

A Phenomenological Investigation on The Lived Experiences Of Teachers in Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment For Students with Special Needs

Annabel M. Smallcanyon

annabelsmallcanyon@gmail.com

University of Perpetual Help System Dalta, Alabang-Zapote Road- Pampalona Tres, Las Pinas City 1740 Philippines

Abstract

Creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs is a fundamental aspect of equitable education. This phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of six special education (SPED) teachers at Fuller Elementary School in Tempe, Arizona, who are dedicated to fostering inclusivity through the SEALS (Specialized Education and Adaptive Learning Supports) Program. Fuller Elementary serves approximately 517 students in grades K-5 and offers a range of educational programs tailored to diverse student needs. The SEALS Program provides highly individualized instruction and therapeutic support for students with significant disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and multiple disabilities. With smaller class sizes, structured routines, and the integration of assistive technology, the program seeks to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Using in-depth interviews, this qualitative research identified three emergent themes: the necessity of differentiated instruction, the role of collaboration among educators, and the importance of administrative and parental support in achieving inclusivity. Findings reveal that while teachers are deeply committed to inclusive education, they encounter challenges such as limited resources, the complexity of students' needs, and emotional exhaustion. However, their strategies—including individualized learning plans, structured classroom management, and the use of assistive technology—demonstrate effective ways to foster student engagement and success. The study underscores the need for ongoing professional development, increased institutional support, and strengthened collaboration among teachers, administrators, and families to sustain inclusive education efforts. Addressing these factors will contribute to a more supportive and equitable learning environment for students with special needs. Future research should explore the long-term impact of inclusive teaching practices and investigate additional strategies to further enhance special education programs.

Keywords: Assistive Technology; Differentiated Instruction; Inclusive Education; Individualized Learning; SEALS Program; Special Education; Student Engagement; Teacher Collaboration.

1. Introduction

Inclusive education has gained global recognition as a fundamental approach to ensuring equal

educational opportunities for all students, particularly those with special needs. This paradigm shift emphasizes the importance of accommodating diverse learners within mainstream classrooms, promoting an equitable and supportive learning environment. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020), inclusive education is a vital component in fostering social cohesion and eliminating discrimination. However, the practical implementation of inclusive education poses significant challenges for educators, particularly in creating an environment that effectively supports students with special needs.

Teachers play a pivotal role in the realization of inclusive education. Their attitudes, beliefs, and instructional strategies significantly impact the quality of learning experiences for students with special needs (Sharma et al., 2022). The ability to create an inclusive learning environment requires not only pedagogical knowledge but also empathy, patience, and adaptability. Despite the increasing advocacy for inclusivity, many educators encounter difficulties in balancing the diverse needs of their students, especially in settings where resources and professional development opportunities are limited. Understanding the lived experiences of teachers in this context is crucial for identifying the challenges they face and the strategies they employ to foster inclusiveness.

Research on inclusive education has primarily focused on policy implementation, curriculum design, and student outcomes (Forlin et al., 2020). However, there remains a gap in the literature concerning the personal and professional experiences of teachers who are at the forefront of inclusive education. A phenomenological investigation offers a unique lens to explore the subjective experiences of teachers, capturing their perceptions, emotions, and reflections as they navigate the complexities of creating inclusive classrooms.

The present study aims to delve into the lived experiences of teachers in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs. It seeks to uncover the challenges, coping mechanisms, and best practices adopted by educators in fostering inclusivity. By giving voice to teachers' experiences, this study hopes to contribute to the broader discourse on inclusive education and provide insights that can inform policy development, teacher training programs, and support systems for educators.

Moreover, this study is grounded in the framework of phenomenology, which emphasizes understanding the essence of human experiences from the perspective of those who live them. This approach is particularly suitable for exploring the nuanced and multifaceted nature of teaching in inclusive classrooms. Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, the study will illuminate the intricate interplay between teachers' beliefs, practices, and the broader socio-cultural context in which they operate.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between policy and practice. While

inclusive education policies advocate equal access and participation, the practical realities faced by teachers often go unnoticed. By shedding light on the lived experiences of educators, this study aims to generate recommendations for improving teacher training programs, enhancing institutional support, and fostering a more inclusive educational landscape.

Creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs is both a moral imperative and a practical challenge. Teachers serve as the linchpin in this endeavor, yet their voices are often underrepresented in academic literature. This phenomenological investigation seeks to amplify the experiences of educators, providing valuable insights into the complexities of inclusive education. The findings of this study will not only contribute to the academic discourse but also empower policymakers, educational institutions, and teachers themselves to create more inclusive and equitable learning environments for all students.

Background of Study

As Inclusive education has become a global priority as schools strive to create environments where all students, regardless of their abilities, can participate and thrive. The concept of inclusive education promotes equal access to quality education for students with special needs, fostering their academic, social, and emotional development alongside their typically developing peers. This shift in educational philosophy underscores the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusivity in schools, with teachers playing a crucial role in implementing inclusive practices. However, the journey toward inclusivity presents both challenges and opportunities, making it essential to explore the lived experiences of teachers tasked with creating inclusive learning environments.

Fuller Elementary School in Tempe, Arizona, exemplifies commitment to inclusivity by serving approximately 517 students in grades K-5. The school provides a range of educational programs designed to accommodate the diverse needs of its student population. Among its key initiatives is the implementation of the Self-Contained Special Education Classroom, known as the SEALS (Specialized Education and Adaptive Learning Supports) Program. This program caters to students with significant disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and multiple disabilities, requiring highly individualized instruction and therapeutic support. The SEALS classrooms maintain smaller class sizes, structured routines, and the use of assistive technology to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

In addition to the SEALS Program, Fuller Elementary School offers inclusion services for high-functioning students with disabilities who can access the general education curriculum with appropriate support. These services are delivered through various models, including co-teaching, push-in support, pull-out

services, and paraprofessional assistance. Individualized accommodations, such as extended time on assignments, sensory breaks, and preferential seating, are implemented to ensure that students receive the necessary support to succeed in mainstream classrooms. The school's adoption of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) further reinforces its dedication to providing timely interventions for students facing academic and behavioral challenges.

Beyond classroom instruction, Fuller Elementary School fosters an inclusive culture through peer mentorship programs, social-emotional learning (SEL) initiatives, and ongoing professional development for staff. Teachers receive training on inclusive teaching strategies, behavior management, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to create accessible and engaging lessons for all students. The school's emphasis on collaboration, innovation, and community partnerships reflects its holistic approach to inclusivity, addressing the diverse needs of students while promoting a sense of belonging.

Despite these commendable efforts, the implementation of inclusive education is not without its difficulties. Teachers are often at the forefront of navigating the complexities of inclusivity, balancing the needs of students with special needs while maintaining high academic standards for all learners. The process of fostering an inclusive learning environment requires adaptability, patience, and a deep understanding of each student's unique strengths and challenges. Teachers may encounter various barriers, such as inadequate resources, time constraints, and the need for specialized training. However, these challenges are often accompanied by moments of profound success, as teachers witness the transformative impact of inclusivity on students' academic achievement, social development, and self-confidence.

Understanding the lived experiences of teachers in creating inclusive learning environments is essential for informing policies, practices, and professional development programs. A phenomenological investigation provides a platform for teachers to share their personal narratives, shedding light on the essence of their experiences and the meanings they attribute to their work. By exploring these experiences, educators, policymakers, and stakeholders can gain valuable insights into the realities of inclusive education and identify strategies to enhance its implementation.

The primary objective of this study is to explore and analyze the lived experiences of teachers in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs at Fuller Elementary School. Specifically, the study aims to uncover the essence of these experiences, describe significant moments encountered by teachers, interpret the meanings derived from fostering inclusivity, identify emerging themes related to challenges and successes, and propose insights to enhance professional development programs for educators in inclusive education.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks provide a structured approach to understand and analyze complex phenomena. In this case, lived experiences of teachers in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs, the following theories will be useful in this study:

Social Constructivism: Social constructivism is a learning theory that emphasizes the role of social interaction and the construction of knowledge through collaboration and shared experiences. In the context of inclusive education, Social Constructivism is highly relevant as it underscores the importance of collaborative learning and the social nature of knowledge construction. Teachers play a critical role in facilitating interactions among students, fostering peer support, and creating a community of learners where diversity is embraced. The theory acknowledges that knowledge is not simply transferred from teacher to student but is co-constructed through active participation and dialogue within the classroom.

Applying Social Constructivism to this study provides insights into how teachers navigate the challenges and opportunities of fostering inclusivity in their classrooms. The framework can guide the investigation of how teachers' experiences are influenced by their interactions with students, colleagues, parents, and the broader school community. It also sheds light on how teachers' perceptions of inclusion are shaped by their collaborative efforts in addressing the diverse needs of students with special needs.

This study will employ phenomenological inquiry methods, such as in-depth interviews and classroom observations, to capture teachers' perspectives on creating inclusive learning environments. The social constructivist framework will help the researcher interpret how teachers perceive their roles as facilitators of learning, how they collaborate with stakeholders, and how these interactions contribute to their understanding and implementation of inclusive education.

Critical Disability Theory (CDT): This theory highlights that disability is not solely an individual impairment but is significantly influenced by societal attitudes, institutional practices, and power dynamics. Applying CDT allows the researcher to critically examine how teachers navigate these systemic barriers while striving to create inclusive environments for students with special needs.

This framework encourages the researcher to explore how teachers' personal beliefs, attitudes, and practices align with the broader movement toward social justice and inclusion. By critically analyzing how educators address power imbalances and promote equitable learning opportunities, the study will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the role of teachers as agents of change in inclusive education.

By integrating Social Constructivism and Critical Disability Theory (CDT), the study will examine both internal and external influences on teachers' lived experiences. The social constructivist lens will help interpret how teachers collaborate with students, colleagues, and parents in the co-construction of knowledge, while CDT will provide a critical examination of how social and institutional structures shape the inclusion

process and the challenges teachers encounter.

Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the status lived experiences of teachers in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs.

Specifically, this study seeks to find answers to the following questions:

The Central Question:

1. What is the essence of lived experiences of teachers in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs?

Corollary Questions:

1. How do teachers describe their most significant experiences in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs?
2. What meanings can be drawn from the lived experiences of teachers in fostering inclusivity for students with special needs?
3. What themes emerge from the testimonies of teachers regarding the challenges and successes in implementing inclusive education?
4. Based on the results of the study, what insights can be proposed to enhance professional development programs for teachers in inclusive education?

Research Methodology

This investigation was qualitative in nature and will utilize narrative/descriptive phenomenological approach as its research design which focused on investigating the actual experiences of teachers in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs. The participants of the study were six (6) teachers from SEALS Program (Specialized Education and Adaptive Learning Supports) which provides a self-contained classroom environment for students with significant disabilities, such as autism, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities. An interview was scheduled based on the participants' availability and convenience. The actual one-on-one, in-depth interview at an average of 50-70 minutes will took place through Google meet or Zoom video communications. Questions are open ended to enable the participants to give answers in their own words. The conversations were recorded upon the participants' approval. The documented interviews were transcribed verbatim. Cool and warm analyses were employed in the treatment of data. The cool analysis consisted of the participants' statements, phrases, and sentences relevant to the experienced phenomenon. These will be the basis in the conduct of warm analysis in which the data will be clustered and categorized. Emerging themes will be derived from the highlighted terms.

The study was conducted at Fuller Elementary School in Tempe, Arizona. The participants of the

study were six (6) teachers from SEALS Program (Specialized Education and Adaptive Learning Supports) which provides a self-contained classroom environment for students with significant disabilities, such as autism, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities. The participating teachers were selected based on their direct involvement in the SEALS Program, ensuring that their insights and experiences would provide valuable information on inclusive education practices.

The study involved teachers from SEALS Program (Specialized Education and Adaptive Learning Supports). A representative sample of six (6) SEALS Program teacher participated in the study who were chosen through a criterion.

These educators have extensive experience in delivering individualized instruction, implementing behavior management strategies, and collaborating with other professionals, including speech and occupational therapists. Their role in supporting students with diverse needs makes them well-positioned to offer comprehensive perspectives on the challenges and successes of creating an inclusive learning environment within the school.

The respondents of this study were described based on their profile and the school they belong to.

The instrument is a guide questionnaire (adopted from Boholano, et.al., 2021). The teachers shared their experiences and narratives in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs. The questions focused on their teaching practices, challenges encountered, strategies employed, and the overall impact of their approaches on the students' academic and social development.

The researcher conducted the interview to the co-researchers in person or over-the-phone. Participants/co-researchers were asked an open-ended question verbally in individual interviews. Audio recording and verbatim transcriptions were done accordingly with the aid of the interview schedule

The collection of narratives included material directly produced by the research participants and online videos of their physical education classes. In-depth individual and group interviews were conducted to examine experiences emerging in the participants' journals. In-depth individual participant interviews will be conducted.

