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Training needs assessment of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers handling inclusive classrooms: Basis for Learning Action Cell sessions

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the professional development needs of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers and used the findings as a basis for developing proposed Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions. It examined the teachers' professional background, the perceived importance of selected competencies, their self-rated competence in providing learner support, and their preferred arrangements for LAC activities. The study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design guided by Borich's Needs Assessment Model and involved 31 qualified secondary teachers from Nug-as National High School during School Year 2026–2027 through total enumeration. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire and analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, rank, and Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score (MWDS). The findings showed differences in the respondents' age, educational preparation, teaching experience, and position. The respondents reported limited or no participation in seminars specifically addressing the training areas covered by the study. They generally considered competencies related to early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support as highly important, while their self-rated competence varied across the identified areas. The MWDS results provided the basis for determining and ranking the competencies requiring greater professional development attention. The respondents preferred LAC activities that involved practical exercises, peer learning, demonstrations, and classroom-based situations. Based on the identified priority needs, the study proposes focused LAC sessions that are practical, relevant, and responsive to the teachers' professional development needs. The proposed sessions may help strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills in providing appropriate support to learners with diverse needs in inclusive classroom settings.

Keywords: Inclusive education, training needs assessment, Non-SNED-Trained Secondary Teachers, Learning Action Cell Sessions, descriptive-correlational research, secondary education, Nug-as National High School, Cebu, Philippines.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has been strengthened in the Philippine basic education system through policies promoting equitable access and meaningful learning opportunities for learners with disabilities. DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021 provides policy guidelines for educational programs and services for learners with disabilities, while Republic Act No. 11650 institutionalizes inclusive education and support services (DepEd, 2021; Republic Act No. 11650, 2022). Within inclusive classrooms, teachers are often the first to observe learner concerns and are expected to recognize support needs, document observations, provide initial classroom support, coordinate with school personnel and parents, initiate referrals, and respond to challenging behavior through positive strategies. These responsibilities are essential to ensuring that no learner is left behind.

Philippine studies demonstrate the importance of teacher preparation in inclusive education. De Los Reyes et al. (2025) found that relevant training positively associates with teachers' knowledge and preparedness, while Vergara et al. (2025) identified needs in responding to diverse learners, applying Universal Design for Learning, using adaptive technologies, and strengthening classroom management. Marchan et al. (2025) further reported that inadequate resources and insufficient training affect the implementation of inclusive practices. International studies similarly emphasize that teacher preparation is central to inclusive education. Mavuso (2022) found that teachers require stronger competencies in recognizing learning difficulties, assessing needs, differentiating instruction, collaborating with support personnel, and making referrals. Crispel and Kasperski (2021) emphasized that special education training influences inclusive practices, while Triviño-Amigo et al. (2022) highlighted the need to examine preparation according to educational level, and McGuire et al. (2024) identified continuing gaps in classroom- and behavior-management preparation.

Although previous studies have provided important information about teachers' readiness for inclusive education, several research gaps remain. While De Los Reyes et al. (2025), Vergara et al. (2025), and Marchan et al. (2025) describe teachers' preparedness and challenges, they present a general picture and do not identify which specific competencies non-SNED-trained secondary teachers consider their highest training priorities. Moreover, limited studies have examined these concerns within Cebu Province, creating a need for localized evidence that reflects the realities of public secondary schools in the region. International findings from Mavuso (2022), Crispel and Kasperski (2021), Triviño-Amigo et al. (2022), and McGuire et al. (2024) were generated in educational systems that differ from the Philippine context and may not fully represent the professional development needs of secondary teachers under local policies, resources, and school conditions. More importantly, limited evidence systematically identifies priority training needs of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers, as most studies have focused on confidence, attitudes, or experiences rather than examining the gap between perceived importance and self-rated competence. Consequently, school heads and instructional leaders lack sufficient evidence to plan Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions and professional development programs that directly respond to teachers' actual needs.

This study addresses these gaps by assessing the specialized training needs of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers at Nug-as National High School using Borich's Needs Assessment Model (Borich, 1980). Specifically, it examines teachers' perceived importance and self-rated competence in three essential domains: early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. Unlike previous studies that primarily measured preparedness or implementation experiences, this study systematically identifies and ranks competency gaps using the Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score to determine areas requiring the most urgent professional development. By generating localized evidence from a public secondary school in Cebu Province, the study provides an

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evidence-based foundation for developing context-responsive Learning Action Cell sessions and other professional development initiatives aligned with teachers' actual classroom responsibilities. In doing so, it extends existing literature by offering a competency-based needs assessment that can guide school leaders and policymakers in planning more targeted, relevant, and sustainable teacher development programs.

Statement of the problem

This study assessed the priority training needs of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers at Nug-as National High School for School Year 2026–2027 as a basis for the development of a Contextualized Learning Action Cell.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of age and sex, highest educational attainment, teaching experience, teaching position, and attendance to seminars?
2. What is the level of importance of training non-SNED-trained secondary teachers for learner support needs in terms of early recognition, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behaviour support?
3. What is the level of competence of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers for learner support needs in terms of early recognition, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behaviour support?
4. What Learning Action Cell session arrangements do the teacher-respondents prefer in terms of training topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the importance of training and the competence of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers for learner support needs?
6. Based on the identified priority training needs and preferred session arrangements, what contextualized Learning Action Cell sessions may be proposed?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative descriptive survey research design guided by Borich's Needs Assessment Model (1980). The design was appropriate because it enabled the systematic assessment and prioritization of the professional development needs of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers at Nug-as National High School during School Year 2026–2027. Specifically, the study described the respondents' demographic and professional profiles, their perceived importance of selected competencies, their self-rated competence in performing these competencies, and their preferred arrangements for Learning Action Cell sessions. No variables were manipulated, and no causal relationships were established. Instead, the study determined the perceived gaps between the importance assigned to selected competencies and the respondents' perceived level of competence in carrying them out. The study was limited to the respondents' perceived training needs and self-assessments. It did not diagnose or classify learners, determine the prevalence of disabilities or other learner support needs, or objectively evaluate the actual classroom performance of teachers. It also did not implement or evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions. Instead, the identified competency priorities, domain rankings, overall competency ranking, and preferred session arrangements were used as the basis for formulating the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions for the identified school.

The competency assessment covered three major domains: early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. The early recognition domain included identifying persistent concerns related to learning, communication, participation, social interaction, and behavior; recording classroom observations objectively; providing appropriate initial classroom support; and determining when consultation or referral was needed. The school-based referral and collaboration domain covered consultation with appropriate school personnel, professional and respectful communication of learner concerns, coordination with parents or guardians, proper handling of confidential information and documentation, and adherence to appropriate school-based referral procedures. The positive behavior support domain included setting clear classroom expectations and routines, using preventive and positive behavior-support strategies, reinforcing appropriate learner behavior, responding calmly and consistently to challenging behavior, and promoting learner participation, self-regulation, and dignity.

The study followed a systematic procedure to ensure that its objectives were achieved in an organized and logical manner. The flow of the study was structured according to the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model, which guided the identification of the required data, the procedures for collecting and analyzing the information, and the development of the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions. The input phase involved identifying and gathering the information needed to assess the professional development needs of non-SNED-trained teachers. The inputs included the respondents' profiles in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, teaching position, subject or learning area handled, and previous training related to inclusive education, learner support, school-based referral, and behavior management. The inputs also covered the respondents' ratings of the perceived importance and self-rated competence of the identified competencies across the three domains of early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. In addition, the respondents' preferred Learning Action Cell session arrangements, including training topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms, were included as part of the study inputs.

