office.

For the quantitative work in this study, the researcher's survey questionnaire served as the primary data gathering tool. The questionnaire was organized into four parts that are related to the study and its goals. Part 1 gathered the teachers' demographics, namely age, sex, teaching position, highest educational attainment, and years of experience using the Learning Action Cell (LAC). Part 2 focused on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Learning Action Cell (LAC), covering student diversity and inclusivity, content and pedagogy, curriculum context, assessment and reporting, and 21st century skills. Part 3 examined the knowledge and practice of differentiated instruction in inclusive education from the teachers' perspective, knowledge of inclusive education policies, content differentiation, process differentiation, and learning environment differentiation. Finally, in part 4, the challenges teachers face when implementing differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms were discussed.

For another interpretation of the composite mean, the following options were used to determine the teachers' level of awareness of differentiated instruction in inclusive education. An option value of 4, corresponding to a range of 3.50 – 4.00, was given the verbal interpretation of Strongly Agree. An option value of 3, corresponding to a range of 2.50 – 3.49, was given the verbal interpretation of Agree. An option value of 2, corresponding to a range of 1.50 – 2.49, was given the verbal interpretation of Disagree. An option value of 1, corresponding to a range of 1.00 – 1.49, was given the verbal interpretation of Strongly Disagree.

The questionnaire was robustly validated for reliability and accuracy through several stages. The draft was first presented to the research adviser for review and correction. Following the adviser's feedback, the instrument was also tested by two external and one internal validator to confirm its content validity and to improve the item details based on expert advice. After feedback and amendments to the data set were made to enhance the instrument's quality, it was sent back to the adviser for final consideration. The researcher also conducted a pilot test with 10 teachers in a different district in Batangas to assess how well the questionnaire questions were written and how effectively the information was communicated. These people were selected because they were not enrolled in the study and shared the same career background. Finally, after validation and pilot testing, a Google Form version was created to distribute the survey link to actual study participants.

To ensure a systematic and ethical approach to the study, the following data collection procedures were used. Before doing so, the researcher wrote a formal letter of permission to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Batangas, requesting approval to collect data. The official approval was granted, and the researcher corresponded with the district's school heads to distribute the instrument. The researcher's questionnaire was first validated by the research adviser and then verified by three external validators to assess content validity and refine the research items in line with relevant professional advice. Then, a pilot test with 10 teachers from another district in Batangas who were not part of the actual study but had the same professional experience was conducted to assess whether the questionnaire items were clear, reliable, and flowed well. Once the instrument was approved, the Google Form version

was created to make collecting as seamless as possible. The survey link was then sent to 118 respondents. This survey was intended to determine how LAC utilization improves teachers' understanding and practice of differentiated instruction (DI) in inclusive classrooms. Finally, the collected data were reviewed, organized, and statistically analyzed to identify effective practices and areas for improvement in differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms.

The respondents in this study were all elementary public teachers of the Tuy Sub Office in Tuy, Batangas, totaling 167 and yielding a sample size of 118. Simple random sampling was used to determine the target respondents. The various data gathered were analyzed and statistically treated to obtain answers to the proposed questions. To provide a clearer meaning to the gathered data, the researcher used the mean, the Kruskal Wallis test, and the Mann Whitney test. The mean was used through the process of finding the mean, or central tendency. The Kruskal Wallis H test, also called the one-way ANOVA on ranks, is a rank based nonparametric test that can be used to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between two or more groups of an independent variable on a continuous or ordinal dependent variable. Frequency and percentage were used to compute the frequencies for age, sex, teaching position, highest educational attainment, special education training and seminars, and the number of years of using the learning action cell. The frequency was indicated as a whole number, representing the total number of respondents in that category, while the percentage was indicated by the (%) sign, computed according to its respective frequency. The four point Likert scale was used for the response on the level of perception of teachers regarding the effectiveness of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) in improving their capability, specifically focusing on student diversity and inclusivity, content and pedagogy, curriculum contextualization, assessment and reporting, and 21st century skills. It was also used for the level of teachers' awareness and practice of differentiated instruction in inclusive education, including familiarity with differentiated instruction strategies, awareness of students' diverse needs, knowledge of policies supporting inclusive education, and differentiation of content, processes, and learning environments, as well as for the challenges teachers face when implementing differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms. Finally, based on everything gathered, the researcher developed an action plan to help teachers think about and implement differentiated instruction. The data and teachers' experience combined to produce an integrated approach, ensuring that the findings and recommendations were data based and relevant to actual classroom situations.

The University of Perpetual Help System's ethics board, the IRB, is involved in a research study to ensure researchers' safety and the protection of their rights, and its principles are as much about respect for people's choices, doing the right thing, not doing harm, and being fair to all. This research project adhered to these ethical standards, ensuring that all participants were treated with dignity and protected. Before any data collection, approval had to be obtained from the appropriate Institutional Review Board. Participation was entirely voluntary, and the consent of teachers, parents, and school administrators was obtained. The study's purpose, methods, risks, and benefits were explicitly explained to the participants as well, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. During the entire study, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. Personal data was never mentioned in survey responses, and no personal information or pseudonyms or codes were used in interview transcripts to ensure anonymity. All data, digital or physical, was kept in secure files, locked cabinets, or password protected systems for security reasons and not disclosed to anyone. No individual responses were reported in the report. All data were analyzed and aggregated at the end and compiled into a report. The overall research was conducted with respect, fairness, and transparency. The researcher took great care to avoid any issues, especially with school staff

and respondents. This study was also culturally sensitive and inclusive. Results and feedback were provided to the schools involved in the project, with students' input, and the study was made transparent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are grounded in data gathered from 118 elementary public-school teachers of the Tuy Sub-Office in Tuy, Batangas, who served as respondents following a quantitative research design employing simple random sampling. Data were collected using a validated survey questionnaire composed of four parts covering the demographic profile of the respondents, their perceptions of the effectiveness of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) in improving their capability, their level of awareness and practice of differentiated instruction (DI) in inclusive education, and the challenges they face in implementing differentiated instruction. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution, weighted mean with corresponding verbal interpretation based on a four-point Likert scale, and inferential statistical procedures to test for significant relationships and differences across demographic profile variables. The discussion that follows is grounded entirely in the data gathered and is interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study, namely to describe the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents, to determine their perceptions of the effectiveness of the LAC, to assess their awareness and practice of differentiated instruction in inclusive education, to identify the challenges they encounter in implementing DI, to test for significant relationships and differences involving demographic variables, and to propose an action plan responsive to the findings.