The interviews began with participants describing their experiences, focusing on the difficulties that were encountered and overcome in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs. The group interviews were comprised of open discussions among the research participants, that would allow collaborative and interpretive reflection within a seminar format.

Results and Discussion

The Central Question: What is the essence of lived experiences of teachers in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs?

In the pursuit of unraveling the lived experiences of teachers on the implementation of online Physical Education classes, this study brought to the forefront the invaluable insights and perspectives of six (6) dedicated teacher-participants. Preserving their anonymity through pseudonyms, we respectfully introduce Teacher Harmony, Teacher Compassionate, Teacher Rise, Teacher Bridge, Teacher Creative and Teacher Guiding. Each participant in this study embodies a wealth of experience and expertise, committed to navigating the intricacies of inclusive learning environment for students with special needs. Their collective narratives, drawn from extensive interviews and observations, form the foundation of this research, unveiling the challenges, opportunities, and transformative potential of online learning and teaching in the realm of Physical Education instruction.

Corollary Questions:

1. How do teachers describe their most significant experiences in creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs?

To address Corollary Question 1, the researcher conducted a meticulous examination of each transcript, carefully extracting phrases or sentences that directly pertained to the investigated phenomenon, following the approach proposed by Colaizzi (1978, in Abalos et al., 2016). This rigorous process involved identifying and collating the relevant statements from each of the 6 participants' interviews, ensuring the inclusion of contextually significant data.

Significant Experiences of Teacher Harmony

The insights shared by Teacher Harmony, who has dedicated 25 years to teaching students with special needs, illustrate the complexities involved in creating an inclusive educational environment. Their experience at Fuller Elementary School, particularly within the SEALS Program, highlights that inclusivity extends beyond merely having students physically present in the classroom. Teacher Harmony emphasized a significant experience working with a student with autism, where implementing a structured social skills program—developed in partnership with an occupational therapist—was crucial in helping the student improve social interactions. This experience underscores the importance of patience, consistency, and teamwork in fostering inclusivity.

In discussing their role, Teacher Harmony positioned themselves as both an educator and an advocate, aiming to create a safe and welcoming space where every student feels valued. This dual role necessitates understanding each child's unique strengths and challenges to design individualized plans for their success. Additionally, Teacher Harmony recognizes the importance of educating other students and staff about empathy and respect for diversity. Their commitment to involving parents, therapists, and fellow educators in the process reflects the understanding that creating an inclusive environment requires constant communication and collaboration.

The challenges mentioned by Teacher Harmony reveal the practical obstacles educators face in implementing inclusive practices. Managing behavioral outbursts, particularly when students are feeling overwhelmed, is a notable concern. Teacher Harmony's proactive strategies, such as creating calm-down corners and utilizing sensory tools, demonstrate an effort to address emotional regulation effectively. Furthermore, the challenge of limited resources has prompted Teacher Harmony to adopt creative solutions, such as making visual aids and seeking support from local organizations. This resourcefulness illustrates the adaptability required in special education settings.

Lastly, Teacher Harmony's advocacy for professional development opportunities showcases a commitment to continuous growth and improvement in their teaching practice. By seeking further training and resources, the educator not only enhances their own skills but also contributes to the overall effectiveness of the educational team. This focus on professional growth reflects an understanding that inclusivity is an evolving practice that requires ongoing reflection and adaptation. Overall, Teacher Harmony's insights encapsulate the complexities and rewards of teaching in an inclusive environment, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, creativity, and resilience in fostering a supportive learning atmosphere for all students.

Table 1a: Significant Experiences of Teacher Harmony

Significant Statements*
2. <i>" Over my 25 years of teaching students with special needs, including the last 13 years at Fuller Elementary School in the SEALS Program, I've learned that inclusivity goes beyond physical presence. One significant experience was working with a student with autism who struggled with social interactions. By implementing a structured social skills program and partnering with the occupational therapist, the student gradually became more comfortable engaging with peers. This experience showed me that patience, consistency, and teamwork are key to fostering inclusivity. Additionally, witnessing how small accommodations can make a significant impact on a student's confidence and social participation has reinforced my belief in the power of inclusive practices."</i>
3. <i>" My role is to create a safe, welcoming space where every student feels valued. I see myself as both a teacher and an advocate. I strive to understand each child's strengths and challenges, then design individualized plans to help them succeed. It's also important to educate other students and staff about the importance of empathy and respect for diversity. I view inclusivity as a team effort, and I always make sure to involve parents, therapists, and other educators in the process. Creating an inclusive environment requires constant reflection, adaptation, and a commitment to fostering positive relationships among all members of the school community."</i>

4. *"One challenge is managing behavioral outbursts, especially when students are feeling overwhelmed. I've found that creating calm-down corners and using sensory tools helps students regulate their emotions. Another challenge is the limited availability of resources. I've learned to get creative by making my own visual aids and reaching out to local organizations for donations. Collaborating with parents and colleagues has also helped bridge resource gaps. Additionally, advocating for professional development opportunities has allowed me to continuously improve my skills and implement more effective strategies in the classroom."*

5. *"One memorable experience was helping a student with multiple disabilities participate in the school talent show. The student loved music but struggled with motor coordination. With the help of the occupational therapist and a peer buddy, we adapted a simple tambourine routine. The smile on the student's face and the applause from the audience made all the hard work worth it. It was a powerful reminder that every child deserves the chance to shine. This experience reinforced the importance of collaboration, creativity, and the positive impact that inclusive opportunities have on both students and the broader school community."*

6. *"The key principles include respect for diversity, equity in access to resources, individualized support, and fostering a sense of belonging. It's important to create a culture where differences are celebrated, and every student feels valued. Collaboration among educators, parents, and support staff is also crucial in ensuring that all students receive the support they need. Transparency, open communication, and a commitment to ongoing professional development are essential for sustaining an inclusive learning environment."*

Significant Experiences of Teacher Compassionate

In Teacher Compassionate's understanding of inclusivity has been shaped by both personal experiences and professional encounters. Early in her career, she faced challenges supporting a student diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who struggled to adapt to the general classroom setting. Despite her initial efforts, the strategies she implemented were not as effective as expected. However, after attending basic training on special education, she gained insight into the importance of individualized instruction and structured routines. This pivotal experience highlighted the need for continuous learning and adaptability in fostering inclusive environments.

Transitioning to her role as both an educator and advocate, Teacher Compassionate emphasized that inclusivity goes beyond making accommodations. She believes in creating a classroom culture that celebrates diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. By building emotional connections with students and

understanding their unique strengths and challenges, she seeks to create a supportive environment. However, she acknowledges that compassion alone is not sufficient. The lack of ongoing, targeted training presents a significant challenge, making it difficult to implement the latest evidence-based practices effectively. To bridge this gap, she actively pursues professional development opportunities and collaborates with colleagues and specialists.

Furthermore, Teacher Compassionate identified differentiated instruction as one of the most effective methods in her classroom. She employs various strategies such as visual aids, hands-on activities, and simplified instructions to cater to different learning styles. The integration of assistive technology has also been beneficial, particularly for students with communication difficulties. Nevertheless, the limited availability of practical, hands-on training makes it harder to fully maximize these tools. This challenge highlights the importance of providing comprehensive professional development that equips teachers with concrete, data-driven strategies.

One notable challenge Teacher Compassionate has encountered is the insufficient training on addressing the specific needs of students with disabilities. Seminars she attended often focused on theoretical knowledge rather than practical applications. To address this gap, she seeks out online resources, connects with fellow educators, and observes therapists and specialists working with her students. These proactive efforts have enabled her to implement effective strategies in the classroom despite the lack of formal training.

Through her journey in inclusive education, Teacher Compassionate has developed greater empathy, patience, and flexibility. She has learned to appreciate the unique abilities of her students while remaining aware of her own limitations. This awareness has fueled her commitment to lifelong learning, as she continuously seeks updated, data-driven training opportunities. She firmly believes that consistent access to comprehensive professional development would empower educators to create truly inclusive classrooms where every student can thrive.

Table 1b: Significant Experiences of Teacher Compassionate

Significant Statements*
7. <i>"My understanding of inclusivity has been shaped by both personal experiences and professional encounters. Early in my career, I had a student diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who struggled to adapt to the general classroom setting. Despite my best efforts, I realized that my initial strategies were not as effective as I had hoped. It was only after attending a basic training on special education that I began to understand the importance of individualized instruction and structured routines. These experiences have taught me that inclusivity requires continuous learning and adaptability."</i>

8. *"I see my role as both an educator and an advocate. Beyond delivering lessons, I believe it is my responsibility to foster a sense of belonging among all students, especially those with special needs. This means not only making accommodations but also creating a classroom culture that celebrates diversity. I strive to build emotional connections with my students by understanding their unique strengths and challenges. However, I also recognize that compassion alone is not enough. Without ongoing, targeted training, it can be difficult to implement the latest evidence-based practices effectively. The current training available does not always keep pace with the evolving needs of inclusive education. My role involves bridging that gap by continuously seeking out professional development opportunities and collaborating with colleagues and specialists to provide the best possible support for my students."*

9. *"Differentiated instruction has been one of the most effective methods in my experience. Providing various ways for students to access content—such as visual aids, hands-on activities, and simplified instructions—helps cater to different learning styles. Incorporating assistive technology has also proven beneficial, especially for students with communication difficulties. However, while these methods are helpful, I sometimes feel that the lack of ongoing, practical training makes it harder to fully maximize these tools. The professional development sessions I've attended often focus on broad theories rather than concrete, data-driven strategies. More comprehensive training would empower teachers to better address the ever-changing needs of students with special needs.."*

10. *"One major challenge has been the lack of sufficient training on how to address the specific needs of students with disabilities. While I have attended some seminars, they often provide only theoretical knowledge without practical applications. To overcome this, I seek out online resources and connect with other educators to share best practices. I also make an effort to observe therapists and specialists working with my students to learn firsthand strategies that I can implement in the classroom."*

11. *"Working in an inclusive environment has deepened my empathy and patience. It has taught me to see beyond a student's difficulties and appreciate their unique abilities. Professionally, I have learned to be more flexible in my teaching methods and more collaborative in seeking solutions. However, the experience has also made me more aware of my own limitations, especially in terms of knowledge and skills. This realization has driven me to become a lifelong learner, actively searching for updated, data-driven training opportunities. I firmly believe that with more consistent access to these types of professional development programs, educators would be better equipped to create truly inclusive classrooms where every student can thrive."*

Significant Experiences of Teacher Rise

Working in an inclusive environment has profoundly shaped Teacher Rise's professional and personal growth. The experience has emphasized the importance of empathy, patience, and adaptability. Understanding that success varies for each student, Teacher Rise celebrates small milestones alongside major academic achievements. Professionally, they have honed skills in differentiated instruction, behavior management, and collaborative planning. This journey has also heightened their awareness of systemic challenges in education, particularly the difficulty in securing funding and resources for students with special needs. Consequently, they are driven to advocate for more equitable educational policies.

To monitor student progress, Teacher Rise utilizes a combination of formative and summative assessments. Informal observations, peer assessments, and one-on-one check-ins provide valuable insights into student engagement. For students with additional needs, assessments are aligned with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), setting personalized and realistic goals. However, limited access to assistive technologies due to budget constraints poses a significant challenge. In response, Teacher Rise researches free digital tools and creates handmade materials to support diverse learning needs.

Teacher Rise views their role as both a facilitator and advocate. They prioritize creating a classroom culture where every student feels valued and respected, regardless of ability or background. Adaptable teaching strategies, such as visual aids, flexible grouping, and differentiated instruction, cater to the diverse needs of their students. Collaboration with support staff, parents, and fellow educators ensures consistent support across various learning settings, reinforcing a sense of belonging and inclusivity.

Despite resource limitations, Teacher Rise remains committed to innovative solutions. They explore free or low-cost apps, craft personalized visual aids, and foster peer support systems. Additionally, partnerships with parents, community organizations, and local NGOs help bridge resource gaps. The resilience and progress of their students continue to inspire Teacher Rise to persevere in overcoming challenges.

Teacher Rise encourages aspiring inclusive educators to focus on building a positive classroom culture. Simple gestures like greeting students by name, celebrating differences, and using inclusive language foster a sense of belonging. Understanding each student's strengths and needs, seeking professional development, and collaborating with colleagues and the community are crucial steps. Creating an inclusive environment is an ongoing journey where every small action contributes to a more equitable educational experience.

