

**Inclusive education readiness of elementary teachers:
Assessing training needs in special education competencies
as basis for contextualized School Learning Action Cell (SLAC)**

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the priority training needs of non-SNED-trained elementary teachers at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School for School Year 2026–2027, as a basis for a contextualized School Learning Action Cell program. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered through a researcher developed questionnaire administered to all 39 non-SNED-trained teachers through total enumeration. Respondents rated their level of importance of and level of competence in 14 competencies across three domains: early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. Findings showed that respondents were predominantly female (94.87%) and Teacher III (66.67%), yet 43.59% had not attended any training related to inclusive education. Respondents rated all three domains as highly important (grand mean = 4.57), with school-based referral and collaboration rated highest (4.66), while their self-rated competence was lower (grand mean = 4.20), particularly in early recognition of learner support needs (3.94). A Pearson correlation revealed a significant, weak positive relationship between importance and competence ($r = 0.326$, $p = 0.043$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Based on these findings and the respondents' preferred session arrangements, a contextualized School Learning Action Cell program was proposed, anchored on an action plan targeting the domains with the widest gap between importance and competence. The study recommended that the school administration and Learning Action Cell coordinator adopt the action plan as part of the school's continuing professional development program for inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive education, training needs assessment, descriptive-correlational, non-SNED-trained teachers, early recognition of learner support needs, school based referral, positive behavior support, School Learning Action Cell.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a global educational priority grounded in the principle that all learners, including those with disabilities and diverse learning needs, should have equitable access to quality education and meaningful opportunities for participation and learning. In the Philippine basic education system, this commitment has been strengthened through Republic Act No. 11650, or the Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education Act, which institutionalizes inclusive education and mandates appropriate support services for learners with disabilities (Republic Act No. 11650, 2022). Complementing this legislation, Department of Education Order No. 44, s. 2021 provides policy guidelines for educational programs and services for learners with disabilities within the K to 12 Basic Education Program (Department of Education [DepEd], 2021). Together, these policies reinforce the responsibility of schools to create learning environments in which learners, regardless of ability or disability, can access appropriate programs, participate meaningfully, and receive support responsive to their individual educational needs.

The realization of inclusive education, however, depends not only on the existence of supportive legislation and institutional policies but also on the capacity of teachers to translate these commitments into effective classroom practices. Elementary teachers are expected to respond to increasingly diverse learner needs through appropriate instructional strategies, assessment accommodations, classroom management, behavior support, individualized educational planning, and collaboration with parents, special education professionals, and other stakeholders. Their responsibilities extend beyond supporting learners whose disabilities have already been formally identified. Teachers also encounter learners who consistently demonstrate difficulties or barriers in learning, communication, participation, social interaction, or behavior but whose specific support needs have not yet been formally identified. In these circumstances, teachers are expected to observe concerns objectively, provide appropriate initial classroom support, document relevant observations, collaborate with appropriate personnel, and initiate referral when necessary. These responsibilities are essential to ensuring that learners experiencing persistent difficulties are recognized and supported rather than overlooked within regular classrooms.

Despite continuing efforts to institutionalize inclusive education, translating policy commitments into consistent classroom practice remains challenging. This concern is particularly significant at the elementary level, where teachers simultaneously manage subject specific instruction, multiple classes, varied learner needs, and complex classroom management demands. Teachers without formal Special Needs Education training are nevertheless expected to respond appropriately to learners requiring additional support, even when they may have received limited preparation in recognizing persistent learner concerns, documenting observations, implementing initial interventions, following school based referral procedures, or applying positive behavior support strategies. The gap between policy expectations and teachers' practical preparation therefore represents a critical issue in the implementation of inclusive education. At Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School, this concern requires systematic assessment because non SNED trained elementary teachers support diverse learners in regular classrooms, yet their specific professional development needs in inclusive practice have not been formally determined.

Evidence from Philippine studies underscores the importance of examining teachers' preparedness and professional development needs in inclusive education. De Los Reyes et al. (2025), in their study involving secondary public school teachers in Cebu City, found that relevant training was positively associated with teachers' knowledge and skills preparedness for inclusive education. Their findings indicate that exposure to appropriate professional

development can strengthen teachers' capacity to respond to learner diversity. Similarly, Vergara et al. (2025) found that although teachers demonstrated confidence and strengths in classroom management, they continued to require further development in adapting instruction to diverse learner needs, understanding Universal Design for Learning, using adaptive technologies, implementing individualized education plans, and strengthening classroom management strategies. Marchan et al. (2025) likewise reported that teachers working in inclusive classrooms encountered inadequate resources and insufficient training, conditions that affected the implementation of inclusive practices. Collectively, these Philippine studies demonstrate that teachers' willingness and general classroom experience alone do not guarantee preparedness for inclusion. Effective implementation also requires sustained, practical, and context responsive professional development that addresses the actual demands encountered in regular classrooms.

International research similarly establishes teacher preparation as a central condition for effective inclusive education. Mavuso (2022) found that senior phase teachers required stronger competencies in recognizing learning difficulties, assessing learner needs, differentiating instruction, collaborating with support personnel, and making appropriate referrals. These competencies are closely related because recognizing a learner concern is meaningful only when teachers also understand how to respond, coordinate support, and connect the learner with appropriate services. Crispel and Kasperski (2021) likewise emphasized that special education training influences teachers' capacity to implement inclusion in mainstream classrooms, further demonstrating the importance of specialized professional preparation even when teachers work primarily in general education settings. Triviño Amigo et al. (2022), in comparing primary and secondary teachers, further highlighted the need to examine teacher preparation according to educational level because elementary teachers may experience professional development needs that differ from those encountered by secondary teachers.

The literature also demonstrates that classroom and behavior management constitute persistent areas of professional need within inclusive settings. Through a systematic review, McGuire et al. (2024) identified continuing gaps in classroom and behavior management preparation among both preservice and inservice teachers. Allam and Martin (2021) similarly reported that regular teachers frequently experience unresolved systemic challenges related to special education despite years of classroom practice. Such findings suggest that accumulated teaching experience cannot automatically substitute for deliberate preparation in inclusive practices. Ionescu and Vršmaş (2022) consequently emphasized that teachers' inclusive education training needs should be identified directly rather than inferred from general teaching experience. This argument is reinforced by Oswal et al. (2025), whose systematic review found that inclusive education strategies remain inconsistently implemented across institutions when deliberate and targeted teacher preparation is absent. Across these studies, a consistent pattern emerges: inclusive education requires professional learning that corresponds directly to teachers' actual responsibilities, particularly the recognition of learner support needs, access to appropriate school based support systems, collaboration with relevant personnel, and positive responses to challenging behavior.

Although existing research has examined teacher preparedness, confidence, instructional practices, exposure to training, competence, and classroom management challenges, important contextual and practical gaps remain. De Los Reyes et al. (2025) and Vergara et al. (2025) primarily assessed broad dimensions of teacher preparedness for inclusive education, while Marchan et al. (2025) focused on instructional practices and implementation challenges. International studies have similarly concentrated on teacher competence, the effects

of training, general preparedness, and classroom or behavior management needs. While these studies establish the importance of teacher preparation, they do not directly determine the specific combination of competencies needed by non SNED trained elementary teachers who must recognize persistent learner concerns, access school based referral mechanisms, collaborate with relevant stakeholders, and manage learner behavior positively within the particular context of Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School. This contextual gap is significant because professional development is most useful when it responds to demonstrated needs rather than relying on broad assumptions about what teachers should know.