Demographic profile of the respondents

With respect to age, the majority of respondents fell within the 40-49 age bracket, accounting for 38.14% of the total population, or 45 out of 118 respondents, followed by the 30-39 age group at 26.27% (31 respondents) and the 50-59 age group at 18.64% (22 respondents). Younger teachers aged 20-29 comprised 16.10% of the sample (19 respondents), while those aged 60 years old or above represented only 0.85% (1 respondent). This distribution indicates that the respondent population is predominantly middle-aged and likely at the peak of their careers, representing a workforce with substantial professional experience in teaching, which is fundamental for implementing complex pedagogical approaches such as differentiated instruction. At the same time, the LAC, as a professional development system, is needed to bridge the gap between traditional teaching strategies favored by older generations and the newer, student-centered teaching methods required for inclusive education, a pattern that is consistent with the literature on teacher age and experience in instructional delivery (Bautista & Santos, 2024). Younger teachers may be more open to DI because of more recent training, while middle-aged teachers are more likely to integrate DI with established practices learned through years of teaching; however, although experienced teachers are more able to adapt the curriculum (Villanueva & Dela Cruz, 2025), veteran teachers may be less inclined to adopt new DI methods for the first time within the comfort of established routines (Luna & Ramos, 2023), underscoring the importance of LAC sessions as a platform for these experienced educators to engage in reflective practice and collaborate to develop DI skills.

In terms of sex, a significant majority of respondents were female, comprising 83.05% of the 118 respondents, while male respondents accounted for 16.95%. This indicates that the teaching force in the study area is dominated by female educators, consistent with traditional demographic trends in Philippine public elementary education, and suggests that differentiated instruction in the Tuy Sub-Office is predominantly implemented by female teachers. This

gender distribution is important because, as Villanueva (2025) noted, female teachers in elementary schools often use DI strategies more than their male counterparts, who may lean toward more structured subject-matter delivery. Kaur and Singh (2021) similarly reported that gender plays a key role in classroom management, with female teachers being more student-centered, a foundation for DI, while Smit and Oostdam (2020), although finding no difference in actual awareness of DI between the two genders, noted that the pedagogical approach to inclusive classrooms is often influenced by these differing teaching styles. A high percentage of female respondents therefore implies that they are especially well-suited to developing a flexible, empathetic, and responsive learning environment supportive of inclusive education, as well as to collaborating on platforms such as the LAC.

Regarding teaching position, the plurality of respondents, 41.53% or 49 out of 118, held the position of Teacher III, followed by Teacher I at 21.19% (25 respondents) and Teacher II at 16.95% (20 respondents). Higher-level teaching positions were less represented, with Master Teacher I comprising 11.02% (13 respondents) and Master Teacher II comprising only 2.54% (3 respondents), while specialized or administrative groups classified as Others constituted 6.77% of the total participants. The high proportion of respondents at the Teacher III level indicates a midcareer workforce with established professional stability and substantial classroom experience, forming the core participants of the LAC, while Master Teachers, though fewer in number, remain key as instructional leaders who can facilitate learning for DI collaboration. This is consistent with the literature indicating that experienced teachers at the Teacher III and Master Teacher levels are more likely to practice DI because of their years of curriculum adaptation (Luna & Ramos, 2023), although veteran teachers may remain within a comfort zone of familiar routines, making the LAC necessary to foster innovation, particularly when paired with follow-up coaching and mentoring from higher-ranking educators to ensure that professional development is embedded in classroom practice.

With respect to highest educational attainment, the single largest group of respondents held a Bachelor's Degree, comprising 48.31% or 57 out of 118 respondents, while 27.12% (32 respondents) held a Master's Degree and 16.95% (20 respondents) had completed Master's Units. A smaller proportion had pursued doctoral studies, with 4.24% (5 respondents) having completed Doctorate Units and 3.39% (4 respondents) having earned a Doctorate Degree. Combined, more than half of the sample, or 51.69%, had studied beyond the undergraduate level, reflecting strong academic literacy and professional knowledge among the respondent group. The role of educational background in the successful implementation of DI is well established, as Sarmiento (2025) observed that teachers with master's degrees in education or special education have a deeper understanding of DI principles and are more likely to apply them in practice than those without such qualifications, a finding supported by Cruz and Bautista (2024), who observed that graduates of programs promoting inclusive teaching were more confident and able to adapt instruction to students with diverse backgrounds. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2020) further noted that formal education is foundational to an inclusive mindset, as teachers with less specialized training are less likely to understand the practical aspects of differentiation even when they possess strong subject-matter knowledge, suggesting that the continued academic progress observed among the respondents in this study is a strong indicator of DI effectiveness.

In terms of the number of years utilizing the LAC, 50.85% of respondents, or 60 out of 118, had been using LAC sessions for more than 10 years, while 16.10% (19 respondents) had 7 to 10 years of experience. Respondents with 1 to 3 years and with 4 to 6 years of experience each comprised 12.71% (15 respondents), while only 7.63% (9 respondents) had less than 1 year of experience with LAC. This distribution indicates that the teacher-respondents at the

Tuy Sub-Office are very long-term practitioners of the LAC framework, and given that roughly half of the participants have over a decade of experience with LAC, the framework appears deeply ingrained in their professional working lives. This longevity is key to implementing DI, as professional learning communities such as the LAC allow for the gradual refinement of complex pedagogical skills and the institutionalization of reflective practices, providing a strong foundation for the proposed action plan given that veteran LAC participants are already familiar with the collaborative and reflective nature of the sessions. This high level of utilization is supported by DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, which institutionalized the LAC as a school-based method to develop teachers through collaborative learning and reflective practice, and aligns with Reyes et al. (2025), who argued that the LAC's peer-led, collaborative framework builds stronger teaching communities and fosters teachers' sense of ownership over their professional development. Lorenzo and Bautista (2025) similarly noted that continued LAC participation supports teachers in evaluating student learning outcomes and developing responsive instructional plans, while Tomlinson (2022) emphasized that familiarity with differentiation develops through a continuous professional learning process, and Vescio et al. (2020) found that professional learning communities enhance teachers' content knowledge and classroom practices over time. These findings collectively suggest that LAC's long-term experience can help respondents become familiar with differentiated strategies in inclusive classrooms when sessions are focused and tailored to different instructional challenges.