The process phase covered the procedures used for data collection, processing, and analysis. The researcher first secured permission from the appropriate school and education authorities through formal communication. After approval was granted, the purpose, scope, and procedures of the study were explained to the qualified respondents, and their informed consent was obtained. The researcher then administered the structured questionnaire to the respondents and provided the necessary instructions for completing the instrument. After the questionnaires were retrieved, the responses were checked for completeness and organized for data processing. The collected data were encoded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical procedures. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the respondents' demographic and professional profiles. Mean scores were used to describe the perceived importance and self-rated competence of the identified competencies. The Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score (MWDS) based on Borich's Needs Assessment Model was used to determine and rank the priority training needs. The respondents' preferred Learning Action Cell session arrangements were also summarized using appropriate descriptive statistics. The results were then interpreted according to the objectives of the study. Finally, the findings from the data analysis were used to identify the priority competencies and areas requiring professional development, and these results served as the basis for formulating the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions for the participating teachers. As depicted in the flow of the study, the structured training-needs assessment questionnaire was distributed to the non-SNED-trained teachers and retrieved after they had completed it. The responses were checked for completeness, coded, organized, and tabulated for statistical analysis. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the respondents' profiles and preferred Learning Action Cell

session arrangements, while weighted means were used to summarize their perceived importance and self-rated competence. Borich's Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score (MWDS) was calculated for each competency and ranked to determine the areas with the highest priority for professional development. Finally, the processed data were analyzed and interpreted in relation to the research questions, and the findings provided the basis for developing the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions.

The study will be conducted at Nug-as National High School, a public secondary school located in the District of Alcoy, Cebu. The school is situated in a mountainous community, as shown in the location map of the research environment, and provides education to learners from Grades 7 to 12. It has 16 class sections across the junior and senior high school levels, with an estimated enrollment of 568 learners and a teaching force of 31 teachers. As a regular public secondary school, the institution serves learners with different academic, behavioral, communication, social, and participation needs. Nug-as National High School conducts school-based professional development through mechanisms such as the Learning Action Cell (LAC), which provides teachers with opportunities to discuss classroom concerns, share practices, and improve their professional knowledge and skills. LAC activities may address common instructional and school-related concerns identified by teachers and school personnel. Other school-based support mechanisms, such as consultations with school administrators, guidance personnel, and designated personnel responsible for learner support, may also provide teachers with opportunities to seek assistance when classroom concerns arise. However, the availability of existing LAC activities does not necessarily mean that all specific competencies required in inclusive classroom situations have been sufficiently addressed. Regular LAC sessions may cover a range of instructional and professional concerns, while some teachers may still need more focused learning opportunities related to supporting learners with persistent or varied needs. Thus, identifying teachers' priority needs can help determine whether additional or more targeted LAC sessions are necessary rather than merely repeating topics already included in existing professional-development activities. The school was selected as the research environment because it provides a relevant setting for examining the professional-development needs of teachers who do not have formal SNED training. The presence of existing LAC and other school-based support mechanisms provides a basis for examining the difference between available professional-development opportunities and the specific competencies that teachers still need to strengthen. The results of the needs assessment will therefore be used to develop proposed LAC sessions that complement existing school programs and focus on areas requiring greater attention. In this way, the proposed sessions are intended to respond to an identified training gap and provide practical support that can complement, rather than duplicate, the school's current professional-development activities.

The respondents of the study will be the non-SNED-trained secondary teachers of Nug-as National High School during School Year 2026–2027. Total enumeration will be used, meaning that all teachers who satisfy the required qualifications will be invited to participate in the study. This method is suitable because the identified group is limited in number and well-defined. Including all qualified teachers will allow the researcher to obtain a more complete picture of their professional-development needs within the school. The respondents must be currently teaching at the secondary level and must not have a formal specialization in Special Needs Education. They must also be handling regular classes where learners may have different learning, communication, participation, social, or behavioral needs. Participation will be voluntary, and teachers must provide informed consent before answering the research instrument. Teachers who have a formal SNED specialization or extensive formal SNED training, are not currently assigned to regular secondary classes, are on leave during the data-

collection period, or choose not to participate will not be included. The respondents will provide information about the competencies they consider important and their current level of competence in the areas covered by the study. Their responses will be used to determine the priority areas for professional development through Borich's Needs Assessment Model. The results will provide a basis for developing proposed Learning Action Cell sessions that are appropriate to the needs of the participating teachers and the context of Nug-as National High School. The distribution of the respondents by gender shows a total of 31 respondents, equivalent to 100.00%, of whom 8 were male, representing 25.81%, and 23 were female, representing 74.19%. A structured questionnaire was administered to the 31 teacher-respondents.

The primary instrument of the study will be a researcher-developed structured questionnaire designed to reflect the comparison under the three domains to be assessed for the perceived training needs. It will be used to gather quantitative data on the perceived importance and self-rated competence of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers in selected competencies related to inclusive classroom practice. The instrument will also obtain information on the respondents' preferred arrangements for Learning Action Cell sessions. Its content will be anchored on Borich's Needs Assessment Model and the three domains of the study: early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. The questionnaire will be intended solely for the non-SNED-trained secondary teacher-respondents of Nug-as National High School and will be divided into five parts. Part I will gather the demographic and professional characteristics of the respondents, including age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, teaching position, subject or learning area handled, and previous training attended related to inclusive education, learner support, school-based referral, or behavior management, using a checklist and fill-in-the-blank format as appropriate. Part II will contain competency statements related to recognizing persistent concerns in learning, communication, participation, social interaction, and behavior; documenting classroom observations objectively; providing appropriate initial classroom support; and determining when consultation or referral may be necessary. Part III will assess competencies related to consulting appropriate school personnel, communicating learner concerns professionally and respectfully, coordinating with parents or guardians, maintaining confidentiality and proper documentation, and following established school-based referral procedures. Part IV will include competency statements on establishing clear classroom expectations and routines, applying preventive and positive behavior-support strategies, reinforcing appropriate behavior, responding calmly and consistently to behavioral concerns, and promoting learner participation, self-regulation, and dignity. For Parts II, III, and IV, each competency will be rated according to two dimensions. The first dimension is perceived importance, which refers to the extent to which the respondent considers the competency essential in supporting learners in an inclusive classroom. The second dimension is self-rated competence, which refers to the respondent's perceived ability to perform the competency in current teaching practice. Both dimensions were measured using a five-point rating scale. For perceived importance, the scale was interpreted as 5 – Very Important, 4 – Important, 3 – Moderately Important, 2 – Slightly Important, and 1 – Not Important. For self-rated competence, the scale was interpreted as 5 – Highly Competent, 4 – Competent, 3 – Moderately Competent, 2 – Slightly Competent, and 1 – Not Competent. The paired ratings will provide the data needed to compute the Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score for each competency. Competencies considered highly important but given lower self-rated competence scores will receive higher priority for professional development. Part V, the final part, will obtain the respondents' preferences regarding possible LAC training topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms. The responses will help ensure that the proposed sessions are not only based on the identified priority competencies but are also appropriate to

the respondents' professional context and preferred ways of learning. Before its administration, the questionnaire will be submitted to qualified experts in inclusive education, research, and educational measurement for content validation. Their comments and recommendations will be used to improve the clarity, relevance, organization, and alignment of the items with the research questions. The revised instrument may also undergo pilot testing among teachers who possess characteristics similar to those of the intended respondents but who will not be included in the actual study. The results will be used to determine the reliability and comprehensibility of the questionnaire before final administration.