The present study addresses this gap by focusing specifically on non SNED trained elementary teachers at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School and examining their training needs across three interconnected domains: early recognition of learner support needs, school based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support and inclusive classroom management. These domains represent a logical continuum of inclusive classroom practice. Teachers must first recognize persistent concerns that may indicate a need for additional support, then understand how to document and communicate those concerns and access appropriate referral and collaborative mechanisms, and finally provide respectful, preventive, and supportive classroom responses while the learner continues to participate in the educational environment. Importantly, the study does not seek to diagnose learners, classify disabilities, or determine the prevalence of disabilities. Rather, it focuses on whether teachers possess the knowledge, skills, competence, and institutional support necessary to respond appropriately when persistent learner concerns are observed.

This focus is further supported by the Philippine policy framework for identifying and assisting learners who may require additional educational support. DepEd Order No. 23, s. 2022, or the Child Find Policy for Learners with Disabilities Towards Inclusive Education, is particularly relevant because it supports the early recognition of possible learner support needs and the appropriate referral of concerns. The policy does not position regular teachers as diagnosticians. Instead, teachers contribute to the support process by recognizing observable concerns, documenting relevant information, coordinating with appropriate personnel, providing suitable initial support, and helping connect learners who may require additional assistance with appropriate school based or external services. When considered alongside Republic Act No. 11650 and DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, the Child Find Policy establishes a strong legal and institutional basis for strengthening teachers' capacity to respond appropriately, respectfully, and systematically to learner diversity (DepEd, 2021; Republic Act No. 11650, 2022).

The study is theoretically anchored in Knowles' Adult Learning Theory or Andragogy (1984), Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), and the principles of Positive Behavior Support. Knowles' Adult Learning Theory conceptualizes teachers as adult learners who bring accumulated experiences, professional concerns, existing knowledge, and practical needs into professional learning situations. From this perspective, effective capability building should not be detached from teachers' everyday realities but should instead be relevant, problem centered, experience based, and immediately applicable to their work. This principle supports the assessment of the actual knowledge, skills, competencies, and difficulties of non SNED trained elementary teachers before capability building activities are developed. Rather than assuming what teachers need, the study uses their reported experiences and perceived competencies as the basis for identifying professional learning priorities in early recognition of learner support needs, school based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. Consequently, the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions and other capability building activities presented in Chapter 4 are grounded in needs identified by the teachers themselves, consistent with Knowles' emphasis on practical and responsive adult learning.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) further strengthens the study by situating learner development and educational support within interconnected environmental systems. Learners do not experience difficulties in isolation from their classrooms, families, schools, communities, and other social environments. Accordingly, effective inclusive education requires communication and coordinated support among the individuals and institutions surrounding the learner. This perspective reinforces the importance of school based referral and collaboration because teachers' observations and classroom interventions represent only part of a broader support system. When concerns persist, meaningful collaboration among teachers, families, school personnel, special education professionals, and other relevant service providers can help ensure that learner needs are understood and addressed through coordinated action. Bronfenbrenner's framework therefore complements the inclusive education policies underpinning the study by emphasizing that effective learner support depends on relationships and interactions across multiple educational and social contexts.

The principles of Positive Behavior Support provide an additional foundation for understanding teachers' responsibilities in inclusive classroom management. Within an inclusive perspective, challenging behavior should not be addressed primarily through punitive or exclusionary responses. Instead, teachers need preventive, respectful, instructional, and supportive approaches that consider the circumstances surrounding behavior and help learners develop more appropriate ways of participating in classroom activities. Positive Behavior Support is therefore closely aligned with the study's emphasis on inclusive classroom management because it positions behavior management as part of learner support rather than merely classroom control. Combined with early recognition and appropriate referral, positive behavior support enables teachers to respond constructively to learner concerns while maintaining participation, dignity, and access to learning.

Alongside these theoretical foundations, the study employs Borich's Needs Assessment Model (1980) as a methodological guide for identifying and prioritizing teacher training needs. The model compares teachers' perceived importance of a particular competency with their perceived level of competence in performing that competency. Through this comparison, competencies considered highly important but accompanied by comparatively lower levels of perceived competence can be identified as priority areas for capability building. In the present study, Borich's model guides the interpretation of respondents' ratings of the importance of and competence in learner support competencies presented in Chapter 2. This systematic approach enables professional development priorities to be established using evidence derived from the teachers' own assessments rather than from predetermined assumptions. The resulting priorities subsequently inform the development of the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions for non SNED trained elementary teachers at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School.

Taken together, the literature, theoretical perspectives, methodological framework, and Philippine policy foundations reveal a common argument: inclusive education can be effectively realized only when teachers possess the competencies and support systems required to respond to learner diversity in everyday classroom practice. Republic Act No. 11650, DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, and DepEd Order No. 23, s. 2022 establish the policy expectation for equitable participation, appropriate educational services, early recognition, and systematic learner support. Knowles' Adult Learning Theory explains why professional development should be grounded in teachers' experiences and identified needs, while Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes the necessity of coordinated support across the learner's interconnected environments. The principles of Positive Behavior Support provide a foundation for preventive, respectful, and instructional responses to learner behavior, while Borich's Needs Assessment Model offers a systematic means of determining which

competencies require the greatest attention. These foundations converge on the need for targeted, evidence based, and context responsive professional development for teachers responsible for implementing inclusion in regular elementary classrooms.

Guided by these considerations, the study sought to determine the specific training needs of non SNED trained elementary teachers at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School in early recognition of learner support needs, school based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support and inclusive classroom management. Specifically, it examined teachers' perceived level of importance of and level of competence in these learner support competencies, together with their preferred capability building activities. By identifying areas that teachers consider important but in which they perceive themselves as less prepared, the study provides an empirical basis for professional development that responds directly to classroom realities. The findings served as the basis for the proposed School Learning Action Cell program and action plan presented in Chapter 4, which addresses the most urgent areas of need identified in Chapter 2. In this way, the study contributes to strengthening the capacity of non SNED trained elementary teachers, improving school based mechanisms for recognizing and responding to learner concerns, and supporting the continuing implementation of inclusive education at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School.

Statement of the problem

This study assessed the priority training needs of non SNED trained elementary teachers at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School for School Year 2026–2027 as a basis for a contextualized Learning Action Cell program.

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 elementary teachers for learner support needs in terms of early recognition of learner support needs, school based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support?
3. What is the level of competence of non SNED trained elementary teachers for learner support needs in terms of early recognition of learner support needs, school based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior 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 level of importance of training and the level of competence of non SNED trained elementary 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 for non SNED trained elementary teachers at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, guided by the needs-assessment logic of Borich's (1980) model of comparing perceived importance against self-rated competence. This design was appropriate because it enabled the systematic description of the training needs of non-SNED-trained teachers at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School during School Year 2026–2027, and the determination of whether a significant relationship exists between the level of importance they place on the identified

learner-support competencies and their level of competence in performing them. Specifically, the study described the respondents' demographic and professional profiles, their level of importance of and level of competence in the identified competencies across the three domains, and their preferred arrangements for Learning Action Cell sessions. No variables were manipulated, and no causal relationships were established; the correlational component was limited to determining the strength and significance of the relationship between importance and competence. The needs-assessment logic underlying Borich's (1980) model served as the conceptual anchor of the study. This approach ensured that priority training needs were not identified on the basis of low competence alone, but as competencies that respondents also considered essential in supporting learners in inclusive classrooms.