Level of perception of teachers regarding the effectiveness of the LAC in improving their capability

With regard to student diversity and inclusivity, the LAC's ability to enable teachers to emphasize that learners are at the center of the educational process ranked first, obtaining a weighted mean of 3.8136 with a verbal interpretation of Strongly Agree, indicating that the LAC is very useful in helping teachers adopt the core philosophy of learner-centeredness. Ranked second was the indicator on addressing learners' needs as to their strengths, interests, and experiences, with a weighted mean of 3.7966 (Strongly Agree), suggesting that teachers view the LAC as facilitating a shift from generic teaching toward a more personalized approach. Ranked third was the promotion of gender sensitivity and equality in classroom practices, with a weighted mean of 3.7881 (Strongly Agree), indicating growing teacher awareness of the social dimensions of the classroom. Tied for fourth and fifth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7373 (Strongly Agree), were the indicators on establishing learning environments responsive to learner diversity and fostering empathy and mutual respect among learners, showing that the LAC helps teachers cultivate a positive and inclusive classroom culture. Tied for sixth and seventh place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7288 (Strongly Agree), were encouraging learners to be holistically developed and recognizing and supporting the needs of learners with disabilities. Ranked eighth was the application of inclusive practices respecting linguistic and cultural backgrounds, with a weighted mean of 3.6864 (Strongly Agree); ranked ninth was the design of differentiated learning activities catering to multiple intelligences, with a weighted mean of 3.6780 (Strongly Agree); and ranked tenth was the discussion of diversity as emanating from factors such as gender, community membership, religious beliefs, family configurations, and special learning needs, with a weighted mean of 3.6695, still interpreted as Strongly Agree. The average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7364, interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating that teachers regard the LAC as a highly effective tool for improving diversity and inclusivity among their learners, with the greatest confidence expressed toward the philosophical shift to learner-centeredness and toward recognizing student strengths, alongside sensitivity to the practical and cultural nuances of diversity. These results are consistent with the Inclusive Pedagogy Framework of Florian and

Black-Hawkins (2020), which holds that teaching should address the whole student rather than treating diversity as an exception, and align with Reyes et al. (2025), who found that the LAC's peer-led, collaborative culture fosters teacher ownership of professional development, as well as with Villanueva and Ramos (2023), whose work in Batangas showed that regular LAC participation builds teacher confidence in implementing inclusive and differentiated methods, and Subban and Sharma (2020), who explained that school-based communities of practice provide teachers with practical methods and confidence for differentiating instruction according to student profiles. These perspectives confirm that, for teachers in the Tuy Sub-Office, the LAC is an indispensable tool for implementing the inclusive mandates of Republic Act No. 11650 in practice.

With regard to content and pedagogy, the highest-ranked indicator was the LAC's role in enabling teachers to use learner-centered strategies that promote critical thinking and creativity, obtaining a weighted mean of 3.8220 (Strongly Agree). Ranked second was the use of varied instructional materials to meet different ability levels, with a weighted mean of 3.8136, while ranked third was the conduct of developmentally appropriate teaching methods that respect individual differences, with a weighted mean of 3.8051. Ranked fourth was planning lessons and delivering instruction effectively, with a weighted mean of 3.7966. Tied for fifth and sixth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7797, were integrating innovative teaching strategies to support differentiated instruction and adapting teaching approaches based on formative assessment results. Ranked seventh was preparing for lessons and feeling more confident and at ease when delivering lesson plans, with a weighted mean of 3.7712. Tied for eighth and ninth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7458, were studying and analyzing the K to 12 Curriculum and designing learning objectives that balance curriculum standards and student needs. Ranked tenth was translating curriculum content into relevant learning activities, with a weighted mean of 3.7373, still interpreted as Strongly Agree. The overall average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7797, interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating that teachers are highly satisfied with the LAC's effectiveness in this area. The top ranking of learner-centered strategies and varied learning materials suggests that the sessions enable teachers to move away from teacher-led instruction toward more student-driven teaching and learning practices, positioning the LAC as a collaborative space where educators brainstorm and refine practical tools to engage diverse learners, while the high scores in developmentally appropriate methods and effective lesson planning point to the LAC as an important support system that increases teacher confidence. Even the lower-ranked indicators concerning curriculum analysis and translation retained high means, evidencing teachers' ongoing commitment to both the content and the process of teaching. These findings are supported by Villanueva and Ramos (2023), who found LAC sessions beneficial for developing instructional strategies within differentiated instruction; by Reyes et al. (2025), whose emphasis on the learner-centered approach as a top-ranked result reflects the peer-led nature of the LAC contributing to greater teacher ownership; and by Subban and Sharma (2020), whose account of school-based communities of practice as venues for practical experience is reflected in the high ranking of varied instructional materials. Lorenzo and Bautista (2025) further affirmed that the LAC helps teachers feel in control of the process and supports inclusive teaching by enhancing the ability to make informed instructional plans, while Tinio (2024) added that the LAC is designed to align classroom practice with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, providing a holistic model of professional development. These supports confirm that, for educators in the Tuy Sub-Office, the LAC is an essential site for translating theoretical knowledge into effective classroom instruction that meets the diverse needs of all students.

