

Teaching Behavior: A Social Cognitive Inquiry into the Work Context of Special Education Teachers

Rachel L. Sabinorio, Roselyn M. Presno, Sitti Johanna Feb R. Mamac, Edroslyn J. Fernandez*

^a *rachel.sabinorio@hcdc.edu.ph / roselyn.presno@hcdc.edu.ph / sittijohannafeb.mamac@hcdc.edu.ph / edroslyn.fernandez@hcdc.edu.ph*
Holy Cross of Davao College, Sta Ana., Davao City, 8000, Philippines

Abstract

This qualitative study explored the teaching behaviors of special education (SPED) teachers through the lens of Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, focusing on the interaction of personal factors, behavioral patterns, and environmental influences in inclusive education settings. The study identified core themes that reflect the dynamic challenges and motivations inherent in their work using in-depth, semi-structured interviews with six purposively selected SPED teachers. The findings revealed that teachers draw deep fulfillment and motivation from students' engagement and growth, highlighting the importance of self-efficacy, emotional resilience, and strong support systems. Key teaching practices included consistent routines, personalized instruction, flexible strategies, and the cultivation of meaningful emotional connections with students. Environmental factors such as administrative support, classroom resources, and inclusive school culture are critical in shaping teaching behavior. These insights emphasized the need for responsive policies and professional development programs tailored to the needs of special education teachers. The study contributes a deeper understanding of the reciprocal relationship between teacher behavior and student development in inclusive educational contexts.

Keywords: Special education, teaching behavior, Social Cognitive Theory, inclusive education, self-efficacy, teacher motivation, environmental influences, personalized instruction, SPED teachers.

1. INTRODUCTION

The dynamic and sometimes difficult context associated with special education classrooms causes specific challenges that significantly influence teachers' behavior. Special education teachers have to deal with challenging students, behave professionally, and interact in a social environment in school; these all impact the teacher's motivation, decision-making process, and teaching approach considerably. Despite their crucial role in child welfare work, relatively little is known about how their work environment influences their behavior and professional quality of life. Social cognitive theory is used as a basis for examining the influence of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors on the practice of special educators. Through analyzing these dynamics, the study aims to offer valuable data that can direct professional growth, support systems, and

policies tailored to special education environments.

Wu et al. (2020) surveyed 439 special education teachers in many provinces of China. Emotional labor was a strong mediating variable, significantly mediating the linkages between social support and wellbeing. Teachers engage in emotional labor when they try to regulate their emotions according to their professional role demands, which may result in emotional exhaustion and, ultimately, burnout. The research highlights the need to support and sustain teachers' mental health and wellbeing with regular guidance and enable them to maintain sustainable educational output.

Furthermore, Fu et al. (2022) explored that the lower subjective wellbeing of special education teachers is related to high job demands, emotional exhaustion, and the absence of social appreciation. The findings imply that improved social support and self-efficacy sophistication would contribute to teachers' wellbeing and job satisfaction gains.

Alahmed (2024) found that burnout among Saudi Arabia's inclusive school SPED instructors mainly results from poor administrative support, role uncertainty, and heavy workload. When teachers lack clear direction or sufficient support, these organizational pressures cause emotional strain. Administrative and collegial support was found to help offset emotional tiredness at various degrees of teaching experience and background. This emphasizes the need for relational support in maintaining teacher wellbeing.

The Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system is complex in the United Kingdom, affecting teachers, particularly those in mainstream institutions. Otte (2024) claims that despite rising requests, teachers see little change in support for SEND kids. The growing number of pupils needing particular help strains school resources, leaving teachers unprepared and without support. Along with endangering SEND kids' quality of education, this systematic breakdown greatly stresses and increases burnout risk for instructors. The absence of sufficient facilities, personnel, and training strongly influences teacher behavior, well-being, and student results, stressing a significant educational system flaw.

The Philippines is no exception to the challenges faced by Special Education (SPED) in the global setting. Teachers in the country also experience similar hurdles, as shown, which are evident in the different studies conducted. Dotimas (2023) conducted research in a school for deaf and blind students in Pasay City. The findings revealed that teachers experience demanding teaching conditions and a lack of advancement opportunities, which contributed significantly to the teachers' stress levels. Similar research conducted by Abina et al. (2022) in Davao City showed that although teachers express high job satisfaction, there is still a need for compensation and job requirements to enhance employee retention further. Moreover, Esternon et al. (2023) reported that teachers in Davao City had moderate to high-stress levels concerning instructional readiness and the difficulty of implementing blended learning approaches during COVID-19.

This gap in education fueled the study's purpose to explore the interconnection of personal factors, patterns of behavior, and environmental factors, as proposed in the Social Cognitive Theory of Albert Bandura. This study aims to deepen the understanding of how teachers' beliefs, motivations, emotional states, and past experiences (personal factors) interact with their classroom practices (behavior) and work conditions (environmental influences). With Social Cognitive Theory, the study further seeks to understand how the teacher of special education adapts to challenges, makes instructional decisions, and influences their teaching context while at the same time being shaped by it. The findings of this study are expected to shed light on the cognitive and environmental mechanisms that influence teaching performance, contributing to the improvement of support systems and policies for special education professionals.

This study will provide significant information about the complex relationship between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors that influence the teaching practices of special education teachers. Using Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the research highlights the interaction between personal beliefs, especially self-efficacy, and expected outcomes, and the pressures in educational settings to influence the teacher's professional behaviors. Understanding the experiences of these teachers through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory will provide rich information that can be used to create interventions that aim to improve the teachers' wellbeing, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness.

1.1 Significance of the Study

This study provides important insights into the professional identity and work environment of SNED teachers by examining their personal characteristics, attitudes, and instructional strategies in inclusive classrooms. The results are intended to help school administrators worldwide create professional development and support initiatives that work for special education teachers. It also helps to improve educational experiences for students with special needs by guaranteeing that they receive fair and encouraging learning settings, and it lays the groundwork for future worldwide research on inclusive education practices.

1.2 Research Objectives

Teaching is a noble profession, but it comes with significant responsibilities and challenges, much more so in an inclusive education setting. In inclusive education, teaching becomes even more complex and demanding due to influences such as personal traits, teaching techniques, and environmental factors. The teacher's role in special education is crucial because their behaviors can influence the learning outcomes of students with special needs.

With the help of Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, this study aims to explore how personal factors, behavioral patterns, and environmental patterns work together to shape the teaching behaviors of SNED teachers. Despite these educators' crucial roles, limited research highlights how their personal experiences, perspectives, and work realities contribute to their teaching style. Thus, this study hopes to address this gap by investigating the distinct interaction between cognition, behavior, and environment of SNED teachers in their daily work.

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do special education teachers perceive the personal traits or attitudes they bring into their teaching?
2. How do special education teachers describe their teaching habits or actions in the classroom?
3. What factors in the school or classroom do special education teachers perceive as influencing their teaching?
4. How do special education teachers perceive and explain how they teach their students at work?

1.3 Literature Review

Teachers have the unique privilege of spending months at a time getting to know the students who make up their classes, with all their abilities, talents, strengths, and needs. One of the joys teaching career has been to witness how the fabric of a class dynamic is woven from the range of abilities of the students. It has been an experience that the diversity of children's abilities, regardless of who they are, brings richness to their relationships with each other and their teacher, making each class unique and interesting (Murphy and Torre 2014).

Special education teachers are always in high demand because few people have what it takes. They work with children with a wide range of disabilities. Whether dealing with minor learning disabilities or students who have severe physical and cognitive disorders, a special education teacher must have the skill and knowledge to know how to best work with the child.

Recent research by Berchiatti et al. (2022) highlights the critical importance of student-teacher relationship quality for kids with special educational needs and learning difficulties. Their studies reveal that the nature of this interaction greatly influences students' emotional wellbeing, hyperactivity, and academic performance. This emphasizes that enhancing student results and creating a better learning environment in special education depends on a pleasant, accepting, and encouraging relationship; so, indirectly, the acceptance of a teacher supports these significant connections.

Also, understanding behavioral patterns through qualitative methods involves examining how individuals act, think, and respond in specific contexts, often revealing deeper social or psychological

dynamics that might not surface through quantitative data alone (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Additionally, Miña (2024) also underlines how important patience and tailored attention are. Reflecting the necessity to slow down teaching and accommodate each student's pace, one teacher said, "We cater to them one by one; we cannot forget to pay attention to them." This method reveals that patience is an intentional teaching tool rather than a personal attribute. Teachers assist students in developing confidence and independence by allowing them the time and support they need, lowering their frustration. Miña's results emphasize how attentive and compassionate instruction creates a welcoming and inclusive classroom for students with special needs.

