

Readiness of Graduate School Students on the Implementation of Differentiated Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the readiness of Master of Arts in Special Education (MAEd SPED) students at Cebu Technological University–Main Campus in implementing Differentiated Instruction (DI) in inclusive classrooms for the academic year 2025-2026. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive-correlational design and complete enumeration sampling, the study involved 41 respondents who were surveyed on their demographic profiles, perceived readiness for DI, and the challenges they face in its implementation. The findings revealed that respondents generally felt "Ready" to implement DI, particularly in areas such as defining learner objectives and creating supportive learning environments. However, several challenges emerged, including time management, classroom management, and insufficient resources. The most significant barriers included the logistical demands of DI, particularly in large classrooms, which hindered its full implementation. The study highlights that while MAEd SPED students are confident in applying DI strategies, structural barriers such as class sizes and resource limitations impede the effective application of these strategies in real classroom settings. Based on the findings, the study emphasizes the need for targeted professional development, systemic support, and adequate resources to enhance DI implementation in inclusive classrooms. The study's insights aim to contribute to the improvement of teacher preparation programs and the alignment of educational policies with the principles of inclusive education.

Keywords— Special Education, Differentiated Instruction, Inclusive Classroom, Professional Development

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and diverse educational landscape, the concept of teacher readiness, referring to the knowledge, skills, confidence, and attitudes required to effectively respond to learner diversity, has become increasingly important (Mabanag et al., 2024). As schools strive to embrace inclusion, there is a growing consensus that every learner, regardless of ability, background, gender, socioeconomic status, or cultural identity, deserves equal access to quality education (Kimhi & Bar Nir, 2025). Inclusive education is no longer regarded as a specialized intervention for students with disabilities but as a foundational principle of an equitable and responsive education system (Dumbuya, 2024). Achieving this vision requires educators who are prepared to meet diverse learning needs through flexible and intentional instruction (Mabanag et al., 2024). By fostering classroom environments where all students feel respected, supported, and able to succeed, inclusive education strengthens both individual outcomes and the broader educational community (Kimhi & Bar Nir, 2025). This global shift reflects a deeper understanding that educational progress is only possible when no learner is left behind (Dumbuya, 2024).

This paradigm shift is grounded in landmark international frameworks that have redefined the goals of education in the 21st century. The Salamanca Statement, adopted in 1994, was a turning point in global educational policy, asserting that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions (Magnússon, 2019). Building on this foundation, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 strengthens the call for inclusive and equitable quality education by setting a global target to ensure that all learners have access to inclusive learning environments by 2030 (Adipat & Chotikapanich, 2022). These frameworks reinforce the principle that inclusive education is

both a right and a necessity, one that promotes lifelong learning, reduces inequalities, and fosters social cohesion. As emphasized by Shaeffer (2019), inclusion is not merely about physical access to classrooms but about meaningful participation, engagement, and achievement for all learners.

Central to the realization of inclusive education is the recognition of learner diversity within the classroom. This recognition has led to the development and adoption of pedagogical models that promote flexibility, responsiveness, and equity, among which Differentiated Instruction (DI) stands out. Defined by Gheysens et al. (2022) as a responsive teaching philosophy, DI enables educators to proactively adjust content, processes, products, and learning environments according to students' readiness levels, learning profiles, and interests. More than a strategy, DI represents a mindset that values student-centeredness and diversity as essential elements of effective teaching.

Recent literature affirms the significant role of DI in fostering inclusive classroom environments. Goyibova et al. (2025) report that purposeful differentiation enhances engagement and participation, particularly among neurodiverse learners. Porta (2025) further asserts that teachers who embrace DI are better positioned to cultivate equitable learning spaces, especially when supported by high self-efficacy and access to flexible instructional tools. These findings underscore that DI is not simply a pedagogical option; it is a necessary framework for achieving inclusive education outcomes.

Despite growing recognition of its benefits, the application of DI remains inconsistent. Studies by Manasia et al. (2019) and Moosa and Shareefa (2019) reveal that a key determinant of successful DI implementation is teacher readiness, comprising professional knowledge, confidence, and adaptability. However, systemic barriers such as insufficient training, large class sizes, and limited planning time continue to impede implementation efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic has further strained educators' capacities, especially in developing nations, where technological gaps and reduced instructional support have deepened existing inequities (Khlaif et al., 2021).

These challenges are particularly pronounced in low- and middle-income countries, where structural constraints hinder the operationalization of inclusive practices. Singh (2024) found that many teachers in resource-limited schools struggle with DI implementation due to a lack of instructional materials, rigid curricula, and minimal professional development. Parker et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of context-sensitive teacher education programs that align DI practices with localized realities and capacities.

In the Philippines, inclusive education is supported by progressive legal frameworks such as Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013), Republic Act No. 11650 (Inclusive Education Act of 2022), and DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009. These policies affirm the state's commitment to addressing learner diversity and promoting educational equity. However, the translation of these policies into classroom practice remains a work in progress. Khaleel (2023) found that while public school teachers are generally supportive of inclusive principles, many report challenges in applying DI effectively, particularly in rural and overcrowded schools lacking sufficient training support.

Notably, most Philippine-based research has concentrated on in-service teachers, leaving a critical gap in understanding the readiness of pre-service and graduate-level educators. This gap is particularly concerning in the context of Master of Arts in Education major in Special Education (MAEd SPED) programs. Graduate students in these programs are not only expected to master inclusive teaching strategies but are also positioned as future instructional leaders tasked with modeling best practices in diverse classroom settings (Da et al., 2025).

It is within this context that the present study, titled "Assessing the Readiness of Master of Arts in Special Education Students in Applying Differentiated Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms," is situated. While these students receive academic training on inclusive pedagogies, little is known about their actual preparedness to implement DI across various dimensions of teaching practice.

This study aims to assess the readiness of MAEd SPED students in applying Differentiated Instruction in inclusive classrooms. Specifically, it will evaluate their understanding of learner variability, clarity of

instructional goals, use of formative assessments, application of DI strategies, planning for individualized supports, and ability to create equitable classroom environments. In addition, it will analyze whether readiness levels differ based on demographic variables such as age, gender, teaching experience, and prior exposure to inclusive education settings.

By identifying strengths and areas for growth, the study seeks to offer evidence-based insights that will inform curriculum design, teacher preparation programs, and professional development pathways. Ultimately, this research contributes to closing the gap between inclusive education policy and classroom reality by ensuring that graduate students in special education are equipped with the competence, mindset, and confidence to meet the needs of all learners. In doing so, the study aligns with broader national and international goals of fostering inclusive, equitable, and quality education for every child.

Legal Basis

This study is guided by three key legal frameworks that institutionalize inclusive education and define the responsibilities of educators in the Philippine context. These policies form the structural and ethical basis for evaluating teacher readiness in differentiated instruction.

Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act Of 2013). This law reformed the Philippine educational system by establishing the K–12 curriculum and mandating the use of learner-centered and inclusive teaching approaches. It emphasizes curriculum flexibility, contextualization, and alignment with learners' developmental needs. RA 10533 encourages educators to adopt differentiated and culturally responsive methods, thereby promoting equity and access to quality education for all. Ji (2024) observes that while the policy framework is strong, its successful implementation depends on the capacity of teachers to design instruction that reflects these inclusive values. For MAEd SPED students, this law serves as a directive to master strategies like DI that directly support curriculum responsiveness and learner diversity.

Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) directly connects to the research variables by establishing the legal mandate for inclusive education and the need for teachers to implement learner-centered strategies, such as Differentiated Instruction (DI), in their classrooms. This law reinforces the study's focus on assessing the readiness of MAEd SPED students to apply DI, as it requires teachers to address the diverse needs of all students. In the context of this study, RA 10533's emphasis on curriculum flexibility and adaptation aligns with the research variable of "readiness," as it evaluates how prepared MAEd SPED students are to implement such strategies in inclusive settings. Moreover, the law's focus on contextualizing instruction based on learners' developmental needs links to the variable of "effective instructional strategies," as it challenges MAEd SPED students to design and apply instructional practices that are both responsive to individual student needs and aligned with the principles of inclusive education.

Republic Act No. 11650 (Inclusive Education Act of 2022). As the most recent legislation on inclusive education in the Philippines, RA 11650 mandates that learners with disabilities be given full access to regular schools and learning environments, along with appropriate support services. It calls for the professional development of teachers in inclusive strategies and the use of instructional practices that meet the diverse needs of all learners. Gonzaga et al. (2024) stress that this law places a high level of accountability on teacher education institutions to prepare future educators, especially those in SPED, to implement inclusive pedagogies such as DI. This legal mandate aligns closely with the objectives of this study, which seeks to determine whether MAEd SPED students are truly prepared to translate inclusive principles into practice.

Republic Act No. 11650 (Inclusive Education Act of 2022) closely links to the research variables by setting a legal framework that emphasizes the need for teachers to implement inclusive strategies, such as Differentiated Instruction (DI), to support students with disabilities in regular schools. The law places significant responsibility on teacher education institutions to ensure that future educators, particularly those specializing in Special Education (SPED), are equipped with the necessary skills to apply inclusive teaching practices effectively. In the context of this study, RA 11650 directly relates to the "readiness" variable, as it evaluates whether MAEd SPED students are adequately prepared to implement the inclusive teaching strategies mandated by the law. The law's emphasis on professional development and training aligns with the study's

focus on the "professional development" aspect, examining how well MAEd SPED students have internalized the principles of inclusive education and whether they can apply them in real classroom settings.

Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities). RA 7277, also known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities, enshrines the rights of persons with disabilities, including the right to quality and accessible education. It mandates the removal of barriers that limit participation and learning and supports the integration of learners with disabilities into mainstream schools. This legal foundation supports the study by framing differentiated instruction as a means of fulfilling the rights of children with disabilities to fully participate in learning. For MAEd SPED students, readiness entails not only instructional competence but also a legal and ethical responsibility to uphold inclusive practices in compliance with this law (Scholl, 2021).

Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities) is intrinsically linked to the research variables by establishing a legal and ethical framework that mandates the integration of learners with disabilities into mainstream education. This law requires teachers to adapt their instructional strategies to ensure that learners with disabilities can fully participate in the learning process, making Differentiated Instruction (DI) a key strategy for meeting the diverse needs of these students. In the context of this study, RA 7277 connects to the "readiness" variable by examining whether MAEd SPED students are prepared not only in terms of instructional competence but also in fulfilling their legal and ethical responsibilities as educators for students with disabilities. The study evaluates how well MAEd SPED students understand and apply DI strategies in compliance with RA 7277, ensuring that they are equipped to uphold the rights of learners with disabilities to receive quality, accessible education. By focusing on the readiness of these students to implement inclusive practices, the study directly reflects the law's emphasis on the need for teachers to be adequately prepared to support the full participation of children with disabilities in the educational system.

DepEd Order No. 72, S. 2009. This policy, titled Inclusive Education as a Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children, operationalizes inclusive education in public schools. It emphasizes the importance of adopting varied instructional approaches to accommodate learners with diverse needs, particularly those from marginalized groups (Baguisa & Ang-Manaig, 2019). The order highlights the necessity of building teacher competence in differentiated instruction and promoting inclusive school cultures. It also calls for schools and divisions to institutionalize support systems for teachers, including training and access to instructional resources. By integrating DI into daily teaching practice, educators help ensure that no child is excluded from meaningful learning opportunities. This directive reinforces the legal expectation that teachers should be ready and able to differentiate instruction as part of their commitment to inclusive education.

These theoretical and legal foundations support the central premise of this study: that the readiness of MAEd SPED students to apply differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms is shaped by a dynamic interplay of beliefs, competencies, and systemic expectations. The theories provide the cognitive and pedagogical justification for DI, while the laws establish its necessity as a professional standard and ethical obligation.

Significance of the Study

This section presents the necessity of this research and its potential benefits for various stakeholders. It provides a rationale for the study's significance, emphasizing its contribution to the field of special education, its role in generating new insights on teacher preparedness, and the advantages it offers to different individuals and groups. The findings of this study will be beneficial to the following: Department of Education (DepEd), school administrators, teacher educators and curriculum planners, MAEd SPED students, learners with special educational needs (LSEs), policymakers, researcher, and future researchers.

Objectives of the Study

The action plan aims to achieve the following objectives:

Enhance Time Management and Classroom Management: Provide targeted support in managing time effectively for differentiated activities and strategies for handling diverse classrooms.

Develop Teacher Competence in Lesson Planning Based on Learner Readiness: Offer training in creating learner profiles and using them to inform lesson planning.

Increase Confidence in Implementing DI Strategies: Focus on professional development that boosts self-efficacy in using DI strategies effectively.

Provide Access to Necessary Resources and Tools: Ensure that students have access to instructional materials, technology, and professional networks to implement DI in the classroom.

Promote Collaborative Learning and Peer Support: Foster mentorship and collaborative learning among students to share best practices and solve common classroom challenges.

Research Methodology

This section outlines the methodological framework used to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. It covers the research design, research environment, respondents, instrumentation, data gathering procedure, statistical treatment, and definition of terms.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the perceived readiness of Master of Arts in Education major in Special Education (MAEd SPED) students at Cebu Technological University in implementing differentiated instruction (DI) within inclusive classroom settings. This design is appropriate for describing variables and determining potential associations among them (Saro et al., 2023).

The descriptive component of the study focused on summarizing the demographic profiles of the respondents, such as age, gender, years of service, highest educational attainment, area of specialization, type of school, professional membership, and relevant trainings attended, as well as their perceived readiness in implementing DI. The readiness data covered seven domains: student learning characteristics, clarity of learner objectives, pre-assessment strategies, instructional strategies, individual supports, flexible grouping, and learning environment.

To address Statement of the Problem No. 4, which pertains to the perceived issues and challenges in implementing differentiated instruction, the study used Part III of the questionnaire, which was adapted from the validated 14-item instrument developed by Siam and Al-Natour (2016). This instrument examined challenges in four key areas: instructional planning, classroom management, availability of training and resources, and administrative support. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Not Challenging and 5 = Extremely Challenging.

The correlational component of the study aimed to determine whether there were significant associations between the respondents' demographic characteristics and their level of perceived readiness in implementing DI (SOP No. 3). This helped identify patterns or factors that may influence instructional preparedness.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze data from Parts I to III of the questionnaire. To analyze SOP No. 3, the Chi-square test for association was used to determine relationships between demographic factors and readiness levels. For SOP No. 4, item means and standard deviations were calculated to quantify the level of challenge perceived by respondents in each area of differentiated instruction.

This methodological approach was designed to generate practical, data-driven insights that can inform teacher preparation, SPED training programs, and inclusive education policies within higher education.

Environment

Cebu Technological University (CTU) – Main Campus is a premier state university located in M.J. Cuenco

Avenue, Corner R. Palma Street, Cebu City, Philippines. As one of the leading higher education institutions in the region, CTU operates under the supervision of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and is recognized for its commitment to academic excellence, research innovation, and public service. The university offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs across multiple disciplines, including engineering, education, technology, and the arts.

At the time of the study, the university maintained an active graduate education program, including the Master of Arts in Education major in Special Education (MAEd SPED), which aims to develop future educators with advanced knowledge and skills in inclusive and specialized instruction. The program is designed to prepare graduate students to respond effectively to diverse learner needs through coursework grounded in theoretical principles and practical application. Courses in differentiated instruction, learner assessment, and inclusive pedagogies are central components of the program.

The CTU Main Campus was selected as the research environment due to its established reputation in teacher education and its robust offering of graduate-level programs in special education. The MAEd SPED students enrolled in the university were deemed suitable respondents for the study as they are being trained to implement inclusive teaching strategies, including differentiated instruction. Moreover, their diverse academic and professional backgrounds provided a meaningful context for analyzing perceived readiness in inclusive classroom settings.

Initial coordination with the College of Education revealed that the university maintains a supportive academic environment, with faculty members who are experts in special and inclusive education. These conditions made CTU – Main Campus an appropriate and relevant setting for examining the preparedness of future SPED professionals in applying differentiated instruction within the framework of inclusive education.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were the Master of Arts in Education major in Special Education (MAEd SPED) students enrolled at Cebu Technological University – Main Campus for the Academic Year 2025–2026. The researcher employed complete enumeration sampling to identify the participants, ensuring that all eligible graduate students currently enrolled in the MAEd SPED program were included in the study.

Complete enumeration, also known as census enumeration, is a method that involves collecting data from the entire population of interest rather than selecting a sample subset (Encyclohub, 2024). This approach is particularly effective for studies with a limited and accessible population, as it minimizes sampling errors and provides a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being investigated. In the context of this study, complete enumeration ensures that the perceptions, levels of readiness, and demographic profiles of all MAEd SPED students are considered, leading to more valid and generalizable findings within the university setting.

Table 1 shows the distribution of participants based on the program and campus of origin.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
CTU – Main Campus (MAEd SPED Students)	41	100
Total	41	100

Instrument

This study utilized an adapted questionnaire to assess the perceived readiness of Master of Arts in Education major in Special Education (MAEd SPED) students in implementing differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms. The instrument was structured into three major parts:

Part I: Demographic Profile – This section gathered essential demographic information, including age, gender, years of service, highest educational attainment, area of specialization, type of school, professional organization membership, and relevant trainings or seminars attended. These variables were included to determine possible associations with the respondents' perceived readiness in implementing differentiated instruction (DI).

Part II: Perceived Readiness in Implementing Differentiated Instruction (2025 Adaptation) – This section employed an instrument adapted in 2025 from Stetson & Associates to measure the respondents' preparedness in key areas of differentiated instruction. The questionnaire will consist of 44 items, organized into seven domains: (1) Student Learning Characteristics, (2) Clarity Regarding Learner Objectives, (3) Pre-Assessment Strategies, (4) Effective Instructional Strategies, (5) Individual Student Supports, (6) Flexible Grouping, and (7) Learning Environment. Each item will be rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Not Ready) to 5 (Very Ready), with higher scores indicating greater preparedness and confidence in applying differentiated instruction practices. The adapted tool has been reviewed by experts in the field to ensure its contextual relevance and validity for use with Filipino graduate students enrolled in special education programs.

Part III: Perceived Issues and Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Instruction – This part was adapted from the validated 14-item questionnaire developed by Siam and Al-Natour (2016), which examined implementation challenges faced by teachers in practicing DI. The items covered areas such as instructional planning, classroom management, availability of training and resources, and administrative support. Each item was rated using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Not Challenging) to 5 (Extremely Challenging).

Data Gathering Procedure

This section outlines the procedures for data collection, ensuring adherence to ethical standards, the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), and proper data handling protocols.

Preliminary Stage. Before initiating data collection, a formal request letter was submitted to the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School at Cebu Technological University – Main Campus. This letter requested approval to conduct the study among Master of Arts in Education major in Special Education (MAEd SPED) students. Upon receiving approval, the researcher coordinated with course instructors or department heads to identify qualified respondents and arrange the logistics for administering the survey. All respondents were provided with an Informed Consent Form, which detailed the study's purpose, voluntary nature, data confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from participation at any time. An orientation session was conducted to explain the study objectives, clarify the content of the questionnaire, and provide instructions for completing it.

Data Gathering Stage. The study used complete enumeration sampling, involving all MAEd SPED students currently enrolled in the program. The adapted questionnaire was administered either in printed format or through a secure digital platform, depending on the respondents' availability and preference. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part I for demographic profile, and Part II for measuring perceived readiness in applying differentiated instruction, adapted in 2025 from the instrument by Stetson & Associates. Respondents were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire thoughtfully. The researcher remained available throughout the process to provide clarification, should any questions arise.

Post Data Gathering Stage. After the completion of data collection, the researcher validated and cleaned the data. This includes checking for missing or incomplete responses, correcting any inconsistencies, and preparing the data for statistical analysis. The validated responses were encoded into a statistical software package for processing. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) was used to summarize the demographic profile and readiness levels. Inferential statistics, including independent

samples t-test, one-way ANOVA, and other appropriate tests, were applied to determine whether significant differences exist based on demographic variables.

Throughout all phases, strict compliance with ethical guidelines and data privacy regulations was ensured to protect the identity, rights, and welfare of all participants.