With respect to curriculum contextualization, the indicator on designing activities that connect global concepts to real-life student experiences ranked first with a weighted mean of 3.7797 (Strongly Agree), while aligning curriculum content and instructional strategies relevant and appropriate to the teaching context ranked second with a weighted mean of 3.7712. Modifying the teacher's guide and learners' materials to accommodate the unique contexts of a particular locality ranked third with a weighted mean of 3.7627, and applying the K to 12 Curriculum in a culturally responsive, integrative, and contextualized way ranked fourth with a weighted mean of 3.7458. Tied for fifth and sixth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7373, were integrating local culture, history, and practices into classroom lessons and developing culturally responsive performance tasks for learners. Tied for seventh and eighth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7288, were identifying and responding to opportunities to link teaching and learning to the experiences, interests, and aspirations of the wider school community and adjusting lessons to address students' socioeconomic and environmental contexts. Collaborating with community stakeholders to enrich curriculum delivery ranked ninth with a weighted mean of 3.7034, while preparing curricula materials suited to the cultural and social context ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 3.6864, still interpreted as Strongly Agree. The average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7381, interpreted as Strongly Agree. In relation to this dimension, the data further indicate that teachers regard timely and accurate learning feedback, together with ethical practices in the assessment and reporting of learner data and the maintenance of an organized, up-to-date record of student performance and progress, as particularly strong indicators of LAC effectiveness, with corresponding weighted means of 3.7881 and 3.7797, contributing to an overall average weighted mean of 3.7584 for related assessment and reporting concerns. This pattern suggests that teachers are moving away from isolated grading practices toward a more standardized yet flexible assessment culture grounded in colleague collaboration and technology-based tools, and that even the comparatively lower-ranked indicators concerning stakeholder communication and data-driven changes remain high, indicating that teachers are conscious not only of what happens within the classroom but also of their broader reporting responsibilities. These results support Lorenzo and Bautista's (2025) findings that the LAC facilitates teachers' examination of student learning outcomes and the creation of responsive instructional plans, and align with Vescio et al. (2020), who found that collaborative inquiry and reflective dialogue within professional learning communities improve instructional outcomes and student learning. The focus on collaboratively developing rubrics is likewise consistent with ResearchGate (2020), which described such sessions as forums for teachers to address challenges including the development of rubrics for differentiated assessments, while Tinio (2024) noted that the LAC is instrumental in ensuring ethical and accurate reporting consistent with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, and Florian and Black-Hawkins (2020) argued that planning for diversity across all areas of the educational process, including assessment, is critical. These supports confirm that for educators in the Tuy Sub-Office, the LAC is an indispensable tool for ensuring that assessment practices remain fair, transparent, and supportive of all learners' growth.

With respect to assessment and reporting specifically, the highest-ranked indicator was the use of performance-based assessments to measure higher-order thinking skills, obtaining a weighted mean of 3.8220 (Strongly Agree), followed by differentiating assessment methods based on students' readiness levels, with a weighted mean of 3.8136. Using learner output as evidence to improve professional practice ranked third with a weighted mean of 3.8051, and analyzing assessment results collaboratively with colleagues during LAC sessions ranked fourth with a weighted mean of 3.7966. Tied for fifth, sixth, and seventh place, each with a weighted mean of 3.7797, were applying learner-centered assessment policies aligned with the K to 12 Curriculum, conducting assessment that provides necessary feedback about learning outcomes, and using peer and self-assessment strategies to promote student reflection.

Designing assessment tools that address multiple learning styles ranked eighth with a weighted mean of 3.7627, incorporating formative assessment data during LAC sessions to design appropriate interventions ranked ninth with a weighted mean of 3.7458, and selecting, organizing, and using sound assessment continuously ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 3.7288, still interpreted as Strongly Agree. The average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7814, interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating strong agreement on the effectiveness of the LAC for strengthening participants' assessment and reporting skills. The top ranking for performance-based assessments indicates that teachers are moving away from traditional tests toward more complex measures of student achievement through collaborative sessions, positioning the LAC as a venue where educators hone their capacity to evaluate higher-order thinking, a critical aspect of ensuring that students in inclusive classrooms are appropriately challenged. The high scores for differentiating assessment based on readiness and for using assessment results to improve practice further indicate that the LAC serves as an important tool for data-driven teaching, with even the lowest-ranked indicator concerning the continuous organization of assessment retaining a high mean. These findings are supported by Lorenzo and Bautista (2025), who showed that LAC participation enables teachers to assess students' learning outcomes and suggest changes to instructional plans; by Vescio et al. (2020), who argued that collaborative inquiry and reflection in professional learning communities lead to meaningful instructional change; by Subban and Sharma's (2020) account of differentiated instruction requiring communities of practice that train teachers to distinguish content and process according to student needs; and by Florian and Black-Hawkins's (2020) Inclusive Pedagogy Framework, which emphasizes that the educational process should accommodate a diversity of students. These supports validate that, for educators in the Tuy Sub-Office, the LAC is a key tool for ensuring that assessment practices are authentic, inclusive, and directly related to improving classroom instruction.

With respect to 21st century skills, the highest-ranked indicator was the ability to understand 21st century learners, with a weighted mean of 3.8305 (Strongly Agree), followed by guiding learners in developing problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, with a weighted mean of 3.8220. Tied for third and fourth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.8136, were utilizing social media platforms in teaching and developing awareness of information and communication systems relevant to education. Tied for fifth and sixth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7881, were integrating ICT in teaching and adapting to 21st century skills. Facilitating collaboration among learners using digital platforms ranked seventh with a weighted mean of 3.7797, integrating global awareness and cross-cultural skills into classroom activities ranked eighth with a weighted mean of 3.7627, promoting creativity and innovation through project-based learning ranked ninth with a weighted mean of 3.7542, and encouraging digital citizenship and responsible technology use ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 3.7458 (using the table value), while the discussion further references a comparable value of 3.7373 for digital citizenship integration, both interpretations remaining Strongly Agree. The average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7898 (also referenced as 3.7890 in the discussion), interpreted as Strongly Agree. The top-ranking regarding understanding 21st century learners and supporting problem-solving indicates that teachers are effectively engaging in collaborative sessions to reorient their perspective toward the psychological and cognitive needs of younger students, positioning the LAC as an indispensable intellectual hub for mentoring students in higher-level thinking. At the same time, the comparatively lower ranking of digital citizenship and project-based learning, despite still scoring high, suggests a modest gap between teachers' conceptual understanding of 21st century knowledge and their capacity to systematically implement specialized digital applications in daily teaching. These findings

are supported by Lorenzo and Bautista (2025), who noted that LAC-equipped teachers are better able to create responsive instructional plans beyond content delivery; by Tinio (2024), who indicated that the LAC framework aligns with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers' emphasis on 21st century skills; by Vescio et al. (2020), who emphasized the LAC's role in facilitating collaborative learning linked positively to learner engagement; and by Salazar and Pineda (2025), who noted those obstacles such as limited access to updated resources continue to hinder the effective use of these sessions in many public schools. Together, these supports demonstrate that for educators at the Tuy Sub-Office, the LAC is essential for sustaining innovative teaching, developing future-ready skills, and providing ongoing resource support.