Moreover, the most recent studies by Weidmann and Chopik (2024) highlighted the significant role of environmental contexts in shaping behavior. For instance, broad environmental factors, such as cultural norms and societal structures, and narrow influences, like neighborhood quality and social relationships, play crucial roles in personality development. These findings underscore the importance of considering environmental contexts in understanding behavioral patterns. Additionally, research conducted by Ortega et al. (2020) demonstrated that adolescents' physical activity and dietary behaviors are significantly influenced by their home, school, and neighborhood environments, including the availability of recreational spaces and food outlets.

Moreover, students with special needs can present challenging issues for teachers. In choosing how to respond when students with disabilities present behavioral difficulties, teachers must consider what underlies their behavior. The behavioral problems presented by these students often result from feelings of discouragement, frustration, and inadequacy.

Also, they noted that supportive school environments encourage reflective teaching practices and foster adaptive behavioral patterns Macías and Sánchez (2022). Lastly, contextual and relational factors are emphasized in promoting authentic and effective teaching behavior, reinforcing the SCT view that behavior is continuously shaped through social interaction and environmental engagement.

1.4 Assumptions of the Study

This study assumes that SNED teachers can clearly express their personal characteristics, instructional strategies, and environmental components influencing their practices, thereby offering honest and insightful analysis of the dynamic interaction among these elements as suggested by Social Cognitive Theory. It also implies that special education instructors' working environment greatly influences their teaching approaches in ways that would be amply investigated by qualitative research. As researchers, we understand our need to leave aside personal prejudices, remain objective, open-minded, and polite, and listen and observe deeply with excellent knowledge to fully appreciate the participants' points of view.

1.5 Theoretical Lens

This study is rooted in Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which suggests that human behavior emerges from the dynamic interplay of personal factors, behavioral patterns, and environmental influences (Bandura, 1986; 2001). When we apply this theory to teaching behavior, it offers a valuable perspective on how the actions of special education teachers are influenced not just by their own beliefs, attitudes, and professional skills but also by the social and organizational context they operate.

Viewing teaching behavior through this lens reveals it as a blend of internal cognitive processes and external situational pressures, making Social Cognitive Theory especially pertinent for understanding the intricate work environment of special education teachers.

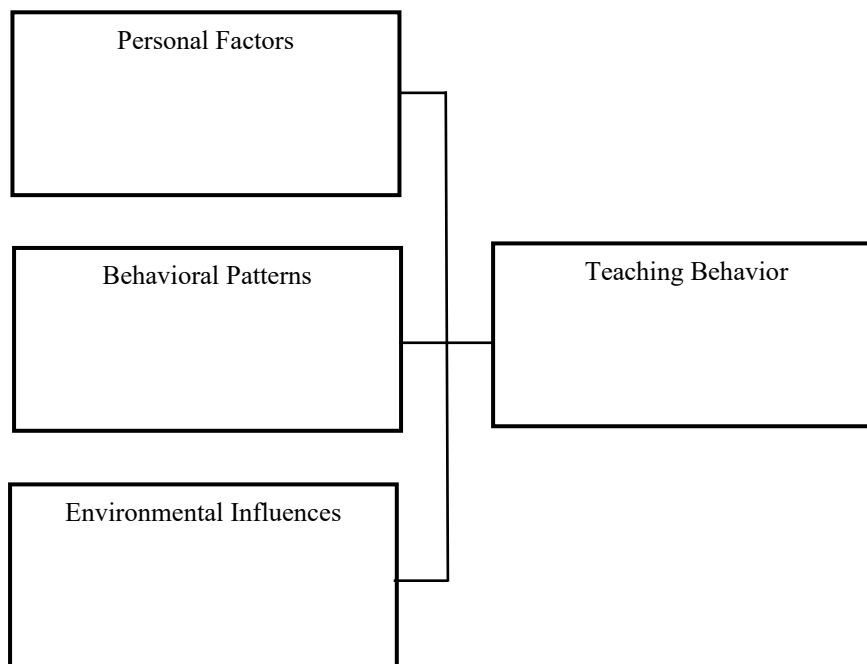


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The descriptive qualitative research methodological approach used non-numerical data to examine human experiences, behaviors, and social events. This method aimed to offer rich, in-depth explanations that conveyed the nuance and significance people placed on their experiences. By focusing on context and depth, it revealed the subtleties of both individual and group experiences. Creswell and Poth (2018) noted that qualitative research proved especially useful for examining viewpoints and feelings, allowing researchers to comprehend participants' lived reality fully. Qualitative approaches worked particularly well when one examined real-world scenarios where context and meaning were crucial. Additionally, descriptive qualitative research aimed to investigate how people viewed and understood their experiences, emphasizing the core of these experiences in a particular setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

2.2 Participants and Sampling

This study applied purposive sampling, a non-probability technique whereby participants were purposefully chosen depending on particular criteria pertinent to the study. Participants were selected based on their experience with the theme, capacity for insight expression, eagerness to be interviewed, and age exceeding eighteen. Six individuals were chosen according to qualitative research guidelines prioritizing depth above quantity. Studies showed that 4 to 10 participants in the targeted research could reach data saturation (Hennink et al., 2022; Ahmed, 2024). Hence, this sample size was suitable for thoroughly investigating the topic.

2.3 Data Collection

Under the direction of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001), the study employed in-depth, semi-structured interviews to investigate how personal, behavioral, and contextual factors impacted the teaching methods of special education (SPED) instructors. Six seasoned SPED teachers, purposively selected from at least one year of experience, guaranteed pertinent and perceptive data. These individuals were interviewed either in person or virtually using safe internet systems. Open-ended questions probed emotional needs, peer support, and coping mechanisms. Following accepted qualitative analysis techniques, all interviews were audio recorded and verbatim transcribed to retain complexity and correctness (Hill et al., 2022). This approach sought deep insights into teaching behavior by thoroughly understanding their professional experiences under the Social Cognitive Theory framework. It exposed how SPED teachers' cognitions, behaviors, and work settings interacted.

2.4 Data Analysis

This research used reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) to interpret the qualitative data from semi-structured interviews conducted with special education (SPED) teachers. As Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory concurred, this method proved well-fitted for analyzing how individual factors, behavioral habits, and environmental forces met to construct teaching behaviors. The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's six-step process: familiarization with data, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2022). During this recursive process, the researcher was reflexive, recognizing how individual biases and theoretical assumptions affected the interpretation of data. Reflexivity added depth and validity to the analysis, ensuring that findings truly reflected participants' experiences. With the low sample size of four participants, thematic saturation became the goal for the study, marking the point where no new themes were found in the data (Hennink et al., 2017). This strategy aligned with contemporary qualitative research prioritizing depth over breadth and was well-suited to studies of narrow, context-rich phenomena.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant research ethics board before data collection. To guarantee the safety and welfare of participants, the investigation implemented numerous ethical standards. To participate, participants were required to execute a consent form and were provided with comprehensive information regarding the study. The decision to participate was wholly voluntary, and participants were permitted to withdraw at any time without incurring any consequences. Pseudonyms were implemented to safeguard participants' privacy, and all data was stored securely. The researchers maintained a high level of sensitivity to the participants' emotions. They ensured that they felt supported and at ease during the interview process in light of the emotive nature of the subject matter.

2.6 Role of the Researcher

In this study, the researcher took on an active and reflective role, steering the data collection and interpretation in line with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. This theory suggested that behavior was influenced by a mix of personal factors, actions, and environmental elements (Bandura, 2001). Since the focus was on the teaching behaviors of special education (SPED) teachers, the researcher needed to be mindful of how their own experiences and beliefs might have shaped their interactions with participants and the analysis of the data. The researcher challenged this by employing reflexive thematic analysis (Campbell et al., 2021), maintaining a critical self-awareness throughout the process. Techniques such as bracketing and transpersonal reflexivity were used to minimize bias and capture the participants' experiences (Dörfler & Stierand, 2021). Additionally, the researcher had committed to ethical responsibilities, ensured informed consent, maintained confidentiality, and created a respectful environment for participants to share their insights. This ethical and reflective approach fostered a deep and trustworthy exploration of how the behaviors of SPED teachers were

shaped by their cognitive beliefs, actions, and the environments in which they worked.

3. Results and Discussions

Figure 2 shows the dynamic interplay of environmental, behavioral, and personal elements influencing the teaching behavior of special education teachers. Rooted in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the figure depicted how various elements interacted continually rather than acting alone. The themes underlined the complex character of teacher behavior as molded by internal beliefs, classroom activities, and outside conditions and support.

This study utilized the notation "P [number] – Line [number]" to reference interview data, where "P" indicated the participant and "Line" referred to the specific line in the transcript. For example, "P3 – Line 171" indicated that the statement had been made by Participant 3 at line 171.