Statistical Treatment

The data was encoded into a Data Matrix, tabulated, and statistically analyzed using appropriate quantitative methods to ensure accurate and valid interpretation of the results.

Frequency and Percentage – These descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic profile of the respondents, including age, gender, teaching experience, and experience in inclusive or SPED classrooms. Frequency referred to the number of respondents in each category, while percentage showed their proportion relative to the total sample size.

Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation – These were employed to determine the overall level of perceived readiness of MAEd SPED students in applying differentiated instruction. The weighted mean indicated the central tendency of responses for each indicator, while the standard deviation showed the variability in the responses across the seven domains of differentiated instruction.

Independent Samples t-Test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) – These inferential statistical tools were used to test for significant differences in the levels of perceived readiness when the respondents are grouped according to demographic variables. The t-test applied to variables with two categories (e.g., gender), and ANOVA were used for those with three or more categories (e.g., age, teaching experience). A significance level of 0.05 was set as the criterion for determining statistical significance. A p-value less than 0.05 indicated a significant difference.

Ethical Consideration

To uphold the highest standards of ethical research, this study ensured fairness, transparency, and integrity throughout its design and implementation. Special care was taken to protect the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants. The selection of respondents followed ethical protocols, and all necessary precautions are implemented to avoid coercion, misrepresentation, data fabrication, and any form of harm.

This research adhered to institutional ethical standards and national policies, including the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Prior to data collection, the research protocol was submitted to and reviewed by the institution's Ethics Review Committee to verify its alignment with accepted ethical principles. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were required to provide informed consent before completing the questionnaire. The informed consent form clearly outlined the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and the participants' right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. The ethical considerations observed in this study were outlined as follows:

Conflict of Interest – The researcher declared no conflict of interest. No financial incentives or external sponsorships were involved that might influence the study's outcomes or interpretations.

Privacy and Confidentiality – Participants' privacy and confidentiality were safeguarded at all times. No personally identifiable information was collected, and responses were anonymized. All data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes.

Informed Consent Process – All participants were informed verbally and in writing about the purpose, scope, and voluntary nature of the research. They were encouraged to ask questions and are given ample time to decide on their participation.

Vulnerability – The study involved graduate students enrolled in the MAEd SPED program at Cebu Technological University. As professionals pursuing higher education, they were not considered members of a

vulnerable group. Participation was entirely voluntary and without risk to academic or personal standing.

Recruitment Process – The study employed complete enumeration sampling involving all eligible MAEd SPED students. The recruitment process was fair and inclusive, with no respondent pressured or excluded unfairly from participation.

Risk Assessment – The study posed minimal to no risk. Participants were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire designed to assess perceived readiness for differentiated instruction. No physical, psychological, or legal risks were involved.

Benefits and Rights of Participants – Respondents were assured of their right to withdraw at any time without facing academic, personal, or professional consequences. Participation in the study contributed to a broader understanding of teacher preparedness in inclusive education and may help improve future teacher education programs.

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study on the readiness of Master of Arts in Education major in Special Education (MAEd SPED) students at Cebu Technological University in applying differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms. The data are organized and presented according to the specific problems raised in the study. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations are used to summarize the demographic profile and readiness levels of the respondents. The analysis focuses on interpreting the findings in relation to the seven readiness components: student learning characteristics, clarity regarding learner objectives, pre-assessment strategies, effective instructional strategies, individual student supports, flexible grouping, and learning environment. Interpretations are supported with relevant literature to provide a deeper understanding of the results.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

This section presents the demographic profile of the MAEd SPED students who participated in the study. The profile includes their age, gender, teaching experience, and inclusive or SPED classroom experience. Understanding these characteristics provides context for interpreting their perceived readiness to apply differentiated instruction, as demographic factors may influence their teaching approaches, familiarity with inclusive practices, and professional preparedness.

Age and Gender

Age and gender were examined to identify potential differences in teachers perceived readiness to apply differentiated instruction, considering how generational experiences, perspectives, and socio-cultural factors may influence instructional approaches and preparedness.

Table 2
Age and Gender

Age Bracket	Gender		Frequency	Percentage
	Male	Female		
41 years old and above	0	9	9	21.95
36-40 years old	1	13	14	34.15
31-35 years old	0	7	7	17.07
26-30 years old	0	4	4	9.76
20-25 years old	0	7	7	17.07
Grand Total	1	40	41	100

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents according to age and gender. Out of the 41 Special Education teachers surveyed, 40 (97.56%) were female while only 1 (2.44%) was male, indicating a highly female-dominated teaching population. In terms of age, the largest group of respondents belonged to the 36–40 age bracket (34.15%), followed by teachers aged 20–25 (17.07%) and

31–35 years old (17.07%). Meanwhile, 21.95% of the participants were 41 years old and above, while the smallest group, at 9.76%, belonged to the 26–30 age range.

The data suggests that most SPED teachers are in their mid- to late-career stages, particularly in the 36–40 age group, which may reflect the accumulation of professional experience and stability in the teaching profession. The predominance of female teachers highlights the continuing gender imbalance in the teaching workforce, consistent with broader trends in education where teaching, especially in basic education and special education, is often regarded as a female-dominated profession. The relatively small number of younger teachers (26–30 years old) may indicate recruitment or retention challenges for early-career professionals in SPED.

This gender imbalance may have implications for how Differentiated Instruction (DI) is perceived and implemented. Research has shown that female-dominated professions tend to foster more nurturing and relational approaches to teaching, which aligns with the principles of DI, such as recognizing individual learning needs and creating supportive environments. However, the lack of male representation could limit diverse perspectives on instructional practices. Gender diversity in teaching can promote a broader range of ideas, pedagogies, and problem-solving approaches, which could enhance the implementation of DI strategies, particularly in inclusive classrooms. The scarcity of younger teachers also indicates the need for recruitment strategies that target more early-career professionals, including males, to bring fresh perspectives and further support the effective application of DI.

These findings resonate with international and local research that shows teaching, particularly in elementary and special education, remains a highly feminized profession (Kadrnožková & Hájková, 2024). Gender imbalance in the workforce can affect the application of innovative teaching strategies, such as DI. Studies have suggested that female teachers may naturally incorporate more collaborative and supportive strategies that align with DI's focus on meeting diverse student needs. However, the underrepresentation of male teachers may limit the variety of instructional approaches and the application of DI methods that appeal to different learning styles. Furthermore, age and career stage have been found to influence teachers' openness to adopting new instructional strategies. Younger teachers are often more adaptable to innovative methods, while mid-career educators tend to rely on established practices, although they bring valuable stability and classroom management experience (Gheysens et al., 2022; Christie, 2019). These demographic trends underscore the importance of designing professional development programs that address both gender and generational diversity, fostering an inclusive teaching workforce capable of implementing DI effectively.

Years of Service

Years of service was included to assess whether the length of teaching experience influences readiness, as more experienced teachers may have developed strategies, skills, and confidence that affect their approach to differentiated instruction.

Table 3

Years of Service

Years of Service	f	%
Above 6 years	13	31.71
4-6 years	3	7.32
1-3 years	10	24.39
Less than 1 year	8	19.51
None	7	17.07
Grand Total	41	100

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents according to their years of teaching service. Among the 41 Special Education teachers surveyed, the largest proportion (31.71%) reported having more than 6 years of teaching experience, while 24.39% had been teaching for 1–3 years. A smaller group (19.51%) had less than 1 year of service, and 7.32% had 4–6 years of experience. Interestingly, 17.07% indicated having no formal years of service in teaching, which may suggest that they are either newly appointed, substitute teachers, or transitioning into SPED from other professional fields.

The distribution suggests that while a substantial number of SPED teachers are highly experienced (more than 6 years), there is also a significant portion of early-career teachers who are in the 1–3 years or less than 1 year range. The presence of teachers with no years of service could point to recent recruitment efforts or the inclusion of teacher candidates in the study. This diversity in teaching experience may impact readiness for differentiated instruction since experienced teachers often develop classroom management skills and adaptive strategies over time, while novice teachers may be more receptive to innovative practices but require mentoring and support.

The data underscores the need for differentiated professional development programs aligned with teachers' career stages. For novice and early-career teachers, mentorship, induction programs, and targeted training can help build confidence and equip them with strategies for implementing differentiated instruction. Meanwhile, experienced teachers may benefit from advanced workshops that deepen their pedagogical repertoire and encourage peer coaching. Schools and policymakers should also consider strategies for teacher retention, as sustaining a balance of experienced and novice educators is critical for fostering a supportive and innovative SPED environment.

Research has consistently shown that teaching experience influences both confidence and instructional practices. Shank and Santiago (2022) highlighted that novice teachers often face challenges with classroom management and instructional adaptation, making structured induction programs essential. Conversely, veteran teachers tend to rely on accumulated strategies, which can enhance classroom stability but may also create resistance to pedagogical change if not continuously supported (Sera-Sirven, 2021). Moreover, Smets and Struyven (2020) emphasized that readiness to apply differentiated instruction is not solely determined by years of service but also by ongoing professional learning and reflective practice. This suggests that experience must be coupled with continuous development to optimize instructional effectiveness.

Highest Educational Attainment

Highest educational attainment was evaluated to determine whether academic qualifications and advanced studies contribute to greater readiness, based on the premise that higher education may enhance instructional knowledge and pedagogical competence.

Table 4

Highest Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	f	%
Doctorate Degree Holder	1	2.44
Master Degree Holder	2	4.88
With Units in Master	22	53.66
Bachelor Degree Holder	16	39.02
Grand Total	41	100

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents according to their highest educational attainment. Out of 41 SPED teachers, the majority (53.66%) reported having earned units in a master's program, while 39.02% held a bachelor's degree as their highest qualification. A smaller proportion (4.88%) had completed a master's degree, and only one respondent (2.44%) possessed a doctoral degree. This indicates that while most respondents have pursued graduate education, only a small percentage have completed advanced degrees.

The findings suggest that a significant number of teachers are actively pursuing higher education, which may reflect compliance with professional standards or personal motivation for career advancement. The high percentage of teachers with units in a master's program implies that many are in transition toward completing graduate studies. This may also be linked to Department of Education (DepEd) requirements and incentives for teachers to pursue continuous professional growth under policies such as the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (RA 4670).