Level of teachers' awareness and practice of differentiated instruction in inclusive education

In terms of familiarity with differentiated instruction strategies, the top-ranked indicator was the ability to distinguish between traditional teaching methods and differentiated instruction, with a weighted mean of 3.8051 (Strongly Agree), followed by familiarizing oneself with several strategies for differentiating assessments, with a weighted mean of 3.7797. Tied for fourth, fifth, and sixth place (all effectively at rank 4), each with a weighted mean of 3.7712, were familiarizing oneself with DI strategies such as flexible grouping and tiered assignments, familiarizing oneself with how technology can support DI, and understanding how DI connects to inclusive education. Understanding how to apply DI strategies to address students' varied learning styles ranked sixth with a weighted mean of 3.7627, and identifying when and how to use content, process, and product differentiation ranked seventh with a weighted mean of 3.7373. Tied for eighth and ninth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7288, were distinguishing different resources such as books, online platforms, and LAC sessions that provide information on DI strategies, and establishing effective classroom management routines for smooth transitions during differentiated activities. Explaining the core principles of differentiated instruction, namely content, process, product, and learning environment, ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 3.7203, still interpreted as Strongly Agree. The average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7576, interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating high familiarity and a deep conceptual understanding of differentiated instruction among the participants. The high ranking of the ability to distinguish traditional from differentiated approaches indicates that teachers are internalizing the theoretical basis for moving away from one-size-fits-all approaches toward more personalized instruction, while the lower ranking, though still high, of indicators involving core principles and classroom management routines suggests that although teachers are familiar with DI concepts, they may still struggle with the practical and technical aspects of implementation, reflecting a modest disconnect between general awareness of inclusive approaches and the ability to explain and implement the specific, complex routines required for a truly differentiated classroom. As Taylor and Francis (2022) noted, DI strategies must still be operationalized in tangible ways within content, process, and learning environment domains, particularly regarding the customization of content and tools based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles, and as JER (2025) and Journal Nawala (2025) observed, teachers encounter problems with insufficient facilities, large class sizes, and limited resources that continue to hinder the full implementation of differentiated learning in inclusive schools.

Regarding awareness of students' diverse needs, the highest-ranked indicator was understanding that gifted and talented students also require differentiated instruction, obtaining a weighted mean of 3.7881 (Strongly Agree). This was followed by a four-way tie for second through fifth place, each with a weighted mean of 3.7797, comprising determining diverse academic readiness levels, understanding that students' interests can be leveraged to increase

engagement, understanding that students require different levels of emotional support, and recognizing that classroom diversity requires continuous teaching adaptation. Identifying students' existing prior knowledge and potential misconceptions ranked sixth with a weighted mean of 3.7712. Tied for seventh and eighth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7542, were recognizing varying learning preferences such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, and recognizing how students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds influence learning. Understanding that socioeconomic factors affect students' ability to participate in learning ranked ninth with a weighted mean of 3.7458, and distinguishing the specific needs of students with disabilities and other exceptionalities ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 3.7373, still interpreted as Strongly Agree, a finding consistent with Magno's (2022) emphasis on the need for schools to become inclusive learning environments integrating learners with disabilities into regular classrooms through appropriate curriculum adaptation. The average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7669, interpreted as Strongly Agree, reflecting strong professional consciousness regarding the various factors influencing student success in an inclusive environment. The top ranking concerning gifted and talented learners suggests that teachers have moved beyond the misconception that inclusive education applies only to remediation, recognizing instead that high-achieving learners also require tailored instruction, while the relatively lower ranking of indicators involving socioeconomic factors and the specific needs of students with disabilities, though still high, suggests that teachers may feel less confident navigating systemic barriers and clinical exceptionalities compared to pedagogical variables such as interest and readiness. This is consistent with Republic Act No. 11650, or the Inclusive Education Act of 2022, which, as discussed by Francisco and Ramos (2023), mandates the establishment of inclusive learning resource centers and requires public and private schools to comply with accessibility standards for learners with disabilities, outlining the responsibilities of teachers, administrators, and local government units in creating an inclusive school culture.

Concerning knowledge of policies supporting inclusive education, the top-ranked indicator was acknowledging that LAC sessions are designed to strengthen teachers' capacity for inclusive education, with a weighted mean of 3.7881 (Strongly Agree). Familiarizing oneself with DepEd Orders that emphasize differentiated instruction ranked second with a weighted mean of 3.7797, and acknowledging that schools are mandated to provide reasonable accommodations for learners with special needs ranked third with a weighted mean of 3.7712. Understanding how inclusive education policies align with the goals of the K to 12 Curriculum ranked fourth with a weighted mean of 3.7542, and understanding one's role and responsibilities in implementing inclusive education policies ranked fifth with a weighted mean of 3.7458. Acknowledging DepEd policies and guidelines related to inclusive education ranked sixth with a weighted mean of 3.7203. Tied for seventh and eighth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.6949, were incorporating the principles of inclusive education policies into daily classroom routines and determining support services available for students with diverse learning needs. Recognizing the national policies and laws that support inclusive education in the Philippines ranked ninth with a weighted mean of 3.6610, and determining the legal frameworks in the Philippines that support inclusive education ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 3.6525, still interpreted as Strongly Agree. The average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7263, interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating a strong level of professional recognition of the regulatory and supportive context of inclusive education. The top position of LAC sessions suggests that teachers value collaborative professional development as the principal and most effective method for building capacity in inclusive education, esteeming institutionalized support systems and departmental policies more than abstract legislative theories, while the relatively lower ranking of general recognition of national laws and specific

legal frameworks, though still high, suggests a knowledge gap between school-level policy familiarity and technical-level legal systems. This is corroborated by UNESCO (2021), which has long encouraged Philippine education policy to move away from segregated education models toward inclusive education, and by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA, 2023), whose plans underscore the importance of teacher training and infrastructure in improving equity in education.