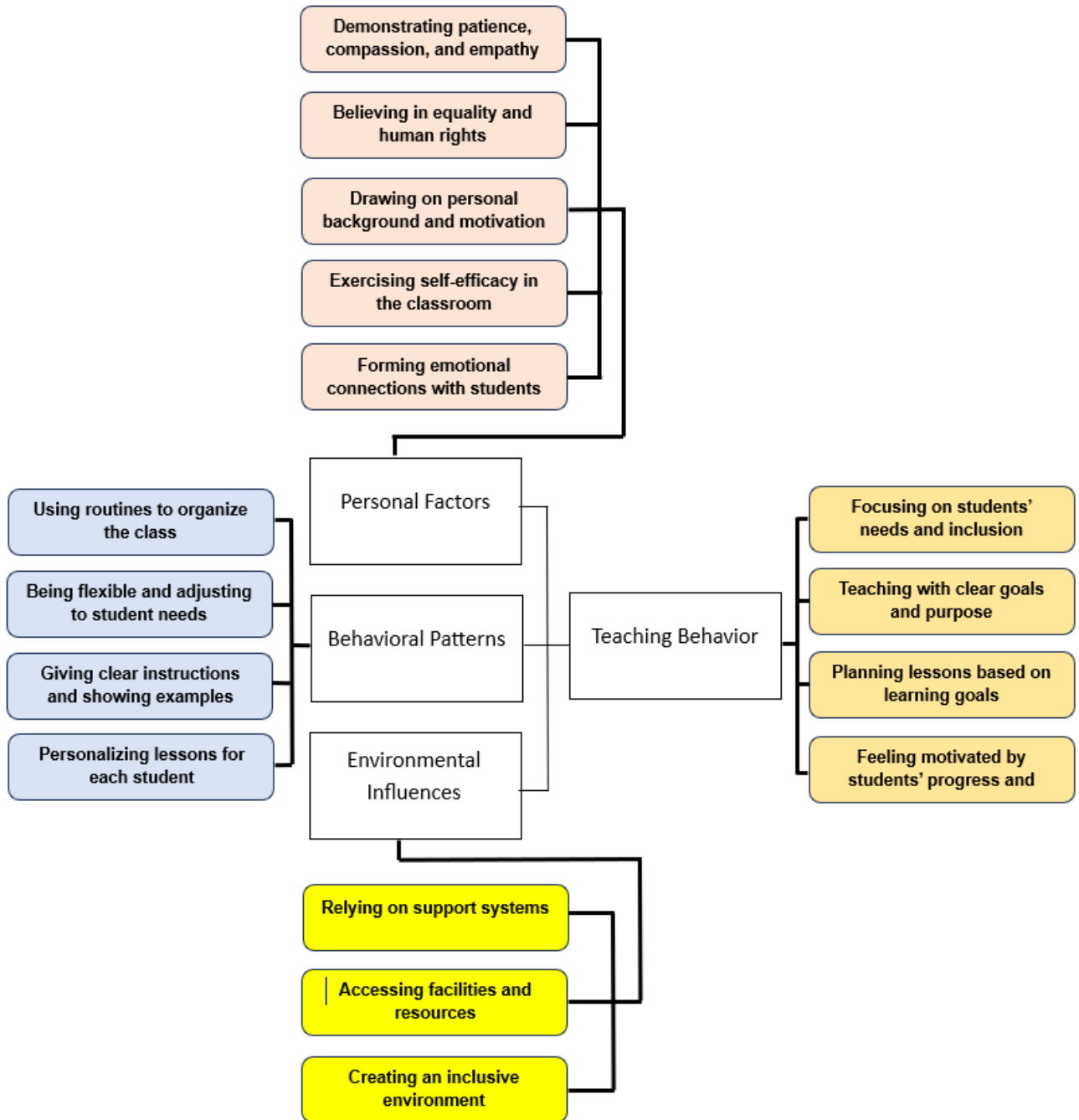


Figure II. Themes Generated on Interaction of Personal, Behavioral, and Environmental Factors Influencing Teaching Behavior of Special Education Teachers

3.1 Personal Traits or Attitudes as Perceive by the Special Education Teachers

Based on the analysis, special education teachers feel that their everyday activities rely on their unique qualities. Under Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the study underlines how teachers' aims, emotions, and beliefs affect classroom interactions. Five primary themes emerged: expressing empathy and patience, believing in equality, applying personal experience, using self-efficacy, and forging close relationships with children. These findings show how powerfully shaped by strong ideals and emotional commitment personal instruction in special education is.

3.1.1 Demonstrating patience, compassion, and empathy. In special education, patience, compassion, and empathy become important personal qualities. Responding to pupils' various and sometimes complicated requirements depends on these attributes. Supporting learning development and handling difficulties calmly and constructively depends on patience. Compassion and empathy also help teachers to personally relate to their students, grasp their unique situation, and offer appropriate help. These qualities help to create a friendly classroom where students feel valued, safe, and respected. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"Being committed to my work and having patience because in creating inclusive environment that is one of the... for me it's one of the biggest and foremost rules that we have because we cannot teach students" – P2, Lines 14-16

"I think my qualities are compassionate, patient, and open-minded person."
 – P2, Lines 25-27

"Being committed to my work and having a patience because in creating inclusive environment that is one of the... for me it's one of the biggest and foremost rules that we have because we cannot teach students" – P2, Lines 14-16

"We really need to have a lot of patience because if we don't, it might affect the learning of the children, not just those in special education, but also those in the mainstream." - P4, Line 8-9

The quotations stress the need for patience, compassion, and understanding to build a welcoming and encouraging classroom. These qualities are seen by teachers as basic for getting special needs pupils reached and for encouraging good learning opportunities for every student. According to recent research, inclusive classrooms are created by empathy, compassion, and patience. Emotionally conscious teachers are more successful in supporting diverse students, according to Graziano et al. 2024. According to Makweya and Sepadi (2024), empathy enables teachers to customize their lessons and create closer bonds with their pupils, creating a positive learning environment for everybody.

These results fit Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which holds that environmental settings and personal elements such as beliefs, emotions, and self-regulation interact dynamically with behavior. Teachers' empathy and patience show important personal cognitive aspects that affect their teaching strategies and define the classroom atmosphere, therefore illustrating the reciprocal character of human agency in learning environments.

3.1.2 Believing in equality and human rights. This theme reflects a strong commitment to fairness, inclusion, and respect in teaching. Teachers maintain that every student has equal rights, chances, and dignity. They see every child as capable of development; hence, they create an environment that appreciates every student equally and fosters learning. These values direct inclusive and polite instructional strategies. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"So, our beliefs really have a big influence, like our belief in the equality of humanity, that they too have rights." – P1, Lines 45-46

"So, maybe it is that belief that everyone has the right to live, to be given equal opportunities. That belief is probably what really shaped me, that you should also teach them, not disregard them."

That's it." – P1, Lines 52-54

"I always believe that regardless of their disabilities, they have a potential to succeed as well" – P2, Lines 40-41

"I think they deserve every opportunity that they possibly get and should be treated just like everybody else. It must be equal, yes. So, I think that would be, like, the biggest thing that, like I bring to it, and then, like, I hold them to the same expectations I would have anybody type of deal. Like, I think that's just how, like, how, like, I said I was raised, and everybody deserves the same opportunities. Like, nobody should be treated any differently. – P5, Lines 15-20

The statements capture teachers' common belief that everyone, regardless of origin or handicap, is entitled to equal rights, opportunity, and respect. This conviction in every student's inherent potential and dignity drives inclusive teaching approaches and supports a solid ethical basis anchored in equality and human rights. Teachers agree that everyone, regardless of origin or handicap, deserves equal rights, opportunities, and respect. This belief in every learner's potential and dignity underpins inclusive teaching techniques and a solid ethical foundation for inequality and human rights. Fernandez et al. (2023) found that future teachers' diversity and inclusion attitudes strongly influence their inclusive education preparation. Bethere et al. (2023) found that Latvian and Lithuanian teachers who respect equality and human rights are more inclusive. These studies show how deeply held ideas impact instructors' inclusive environment dedication.

These findings support Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes personal, behavioral, and environmental interactions. Personal cognitive elements like equality and human rights values impact teachers' teaching behavior and create an inclusive classroom. According to Bandura (1986), people shape and are molded by their environment. Teachers who believe in every student's worth and potential use inclusive techniques to create a fair learning environment where all students can succeed.