The results highlight the importance of encouraging teachers to complete graduate programs, as higher qualifications are often associated with enhanced pedagogical competence, reflective practice, and research-informed instruction. For SPED teachers, advanced studies may provide deeper knowledge of inclusive education, differentiated instruction, and specialized interventions for learners with diverse needs. Institutions should strengthen support mechanisms such as scholarships, study leaves, and in-service training programs to help teachers complete their graduate education. Additionally, collaboration between higher education institutions and DepEd may further bridge the gap between theory and practice in SPED instruction.

Several studies have established the link between higher academic qualifications and improved teaching performance. Khalid et al. (2021) emphasized that advanced education equips teachers with stronger content knowledge and pedagogical skills, fostering greater instructional readiness. Similarly, Slade et al. (2019) found that teachers with higher qualifications tend to positively influence student outcomes, partly due to their enhanced capacity for reflective practice and evidence-based strategies. In the Philippine context, Maguate et al. (2024) underscored the role of continuous professional development in shaping teachers' adaptive expertise, particularly in diverse and inclusive classrooms. This suggests that educational attainment, when combined with ongoing training, plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction.

Area of Specialization

Area of specialization was considered to assess whether a teacher's primary field of expertise is linked to readiness, as different subject areas or focus fields may require varied approaches to differentiated instruction.

Table 5
Area of Specialization

Area of Specialization	f	%
Early Childhood Education	1	2.44
Elementary Education	10	24.39
Secondary Education	13	31.71
Special Education	17	41.46
Grand Total	41	100

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents according to their area of specialization. Among the 41 SPED teachers surveyed, the largest group (41.46%) specialized in Special Education, followed by Secondary Education (31.71%) and Elementary Education (24.39%). Only one respondent (2.44%) reported Early Childhood Education as their area of specialization. This distribution indicates that most respondents had specialized training directly related to SPED, while a significant number entered the field from general education backgrounds.

The data suggests that while a substantial proportion of teachers have specific training in Special Education, many come from broader teaching disciplines. Teachers from elementary and secondary backgrounds may not always have had formal SPED training during their undergraduate programs but may have transitioned to SPED roles due to demand, reassignment, or professional interest. This aligns with national trends in the Philippines where there is a shortage of formally trained SPED teachers, leading to general education teachers being deployed in inclusive or SPED classrooms (Reyes, 2023).

The findings emphasize the need to strengthen SPED-specific teacher preparation and professional development. While general education teachers bring valuable pedagogical knowledge, they may require additional training in differentiated instruction, individualized education plans (IEPs), and evidence-based interventions for learners with disabilities. To address this, DepEd and higher education institutions can expand SPED programs, provide bridging courses, and integrate inclusive education training across all teacher education curricula. This ensures that teachers, regardless of specialization, are better prepared for inclusive practices.

Research highlights that teacher specialization plays a crucial role in instructional readiness. Ismatilloeyvna (2025) argued that specialized training in inclusive pedagogies enables teachers to adopt flexible strategies that

meet diverse learner needs. Similarly, Mitchell (2024) emphasize that SPED-prepared teachers demonstrate higher confidence and competence in implementing inclusive practices compared to those without such training. In the Philippine context, Cruz (2024) points out the persistent gap in SPED-trained teachers, stressing the importance of continuous professional learning opportunities for those entering the field from general education.

Type of School Currently Teaching

Type of school was examined to explore whether the educational setting public, private, or specialized affects readiness, as institutional resources, policies, and student diversity may impact a teacher's ability to implement differentiated instruction.

Table 6

Type of School

Type of School	f	%
Private Inclusive School	7	17.07
Private Regular School	2	4.88
Public Regular School	21	51.22
Public SPED Center	4	9.76
None	7	17.07
Grand Total	41	100

Table 6 presents the distribution of respondents according to the type of school where they currently teach. Out of 41 respondents, the majority (51.22%) were from public regular schools, followed by private inclusive schools (17.07%). A smaller proportion reported teaching in public SPED centers (9.76%) and private regular schools (4.88%). Interestingly, 17.07% of respondents indicated that they were not currently teaching in any school. This distribution suggests that while public schools, particularly regular schools, remain the main setting for SPED teachers, a considerable number are engaged in inclusive or specialized institutions.

The high concentration of teachers in public regular schools indicates that inclusive education is largely implemented in mainstream classrooms rather than in specialized SPED centers. This reflects the Department of Education's mandate to mainstream learners with disabilities into regular classes where possible. However, the smaller representation of teachers in public SPED centers underscores the limited number of specialized facilities in the Philippines, placing a heavier responsibility on public regular schools to provide inclusive services, often with fewer specialized resources (Kilag et al., 2025).

The type of school where teachers work can significantly affect their readiness to implement differentiated instruction. Teachers in inclusive schools may receive more structured support and training, whereas those in regular schools may face challenges such as large class sizes, limited teaching aides, and insufficient access to assistive technologies. To strengthen readiness across settings, it is recommended that public and private institutions alike provide ongoing professional development, ensure access to appropriate instructional resources, and foster collaborative teaching models. Moreover, expanding the number of SPED centers or equipping existing schools with specialized support could enhance teachers' confidence and competence in addressing diverse learner needs.

Existing literature supports the notion that institutional context influences teacher readiness for inclusive practices. According to Brussino (2021), schools that embed inclusive policies and provide adequate resources tend to foster higher levels of teacher preparedness. Similarly, Pozas et al. (2022) found that support structures within schools significantly impact teachers' confidence in differentiated instruction. In the Philippine context, Termes et al. (2020) highlights persistent inequities between public and private schools, with private inclusive schools often having more resources and smaller class sizes compared to overcrowded public schools. These findings stress the importance of systemic support across all educational settings to enhance readiness for differentiated instruction.

Membership in Professional Organization

Membership in a professional organization was assessed to determine whether participation in professional networks and development activities enhances readiness, given that such affiliations may provide additional training, resources, and collaborative opportunities.

Table 7
Membership

Membership	f	%
PAFTE	18	43.90
PPSTA	5	12.20
ACT	1	2.44
NOPT	1	2.44
None	16	39.02
Grand Total	41	100

Table 7 shows the distribution of respondents based on their membership in professional organizations. Of the 41 participants, 43.90% reported being members of the Philippine Association for Teachers and Educators (PAFTE), while smaller proportions indicated membership in the Philippine Public School Teachers Association (PPSTA) (12.20%), the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) (2.44%), and the National Organization of Professional Teachers (NOPT) (2.44%). Notably, 39.02% of the respondents reported having no membership in any professional organization. This demonstrates that while a significant number of teachers engage in professional networks, a considerable proportion remains unaffiliated.

The data suggest that PAFTE plays a key role in supporting teacher professional development in the Philippines, given its significant membership among respondents. Professional organizations such as PAFTE and PPSTA are known to provide training, seminars, and networking opportunities that may enhance teacher readiness for differentiated instruction and inclusive education. On the other hand, the relatively large number of non-members may indicate barriers such as lack of awareness, limited financial resources, or restricted access to organizational activities, particularly in rural or underfunded areas.

Membership in professional organizations has the potential to strengthen teacher readiness by exposing educators to innovative pedagogical strategies, policy updates, and collaborative practices. Teachers who are not affiliated with such groups may have fewer opportunities for continuous professional development, which could impact their ability to adapt to diverse classroom needs. Thus, encouraging more teachers to join organizations like PAFTE or PPSTA and ensuring accessibility of these networks across public and private institutions would be beneficial. Schools and educational leaders can also support non-member teachers by providing localized professional learning communities that replicate the benefits of formal organizations.

Research consistently highlights the value of professional organizations in enhancing teacher competence and readiness. According to Zamiri and Esmaeili (2024), professional networks serve as platforms for sharing best practices and fostering collective learning. Similarly, Cimene (2023) emphasized that continuous professional development is crucial in improving teaching quality, particularly in inclusive and diverse learning environments. In the Philippine context, PAFTE underscores its mission to advance teacher education through training, conferences, and collaborative engagement. These findings affirm that professional membership can be a significant factor in promoting readiness, although equitable access to these opportunities remains a challenge.

LEVEL OF PERCEIVED READINESS

The level of perceived readiness of MAEd SPED students in applying differentiated instruction refers to the extent to which future special education teachers believe they are prepared to implement teaching strategies

that address diverse learners' needs. This measure reflects both the knowledge and practical confidence necessary for delivering equitable and inclusive instruction.

Student Learning Characteristics

This domain was included to measure the teachers' ability to recognize, assess, and address diverse student learning which are fundamental to implementing differentiated instruction effectively.

Table 8

Student Learning Characteristics

Indicators	Mean	SD	VD
I assess student learning characteristics early in the school year.	3.93	0.98	R
I create a class profile to guide differentiated instruction.	3.80	1.03	R
I design lesson plans based on students' readiness and ability levels.	3.78	1.03	R
I incorporate student interests into my lesson planning.	4.02	0.85	R
I deliver lessons using different learning modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic).	4.12	0.98	R
I provide students with choices in learning activities and projects.	4.05	0.99	R
I engage students in identifying their own learning styles and needs.	4.04	0.95	R
I select instructional materials suited to students' readiness, interests, and learning styles.	4.24	0.94	R
I adjust assessments according to student ability, interests, and learning styles when appropriate.	4.07	0.96	R
Grand Mean	4.02	0.97	R

Legend: Very Ready (VR): 4.50-5.00, Ready (R):3.50-4.49, Somewhat Ready (SR):2.50-3.49, Barely Ready (BR):1.50-2.49, Not Ready (NR): 1.00-1.49

Table 8 presents the respondents' readiness in addressing student learning characteristics as part of differentiated instruction. The overall grand mean of 4.02 (SD = 0.97) indicates that teachers are "Ready" to assess and respond to diverse learning needs. Among the indicators, the highest mean was recorded for "I select instructional materials suited to students' readiness, interests, and learning styles" (M = 4.24, SD = 0.94), reflecting strong readiness in aligning resources with learner diversity. The lowest mean was observed in "I design lesson plans based on students' readiness and ability levels" (M = 3.78, SD = 1.03), though still within the "Ready" category.