The process of collecting data for this study will be carried out in three stages: the Preliminary Stage, Data Gathering Stage, and Post–Data Gathering Stage. Each stage will be systematically implemented to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and ethical integrity of the research process. The study will begin with the preparation of the researcher-developed structured questionnaire based on the objectives, Statement of the Problem, three competency domains, and Borich's Needs Assessment Model. The instrument will be submitted to qualified experts in inclusive education, research, and educational measurement for content validation, and their comments and recommendations will be incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, organization, and alignment of the questionnaire items. When necessary, the revised instrument will be pilot-tested among teachers with characteristics similar to those of the intended respondents but who will not participate in the actual study. After the instrument has been finalized, the researcher will secure formal approval from the appropriate school and education authorities through a transmittal letter. Coordination with the school head or designated school representative will then be undertaken to identify the teachers who meet the inclusion criteria. The purpose, objectives, procedures, voluntary nature, and confidentiality provisions of the study will be explained to the eligible respondents. Each participant will be asked to sign an informed consent form before taking part in the study, and their decision to participate or decline will not affect their professional standing. In the data-gathering stage, the primary instrument will be a printed, structured training-needs assessment questionnaire intended for the non-SNED-trained secondary teachers of Nug-as National High School. The questionnaire will contain five parts: Part I will gather the respondents' demographic and professional profiles; Parts II, III, and IV will assess the perceived importance and self-rated competence of the respondents in early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support, respectively; and Part V will gather their preferred Learning Action Cell session arrangements in terms of topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms. The researcher will personally distribute the questionnaires to all eligible respondents under the total-enumeration approach. Clear instructions will be provided before the respondents answer the instrument, and questions concerning the completion of the questionnaire will be addressed without suggesting or influencing any response. To minimize disruption to regular classes and teaching responsibilities, the respondents will complete the questionnaires during their free periods, vacant periods, or other available non-teaching hours. The accomplished questionnaires will be personally retrieved by the researcher and checked for completeness. Respondents will not be required to write their names on the instrument, and all collected information will be handled confidentially. Completed questionnaires and encoded data will be secured and used only for the purposes of the study. In the post-data-gathering stage, the responses will be coded, organized, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis. The respondents' profiles and preferred LAC session arrangements will be summarized, while the perceived-importance and self-rated-competence ratings will be analyzed using weighted means. The Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score will be computed for each competency to identify and rank the priority

training needs of the respondents. The results will then be analyzed and interpreted in relation to the research questions. The highest-ranked training needs, together with the respondents' preferred session arrangements, will serve as the basis for formulating proposed Learning Action Cell sessions for non-SNED-trained secondary teachers at Nug-as National High School. The proposed sessions will not be implemented or evaluated within the scope of the study.

The researcher gives careful attention to ethical standards in carrying out the study entitled "Training Needs Assessment of Non-SNED-Trained Secondary Teachers Handling Inclusive Classrooms: Basis for Learning Action Cell Sessions." The rights, dignity, privacy, and welfare of the participating teachers are respected throughout the research. Each respondent is allowed to decide freely whether to take part in the study. The information gathered is used strictly for academic purposes and is handled responsibly. The researcher also maintains honesty and fairness when collecting, examining, and reporting the data. The study follows the research policies of the institution and observes the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Permission is obtained from the appropriate authorities of Nug-as National High School before the survey is conducted. The respondents are informed about the purpose of the study, the activities they will complete, and their rights as participants. An informed consent form is given and explained before the questionnaire is answered. With regard to conflict of interest, the researcher declares that no conflict of interest is present in the conduct of the study. The research is completed for academic purposes without financial or personal interests that could affect the results. The researcher maintains objectivity when gathering and interpreting the participants' responses, and the findings are reported based on the actual information collected. With regard to privacy and confidentiality, the personal information and responses of the participating teachers are kept private. The researcher collects only data that are necessary for addressing the objectives of the study. Completed questionnaires and other research records are kept in a secure place and are not shared with unauthorized individuals. The results are presented as group findings so that individual respondents cannot easily be identified. In the informed consent process, each participant is informed about the purpose and general procedures of the research before answering the questionnaire. The researcher explains the expected participation and the intended use of the information provided. Respondents are reminded that participation is voluntary and that they may choose to stop participating without receiving any penalty. Consent is secured only after the participants have received enough information to make an informed decision. In terms of the protection of participants, the participants are non-SNED-trained secondary teachers handling inclusive classrooms at Nug-as National High School. The researcher ensures that they are treated with courtesy and respect throughout the research process. The questions are focused on their training needs, competence, and preferred Learning Action Cell arrangements and are not intended to criticize individual teachers. The researcher also avoids procedures that could cause unnecessary pressure, embarrassment, or discrimination. In the recruitment process, the respondents are invited based on the qualifications established for the study. Eligible teachers are given clear information about the research before they decide whether to participate. They are provided with adequate time to consider their participation without pressure from the researcher or other persons, and no respondent is required or forced to participate. As to risk assessment, the study is expected to have minimal risk because participation mainly involves answering a research questionnaire about professional training needs and inclusive classroom practices. The questions are designed to avoid unnecessary personal or sensitive information. Measures are taken to protect the respondents from possible privacy or professional concerns, and participants may also choose to discontinue their participation if they feel uncomfortable. Regarding the benefits and rights of participants, the respondents are informed that they have the right to refuse participation or withdraw from the

study at any point without penalty. While no direct financial reward is provided, their responses may help identify areas where teachers need additional knowledge and skills in inclusive education. The findings may be useful in planning Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions that respond to the actual needs of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers. The study may also help school administrators and other education personnel develop suitable professional development activities that can improve support for diverse learners.

The data obtained from the validated questionnaire were organized, processed, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical techniques. The statistical tools were selected based on the research questions and the type of data collected. These included frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, Borich's Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score (MWDS), rank, and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson's r). Frequency count was used to determine the number of respondents belonging to each category of the profile variables. These variables included age, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, teaching position, subject or learning area handled, and previous training related to inclusive education, learner support, school-based referral, or behavior management. Frequency counts were also used to determine the number of respondents who selected particular LAC topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms, which provided a clear numerical description of the distribution of responses. Percentage was used to determine the proportion of respondents represented in each category. It was computed based on the total number of respondents and was presented together with the frequency counts. This statistical measure helped describe the respondents' profile and summarize their preferences regarding the proposed LAC sessions, and percentage values also made it easier to compare the distribution of responses across different categories. Weighted mean was used to summarize the respondents' ratings of the perceived importance and self-rated competence for each identified competency. The competencies were grouped into three domains: (1) early recognition of learner support needs, (2) school-based referral and collaboration, and (3) positive behavior support. For perceived importance, the weighted mean showed the general level of importance that respondents assigned to each competency. For self-rated competence, it represented the respondents' perceived ability to perform the competency in their teaching practice. The resulting means were interpreted according to the established rating scale. These measures reflected the respondents' perceptions and were not treated as objective assessments of their actual classroom performance. Standard deviation was used to determine the extent to which the respondents' ratings varied from the mean. It was applied to the perceived importance and self-rated competence scores for each competency. A smaller standard deviation indicated that the respondents' ratings were relatively close to one another, while a larger value indicated greater variation in their responses. This measure helped determine whether the respondents had generally similar or differing perceptions regarding the importance and competence associated with the identified competencies.

The assessment of professional development needs followed a systematic process in which teacher ratings led to discrepancy scores, which led to the Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score (MWDS) per competency, followed by the ranking within each domain, the ranking of the three domains, and finally the overall ranking of all competencies. The first stage involved recording the importance and competence ratings provided by each of the respondents for every competency. These ratings served as the primary and raw numerical data for the needs assessment. The importance ratings indicated how essential the teachers considered each competency, while the competence ratings reflected their perceived ability to perform the corresponding practice. The two sets of ratings were analyzed separately because a competency could be regarded as highly important even when teachers perceived themselves as having a

lower level of competence in performing it. For each competency, the mean importance score was computed by adding the importance ratings given by all respondents and dividing the sum by the total number of respondents, expressed as $\bar{I} = \Sigma I / N$, where $\bar{I}$ represented the mean importance score, ΣI represented the sum of the importance ratings, and N represented the total number of respondents. The resulting mean indicated the general level of importance assigned to the competency, and a higher mean importance score indicated that the competency was considered more essential in supporting learners in inclusive classrooms. The same procedure was applied to obtain the mean competence score, expressed as $\bar{C} = \Sigma C / N$, where $\bar{C}$ represented the mean competence score, ΣC represented the sum of the competence ratings, and N represented the total number of respondents. The mean competence score represented the respondents' general perception of their ability to perform the competency. A higher mean competence score indicated a higher perceived level of capability, whereas a lower score indicated an area where teachers might have needed additional knowledge, guidance, or practice. These mean scores provided the basis for determining the discrepancy between the perceived importance of each competency and the teachers' self-rated competence.