The competency assessment covered three domains: early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. The early recognition domain included 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 was necessary. The school-based referral and collaboration domain included consulting appropriate school personnel, communicating learner concerns professionally and respectfully, coordinating with parents or guardians, maintaining confidentiality and proper documentation, and following appropriate school-based referral procedures. The positive behavior support domain included establishing clear classroom expectations and routines, applying 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 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 the teachers. It also did not implement or assess the effectiveness of the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions. The identified priority training needs and preferred session arrangements were instead used as the basis for formulating the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions presented in Chapter 4. The flow of the study followed a systematic procedure to ensure that its objectives were achieved in an organized and logical manner, and it was structured according to the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model, which guided the identification of the needed data, the procedures for collecting and analyzing them, and the formulation of the contextualized Learning Action Cell sessions.

In the input phase, the information needed to assess the training needs of non-SNED-trained elementary teachers was identified and gathered. The input included the respondents' profiles in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, teaching experience, teaching position, and attendance to seminars. It also included their ratings of the level of importance and level of competence of the identified competencies under the three domains of early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. Furthermore, the respondents' preferred Learning Action Cell session arrangements in terms of training topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms formed part of the input. The process phase covered the procedures for data collection, processing, and analysis. The researcher first secured permission from the appropriate school and education authorities through formal communication. After approval was obtained, the purpose and procedures of the study were explained to the eligible respondents, and their informed consent was secured. The structured training-needs assessment questionnaires were then distributed to the non-SNED-trained elementary teachers and

retrieved after completion. The responses were checked, coded, organized, and tabulated for statistical treatment. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the respondents' profiles and preferred Learning Action Cell session arrangements, while weighted means and standard deviations were used to summarize their level of importance and level of competence, and the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between the two. Finally, the processed data were analyzed and interpreted to answer the research questions and establish the basis for the study's output. This flow is depicted in Figure 2, which presents the input as the profile of the teacher-respondents, the perceived importance and self-rated competence in early recognition of learner support needs, the perceived importance and self-rated competence in school-based referral and collaboration, the perceived importance and self-rated competence in positive behavior support, and the preferred Learning Action Cell session arrangements. The process is shown as the securing of permission and informed consent, the distribution and retrieval of questionnaires, the checking, coding, organizing, and tabulating of the data, the statistical treatment using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation, the ranking of priority training needs, and the analysis and interpretation of findings. The output is the contextualized Learning Action Cell sessions.

The study was conducted at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School, under the Schools Division of Toledo City, Department of Education, Region VII (Central Visayas). The location of the school within the Province of Cebu is shown in Figure 3, which presents the Province of Cebu on the left and Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School on the right. The school serves learners from Kindergarten to Grade 6 and provides quality basic education to children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. As an inclusive learning institution, the school accommodates learners with varying abilities, including those who may require additional educational support, within regular classroom settings. As a public elementary school implementing inclusive education, the school provides an appropriate context for examining the professional development needs of non-SNED-trained elementary teachers who are expected to respond to observed learner concerns in their daily teaching practice.

Like other public schools under the Department of Education, Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School conducts regular School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions as its established school-based continuing professional development mechanism, consistent with DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016 (The Learning Action Cell as a K to 12 Basic Education Program School-Based Continuing Professional Development Strategy). These existing sessions, however, have generally focused on curriculum delivery and generic pedagogical concerns, and have not specifically addressed the inclusive education and special-education support competencies examined in this study. This context indicates that the contextualized Learning Action Cell sessions proposed by the study would strengthen and build on an existing school mechanism to address an unmet training need, rather than duplicate current programs.

The school environment is relevant to the present study because elementary teachers manage subject-specific instruction, multiple classes, diverse learner profiles, and classroom-management demands. Within this context, teachers may encounter learners who demonstrate persistent concerns related to learning, participation, communication, social interaction, or behavior. These concerns do not require teachers to diagnose or classify learners. Rather, they require teachers to provide appropriate initial classroom support, document relevant observations objectively, consult appropriate school personnel, communicate with parents or guardians when necessary, and follow established school-based referral procedures. The increasing diversity of learners in inclusive classrooms also requires elementary teachers to continuously strengthen their knowledge and instructional competencies. While non-SNED-trained elementary teachers possess the pedagogical skills needed for general education, they may encounter challenges in addressing the varied academic, behavioral, communication, and social-emotional needs of learners with disabilities and other exceptionalities. Assessing these

training needs provided valuable information for designing a responsive professional development program that enhances teachers' capacity to deliver quality, equitable, and inclusive education for all learners.

Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School was selected as the locale of the study because it provided access to the target respondents, specifically non-SNED trained elementary teachers, and offered a suitable environment for examining their specialized training needs. The study assessed their level of importance of and level of competence in three areas: early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. Their responses provided localized evidence regarding the competencies that require further professional development, and allowed the researcher to determine the competencies that teachers consider significant for inclusive education but require further enhancement. The study was conducted through a survey questionnaire guided by the needs assessment logic of Borich's model. The school setting was not used to assess, diagnose, classify, or collect individual information from learners. Instead, the research focused exclusively on teachers' perceived training needs and professional experiences in supporting inclusive classrooms. The findings served as the basis for the proposed contextualized School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) program for Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School presented in Chapter 4, which is intended to strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills in early identification of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support.

The respondents of the study consisted of 39 non-SNED-trained elementary teachers of Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School for School Year 2026–2027. The study utilized the total enumeration sampling technique, in which all teachers who satisfied the established inclusion criteria were included as participants. This method was considered appropriate because the target population is limited in number and well-defined, allowing the researcher to obtain a complete and accurate assessment of the teachers' priority training needs. To be included in the study, teachers had to be currently assigned to teach at the elementary level at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School, had no formal SNED training or specialization, and were handling regular classes that include learners with diverse educational, social, behavioral, communication, participation, or learning support needs. Teachers also had to be willing to participate and provide informed consent. Teachers who had formal specialization or extensive formal training in Special Needs Education were excluded from the study because the research specifically focused on the training needs of non-SNED-trained elementary teachers. Teachers who were not currently handling regular elementary classes, were on leave during the data-gathering period, or chose not to participate were likewise excluded.

The respondents' participation was essential because they are directly involved in classroom instruction and daily interactions with learners who may demonstrate persistent concerns in learning, participation, communication, social interaction, or behavior. The selected respondents were appropriate for this study because they are actively engaged in classroom instruction and regularly teach learners with diverse educational and support needs. Their responses were used to determine the level of importance of and level of competence in the competencies related to early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. Guided by the needs-assessment logic of Borich's model, the collected data were analyzed to determine and prioritize the competencies that served as the basis for the proposed School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School. Through total enumeration, all 39 non-SNED-trained elementary teachers of the school participated in the study ($N = 39$). By teaching position, 9 respondents (23.08%) were Teacher II, 26 respondents (66.67%) were Teacher III, 2

respondents (5.13%) were Teacher IV, and 2 respondents (5.13%) were Master Teacher I, for a total of 39 respondents (100.00%).