The results suggest that teachers are particularly confident in adapting instructional materials and using varied modalities (M = 4.12) to support student learning differences. Likewise, they are ready to incorporate student interests (M= 4.02) and provide learning choices (M = 4.05), which reflect practices consistent with learner-centered pedagogy. However, comparatively lower scores in creating class profiles (M = 3.80) and lesson planning based on readiness (M = 3.78) suggest areas that could be strengthened through more systematic assessment of learner differences at the planning stage. This gap highlights that while teachers demonstrate flexibility in practice, the integration of learner data into structured planning may need further development.

The findings imply that teachers value responsiveness to student differences but may benefit from more training in diagnostic assessment and profiling of learners at the start of the school year. Conducting class profiles and readiness-based lesson planning are foundational to differentiated instruction because they provide the data needed to inform teaching strategies (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2023). Therefore, professional development initiatives should emphasize practical strategies for conducting learner inventories, integrating readiness levels into lesson planning, and designing tiered activities that systematically address diverse student needs.

Encouraging reflective practice and collaborative sharing among teachers can further enhance their ability to align planning with actual learner characteristics.

Scholars emphasize that understanding student learning characteristics is critical to effective differentiation. Goyibova et al. (2025) noted that differentiated instruction is built on assessing students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles to tailor instruction appropriately. Similarly, Price et al. (2020) highlighted that acknowledging learner diversity fosters higher engagement and academic achievement. In the Philippine context, Bulusan et al. (2025) stressed that culturally responsive teaching and learner-centered instruction are essential to meeting diverse classroom needs. These findings align with the present study, underscoring that while teachers are generally ready, further strengthening in learner profiling and readiness-based planning is necessary to fully optimize differentiated instruction.

Clarity Regarding Learner Objectives

This domain assessed how clearly teachers identify, communicate, and align lesson objectives with curriculum standards, ensuring that learning goals are transparent and adapted to the needs of diverse learners in differentiated instruction.

Table 9

Clarity Regarding Learner Objectives

Indicators	Mean	SD	VD
I clearly identify and communicate the key concepts in each lesson.	4.14	0.82	R
I explain the big ideas or general themes connected to my lessons.	4.24	0.80	R
I communicate the purpose and objectives of each lesson to my students.	4.22	0.82	R
I align my lessons with the prescribed on-grade-level learning objectives.	4.29	0.72	R
I help students connect new learning to prior knowledge and experiences.	4.34	0.73	R
I adjust the complexity of instruction while keeping lessons aligned with grade-level standards.	4.17	0.74	R
Grand Mean	4.23	0.77	R

Legend: Very Ready (VR): 4.50-5.00, Ready (R): 3.50-4.49, Somewhat Ready (SR): 2.50-3.49, Barely Ready (BR): 1.50-2.49, Not Ready (NR): 1.00-1.49

Table 9 presents the results on teachers' readiness in terms of clarity regarding learner objectives. The overall grand mean of 4.23 (SD = 0.77) indicates that teachers are generally "Ready" in this domain. Among the indicators, the highest-rated was "I help students connect new learning to prior knowledge and experiences" (M = 4.34, SD = 0.73), while the lowest-rated was "I clearly identify and communicate the key concepts in each lesson" (M = 4.14, SD = 0.82). All items were consistently rated within the Ready range, suggesting strong but improvable competence in clarifying and aligning learning objectives.

The data highlight that teachers are particularly effective in fostering connections between new content and learners' prior experiences, an essential aspect of meaningful learning. However, the slightly lower score in identifying and communicating key concepts suggests that some teachers may still face challenges in lesson framing and ensuring that essential learning points are clear and accessible. This reflects a balance between teachers' ability to contextualize lessons and their capacity to distill and highlight core instructional goals.

The findings imply that while teachers demonstrate readiness, professional development can further strengthen their capacity to frame objectives in ways that are both conceptually clear and aligned with standards. Training workshops on backward design, scaffolding, and explicit lesson framing could help teachers sharpen their clarity of instruction. Moreover, integrating reflective practices such as peer lesson observations or instructional coaching may provide opportunities for feedback on how objectives are communicated and aligned with learner diversity.

Clarity of learner objectives is consistently linked to higher student achievement and engagement. Hall (2019) identifies teacher clarity as one of the most powerful influences on student learning, while Werner and Milyavskaya, M. (2019) emphasized that clearly defined goals enhance students' motivation and self-regulation. Similarly, Matiyenga and Ajani (2024) stressed that in differentiated instruction, clear communication of objectives ensures equitable access to curriculum for diverse learners. In addition, Carter and Andersen (2023) highlighted that connecting new learning to prior knowledge is central to building deeper understanding. These studies affirm the importance of the observed readiness in this domain while pointing toward opportunities for refinement.

Pre-Assessment Strategies

This domain focused on the teachers' use of tools and methods to gauge students' prior knowledge and skill levels before instruction, enabling them to design lessons that meet varying learning needs.

Table 10

Pre-Assessment Strategies

Indicators	Mean	SD	VD
I use pre-assessment strategies to identify students' prior knowledge and skill levels.	4.02	0.76	R
I modify my lesson design based on the results of preassessments.	4.12	0.78	R
I am familiar with a variety of pre-assessment tools and strategies (e.g., KWL charts, gallery walks).	4.04	0.89	R
I involve students in reviewing pre-assessment results to set their learning goals.	4.05	0.86	R
Grand Mean	4.06	0.82	R

Legend: Very Ready (VR): 4.50-5.00, Ready (R): 3.50-4.49, Somewhat Ready (SR): 2.50-3.49, Barely Ready (BR): 1.50-2.49, Not Ready (NR): 1.00-1.49

Table 10 shows the results on teachers' readiness in using pre-assessment strategies. The grand mean of 4.06 (SD = 0.82) reveals that teachers are generally "Ready" to employ different tools and methods in assessing learners' prior knowledge and skills. The highest-rated indicator was "I modify my lesson design based on the results of pre-assessments" (M = 4.12, SD = 0.78), while the lowest-rated was "I use pre-assessment strategies to identify students' prior knowledge and skill levels" (M = 4.02, SD = 0.76). All items were consistently within the Ready range, showing that teachers possess the capacity to conduct pre-assessments but with room for enhancement in systematic application.

The results indicate that teachers are more confident in adapting instruction after conducting pre-assessments than in consistently implementing such assessments at the outset. This suggests that while teachers recognize the value of tailoring instruction, some may still lack structured approaches or varied techniques to fully capture learners' prior knowledge. The relatively modest ratings across all indicators imply that pre-assessment is practiced but not yet maximized as a central tool for differentiated instruction.

These findings imply a need for greater emphasis on strengthening teachers' repertoire of pre-assessment techniques and embedding them systematically into classroom practice. Schools and divisions could provide training on the effective use of both formal and informal pre-assessment tools (e.g., diagnostic quizzes, think-pair-share, KWL charts, entrance tickets) and how to interpret results for instructional planning. Encouraging student involvement in reviewing pre-assessment outcomes may also cultivate ownership of learning and goal-setting skills. Continuous professional support through mentoring and lesson study can enhance consistency in applying these strategies.

Research underscores the importance of pre-assessment in differentiated instruction. Wong et al. (2023) highlighted that understanding students' readiness levels is the foundation of effective differentiation. Gamage (2025) further emphasized that assessment for learning, including pre-assessment, provides critical feedback that informs instructional decisions. Meanwhile, Dubey (2024) points out that involving students in pre-assessment results fosters self-awareness and motivation toward learning goals. These studies validate the

observed readiness among teachers while reinforcing the need to deepen their expertise in strategically using pre-assessment to guide instruction.

Effective Instructional Strategies

This domain examined teachers' ability to apply varied teaching approaches, instructional accommodations, and content modifications to enhance engagement, accessibility, and success for all learners within a differentiated instruction framework.

Table 11
Effective Instructional Strategies

Indicators	Mean	SD	VD
I do not rely primarily on lectures when teaching.	4.0	0.67	R
I use a wide range of teaching strategies to make lessons engaging and effective.	4.15	0.76	R
I differentiate lesson content using strategies such as tiered learning and curriculum compacting.	4.05	0.71	R
I differentiate the learning process through strategies like guided notetaking, group activities, and graphic organizers.	4.09	0.77	R
I use varied assessment strategies like portfolios and project-based learning.	4.15	0.85	R
I provide instructional accommodations for any student who requires them.	4.12	0.68	R
I modify curricular goals when required by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).	3.63	1.22	R
I use planning tools to prepare differentiated lessons.	3.90	0.94	R
Grand Mean	4.01	0.83	R

Legend: Very Ready (VR): 4.50-5.00, Ready (R): 3.50-4.49, Somewhat Ready (SR): 2.50-3.49, Barely Ready (BR): 1.50-2.49, Not Ready (NR): 1.00-1.49

Table 11 presents the results on teachers' readiness in employing effective instructional strategies. The grand mean of 4.01 (SD = 0.83) indicates that teachers are generally "Ready" to implement differentiated instruction through varied teaching approaches, accommodations, and modifications. The highest-rated indicators were "I use a wide range of teaching strategies to make lessons engaging and effective" (M = 4.15, SD = 0.76) and "I use varied assessment strategies like portfolios and project-based learning" (M = 4.15, SD = 0.85). Meanwhile, the lowest-rated item was "I modify curricular goals when required by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)" (M = 3.63, SD = 1.22), though it still fell within the "Ready" category.

The results suggest that teachers are confident in using diverse instructional and assessment strategies that enhance classroom engagement. However, the relatively lower rating for modifying curricular goals for IEPs reflects possible challenges in specialized instructional adjustments. This may indicate either limited training in addressing individual needs of students with disabilities or systemic barriers, such as insufficient resources and support for inclusive practices. Overall, teachers are prepared to apply differentiated strategies, but their readiness is stronger in general classroom strategies than in specialized accommodations.