The second stage involved computing the discrepancy score of each respondent for every competency. The discrepancy score was obtained by subtracting the teacher's competence rating from the corresponding importance rating, expressed as $D = I – C$, where D represented the discrepancy score, I represented the individual importance rating, and C represented the individual competence rating. A positive discrepancy score indicated that the teacher considered the competency more important than his or her current level of competence. A discrepancy score of zero indicated that the importance and competence ratings were equal. A negative discrepancy score indicated that the respondent's competence rating was higher than the importance rating. The discrepancy score represented the perceived difference between the importance assigned to a competency and the teacher's perceived ability to perform it.

The third stage involved computing the MWDS for each competency. Before obtaining the MWDS, each respondent's discrepancy score was weighted using the mean importance score of the corresponding competency, expressed as $WD = (I – C) \times \bar{I}$, where WD represented the weighted discrepancy score, $I – C$ represented the individual discrepancy score, and $\bar{I}$ represented the mean importance score of the competency. Weighting the discrepancy according to mean importance gave greater consideration to gaps involving competencies that were regarded as highly important than to similar gaps involving competencies with lower importance ratings. The weighted discrepancy scores of all respondents were then added and divided by the total number of respondents to obtain the MWDS for each competency, expressed as $MWDS = \Sigma[(I – C) \times \bar{I}] / N$, where MWDS represented the Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score, I represented the individual respondent's importance rating, C represented the individual respondent's competence rating, $\bar{I}$ represented the mean importance rating of the competency, and N represented the total number of respondents. In practical terms, the researcher computed the discrepancy score for each respondent, multiplied each discrepancy by the competency's mean importance score, summed the resulting weighted discrepancy scores, and divided the total by the number of respondents. This procedure produced one MWDS for each of the 14 competencies. For each competency, the competence rating of every respondent was subtracted from the corresponding importance rating, the resulting discrepancy was multiplied by the mean importance score of that competency, and the weighted discrepancy scores were then summed and divided by the total number of respondents. The MWDS could also be obtained by multiplying the mean discrepancy score by the mean importance score, expressed as $MWDS = \bar{D} \times \bar{I}$, where $\bar{D}$ represented the average discrepancy score of the respondents and $\bar{I}$ represented the mean importance score of the competency. This simplified formula produced the same result because the same mean importance score was applied to all discrepancy scores under a particular competency. However, the complete

MWDS formula was used in presenting the statistical procedure because it showed how the individual ratings contributed to the final competency score. The MWDS served as the primary measure for determining training priorities. A higher positive MWDS indicated a larger weighted gap between the perceived importance of a competency and the respondents' self-rated competence, and thus represented a greater need for training. A lower positive MWDS indicated a smaller training need, while an MWDS of zero suggested that the average importance and competence ratings were equal. A negative MWDS indicated that the respondents' competence ratings were higher than their importance ratings. Consistent with Borich's model, the MWDS values were interpreted mainly through ranking rather than through fixed numerical cut-off points. Accordingly, a higher positive MWDS indicated a larger gap between the importance of a competency and the respondents' perceived competence, and competencies with higher positive MWDS values represented greater priorities for professional development, whereas lower MWDS values indicated smaller perceived gaps. The MWDS results were used to determine which competencies required greater attention in the proposed LAC sessions.

The fourth stage involved ranking the competencies within each of the three domains. The MWDS values of the competencies under early recognition of learner support needs were arranged from highest to lowest, and the same procedure was applied to the domains of school-based referral and collaboration and positive behavior support. The competency with the highest MWDS within each domain was identified as the highest-priority training need in that area. This domain-based ranking showed which specific skills or practices required greater attention under each major area of inclusive classroom support. Rank was used to arrange the competencies according to their MWDS values from highest to lowest. The competency with the highest MWDS was assigned the highest priority because it represented the largest weighted discrepancy between importance and perceived competence. The ranking was performed within each competency domain and across all identified competencies, and the resulting order helped determine which specific areas should receive greater emphasis in the proposed LAC sessions. The fifth stage involved determining and ranking the overall training priority of the three domains. The domain MWDS was obtained by adding the MWDS values of the competencies within a domain and dividing the sum by the number of competencies included, expressed as Domain MWDS = Σ Competency MWDS / Number of Competencies in the Domain. The average MWDS was used instead of the total MWDS because the three domains contained different numbers of competencies. Early recognition of learner support needs contained four competencies, while school-based referral and collaboration and positive behavior support each contained five competencies. Using the average provided a more appropriate basis for comparing the domains. The domain with the highest average MWDS was ranked first and interpreted as the area with the greatest need for training attention. The final stage involved combining all 14 competencies from the three domains and arranging them from the highest to the lowest MWDS. This overall ranking identified the competencies that represented the most pressing training needs of the respondents regardless of domain classification. The analysis therefore provided three levels of findings: the ranking of competencies within each domain, the ranking of the three domains, and the overall ranking of all competencies. These results provided a basis for selecting and sequencing the content of the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between the respondents' perceived importance of the competencies and their self-rated competence. This test was appropriate because the study examined the association between two sets of numerical ratings obtained from the same

respondents. The Pearson's r value indicated the direction and strength of the relationship between the two variables. A positive coefficient indicated that higher importance ratings tended to be associated with higher competence ratings, while a negative coefficient indicated an inverse relationship. A value close to zero indicated a weak or negligible linear relationship. The significance of the computed correlation was tested using the predetermined level of significance. The null hypothesis was evaluated to determine whether the observed relationship between perceived importance and self-rated competence was statistically significant. The result was used to support the interpretation of whether the two measures were meaningfully associated among the respondents.

Borich's Needs Assessment Model served as the analytical framework of the study because it considered both the perceived importance of a competency and the respondents' perceived ability to perform it. Thus, training needs were not identified solely from low competence ratings. Instead, the assessment considered the extent to which a competency was viewed as important and the extent to which teachers felt capable of performing it. This approach helped identify competencies that were both important to inclusive classroom practice and associated with perceived areas for professional improvement. The respondents' demographic and professional profiles were summarized using frequencies and percentages. The perceived importance and self-rated competence scores were described using means. The respondents' preferred training topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms were also summarized using frequencies, percentages, or mean scores, depending on the format of the questionnaire items. The MWDS rankings and the preferred LAC session arrangements collectively served as the basis for developing relevant, practical, and context-responsive Learning Action Cell sessions for the identified teacher-respondents. The statistical results were interpreted collectively to address the research questions of the study. Frequency counts and percentages described the respondents' profiles and LAC preferences. Weighted means and standard deviations summarized the perceived importance and self-rated competence of the identified competencies. Borich's MWDS determined the priority areas for professional development, while rank established the order of the competencies according to training priority. Pearson's r was used to determine the relationship between perceived importance and self-rated competence. The combined findings provided an evidence-based basis for identifying the competencies that required greater professional development attention. The results were then used in formulating the proposed Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, including their priority topics, learning activities, delivery approaches, and support mechanisms.