3.1.3 Drawing on personal background and motivation. This subject emphasizes how teachers' experiences and inherent motives define their dedication to inclusive education. Early exposure to learners with special needs, supporting family influences, and past experiences allowing learners with impairments all help to foster a greater awareness and sensitivity in their instruction. These personal origins shape their perspectives and help them be more motivated to advocate for and assist children with special educational needs. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"I was just a teen, around sixteen or seventeen, when I was already exposed to them, so those experiences really influenced me. When I look back, I realize, ah okay, those experiences contributed to my ability to teach children with special needs now." – P1, Lines 25-27

"My family and the children I see who really need assistance to learn, because not everyone is given the opportunity to attend school, especially learners like them." – P2, Lines 236-238

"I guess my background, I think, more influenced anything I was on an IEP, even in like elementary school through high school, I am horrible at reading, and I can admit that I had accommodations for reading through college, even, like I am not a good reader at all, and I think like that started, like sparked the interest. But my mom does speech therapy, so my mom works with the same population of kids like I teach now. So, after school, I would go and hang out in her classroom and do they hang out with all these kids? Like, that's kind of where and like, why? I guess I leaned more towards it." – P5, Lines 27-33

The statements capture how personal experiences, including family influences, early exposure to kids with special needs, and intimate knowledge of adjustments, have formed teachers' drive to work in special education. These early encounters support greater empathy and dedication, highlighting the need for a personal background in creating inclusive teaching strategies.

Early contact with people with special needs, familial influence, or direct participation with lodging can all greatly affect a teacher's drive and sensitivity toward working in special education. Studies confirm this link: Kunz et al. (2021) found that student instructors who had positive prior interaction with persons with disabilities showed higher confidence in their teaching ability and more substantial support of inclusion. Likewise, Dignath et al. (2022) observed that personal and professional experiences powerfully shape teachers' opinions on inclusive education. These results highlight how much personal background shapes a greater dedication to inclusive teaching.

The theme "Drawing on Personal Background and Motivation" has much to do with Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which says that behavior, personal factors, and the surroundings all affect each other. Personal cognitive factors like teachers' early experiences, personal struggles, and family impact shape their motivation and how they teach now. These strong beliefs and experiences from the past serve as strong motivators that make them even more dedicated to inclusive education. In line with Bandura's idea of self-reflective agency, these teachers use their pasts to guide their actions and make learning settings fair and supportive.

3.1.4 Exercising self-efficacy in the classroom. This subject shows how confident teachers grow and how they can oversee and assist various students in the classroom. Their degree of self-efficacy is highly influenced by work experience, educational background, and focused training. Colleagues' support and capacity to grasp and apply student data help boost their confidence even more so that they may make wise teaching decisions. These sources of self-efficacy together enable teachers to promote inclusive teaching methods and successfully manage classroom issues. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"To boost my self-confidence, that's why I took a master's in SPED. So, I really pursued a master's in SPED." – Participant 1, Lines 65-66

"Something like that, and somehow my confidence was boosted through our trainings..." Participant 3 – Line 58

"...as time goes by, with the help of our colleagues, we just exchange ideas... it really helps... so it also builds confidence, and at the same time, more and more people begin to understand how it is." – P4- Line 89-92

Based on the quotes, teachers develop self-efficacy from many sources, including professional development, more knowledge, and peer-reviewed work. Reiterating the idea of building classroom self-efficacy, these encounters improve their abilities and increase their confidence in properly guiding and assisting children with special needs.

Recent research shows teachers acquire self-efficacy for inclusive education through focused professional development, further study, and group experiences. Emphasizing professional development specifically for inclusive education, Yavuz and Yavuz (2020) stress how much teachers' confidence in helping kids with special needs improves when Factors including training, teaching experience, and support systems significantly influence teacher self-efficacy in inclusive environments, Wray et al. (2022) also discovered. Furthermore, noted as an essential determinant of teachers' confidence in implementing inclusive education, Franzen et al. (2024). These results confirm the theory that developing self-efficacy is a complex process reinforced by peer support and formal education.

The theme "Exercising Self-Efficacy in the Classroom" strongly relates to Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, particularly the idea of self-efficacy, in his belief in one's capacity to execute behaviors necessary to manage circumstances effectively. Through education, training, teamwork, and classroom experience, all personal and contextual factors Bandura notes as fundamental sources of self-efficacy, teachers in this study grew in confidence. Their efficacy and resilience in handling various classroom need developed with their increasing confidence in their talents. This shows how closely human ideas, behavior, and contextual support underlined in Social Cognitive Theory interact.

3.1.5 Forming emotional connections with students. This theme emphasizes teachers' emotional involvement in meeting their needs, interests, and development, fostering significant bonds with their pupils. Teachers change their approaches to keep students interested, get ideas from student involvement, and feel fulfillment when students demonstrate development and accomplishment. These emotional ties promote responsive learning by which teachers' dedication to inclusive education is reinforced, as well as student motivation. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"Um, I think it is really important to give them hands-on experiences when it comes to teaching and learning. I make sure that everyone is doing their task, for example, if they're not interested in my discussion or activity, I look for another hands-on activity where they can be more actively involved." – P2, Lines 243-245

"I like that part because it feels really good, it's rewarding when you see your student learning and enjoying what you're doing. On my part, it inspires me even more." - P3, Line 47-48

"just the kids, like, when you see something click, or like, I was doing something the other day in fifth grade, and they were just flying through it. And I never in a million years thought they would have flown through the fraction thing that we were working on. I was like, oh, little things like that that just like, make me happy, or like kids wanting to come hang out with me and stuff like, oh, I just enjoy that."

– P5, Lines 186-190

The quotations show how teachers emotionally commit to their students by modifying their instruction to keep them involved and discovering delight in their growth. Reflecting the idea of creating emotional links that improve teaching and learning experiences, these significant relationships motivate teachers and support their motivation. Recent research demonstrating that close teacher-student relationships improve inclusive education supports the theme "Forming Emotional Connections with Students." Particularly for kids with exceptional needs (Pérez-Salas et al., 2021), emotional involvement helps improve students' social skills (Llorent et al., 2024) and raises engagement. Calandri et al. (2025) underline even more how vital inclusive and supportive classroom environments depend on the emotional competency of teachers, that is, empathy and emotional regulation. These results confirm that good teaching depends much on emotional ties.

Teachers' motivation and empathy for working in special education are much shaped by personal experiences, such as early exposure to people with special needs, familial influence, or firsthand experience with accommodations. This fits Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which stresses the connection among personal elements, behavior, and surroundings. The idea holds that self-efficacy ideas and observational experiences shape learning.

3.2 Teaching Habits or Actions as Perceive by the Special Education Teachers. The data imply that special education teachers' deliberate and adaptive teaching behaviors are rooted in their continual attempts to accommodate diverse learners. Participants saw these behaviors as intelligent, responsive responses formed by professional experience and personal knowledge, not separate tactics. Based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the constant interplay between personal beliefs, behaviors, and the environment, the findings show how teachers model and adapt their instructional tactics to meet student requirements. Participants illustrated Bandura's reciprocal determinism by explaining how reflection and classroom experience shape their behaviors. Their accounts revealed four main themes: employing routines to organize the class, being flexible and adaptable to student requirements, giving clear directions and examples, and personalizing teaching. These themes show an organized and dynamic teaching style guided by core ideas and shaped by daily interactions with students and the learning environment.

3.2.1 Using routines to organize the class. One of the main ideas that came out of the data was how patterns were used to keep the class on track. Special education teachers stressed the importance of consistent

routines to create a structured and predictable setting that helps students feel safe and focused. Routines like starting the day with a particular exercise, following a visual schedule, or using repeated verbal cues were important for controlling behavior, lowering anxiety, and helping students with different mental and emotional needs. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"Um, well... it's really that strategy where their activities are very routine-based."

– P1, Lines 85

"So, for us working with severe and profound cases, it really has to be routine so they can remember like, 'Ah, okay, this is what we're supposed to do.' The lesson is repeated over and over so they can remember, but the routine should always be there, that's how it is." – P1, Lines 98-100

"You have to follow your routine; there really has to be a routine. Since we have one hour of prep time here, what I do is I always make a monthly planner where I put all my schedules. So, if you have schedules, you stay organized with the tasks you need to do. For example, on these following days, this is what I will do, and this is what I will give them as reinforcement. It's necessary; it's very important to be organized so that you also know what your goal is for the student."

– P2, Lines 69-75

The responses from all participants show how a basic method for preserving structure, enhancing memory retention, and guaranteeing seamless transitions across the school day is employing routines to arrange the class. Their focus on preparation, repetition, and predictable sequences captures the important part routines perform in helping students, especially those with severe or profound disabilities, comprehend expectations and remain involved in the learning process.

Studies stressing the need for special education routines help confirm this result. According to the Australian Education Research Organization (2021), explicitly teaching and regularly reinforcing classroom activities give structure and predictability, qualities vital for student learning and behavior control. GoLearn (2023) further states that by lowering anxiety, enhancing focus, and encouraging independence, creating a more efficient learning environment, structured daily routines aid special education children. Using routines to set the class fits Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes learning via interaction with the surroundings and observation. Through constant routines that kids see and copy, teachers help pupils comprehend expectations and foster skills through repetition. With teachers actively creating a supportive environment that encourages self-regulation and involvement, this illustrates the reciprocal impact between teacher behavior and student learning.