With respect to content differentiation, tied for first and second place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7797, were aligning the content taught with students' individual learning goals and presenting key vocabulary and concepts using both abstract and concrete examples. Pre-assessing students' knowledge to adjust the content taught ranked third with a weighted mean of 3.7627. Tied for fourth and fifth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7373, were varying the complexity of reading materials or texts to match students' reading levels and using a variety of resources such as videos, audio, and manipulatives to present content. Offering anchor activities for students who finish the main content early ranked sixth with a weighted mean of 3.7288. Tied for seventh and eighth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7203, were providing different levels of support or scaffolding for content mastery and providing advanced students with opportunities for independent research or deeper exploration of core content. Allowing students to choose from different topics or units of study based on their interests ranked ninth with a weighted mean of 3.6949, and streamlining or reducing required content for students who need to focus only on essential understandings ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 3.6864, still interpreted as Strongly Agree. The average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7347, interpreted as Strongly Agree. As Uniku (2025) suggests, adaptations of content, such as reducing material complexity for students with lower proficiency or incorporating local cultural themes, indicate that a regional focus on practical application of content leads to more effective differentiated instruction when teachers concentrate on the basics. The top ranking for content alignment with individual goals and multimodal examples shows that teachers are highly capable of creating and delivering new content at the outset of the lesson cycle, focused on ensuring students engage with content at both concrete and abstract levels. However, the comparatively lower, though still high, ranking of the indicator concerning streamlining or reducing content for students needing to focus on essential understandings suggests that teachers are more comfortable adding depth to lessons than simplifying content for struggling learners without losing depth, indicating a gap between teachers' ability to broaden content and their capacity to appropriately simplify it. This is supported by Sharma et al. (2022), who found that clear policies, resources, and ongoing training lead to better teacher attitudes toward inclusion and improved learning experiences for students with disabilities, and by Florian and Beaton (2020), who concluded that inclusive teaching requires a shift in teachers' attitudes, enhancing basic teaching methods that benefit all students rather than merely adding specialized practices.

With respect to process differentiation, the highest-ranked indicator was encouraging students to use their preferred learning styles during practice time, with a weighted mean of 3.7627 (Strongly Agree). Using interest centers or learning stations that allow students to explore content through different modalities ranked second with a weighted mean of 3.7542, and varying the level of teacher input and guidance based on student readiness ranked third with a weighted mean of 3.7373. Tied for fourth and fifth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7203, were providing varied amounts of time for students to complete tasks and offering graphic organizers, sentence starters, or checklists to guide students who need structure. Tied for sixth and seventh place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7119, were offering students choices in how they learn or process information and using strategies where students become experts on different parts of a topic and teach their peers. Tied for eighth and ninth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7034, were using flexible grouping strategies for different activities

and incorporating different instructional methods such as lectures, discussions, hands-on activities, and projects. Providing students with options to work on tiered activities focused on the same essential skill but at varying levels of complexity ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 3.6780, still interpreted as Strongly Agree. The average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7203, interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating strong professional competency in facilitating diversity of learning in the classroom. The top ranking for learning style encouragement and interest centers shows that teachers are effective at creating learner-centered environments prioritizing student autonomy and engagement, while the comparatively lower, though still high, ranking of tiered activities based on complexity suggests that teachers, though skilled at offering choice and variety, may find it more challenging to design tasks specifically calibrated to different cognitive demands. This is supported by Geng et al. (2021), who found that professional development in inclusive pedagogies in China is crucial to teachers' capacity to implement differentiated strategies in diverse classrooms, and by Reyes et al. (2025), who suggested that the LAC's peer-led, collaborative model builds stronger teaching communities and fosters teacher accountability for their own professional development.

With respect to learning environment differentiation, the highest-ranked indicator was creating a supportive and respectful classroom where diversity is valued, obtaining a weighted mean of 3.8475 (Strongly Agree), followed by arranging the classroom to support various learning activities and student needs, with a weighted mean of 3.8305, and fostering a classroom environment that encourages student choice and independence, with a weighted mean of 3.8220. Tied for fourth and fifth place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7966, were empowering students to take on classroom roles or responsibilities that match their strengths and teaching students regularly how to work in different configurations to promote collaboration skills. Tied for sixth and seventh place, both with a weighted mean of 3.7712, were providing designated areas or tools that support different learning styles, such as quiet corners or sensory tools, and communicating clearly the criteria for success using models or rubrics tailored to different complexity levels. Adjusting the noise level, lighting, or seating arrangements based on individual student needs ranked eighth with a weighted mean of 3.7458, establishing clear and flexible routines for transitions, task expectations, and seeking assistance ranked ninth with a weighted mean of 3.7373, and using visual schedules, cue cards, or task checklists to help students manage their own workflow ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 3.7203, still interpreted as Strongly Agree. The average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.7839, interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating a high skill level in shaping both the physical and socio-emotional aspects of the classroom to make it accessible, supportive, and respectful for all learners, with teachers appearing as concerned about students' emotional safety and cultural inclusivity as about the physical classroom environment. The relatively lower, though still high, ranking of visual schedules, checklists, and clear transition routines suggests that while teachers excel at fostering a positive environment, they may be less consistent in managing individual student workflows and providing structural executive-functioning supports. These findings align with Reyes and Bautista's Filipino research on DI in the context of group work and leveled tasks, which nonetheless found that deeper differentiation practices, such as curriculum compacting and tiered instruction, are rarely observed in regular classrooms, and with León and Morales (2023), who found in South American schools that teachers tend to adopt DI mainly in response to students' academic readiness rather than their interests and learning profiles, suggesting only partial utilization of Tomlinson's framework both locally and globally.

Challenges in implementing differentiated instruction

The greatest challenge identified by teachers was large class size making it physically and logistically difficult to manage flexible grouping and movement, obtaining a weighted mean of 3.5424, interpreted as Strongly Agree. This was followed by the lack of adequate resources, such as varied books and materials, with a weighted mean of 3.5339, also interpreted as Strongly Agree. The difficulty of managing a classroom with a wide range of student needs ranked third with a weighted mean of 3.4661 (Agree), and time constraints for lesson planning and preparation ranked fourth with a weighted mean of 3.4492 (Agree). Perceived pressure or requirement to cover standardized curriculum content within a fixed time ranked fifth with a weighted mean of 3.4068 (Agree), and the lack of a clear framework or model for implementation ranked sixth with a weighted mean of 3.3983 (Agree). The lack of collaboration time with special education teachers or colleagues to design differentiated lessons ranked seventh with a weighted mean of 3.3390 (Agree), while insufficient professional development opportunities focused on differentiated instruction, and concerns about fairness or resistance from students or parents regarding differentiated assignments, were both associated with a weighted mean of 3.3305 (Agree), with the former ranked eighth and the latter identified separately in the ranking structure. The difficulty in accurately assessing or diagnosing students' varied readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 3.3220, still interpreted as Agree. The overall average weighted mean for this dimension was 3.4119, interpreted as Agree, indicating a moderately high perception of the obstacles educators face in sustaining differentiated instruction. The prominence of large class sizes and scarce resources at the top of the ranking suggests that the primary obstacles to DI implementation are systemic and environmental rather than reflective of teacher willingness, with the classroom's physical environment posing a significant hurdle to flexible grouping, a pillar of differentiated learning. At the same time, the fact that difficulty in diagnosing and assessing student needs ranked lowest, despite remaining a genuine challenge, indicates that teachers are more confident in identifying student needs than in physically managing differentiated activities within present classroom conditions, pointing to a gap between teacher competency and the institutional support required to translate that competency into practice. These results are supported by Dela Cruz and Santos (2023), who found that public school teachers in Batangas report large class sizes, insufficient instructional resources, and time constraints as the main barriers to differentiation, hindering the design of learning activities according to students' readiness levels, learning profiles, and interests, and by Reyes et al. (2025), who highlighted that many inclusive classrooms in rural areas lack assistive technologies and adaptive learning materials, making it difficult for students with disabilities to access quality learning opportunities.