These findings imply that while teachers are equipped to implement varied teaching and assessment approaches, professional development should focus more on inclusive education practices, particularly in supporting students with IEPs. Training in evidence-based strategies such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), tiered instruction, and scaffolded learning can strengthen teachers' competence in adapting lessons for diverse learners. Furthermore, schools may need to ensure that support systems, including collaboration with special education teachers and access to instructional resources, are available to sustain differentiated practices across all learning contexts.

Scholarly literature supports these findings, as Qorib (2024) emphasized that effective differentiation requires varied instructional strategies to address differences in student readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Lovett (2021) stressed that individualized accommodations, particularly for students with disabilities, are crucial to ensuring equity in learning. Similarly, Rao (2021) highlighted the role of UDL in fostering

accessibility and flexibility in instructional design. These studies reinforce the need to further strengthen teachers' application of specialized strategies while building on their demonstrated readiness in general instructional practices.

Individual Student Supports

This domain evaluated teachers' capacity to provide targeted interventions, accommodations, and extensions that address individual students' needs, ensuring equity and inclusivity in the learning process.

Table 12

Individual Student Supports

Indicators	Mean	SD	VD
I adjust lessons to address the needs of all students, reducing the need for separate supports.	4.02	0.82	R
I provide additional support for students who struggle with content.	4.15	0.88	R
I offer extended learning opportunities for students who need more challenge.	4.17	0.77	R
I appropriately implement accommodations and modifications required by students' IEPs.	3.73	1.09	R
I determine the need for individual student supports during lesson planning.	3.92	0.98	R
Grand Mean	4.00	0.91	R

Legend: Very Ready (VR): 4.50-5.00, Ready (R): 3.50-4.49, Somewhat Ready (SR): 2.50-3.49, Barely Ready (BR): 1.50-2.49, Not Ready (NR): 1.00-1.49

Table 12 presents the results on teachers' readiness in providing individual student supports. The grand mean of 4.00 (SD = 0.91) indicates that teachers are generally "Ready" to offer targeted interventions, accommodations, and extensions to meet diverse learners' needs. The highest-rated indicator was "I offer extended learning opportunities for students who need more challenge" (M = 4.17, SD = 0.77), closely followed by "I provide additional support for students who struggle with content" (M = 4.15, SD = 0.88). The lowest-rated item was "I appropriately implement accommodations and modifications required by students' IEPs" (M = 3.73, SD = 1.09), although it still reflected readiness.

The data reveal that teachers are effective in addressing both ends of the learning spectrum, providing remedial support for struggling students and extended opportunities for advanced learners. However, the relatively lower mean in implementing IEP-based accommodations indicates an area where teachers may feel less prepared or encounter challenges. This suggests that while teachers are competent in general differentiation practices, there remains a gap in delivering individualized supports aligned with formal special education requirements.

These findings imply a strong foundation for responsive teaching but highlight the need to strengthen competencies in implementing accommodations for students with disabilities. Targeted professional development in inclusive education practices, particularly on understanding IEPs and applying individualized modifications, is essential. Schools may also consider providing collaborative opportunities between general and special education teachers to enhance confidence in delivering tailored supports. Additionally, allocating resources such as assistive technologies and instructional aides could further empower teachers to address individual learning needs effectively.

Research supports these insights, as Passmore (2025) emphasized that individualized supports, particularly IEP-based accommodations, are critical to ensuring access and equity in inclusive classrooms. Reis et al. (2021) underscored the importance of providing both remediation and enrichment as core elements of differentiated instruction. Meanwhile, Shireesha and Jeevan (2024) stressed that teachers' capacity to

personalize learning for all students is central to inclusive education. These studies affirm that while teachers are ready to provide general supports, building deeper expertise in individualized accommodations remains crucial.

Flexible Grouping

This domain measured how effectively teachers form and adjust student groups based on readiness, interests, or learning styles, fostering collaboration and maximizing learning opportunities in differentiated instruction.

Table 13
Flexible Grouping

Indicators	Mean	SD	VD
I form student groups based on readiness, interests, learning styles, or student choice.	3.95	0.86	R
I change groupings regularly and based on student needs.	3.95	0.97	R
I assess both individual contributions and group performance during group work.	3.95	0.80	R
I teach students how to work effectively in groups, including roles and responsibilities.	4.07	0.98	R
Grand Mean	3.98	0.90	R

Legend: Very Ready (VR): 4.50-5.00, Ready (R):3.50-4.49, Somewhat Ready (SR):2.50-3.49, Barely Ready (BR):1.50-2.49, Not Ready (NR): 1.00-1.49

Table 13 shows the results for teachers' use of flexible grouping in the classroom. The domain obtained a grand mean of 3.98 (SD = 0.90), interpreted as "Ready." Among the indicators, the highest mean was "I teach students how to work effectively in groups, including roles and responsibilities" (M = 4.07, SD = 0.98), indicating teachers' strength in preparing students for collaboration. The remaining indicators, forming groups based on readiness, interests, or choice (M= 3.95, SD = 0.86), changing groupings regularly based on needs (M = 3.95, SD = 0.97), and assessing both individual and group performance (M = 3.95, SD = 0.80), received equal ratings, showing consistency in teachers' readiness across different aspects of flexible grouping.

The findings suggest that teachers demonstrate consistent readiness in applying flexible grouping strategies. The slightly higher rating for teaching students how to work effectively in groups implies that teachers prioritize equipping learners with collaboration skills, which can foster productive group dynamics. However, the uniform mean scores for the other indicators indicate that while teachers apply grouping strategies, they may not fully maximize the potential of flexible grouping to tailor instruction according to varied student profiles.

These results imply that while teachers are generally prepared to implement flexible grouping, professional development can further strengthen their ability to use grouping as a dynamic tool for differentiation. Training on strategies such as interest-based grouping, tiered tasks, and rotational models could help teachers move beyond traditional groupings and more effectively match instruction to learner needs. Additionally, schools may support this practice by providing classroom structures and resources (e.g., space, materials, and time) that allow for smoother implementation of varied group arrangements.

Scholarly literature supports the importance of flexible grouping as a core principle of differentiated instruction. Summers and Beers (2019) emphasized that adjusting groups based on readiness, interest, and learning profiles increases engagement and equity in the classroom. Similarly, Ramos et al. (2021) highlighted that effective grouping not only enhances collaboration but also provides multiple pathways to learning. Furthermore, Ruijuan et al. (2023) argue that well-structured group work promotes both academic success and social interaction, strengthening inclusive practices. These findings affirm that while teachers are ready, continuous refinement of flexible grouping strategies can elevate its impact on student learning.

Learning Environment

This domain assessed the extent to which teachers create a supportive, organized, and student-centered classroom environment that encourages active participation, collaboration, and differentiated learning experiences.

Table 14
Learning Environment

Indicators	Mean	SD	VD
I work with students to develop classroom norms for behavior and teamwork.	4.17	0.83	R
I arrange my classroom to promote collaboration and differentiated learning.	4.15	0.85	R
I use transition strategies that minimize downtime (e.g., sponge activities, enrichment).	3.98	0.82	R
I display student work to celebrate learning.	4.07	0.82	R
Student talk, movement, and activity during lessons are aligned with learning goals.	3.95	0.89	R
I teach process and study skills appropriate to my students' learning levels.	4.10	0.92	R
I allow for student-directed learning during part of the instructional day.	4.07	0.79	R
I maximize instructional time by minimizing classroom interruptions and non-teaching activities.	3.98	0.82	R
Grand Mean	4.06	0.84	R

Legend: Very Ready (VR): 4.50-5.00, Ready (R): 3.50-4.49, Somewhat Ready (SR): 2.50-3.49, Barely Ready (BR): 1.50-2.49, Not Ready (NR): 1.00-1.49

Table 14 presents the results for the domain on Learning Environment. The overall grand mean was 4.06 (SD = 0.84), which falls under the descriptor “Ready.” The highest-rated indicator was “I work with students to develop classroom norms for behavior and teamwork” (M = 4.17, SD = 0.83), reflecting strong teacher readiness in fostering shared responsibility and positive classroom culture. Close behind were arranging classrooms to promote collaboration and differentiated learning (M = 4.15, SD = 0.85) and teaching process and study skills appropriate to students’ levels (M = 4.10, SD = 0.92). Other highly rated practices included displaying student work (M = 4.07, SD = 0.82) and allowing student-directed learning (M = 4.07, SD = 0.79). Meanwhile, the lowest mean scores were observed in transition strategies to minimize downtime (M = 3.98, SD = 0.82) and minimizing interruptions to maximize instructional time (M = 3.98, SD = 0.82).

The data indicate that teachers are generally ready to establish positive and effective learning environments. Their strength lies in creating norms for behavior and collaboration, which sets a foundation for inclusivity and mutual respect. Moreover, the emphasis on arranging the physical environment and teaching study skills suggests a balanced approach to both the organizational and academic aspects of classroom management. However, slightly lower ratings for managing transitions and reducing interruptions may reflect areas where instructional time could be further optimized, pointing to a need for enhanced time-management strategies.

The findings imply that while teachers are adept at cultivating supportive and student-centered classrooms, there is room to improve efficiency in the use of class time. To strengthen these areas, professional development may focus on effective transition routines, time-on-task strategies, and integrating quick “sponge” activities to maintain student engagement. Schools could also support teachers by implementing policies that minimize external interruptions and by providing resources that encourage student autonomy. By addressing these aspects, teachers can maximize instructional time while maintaining the positive, collaborative environments they have already established.

Research underscores the importance of a supportive and organized classroom environment in promoting student engagement and differentiated learning. Walker and Graham (2021) argued that strong teacher-student relationships and clear behavioral expectations significantly influence classroom climate and learning outcomes. Similarly, Tomlinson (2022) emphasized that physical arrangements and routines tailored to differentiation create equitable access to learning opportunities. Furthermore, Ibaraki (2024) highlight that classrooms fostering collaboration and minimizing disruptions enhance both academic performance and student well-being. These findings support the present results, indicating that teachers are ready to build effective learning environments, with additional opportunities to refine time management and transition strategies.

Summary of Teachers’ Readiness in Differentiated Instruction

To provide a holistic view of teachers’ readiness in implementing differentiated instruction, the results from the seven domains were consolidated into a summary table, presenting the composite means and descriptive values across key areas.