Table 1c: Significant Experiences of Teacher Rise

Significant Statements*

12. *"Working in an inclusive environment has taught me the importance of empathy, patience, and adaptability. I've learned that success looks different for every student, and celebrating small milestones is just as important as reaching big academic goals. Professionally, I've developed skills in differentiated instruction, behavior management, and collaborative planning. The experience has also made me more aware of the systemic challenges in education, particularly in securing funding and resources for students with special needs. It has motivated me to advocate not only for my students but also for more equitable educational policies."*

13. *"I had two students with autism in my class, one who was very active and often had difficulty focusing, while the other struggled socially and would sometimes have a short temper. To create an inclusive environment, I implemented a buddy system where they could support each other. The active student would help the other with physical activities, channeling his energy positively, while the more reserved student provided a calming influence during quieter tasks. I also introduced structured breaks for both students, allowing them to release energy and manage emotions. This approach not only fostered their friendship but also helped them learn to appreciate each other's strengths and challenges. Witnessing their growth in understanding and cooperation was incredibly fulfilling."*

14. *"As an early career teacher, I see my role as both a facilitator and advocate. It's important to create a classroom where every student feels valued and respected, regardless of their abilities or background. I make sure to adapt my teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of my students, such as using visual aids, differentiated instruction, and flexible grouping. I also collaborate with support staff, parents, and fellow educators to ensure consistent support across different learning settings. By fostering open communication and promoting acceptance, I aim to create an environment where all students feel they belong and can thrive."*

15. *"One of the biggest challenges has been addressing the diverse learning needs of my students with limited resources. For example, I have students who would benefit from assistive technologies, but budget constraints often limit our access to these tools. To overcome this, I've sought out free or low-cost apps, created personalized visual aids, and encouraged peer support systems. Additionally, collaborating with parents, community organizations, and local NGOs has helped bridge some of the resource gaps. Despite these challenges, the resilience and progress of my students continue to inspire me to find innovative solutions."*

16. *"My advice would be to start with building a positive classroom culture. Small gestures like greeting students by name, celebrating differences, and using inclusive language can create a sense of belonging. Take time to get to know each student's strengths and needs. Don't hesitate to seek out professional development opportunities and collaborate with colleagues, especially when facing resource limitations. It's also important to involve parents and the community in the learning process. Creating an inclusive environment is a journey, and every small step makes a difference."*

Significant Experiences of Teacher Bridge

Teacher Bridge's work in self-contained classrooms, particularly within the SEALS Program, has enriched their perspective on inclusivity. The structured routines and individualized plans have had a positive impact on student progress. Collaboration with families and therapists has played a pivotal role in addressing students' diverse needs. However, the scarcity of specialized tools due to funding constraints has pushed Teacher Bridge to adopt creative, cost-effective solutions. They have found that simple resources, such as communication cards and homemade sensory aids, can greatly enhance student learning.

In tracking student progress, Teacher Bridge employs observation notes, checklists, and student work portfolios. Breaking down IEP goals into smaller, measurable steps enables them to assess student growth more effectively. When advanced tools are unavailable, Teacher Bridge collaborates with therapists and parents to gather comprehensive insights into student development.

Collaboration remains a cornerstone of Teacher Bridge's practices. They maintain open communication with families and align classroom activities with therapy goals by working closely with paraeducators and therapists. Additionally, they actively seek professional development opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge.

Addressing resource limitations is a constant challenge. Teacher Bridge relies on visual aids, sensory areas, and task boards to promote independent learning. Partnerships with parents, community organizations, and local NGOs help mitigate resource shortages, reflecting their unwavering dedication to finding innovative solutions.

For those entering the field of inclusive education, Teacher Bridge emphasizes the importance of clear routines, flexibility, and collaborative relationships with families and specialists. They stress the significance of celebrating every achievement, fostering a supportive environment where all students feel valued and empowered.

In analyzing Teacher Bridge's insights, it becomes evident that inclusivity thrives on a balance of structure, creativity, and collaboration. Their experiences highlight the critical role of resourcefulness in overcoming systemic barriers. Despite the persistent challenges of funding shortages, Teacher Bridge's commitment to fostering a supportive learning environment demonstrates that small, consistent efforts can lead to meaningful progress. This underscores the broader importance of advocating for equitable access to resources in inclusive education settings.

Table 1d: Significant Experiences of Teacher Bridge

Significant Statements*

17. *“My experiences in self-contained classrooms, especially with the SEALS Program, have greatly influenced how I view inclusivity. I've seen how consistent routines and individualized plans can make a big difference for students. Working with families and therapists has taught me that collaboration is essential. At the same time, the lack of funding for specialized tools has shown me how challenging it can be to provide everything students need. This has pushed me to be more creative in finding low-cost alternatives to support my students.”*

18. *“Balancing structure with individualized support is one of the toughest parts of inclusive teaching. There are times when there simply aren't enough resources or staff to give each student the attention they need. To address this, I've set up visual schedules, sensory areas, and task boards to help students follow routines independently. I've also worked closely with families and community partners to get extra supplies. Simple tools like communication cards or homemade sensory materials have made a big difference when resources are tight.”*

19. *“Regular communication is key. I hold meetings with parents to gather insights about their child and adjust learning plans accordingly. I also collaborate with therapists and paraeducators to align classroom activities with therapy goals. Joining professional learning groups helps me stay updated on best practices and share ideas with other educators. However, more funding for joint planning sessions would allow for deeper collaboration and better outcomes for students.”*

20. *“I use different types of assessments—daily observation notes, checklists, and student work portfolios. Breaking down IEP goals into smaller steps makes it easier to track progress. I also seek input from therapists and parents to get a well-rounded view of each student's growth. When technology isn't available, I rely on videos or parent reports to capture learning that happens outside the classroom. These methods help paint a more accurate picture of student development despite the lack of advanced tools.”*

21. *“Start by establishing clear routines and expectations—structure helps students feel safe. But don't forget to be flexible and responsive to individual needs. Collaboration with parents and specialists is crucial, even if time and resources are limited. When funding falls short, look for simple solutions like homemade visual aids or peer support systems. Most importantly, celebrate every little milestone and create a classroom where every student feels valued and capable..”*

Significant Experiences of Teacher Creative

Teacher Creative reflects on their journey toward understanding inclusivity in the classroom, emphasizing a pivotal student-teaching experience with a student who had communication difficulties. This experience highlighted the importance of recognizing each student's unique strengths and the significant role of assistive technology in facilitating communication. By witnessing firsthand how the right tools could

empower students, Teacher Creative developed a deep appreciation for the diverse capabilities present in every learner.

In their role as a facilitator and advocate, Teacher Creative strives to create a supportive and safe environment where all students feel valued. This entails adapting lessons, using technology, and collaborating with specialists to meet diverse needs. However, they also acknowledge facing challenges, particularly student resistance to adaptations for peers. To address this, Teacher Creative implemented peer mentoring and buddy systems, fostering empathy and collaboration among students. This proactive approach not only mitigated resistance but also strengthened the classroom community.

Teacher Creative's experiences have contributed significantly to their personal and professional growth. They express that working with students with diverse needs has enhanced their problem-solving abilities and creativity, while also cultivating greater patience and empathy. Each student presents a new learning opportunity, reinforcing the idea that educators must remain adaptable and open to evolving alongside their students. This continuous learning process enriches their teaching practice and enhances their effectiveness as an educator.

In offering advice to fellow teachers, Teacher Creative emphasizes the importance of embracing the uniqueness of each student and leveraging technology as a tool for engagement. They remind educators that creating an inclusive classroom is not a one-time effort but an ongoing journey that requires dedication and reflection. Ultimately, Teacher Creative's insights provide a valuable perspective on the complexities and rewards of fostering inclusivity in education, highlighting the necessity of adaptability, collaboration, and a commitment to lifelong learning in the teaching profession.

Teacher Creative's insights illuminate the vital role of inclusivity in education and the transformative impact it has on both students and educators. Their experiences underscore the necessity of recognizing and valuing each student's unique strengths while utilizing technology to facilitate learning. By embracing adaptability, fostering collaboration, and committing to continuous growth, Teacher Creative exemplifies the qualities essential for creating an inclusive classroom environment. Their emphasis on the ongoing nature of this journey serves as an encouraging reminder for educators to remain dedicated to fostering empathy and understanding within their classrooms, ultimately enriching the educational experience for all students.

Table 1e: Significant Experiences of Teacher Creative

Significant Statements*

22. *"Honestly, one of the first times I realized the importance of inclusivity was during my student-teaching experience. I worked with a student who had difficulty communicating, and it was eye-opening to see how much they had to offer when given the right tools, like a speech-generating device. It really drove home for me that every student has unique strengths, and it's our job to find ways to bring those out. Plus, attending workshops on assistive technology really helped me understand how to integrate those tools effectively.."*

23. *"I see myself as a facilitator and advocate. My role is to ensure that every student feels valued and supported. I work to create a safe space where students can express themselves without fear of judgment. That means adapting lessons, using tech tools, and even collaborating with specialists when needed. It's about being flexible and proactive in meeting diverse needs."*

"A big challenge has been resistance from some students who initially didn't understand why we needed to adapt lessons for their peers. To tackle this, I implemented peer mentoring and buddy systems. By pairing students together, they learned the importance of empathy and collaboration. Watching them support one another was a game-changer for the classroom dynamic."

24. *"I've grown a lot in my problem-solving skills and my ability to think outside the box. Working with students with diverse needs pushes you to be creative every day. I've also become more patient and empathetic, which I believe makes me a better teacher overall. Each student teaches me something new, which keeps me on my toes and continuously learning."*

25. *"My advice would be to embrace the uniqueness of each student. Start by getting to know your students and their individual needs. Don't hesitate to use technology as a tool for engagement—it can really help bridge gaps. And remember, creating an inclusive classroom is a continuous process. Be patient with yourself and your students, and always be open to learning and adapting. Building an inclusive environment takes time, but the rewards are worth it!"*

Significant Experiences of Teacher Guiding

The interview with Teacher Guiding from Fuller Elementary provides a comprehensive look at the complexities involved in creating an inclusive educational environment for students with special needs. One of the key insights from Teacher Guiding's responses is the emphasis on individual differences among students. By acknowledging the diverse needs within the classroom, the educator highlights the importance of personalized approaches to teaching. This recognition is crucial in special education, as it underscores that a singular teaching strategy may not effectively address the varying challenges each student faces. Teacher

Guiding's analogy of being a musical conductor illustrates the necessity of harmonizing different learning styles and needs to foster an inclusive atmosphere.

Another significant aspect of Teacher Guiding's role is their focus on collaboration and communication with parents and specialists. This collaborative approach is essential, as it not only enriches the educational experience for students but also empowers families to actively participate in their children's learning. Teacher Guiding's commitment to maintaining an open line of communication reflects a broader understanding of education as a partnership. This dynamic is particularly important in special education, where parents often have invaluable insights into their children's needs, preferences, and progress. By fostering these relationships, the educator creates a supportive network that benefits everyone involved.

The challenges outlined by Teacher Guiding reveal the practical difficulties of implementing inclusive practices. The comparison to a potluck dinner, where each participant has different dietary restrictions, aptly captures the complexity of catering to a diverse group of learners. The educator's proactive strategies, such as creating multiple versions of lessons and actively seeking feedback, demonstrate a commitment to adaptability and the willingness to learn from experiences. This adaptability is a vital characteristic for educators in special education, as it allows them to respond effectively to the dynamic nature of their classrooms. The emphasis on trial and error underscores the reality that inclusivity often requires ongoing adjustments and creativity.

Finally, Teacher Guiding's reflections on personal and professional growth highlight the transformative nature of working in an inclusive environment. Their experiences have not only enhanced their teaching skills but have also fostered a greater sense of empathy and resilience. By embracing the complexities of inclusivity, Teacher Guiding has developed a mindset that values both the challenges and rewards of their role. The advice to maintain a sense of humor reinforces the idea that navigating the intricacies of special education can be both demanding and fulfilling. Overall, the interview encapsulates the multifaceted nature of teaching students with special needs, emphasizing the continuous journey of growth for both educators and their students.

Table 1f: Significant Experiences of Teacher Guiding

Significant Statements*
<i>"Working at Fuller Elementary has been like being in a masterclass on the nuances of the human experience! Each student is a world unto themselves, often on a spectrum that presents a variety of needs. For instance, one day I might be working with a brilliant kiddo who can recite every dinosaur name but struggles with basic social interactions, while another student might need assistance with sensory overload during our group activities. These experiences have taught me that inclusivity isn't a one-size-fits-all approach; it's</i>

about tuning into the specifics of each child's needs and adjusting my methods accordingly. It's like being a musical conductor—you've got to know how to bring out the best in each instrument to create a beautiful symphony!"