The study entitled "Training Needs Assessment of Non-SNED-Trained Secondary Teachers Handling Inclusive Classrooms: Basis for Learning Action Cell Sessions" used a five-point Likert scale to organize and interpret the responses of the participants. The scale was applied to the teachers' views about the need for training, their ability to provide support to learners, and their choices for the proposed Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions. Each response was assigned a numerical value to make the data easier to summarize and compare. The weighted mean was then matched with the appropriate descriptive category. The following scales served as the basis for interpreting the results of the study. To describe how necessary the respondents considered training for improving their knowledge and skills in handling diverse learners in inclusive secondary classrooms, the level of importance of training was interpreted as follows. A scale of 5 with a numerical rating of 4.21–5.00 was described as Very High, meaning that training is viewed as strongly needed to help teachers respond effectively to the varied needs of learners. A scale of 4 with a numerical rating of 3.41–4.20 was described as High, meaning that training is considered important in improving teachers' classroom knowledge and skills. A scale of 3 with a numerical rating of 2.61–3.40 was described as Moderate, meaning that training is seen as reasonably useful for developing teachers' ability to

support learners. A scale of 2 with a numerical rating of 1.81–2.60 was described as Low, meaning that training is viewed as having limited importance in strengthening inclusive classroom practices. A scale of 1 with a numerical rating of 1.00–1.80 was described as Very Low, meaning that training is considered minimally important for improving teachers' ability to support learners in inclusive settings. To determine the respondents' level of competence in recognizing and responding to learner support needs in inclusive classrooms, the level of competence of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers was interpreted as follows. A scale of 5 with a numerical rating of 4.21–5.00 was described as Outstanding, meaning that the teacher shows excellent ability in applying appropriate practices and providing support to learners with different needs. A scale of 4 with a numerical rating of 3.41–4.20 was described as Very Satisfactory, meaning that the teacher demonstrates strong skills in managing classroom needs and providing suitable learner support. A scale of 3 with a numerical rating of 2.61–3.40 was described as Satisfactory, meaning that the teacher demonstrates adequate skills but may still benefit from improvement in selected areas. A scale of 2 with a numerical rating of 1.81–2.60 was described as Fair, meaning that the teacher shows emerging skills and needs additional guidance, practice, and professional support. A scale of 1 with a numerical rating of 1.00–1.80 was described as Poor, meaning that the teacher demonstrates limited skills and requires further training to provide effective learner support. To determine how strongly respondents favored the proposed LAC arrangements, particularly the training topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms, the preferred Learning Action Cell (LAC) session arrangements were interpreted as follows. A scale of 5 with a numerical rating of 4.21–5.00 was described as Highly Preferred, meaning that the LAC arrangement is strongly favored and is considered highly suitable for the teachers' identified learning needs. A scale of 4 with a numerical rating of 3.41–4.20 was described as Preferred, meaning that the LAC arrangement is favored and is considered useful for supporting teachers' professional development. A scale of 3 with a numerical rating of 2.61–3.40 was described as Moderately Preferred, meaning that the LAC arrangement is acceptable and may provide some assistance in addressing teachers' learning needs. A scale of 2 with a numerical rating of 1.81–2.60 was described as Less Preferred, meaning that the LAC arrangement receives limited support and may not fully match the teachers' preferred learning approach. A scale of 1 with a numerical rating of 1.00–1.80 was described as Not Preferred, meaning that the LAC arrangement receives very little support and is considered unsuitable for the respondents' identified training needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the study entitled "Training Needs Assessment of Non-SNED-Trained Secondary Teachers Handling Inclusive Classrooms: Basis for Learning Action Cell Sessions." The analysis draws on data gathered from 31 secondary teacher-respondents using a survey questionnaire. The instrument gathered the respondents' profile, their ratings of the importance of training and of their own competence across three learner support components (early recognition, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behaviour support), and their preferred Learning Action Cell (LAC) session arrangements. The data were treated with frequencies, percentages, weighted means, standard deviations, and rankings for multiple-response items, and with a Pearson r test of the relationship between the importance of training and teacher competence, interpreted against a 0.05 level of significance (two-tailed). The importance scale was interpreted as 4.21 to 5.00 Highly Important, 3.41 to 4.20 Important, 2.61 to 3.40 Moderately Important, 1.81 to 2.60 Less Important, and 1.00 to 1.80 Not Important. The competence scale was interpreted as 4.21 to

5.00 Highly Competent, 3.41 to 4.20 Competent, 2.61 to 3.40 Moderately Competent, 1.81 to 2.60 Less Competent, and 1.00 to 1.80 Not Competent. The discussion is grounded in the data gathered, and the results are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study. These objectives are to describe the respondents' profile, to determine the importance of training and the level of competence in the learner support needs, to identify the preferred LAC session arrangements, and to test the relationship between importance of training and competence. The findings are meant to guide the selection of topics and activities for LAC sessions on inclusive teaching practices, classroom management, assessment, learner support, and teacher collaboration.

Profile of the respondents

The 31 secondary teachers who participated were described by age and sex, and the profile establishes the context of their preparation for inclusive classroom responsibilities. The largest age group was 29 to 34 years, with 13 respondents or 41.94%. Eleven respondents or 35.48% were aged 23 to 28 years, six respondents or 19.35% were above 40 years old, and only one respondent or 3.23% was in the 35 to 40 age category. In terms of sex, 25 respondents or 80.65% were female and six or 19.35% were male. The participants were therefore mainly female teachers, and most belonged to the 23 to 34 age range. Age should not be the sole basis for judging competence or training requirements, because teachers of different ages vary in experience, preparation, and exposure to inclusive education. Sabanal, Delos Reyes, Cabigon, and Tenerife-Cañete (2025) examined age, gender, and teaching-related factors in relation to the readiness of secondary teachers for inclusive education. They supported considering teacher characteristics while also examining specific competencies in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices. In the present study, age and sex are descriptive information about the composition of the group, and the training needs identified in the later tables remain the primary basis for professional development priorities. Because the respondents come from different age groups and backgrounds, LAC activities should address common instructional needs relevant to inclusive classrooms. De Los Reyes, Delos Reyes, Cabigon, and Pinili (2025) identified areas of teacher preparedness in inclusive education that can be strengthened through structured and continuing professional support. Diaz, Delos Reyes, Pinili, Añero, and Cabigon (2025) examined the relationship between teachers' training experiences and their readiness to implement inclusive teaching practices. The demographic information thus provides context, while the complete training needs assessment guides the selection of specific LAC topics.

The respondents' highest educational attainment shows that 16 respondents or 51.61% had earned master's units, making this the largest group. Fourteen respondents or 45.16% were college graduates, and only one respondent or 3.23% was a master's graduate, for a total of 31 respondents or 100.00%. Most teachers have therefore pursued education beyond the bachelor's degree, although very few have completed graduate studies. Since the respondents are non-SNED-trained, their educational attainment may serve as a foundation for further professional learning focused on inclusive education. Benemerito et al. (2025) emphasized the value of professional development in strengthening teachers' instructional practices for inclusive classroom settings. Having master's units does not necessarily mean that teachers have received specialized preparation in special and inclusive education, so training should focus on practical competencies applicable to learners with different abilities, needs, and learning characteristics. Deala and Lopez (2024) reported that LAC activities addressing learner diversity, pedagogy, assessment, technology, and curriculum contextualization contributed to teachers' personal and professional development. Educational attainment should not be the sole indicator of competence, and areas such as differentiated instruction, inclusive classroom management, appropriate assessment, learner support, and collaboration may be considered in the training

program. Vega and Orleans (2025) found that LAC can function as an in-house professional development approach that supports teachers' pedagogical knowledge and professional growth. Dela Cruz and Baguio (2024) reported a positive relationship between LAC practices and teachers' self-efficacy, which highlights the value of collaborative professional learning. These findings support LAC sessions that are practical, inclusive, and responsive to the participants' needs.

Teaching experience was distributed as follows. Sixteen respondents or 51.61% had 1 to 5 years of experience, making this the largest group. Ten respondents or 32.26% had taught for 6 to 10 years, and five respondents or 16.13% had 11 to 15 years, for a total of 31 respondents or 100.00%. Most respondents therefore have less than 11 years of teaching experience, and 83.87% have between 1 and 10 years. This suggests that many of the teachers may benefit from continuing professional development focused on the practical demands of inclusive classrooms. Opoku and Nketsia (2025) found that teachers may have some exposure to inclusive education yet still require additional professional development to respond to diverse learning needs. Years of service alone do not indicate adequate preparation for inclusive education, since teachers may still need to improve their skills in adapting instruction, supporting different learners, and managing varied classroom needs. Wood et al. (2025) reported that effective professional development for inclusive education commonly includes practical application, feedback, and training on inclusive teaching practices, which supports making the proposed sessions practical and connected to actual classroom situations. The variation in experience also allows teachers to learn from one another, with less experienced teachers benefiting from guidance and mentoring and more experienced teachers contributing classroom practices. The sessions should therefore include group discussions, sharing of strategies, and collaborative problem-solving rather than formal presentations alone. Johansson and Herrebrøden (2025) emphasized that professional learning communities can strengthen collaboration and develop teachers' competencies for inclusive practices.

