

Teachers Preparedness in Delivering Inclusive Instruction for students with Learning Disabilities in Island Garden City of Samal- A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

This study explored the preparedness of general education teachers of the Island Garden City of Samal to deliver inclusive instruction for students with learning disabilities. This study is grounded in Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. Using a phenomenological approach, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with six purposively selected teachers actively engaged in inclusive classrooms. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis and found three general themes: (1) continuous training and professional development, (2) the significance of access to teaching materials and school support systems, and (3) how teachers' self-efficacy about their capability affects their instructional style. The results showed that certain teachers felt somewhat ready, while others were keen to do better given their limited training and resources. This highlights the importance of ongoing professional development, improved access to inclusive teaching resources, and greater institutional support for increasing teachers' confidence and effectiveness. This study recommends increasing pre-service and in-service training, offering more inclusive teaching materials, and promoting greater collaboration among educators for facilitating effective inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive education; teacher preparedness; self-efficacy; learning disabilities

Introduction

Inclusive education gives each and every child the chance to gain quality learning irrespective of any physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other learning disabilities they might have. In the case of learning disabilities children, the implementation of inclusive teaching practices is especially crucial in order to avoid them falling behind academically as well as socially. Although many individuals are involved in making inclusive education a success, teachers are the most significant stakeholders who convert policies into practical actions. Research identifies that the success of inclusive education largely depends on the performance of teachers since they are the people who are actually working with students to put these practices into action (Norwich, 1994; World Health Organization, 2011; Shade & Stewart, 2001).

However, evidence shows that most teachers are not well-prepared to carry out this crucial task. The case in point is a worldwide study by Karynbaeva et al. (2021) that found that only 3% of teachers felt they were well-prepared to teach children with learning disabilities, thus showing a common shortage of both knowledge and skills. In the Philippines, in spite of the activities of the Department of Education to promote inclusive education, many teachers face challenges such as insufficient training, poor access to effective pedagogical

methods, and difficulty 5 working together with special education experts (Ecoben, 2019). Although the majority of teachers embrace inclusive education, they often express a feeling of inadequacy and a lack of significant exposure or experience in teaching diverse learners. Despite these difficulties, there is relatively little research that seeks to assess the readiness of teachers in localized settings like the Island Garden City of Samal. While inclusive practices have been started in some schools in the area, there is a significant absence of knowledge regarding how well teachers are ready to work with students with learning disabilities and offer truly inclusive teaching. Because Samal is a rural town with limited availability of resources and training, it is ever more important that teacher readiness be assessed and understood. Measurement of this type can assist in determining where support and professional development are most necessary to make all children accessible to the education they are entitled to.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to explore the perceptions of teachers in Island Garden City of Samal, shedding light on their readiness to deliver inclusive instruction to students with learning disabilities in Island Garden City of Samal. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perspectives of general education teachers in the Island Garden City of Samal regarding their preparedness to deliver inclusive instruction to students with learning disabilities?
2. What factors influence the perceptions of preparedness among general education teachers in delivering inclusive instruction?
3. How does perceived preparedness affect the teaching practices of general education teachers when working with students with learning disabilities?

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded by Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory guides the study wherein in highlights the importance of self-efficacy this means that an individual's belief in his or her ability to overcome difficult tasks and perform his or her tasks in a successful way (Bandura, 1997). In education context, this means that the possibility of teachers being successful in their profession is higher if they believe in their capability to adapt their teaching approaches to cater the varied needs of students, particularly students with learning disabilities.

According to Hsiao, Chang, Tu, and Chen (2011) stated that teacher self-efficacy is the confidence of a or capacity to plan, arrange, and implement activities that are created to accomplish certain educational goals. Their study shows, teachers with high self-efficacy are expected to try new pedagogical methods and show high dedication towards inclusive education. This result is in aligned with Bandura's theory, which shows that the teachers who believe in themselves are more likely to implement inclusive practice and provide more support to the students with special needs.