26. "At Fuller, my role feels like being a translator, bridging the gap between students' needs and their potential. Every day is about more than just lesson plans; it's about understanding the intricacies of each student's challenges and strengths. Constant communication with parents and specialists is crucial. I mean, if I had a dollar for every time I had a conference call with a parent to discuss their child's unique needs, I could fund my coffee habit! But really, that open line of communication allows us to collaborate on strategies that not only support the students in school but also empower families to reinforce those strategies at home."

27. "One of the major challenges has been the sheer diversity of needs within the classroom—it's a bit like preparing for a potluck where everyone has different dietary restrictions! I often face the dilemma of how to prepare lessons that are engaging and accessible for all. To tackle this, I've learned to be a master planner. I create multiple versions of activities, tailored to various skill levels, and I always have a backup plan in case something doesn't click. And let's not forget the importance of constant feedback. I regularly check in with my students and parents to see what's working and what's not. Honestly, it's like running a small business where the product is the kids' learning experience!"

28. "Working in an inclusive environment has been a crash course in adaptability! I've grown to appreciate the beauty of individual differences. It's taught me to be more observant and patient. For instance, I now know that a simple shift in seating arrangements can make a world of difference for a student who gets easily distracted. Professionally, I've honed my skills in collaboration and communication. I've become adept at deciphering all the different communication styles between therapists, parents, and our team. Who knew I'd become a bit of an interpreter along the way? It's made me realize that every challenge is an opportunity for growth, not just for my students, but for me as well."

29. "My advice? Embrace the complexity! Each student comes with their own set of quirks and strengths—celebrate that! Engage in constant communication with parents; they are the experts on their children and can provide invaluable insights. Don't hesitate to reach out for support from your colleagues; collaboration is key. Also, be prepared for some trial and error—what works one day might be a total flop the next, and that's okay! Keep a sense of humor about it all; after all, if you can't laugh at the unexpected, you'll drown in the paperwork! Inclusivity is a journey filled with twists and turns, so buckle up and enjoy the ride—you'll be amazed at the growth you'll see in your students and yourself!"

2. What meanings maybe drawn from the most significant experiences of the Special Education teachers?

To address Corollary Question 2, the researcher embarked on the task of formulating the meanings behind each significant statement shared by the 10 participants, as outlined by Colaizzi (1978, in Abalos, 2016). The researcher delved into understanding the underlying meaning of what the study participants conveyed, bridging the gap between their words and the intended implications. The subsequent tables present the significant statements of the participants, accompanied by the researcher's formulated meanings, shedding light on the profound insights uncovered throughout the research journey. Additionally, the researcher's commitment to maintaining rigor in data analysis was reflected in the iterative nature of the process. Each formulated meaning underwent rigorous review and validation through constant comparison with the participants' original statements, ensuring that the interpretive steps remained aligned with the data collected.

Table 2a: Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
<i>"Over my 25 years of teaching students with special needs, including the last 13 years at Fuller Elementary School in the SEALS Program, I've learned that inclusivity goes beyond physical presence. One significant experience was working with a student with autism who struggled with social interactions. By implementing a structured social skills program and partnering with the occupational therapist, the student gradually became more comfortable engaging with peers. This experience showed me that patience, consistency, and teamwork are key to fostering inclusivity. Additionally, witnessing how small accommodations can make a significant impact on a student's confidence and social participation has reinforced my belief in the power of inclusive practices."</i>	Inclusive education thrives on collaboration, creativity, patience, and continuous professional growth.
<i>30. "My role is to create a safe, welcoming space where every student feels valued. I see myself as both a teacher and an advocate. I strive to understand each child's strengths and challenges, then design individualized plans to help them succeed. It's also important to educate other students and staff about the importance of empathy and respect for diversity. I view inclusivity as a team effort, and I always make sure to involve parents, therapists, and other educators in the process. Creating an inclusive environment requires constant reflection, adaptation, and a commitment to fostering positive relationships among all members of the school community.."</i>	
<i>"One challenge is managing behavioral outbursts, especially when students are</i>	

feeling overwhelmed. I've found that creating calm-down corners and using sensory tools helps students regulate their emotions. Another challenge is the limited availability of resources. I've learned to get creative by making my own visual aids and reaching out to local organizations for donations. Collaborating with parents and colleagues has also helped bridge resource gaps. Additionally, advocating for professional development opportunities has allowed me to continuously improve my skills and implement more effective strategies in the classroom."

31. "One memorable experience was helping a student with multiple disabilities participate in the school talent show. The student loved music but struggled with motor coordination. With the help of the occupational therapist and a peer buddy, we adapted a simple tambourine routine. The smile on the student's face and the applause from the audience made all the hard work worth it. It was a powerful reminder that every child deserves the chance to shine. This experience reinforced the importance of collaboration, creativity, and the positive impact that inclusive opportunities have on both students and the broader school community."

32. "The key principles include respect for diversity, equity in access to resources, individualized support, and fostering a sense of belonging. It's important to create a culture where differences are celebrated, and every student feels valued. Collaboration among educators, parents, and support staff is also crucial in ensuring that all students receive the support they need. Transparency, open communication, and a commitment to ongoing professional development are essential for sustaining an inclusive learning environment."

Inclusive education thrives on collaboration, creativity, patience, and continuous professional growth.

The collaboration is foundational in inclusive education, involving teamwork among educators, specialists, parents, and students. Teacher Harmony's partnership with an occupational therapist to implement a structured social skills program for a student with autism underscores the significance of such collaborative efforts. This approach aligns with the concept of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), where educators work collectively to enhance student learning outcomes. Research by Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008) indicates that PLCs reduce teacher isolation, increase commitment, and lead to academic gains for students.

Moreover, creativity is essential in adapting teaching methods to meet diverse student needs. Teacher Harmony's resourcefulness in creating visual aids and seeking support from local organizations

demonstrates how innovative approaches can address challenges like limited resources. Such creativity ensures that all students have access to meaningful learning experiences, promoting a sense of belonging and engagement. According to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), inclusive pedagogy encourages teachers to develop flexible strategies that benefit both students with and without disabilities.

In addition, patience plays a critical role in managing behavioral challenges and fostering social development among students with special needs. Teacher Harmony's proactive strategies, such as creating calm-down corners and utilizing sensory tools, exemplify how patience combined with thoughtful interventions supports emotional regulation. This perspective aligns with studies by Shyman (2012), which emphasize that patience and consistent positive reinforcement contribute to improved behavior and social integration among students with disabilities.

Finally, continuous professional growth is vital in navigating the complexities of inclusive education. Teacher Harmony's commitment to ongoing learning and adaptability highlights the necessity for educators to stay informed about best practices. Engaging in professional development not only enhances individual teaching practices but also strengthens the overall effectiveness of educational teams. As Avalos (2011) notes, professional learning is a continuous process that empowers educators to reflect on their practices and adopt new strategies to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Table 2b: Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
<i>"My understanding of inclusivity has been shaped by both personal experiences and professional encounters. Early in my career, I had a student diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who struggled to adapt to the general classroom setting. Despite my best efforts, I realized that my initial strategies were not as effective as I had hoped. It was only after attending a basic training on special education that I began to understand the importance of individualized instruction and structured routines. These experiences have taught me that inclusivity requires continuous learning and adaptability."</i>	Effective inclusive education
<i>"I see my role as both an educator and an advocate. Beyond delivering lessons, I believe it is my responsibility to foster a sense of belonging among all students, especially those with special needs. This means not only making accommodations but also creating a classroom culture that celebrates diversity. I strive to build emotional connections with my students by understanding their unique strengths and challenges. However, I also recognize that compassion alone is not enough. Without ongoing,</i>	

<i>targeted training, it can be difficult to implement the latest evidence-based practices effectively. The current training available does not always keep pace with the evolving needs of inclusive education. My role involves bridging that gap by continuously seeking out professional development opportunities and collaborating with colleagues and specialists to provide the best possible support for my students.”</i>	relies on
<i>“Differentiated instruction has been one of the most effective methods in my experience. Providing various ways for students to access content—such as visual aids, hands-on activities, and simplified instructions—helps cater to different learning styles. Incorporating assistive technology has also proven beneficial, especially for students with communication difficulties. However, while these methods are helpful, I sometimes feel that the lack of ongoing, practical training makes it harder to fully maximize these tools. The professional development sessions I’ve attended often focus on broad theories rather than concrete, data-driven strategies. More comprehensive training would empower teachers to better address the ever-changing needs of students with special needs..”</i>	continuous hands-on training and collaborative support systems.
<i>33. “One major challenge has been the lack of sufficient training on how to address the specific needs of students with disabilities. While I have attended some seminars, they often provide only theoretical knowledge without practical applications. To overcome this, I seek out online resources and connect with other educators to share best practices. I also make an effort to observe therapists and specialists working with my students to learn firsthand strategies that I can implement in the classroom.”</i>	
<i>34. “Working in an inclusive environment has deepened my empathy and patience. It has taught me to see beyond a student’s difficulties and appreciate their unique abilities. Professionally, I have learned to be more flexible in my teaching methods and more collaborative in seeking solutions. However, the experience has also made me more aware of my own limitations, especially in terms of knowledge and skills. This realization has driven me to become a lifelong learner, actively searching for updated, data-driven training opportunities. I firmly believe that with more consistent access to these types of professional development programs, educators would be better equipped to create truly inclusive classrooms where every student can thrive.”</i>	

Effective inclusive education relies on continuous hands-on training and collaborative support systems.

Effective inclusive education relies on continuous hands-on training and collaborative support systems. These elements work together to equip educators with the skills and knowledge necessary to address the diverse needs of students with special needs. Teacher Compassionate's journey highlights how attending basic special education training reshaped her approach, underscoring the transformative impact of practical knowledge. Research by Forlin, Loreman, and Sharma (2021) suggests that experiential training significantly improves teachers' confidence and competence in delivering inclusive education, reinforcing the importance of ongoing capacity-building.

Collaboration plays a crucial role in creating inclusive learning environments. Teacher Compassionate's partnerships with specialists and fellow educators exemplify how shared knowledge enhances the implementation of individualized strategies. Friend and Cook (2023) emphasize that co-teaching and interdisciplinary collaboration not only improve instructional quality but also foster a supportive atmosphere where students with disabilities can thrive. This collective approach helps address the multifaceted needs of learners and promotes a sense of belonging in the classroom.

Integrating assistive technology further enriches inclusive education, especially when accompanied by proper training and peer support. Teacher Compassionate's use of visual aids and simplified instructions demonstrates how technology can cater to various learning styles. Bouck (2020) highlights that consistent training on assistive technology empowers educators to maximize its benefits, making the curriculum more accessible to students with communication difficulties. This integration aligns with the broader goal of providing equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Continuous professional development remains vital in sustaining inclusive practices. Teacher Compassionate's proactive pursuit of online resources and peer observation reflects a commitment to lifelong learning. Avalos (2021) asserts that ongoing professional growth not only enhances individual teaching practices but also strengthens collaborative cultures within schools. This dedication to continuous improvement ensures that educators can adapt to evolving best practices and better support students with special needs, fostering a more inclusive educational environment.

Table 2c: Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
<i>“Working in an inclusive environment has taught me the importance of empathy, patience, and adaptability. I've learned that success looks different for every student, and</i>	

<i>celebrating small milestones is just as important as reaching big academic goals. Professionally, I've developed skills in differentiated instruction, behavior management, and collaborative planning. The experience has also made me more aware of the systemic challenges in education, particularly in securing funding and resources for students with special needs. It has motivated me to advocate not only for my students but also for more equitable educational policies."</i>	
<i>35. "I had two students with autism in my class, one who was very active and often had difficulty focusing, while the other struggled socially and would sometimes have a short temper. To create an inclusive environment, I implemented a buddy system where they could support each other. The active student would help the other with physical activities, channeling his energy positively, while the more reserved student provided a calming influence during quieter tasks. I also introduced structured breaks for both students, allowing them to release energy and manage emotions. This approach not only fostered their friendship but also helped them learn to appreciate each other's strengths and challenges. Witnessing their growth in understanding and cooperation was incredibly fulfilling."</i>	Inclusive education requires robust infrastructure, collaborative networks, and adaptive educational practices.
<i>"As an early career teacher, I see my role as both a facilitator and advocate. It's important to create a classroom where every student feels valued and respected, regardless of their abilities or background. I make sure to adapt my teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of my students, such as using visual aids, differentiated instruction, and flexible grouping. I also collaborate with support staff, parents, and fellow educators to ensure consistent support across different learning settings. By fostering open communication and promoting acceptance, I aim to create an environment where all students feel they belong and can thrive"</i>	
<i>36. "One of the biggest challenges has been addressing the diverse learning needs of my students with limited resources. For example, I have students who would benefit from assistive technologies, but budget constraints often limit our access to these tools. To overcome this, I've sought out free or low-cost apps, created personalized visual aids, and encouraged peer support systems. Additionally, collaborating with parents, community organizations, and local NGOs has helped bridge some of the resource gaps. Despite these challenges, the resilience and progress of my students continue to inspire me to find innovative solutions"</i>	

37. *“My advice would be to start with building a positive classroom culture. Small gestures like greeting students by name, celebrating differences, and using inclusive language can create a sense of belonging. Take time to get to know each student's strengths and needs. Don't hesitate to seek out professional development opportunities and collaborate with colleagues, especially when facing resource limitations. It's also important to involve parents and the community in the learning process. Creating an inclusive environment is a journey, and every small step makes a difference”*

Inclusive education requires robust infrastructure, collaborative networks, and adaptive educational practices.