The primary instrument of this study was a researcher-developed structured questionnaire. It was designed to gather information needed to assess the priority training needs of non-SNED-trained elementary teachers at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School. The questionnaire was informed by the needs-assessment logic of Borich's model, which compares the level of importance of a competency with the teacher's level of competence in performing that competency, helping determine the areas that require professional development. The questionnaire also included items that identified the respondents' preferred School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) session arrangements. The content of the instrument was aligned with the objectives of the study and focused on the three areas investigated: early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. The questionnaire was administered only to non-SNED-trained elementary teachers of Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School, specifically to the 39 teacher-respondents, and it was divided into three parts.

The first part gathered the respondents' demographic and professional information, including age, sex, highest educational attainment, teaching experience, teaching position, subject or learning area handled, and attendance to seminars related to inclusive education. This information was used to describe the profile of the respondents and answer the first research question. A checklist and fill-in-the-blank format was used where appropriate. The second part rated each of the 14 competencies under the three domains of early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support on two dimensions. The first dimension was the level of importance, which refers to how important the respondent considers the competency in supporting learners in an inclusive classroom, or the extent to which a competency was considered essential in supporting learners in inclusive classrooms. The second dimension was the level of competence, which refers to the respondent's perceived ability to perform the competency in actual classroom practice and in their teaching practice. The paired ratings were used to compute the weighted mean level of importance and the weighted mean level of competence for each domain, answering the second and third research questions, and to test whether a significant relationship exists between the two, answering the fifth research question. The third and final part of the questionnaire gathered information on the respondents' preferred School Learning Action Cell (LAC) session arrangements. The items asked about preferred training topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms. The information collected from this section answered the fourth research question and served as an important basis for designing School Learning Action Cell sessions that respond to the identified training needs and preferences of the teachers. The findings from all parts of the questionnaire provided the information needed to develop the proposed School Learning Action Cell sessions for non-SNED-trained elementary teachers at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School. Before the questionnaire was administered, it was submitted to experts in inclusive education, educational research, and educational measurement for content validation. Their comments and suggestions were used to improve the clarity, relevance, organization, and alignment of the questionnaire with the objectives of the study.

Both dimensions used a five-point rating scale. For the level of importance, responses were interpreted as 4.21–5.00, Highly Important; 3.41–4.20, Important; 2.61–3.40, Moderately Important; 1.81–2.60, Less Important; and 1.00–1.80, Not Important. For the level of competence, responses were interpreted as 4.21–5.00, Highly Competent; 3.41–4.20, Competent; 2.61–3.40, Moderately Competent; 1.81–2.60, Less Competent; and 1.00–1.80, Not Competent. In the scoring procedure, each competency under the three domains was rated according to two dimensions, namely level of importance and level of competence. The level of importance refers to the extent to which the respondent considers a competency essential in

supporting learners in inclusive classrooms, while the level of competence refers to the respondent's perceived ability to perform the same competency in current teaching practice. Both ratings used a five-point scale interpreted through the following ranges: 4.21–5.00, Highly Important / Highly Competent; 3.41–4.20, Important / Competent; 2.61–3.40, Moderately Important / Moderately Competent; 1.81–2.60, Less Important / Less Competent; and 1.00–1.80, Not Important / Not Competent. The two ratings for each competency were used to compute the weighted means compared in Chapter 2, and the overall importance and competence scores were correlated to test the study's null hypothesis.

This study observed strict adherence to ethical standards in order to protect the rights, welfare, and dignity of all participants. It was carried out with honesty, transparency, and professionalism throughout the planning, data-collection, analysis, and reporting stages, and observed the ethical policies of the institution and the requirements of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). The information collected was used solely for the completion of this academic study and for no other purpose. Before participating, each respondent received a clear explanation of the research objectives, procedures, expected duration of participation, possible benefits, and their responsibilities as participants. Each participant signed an informed consent form confirming that participation was voluntary and that they could decline or withdraw at any stage without penalty or negative consequences to their professional standing. Consent was obtained only after participants fully understood the nature of the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, with no coercion or pressure involved, and teachers could decline or discontinue participation at any point without any consequences to their teaching responsibilities or professional evaluation.

The identity of every respondent was protected throughout the research process. The questionnaire did not require unnecessary personal information, and respondents were not asked to write their names. All data were coded to ensure anonymity, kept in a secure location accessible only to the researcher and authorized personnel, and stored securely both physically and digitally. Findings are presented only in summary form so that individual participants cannot be identified. The researcher confirms that no conflict of interest existed in the conduct of this study. The research was completed independently and was not influenced by financial support, personal relationships, or any outside organization, and the results are presented honestly and without favoring any individual or group. The study involved very little risk because respondents were only asked to answer a questionnaire about their level of importance of and level of competence in competencies related to inclusive education. The survey did not include sensitive or intrusive questions, and no physical, emotional, social, legal, or professional harm was expected or reported. All participants were treated respectfully and professionally throughout the research process, with no respondent exposed to discrimination, embarrassment, or unnecessary pressure. The study adhered to the principle of beneficence by generating insights that may help improve inclusive classroom practices and strengthen teachers' capacity to support diverse learners, while ensuring that no participant was placed at risk of harm.

Participants were invited based on the selection criteria established for the study. Only teachers who met the qualifications were requested to participate, the invitation was made respectfully, and respondents were given sufficient time to decide. No incentives or forms of pressure were used to influence their decision. Participants could stop participating at any time without penalty. Although there was no direct financial or material benefit, their responses may help identify priority areas for specialized training among non-SNED-trained elementary teachers and may guide school leaders, education supervisors, and program planners in designing professional development activities, School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions,

and other capacity-building programs that strengthen teachers' ability to manage inclusive classrooms and improve learning opportunities for all learners. Formal approval was secured from the school head and school authorities of Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School prior to data collection. Coordination with designated school representatives ensured that all procedures aligned with school policies, promoting transparency, respect, and cooperation throughout the research process.

The process of collecting data was carried out in three stages: the preliminary stage, the data gathering stage, and the post data gathering stage. Each stage was systematically implemented to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and ethical integrity of the research process. The study began with the preparation of the researcher-developed structured questionnaire based on the objectives, the Statement of the Problem, the three competency domains, and the needs-assessment logic of Borich's model. The instrument was submitted to qualified experts in inclusive education, research, and educational measurement for content validation, and their comments and recommendations were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, organization, and alignment of the questionnaire items. After the instrument was finalized, the researcher secured formal approval from the appropriate school and education authorities through a transmittal letter. Coordination with the school head or designated school representative was then undertaken to identify the teachers who met the inclusion criteria. The purpose, objectives, procedures, voluntary nature, and confidentiality provisions of the study were explained to the eligible respondents. Each participant was asked to sign an informed consent form before taking part in the study, and their decision to participate or decline did not affect their professional standing.

In the data gathering stage, the primary data-gathering instrument was a printed, structured training-needs assessment questionnaire intended for the non-SNED-trained elementary teachers of Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School. The questionnaire contained three parts. Part I gathered the respondents' demographic and professional profiles. Part II assessed their level of importance of and level of competence in early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. Part III gathered their preferred Learning Action Cell session arrangements in terms of training topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to all eligible respondents under the total-enumeration approach. Clear instructions were provided before the respondents answered the instrument, and questions concerning the completion of the questionnaire were addressed without suggesting or influencing any response. To minimize disruption to regular classes and teaching responsibilities, the respondents completed the questionnaires during their free periods, vacant periods, or other available non-teaching hours. The accomplished questionnaires were personally retrieved by the researcher and checked for completeness. Respondents were not required to write their names on the instrument, and all collected information was handled confidentially. Completed questionnaires and encoded data were secured and used only for the purposes of the study.