In addition, Mojavezi and Tamiz (2012) found that teacher self-efficacy positively influences students' achievement and motivation. Teachers who are confident of their abilities as teachers are most likely to use more effective strategies, which enhance student participation and allow students with learning disabilities to achieve academically. Similarly, Alnahdi and Schwab (2021) recently carried out a study in Saudi Arabia and

found that teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion were strongly predictive of their self-efficacy, with personal experiences, such as having a disabled family member, often being more impactful than formal qualifications.

This theory was chosen for this study because it supported the findings and offered a relevant, empirically supported description of how teachers' internalized beliefs impact their readiness to deliver inclusive instruction. Teachers who work in underdeveloped areas, like the Island Garden City of Samal, encounter many difficulties. One important element that might combat a lack of institutional support or training is self-efficacy.

Method

This chapter gives an overview of the most significant factors that guided the research process, including the design of the research, the participants, the sampling methods, the data collection, the instruments used for data collection, the manner in which the data was processed.

For the aim of this study, a qualitative approach was utilized, using a phenomenological method. This structure enables the investigation and understanding of the individual views and experiences of teachers concerning their readiness to provide inclusive education for students with learning disabilities in the Island Garden City of Samal. Phenomenology is specifically suited in this case since it is interested in grasping the way people see and make sense of their experiences in a particular context (Stumpfegger, 2017; Tenny et al., 2022). Creswell (2014) defines that qualitative research aims to investigate and interpret meanings people ascribe to social problems, while Merriam and Tisdell (2016) highlight its purpose to investigate the meaning of experience from the perspective of the people who live it. This method provides an in-depth understanding of the concern and realities confronting teachers when applying inclusive instructions.

The study was conducted in some of the public grade schools in the Island Garden City of Samal that are actively implementing inclusive education programs. The participants were six general education teachers who were able to effectively sustain inclusive classrooms with students with learning disability. The teachers were selected based on their field experience and active participation in the delivery of inclusive instruction.

To gather information, semi-structured interviews were conducted, using an interview guide questions adapted from Walsh-Yusuf (2018), which was originally designed to explore teacher readiness in inclusive classroom settings. The gathered data were interpreted using thematic analysis—a study that enables the recognition of prevailing ideas or trends arising from the answers (Riger & Sigurvinsdottir, 2016). The interview answers were coded and the recognized themes were interpreted to serve the purpose of improved comprehension of the teachers' perspectives on their preparedness to give inclusive education to students with learning disabilities.

Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the results and discussion and the perspectives of general education teachers in the Island Garden City of Samal towards their readiness to give inclusive instruction for students with learning disabilities. The results are presented logically in three themes from the participants' responses: (1) training and professional development, (2) access to resources, support systems and collaboration, and (3)

instructional strategies and adaptation. The themes identify both the strengths and limitations encountered by the teachers, as well as the affective and professional reactions they have developed in regards to inclusive education. By including the participants' words, the research confirms their own experience and expertise regarding their perceptions.