Table 15
Summary Table

Level of Readiness	Mean	SD	VD
Student Learning Characteristics	4.02	0.97	R
Clarity Regarding Learner Objectives	4.23	0.77	R
Pre-Assessment Strategies	4.06	0.82	R
Effective Instructional Strategies	4.01	0.83	R
Individual Student Supports	4.00	0.91	R
Flexible Grouping	3.98	0.90	R
Learning Environment	4.06	0.84	R

Legend: Very Ready (VR): 4.50-5.00, Ready (R): 3.50-4.49, Somewhat Ready (SR): 2.50-3.49, Barely Ready (BR): 1.50-2.49, Not Ready (NR): 1.00-1.49

Table 15 presents the overall summary of teachers' readiness across the seven domains of differentiated instruction. The composite means ranged from 3.98 to 4.23, all falling under the descriptor "Ready." The highest-rated domain was Clarity Regarding Learner Objectives ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.77$), suggesting that teachers consistently ensure that learning goals are communicated and aligned with instruction. Other relatively strong areas included Pre-Assessment Strategies ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.82$) and Learning Environment ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.84$). Moderate readiness was observed in Student Learning Characteristics ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.97$) and Effective Instructional Strategies ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.83$). The lowest means were found in Individual Student Supports ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.91$) and Flexible Grouping ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.90$).

The data reflect that teachers exhibit consistent readiness across domains, with strengths in communicating objectives and structuring organized environments for learning. This alignment suggests that teachers are intentional in guiding students toward clear targets. However, the relatively lower means in Individual Student Supports and Flexible Grouping highlight areas where differentiated instruction could be deepened. While teachers are generally prepared, their ability to personalize learning through targeted supports and dynamic grouping strategies may require more systematic development.

The findings imply that professional development efforts should consolidate teachers' existing strengths while addressing gaps in differentiation. Training programs may emphasize practical strategies for flexible grouping, scaffolding, and individualized supports to better accommodate diverse learners. Schools could also provide structured mentoring and peer collaboration opportunities to help teachers refine these practices. Policymakers and administrators may consider allocating resources to support teachers with learning materials, technological tools, and reduced class sizes, factors that can enhance the effective implementation of flexible and individualized approaches.

Literature emphasizes that readiness in differentiated instruction requires a balance between clarity, structure, and adaptability. Mogale (2025) underscored that establishing clear learning objectives provides the foundation for effective differentiation, while flexible grouping and targeted supports ensure equitable access to learning opportunities. Furthermore, Idowu (2024) noted that while clarity in objectives is a teacher strength, continuous improvement in personalized supports is necessary for addressing diverse student needs. A study by Bondie et al. (2019) also affirm that differentiated instruction is most effective when teacher readiness extends beyond planning toward flexible implementation in the classroom. These insights support the current findings, showing that teachers are broadly ready but would benefit from enhanced practices in individualized support and flexible grouping.

Association Between Respondents' Profile and Student Learning Characteristics

To examine whether teachers' demographic characteristics have an influence on their readiness to address student learning characteristics, a chi-square test of association was conducted. The results are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16

Significant Association between Respondents Profile and Student Learning

Demographic Variable	Characteristics			Remarks	Results
	Chi-Square	df	p-value		
Age	11.48078	4	0.175916	NS	NS
Gender	0.531481	1	0.766638	NS	NS
Years of Service	5.003532	4	0.757199	NS	NS
Highest Educational Attainment	3.748843	3	0.710621	NS	NS
Area of Specialization	3.447243	3	0.750975	NS	NS
Type of School	10.48893	3	0.232371	NS	NS
Membership in Professional Organization	4.773692	6	0.965114	NS	NS

The results in Table 16 show that none of the respondents' demographic variables had a statistically significant association with student learning characteristics, as all p-values were greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Specifically, age ($p = 0.176$), gender ($p = 0.767$), years of service ($p = 0.757$), highest educational attainment ($p = 0.711$), area of specialization ($p = 0.751$), type of school ($p = 0.232$), and membership in a professional organization ($p = 0.965$) were all found to be not significant.

This indicates that student learning characteristics, as perceived by the teachers, remain consistent across varying demographic groups. Teachers' readiness in understanding learners' needs does not appear to be shaped by their age, gender, experience, or academic background. Rather, this uniformity suggests that teaching practices and readiness to address learning characteristics are guided more by professional expectations and classroom demands than by personal or demographic attributes.

The absence of significant associations suggests that interventions to strengthen differentiated instruction should focus less on tailoring programs to teacher demographics and more on providing universal support. School leaders and policymakers may consider designing inclusive professional development programs that equip all teachers, regardless of background, with effective strategies for responding to diverse learning needs. Continuous capacity-building and reflective practice are recommended to sustain and improve this readiness.

These findings align with Zorba's (2020) assertion that responsiveness to student readiness and learning preferences is not determined by demographic attributes but is cultivated through deliberate practice and professional growth. Similarly, Toropova et al. (2019) highlighted that the greatest influence on student

achievement comes from instructional quality rather than teacher characteristics. This reinforces the idea that fostering strong, evidence-based teaching practices is more impactful than demographic factors in shaping teachers' readiness to address student learning characteristics.

Association Between Respondents' Profile and Clarity Regarding Learner Objectives

To further examine whether teachers' demographic characteristics influenced their clarity regarding learner objectives in differentiated instruction, a chi-square test of independence was conducted. The results are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17

Significant Association between Respondents Profile and Clarity Regarding

Learner Objectives

Demographic Variable	Chi-Square	df	p-value	Remarks	Results
Age	7.225553	4	0.512504	NS	Do not Reject
Gender	0.288281	1	0.865766	NS	Do not Reject
Years of Service	8.060544	4	0.427578	NS	Do not Reject
Highest Educational Attainment	2.5677	3	0.860815	NS	Do not Reject
Area of Specialization	2.416071	3	0.87774	NS	Do not Reject
Type of School	4.24425	3	0.834441	NS	Do not Reject
Membership in Professional Organization	1.796655	6	0.99966	NS	Do not Reject

The chi-square test results in Table 17 reveal that none of the respondents' demographic variables had a statistically significant association with their clarity regarding learner objectives, as all p-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold. Specifically, age ($p = 0.513$), gender ($p = 0.866$), years of service ($p = 0.428$), highest educational attainment ($p = 0.861$), area of specialization ($p = 0.878$), type of school ($p = 0.834$), and membership in a professional organization ($p = 0.999$) showed no meaningful differences.

These results indicate that teachers' ability to establish and articulate clear learner objectives is consistent across demographic groups. This suggests that clarity of objectives is less dependent on personal or professional background factors and may be more strongly influenced by institutional standards, training programs, or curriculum requirements that provide uniform guidance on setting instructional goals.

Given these findings, schools and policymakers may not need to differentiate training programs on learner objectives based on demographic characteristics. Instead, emphasis should be placed on providing ongoing professional development that reinforces the alignment of objectives with differentiated instruction practices. Ensuring that all teachers, regardless of age, experience, or background, have access to resources and training on formulating clear objectives can help sustain consistency and quality in instruction.

The consistency of results aligns with studies highlighting that clarity in learner objectives is often guided by systemic frameworks rather than individual differences (Hoemann et al., 2021). Research underscores that when objectives are well-communicated, they enhance student engagement and performance regardless of teacher demographics (Ekal & Mungai, 2024). Similarly, Tomlinson and Imbeau (2023) emphasized that the articulation of objectives is a foundational element in differentiated instruction, ensuring all learners understand the purpose and direction of lessons.

Association Between Respondents' Profile and Pre-Assessment Strategies

To assess whether teachers' demographic characteristics had an influence on their use of pre-assessment strategies in differentiated instruction, a chi-square test of independence was conducted. The results are presented in Table 18.

Table 18 shows that none of the demographic variables were significantly associated with teachers' use of pre-assessment strategies in differentiated instruction. All p-values were

Table 18

Significant Association between Respondents Profile and Pre-Assessment

Strategies

Demographic Variable	Chi-Square	df	p-value	Remarks	Results
Age	7.226209	4	0.512	NS	Do not Reject
Gender	0.330645	1	0.848		Do not Reject
Years of Service	10.52056	4	0.230	NS	Do not Reject
Highest Educational Attainment	1.923038	3	0.9279		Do not Reject
Area of Specialization	4.992122	3	0.545	NS	Do not Reject
Type of School	10.12209	3	0.2561		Do not Reject
Membership in Professional Organization	7.41305	6	0.829	NS	Do not Reject

greater than the 0.05 significance level, including age ($p = 0.512$), gender ($p = 0.848$), years of service ($p = 0.230$), highest educational attainment ($p = 0.928$), area of specialization ($p = 0.545$), type of school ($p = 0.256$), and membership in professional organizations ($p = 0.829$).

These findings suggest that the use of pre-assessment strategies is uniformly practiced by teachers regardless of their demographic characteristics. This implies that pre-assessment, such as diagnostic tests, questioning, or informal observations, is likely driven by curricular frameworks and professional expectations, rather than influenced by differences in age, experience, or academic qualifications.

Since no demographic factors were found to influence the application of pre-assessment strategies, professional development initiatives should instead focus on enhancing the quality and variety of pre-assessment tools used by teachers. Training could emphasize practical strategies for collecting and interpreting student data to inform instruction. Policymakers may also consider integrating pre-assessment practices as a standard across all grade levels to ensure consistent instructional planning.

This outcome is consistent with Mitchell (2024), who emphasized that pre-assessment is a cornerstone of differentiated instruction and is essential for understanding student readiness levels. Similarly, Swann et al. (2020) highlighted that effective pre-assessment practices improve teaching quality by informing decisions that meet diverse learners' needs. Research also suggests that systematic pre-assessment, rather than teacher demographics, plays a more critical role in shaping instructional practices (Sims, 2020).

Association Between Respondents' Profile and Effective Instructional Strategies

To determine whether the respondents' demographic characteristics have a significant relationship with their use of effective instructional strategies, a chi-square test of independence was conducted. The results are shown in Table 19.