Tests of significant relationship and difference

A test of the significant relationship between the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents and their level of perception regarding the effectiveness of the LAC in improving their capability was conducted at the 0.05 level of significance. For age, with 4 and 115 degrees of freedom, the p-value obtained was 0.624; for sex, with 116 degrees of freedom, the p-value was 0.638; for teaching position, with 4 and 115 degrees of freedom, the p-value was 0.535; for educational attainment, with 2 and 115 degrees of freedom, the p-value was 0.830; and for years utilizing the LAC, with 5 and 112 degrees of freedom, the p-value was 0.865. Since all p-values exceeded 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted in each case, indicating that there is no significant relationship between the teachers' demographic profiles of age, sex, teaching position, educational attainment, and years utilizing the LAC, and their perceptions of LAC effectiveness. This finding indicates that the LAC is regarded as an effective professional

development tool by the teaching staff regardless of individual demographic background, with its perceived impact being broad-based and inclusive of all teacher profiles within the school. These results are supported by Smit and Oostdam's (2020) study in Dutch inclusive classrooms, which found no sex-based difference in DI awareness, although younger teachers were more likely to use technology-supported DI strategies, and by Kaur and Singh (2021), who found that gender influences classroom management styles and indirectly affects how DI is implemented, with female teachers being more student-centered and male teachers more focused on structured lessons. Taken together, these results show that age and sex do not determine DI competency; rather, teachers' teaching styles, willingness to adopt innovation, and willingness to include students from diverse backgrounds are the more important factors in differentiated teaching.

A subsequent test of significant difference in the level of perception of teachers regarding the effectiveness of the LAC with respect to the same profile variables was likewise conducted at the 0.05 level of significance. For age, with 4 and 115 degrees of freedom, the p-value was 0.624; for sex, with 116 degrees of freedom, the p-value was 0.638; for teaching position, with 4 and 115 degrees of freedom, the p-value was 0.547; for educational attainment, with 2 and 115 degrees of freedom, the p-value was 0.547; and for years utilizing the LAC, with 5 and 112 degrees of freedom, the p-value was 0.805. As all p-values exceeded the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the LAC across these profile variables was accepted. This indicates that perceptions of LAC effectiveness in improving teachers' skills are consistent across demographic characteristics, with teachers finding LAC sessions beneficial regardless of age, sex, rank, or educational background. These results support Villanueva and Ramos (2023), who found that LAC sessions affect teachers' instructional plans and the integration of differentiated and inclusive education practices in the classroom, observing in their study of public schools in Batangas that teachers who regularly attend LAC sessions are more confident in implementing new strategies. Lorenzo and Bautista (2025) similarly found that continued LAC participation facilitates teachers' review of student learning outcomes, the development of responsive instructional plans, and the promotion of more inclusive learning settings, demonstrating that LAC sessions are most impactful when they are reflective, participatory, and connected to actual classroom scenarios.

Proposed output

In light of these findings, the researcher proposes an output titled Project I.N.T.E.N.S.I.F.Y. (Instructional Network for Teachers: Empowering New Strategies for Inclusion and Flexible Yields), conceived as an enhancement to the existing LAC framework at the Tuy Sub-Office. The rationale for this output stems from the Department of Education's commitment to teachers' continuous professional development through the LAC, understood as a group of teachers working together to address common classroom challenges, and from the recognition, based on the present findings, of a Transition Gap: although the teaching workforce is mature and demonstrates a strong conceptual understanding of inclusive teaching practices, its implementation is constrained by logistical challenges, including large class sizes, limited preparation time, and the technicalities of tiered instruction, which impede the translation of inclusive theories into classroom practice. Rather than functioning as a traditional session, Project I.N.T.E.N.S.I.F.Y. reframes the LAC as a technical-pedagogical laboratory that draws on the experience of mid-career teachers to move from general knowledge toward a systematic approach to content differentiation, environmental adjustment, and adaptive

assessment. By elevating the teaching process to a greater level of technical detail, the project seeks to convert inclusive learning from stated policy into consistent classroom practice, ensuring that no learner is left behind. The objectives of this proposed initiative are to develop teachers' technical mastery in designing tiered activities and simplified curriculum models appropriate for diverse learners in large classes; to support resource generation through the development of localized, differentiated curriculum materials and inclusive rubrics that mitigate existing resource deficits; to promote lateral mentorship by utilizing the experience of veteran teachers through peer-based coaching and modeling of successful inclusive classroom mechanics; to achieve logistical efficiency by equipping teachers with routines and visual management tools that optimize time and space and reduce the burden of high-volume classroom management; and to strengthen functional assessment by enabling teachers to use technology-based assessment tools for timely, accurate feedback and systematic tracking of student progress. A corresponding project workplan has been developed to operationalize these objectives within the LAC structure of the Tuy Sub-Office.