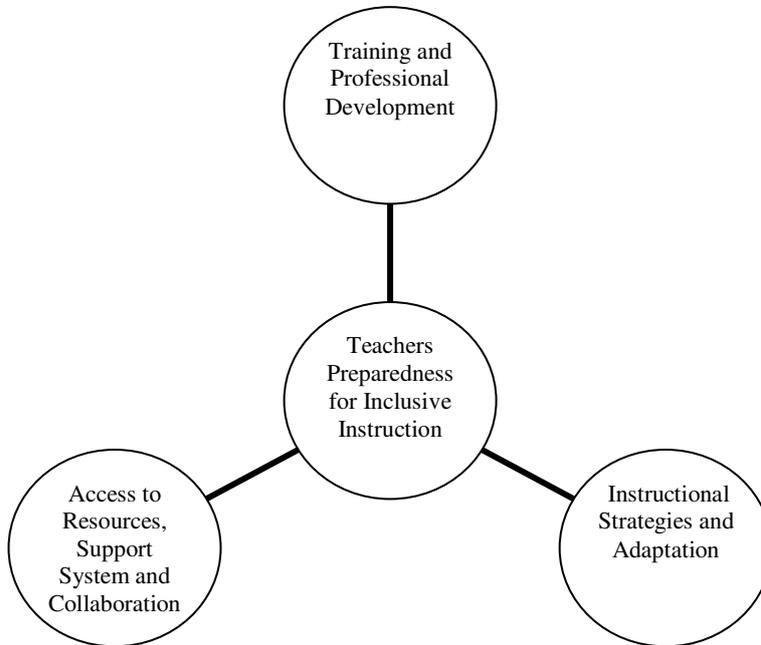


Figure 1. Emerging themes of Teachers Preparedness for Inclusive Instruction

Theme 1: Training and Professional Development

This theme states what general education teachers think regarding their readiness to teach students with learning disabilities. There are some teachers who feel that they are just beginning to learn, and others who acknowledge that they have much to learn. Participant 2, for example, described themselves as "developing" in readiness, which shows that they are aware of inclusive instruction but implies that there is a need for ongoing trainings and modifications to address the individual needs of each student.

"I described my preparedness to deliver inclusive instruction to students with learning disabilities as developing, while I receive training on differentiated instruction and universal design for learning, I recognize that every student with disabilities presents unique challenges and opportunities." –P2

According to Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, which states that people construct a sense of efficacy from mastery experiences, social models, and feedback. In teaching, this is a question of gaining confidence as teachers gain firsthand experience, but ongoing development is needed since they must cope with novel and complicated problems. Another teacher, Participant 6, reported that they feel "moderately prepared," using approaches like differentiated instruction and positive behavior support.

"As a general education teacher in the Island Garden City of Samal, I consider myself moderately prepared to deliver inclusive instruction to students with learning disabilities. I am aware of the principles of inclusive education and make conscious efforts to apply strategies such as differentiated instruction, scaffolded learning tasks, and positive behavior support in my classroom." P6

This implies that they have functional competencies and are showing a willingness to further develop. Another teacher, Participant 3 also reported a high degree of commitment to supporting their students, saying,

"As a teacher in Island Garden City of Samal, I try my best to support with learning disabilities. I use different strategies. I still need more, but I am willing to improve so I can give my students a chance to succeed."- P3

What this indicates is a commitment to ongoing education and a willingness to seek continuing education, and the necessity of ongoing professional development in the development of competence. Overall, teachers felt a mix of emotions including humility, measured confidence, determination, and receptiveness to learning. A significant theme that emerged among these feelings is their aspiration to refine their skills in inclusive teaching, which research identifies as a critical component of effective inclusive pedagogy (Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2012).

Theme 2: Access to Resources, Support System and Collaboration

This part considers the range of factors, both internal and external, on the attitudes of readiness for inclusive teaching among teachers. Some teachers refer to structural factors, such as a lack of tools and resources. As Participant 3 indicated, limited availability of teaching materials, assistive technology, and support staff might hinder the modification of lessons for students with varying needs.

"The availability of teaching materials, assistive technology, and support services plays a big role. Limited resources can make it more challenging to adapt instruction to meet individual with learning disabilities and special needs." P3

Such disillusionment shows how school policy and provision have a direct effect on a teacher's capacity to pursue inclusive instructions. This is why this finding supports with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory in emphasizing how a teacher's development and effectiveness are significantly influenced by various environmental factors, including institutional policy and resource provision (Guy Evans, 2020). Apart from that, it is also important that training and ongoing support are offered. Additionally, Participant 6 further stated that preparedness is directly affected by the provision of adequate training and resources.

"I feel prepared to deliver inclusive education when I have received proper training and have access to necessary resources."- P6

Availability of professional growth and the distribution of the right tools increase the confidence and capacity of the teachers. Furthermore, Participant 4 also further stated that a positive school climate and collaboration among the teacher's increase teachers' preparedness, citing the support as hard and a learning experience.

“Environment and Peer Factor, which both things give me a challenging and guided ways to become equipped to create a well modified instruction”- P4

This shows that collaboration and a positive school climate are very important in increasing teachers' ability to provide inclusive education.

Overall, this theme indicates that teacher's feeling of preparedness is not merely a function of personal interest but is inseparable with institutional support, adequate resources, and positive climate. As Manalo (2024) indicates, even highly educated teachers would be unable to modify instruction for diverse learners without institutional support.