By teaching position, 20 respondents or 64.52% were Teacher I, five or 16.13% were Teacher II, and six or 19.35% were Teacher III, for a total of 31 respondents or 100.00%. Teacher I is thus the largest group represented. This should not be read as proof that Teacher I respondents have greater training needs, but it identifies the main group in the assessment. Benemerito et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of professional development in strengthening teachers' practices in inclusive classroom environments. Gonzaga et al. (2024) reported that general education teachers in Cebu experienced challenges in implementing inclusive education and identified the need for additional training, particularly in collaboration skills. Professional learning activities may therefore give attention to cooperation, classroom strategies, and learner support, and may let teachers discuss classroom concerns and develop solutions together. The presence of Teacher I, Teacher II, and Teacher III respondents creates an opportunity for professional exchange through discussions, demonstrations, reflection activities, and collaborative problem-solving. Vega and Orleans (2025) found that LAC can function as an in-school professional development activity that supports teacher learning, collaboration, instructional improvement, and professional competence, and that it is more meaningful when teachers actively share and apply knowledge.

Seminar attendance shows that all 31 respondents, or 100.00%, had not attended seminars related to inclusive education, so the total is 31 or 100.00%. Teachers may have had limited opportunities for professional learning specifically focused on inclusive classroom practices. De Los Reyes et al. (2025) found that secondary teachers showed gaps in their knowledge, skills, and practices in implementing inclusive education and recommended targeted professional development. The complete absence of seminar participation therefore

points to a significant need for organized training. Bermudo et al. (2025) reported that relevant teacher training was an important factor associated with preparedness for inclusive education among Filipino high school teachers. Lauron et al. (2025) found a positive relationship between professional development participation and teachers' readiness to teach diverse learners. The sessions may include practical discussions and activities on differentiated instruction, classroom management, learner support, assessment, and collaboration with parents and other school personnel. Benemerito et al. (2024) reported that professional development can contribute to improved pedagogical practices in inclusive settings, and Jugan et al. (2024) emphasized continuing capacity-building and professional support. The 100.00% non-attendance rate provides a clear basis for using LAC sessions as a school-based approach to strengthen teachers' preparation.

Importance of training for learner support needs

For early recognition, the respondents rated training as Highly Important, with an aggregate mean of 4.52 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.56. The highest-rated indicator was recognizing persistent concerns in learning, communication, participation, social interaction, and behaviour, with a weighted mean of 4.71 and a standard deviation of 0.46. Providing appropriate initial classroom support obtained 4.68 (SD 0.54), documenting classroom observations objectively obtained 4.39 (SD 0.67), and capacity to determine when consultation or school-based referral is necessary obtained the lowest mean of 4.29 (SD 0.59). All four indicators were interpreted as Highly Important. Teachers thus consider noticing possible learner difficulties early an essential competency, and they also value responding appropriately and communicating observations to the proper school personnel. Donato (2024) found that teachers involved in identifying learners with disabilities encountered challenges in applying child-find practices, which highlights the need to strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills for early identification. Jugan et al. (2024) reported that elementary teachers generally expressed positive attitudes toward inclusive education but also identified concerns related to training, resources, and support. This supports practical training in observation, initial classroom assistance, consultation, and referral. Lauron et al. (2025) found that participation in professional development and institutional support were positively associated with teachers' readiness for inclusive education. The aggregate mean of 4.52 indicates that early recognition should be a major component of the proposed training program.

For school-based referral and collaboration, the aggregate mean was 4.81 and the aggregate standard deviation was 0.41, interpreted as Highly Important. Communicating observed learner concerns professionally and respectfully received the highest weighted mean of 4.87 (SD 0.34), followed by maintaining confidentiality and proper documentation at 4.84 (SD 0.37). Coordinating with parents or guardians obtained 4.81 (SD 0.40), consulting appropriate personnel obtained 4.77 (SD 0.43), and following appropriate school-based referral procedures obtained 4.74 (SD 0.51). All indicators were Highly Important. Teachers need to communicate learner concerns clearly while protecting information about the learner, and they recognize the need to work with families, school personnel, and others who can assist learners. Alsudairy (2024) reported that targeted professional development can improve teachers' co-teaching and collaboration skills. Schnepel et al. (2025) found that collaboration between general and special education teachers is associated with stronger inclusive teaching practices and better satisfaction with professional collaboration. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.34 to 0.51, indicate that ratings were generally consistent. Fajardo and Lozano (2025) reported that non-SPED teachers in Philippine inclusive classrooms experienced challenges related to inadequate training and emphasized the value of professional development and support from school stakeholders. These findings provide a strong basis for LAC sessions on

realistic referral situations, teamwork, parent communication, confidentiality, and proper documentation.

For positive behaviour support, the aggregate mean was 4.61 and the aggregate standard deviation was 0.45, interpreted as Highly Important. Using preventive and positive behaviour-support strategies received the highest weighted mean of 4.87 (SD 0.34), followed by establishing clear classroom expectations and routines at 4.81 (SD 0.40). Reinforcing appropriate learner behaviour obtained 4.52 (SD 0.51), promoting learner participation, self-regulation, and dignity obtained 4.48 (SD 0.51), and responding calmly and consistently to challenging behaviour obtained the lowest mean of 4.35 (SD 0.49). All five indicators were Highly Important. Teachers consider it important to prevent behaviour problems and to create conditions where learners understand expected behaviours. Torelli et al. (2024) demonstrated that focused teacher training can improve the use of positive behaviour-support practices. LAC sessions should therefore give teachers practice in preventive strategies, classroom routines, and positive ways of guiding behaviour. The means of 4.52 and 4.48 suggest that teachers need approaches that recognize appropriate behaviour and encourage responsible participation, so positive behaviour support involves strengthening desirable behaviours through encouragement and constructive feedback as well as correcting inappropriate actions. Chow et al. (2025) found that mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms may require additional professional development to strengthen their behavioural-management knowledge and skills. The lowest mean of 4.35 for responding calmly and consistently to challenging behaviour suggests that teachers may need support in responding to difficult situations without relying on punitive or inconsistent approaches. The aggregate standard deviation of 0.45 shows that respondents generally had similar views. Austin et al. (2024) found that professional development involving positive behavioural interventions and supports can influence teachers' approaches to school discipline. Scenarios, role-playing, case analysis, guided practice, and reflection may therefore be used to build consistent and respectful responses.

In summary, all three components were rated Highly Important. School-based referral and collaboration obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.81 (SD 0.41), positive behaviour support followed with 4.61 (SD 0.45), and early recognition obtained 4.52 (SD 0.56). The grand mean was 4.65 and the grand standard deviation was 0.47, also Highly Important. Respondents strongly recognize the need for training in supporting learners with diverse needs. Saulon and Espiritu (2025) found that professional development is important in equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to support diverse learners in Philippine public elementary schools. The highest rating for referral and collaboration may reflect the need for clear procedures in identifying concerns, making referrals, sharing observations, and working together on interventions. Basister et al. (2025) found that collaboration among teachers, including mathematics and special education teachers, increased awareness of diverse learner needs and encouraged more responsive classroom planning. The standard deviations of 0.56, 0.41, and 0.45, together with the grand standard deviation of 0.47, show relatively close responses. Training is therefore needed across all three areas rather than only one. Jugan et al. (2024) reported that teachers in Cebu recognized the importance of inclusive education but identified concerns involving training, resources, and support, and recommended continuing professional development.