Taken together, the findings of this study demonstrate that the 118 teacher-respondents of the Tuy Sub-Office, predominantly aged 40-49 (38.14%), female (83.05%), holding the position of Teacher III (41.53%), possessing a Bachelor's Degree (48.31%), and utilizing the LAC for more than 10 years (50.85%), hold strongly favorable perceptions of the LAC's effectiveness across all five dimensions examined, with average weighted means ranging from 3.7263 to 3.7898, all interpreted as Strongly Agree, and likewise report strong awareness and practice of differentiated instruction across the dimensions of familiarity with DI strategies, awareness of students' diverse needs, knowledge of supportive policies, content differentiation, process differentiation, and learning environment differentiation, with average weighted means ranging from 3.7203 to 3.7839, also interpreted as Strongly Agree. At the same time, teachers reported a moderately high level of challenges in implementing DI, with an overall average weighted mean of 3.4119 interpreted as Agree, driven principally by large class sizes and inadequate resources. Statistical testing revealed no significant relationship between demographic profile variables and perceptions of LAC effectiveness, with all p-values for age (0.624), sex (0.638), teaching position (0.535), educational attainment (0.830), and years utilizing the LAC (0.865) exceeding the 0.05 level of significance, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis in each instance, and similarly revealed no significant difference in perceptions of LAC effectiveness across these same variables, with p-values of 0.624, 0.638, 0.547, 0.547, and 0.805 respectively, again exceeding the 0.05 level of significance and resulting in acceptance of the null hypothesis. These results directly address the objectives of the study by establishing that the LAC is perceived as a uniformly effective, demographically inclusive professional development mechanism, that teachers possess strong conceptual awareness of differentiated instruction and inclusive education policy, and that the principal barriers to fuller implementation are systemic and logistical rather than attitudinal. The findings contribute to the field by clarifying that professional development frameworks such as the LAC can build strong conceptual and dispositional readiness for inclusive teaching across diverse teacher profiles, while also revealing a persistent transition gap between pedagogical awareness and technical classroom implementation, a gap that the proposed Project I.N.T.E.N.S.I.F.Y. is designed to address. These results, grounded firmly in the data gathered from the 118 respondents and the statistical procedures applied, provide the empirical foundation for the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations to be presented in the succeeding chapter.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the respondents were predominantly 40 to 49 years old and female, with most holding the position of Teacher III and

possessing a bachelor's degree as their highest educational attainment. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents had participated in the Learning Action Cell (LAC) for more than 10 years, indicating extensive teaching experience and a well-established institutional memory. This long-standing engagement demonstrates that the LAC has become an enduring component of teachers' professional practice rather than a temporary administrative initiative. Such maturity within the program provides a strong foundation for collaboration, mentorship, and peer supported professional development, thereby fostering a school culture that is conducive to the implementation of innovative and high-quality teaching strategies, particularly differentiated instruction within inclusive classrooms.

The findings further reveal that teachers generally perceive the Learning Action Cell as an effective professional development resource that promotes student diversity and inclusivity by placing learners at the center of instruction. This perception highlights the importance of adopting learner centered pedagogical approaches that stimulate critical thinking and creativity while ensuring that curriculum contextualization connects broader concepts to students' authentic experiences. Likewise, teachers recognize the need to strengthen assessment and reporting practices by emphasizing performance-based assessments that measure higher order thinking skills. The results also underscore the necessity of integrating 21st century skills into classroom instruction, recognizing that technological advancements require teachers to continuously adapt their instructional practices to meet the needs of contemporary learners.

Moreover, the statistical findings demonstrate that teachers possess a strong awareness of differentiated instruction within inclusive education and recognize the distinction between traditional instructional approaches and differentiated teaching practices. Teachers acknowledge the importance of addressing the diverse needs of all learners, including gifted and talented students, while recognizing that Learning Action Cell sessions serve as valuable mechanisms for strengthening teachers' competencies in inclusive education. The findings further indicate that differentiated instruction should include the alignment of instructional content with individual learning goals, the presentation of key vocabulary and concepts through both abstract and concrete examples, the encouragement of students to practice according to their preferred learning styles during instructional activities, and the establishment of positive learning environments that embrace diversity and promote equitable participation for all learners.

Despite these positive perceptions and levels of awareness, the study also establishes that teachers continue to encounter implementation challenges when applying differentiated instruction in actual classroom settings. The most significant challenge identified was the presence of large class sizes, which made the management of flexible grouping and student movement physically and logistically demanding. In contrast, teachers reported relatively fewer difficulties in assessing students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles, suggesting that diagnostic assessment practices have become more manageable than the organizational demands associated with differentiated instruction.

Furthermore, the study confirms that teachers' demographic characteristics, including age, sex, teaching position, educational attainment, and years of participation in the Learning Action Cell, do not significantly influence their perceptions of the program's effectiveness. The acceptance of the null hypothesis across all demographic variables indicates that teachers' professional evaluations of the Learning Action Cell remain consistent regardless of their personal or professional backgrounds. This finding reinforces the conclusion that the Learning Action Cell functions as a universally beneficial and flexible professional development mechanism that effectively supports teachers in strengthening competencies related to differentiated instruction and inclusive education. Its effectiveness is therefore grounded in

shared professional experiences rather than demographic differences, allowing the program to provide equitable value and opportunities for professional growth among all teaching personnel.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the Learning Action Cell serves as a sustainable and effective professional development framework capable of enhancing teachers' readiness to implement differentiated instruction in inclusive educational settings. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that maximizing its potential requires continuous refinement of instructional strategies, logistical support, and professional learning opportunities. Accordingly, teachers are encouraged to move beyond theoretical understanding by implementing differentiated instruction through structured lesson planning, tiered instructional activities, and flexible grouping strategies developed during Learning Action Cell sessions. Professional development initiatives should continue to emphasize the practical mechanics of differentiated instruction, including curriculum streamlining, effective classroom transitions, and pedagogical delivery, while also strengthening teachers' competencies in addressing the needs of learners with disabilities and understanding the influence of socioeconomic factors on student learning. Greater emphasis should likewise be placed on integrating 21st century skills through digital citizenship, project-based learning, collaborative technologies, and student-centered critical thinking activities.

In addition, school administrators are encouraged to strengthen institutional support by developing standardized differentiated instruction toolkits, digital resource libraries, adaptive instructional materials, and detailed assessment rubrics that can reduce teachers' workloads while promoting instructional consistency. Schools should also foster stronger cross departmental collaboration by involving special education teachers and technical experts as facilitators or consultants during Learning Action Cell sessions to provide specialized guidance in assessing student readiness and implementing differentiated instruction effectively. Addressing the logistical limitations associated with large class sizes through additional resources, specialized personnel, and improved implementation frameworks is likewise essential for sustaining effective inclusive education practices. Finally, future research should investigate the long term effects of Learning Action Cell based interventions on student learning outcomes within inclusive educational settings while exploring the potential of digital tracking systems, assistive technologies, digital resource sharing, teacher training modules, and periodic research based evaluations to continuously improve the Learning Action Cell framework and ensure that its instructional strategies remain responsive to the diverse and evolving needs of learners.

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