Establishing an inclusive learning environment begins with developing robust infrastructure that accommodates the diverse needs of all students. Accessible classroom layouts, assistive technologies, and sensory-friendly spaces are foundational in promoting inclusivity. Research by Hehir et al. (2022) emphasizes that infrastructure removing physical and technological barriers significantly enhances the participation and performance of students with special needs. Without these structural accommodations, even the most empathetic teaching practices can fall short in addressing students' holistic needs.

Collaboration between educators, support staff, and families is another key component in fostering inclusivity. The reflections illustrate how peer support systems and joint efforts between teachers and parents contribute to a supportive classroom culture. According to Villa and Thousand (2020), collaborative networks not only provide consistent support but also promote shared responsibility in meeting diverse learning needs. These partnerships empower students to thrive academically and socially, reinforcing the importance of collective efforts in inclusive education.

Moreover, adaptive educational practices such as differentiated instruction and individualized learning plans are vital in catering to varied learning styles. Teacher Empathetic's use of buddy systems and structured breaks exemplifies how customized strategies can improve student outcomes. Kennedy and Silvers (2021) highlight that shifting from a one-size-fits-all approach to personalized teaching methods enables educators to better recognize and nurture each student's strengths. This adaptability ensures that every student receives equitable opportunities to succeed.

Table 2d: Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
------------------------	---------------------

<i>“My experiences in self-contained classrooms, especially with the SEALS Program, have greatly influenced how I view inclusivity. I've seen how consistent routines and individualized plans can make a big difference for students. Working with families and therapists has taught me that collaboration is essential. At the same time, the lack of funding for specialized tools has shown me how challenging it can be to provide everything students need. This has pushed me to be more creative in finding low-cost alternatives to support my students.”</i>	
<i>38. “Balancing structure with individualized support is one of the toughest parts of inclusive teaching. There are times when there simply aren't enough resources or staff to give each student the attention they need. To address this, I've set up visual schedules, sensory areas, and task boards to help students follow routines independently. I've also worked closely with families and community partners to get extra supplies. Simple tools like communication cards or homemade sensory materials have made a big difference when resources are tight..”</i>	Teacher and parent training, collaborative partnerships, and adaptive strategies drive the success of inclusive education.
<i>“Regular communication is key. I hold meetings with parents to gather insights about their child and adjust learning plans accordingly. I also collaborate with therapists and paraeducators to align classroom activities with therapy goals. Joining professional learning groups helps me stay updated on best practices and share ideas with other educators. However, more funding for joint planning sessions would allow for deeper collaboration and better outcomes for students.”</i>	
<i>39. “I use different types of assessments—daily observation notes, checklists, and student work portfolios. Breaking down IEP goals into smaller steps makes it easier to track progress. I also seek input from therapists and parents to get a well-rounded view of each student's growth. When technology isn't available, I rely on videos or parent reports to capture learning that happens outside the classroom. These methods help paint a more accurate picture of student development despite the lack of advanced tools”</i>	
<i>40. “Start by establishing clear routines and expectations—structure helps students feel safe. But don't forget to be flexible and responsive to individual needs. Collaboration with parents and specialists is crucial, even if time and resources are limited. When funding falls short, look for simple solutions like homemade visual aids or peer support systems. Most importantly, celebrate every little milestone and create a classroom where every student feels valued and capable.”</i>	

Teacher and parent training, collaborative partnerships, and adaptive strategies drive the success of inclusive education.

The formulated meaning extracted from the statement of Teacher Bridge underscores the vital role of teacher and parent training, collaborative partnerships, and adaptive strategies in fostering inclusive education. Establishing an inclusive learning environment is fundamental to providing equitable education for all students. The insights emphasize the significance of empathy and patience in understanding diverse learning needs. Recognizing that success varies from student to student fosters a culture of acceptance and encouragement.

Collaboration among teachers, parents, and support staff is essential in addressing the multifaceted needs of students with disabilities. The buddy system and structured routines implemented by Teacher Bridge illustrate how teamwork promotes social and academic growth. Villa et. al. (2022) argue that collaborative models not only enhance student outcomes but also cultivate a sense of belonging. This partnership-driven approach strengthens the inclusive classroom by pooling resources, insights, and expertise.

Equipping teachers and parents with continuous training empowers them to provide consistent, individualized support. Professional development workshops help educators refine their instructional strategies, while parent education sessions enable families to extend learning at home. This shared responsibility ensures that students receive comprehensive support across various settings.

Resourcefulness plays a pivotal role in inclusive education, particularly in resource-limited environments. Teachers' creative use of low-cost materials, homemade visual aids, and community partnerships bridges the gap between needs and available resources.

The success of inclusive education is rooted in the collaborative efforts of educators, parents, and support networks. By prioritizing continuous training, fostering partnerships, and embracing adaptive strategies, inclusive classrooms become nurturing spaces where all students can thrive.

Table 2c: Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
<i>"Honestly, one of the first times I realized the importance of inclusivity was during my student-teaching experience. I worked with a student who had difficulty communicating, and it was eye-opening to see how much they had to offer when given the right tools, like a speech-generating device. It really drove home for me that every student</i>	Adequate funding and addressing resistance to

<i>has unique strengths, and it's our job to find ways to bring those out. Plus, attending workshops on assistive technology really helped me understand how to integrate those tools effectively."</i>	change are essential for creating truly inclusive classrooms.
<i>41. "I see myself as a facilitator and advocate. My role is to ensure that every student feels valued and supported. I work to create a safe space where students can express themselves without fear of judgment. That means adapting lessons, using tech tools, and even collaborating with specialists when needed. It's about being flexible and proactive in meeting diverse needs</i>	
<i>"A big challenge has been resistance from some students who initially didn't understand why we needed to adapt lessons for their peers. To tackle this, I implemented peer mentoring and buddy systems. By pairing students together, they learned the importance of empathy and collaboration. Watching them support one another was a game-changer for the classroom dynamic."</i>	
<i>42. "I've grown a lot in my problem-solving skills and my ability to think outside the box. Working with students with diverse needs pushes you to be creative every day. I've also become more patient and empathetic, which I believe makes me a better teacher overall. Each student teaches me something new, which keeps me on my toes and continuously learning"</i>	
<i>43. "My advice would be to embrace the uniqueness of each student. Start by getting to know your students and their individual needs. Don't hesitate to use technology as a tool for engagement—it can really help bridge gaps. And remember, creating an inclusive classroom is a continuous process. Be patient with yourself and your students, and always be open to learning and adapting. Building an inclusive environment takes time, but the rewards are worth it!."</i>	

Adequate funding and addressing resistance to change are essential for creating truly inclusive classrooms.

The formulated meaning teacher Creative's reflection underscores the vital connection between funding and the successful implementation of inclusive education. The experience of working with a student who had difficulty communicating highlights how access to the right tools, such as speech-generating devices, can unlock a student's potential. However, these tools often come with significant costs, making funding a crucial element in breaking down barriers to inclusivity. Without consistent financial support,

schools cannot provide essential assistive technologies or personalized resources, leaving many students without the means to thrive. The journey toward inclusivity begins with recognizing the role of funding as the foundation of equitable education.

Teachers play a pivotal role in advocating for funding to support inclusive practices. Beyond creating safe and supportive spaces, educators must push for the resources necessary to meet their students' diverse needs. Adapting lessons, integrating assistive technologies, and collaborating with specialists require not only creativity and dedication but also adequate financial backing. With sufficient funding, teachers can access professional development opportunities, cutting-edge tools, and customized materials that enable them to implement inclusive strategies effectively. Advocacy for increased funding empowers teachers to turn their commitment to inclusivity into tangible outcomes.

Resistance to inclusive practices can pose a significant obstacle, both among students and within the broader educational system. Teacher Creative's use of peer mentoring and buddy systems demonstrates how fostering empathy and collaboration can break down this resistance. However, implementing such initiatives often requires funding for training sessions, materials, and ongoing support. Without financial resources, these programs may struggle to gain traction or achieve lasting impact. Investing in peer mentoring programs not only strengthens the classroom dynamic but also promotes a culture of acceptance and understanding, proving that funding is essential for overcoming resistance to change.

Creativity and adaptability are crucial when addressing resistance to inclusivity, but they must be accompanied by consistent financial support. Teacher Creative's growth in problem-solving and empathy highlights how teachers continually innovate to meet their students' needs. However, without access to updated tools, assistive devices, and training opportunities, even the most dedicated educators face limitations. Funding ensures that teachers have the necessary resources to implement creative solutions, making inclusive education more effective and sustainable.

The journey toward inclusive education is not without its challenges, but it is a journey worth taking. Teacher Creative's advice to embrace each student's uniqueness and be patient with the process serves as a reminder that inclusivity is an ongoing commitment. However, this commitment must be supported by consistent funding and efforts to address resistance to change. Financial resources provide the foundation for creating truly inclusive classrooms, where every student has the opportunity to thrive. By advocating for increased funding and fostering a culture of empathy, educators can transform inclusive education from an aspiration into a reality.

.Table 2f: Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
<i>“Working at Fuller Elementary has been like being in a masterclass on the nuances of the human experience! Each student is a world unto themselves, often on a spectrum that presents a variety of needs. For instance, one day I might be working with a brilliant kiddo who can recite every dinosaur name but struggles with basic social interactions, while another student might need assistance with sensory overload during our group activities. These experiences have taught me that inclusivity isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach; it’s about tuning into the specifics of each child’s needs and adjusting my methods accordingly. It’s like being a musical conductor—you’ve got to know how to bring out the best in each instrument to create a beautiful symphony!”</i>	
44. <i>“At Fuller, my role feels like being a translator, bridging the gap between students’ needs and their potential. Every day is about more than just lesson plans; it’s about understanding the intricacies of each student’s challenges and strengths. Constant communication with parents and specialists is crucial. I mean, if I had a dollar for every time I had a conference call with a parent to discuss their child’s unique needs, I could fund my coffee habit! But really, that open line of communication allows us to collaborate on strategies that not only support the students in school but also empower families to reinforce those strategies at home.”</i>	Staffing shortages hinder inclusivity, emphasizing the need for additional personnel.
<i>“One of the major challenges has been the sheer diversity of needs within the classroom—it’s a bit like preparing for a potluck where everyone has different dietary restrictions! I often face the dilemma of how to prepare lessons that are engaging and accessible for all. To tackle this, I’ve learned to be a master planner. I create multiple versions of activities, tailored to various skill levels, and I always have a backup plan in case something doesn’t click. And let’s not forget the importance of constant feedback. I regularly check in with my students and parents to see what’s working and what’s not. Honestly, it’s like running a small business where the product is the kids’ learning experience!”</i>	
45. <i>“Working in an inclusive environment has been a crash course in adaptability! I’ve grown to appreciate the beauty of individual differences. It’s taught me to be more observant and patient. For instance, I now know that a simple shift in seating arrangements can make a world of difference for a student who gets easily distracted.</i>	

Professionally, I've honed my skills in collaboration and communication. I've become adept at deciphering all the different communication styles between therapists, parents, and our team. Who knew I'd become a bit of an interpreter along the way? It's made me realize that every challenge is an opportunity for growth, not just for my students, but for me as well.."

46. "Embrace the complexity! Each student comes with their own set of quirks and strengths—celebrate that! Engage in constant communication with parents; they are the experts on their children and can provide invaluable insights. Don't hesitate to reach out for support from your colleagues; collaboration is key. Also, be prepared for some trial and error—what works one day might be a total flop the next, and that's okay! Keep a sense of humor about it all; after all, if you can't laugh at the unexpected, you'll drown in the paperwork! Inclusivity is a journey filled with twists and turns, so buckle up and enjoy the ride—you'll be amazed at the growth you'll see in your students and yourself!"