In the post data gathering stage, the responses were coded, organized, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis by the hired statistician. The respondents' profiles and preferred LAC session arrangements were summarized, the level of importance and level of competence ratings were analyzed using weighted means and standard deviations, and the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between the two. The results were then analyzed and interpreted in relation to the research questions. The findings, together with the respondents' preferred session arrangements, served as the basis for formulating the proposed School Learning Action Cell sessions presented in Chapter 4 for non-SNED-trained elementary teachers at Gen.P. del Rosario Elementary School. The proposed sessions were not implemented or evaluated within the scope of the study.

The data gathered from the validated questionnaire were organized, analyzed, and interpreted by the hired statistician using appropriate statistical tools to answer the research questions of the study. Frequency count was used to determine the number of respondents in each category of the profile variables, which include age, sex, highest educational attainment, teaching experience, teaching position, subject or learning area handled, and attendance to seminars related to inclusive education. It was also used to determine how many respondents selected each preferred topic, delivery mode, learning activity, and support mechanism for the Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions. Percentage was used to show the proportion of respondents in every category based on the total number of respondents, which helped describe the respondents' profile and present their preferences for the proposed LAC sessions in a simple and clear way. The respondents' demographic and professional profiles were thus summarized using frequencies and percentages, and their preferred training topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms were likewise summarized using frequencies and ranks.

The weighted mean (WM) was used to determine the respondents' ratings on the level of importance of each competency and their level of competence in performing it, and the competencies were grouped into the areas of early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support. The importance rating showed how important the respondents believed each competency to be in supporting learners in inclusive classrooms, while the competence rating showed how confident they were in performing each competency in their teaching practice. These ratings describe the respondents' own perceptions and were not intended to measure their actual teaching performance. The weighted mean indicated the general level assigned by the 39 respondents. The standard deviation (SD) was used alongside each weighted mean to describe the degree of variability or consistency in the respondents' ratings of importance and competence, for every competency, for every domain, and overall. For each competency and for each of the three domains, a weighted mean and standard deviation were computed for the level of importance and, separately, for the level of competence. Domain-level and overall (grand) means were likewise computed by averaging the weighted means of the competencies within each domain, and across all three domains, respectively.

To determine whether the level of importance and the level of competence of the respondents were significantly related, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was computed between the respondents' overall importance scores and their overall competence scores. The resulting r -value was interpreted for strength and direction of correlation, and tested for significance at the 0.05 level using its corresponding p -value. A p -value less than 0.05 led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating a significant relationship between the two variables, while a p -value of 0.05 or greater led to the failure to reject the null hypothesis. Ranking was used to arrange competencies and domains according to their weighted means, and to arrange the respondents' preferred training topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms according to frequency. Competencies with high importance but comparatively lower competence were identified as priority topics for inclusion in the proposed School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions. Lastly, the respondents' preferred SLAC session topics, delivery modes, learning activities, and support mechanisms were summarized using frequency count and rank. The results were combined with the weighted-mean findings to develop the proposed School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions presented in Chapter 4. The weighted-mean results, the correlation between importance and competence, and the preferred LAC session arrangements collectively served as the basis for developing relevant, practical, and context-responsive Learning Action Cell sessions for non-SNED-trained elementary teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from 39 non-SNED-trained elementary teachers of Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School. The study employed a descriptive-correlational design, and the data were gathered from the 39 teacher-respondents through a researcher-prepared questionnaire that measured their level of importance of and level of competence in early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support, as well as their preferred Learning Action Cell (LAC) session arrangements. The data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, weighted means, standard deviations, and Pearson product-moment correlation. Each indicator was rated on a five-point scale. For importance, the interpretation was 4.21–5.00, Highly Important; 3.41–4.20, Important; 2.61–3.40, Moderately Important; 1.81–2.60, Less Important; and 1.00–1.80, Not Important. For competence, the interpretation was 4.21–5.00, Highly Competent; 3.41–4.20, Competent; 2.61–3.40, Moderately Competent; 1.81–2.60, Less Competent; and 1.00–1.80, Not Competent. The discussion is grounded in the data gathered, and the results are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study, which are organized according to the research questions: the profile of the respondents, their level of importance and level of competence in the three learner-support domains, their preferred LAC session arrangements, and the significant relationship between their level of importance and level of competence.

Profile of the respondents

With respect to age and sex, the respondents were overwhelmingly female, comprising 37 of the 39 teachers (94.87%), while male teachers numbered 2 (5.13%). In terms of age, 4 respondents (10.26%) were above 56 years old, all of them female (10.26%) with no male respondents in this bracket (0, 0.00%). In the 49–56 bracket there were 12 respondents (30.77%), of whom 11 were female (28.21%) and 1 was male (2.56%). The 41–48 bracket likewise had 12 respondents (30.77%), with 11 females (28.21%) and 1 male (2.56%). The 33–40 bracket had 11 respondents (28.21%), all of them female (28.21%), with no male respondents (0, 0.00%). The sample was therefore fairly evenly distributed among the 33–40, 41–48, and 49–56 brackets, with the smallest proportion aged above 56. This distribution indicates a predominantly female, experienced teaching force spread across early- to late-career age groups, which is consistent with the demographic composition typically observed among elementary teachers in Philippine public schools. Such a balanced age spread suggests that the identified training needs are not confined to a single generation of teachers but cut across early-career and senior teachers alike. Any proposed Learning Action Cell sessions should therefore be designed to be equally relevant and accessible to teachers at different career stages, rather than assuming shared prior training among older, more experienced staff. Honteveros et al. (2025) similarly emphasized that teachers' readiness for inclusive education is linked less to age or tenure than to the actual training and support they have received, reinforcing the need to assess training needs directly rather than assume readiness based on years of service.

In terms of highest educational attainment, the majority of the respondents, 29 (74.36%), had earned units toward a master's degree, while 4 (10.26%) were master's graduates and 6 (15.38%) held only a bachelor's degree. This distribution suggests a teaching force that has largely pursued postgraduate study, reflecting a general commitment to professional growth. However, graduate coursework in education does not necessarily include specialized preparation in inclusive education or special needs education, meaning that advanced academic qualifications alone do not guarantee readiness to support learners with disabilities in regular classrooms. This is consistent with De Los Reyes et al. (2025), who found that Philippine

teachers' preparedness for inclusive teaching depended more on relevant, targeted training than on general educational attainment. Lopez et al. (2025) similarly found that teachers' professional training and support, rather than their educational attainment alone, determined their preparedness for inclusive education in the public school setting.

Regarding teaching experience, more than half of the respondents, 21 (53.85%), had 16 years or more of teaching experience, 13 (33.33%) had 11 to 15 years, and 5 (12.82%) had 6 to 10 years. No respondent had less than six years of teaching experience. This finding indicates a highly experienced teaching force with a long history of classroom practice, yet, as the later results show, this extensive experience did not translate into uniformly high competence across all three learner-support domains. This is consistent with Honteveros et al. (2025), who noted that years of teaching experience alone do not equip regular teachers with the specialized skills needed for inclusive practice, and that dedicated training on learner support remains necessary even for senior teachers.