3.2.2 Being flexible and adjusting to student needs. This topic emphasizes in special education instruction the need for flexibility. Teachers often deal with varied and changing classroom dynamics where one strategy might not be appropriate for every student. Flexibility lets students change class material, pace, and teaching tactics to fit their particular requirements, whether those students have cognitive impairments, behavioral issues, or emotional sensitivity. This flexibility goes beyond rearranging schedules to include tuning in to students' cues and making deliberate, encouraging changes that keep them involved and advance learning. It embodies a responsive, student-centered approach recognized as a fundamental component of good instruction customized support. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"You have to be flexible in your approaches because the children have different, uh, unique sets of strengths and, of course, different experiences in the classroom, so you really need to have different instructions for them." – P2, Lines 89-91

"You really have to adjust when you see that something isn't working. You have to think of something catchy for them like, 'Ah, they are not interested in what I'm doing anymore.'" – P3, Line 130

"At the end of the day, you keep adjusting because... teaching kids is still the main focus, which seems to be the endpoint of everything." – P4, Line 193-194

The participants' answers emphasize the importance of flexibility in reacting to the pupils' moods, interests, and learning requirements. Teachers underlined the need always to change their methods, sometimes improvising or editing plans on demand, to ensure that every student finds their courses interesting and compelling.

Differentiated instruction (DI) entails many strategies, such as tie-red assignments, deliberate grouping, and mastery learning, which help teachers customize their approaches depending on their student's particular abilities and requirements, Pozas and Schneider (2020). This is similar to the participants' opinions on changing their instructional approaches if a given approach proves ineffective. By establishing a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, Pozas et al. (2021) discovered that DI positively influences students' academic self-concept, wellbeing, and social inclusion. Their results highlight the need for constantly changing education to keep student involvement and accommodate individual variances, echoing the participants' emphasis on flexibility, working on the fly, and adjusting activities to fit each student.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the constant interaction of individual elements, behaviors, and the surrounding environment. Hence, the emphasis on changing teaching strategies and flexibility coincides with it. Teachers build a supportive environment that increases self-efficacy and motivation by customizing lessons to fit the particular requirements of their pupils. This constant change represents reciprocal determinism, in which student responses and teacher actions interact to help students remain involved and develop confidence.

3.2.3 Giving clear instructions and showing examples. The participants underlined the need to provide clear directions and specific examples to guarantee pupils grasp what is required. Particularly when activities or ideas are novel or complex, they pointed out that clarity helps pupils stay concentrated and avoid uncertainty. Showing examples helps students visualize the work and learn by observation, supporting different learning approaches. This strategy underlined the requirement of clear communication and practical demonstration since it was considered necessary for meeting personal needs and preserving student involvement. It also reinforced the fact that good teaching depends on this method. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"Relay explicit instruction properly because the objective needs to be clear in order to be met. There's also modeling, like 'I do, we do, you do.' That's how you introduce and demonstrate your objective." – P2, Lines 108-110

"I used I do a lot of modeling, I would say so, especially with like behaviors, I model what it should look like, and then we can go through scripts and social stories"

– P5, Lines 96-97

"I'm really a student centered, inclusive and grounded in active learning."

– P6, Lines 132

"Then if you are grounded in active learning, you will always as a teacher, you are always designing a lesson to make the students get interested with the lessons, so the learning will be active in the classroom." – P6, Lines 136-139

The quotations capture the participants' need for explicit instruction and modeling to provide a clear and efficient learning environment. They underline techniques like "I do; we do, you do" to present goals and direct students methodically. This method encourages active, student-centered learning lessons designed by teachers that include their students and advance knowledge through practice and examples. These realizations reveal a strong dedication to inclusive education and open communication that supports student success and involvement.

The participants' emphasis on clear instructions and modeling aligns with recent research underscoring the effectiveness of explicit instruction in enhancing student learning outcomes. For instance,

Donegan and Fluhler (2024) highlight that incorporating modeling and think-aloud strategies in explicit instruction significantly improves students' comprehension and self-regulation skills. By demonstrating tasks and verbalizing thought processes, teachers provide students with clear examples, facilitating better understanding and application of new concepts. Similarly, Chinpakdee and Gu (2024) found that explicit strategy instruction, which includes clear explanations and guided practice, led to substantial improvements in students' reading proficiency. These findings support the participants' practices of using structured approaches like the "I do, we do, you do" model to introduce objectives and guide students through learning tasks.

Recent studies and participant responses support the effectiveness of explicit instruction and modeling, which closely aligns with Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura emphasizes the role of observational learning, where individuals learn behaviors, skills, and attitudes by watching others. In teaching, strategies like "I do, we do, you do" and modeling behaviors or academic tasks provide students with clear examples to observe, imitate, and internalize.

According to Bandura, this process enhances self-efficacy as students gain confidence by seeing tasks broken down and successfully modeled. The teacher's role in explicitly guiding and supporting students also fits within the concept of reciprocal determinism, where the interaction between teacher behavior, student behavior, and the learning environment all influence each other. Thus, using clear instructions and modeling supports comprehension and fosters motivation and active participation key outcomes in Social Cognitive Theory.

3.2.4 Personalizing lessons for each student. This theme highlights the teachers' commitment to tailoring instruction based on each student's unique characteristics, needs, and learning styles. Participants shared that effective teaching goes beyond one-size-fits-all methods and requires thoughtful observation, flexibility, and adaptation. Teachers can increase student engagement, promote more profound understanding, and create more inclusive and meaningful learning experiences by personalizing lessons. This approach reflects a learner-centered mindset, where each student is valued as an individual and supported in ways that best help them succeed. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"It's really one-on-one instruction because they are varied (different from each other)." – P1, Lines 120

"You have to be flexible in your approaches because the children have different, unique sets of strengths and, of course, different experiences in the classroom, so you really need to have different instructions for them."

– P2, Lines 89-91

"You can also create a lesson plan that includes explicit teaching, so that it will scaffold your techniques to break down your tasks into manageable steps for them, and something like that is really needed." – P2, Lines 98-101

"So, everything I do is based on my goals that are written in their IEP" – P5, Lines 154

The quotes show that teachers personalize their lessons by closely considering each student's needs, strengths, and learning goals. They highlight using one-on-one instruction, flexible approaches, scaffolded steps, and lesson plans aligned with IEP goals or curriculum standards. These practices demonstrate a strong commitment to differentiated and inclusive teaching, where instruction is designed to be manageable, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate. This reinforces the theme of personalizing lessons to support student success in diverse classroom settings.

Kayyali (2025) found that personalized learning, which tailors instructional methods and resources to each learner's unique needs, talents, and interests, significantly enhances student engagement and achievement in STEAM education. Similarly, a systematic review by Özüdoğru (2022) concluded that differentiated instruction positively impacts academic achievement and self-directed learning readiness among preservice

teachers. These findings validate the participants' emphasis on individualized instruction, such as one-on-one teaching and aligning lessons with students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, to support diverse learning needs effectively.

Personalizing lessons aligns closely with Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, particularly through individualized learning, self-efficacy, and reciprocal determinism. By tailoring instruction to each student's unique needs and aligning it with their IEP goals or learning styles, teachers help students build confidence in their abilities, enhancing self-efficacy, a core element of Bandura's theory. This personalization fosters a learning environment where students are more likely to engage actively, observe models of success, and believe in their capability to achieve similar outcomes. Moreover, the constant adjustment of teaching strategies in response to student performance reflects reciprocal determinism, where behavior, personal factors, and the environment continuously influence one another in the learning process.

3.3 Environmental Influences as Perceive by the Special Education Teachers

The third research goal to investigate how special education teachers view and describe the way they teach their students is covered in this section. Results reveal that contextual elements supporting or opposing instructional strategies greatly influence teaching behavior. Four main topics were relying on Support Systems, Accessing Facilities and Resources, and Creating an Inclusive Environment. Teachers underlined the need to work with colleagues, use supportive leadership, and involve interested parties. While professional development kept teachers educated and confident, enough resources and well-equipped classrooms were recognized as crucial. Establishing inclusive, student-centered settings always came first. These topics show how the larger school environment shapes instruction in addition to individual effort. Every theme is covered in great detail in the following sections.