Theme 3: Instructional Strategies and Adaptation

The final theme is the effect of teachers' perception of their readiness on their instructional strategies in teaching students with learning disabilities. Teachers' self-efficacy tends to induce a more proactive and adaptive strategy, employing various instructional strategies. For instance, Participant 3 said:

“My perceived preparedness greatly influences how I approach teaching students with learning disabilities. When I feel confident and well-equipped, I am more proactive in using a variety of teaching strategies, such as differentiated instruction, visual aids, and multi-sensory learning activities. I also tend to be more patient, flexible, and creative in finding ways to engage students and address their individual needs.”- P3

This indicates that sufficient preparation enables teachers to apply strategies such as visual and multisensory activities strategies that are aligned with the Universal Design for Learning principles that seek to address the diverse needs of students. As noted by Olavarria (2023), teachers who are more prepared and knowledgeable in multisensory strategies are much more likely to apply these strategies in the delivery of inclusive instruction. Conversely, Participant 6 recognized that when they feel unprepared, they resort to using known approaches, which might limit the support they might be able to offer.

“If I feel ready, I teach better and try new things. If not, I stick to what I know and may not help the students as much.”-P6

Self-efficacy is therefore highlighted to influence risk-taking and innovation in teaching practice. This supports with Bandura's theory that self-efficacy is vital to improve persistence and problem-solving. In fact, there is evidence supporting that teachers with high self-efficacy are more open to adopting of new teaching methods, have challenging goals, demonstrate higher levels of planning and organization, and target their efforts at solving problems (Lazarides & Warner, 2020).

Moreover, Participant 5 stressed the importance of careful planning of lessons and strict adherence to active, participatory techniques when it comes to feeling prepared and effective. Being proactive in this manner means that preparedness is more than confidence; it is intentional and intentional planning that leads to enhanced learning among all students.

“Mastering your lessons through preparing it ahead of time or preparing your lessons weekly will help you more become prepared specially thinking of methods and techniques to make the teaching-learning process more engaging and inclusive.” -P5

Teachers' perceptions of being prepared, or not prepared, ultimately have direct impacts on their instructional strategies. Teachers who are prepared and confident are more likely to innovate and adapt, thus leading to a more inclusive and challenging learning environment. Diminished confidence, however, may lead to less accommodating teaching behaviors and even exclusion of some students. Enhancing the sense of being prepared among teachers is therefore of the utmost importance not just for them but in order to provide quality education to all students.

Conclusion

Based on the results, teachers had different levels of self-efficacy; some perceived themselves as moderately prepared to implement inclusive instructions, while others perceived themselves as learning in the process. This inconsistency means that perceptions of readiness are dynamic and affected by continuous experiences, training, and support systems. There was an overlying theme among the teachers of an earnest desire to learn and improve, mirroring their readiness to pursue professional development if provided with the necessary tools and support.

The result also revealed some internal and external variables that affect teachers' perceptions of readiness. These are professional development support, access to instructional materials and assistive technology, positive classroom environment, and peer and leadership support. If all of these are adequately addressed, teachers are well-equipped and confident in their ability to address the needs of students with learning disabilities. Withholding such support, however, may deter even the most committed teachers from fully embracing inclusive teaching practices.

Among these factors, it supports that teachers' own self-perceptions of their readiness have direct impact on their teaching practices. Teachers who are confident are more likely to try out new approaches, modify lessons to address individual with special needs, and adopt inclusive practices. Those who feel that they are not ready, however, stick to conventional teaching practices, which may not necessarily address the varied needs of their students. This underscores the imperative need to develop teacher readiness and not merely to enhance their confidence but to improve the learning experience of the students with learning disabilities.

Recommendation

Based on the conclusion, the study suggests that education officials and schools should have a high priority on context-specific, ongoing professional development in inclusive education. Provision of required resources, such as instructional materials and assistive technology, is also required. Additionally, school-

based support systems development through peer support, coaching, and joint work with special education teachers--can improve teacher confidence and capability. Incorporating inclusive education training in pre-service teacher education programs will prepare future teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms more effectively. Finally, the study suggests that the research be replicated in other areas and educational settings to confirm these findings and continue to be attentive to factors affecting teacher preparation in inclusive education.

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