As to teaching position, two-thirds of the respondents, 26 (66.67%), held the position of Teacher III, followed by Teacher II with 9 (23.08%), while Teacher IV and Master Teacher I each accounted for 2 respondents (5.13%). The predominance of Teacher III among the respondents suggests a teaching force that has progressed beyond entry-level positions but has not necessarily advanced into supervisory or master-teacher roles that typically carry additional training opportunities. This concentration in the middle ranks of the teaching hierarchy implies that professional development on inclusive education may not yet have reached this group through position-based training assignments, strengthening the case for a dedicated Learning Action Cell program open to teachers regardless of rank. Barol et al. (2025) similarly found that regular classroom teachers' readiness to handle learners with special educational needs was not determined by rank or position, reinforcing the need for training that reaches teachers across all positions rather than only those in specialized or senior roles.

With regard to attendance to seminars, 22 respondents (56.41%) had attended seminars related to inclusive education or learner support, while a substantial minority of 17 (43.59%) had not attended any such seminar. This finding confirms that seminar attendance in this school remains inconsistent, leaving a considerable number of teachers without any formal exposure to inclusive-education training despite their years of classroom experience. Moríña et al. (2020) similarly found that uneven access to relevant training, rather than a lack of willingness, is a persistent barrier to teachers' readiness for inclusive education, underscoring the need for a school-based program that reaches all teachers rather than relying on individual seminar attendance.

Level of importance of training for the learner support needs

In terms of early recognition, all four indicators were rated Highly Important, with weighted means ranging from 4.28 to 4.59. Documenting classroom observations objectively obtained a weighted mean of 4.54 (SD = 0.55), and recognizing persistent concerns in learning, communication, participation, social interaction, and behavior obtained 4.51 (SD = 0.56). Providing appropriate initial classroom support obtained the highest rating (WM = 4.59, SD = 0.55), while determining when consultation or school-based referral is necessary obtained the lowest, though still Highly Important, rating (WM = 4.28, SD = 0.65). The aggregate mean of 4.48 (aggregate SD = 0.58), interpreted as Highly Important, confirms that the respondents regarded early recognition as a highly important area of their professional responsibility. This uniformly high valuation suggests that teachers are keenly aware of their role in noticing and responding to early signs of learner difficulty, even before any formal diagnosis or referral

takes place. The comparatively lower rating for knowing when to escalate a concern implies that, while teachers value recognition and documentation highly, the decision point of when to seek outside consultation is seen as a slightly less certain aspect of the role. Crispel and Kasperski (2021) emphasized that specialized training strengthens not only teachers' awareness of learner needs but also their confidence in knowing when and how to involve additional support, suggesting that this decision-point competency should receive deliberate attention in the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions. Matolo and Rambuda (2022) likewise emphasized that the early screening, identification, and assessment of learners requiring additional support is a foundational step in implementing inclusive education policy, further affirming why respondents regarded this domain as highly important to their practice.

School-based referral and collaboration received the highest aggregate mean (4.66, aggregate SD = 0.52) among the three domains, interpreted as Highly Important, and coordinating with parents or guardians was rated the highest of all 14 indicators in the study (WM = 4.82, SD = 0.45). All five indicators were rated Highly Important: consulting appropriate personnel (WM = 4.59, SD = 0.55), communicating observed learner concerns professionally and respectfully (WM = 4.64, SD = 0.54), maintaining confidentiality and proper documentation (WM = 4.64, SD = 0.54), and following appropriate school-based referral procedures (WM = 4.62, SD = 0.54). The weighted means thus ranged from 4.59 to 4.82, and the aggregate standard deviation of 0.52 was the smallest among the three domains, indicating strong agreement among respondents. This finding suggests that teachers place the greatest value on working with others, whether parents, guardians, or school personnel, to support learners who may need additional help. The near-uniform agreement across respondents implies that this valuation is broadly shared rather than limited to a subset of teachers. Honteveros et al. (2025) found that collaborative relationships between teachers, families, and support personnel are consistently regarded by Filipino teachers as central to inclusive practice, which is reflected in this domain receiving the highest importance ratings in the present study. This is further supported by Piliotas et al. (2026), who found that Filipino elementary teachers held strongly favorable attitudes toward the collaborative and referral-based aspects of inclusive education, even when their formal training in the area remained limited.

All five indicators of positive behavior support were likewise rated Highly Important, with weighted means clustering narrowly between 4.54 and 4.62 and an aggregate mean of 4.57 (aggregate SD = 0.56). Establishing clear classroom expectations and routines obtained 4.62 (SD = 0.54), using preventive and positive behavior-support strategies 4.59 (SD = 0.55), reinforcing appropriate learner behavior 4.54 (SD = 0.55), responding calmly and consistently to challenging behavior 4.56 (SD = 0.60), and promoting learner participation, self-regulation, and dignity 4.56 (SD = 0.55). The tight clustering of ratings across all five indicators suggests that teachers view the different facets of positive behavior support, from setting expectations to responding to challenging behavior, as equally essential components of a single, coherent practice rather than as separable skills of differing priority. Chow et al. (2025) similarly observed that teachers in inclusive and special education settings tend to regard behavioral management competencies as an integrated skill set, reinforcing the case for addressing this domain holistically in the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions. Ang and Phoon (2025) similarly found that teachers in inclusive Malaysian classrooms viewed behavioural management challenges and their corresponding support needs as interconnected rather than isolated concerns. Elbancol and Marquez (2025) likewise emphasized that classroom management for learners with emotional and behavioral needs requires teachers to draw on a coherent set of preventive and responsive strategies rather than any single isolated technique.

Taken together, all three domains were rated Highly Important, with a grand mean of 4.57 (grand SD = 0.55). School-based referral and collaboration obtained the highest domain

mean (4.66, SD = 0.52), followed by positive behavior support (4.57, SD = 0.56) and early recognition of learner support needs (4.48, SD = 0.58). These results indicate that the respondents recognize the full scope of learner-support competencies, spanning recognition, referral, and behavior management, as highly important to their role as elementary teachers, regardless of their formal SNED training. This uniformly high valuation across domains establishes a strong foundation for the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions, since teacher buy-in for training content is less likely to be a barrier than their actual, comparatively lower, competence.

Level of competence for the learner support needs

Under early recognition, all four indicators were rated Competent, with weighted means ranging narrowly from 3.90 to 3.97. Recognizing persistent concerns in learning, communication, participation, social interaction, and behavior obtained 3.95 (SD = 0.56), documenting classroom observations objectively 3.97 (SD = 0.49), providing appropriate initial classroom support 3.95 (SD = 0.51), and determining when consultation or school-based referral is necessary 3.90 (SD = 0.60). The aggregate mean of 3.94 (aggregate SD = 0.54), interpreted as Competent, was the lowest aggregate competence mean among the three domains. Comparison with the importance results reveals the widest gap in this domain: while early recognition was rated Highly Important (aggregate mean 4.48), the respondents rated themselves only Competent, one descriptive level lower, in actually performing it (aggregate mean 3.94). This gap suggests that although teachers understand and value the importance of noticing and documenting learner concerns early, they do not yet feel highly capable of doing so in practice. Mavuso (2022) found a comparable pattern among senior-phase teachers, who recognized the importance of identifying learning difficulties early but reported feeling under-prepared to do so without specialized training, reinforcing early recognition as the domain most in need of capability-building support in the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions. Asuncion (2025) likewise found that public elementary school teachers' classroom management strategies for learners with learning disabilities were often self-developed through trial and error rather than grounded in formal training on early identification and support.