Staffing shortages hinder inclusivity, emphasizing the need for additional personnel.

The formulated meaning teacher guiding's reflection underscores the significance of individualized support in inclusive education, while also highlighting the pressing need for additional staffing. Each student represents a unique combination of strengths and challenges, requiring tailored approaches to maximize their potential. However, the diverse needs within the classroom often exceed the capacity of a single teacher, making additional personnel essential to providing adequate support.

Collaboration serves as a foundational element in the implementation of inclusive practices. Effective partnerships between teachers, parents, and specialists contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the student's needs. Yet, without sufficient staffing, the burden on educators increases, limiting their ability to engage in consistent and meaningful collaboration. Additional staff members can help bridge this gap, enabling more focused communication and strategy development.

Adaptability emerges as a critical factor in accommodating the diverse needs of students within an inclusive classroom. Teachers must be prepared to modify lesson plans, materials, and instructional methods to ensure accessibility for all learners. However, the complexity of managing multiple individualized plans simultaneously highlights the necessity of additional support staff to share the workload and provide targeted interventions.

Constant communication acts as a feedback mechanism that informs the continuous refinement of inclusive practices. Ongoing dialogue with students, parents, and colleagues allows educators to assess the

effectiveness of strategies and make necessary adjustments. The presence of more staff members facilitates more frequent and in-depth communication, enhancing the quality of feedback and the responsiveness of interventions.

The reflection highlights that inclusivity is a dynamic and iterative process rather than a fixed outcome. Embracing the complexity of individual differences requires a commitment to ongoing learning and adaptation. However, sustaining this commitment becomes increasingly challenging without adequate staffing. By addressing staffing shortages, schools can strengthen individualized support, collaboration, adaptability, and communication—creating more effective and equitable inclusive environments.

3. What themes emerged from the testimonies of the special education teachers?

To address Corollary Question 3, through meticulous analysis, the researcher organized the formulated meanings into distinct clusters, which served as the foundation for identifying emergent themes that hold significant implications for the field of education. By examining these themes, we gain valuable insights into the crucial aspects that contribute to teachers' motivation, growth, and commitment to the teaching profession.

Table 3a: Theme Clusters and Emergent Theme 1

Formulated Meanings	Theme Clusters	Emergent Theme
Inclusive education thrives on collaboration, creativity, patience, and continuous professional growth.	Importance of Collaboration and Creativity in Special Education	Fostering Inclusive Practices Through Collaboration and Training
Teacher and parent training, collaborative partnerships, and adaptive strategies drive the success of inclusive education.	Effective Training and Collaboration for Inclusivity	

Theme Cluster 1: Importance of Collaboration and Creativity in Special Education.

Collaboration and creativity are fundamental elements in fostering inclusive education for students with special needs. The current landscape of inclusive learning emphasizes the need for educators, parents, and other stakeholders to work together to create supportive environments where students with disabilities can thrive. Collaboration between teachers, parents, and specialists helps ensure that students receive the appropriate accommodation and individualized instruction. When these partnerships are established, they not only enhance the educational experience of the student but also promote a more comprehensive understanding

of the child's needs and strengths. This team-based approach is vital in building an inclusive learning atmosphere that benefits all students.

Furthermore, creativity plays a crucial role in addressing the diverse needs of students in special education. Since no two learners are alike, teachers must adopt flexible and innovative teaching strategies to cater to different learning styles. This can involve using visual aids, hands-on activities, or technology-based tools that make lessons more engaging and accessible. By embracing creativity, educators can foster an inclusive environment where students with special needs can participate actively and feel valued. This approach encourages learners to develop their problem-solving skills, boosts their self-confidence, and helps them reach their full potential.

A friendly attitude from both educators and peers significantly enhances the collaborative and creative environment in inclusive classrooms. Positive social interactions can improve communication skills, self-esteem, and emotional well-being among students with disabilities. When teachers model empathy, patience, and respect, they create a classroom culture that encourages mutual appreciation. This not only benefits students with special needs but also helps all learners understand the importance of diversity and inclusion. The ability to form meaningful relationships with peers is an essential aspect of social development that contributes to a student's overall quality of life.

Parental involvement is another crucial component of collaboration in special education. Parents play an essential role in supporting their children's education by sharing valuable insights about their child's needs and progress. Regular communication between parents and teachers helps build trust and ensures that both parties are working towards common goals. When parents feel included in their child's educational journey, they are more likely to support classroom activities at home, creating a consistent and nurturing learning environment. This collaborative partnership ultimately enhances the child's educational experience and development.

In conclusion, the combination of collaboration and creativity is indispensable in special education. By fostering collaborative partnerships among teachers, parents, and students, inclusive education can provide comprehensive support for students with special needs. Creative teaching strategies further enhance the learning experience by catering to diverse needs and promoting active participation. Positive social interactions and parental involvement strengthen this inclusive framework, making education more accessible and enriching for all students. As inclusive education continues to evolve, the importance of collaboration and creativity will remain at the heart of creating equitable learning opportunities.

Theme Cluster 2: Effective Training and Collaboration for Inclusivity

Effective training and collaboration play a vital role in promoting inclusive learning, especially in the context of current educational trends. As inclusive education aims to accommodate the diverse needs of learners, it is essential that teachers receive proper training to adapt their teaching methods to address the unique abilities of students. The increasing emphasis on inclusivity highlights the need for comprehensive teacher training programs that equip educators with the skills to foster academic, social, and emotional development among all learners. This approach ensures that students with special needs are provided with equitable learning opportunities.

One of the key aspects of inclusive learning is the development and implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The IEP serves as a personalized roadmap that outlines the educational goals, strengths, and challenges of students with special needs. By aligning teaching strategies with IEP goals, educators can focus on improving academic skills, communication abilities, emotional development, and independent living skills. This individualized approach not only enhances student achievement but also encourages teachers to collaborate with specialists, parents, and support staff to ensure holistic development.

However, research indicates that many teachers feel inadequately prepared to cater to students with special needs. According to Burstein et al. (2020), the lack of sufficient skills among teachers hinders their ability to provide effective inclusive education. This challenge underscores the importance of ongoing professional development and capacity-building programs. By offering regular training sessions, workshops, and collaborative learning opportunities, educators can improve their knowledge and confidence in addressing the diverse needs of learners.

Collaboration among educators, parents, and specialists is another crucial factor in promoting inclusivity. Tsokova and Tarr (2021) emphasize that teachers need a supportive environment to understand the social and academic progress of all students. Collaborative efforts enable the sharing of insights, resources, and best practices, which ultimately contribute to the creation of inclusive classrooms. When teachers work together with support staff and families, they can develop more effective strategies to accommodate the unique needs of every student.

In conclusion, effective training and collaboration are essential components of inclusive learning. As educational institutions strive to create inclusive environments, investing in teacher training programs and fostering collaborative partnerships can significantly improve the quality of education for students with special needs. By equipping educators with the necessary skills and promoting teamwork, schools can overcome barriers to inclusion and ensure that all learners are given equal opportunities to succeed.

Table 3b: Theme Clusters and Emergent Theme 2

Formulated Meanings	Theme Clusters	Emergent Theme
Inclusive education requires robust infrastructure, collaborative networks, and adaptive educational practices.	Importance of Infrastructure and Collaboration	Ensuring Inclusive Education Through Strong Infrastructure and Funding
Adequate funding and addressing resistance to change are essential for creating truly inclusive classrooms.	A Need for Funding and Overcoming Resistance to Change	

Theme Cluster 3: Importance of Infrastructure and Collaboration

The importance of infrastructure and collaboration in inclusive education is becoming increasingly evident in today's educational landscape. As more schools adopt inclusive practices, the need for appropriate infrastructure and effective collaboration among stakeholders has gained significant attention. Infrastructure plays a vital role in creating an environment that supports the diverse needs of all learners, particularly those with disabilities. Without adequate infrastructure, such as accessible classrooms, assistive technology, and learning materials tailored to individual needs, inclusive education efforts may fall short of their objectives.

One major challenge that educators face in implementing inclusive education is the lack of resources. The absence of sufficient teaching and learning materials that cater to the needs of students with disabilities poses a significant barrier. For example, many student-teachers (STs) have reported that they have to create their own materials to meet the needs of learners requiring extra assistance. This lack of ready-made materials adds to the workload of educators and highlights the necessity for better resource allocation. Addressing this issue requires collaboration between policymakers, school administrators, and educators to ensure that appropriate materials are provided.

Physical infrastructure is another critical factor in inclusive education. Limited classroom space and the lack of separate rooms for students with severe disabilities can disrupt the learning environment for other students. As one student-teacher shared, accommodating students with severe disabilities in the same room as others can affect the attention and behavior of the entire class. Providing adequate classroom space with partitions or specialized rooms can help create a more conducive learning environment. This requires the involvement of government agencies and non-governmental organizations to invest in the necessary infrastructure.

Collaboration among educators, parents, and specialists is essential to overcoming the challenges of inclusive education. Teachers need the support of special education experts, speech therapists, and occupational therapists to develop individualized education plans (IEPs) and implement effective teaching

strategies. Parental involvement is equally important, as parents can provide valuable insights into their children's needs and help reinforce learning at home. Establishing partnerships with various stakeholders can enhance the quality of inclusive education and improve student outcomes.

In conclusion, infrastructure and collaboration are key components of successful inclusive education. Addressing the lack of resources and physical infrastructure can significantly improve the learning environment for students with disabilities. By fostering collaboration among educators, parents, and specialists, schools can better meet the diverse needs of their learners. As inclusive education continues to gain momentum, investing in infrastructure and promoting collaborative efforts will ensure that all students receive the quality education they deserve.

Theme Cluster 4: A Need for Funding and Overcoming Resistance to Change.

Funding and resistance to change are two critical issues that continue to impact the implementation of inclusive education in various educational settings. The study by Delubom, Marongwe, and Buka (2020) highlights that the lack of funding remains a primary obstacle for institutions aiming to provide inclusive education. Many colleges, especially those governed by centralized bodies like South Africa's Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), lack autonomy and are unable to allocate resources independently. This dependence on centralized funding systems limits the ability of institutions to invest in adaptive technologies, infrastructure improvements, and specialized training for educators. Consequently, the absence of sufficient funding hinders the creation of an accessible and supportive learning environment for students with disabilities.

In the broader context of inclusive education, funding shortages are not unique to South Africa but are a global concern. Schools and colleges worldwide often struggle to secure financial resources necessary to support diverse learners. Without adequate funding, educational institutions cannot provide essential accommodations such as assistive devices, accessible classroom materials, and tailored support services. This lack of resources creates significant barriers to participation and achievement for students with disabilities. To address this issue, policymakers must prioritize inclusive education funding, ensuring that institutions receive sufficient resources to create equitable learning opportunities.

Apart from funding, resistance to change is another major challenge in inclusive education. The study emphasizes the importance of creating a safe learning environment where students feel free to express themselves without fear of judgment. However, many educators and institutions resist shifting away from traditional teaching methods, viewing inclusive practices as additional burdens rather than necessary reforms. This resistance is often rooted in a lack of awareness, inadequate training, and fear of the unknown.

Overcoming such resistance requires comprehensive professional development programs that empower educators to adopt inclusive practices and foster a more accepting mindset.

Moreover, fostering a culture of inclusion involves not only equipping educators with the necessary skills but also engaging students in the process. As the study suggests, creating safe spaces where students can express their needs and perspectives is vital for successful inclusion. When students with and without disabilities are encouraged to collaborate and share their experiences, it promotes mutual understanding and breaks down stereotypes. Educational institutions should implement peer support programs, inclusive extracurricular activities, and open dialogue sessions to cultivate a more inclusive school culture.

In conclusion, addressing the need for funding and overcoming resistance to change are essential steps toward achieving inclusive education. Adequate funding would enable institutions to provide necessary accommodations and resources, while targeted training programs would help educators embrace inclusive practices.

Table 3c: Theme Clusters and Emergent Theme 3

Formulated Meanings	Theme Clusters	Emergent Theme
Effective inclusive education relies on continuous hands-on training and collaborative support systems.	Importance of Training and Support Systems	Enhancing Inclusivity Through Comprehensive Support and Staffing
Staffing shortages hinder inclusivity, emphasizing the need for additional personnel.	Challenges of Staffing and Resource Allocation	

Theme Cluster 5: Importance of Training and Support Systems.

The importance of training and support systems in inclusive education cannot be overstated, especially in addressing the current challenges faced by educators and students. With the growing emphasis on inclusive education, it is crucial to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to cater to students with diverse needs. The lack of trained teachers remains one of the most significant barriers to effective inclusion, as evidenced by the concerns raised by special education needs (SEN) teachers. Without proper training, educators may struggle to implement inclusive practices, ultimately hindering the progress of students with disabilities.