Competence in learner support needs

In early recognition, teachers were Moderately Competent, with an aggregate mean of 3.31 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.96. The highest result was for providing

appropriate initial classroom support, with a weighted mean of 3.45 (SD 1.09), interpreted as Competent. Recognizing persistent concerns in learning, communication, participation, social interaction, and behaviour obtained 3.35 (SD 0.91), capacity to determine when consultation or school-based referral is necessary obtained 3.23 (SD 0.92), and documenting classroom observations objectively obtained the lowest mean of 3.19 (SD 0.91). These three indicators were Moderately Competent. Teachers appear better able to give immediate assistance, but they may not feel sufficiently prepared to document concerns and decide on the next step. Raguindin and Yan Ping (2025) identified professional and personal development, inclusive classroom practices, and collaboration as important competency areas for teachers in inclusive education. Nistal Anta et al. (2024) emphasized developing teacher competencies to support learners with special educational needs. The aggregate standard deviation of 0.96 shows some variation, so competence in early recognition was not uniform. Harkins-Brown et al. (2024) reported that competency-focused professional development can help general education teachers become better prepared to include learners with disabilities. LAC sessions may therefore focus on identifying early signs of learner difficulty, making objective classroom records, providing first-level support, and knowing when to consult or refer a learner.

In school-based referral and collaboration, the aggregate mean was 3.43 and the aggregate standard deviation was 0.90, interpreted as Competent. Communicating observed learner concerns professionally and respectfully obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.58 (SD 0.67), followed by coordinating with parents or guardians at 3.52 (SD 0.63), both Competent. Maintaining confidentiality and proper documentation obtained 3.42 (SD 1.18), also Competent. Following appropriate school-based referral procedures obtained 3.35 (SD 1.08) and consulting appropriate personnel obtained the lowest mean of 3.26 (SD 0.96), both Moderately Competent. Teachers are more confident in communicating concerns and coordinating with families, but some may need guidance in identifying the proper personnel to consult. Kyamko et al. (2024) found that teacher collaboration is an important part of strengthening inclusive education practices in Philippine schools. Lauron et al. (2025) reported that teacher training, mentoring, collaboration with special education professionals, and administrative support can contribute to stronger teacher readiness. The standard deviation of 0.90 shows that competence is not completely uniform, and case-based activities, referral exercises, group discussions, and collaborative planning with SPED teachers and other personnel can address this. Basister et al. (2025) found that collaboration among SPED and regular teachers can help educators better understand diverse learner needs. Lim et al. (2026) reported that teacher collaboration and peer support were associated with greater readiness for inclusive education among teachers in Cebu City.

In positive behaviour support, teachers were Moderately Competent, with an aggregate mean of 2.92 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.80. Reinforcing appropriate learner behaviour obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.00 (SD 0.73). Establishing clear classroom expectations and routines and using preventive and positive behavior-support strategies both obtained 2.97 (SD 0.80 and 0.84, respectively). Promoting learner participation, self-regulation, and dignity obtained 2.84 (SD 0.78), and responding calmly and consistently to challenging behaviour obtained the lowest mean of 2.81 (SD 0.87). All five indicators were Moderately Competent. Teachers have a reasonable foundation in managing behaviour, but these practices may not be applied with equal confidence in every situation, and they need more practical preparation in handling difficult behaviours while keeping relationships respectful. Torelli et al. (2024) showed that teacher training can strengthen the use of positive behaviour-support practices. Chow, Ang, and Phoon (2025) found differences in behavioural-management knowledge and skills between teachers in special education and inclusive classrooms. Owens et al. (2024) emphasized teacher self-reflection, self-assessment, goal setting, and collaborative work in strengthening positive behavioural supports. Elbancol and

Marquez (2025) reported that classroom-management approaches can contribute to positive learner behaviour and a supportive inclusive classroom, while lack of training may remain a challenge. The proposed sessions may therefore prioritize positive reinforcement, preventive strategies, calm responses to challenging behaviour, self-regulation, and preservation of learner dignity.

Overall, the grand mean was 3.22 and the grand standard deviation was 0.89, interpreted as Moderately Competent. School-based referral and collaboration had the highest weighted mean of 3.43 (SD 0.90), Competent. Early recognition followed with 3.31 (SD 0.96), and positive behaviour support had the lowest mean of 2.92 (SD 0.80), both Moderately Competent. Teachers possess basic abilities in supporting diverse learners, but some competencies need systematic strengthening. Zapatera et al. (2025) reported that secondary teachers demonstrated areas of competency in inclusive education but also showed gaps in knowledge and skills requiring continuing professional development. The standard deviation of 0.96 for early recognition indicates noticeable differences among teachers, so LAC sessions should give opportunities to practice recognizing learner characteristics, interpreting observations, and determining initial responses. Raguindin and Li (2025) identified inclusive classroom pedagogy, understanding learner diversity, advocacy, networking, and continuing professional development as important competency areas for Filipino teachers. The 3.43 rating for referral and collaboration is an existing strength that can be used when developing interventions for areas of lower competence. The sessions should therefore place greater emphasis on positive behaviour support, maintain activities on early recognition, and build on the established competence in referral and collaboration.

Preferred LAC session arrangements

Respondents could select more than one option in each of the following tables. In training topics, school-based consultation and referral procedures received the highest frequency of 22 and ranked first. Recognizing persistent concerns in learning followed with 15 responses (rank 2), and determining when consultation or referral is necessary had 13 (rank 3). Calm and consistent responses to challenging behavior had 8 (rank 4), objective classroom observation and documentation had 7 (rank 5), and monitoring learners' responses to initial classroom support had 6 (rank 6). Positive reinforcement and constructive feedback had 5 (rank 7), preventive positive behavior-support strategies had 4 (rank 8), providing appropriate initial classroom support had 3 (rank 9), and establishing classroom expectations and routines had 2 (rank 10). Teachers are particularly interested in recognizing learner concerns and in knowing which people or services to approach, since non-SNED-trained teachers may encounter situations that require guidance from other school personnel. Honteveros et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of training and school support in helping teachers respond to the needs of learners in inclusive settings. The moderately ranked topics offer simple strategies teachers can apply before seeking specialized assistance, and Arnoza (2025) highlighted the importance of focused professional development in improving preparedness to support learners with special educational needs. The lower-ranked topics can still be included, because observation, documentation, and clear routines are useful in understanding learners' needs. The varied preferences mean the program may include several related topics, which is consistent with Dela Cruz and Baguio (2024), who emphasized effective LAC practices in strengthening teachers' professional confidence and capacity.

In delivery modes, peer mentoring or coaching obtained the highest frequency of 26 and ranked first. Demonstration sessions followed with 24 (rank 2) and seminar-workshops

with 23 (rank 3). Face-to-face LAC sessions obtained 22 (rank 4) and small-group workshops 21 (rank 5), while printed or digital self-learning material obtained 9 (rank 6). Online sessions obtained 1, the lowest frequency, although the source table lists its rank as 1, which is inconsistent with that frequency. Teachers prefer arrangements that let them interact, observe examples, and learn directly from other teachers. Bermudo et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of professional development in strengthening the preparedness of Filipino high school teachers for inclusive education. The preference for peer mentoring or coaching suggests that respondents value learning through cooperation and shared experiences, and the high preference for demonstration sessions and seminar-workshops suggests that strategies should be explained, demonstrated, practiced, and discussed. Yazici and Uzuner (2024) highlighted the value of inclusive mentoring in developing teachers' confidence and readiness. Lowis Donath et al. (2025) explained that teacher training is more meaningful when teachers are supported in transferring what they learn into classroom practice. Respondents favor interactive professional development over independent learning or online instruction. Diaz et al. (2025) found a positive relationship between teachers' training and readiness for inclusive teaching and recommended capacity-building that includes mentoring and coaching. LAC sessions should therefore primarily use peer mentoring or coaching, demonstration sessions, seminar-workshops, face-to-face discussions, and small-group activities, with printed, digital, and online resources as supplementary materials.