All five indicators under school-based referral and collaboration were rated Highly Competent, with weighted means ranging from 4.23 to 4.46 and an aggregate mean of 4.35 (aggregate SD = 0.74), the highest aggregate competence mean among the three domains. Consulting appropriate personnel obtained 4.23 (SD = 0.71), communicating observed learner concerns professionally and respectfully 4.33 (SD = 0.81), coordinating with parents or guardians 4.46 (SD = 0.72), maintaining confidentiality and proper documentation 4.33 (SD = 0.74), and following appropriate school-based referral procedures 4.38 (SD = 0.71). Unlike the early recognition domain, the respondents' self-rated competence here closely matched their level of importance (aggregate mean 4.66), with only a small gap between the two. This suggests that referral and collaboration, perhaps because they build on teachers' existing communication skills with parents and colleagues, are areas where non-SNED-trained teachers already feel well-equipped. Honteveros et al. (2025) likewise found that teachers' confidence in collaborative and communication-based tasks tends to be higher than their confidence in specialized recognition or intervention skills, consistent with this domain recording both the highest importance and the highest competence ratings in the present study. Mgonja and Mwila (2023) similarly found that regular teachers in inclusive settings were generally confident in their coordinating and consultative roles, even when they lacked specialized training in special needs education.

Four of the five indicators under positive behavior support were rated Highly Competent: establishing clear classroom expectations and routines (WM = 4.33, SD = 0.58), using preventive and positive behavior-support strategies (WM = 4.28, SD = 0.69), reinforcing appropriate learner behavior (WM = 4.33, SD = 0.74), and promoting learner participation, self-regulation, and dignity (WM = 4.36, SD = 0.58). Responding calmly and consistently to challenging behavior was rated only Competent (WM = 4.18, SD = 0.72), the single lowest-rated indicator in this domain and the only one to fall below the Highly Competent range. The domain obtained an aggregate mean of 4.30 (aggregate SD = 0.66), interpreted as Highly Competent. This finding indicates that while teachers feel well-prepared to set expectations, reinforce good behavior, and promote self-regulation, they feel comparatively less confident specifically when actively managing a learner's challenging behavior in the moment. Bochiş et al. (2021) similarly found that pre-service and in-service teachers' attitudes toward behavioral management were least confident in real-time, reactive situations compared to proactive, preventive practices, mirroring the pattern observed in this domain. Bendoy (2025) and Garcillano (2025) likewise found that teachers' behavior and classroom-management practices in special needs settings were generally strong in preventive routines but comparatively less developed in actively responding to diverse or escalating learner behavior, while Dewi et al. (2025) reported that teachers continued to face challenges specifically in supporting students with emotional or behavioral disorders despite otherwise adequate classroom-management preparation.

In summary, early recognition was rated only Competent (3.94, SD = 0.54), the sole domain to fall below the Highly Competent range, while school-based referral and collaboration (4.35, SD = 0.74) and positive behavior support (4.30, SD = 0.66) were both rated Highly Competent. The grand mean of 4.20 (grand SD = 0.65) was interpreted as Competent, as it falls at the boundary between Competent and Highly Competent, just below the Highly Competent threshold of 4.21. Although all three domains were considered Highly Important (grand mean 4.57), only two of the three domains reached the Highly Competent level in practice. Early recognition of learner support needs stands out as the domain with both the lowest competence rating and the widest gap relative to its importance rating, confirming it as the most pressing priority for the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions, consistent with McGuire et al. (2024), who found that early identification and response to learner concerns remain among the least developed competencies in both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs. Osmani and Stanojkovska-Trajkovska (2024) similarly found that teacher competencies directly determined the quality of inclusive education provided to children with developmental difficulties, reinforcing the importance of closing the early recognition competence gap identified in this study.

Preferred Learning Action Cell session arrangements

The respondents could select more than one option per item, and the results are therefore reported as multiple responses. In terms of training topics, recognizing persistent concerns was the most preferred ($f = 26$, rank 1), followed by positive reinforcement and constructive feedback ($f = 23$, rank 2), collaboration with parents or guardians ($f = 22$, rank 3), preventive positive behavior-support strategies ($f = 21$, rank 4), monitoring learner's responses to initial classroom support ($f = 16$, rank 5), providing appropriate initial classroom support ($f = 14$, rank 6), professional communication of learner concerns ($f = 13$, rank 7), establishing classroom expectations and routines ($f = 12$, rank 8), confidentiality and proper handling of learner information ($f = 11$, rank 9), and school-based consultation and referral procedures ($f = 10$, rank 10). Objective classroom observation and documentation was the least preferred topic ($f = 5$, rank 11). The convergence between the top-ranked training topic and the domain

identified as the most pressing priority in the importance and competence results, early recognition of learner support needs, indicates that the teacher-respondents' own stated preferences align closely with the gap identified through their importance and competence ratings. This alignment strengthens the case for anchoring the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions on early recognition, since the intervention addresses both an empirically identified need and the teachers' expressed interest.

In terms of delivery modes, the respondents overwhelmingly preferred a face-to-face LAC session ($f = 32$, rank 1) over any other mode, followed distantly by peer mentoring or coaching ($f = 23$, rank 2), printed or digital self-learning material ($f = 20$, rank 3), seminar-workshop ($f = 19$, rank 4), small-group workshop ($f = 14$, rank 5), and demonstration session ($f = 8$, rank 6). A blended face-to-face and online session was the least preferred mode ($f = 5$, rank 7). This strong preference for face-to-face delivery suggests that the respondents value direct interaction and immediate feedback in professional development, giving them opportunities to communicate, exchange ideas, and participate actively during professional learning activities. This is consistent with the collaborative and communication-oriented competencies already rated highly in the domain of school-based referral and collaboration. It implies that the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions should be designed primarily as in-person, school-based gatherings rather than as self-paced or online modules. Fernandez (2026) similarly found that Filipino teachers preferred classroom management training delivered through direct, in-person engagement over independent or online formats.

With respect to learning activities, analysis of classroom scenarios was the most preferred ($f = 17$, rank 1), followed by collaborative lesson or support planning ($f = 14$, rank 2), demonstration of strategies ($f = 12$, rank 3), question-and-answer session with a resource person ($f = 11$, rank 4), peer sharing of classroom experiences ($f = 10$, rank 5), school-based referral procedure walkthrough ($f = 9$, rank 6), case-based discussion ($f = 8$, rank 7), clear school-based referral guidelines or procedures ($f = 7$, rank 8), role-playing or simulation ($f = 6$, rank 9), reflection and action planning ($f = 4$, rank 10), and administrative support for participation in LAC sessions ($f = 2$, rank 11). Development of observation and documentation samples was the least preferred activity ($f = 1$, rank 12). The preference for scenario-based analysis over the direct development of documentation samples suggests that teachers favor learning activities that let them reason through realistic classroom situations collaboratively, rather than producing paperwork templates in isolation. Marchan et al. (2025) similarly found that Philippine teachers supporting learners with special needs valued case-based, discussion-driven training formats over purely administrative or documentation-focused activities, a pattern reflected in this ranking. Hanur et al. (2025) likewise found that skill-reinforcement activities grounded in practical, discussion-based engagement were more effective in strengthening teachers' inclusive-education practice than materials-based or documentation-heavy formats.