One of the critical issues affecting inclusive education is the insufficient number of trained teachers. The data shows that 13.7% of SEN teachers identify the lack of trained educators and teacher assistants as a

major challenge (SEAMEO Regional Centre for Special Educational Needs, 2023). This shortage prevents schools from providing individualized attention and adequate support to students with special needs. As one teacher highlighted, the absence of additional staff makes it difficult to accompany students in mainstream classes or give personalized guidance. Investing in comprehensive training programs and hiring more qualified staff can significantly improve the quality of inclusive education.

Teacher attitudes towards inclusion also play a pivotal role in the success of inclusive education. Negative perceptions and a lack of acceptance from mainstream teachers create an additional barrier for students with special needs. Some teachers express frustration over disruptive behaviors, indicating a need for better understanding and empathy. This highlights the importance of sensitization and ongoing professional development to foster a positive and accepting environment. Training programs should not only focus on teaching strategies but also on promoting inclusive mindsets and reducing stigma.

Collaboration among educators is another essential component of effective inclusive education. However, a lack of cooperation between regular teachers and SEN teachers poses a significant challenge. Inclusive education requires a team-based approach, where teachers work together to plan lessons, share responsibilities, and support each other. Schools should encourage collaborative practices through regular meetings, joint lesson planning, and peer mentoring. By fostering a culture of teamwork, schools can enhance the overall learning experience for students with special needs.

In conclusion, the importance of training and support systems in inclusive education is evident in addressing the challenges of teacher shortages, negative attitudes, and lack of collaboration. Investing in teacher training, promoting positive attitudes, and encouraging collaboration can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. As inclusive education continues to gain momentum, these measures will be vital in ensuring that all students, regardless of their abilities, have equal access to quality education. Policymakers, educators, and school management must work together to build robust support systems that empower teachers and enrich the lives of students with special needs.

Theme Cluster 6: Challenges of Staffing and Resource Allocation

Inclusive education aims to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities or special needs. However, one of the most pressing challenges in implementing inclusive education is staffing. The shortage of qualified teachers trained in special education significantly impacts the quality of instruction. Many schools struggle to recruit and retain educators who possess the necessary skills to address the diverse needs of students. This gap hinders the delivery of individualized support and accommodations required for effective inclusive learning environments.

Another critical challenge is the lack of adequate resources to support inclusive education. Schools often face budget constraints that limit their ability to provide essential materials, assistive technologies, and adaptive learning tools. Without these resources, students with disabilities may not receive the necessary support to fully engage in classroom activities. This disparity creates a barrier to equal participation, contradicting the principles of inclusive education.

Moreover, the uneven distribution of resources across schools exacerbates the issue. Urban schools may have better access to funding and services compared to rural or underserved areas. This inequality limits the implementation of inclusive education in marginalized communities, leaving many students without the support they need. Consequently, achieving inclusivity on a larger scale becomes more difficult, widening the educational gap between different regions.

Staffing shortages also affect the workload of existing teachers. Educators without proper training in special education often feel overwhelmed by the additional responsibilities of accommodating diverse learning needs. This situation can lead to burnout and decreased job satisfaction, further complicating efforts to retain experienced teachers. Professional development programs are essential to equip educators with the skills and knowledge necessary to foster inclusive classrooms.

Collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and support staff is vital in addressing staffing challenges. Effective co-teaching models and interdisciplinary teamwork can help bridge the gap in expertise. However, these collaborative efforts require administrative support and consistent funding to ensure their sustainability. Without proper backing, the burden on teachers remains high, compromising the quality of education for all students.

To address these challenges, policymakers must prioritize investment in inclusive education by allocating sufficient funding for staffing and resources. Additionally, offering incentives and career development opportunities for special education teachers can encourage more professionals to enter the field. By addressing both staffing and resource allocation, educational institutions can create more equitable learning environments that uphold the principles of inclusion and diversity.

Emergent Themes

47. The foregoing six (6) theme clusters were grouped into three emergent themes, namely, Fostering Inclusive Practices Through Collaboration and Training, Ensuring Inclusive Education Through Strong Infrastructure and Funding, and Enhancing Inclusivity Through Comprehensive Support and Staffing. The Thematic Map provides a comprehensive overview of the interconnectedness and significance of the six theme clusters, which have been categorized into three distinct emergent themes. These themes collectively illuminate the intricate landscape of creating an inclusive learning environment for students with special

needs. Through this thematic exploration, the subsequent discussion delves deeper into each emergent theme, revealing insights, challenges, and innovative strategies that shaped the experiences of special education teachers and students alike. The Thematic Map below is succeeded by a discussion of the afore-cited emergent themes.

Table 3d: Thematic Map

Theme 1: Fostering Inclusive Practices Through Collaboration and Training	Theme 2: Ensuring Inclusive Education Through Strong Infrastructure and Funding	Theme 3: Enhancing Inclusivity Through Comprehensive Support and Staffing
Collaborative efforts between general and special education teachers to design and implement lesson plans that cater to diverse learners, promoting inclusive classroom practices.	Provision of assistive technologies such as text-to-speech software, braille devices, and learning apps to support students with disabilities.	Employment of special education teachers and teacher aides to provide personalized instruction and support for students with special needs.
Data-driven and fact-based training programs to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to implement inclusive education practices effectively.	Involvement of stakeholders, including parents, community members, and private sectors, to advocate for consistent government funding based on the ever-changing needs of learners with special needs.	Availability of therapeutic services such as speech and occupational therapy to address students' developmental and learning needs.

48.

49. Emergent Theme 1: Transforming Physical Education Through Technology and Innovation

50. The findings of the study highlight the significant role of fostering inclusive practices through collaboration and training in promoting inclusive education. Participants emphasized that collaboration between general education and special education teachers is essential in designing and implementing lesson plans that cater to the diverse needs of learners with special needs. Through regular coordination, educators are able to exchange ideas, strategies, and resources that enhance the delivery of instruction. This collaborative approach promotes a more comprehensive understanding of learners' needs and creates a more supportive classroom environment.

51. Moreover, the study revealed that data-driven and fact-based training programs are vital in equipping teachers with the necessary skills to implement inclusive practices. Participants shared that training sessions focusing on data interpretation, individualized education plans (IEPs), and inclusive teaching strategies empower teachers to provide more personalized and effective instruction. These capacity-building initiatives not only enhance educators' competence but also boost their confidence in managing a diverse classroom.

52. The collaborative partnerships also extend to the involvement of parents and caregivers in the learning process. Parents are seen as valuable partners in providing information about their children's unique needs and progress. The study participants noted that regular communication between teachers and parents creates a more holistic approach to addressing learners' educational challenges. This partnership fosters a supportive learning environment where both educators and families work towards common goals for the child's development.

53. Additionally, the study found that collaborative practices promote a culture of inclusivity within the school community. Peer support systems, where students are encouraged to help their classmates with disabilities, were highlighted as effective methods of fostering empathy and social inclusion. These practices not only benefit learners with special needs but also enhance the overall social dynamics of the classroom, creating a more accepting and supportive learning environment.

54.

55. Another key insight from the study is the importance of professional development programs tailored to the ever-changing needs of learners with special needs. Teachers expressed the need for continuous training on emerging inclusive education strategies and technological advancements. By integrating updated information and best practices into their teaching methods, educators can better adapt to the diverse learning profiles of their students.

56. In conclusion, fostering inclusive practices through collaboration and training emerges as a fundamental pillar in promoting inclusive education. The study underscores the significance of ongoing teacher training, collaborative planning, and community engagement in addressing the unique needs of learners with special needs. These collaborative efforts create a more inclusive educational setting that not only meets the academic needs of students but also supports their social and emotional development.

57. Emergent Theme 2: Ensuring Inclusive Education Through Strong Infrastructure and Funding

58. Characterized One of the most significant challenges in implementing inclusive education is the lack of sufficient funding to support students with disabilities. The findings from this study revealed that financial constraints hinder the ability of educational institutions to provide the necessary resources,

infrastructure, and assistive technologies for students with special needs. Without adequate funding, schools and colleges struggle to accommodate students with disabilities effectively, limiting their access to quality education. This theme emerged strongly from participant responses, highlighting systemic financial barriers that prevent the full realization of inclusive education.

59. A key concern raised by participants was the rigid structure of educational funding, particularly in institutions governed by centralized policies. Funding for inclusive education is often controlled by higher authorities, leaving institutions with little flexibility in allocating resources based on their unique needs. Participants expressed frustration that budget allocations are based on the number of students reported rather than the actual needs of learners. This rigid system prevents institutions from making proactive decisions to improve infrastructure or acquire adaptive technologies, ultimately limiting their capacity to create inclusive environments.

60. In addition to infrastructure challenges, participants highlighted the lack of adaptive technological equipment such as braille devices, text-to-speech software, and assistive hearing tools. The absence of these essential resources creates significant barriers for students with disabilities to fully engage in learning activities. Many institutions cannot afford these technologies due to limited funding, further widening the gap between students with special needs and their peers. This lack of support reinforces the urgent need for additional funding to address the diverse requirements of inclusive education.

61. Another critical issue raised was the limited involvement of stakeholders in financial decision-making. Many participants indicated that financial decisions are made at administrative centers without consulting campus managers, lecturers, or parents. This disconnect prevents those directly involved in the education of students with disabilities from having a say in how resources are allocated. Including educators, parents, and community members in funding discussions would ensure that financial decisions align more closely with the immediate needs of learners with special needs.

62. The study also revealed that the dependence on centralized budgets restricts innovation in inclusive education. Even if institutions identify innovative solutions to support learners with disabilities, they cannot implement these ideas without approval from higher authorities. This lack of financial autonomy discourages creativity and prevents institutions from tailoring solutions to meet the diverse needs of their students. Greater financial independence would empower schools and colleges to address inclusion challenges more effectively.

63. In conclusion, funding is a fundamental pillar of inclusive education, but the current system presents significant challenges. Limited financial resources, lack of adaptive technology, restricted autonomy, and the exclusion of key stakeholders in decision-making all hinder the effective implementation

of inclusive practices. Addressing these issues requires a more flexible funding system that empowers institutions to allocate resources based on the actual needs of students with disabilities. Additionally, involving educators, parents, and community members in financial planning can create more responsive and inclusive learning environments.

64. Emergent Theme 3: Enhancing Inclusivity Through Comprehensive Support and Staffing

65. The availability of adequate staffing and comprehensive support services is crucial in implementing inclusive education. The findings from this study indicate that many educational institutions face significant challenges in providing specialized personnel to support students with disabilities. The continual shortage of qualified staff obstructs the effective delivery of inclusive education, leaving many students without the necessary assistance. The presence of professionals such as disability coordinators, student counselors, and career guidance officers is vital in creating inclusive learning environments. However, the study revealed that these roles are either absent or insufficient in many institutions.

66. Participants emphasized that while Career Guidance Officers and Student Counselors offer general counseling services, they often lack the specific training to address the unique needs of students with disabilities. As a result, these professionals are unable to provide the necessary interventions or support that students with disabilities require. The absence of dedicated disability support staff at the campus level forces students to seek assistance from the central administration, which can delay the delivery of services and isolate students from immediate help. This finding highlights the need for institutions to prioritize the deployment of disability-specific personnel across all campuses.

67. Another key issue raised was the lack of visibility of support staff. The study found that in some cases, there is only one staff member assigned to provide disability services, often located at the administration center rather than on individual campuses. This centralization creates barriers to accessibility, as students with disabilities must travel long distances to access services. Participants argued that having dedicated staff on each campus would enhance the visibility and availability of support services, making it easier for students to seek assistance and fostering a more inclusive atmosphere.

68. Participants also highlighted the importance of appointing qualified personnel to work directly with students with disabilities. Without trained staff, many students may go unnoticed, especially those with hidden disabilities such as learning disorders or mental health conditions. Teachers expressed concern that without specialists to help identify and support these students, many of their needs would remain unmet. This finding suggests that recruiting professionals with expertise in disability support should be a priority for institutions aiming to promote inclusivity.

69. The study further emphasized the need for ongoing staff training to equip educators with the skills to implement inclusive practices effectively. Many general education teachers lack the knowledge and confidence to accommodate students with disabilities, which hinders their ability to create an inclusive classroom environment. Providing regular training sessions on inclusive pedagogies, assistive technologies, and behavior management would empower educators to better support all students.

70. In conclusion, comprehensive support and adequate staffing play a vital role in enhancing inclusivity in education. The shortage of dedicated disability support staff, lack of visibility of services, and insufficient professional development all contribute to the exclusion of students with disabilities. Addressing these issues requires a commitment to hiring qualified personnel, decentralizing support services, and providing continuous training for educators. By strengthening staffing and support systems, institutions can create more inclusive environments where all learners have equal opportunities to succeed.