In learning activities, role-playing or simulation obtained the highest frequency of 24 and ranked first, followed by peer sharing of classroom experiences with 21 (rank 2), analysis of classroom scenarios with 20 (rank 3), and school-based referral procedure walkthrough with 17 (rank 4). Collaborative lesson or support planning obtained 15 (rank 5), case-based discussion 9 (rank 6), demonstration of strategies 8 (rank 7), and development of observation and documentation samples 7 (rank 8). Teachers favor activities involving participation, practice, discussion, and actual classroom situations over lecture-based sessions. Darling-Hammond et al. (2024) emphasized that teacher professional learning is more useful when connected to practice, collaboration, and opportunities to apply new knowledge. Kraft et al. (2024) explained that professional development has greater potential to influence teaching when learning is closely connected to teachers' actual work and provides opportunities for active participation. The highest-ranked activities suggest that sessions should prioritize role-playing or simulation, peer sharing, classroom scenario analysis, and referral procedure walkthroughs. Collaborative planning, case discussions, demonstrations, and documentation exercises may serve as supporting activities. Opfer et al. (2024) highlighted professional learning that encourages teacher collaboration, reflection, and practical application.

In support mechanisms, clear school-based referral guidelines or procedures received the highest frequency of 29 and ranked first. Access to relevant school support personnel followed with 24 (rank 2), and sample classroom observation and documentation forms obtained 22 (rank 3). Peer consultation and collaborative planning obtained 19 (rank 4), opportunities to practice and receive feedback 12 (rank 5), printed or digital reference materials 11 (rank 6), and follow-up coaching or mentoring 10 (rank 7). Access to qualified resource persons obtained 4 (rank 8), scheduled time within the school calendar 2 (rank 9), and administrative support for participation in LAC sessions 1 (rank 10). Teachers consider clear referral procedures important for responding to learners who need additional assistance, and they need people within the school who can advise them. Practical forms and tools are also considered useful. Raguindin and Ping (2025) identified collaboration, professional development, networking, and appropriate inclusive classroom practices as important competencies for Filipino teachers. The mid-ranked results show that teachers value learning with colleagues and guidance on actual situations, and that resources and follow-up assistance should remain available after the sessions. The lower frequencies for administrative support,

scheduled time, and qualified resource persons may indicate that these were not immediate priorities, although they can still contribute to successful implementation. Dela Cruz and Baguio (2024) found that LAC practices were positively associated with the self-efficacy of special education teachers and emphasized collaboration, contextualization, and effective delivery. Deala and Lopez (2024) reported that school-based LAC implementation contributed to teachers' personal and professional development. Respondents thus prefer support that provides clear direction, practical assistance, and collaboration, so the sessions should prioritize referral procedures, school-based collaboration, documentation tools, peer learning, practice activities, and follow-up support.

Relationship between importance of training and competence

A Pearson r test examined the relationship between the importance of training and the competence of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers for the learner support needs. The obtained r-value of 0.124 indicates a negligible positive relationship, meaning that the two variables move in the same direction but with very little association. The p-value of 0.505 is higher than the 0.05 level of significance (two-tailed), so the relationship is not statistically significant. The decision is to not reject the null hypothesis, which means that the perceived importance of training is not significantly related to teachers' level of competence. Considering training important does not automatically mean that teachers have stronger skills in supporting learners with diverse needs. Competence appears to develop through actual learning experiences and continued professional support rather than only through recognizing the value of training. Harkins-Brown, Gillon, and Schanbacher (2024) emphasized the value of competency-based professional preparation in helping general education teachers develop skills for including learners with disabilities. Raguindin and Ping (2025) identified inclusive pedagogy, professional development, collaboration, and communication with other stakeholders as areas Filipino teachers need for inclusive education. Basister, Petersson, and Baconguis (2025) found that teacher collaboration through lesson study helped teachers become more aware of diverse learner needs and supported inclusive teaching strategies. Schnepel, Luger, Wehren-Müller, and Moser Opitz (2025) reported that collaboration among general and special education teachers can contribute to stronger inclusive teaching practices. LAC sessions should therefore emphasize peer collaboration, demonstration teaching, case-based activities, shared planning, and feedback. Although Table 19 shows no significant relationship, the result highlights the need for meaningful and practical professional learning opportunities.

Synthesis

Taken together, the findings of the 31 respondents show a group that is mostly female, mostly aged 23 to 34, largely early in their teaching careers, and entirely without prior seminar attendance on inclusive education (100.00%). The teachers rated training as Highly Important across early recognition (4.52), school-based referral and collaboration (4.81), and positive behaviour support (4.61), with a grand mean of 4.65 and a grand standard deviation of 0.47. Their self-rated competence was lower, with a grand mean of 3.22 and a grand standard deviation of 0.89, interpreted as Moderately Competent. Only school-based referral and collaboration (3.43) reached the Competent level, while positive behaviour support (2.92) was the weakest area. The Pearson r of 0.124 with a p-value of 0.505 showed no significant relationship between importance and competence, so the perceived value of training cannot

substitute for structured, practice-based learning. The preferred arrangements point to LAC sessions on consultation and referral procedures and recognition of learning concerns, delivered through peer mentoring or coaching, demonstrations, and seminar-workshops. The activities would be role-playing, peer sharing, and scenario analysis, supported by clear referral guidelines, access to school support personnel, and sample documentation forms. These results address the study's objectives by describing the respondents, identifying where the gap between perceived importance and actual competence is widest, and specifying how LAC sessions should be organized. They contribute school-level evidence on the needs of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers in the Philippine context, a group that existing literature has examined less than SNED-trained teachers. The next chapter builds on these findings by presenting the conclusions and recommendations, including the proposed LAC session design.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the training needs of non-SNED-trained secondary teachers assigned to inclusive classrooms at Nug-as National High School, focusing on how important selected competencies are to teachers and how capable they perceive themselves in performing them. The three areas of concern were the recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and the application of positive behavior support. Using a descriptive-correlational design and total enumeration of the 31 secondary teachers without formal SNED specialization or training, the study gathered data through a researcher-developed questionnaire and analyzed them using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and the Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score. The respondents represented varied age groups, educational backgrounds, years of teaching experience, and teaching positions. Most were female and had either completed a college degree or pursued graduate studies, and none had attended seminars related to the specific learner support needs examined. It is therefore concluded that these teachers enter inclusive classroom work with diverse backgrounds but without prior focused preparation in the areas assessed.

The findings further showed that the respondents regarded training as very important in all areas of the assessment, placing strong value on skills in recognizing learner concerns, working with parents and school personnel, following referral processes, and applying appropriate behavior-support practices. From this, the study concludes that teachers see additional professional development as necessary for responding more effectively to the varied needs of learners in inclusive classrooms. However, their assessed competence was only moderate overall. They demonstrated relatively better ability in school-based referral and collaboration, while early identification of learner concerns and positive behavior support required further improvement. These results indicate that, although teachers acknowledge the significance of training, their actual capability still shows areas that need attention, particularly in identifying learner concerns and managing behavior positively.

This conclusion is reinforced by the hypothesis testing, which revealed that the perceived importance of training was not significantly related to the teachers' level of competence in addressing learner support needs, and the null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. The result implies that recognizing the importance of training does not automatically mean that teachers already possess a high level of competence. Consequently, the need for relevant, practical, and continuous Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions is strengthened, since awareness of the value of training alone cannot close the gap in skills. The teachers' preferred LAC arrangements point in the same direction, as they favored hands-on and collaborative activities such as peer coaching, role-playing, classroom-based scenarios, and referral walkthroughs, together with access to clear school-based guidelines. LAC sessions should accordingly be practical, relevant, and connected to situations teachers actually experience in

school, and professional practice can be strengthened through peer coaching, guided practice, collaboration, and the sharing of effective classroom strategies.

In light of these conclusions, the proposed LAC sessions may be implemented to address the identified needs of non-SNED-trained teachers in inclusive classrooms, emphasizing practical skills in recognizing learner concerns, making appropriate referrals, collaborating with stakeholders, and supporting positive learner behavior. School administrators may provide the time and support needed to ensure active teacher participation, and the LAC program may be adjusted regularly based on teachers' experiences and emerging needs. The findings may also guide school leaders in developing responsive training programs and implementing policies that provide teachers with regular support, appropriate resources, and meaningful opportunities to build their competence in inclusive education. Taken together, these considerations show that strengthening teacher preparation through sustained, practice-based professional learning is essential to improving classroom practices in supporting diverse learners.

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