3.3.1 Relying on support systems. Support systems became clear as essential for the job of special education teachers. Teachers' consistent support from parents, colleagues, and administrators made inclusive policies more effective and manageable. Collaboration reduced isolation, encouraged problem-solving, and boosted teacher confidence. Strong support overall confirmed that inclusive teaching is a team effort rather than a one-person choreography. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"For me, the administration, colleagues, and parents provide great help in assisting the learners." – P2, Lines 193-194

"There is a support team of specialists for children with special needs, including speech therapists, occupational therapists, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and counselors. These staff members help me develop more tailored and effective strategies for my students, enhancing their learning experiences, especially through the use of technology." – P2, Lines 143-147

"They have assistive technology that helps students communicate, which encourages their independent learning. Also, the school conducts ongoing professional development from Monday to Friday, with specific days dedicated to training on improving teaching strategies and adapting to challenges in supporting students." – P2, Lines 149-155

"I really learned a lot from my colleagues by hearing their ideas about the topic that we are discussing during the professional development then in my superiors and my colleagues, I'm really there to support me by giving more giving more information that can help with My teaching, that can improve my teaching, and especially the parents, they're a vital part of hunting" – P6, Lines 208-213

These comments show how depending on support systems helps special education teachers, by means of interactions with parents, colleagues, and administrators, to deliver better instruction. A solid support system, including support workers and experts, allows educators to create customized plans to improve student development. By means of cooperation with parents, colleagues, and administrators, special

education teachers can provide more efficient instruction depending on support systems. Strong networks of support staff and experts enable teachers to customize plans to fit various student needs. Studies reinforce this, indicating that support from school leadership and peers in inclusive environments boosts teacher confidence and efficacy (Barros & Dalonos, 2025; Mahmood et al., 2025).

These results fit Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which holds that environmental settings and personal elements, such as beliefs, emotions, and self-regulation, interact dynamically with behavior. Teachers' empathy and patience show important personal cognitive aspects that affect their teaching strategies and define the classroom atmosphere, therefore illustrating the reciprocal character of human agency in learning environments.

3.3.2 Accessing facilities and resources. Effective instruction depends on clean and well-prepared surroundings, particularly in inclusive classrooms. Enough resources, including teaching materials, assistive equipment, and enough space to allow teachers to give tailored instruction and meet various student requirements. Well-kept, orderly facilities increase student involvement and enable teachers to feel ready and under control. On the other hand, poor resources affect instruction, raise stress levels, and limit the use of inclusive education. Even in cases with limited outside support, teachers' proactive efforts to maintain the organization of the learning environment show their influence in creating a good atmosphere. Thus, guaranteeing good and fair education depends primarily on access to suitable facilities and resources. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"If your environment is good, of course, right? In our case, we can implement activities because we have the materials—we have a kitchen area, a washing area, a refrigerator, and more. So, you could say it's really like a transition classroom for us." – P1, Lines 173-175

"He easily gets distracted... so your classroom really needs to be plain and simple to avoid distractions." – P3 – Line 171

"I try to keep it clean and minimal." – P5, Lines 131

"It really gives a big impact. If the classroom is very clean and all the things that students say is part of their learning, it really gives the students more confidence, and it can help the students more motivated to learn and feel safe and like the students feel safe, and they'll be more like, I love this classroom. I want to, I want to go to school every day, and it encouraged them. It encourages them to be more creative and be engaged in learning." – P6, Lines 196-200

By lowering distractions and encouraging student enthusiasm, a well-equipped, tidy, and straightforward classroom environment significantly helps to facilitate learning. Particularly in inclusive environments, such areas boost students' confidence, raise participation, and let teachers more successfully carry out learning activities. This is backed up by research that shows how inclusive classrooms' physical and mental environment significantly affects how much students participate and how well they do in school. Hoffmann et al. (2021) discovered that students who feel safe and interested in open education are likelier to behave well in class. Similarly, Clemson and Coyle (2025) said that spaces for learning that are meant to be inclusive and meet the needs of students who need extra help promote creativity, teamwork, and academic success.

A neat, well-equipped, and orderly classroom increases student motivation, lowers distractions, and improves learning, especially in inclusive environments. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory helps one understand how important the physical surroundings are in the triadic interplay between personal elements, conduct, and the surroundings.

3.3.3 Creating an inclusive environment. Both a well-kept classroom and a supportive culture help to create an inclusive environment. With help from parents, administrators, and colleagues, teachers are freer to concentrate on student-centered learning. Maintaining a neat, orderly classroom also helps satisfy every student's needs by lowering distractions. These components, taken together, create an environment where

every student feels welcome, involved, and free to succeed. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"They were very supportive and if someone asks for something, they will give it right away. If you need to say something to the parent, say, 'Okay ma'am, I will send that...'"— P1, Lines 188-189

"It really gives a big impact. If the classroom is very clean and all the things that students say is part of their learning, it really gives the students more confidence, and it can help the students more motivated to learn and feel safe and like the students feel safe, and they'll be more like, I love this classroom. I want to, I want to go to school every day, and it encouraged them. It encourages them to be more creative and be engaged in learning."

— P6, Lines 196-200

"I'm practicing, and it's like part of my life as a teacher that I'm really inclusive, student-centered, and focusing on active learning and meaningful learning approach, because it makes the students appreciate learning and making them involved in inclusivity, and they appreciate really learning."

— P6, Lines 240-243

These quotations highlight how a good learning environment results from inclusive, student-centered teaching, clean and orderly classrooms, and supportive parents. They inspire pupils to be more involved in their education, safe, and motivated. These quotations highlight how a good learning environment results from inclusive, student-centered teaching, clean and orderly classrooms, and supportive parents. Research like Miller and Venketsamy (2022), which emphasizes the need to include parents as educational partners to improve classroom learning, supports this. Additionally, Grace and Carlo (2023) underlined that effective inclusive education depends on parents and teachers cooperating. Furthermore, Clemson and Coyle (2025) show how well-designed, inclusive learning environments could inspire student motivation, creativity, and community. Taken together, this research supports the theory that deliberate classroom settings and good connections help improve inclusive education.

This conversation fits Social Cognitive Theory, which stresses the dynamic interaction among environmental, behavioral, and personal elements forming human behavior. Supportive parents, well-organized classrooms, and inclusive teaching strategies reflect environmental and social factors that favorably affect teacher conduct and student involvement. Teachers who demonstrate inclusive and student-centered approaches and when students respond in a supportive atmosphere experience a reciprocal process, reinforcing motivation, involvement, and learning results.

3.4 Teaching Behavior as Perceive by the Special Education Teachers

This part sought the outcome: How do special education teachers view and justify their instruction of their students at their place of employment? The interviews provide honest and unvarnished in-depth analysis of how educators approach the demands and benefits of their jobs. Special education teachers spoke of an ongoing responsive process instead of depending on tactics. This underlines, in keeping with Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the reciprocal connection between personal elements, behavior, and environmental effects.

Focusing on students' needs and inclusion, Teaching with clear goals and purpose, Planning lessons based on learning goals, and Feeling driven by students' success and engagement, the thematic analysis revealed four themes demonstrating the adaptability of special education teaching. Beginning with their commitment to inclusion and awareness in the classroom, these related issues show how instructors include relevant learning opportunities.

3.4.1 Focusing on students' needs and inclusion. Reflecting a responsive and flexible teaching approach, the topic underlined the teacher's capacity to change her tactics to fit the requirements of the students. According to recent research bolstering this, van Geel, et al. (2023) emphasized support for the

importance of teachers being adaptable to satisfy their needs. Good learning support calls on teachers to modify their strategies to meet various difficulties pupils are experiencing, particularly those of special needs children. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"Teacher assesses whether students can handle the activities based on the curriculum and make necessary adjustments" - P2, Lines 228-231

"The teacher is flexible enough to meet students' needs" - P2, Lines 89-91

"Teacher is flexible on diverse needs" - P5, Lines 85-86

"Teacher tailored learning activities based on their needs" - P6, Lines 119-120

The quotations highlight the emphasis on ongoing evaluation and adaptability, showing how teachers examine student readiness and change their courses of instruction. Emphasizing the teachers' ability to change their strategies to fit the demands of particular learning environments, it also emphasizes the subject of Student-Centered and Inclusive Teaching, demonstrating an approachable, adaptable teaching approach. With their quizzes and activities, Cusi et al. (2024) underlined how teachers may measure student development and willingness using current assessment information. It also underlines how the formative evaluation will enable the teachers to determine whether the students are ready to participate in the new learning or further interventions involving their selves. This shows the individualized approach of instruction central to the Student-Centered and Inclusive Teaching theme, showing how teachers design activities that directly address each student's unique learning profile.

Consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the application of formative assessments shows how actively teachers shape the classroom depending on the demands of the students. Through observation, comments, and guided involvement, teachers foster self-efficacy and enhance learning by planning events that fit every student's present level. This customized, student-centered method shows how closely behavior, cognition, and environment fundamental to Bandura's theory interact.