Finally, in terms of support mechanisms, clear school-based referral guidelines or procedures was the most preferred ($f = 27$, rank 1), closely followed by administrative support for participation in LAC sessions ($f = 26$, rank 2) and access to qualified resource persons ($f = 19$, rank 3). The other mechanisms were access to relevant school support personnel ($f = 16$, rank 4), printed or digital reference materials ($f = 11$, rank 5), peer consultation and collaborative planning ($f = 10$, rank 6), follow-up coaching or mentoring ($f = 9$, rank 7), opportunities to practice and receive feedback ($f = 6$, rank 8), and scheduled time within the school calendar ($f = 4$, rank 9). Sample classroom observation and documentation forms was the least preferred ($f = 1$, rank 10). Teachers most valued having concrete, ready-to-use referral tools and dedicated, school-sanctioned time and backing to attend training, rather than

materials-based supports such as printed references or documentation forms. This implies that the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions should be paired with tangible institutional support, such as an official referral flowchart and protected time in the school calendar, to translate training into sustained practice.

Relationship between the level of importance and the level of competence

To answer the fifth research question, a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed between the respondents' overall level of importance of training and their overall level of competence for the learner support needs. The analysis yielded a weak positive correlation ($r = 0.326$), which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance in a two-tailed test ($p = 0.043 < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) that no significant relationship exists between the two variables. This weak but significant positive relationship indicates that teachers who place greater importance on a given learner-support competency also tend to rate themselves as somewhat more competent in performing it, though the relationship is far from strong or deterministic. The modest strength of the correlation suggests that valuing a competency highly does not, by itself, translate into strong self-rated ability. This finding aligns with Crispel and Kasperski (2021), who found that positive teacher attitudes toward inclusion must be paired with structured, hands-on training before they translate into meaningful gains in competence. The implication is that the proposed Learning Action Cell sessions cannot rely on the teachers' already-high regard for these competencies alone; deliberate, structured training is still required to close the gap between what teachers value and what they can currently do, particularly in the early recognition domain, which was identified as the area of lowest competence. Zhumageldiyeva and Abaeva (2023) similarly found that teachers' professional readiness in inclusive educational environments depends on the alignment of their attitudes with their actual competencies, while Ogunwole et al. (2026) emphasized that teacher training and student outcomes are only meaningfully linked when training programs are deliberately designed to close identified practice gaps rather than assumed from teachers' existing dispositions.

Synthesis of findings

Taken together, the data gathered from the 39 non-SNED-trained elementary teachers present a coherent picture that directly addresses the objectives of the study. The respondents were predominantly female (94.87%), highly experienced, largely engaged in postgraduate study (74.36% with master's units), concentrated in the Teacher III position (66.67%), and inconsistently exposed to seminars, with 43.59% having attended none. They rated all three learner-support domains as Highly Important (grand mean = 4.57), yet their self-rated competence reached a grand mean of 4.20, interpreted as Competent, with early recognition (3.94) falling clearly below the Highly Competent level and showing the widest gap relative to its importance (4.48). The significant but weak positive relationship between importance and competence ($r = 0.326$, $p = 0.043$) confirms that valuing a competency does not by itself ensure proficiency. The respondents' preferences for recognizing persistent concerns as a training topic ($f = 26$), face-to-face delivery ($f = 32$), scenario analysis ($f = 17$), and clear referral guidelines ($f = 27$) provide a clear, teacher-endorsed basis for designing the Learning Action Cell sessions. These findings contribute to the literature on inclusive education in Philippine public schools by showing that the training need of non-SNED-trained teachers lies not in their appreciation of learner support but in their practical capability, particularly in early recognition and in responding to challenging behavior. The next chapter builds on these results by

presenting the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the design and implementation of the proposed Learning Action Cell program.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the priority training needs of the 39 non-SNED-trained elementary teachers at Gen. P. del Rosario Elementary School for School Year 2026-2027 as a basis for proposed Learning Action Cell sessions. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, total enumeration sampling, and a researcher-developed questionnaire, the study investigated the teachers' demographic and professional profile, their level of importance of and level of competence in early recognition of learner support needs, school-based referral and collaboration, and positive behavior support, their preferred Learning Action Cell session arrangements, and the significant relationship between importance and competence. The respondents were predominantly female (94.87%), were fairly evenly distributed across the 33-40, 41-48, and 49-56 age brackets, and largely held units toward a master's degree (74.36%). More than half (53.85%) had 16 years or more of teaching experience, and two-thirds (66.67%) held the position of Teacher III. Despite this level of experience, 43.59% had not attended any seminar related to inclusive education or learner support, which indicates that professional seniority and academic advancement have not been matched by sustained exposure to specialized training in this area.

It is concluded that these teachers regard all three learner-support domains as highly important to their role in inclusive classrooms. This conclusion is supported by the grand mean of 4.57 for importance, with school-based referral and collaboration rated highest (4.66), followed by positive behavior support (4.57) and early recognition of learner support needs (4.48). However, their self-rated competence has not kept pace with this high regard. The grand mean for competence was lower at 4.20, at the boundary between Competent and Highly Competent. Early recognition of learner support needs was the only domain rated merely Competent (3.94), whereas school-based referral and collaboration (4.35) and positive behavior support (4.30) were both rated Highly Competent. This pattern shows that early recognition constitutes the most pressing area for professional development, particularly since it is the foundation on which timely referral and appropriate behavioral support depend.

The Pearson correlation test further clarifies this relationship. A weak positive relationship was found between the respondents' level of importance and level of competence for the learner support needs ($r = 0.326$), which was statistically significant ($p = 0.043$) and therefore led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. It follows that valuing these competencies does not, by itself, translate into strong capability, and that deliberate, structured, and contextualized training remains necessary to close the gap. This is reinforced by the teachers' preferences, as they favored training on recognizing persistent learner concerns, delivered through face-to-face Learning Action Cell sessions, using the analysis of classroom scenarios as the primary learning activity, and supported by clear school-based referral guidelines and administrative support for participation.

In light of these conclusions, a Learning Action Cell program anchored on early recognition of learner support needs, delivered through face-to-face, scenario-based sessions and backed by concrete referral tools and administrative support, is warranted to strengthen the specialized training of non-SNED-trained elementary teachers at the school. It is therefore recommended that the proposed action plan be adopted and implemented by the school administration and the Learning Action Cell coordinator as part of the school's continuing professional development program for inclusive education. The sessions may prioritize the

early recognition of learner concerns, appropriate referral and coordination, and positive approaches to managing learner behavior, while incorporating practical activities, demonstrations, peer collaboration, and guided application so that teachers can connect the sessions with their classroom experiences. Finally, school leaders are encouraged to provide the time and basic support needed for the regular conduct of these sessions, so that the teachers' high regard for learner support can be translated into stronger and more consistent classroom practice.

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