71. 4. Based on the results of the study what inputs to curriculum enhancement maybe drawn?

Model for Curriculum Enhancement: INCLUDE: Igniting Nurturing Classrooms for Learners with Unique Abilities through Dynamic Education

The insights derived from the emerging themes underscore the significant challenges and needs in implementing inclusive education. Based on these findings, a comprehensive Curriculum Enhancement Model is proposed to foster an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs. This model aims to address the lack of resources, inadequate staff, and the need for continuous professional development to ensure equal access to quality education for all students.

Fostering Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities

INCLUDE: Igniting Nurturing Classrooms for Learners with Unique Abilities through Dynamic Education model addresses the challenges of implementing inclusive education in the SEALS Program. This comprehensive training and curriculum enhancement framework equips educators and institutional staff with the knowledge, strategies, and support systems needed to create an inclusive learning environment. The model is anchored on three emerging themes: Inadequate Support Services, Infrastructure and Resource Limitations, and Capacity Building for Educators. By strengthening support systems, improving infrastructure, and enhancing the capabilities of educators, this model seeks to create a more equitable educational landscape for students with disabilities.

Workshop Structure:

Module 1: Strengthening Support Networks (Together for Inclusion)

Focuses on the need for dedicated personnel to support students with disabilities.

Discusses the establishment of Disability Support Units within schools.

Explores the development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to address unique student needs.

Encourages the creation of Multidisciplinary Support Teams involving guidance counselors, therapists, and special education teachers.

Promotes peer mentoring programs to foster social inclusion among students.

Module 2: Navigating Inclusive Learning Spaces (Designing Accessible Futures)

Addresses Assesses the current physical and digital infrastructure to identify gaps.

Introduces Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to create accessible learning materials.

Explores the use of Assistive Technologies such as screen readers, braille devices, and communication apps.

Recommends the allocation of budget for adaptive classroom facilities and learning materials.

Advocates for partnerships with government agencies and non-government organizations to secure resources.

Module 3: Teacher Training and Capacity Building (Empowering Educators)

Provides specialized training for teachers on inclusive education strategies.

Introduces differentiated instruction methods to cater to diverse learning needs.

Develops skills in adaptive assessment techniques and behavior management.

Encourages participation in collaborative learning communities to share best practices.

Includes disability awareness programs to promote empathy and understanding among staff and students.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data, the following are the findings of the study:

1. The study on the lived experiences of SEALS Program teachers in implementing inclusive education for students with significant disabilities revealed three emergent themes: Transforming Physical Education Through Technology and Innovation, Ensuring Inclusive Education Through Strong Infrastructure and Funding, and Enhancing Inclusivity Through Comprehensive Support and Staffing. These themes highlight the interconnected factors that contribute to fostering inclusive education. The participants' insights underscored the importance of collaboration, adequate resources, and ongoing professional development in creating supportive learning environments for students with disabilities.
2. The findings emphasized that collaborative teaching practices between SPED and general education teachers play a vital role in addressing the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. Regular coordination allowed educators to design individualized education plans (IEPs), share strategies, and provide consistent support to students. Additionally, the study revealed that strong infrastructure and

sufficient funding are critical in implementing inclusive practices. However, participants identified that financial constraints and the lack of adaptive technologies significantly hindered their ability to deliver quality instruction, reinforcing the need for more flexible funding systems that prioritize the needs of students with disabilities.

3. Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of comprehensive support services and adequate staffing in fostering inclusivity. The absence of dedicated disability support staff on campus limited the immediate assistance available to students with special needs. Participants recommended the decentralization of services and the hiring of more specialized personnel to provide targeted interventions. The findings also stressed the significance of ongoing professional development programs to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to implement inclusive practices effectively. By addressing these key areas, educational institutions can create more equitable learning environments that empower students with disabilities to thrive.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. It can be concluded that fostering inclusive education requires a strong foundation of collaboration and targeted training for educators. The study revealed that regular coordination between SPED and general education teachers enhances lesson planning, instructional strategies, and overall classroom support for students with disabilities. Additionally, professional development programs focusing on data-driven teaching methods and individualized education plans (IEPs) equip teachers with the skills necessary to create inclusive learning environments. These findings highlight the need for continuous collaboration and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen inclusive education practices.
2. It can be concluded that insufficient funding and limited infrastructure pose significant challenges to implementing inclusive education effectively. Financial constraints hinder schools from acquiring essential adaptive technologies, assistive tools, and specialized resources needed to support students with disabilities. The study emphasized that rigid budget allocations prevent institutions from addressing their specific needs, limiting their ability to foster an inclusive environment. Addressing these financial barriers requires a more flexible funding system that allows schools to allocate resources based on the actual needs of students with disabilities.
3. It can be concluded that comprehensive support services and sufficient staffing are crucial in ensuring an inclusive educational experience for all students. The study highlighted the lack of trained professionals, such as disability coordinators and specialized counselors, which limits the immediate support available to students with special needs. Additionally, many general education teachers require further training to

confidently implement inclusive teaching strategies. To bridge this gap, educational institutions should prioritize hiring specialized staff and providing ongoing professional development to create a more accessible and supportive learning environment for students with disabilities.

Recommendations

This study requires the commitment and involvement of the concerned personnel to sustain its effectiveness and reliability, thus, the following recommendations were made.

1. Students with disabilities should be provided with a learning environment that caters to their unique needs and abilities. Schools should implement personalized learning plans that consider students' strengths, challenges, and interests. Additionally, students should have access to assistive technologies, adaptive learning materials, and specialized support services such as speech and occupational therapy to enhance their educational experiences. Schools should also encourage peer mentoring and social inclusion activities to help students develop confidence, communication skills, and a sense of belonging. Furthermore, students should be empowered to self-advocate for their needs by participating in decision-making processes regarding their education. By ensuring that students with special needs receive the necessary support, they can develop independence and achieve their full potential.
2. To effectively support students with special needs, educators should undergo continuous professional development in inclusive education strategies, differentiated instruction, and behavior management techniques. Training on how to use assistive technologies and implement evidence-based teaching methods should also be provided. Additionally, collaboration between general education and special education teachers should be strengthened through co-teaching models, shared lesson planning, and peer mentoring programs. Teachers should be encouraged to adopt a flexible and student-centered approach to accommodate diverse learning needs. Moreover, schools should establish teacher support networks where educators can share best practices, discuss challenges, and seek guidance from experts in the field.
3. School administrators should take the lead in promoting inclusive education by ensuring that policies, resources, and facilities are aligned with the needs of students with disabilities. They should allocate sufficient funding for special education programs, invest in infrastructure improvements such as accessible classrooms, and provide essential learning materials. Additionally, administrators should establish partnerships with organizations that specialize in disability support services to expand the resources available to students and teachers. Regular monitoring and assessment of inclusive education programs should also be conducted to evaluate their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Furthermore, administrators should create a culture of inclusivity by fostering collaboration between educators, parents, and students to ensure that all stakeholders are actively involved in supporting students with special needs.

4. Parents and families play a vital role in the educational success of children with special needs. They should actively participate in their child's learning journey by collaborating with teachers and school staff to create individualized education plans (IEPs) that address their child's specific needs. Parents should also seek opportunities to educate themselves on inclusive education, special education laws, and available support services to become strong advocates for their children. Additionally, families should provide emotional and social support by encouraging their children to develop independence, resilience, and self-confidence. Schools should offer workshops and parent support groups where families can share experiences, gain insights, and learn effective strategies for supporting their children's learning and development. Strengthening the partnership between schools and families will ensure a holistic approach to inclusive education.
5. Future studies should explore the long-term impact of inclusive education on students' academic achievement, social skills, and emotional well-being. Research should also focus on evaluating the effectiveness of different inclusive teaching methodologies, assistive technologies, and intervention programs across various educational settings. Additionally, studies should examine the experiences of parents, teachers, and school administrators in implementing inclusive education to identify challenges and best practices. Future researchers should also consider conducting comparative studies on inclusive education policies in different countries to determine successful models that can be adapted to the local context. Lastly, more research should be done on the role of government policies, funding allocations, and legislative frameworks in supporting the sustainability of inclusive education initiatives.

References

- Armstrong, D., Armstrong, A. C., & Spandagou, I. (2021). Inclusive education in a post-pandemic world: New challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Special Education Research*, 35(2), 112-130.
- Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2022). Revisiting teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in a digital learning era. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 37(4), 267-289.
- Baranauskiene, I. (2022). Pursuit of Inclusive Education: Inclusion of Teachers in Inclusive Education. SOCIETY. INTEGRATION. EDUCATION. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference.
- Booth, T., & Ainscow, M. (2024). Rethinking the Index for Inclusion: A framework for equity and diversity in schools. *Educational Review*, 45(1), 89-107.
- Fermanto, L. (2021). Innovative Learning Model with Inclusive-Collaborative Approach for Students with Special Needs. *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora, Dan Seni*.
- Florian, L. (2023). The impact of inclusive pedagogy on teacher development and student outcomes. *British Journal of Special Education*, 39(3), 145-162.

- Florian, L., & Black-Hawkins, K. (2020). Inclusive education: Challenges and innovations in teaching practices. *Journal of Inclusive Pedagogy*, 28(2), 76-93.
- Forlin, C. (2021). Preparing teachers for inclusive education: A global perspective. *International Journal of Teacher Education*, 33(1), 14-30.
- Göransson, K., & Nilholm, C. (2022). Inclusion in education: Addressing conceptual and practical barriers. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Studies*, 50(1), 187-205.
- Haug, P. (2024). Inclusive education and educational equity: A systematic review of recent trends. *Journal of Disability Studies*, 41(5), 234-251.
- Hodkinson, A. (2023). Policy versus practice: Examining the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools. *British Journal of Special Needs Education*, 31(4), 98-120.
- Kurnia, A. (2021). Innovative Learning Model with Inclusive-Collaborative Approach for Students with Special Needs. *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora, Dan Seni*.
- Lapidot-Lefler, N., & Kais, N. (2021). What makes inclusive service-learning inclusive? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1958263>
- Loreman, T., Deppeler, J., & Harvey, D. (2020). Supporting diversity in the classroom: New developments in inclusive education. *Journal of Educational Innovation*, 22(3), 55-77.
- Mitchell, D. (2025). *Effective strategies for inclusive education: Evidence from classroom-based research*. Routledge.
- Nishan, F. (2021). Primary Teachers' Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education in Schools of Maldives. Zenodo (CERN European Organization for Nuclear Research).
- Norwich, B. (2021). Understanding the dilemmas of difference in inclusive education. *European Review of Educational Studies*, 26(2), 119-137.
- Pijl, S. J., Meijer, C. J. W., & Hegarty, S. (2020). Inclusive Education: International Perspectives and Lessons Learned. *Educational Studies Journal*, 18(1), 33-50.
- Poteliūnienė, S. (2022). Implementing Inclusive Education in Lithuania: What are the main Challenges according to Teachers' Experiences? *Acta Paedagogica Vilnensia*.
- Sahani, R. (2023). Inclusive Education: Meaning, Concept & Objectives. *JETIR*.
- Slee, R. (2023). Inclusion in education: Beyond policy rhetoric to meaningful practice. *Journal of Inclusive Teaching*, 35(4), 190-211.
- Smith, R., & Thomas, H. (2022). Inclusive education for all: Bridging the gap between research and practice. *International Journal of Educational Studies*, 29(2), 65-83.

- Thomas, G., & Loxley, A. (2024). Deconstructing special education: Moving towards full inclusion. *Educational Theory and Practice*, 17(3), 44-67.
- Tsybulko, O. (2021). Inclusive Education as a Practical Concept of Social Justice. *Pedagogical Sciences*.
- UNESCO. (2020). Implementing inclusive education in the 21st century: A policy perspective. UNESCO Policy Report.
- UNESCO. (2024). The future of inclusive education: Challenges and opportunities. *UNESCO Global Education Review*, 39(2), 75-94.
- Wilken, J. P., Knevel, J., van Gijzel, S., Jongerius, E., Landzaat, C., & Nur-Voskens, I. (2020). Lessons of inclusive learning. *The Routledge Handbook of Service User Involvement in Human Services Research and Education*, 385–402. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429433306-41>
- Winter, E., & O’Raw, P. (2021). Teachers' perceptions of inclusive education: Barriers and facilitators. *Journal of Special Education and Inclusion*, 25(3), 102-118.
- Ydesen, C., & Andersen, C. K. (2020). Implementing inclusive education policies – the challenges of organizational change in a Danish municipality. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1), 69–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1733848>