3.4.2 Teaching with clear goals and purpose. Consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the use of formative assessments reveals how actively teachers shape the classroom depending on the needs of the students. Through observation, comments, and guided participation, teachers build self-efficacy and improve learning by organizing activities suitable for each student's current level. This tailored, student-centered approach reveals the intimate interaction among behavior, cognition, and environment basic to Bandura's theory. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"The teacher cares for the students" - P1, Lines 224-226

"Teacher's attitude influence learners" - P3, Lines 35-38

"The student's participation in the class inspires the teacher." - P3, Lines 47-48

"Teachers' motivation comes from the students" - P4, Lines 193-194

"The teacher is motivated by seeing students grow meaningfully, actively, and happily" - P6, Lines 282-283

The quotations capture the depth of the emotional commitment and care teachers showed to their pupils, which is essential for forming the learning process. It stresses the vital link that exists between instructor and student. This conviction that the teacher is worried for the wellbeing and advancement of the pupils transcends mere academic performance. According to Jang et al. (2010), teachers look after their students. A good attitude is important in helping to meet their requirements, especially relatedness, by fostering a pleasant environment that stimulates active participation and engagement. Furthermore, instructors' motivation obtained from witnessing students grow meaningfully and happily corresponds with SDT's concept of autonomy support, in which teachers get intrinsic gratification from the development of their students (Erturan, 2021).

3.4.3 Planning lessons based on learning goals. The third topic emphasizes the importance of thoughtful and intentional preparation to ensure that all students, particularly those with special needs, receive the necessary support to meet their educational needs. This emphasizes how standardized curriculum, individualized educational plans (IEPs), and strategic breakdowns of goals into step-by-step processes will be a tremendous benefit for teachers in their instruction in fulfilling the various requirements of students. This emphasizes how deliberately planned and purposeful the teachers' activities are regarding particular learning goals. Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"Having a standardized curriculum for older students with special needs guides teaching." - P1, Lines 208-209

"Unpack... breaking down goals into basic skills... gradually building up to meet curriculum standards" - P1, Lines, 232-233

"External expectations such as curriculum standards and IEP requirements shape teaching" - P2, Lines 208-209

"The teacher approach is always aligned with IEP" - P5, Lines 154

"The teacher tailored learning activities that is modified to the individual needs of the students." - P6, Lines 123-124

"Curriculum standards and IEP are helpful for teachers" - P6, Lines 225-229

It highlights the critical part that tailored education plans (IEPs) and organized curricula play in improving classroom activities. The first point underlines how the uniform curriculum directs teachers in ensuring their teachings complement accepted learning objectives. Furthermore, the curriculum's scaffolding aims to meet the demands of kids with special needs by means of essentials. Furthermore, ensuring that children's standards are satisfied by following the expectations for IEP requirements development helps construct instructional strategies.

This relates to the purposes of standardized curriculum and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in guiding teaching techniques for older students with special needs in line with many modern educational philosophies. According to Cumming and Rose's (2022), Universal Design for Learning (UDL) underlines the need to build adaptable learning environments that fit individual learning variations. This method guarantees accessibility and involvement by helping customize learning activities to suit the several demands of students.

3.3.4 Feeling motivated by students' progress and participation. It is mostly about how educators find inspiration and motivation from their pupils' growth, involvement, and achievement. This also underlined the cooperative link between student development and instructor motivation. Inspired by pupils most likely to commit significantly to their work, motivated teachers create a secure and inclusive environment where they can both experience fulfillment and success.

Here are extracted responses from the interviewees:

"The student's participation in the class inspires the teacher." - P3, Lines 47-48

"The teacher feels rewarded seeing students improve." - P3, Line 224

"The teacher finds joy and fulfillment in moments when students succeed or make progress." - P5, Lines 186-190

"The teacher is motivated when students grow meaningfully, actively, and happily." - P6, Lines 278-279

According to the quotes, instructors get great inspiration and gratification from their students' success, growth, and involvement. Teachers delight in meaningful learning opportunities regardless of their inspiration, from their families to active classroom participation and student development. These events

confirm their commitment and sense of direction, particularly in special education, where every small development is essential. Participative teaching approaches improve teacher-student interactions, increasing student engagement and motivation (Cardenal et al., 2023). Reflecting Bandura's idea of reciprocal determinism, where teachers influence pupils and are also influenced by their development and behavior, this improves teacher fulfillment and commitment. This is consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, especially the idea of reciprocal determinism, constant interaction between conduct, personal factors, and the surroundings. Teachers' actions form the classroom environment; their responses and growth affect them as well, generating a dynamic cycle of reciprocal influence and development.

IMPLICATIONS

The study's conclusions suggest several significant ramifications for teacher preparation programs and special education practice. One important realization is that their pupils' involvement, development, and success greatly inspire special education teachers. Their sense of fulfillment and purpose is intimately linked to this inner motivation, which is essential for their dedication to the field. Therefore, establishing emotionally supportive settings where teachers feel appreciated and empowered must be a top priority for school administrators and leaders. Increasing teacher self-efficacy through focused professional development, training in emotional resilience, and cooperative support networks is crucial. The study also supports the value of individualized education, well-established classroom routines, and close emotional bonds between educators and learners. These methods promote Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, highlighting the mutual influence of behavioral, contextual, and personal elements, enhancing teacher motivation and improving student outcomes.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Future studies should build on the current findings by incorporating a more varied sample of special education teachers from different geographical areas to improve the results' generalizability. It is also advised to do longitudinal research to examine how teacher behavior, motivation, and teaching practices change, especially in reaction to modifications in educational environments or policies. A deeper understanding of the particular requirements and modifications needed in inclusive classrooms may be possible through comparative studies between SPED and general education teachers. Future research should also look into creating and assessing intervention plans that boost teachers' self-efficacy, better their teaching methods, and improve their mental health. Understanding how teaching practices impact students' engagement, learning, and overall school experience would be enhanced by considering the viewpoints of students with special needs. These paths will help create learning settings that are more inclusive, productive, and encouraging.

References

- Wu, T.-J., Chen, Y.-L., Li, I.-C., & Wang, H.-I. (2020). Social support and well-being of Chinese special education teachers—An emotional labor perspective. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(18), 6884. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17186884>
- Fu W, Wang L, He X, Chen H and He J (2022) Subjective Well-being of Special Education Teachers in China: The Relation of Social Support and Self-Efficacy. *Front. Psychol.* 13:802811. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.802811
- Alahmed, T. (2024). *Burnout of special education teachers in Saudi Arabia's inclusive education schools. Frontiers in Education*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2024.1489820>
- Otte, J. (2024, December 23). 'The worst it's ever been': Teachers decry SEND crisis in England's schools. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/dec/23/the-worst-its-ever-been-teachers-decry-send-crisis-in-englands-schools>

- Dotimas, J. V. G. (2023). Level of Work-Related Stress and Coping Mechanism of Special Education Teachers. *AIDE Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, 3(1), 180–194. <https://doi.org/10.56648/aide-irj.v3i1.62>
- Abina, I. L. S., Loquinario, E. M., Malaya, L. J. P., Belano, J., & Cagape, W. E. (2022). *Special Education Teachers' Job Satisfaction and its Effect on Employee Retention. International Journal of Research Publications*, 115(1), 311-332. <https://doi.org/10.47119/ijrp10011511220224346>
- Esternon, C. E. G., Lopres, J. R., Gomez, B. L., Lopres, G. M., Pilapil, G. M. P., Ramirez, W. N., Anjao, R. M., & Apatan, C. F. (2023). Instructional readiness and stress level of special education teachers on blended learning approach during COVID-19: Implications for post-pandemic. *International Journal of Science and Management Studies (IJSMS)*, 6(6), 47–72.
- Murphy, J., & Torre, D. (2014). *Creating productive cultures in schools: For students, teachers, and parents*. Corwin Press.
- Berchiatti, M., Ferrer, A., Badenes-Ribera, L., & Longobardi, C. (2022). Student–teacher relationship quality in students with learning disabilities and special educational needs. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 28(12), 2887–2905. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2022.2135779>
- Miña, Analiza. (2024). The Lived Experiences of Special Education Teachers in Teaching Inclusive Education Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal The Lived Experiences of Special Education Teachers in Teaching Inclusive Education. 10.5281/zenodo.12731335.
- Weidmann, R., & Chopik, W. J. (2024). Explicating narrow and broad conceptualizations of environmental influences on personality. *Journal of Personality*, 92(1), 5–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12886>
- Ortega, A., Bejarano, C.M., Cushing, C. *et al.* Differences in adolescent activity and dietary behaviors across home, school, and other locations warrant location-specific intervention approaches. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act* 17, 123 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-020-01027-1>
- Macias
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Hennink M, Kaiser BN. Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests. *Soc Sci Med*. 2022 Jan;292:114523. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523. Epub 2021 Nov 2. PMID: 34785096.
- Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2017). Code saturation versus meaning saturation: How many interviews are enough? *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(4), 591–608. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316665344>
- Ahmed, S. (2024). *Sample size for saturation in qualitative research: Debates, definitions, and strategies*. Academia.edu. https://www.academia.edu/126432626/Sample_size_for_saturation_in_qualitative_research_Debates_definitions_and_strategies
- Ahmed, S. K. (2025). Sample size for saturation in qualitative research: Debates, definitions, and strategies. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, 5, 100171.
- Hill, Z., Tawiah-Agyemang, C., Kirkwood, B., & Kendall, C. (2022). Are verbatim transcripts necessary in applied qualitative research? Experiences from two community-based intervention trials in Ghana. *Emerging Themes in Epidemiology*, 19(1), 5. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12982-022-00115-w>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Thematic analysis: A practical guide.
- Campbell, K. A., Orr, E., Durepos, P., Nguyen, L., Li, L., Whitmore, C., Gehrke, P.,

- Graham, L., & Jack, S. M. (2021). Reflexive thematic analysis for applied qualitative health research. *The Qualitative Report*, 26(6), 1625–1640. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol26/iss6/24/>
- Dörfler, V., & Stierand, M. (2021). Bracketing: A phenomenological theory applied through transpersonal reflexivity. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 34(4), 778–793. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-12-2019-0393>
- Graziano, F., Mastrokoulou, S., Monchietto, A., Marchisio, C., & Calandri, E. (2024). The moderating role of emotional self-efficacy and gender in teacher empathy and inclusive education. *Scientific Reports*, 14, 22587. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-70836-2>
- Makweya, P. P., & Sepadi, M. (2024). The crucial role of empathy in fostering inclusive learning environments. In *Global Practices in Inclusive Education Curriculum and Policy* (pp. 77–90). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-4058-5.ch004>
- Fernandez, I. L., Dosil-Santamaria, M., Idoiaga Mondragon, N., & Ozamiz-Etxebarria, N. (2023). Teachers' Involvement in Inclusive Education: Attitudes of Future Teachers. *Education Sciences*, 13(9), 851. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13090851>
- Bethere, D., Kasiliauskiene, R., Pavitola, L., & Usca, S. (2023). Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education: Latvian and Lithuanian Experiences. *Social Sciences*, 12(7), 365. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12070365>
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Kunz, A., Luder, R., & Kassis, W. (2021). Beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion of student teachers and their contact with people with disabilities. *Frontiers in Education*, 6, Article 650236. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.650236>
- Dignath, C., Rimm-Kaufman, S., van Ewijk, R. et al. Teachers' Beliefs About Inclusive Education and Insights on What Contributes to Those Beliefs: a Meta-analytical Study. *Educ Psychol Rev* 34, 2609–2660 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-022-09695-0>
- Yavuz, O., & Yavuz, O. (2020). Targeted Professional Development Strategies to Increase Teachers' Efficacy for Educating Students with Special Needs. *Çağdaş Yönetim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 7(2), 160-179.
- Franzen, K., Moschner, B., & Hellmich, F. (2024). Predictors of primary school teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for inclusive education. *Frontiers in Education*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1437839>
- Wray, E., Sharma, U., & Subban, P. (2022). Factors influencing teacher self-efficacy for inclusive education: A systematic literature review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 117, 103800. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103800>
- Franzen, K., Moschner, B., & Hellmich, F. (2024). Predictors of primary school teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for inclusive education. *Frontiers in Education*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1437839>
- Pérez-Salas CP, Parra V, Sáez-Delgado F, Olivares H. Influence of Teacher-Student Relationships and Special Educational Needs on Student Engagement and Disengagement: A Correlational study. *Front Psychol*. 2021 Jul 14;12:708157. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.708157. PMID: 34335423; PMCID: PMC8317502.
- Llorent, V. J., et al. (2024). Inclusive education by teachers to the development of the social and emotional competencies of their students in secondary education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 125, 103613. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.103613>
- Calandri, E., Mastrokoulou, S., Marchisio, C., Monchietto, A., & Graziano, F. (2025). Teacher Emotional Competence for Inclusive Education: A Systematic Review. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(3), 359. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15030359>
- Australian Education Research Organisation. (2021). *Teaching routines: Their role in classroom management*. Retrieved from <https://www.edresearch.edu.au/summaries->

- explainers/explainers/teaching-routines-their-role-classroom-management
 GoLearn. (2025). *Daily routines that foster success for special education students*. Go Solutions. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://golearn.gosolutions.com/resources/daily-routines-foster-success-special-education-students/>
- Pozas, M., & Schneider, C. (2020). Teachers and differentiated instruction: Exploring differentiation practices to address student diversity. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 20(3), 217–230. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12481>
- Pozas, M., Letzel, V., Lindner, K.-T., & Schwab, S. (2021). DI (Differentiated Instruction) does matter! The effects of DI on secondary school students' well-being, social inclusion and academic self-concept. *Frontiers in Education*, 6, Article 729027. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.729027>
- Donegan, R. E., & Fluhler, S. K. (2024). Intensifying Reading Interventions by Making Instruction More Explicit. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 56(3), 147–155. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00400599241242124journals.sagepub.com>
- Chinpakdee, M., & Gu, P. Y. (2024). The impact of explicit strategy instruction on EFL secondary school learners' reading. *Language Teaching Research*, 28(1), 3–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168821994157>
- Kayyali, M. (2025). The Impact of Personalized Learning on Student Engagement and Achievement in STEAM. In *Integrating Personalized Learning Methods Into STEAM Education* (pp. 51–78). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-7718-5.ch003>
- Özüdoğru, F. (2022). Investigating the Effect of Differentiated Instruction on Academic Achievement and Self-Directed Learning Readiness in an Online Teaching Profession Course. *i.e.: inquiry in education*, 14(2), Article 2. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1379291.pdf>
- Ma, Geraldine D. Barros and Sol Dalonos. Exploring the Support Systems of Special Education Teachers. *American Journal of Educational Research*. 2025; 13(2):88-91. doi: 10.12691/education-13-2-7
- Mahmood, A., Huang, X. and Rehman, N. (2025), "The role of teachers and administrators in supporting the adaptation of students with special needs in mainstream high schools", *Quality Education for All*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 35-54. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QEA-06-2024-0054>
- Hoffmann, L., Närhi, V., Savolainen, H., & Schwab, S. (2021). Classroom behavioural climate in inclusive education – A study on secondary students' perceptions. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 21(4), 293–302. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12529>
- Clemson, H.G., Coyle, D. Space matters: creating inclusive learning spaces for pupils with additional support needs (ASN) in Scotland. *Learning Environ Res* 28, 65–79 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10984-025-09526-3>
- Miller, D., & Venkatsamy, R. (2022). Supporting Parents' Needs as Educational Partners to Enhance Children's Classroom Learning. *Profesi Pendidikan Dasar*, 9(1), 1-14. doi:<https://doi.org/10.23917/ppd.v9i1.18227>
- Grace, P., & Carlo, D.P. (2023). Exploring the Collaboration between Parents of Children with Learning Difficulties and Teachers in Inclusive Education. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 7(4), 1103-1117. <https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/exploring-the-collaboration-between-parents-of-children-with-learning-difficulties-and-teachers-in-inclusive-education/>
- van Geel, M. et al. (2023). Adapting Teaching to Students' Needs: What Does It Require from Teachers?. In: Maulana, R., Helms-Lorenz, M., Klassen, R.M. (eds) *Effective Teaching Around the World*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-31678-4_33
- Cusi, A., Aldon, G., Barzel, B., Olsher, S. (2024). Rethinking Teachers' Formative Assessment Practices Within Technology-Enhanced Classrooms. In: Pepin, B., Gueudet, G., Choppin, J. (eds) *Handbook*

- of Digital Resources in Mathematics Education. Springer International Handbooks of Education. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95060-6_29-1
- Jang, H., Reeve, J., & Deci, E. L. (2010). Engaging students in learning activities: It is not autonomy support or structure but autonomy support and structure. *Journal of educational psychology*, 102(3), 588.
- Erturan, G. (2021). Testing Vallerand's motivational sequence in physical education: The invariance of teachers' motivation to teach. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 8(1), 1-13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.810477>
- Cumming, T. M., & Rose, M. C. (2022). Exploring Universal Design for Learning as an accessibility tool in higher education: A review of the current literature. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 49(5), 1025–1043. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-021-00471-7>
- Cardenal, M. E., Diaz-Santana, O., & Gonzalez-Betancor, S. M. (2023). *Teacher-student relationship and teaching styles in primary education: A model of analysis*. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 8(3), 165–183. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-09-2022-0053>