Table 19

Significant Association between Respondents Profile and Effective Instructional

Strategies

Demographic Variable	Chi-Square	df	p-value	Remarks	Results
Age	11.52447	4	0.173715	NS	Do not Reject
Gender	0.531481	1	0.766638	NS	Do not Reject
Years of Service	15.53408	4	0.049556	NS	Do not Reject
Highest Educational Attainment	2.65525	3	0.850704	NS	Do not Reject
Area of Specialization	3.481427	3	0.746439	NS	Do not Reject
Type of School	7.35427	3	0.498936	NS	Do not Reject
Membership in Professional Organization	4.538683	6	0.971643	NS	Do not Reject

The chi-square test results in Table 19 show that none of the respondents' demographic variables had a statistically significant association with the use of effective instructional strategies, as all p-values were greater than 0.05. Specifically, age ($p = 0.174$), gender ($p = 0.767$), years of service ($p = 0.050$), highest educational attainment ($p = 0.851$), area of specialization ($p = 0.746$), type of school ($p = 0.499$), and membership in a professional organization ($p = 0.972$) did not demonstrate significant differences.

Among the variables tested, years of service ($\chi^2 = 15.53$, $p = 0.050$) came closest to the significance threshold, suggesting a potential trend where teaching experience may have some influence on instructional practices. However, the result was still not statistically significant, which supports the conclusion that teaching strategies remain largely consistent across all demographics.

These findings imply that effective instructional strategies are widely applied by teachers regardless of age, gender, education, specialization, or professional affiliations. This uniformity suggests that training, institutional policies, and shared pedagogical frameworks may be guiding classroom practices more strongly than personal background. It is recommended that future capacity-building programs focus on deepening and refining these common strategies while also encouraging teachers to adapt based on contextual student needs rather than demographic characteristics.

The results resonate with studies showing that instructional strategies are shaped more by pedagogical training and institutional culture rather than demographic factors (Yu, 2021). Research underscores that teacher effectiveness is better linked to continuous professional development and reflective practice rather than static attributes such as age or years of service (Stăncescu et al., 2019). This reinforces the importance of investing in ongoing teacher development to ensure the consistent use of effective instructional strategies across diverse teaching contexts. Moreover, Ingersoll et al. (2021) emphasized that professional growth opportunities, rather than demographic factors, are the primary drivers of instructional improvement. These findings affirm that strengthening professional learning communities and institutional support systems is essential in sustaining consistent and effective teaching practices.

Association Between Respondents' Profile and Individual Student Supports

To determine whether the respondents' demographic characteristics have a significant relationship with their implementation of individual student supports, a chi-square test of independence was conducted. The results are shown in Table 20.

Table 20

Significant Association between Respondents Profile and Individual Student

Demographic Variable	Supports			Remarks	Results
	Chi-Square	df	p-value		
Age	7.537069	4	0.479944	NS	Do not Reject
Gender	0.475893	1	0.788245	NS	Do not Reject
Years of Service	5.680335	4	0.682989	NS	Do not Reject
Highest Educational Attainment	2.670657	3	0.848901	NS	Do not Reject
Area of Specialization	4.245103	3	0.643546	NS	Do not Reject
Type of School	3.076679	3	0.929454	NS	Do not Reject
Membership in Professional Organization	5.434127	6	0.941887	NS	Do not Reject

The chi-square test results in Table 20 reveal that there were no statistically significant associations between respondents' demographic profiles and their implementation of individual student supports. All p-values were above the 0.05 threshold, including age ($p = 0.480$), gender ($p = 0.788$), years of service ($p = 0.683$), highest educational attainment ($p = 0.849$), area of specialization ($p = 0.644$), type of school ($p = 0.929$), and membership in professional organizations ($p = 0.942$).

The absence of significant associations suggests that the provision of individual student supports is practiced consistently by teachers regardless of demographic background. This uniformity indicates that student-centered support strategies may be seen as an essential and non-negotiable part of inclusive teaching practices rather than being influenced by personal or professional characteristics.

These findings imply that schools and education systems have likely instilled a strong culture of prioritizing learner needs through policies, training, and expectations of inclusive practice. However, while demographic variables do not appear to drive differences, strengthening professional development focused on differentiated instruction, counseling, and social-emotional learning may further enhance teachers' ability to provide tailored student supports. School leaders should also sustain systems of collaboration, such as peer mentoring and case conferencing, to ensure that every learner's needs are systematically addressed.

This result is supported by Griful-Freixenet et al. (2020), who emphasized that differentiation and student supports are grounded in pedagogy and mindset rather than teacher demographics. Subban et al. (2023) likewise argued that inclusive education rests on teachers' shared commitment to "teaching everyone," regardless of personal background. Similarly, McChesney and Cross, J. (2023) highlighted that effective support strategies are linked more closely to school-wide professional learning and institutional culture than to individual characteristics.

Association Between Respondents' Profile and Flexible Grouping

To determine whether the respondents' demographic characteristics have a significant relationship with their use of flexible grouping, a chi-square test of independence was conducted. The results are shown in Table 21.

Table 21

Significant Association between Respondents Profile and Flexible Grouping

Demographic Variable	Chi-Square	df	p-value	Remarks	Results
Age	7.187783	4	0.516515	NS	Do not Reject
Gender	0.475893	1	0.788245	NS	Do not Reject
Years of Service	1.800827	4	0.986521	NS	Do not Reject
Highest Educational Attainment	2.078102	3	0.912377	NS	Do not Reject
Area of Specialization	1.664972	3	0.947793	NS	Do not Reject
Type of School	8.691582	3	0.368978	NS	Do not Reject
Membership in Professional Organization	12.54766	6	0.402757	NS	Do not Reject

As shown in Table 21, the chi-square test revealed that none of the demographic variables were significantly associated with the use of flexible grouping. The p-values for age (0.517), gender (0.788), years of service (0.987), highest educational attainment (0.912), area of specialization (0.948), type of school (0.369), and membership in a professional organization (0.403) were all greater than the 0.05 significance level. These findings indicate that teachers' demographic profiles do not influence their application of flexible grouping strategies in the classroom.

The absence of significant relationships suggests that flexible grouping has become a common instructional approach practiced across teachers regardless of their personal or professional background. This uniformity may be attributed to the fact that grouping students flexibly is an inclusive teaching strategy embedded in many curricular reforms and professional training sessions. Thus, whether a teacher is experienced or new to the profession, highly educated or holding basic qualifications, their tendency to implement flexible grouping does not differ significantly.

These results imply that flexible grouping is already a well-integrated strategy among educators and can be considered a standard practice for addressing learner diversity. Since demographic factors do not hinder its adoption, school leaders and administrators should continue reinforcing this approach through professional development and instructional coaching. Moreover, integrating flexible grouping in collaborative lesson planning could further strengthen its impact, ensuring that students of varying abilities benefit from peer support, differentiated activities, and cooperative learning.

The findings align with Rochester's (2021) assertion that flexible grouping is central to differentiated instruction, allowing teachers to adjust groupings based on student readiness, interests, and learning profiles rather than fixed demographic categories. Similarly, Sanguinetti (2024) emphasized that flexible grouping enhances student engagement and achievement across diverse classrooms, underscoring its universal applicability. This consistency between the present results and previous studies highlights that flexible grouping is not limited by teacher characteristics but is instead shaped by instructional philosophy and curricular demands.

Association Between Respondents' Profile and Learning Environment

To determine whether the respondents' demographic characteristics have a significant relationship with their ability to establish and maintain an effective learning environment, a chi-square test of independence was conducted. The results are shown in Table 22.

Table 22

Significant Association between Respondents Profile and Learning Environment

Demographic Variable	Chi-Square	df	p-value	Remarks	Results
Age	13.98225	4	0.082229	NS	Do not Reject
Gender	0.424138	1	0.808909	NS	Do not Reject
Years of Service	7.188546	4	0.516434	NS	Do not Reject
Highest Educational Attainment	5.951386	3	0.428658	NS	Do not Reject
Area of Specialization	3.023182	3	0.805932	NS	Do not Reject
Type of School	7.708398	3	0.46246	NS	Do not Reject
Membership in Professional Organization	8.899603	6	0.711481	NS	Do not Reject

Table 22 shows that none of the demographic variables had a statistically significant association with the creation of a positive learning environment. The chi-square values yielded p-values greater than the 0.05 threshold, including age (0.082), gender (0.809), years of service (0.516), highest educational attainment (0.429), area of specialization (0.806), type of school (0.462), and membership in professional organizations (0.711). These results indicate that the ability to provide a supportive and conducive learning environment is consistently demonstrated by teachers regardless of their personal or professional characteristics.

The lack of significant differences across demographic categories suggests that fostering a productive learning environment is a universal practice among educators. This may be due to its emphasis in teacher training programs, classroom management frameworks, and professional standards that apply equally to all teachers. In other words, the skills and strategies required to maintain a learning-conducive environment are not exclusive to teachers of a particular age, gender, or level of experience, but rather form part of the shared professional identity of educators.

Given these findings, it is recommended that schools and education authorities continue to support teachers in enhancing their classroom management strategies through ongoing training, peer collaboration, and mentoring. Since demographic factors do not appear to influence teachers' ability to establish learning environments, professional development can focus more on equipping all teachers with innovative techniques such as restorative practices, culturally responsive pedagogy, and learner-centered classroom designs. Reinforcing these strategies will ensure equitable learning experiences across diverse school contexts.

This outcome supports Marquez and Oropa's (2025) view that effective classroom management and the establishment of a supportive learning environment are essential teacher competencies that transcend demographic distinctions. Similarly, Williams et al. (2019) emphasized that maintaining a positive learning climate depends largely on consistent implementation of evidence-based practices rather than individual teacher characteristics. These perspectives reinforce the current findings, highlighting that the capacity to build conducive learning environments is a professional responsibility shared across the teaching workforce.

Perceived Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Instruction

Table 23 presents the frequency distribution of responses from 41 respondents, categorizing their perceptions of the challenges in implementing differentiated instruction. The challenges are rated based on the level of difficulty experienced, with the following scales: Extremely Challenging (EC), Very Challenging (VC), Moderately Challenging (MC), Slightly Challenging (SC), and Not Challenging (NC).

Table 23

Perceived Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Instruction

Challenges	Mean	VD
1. Implementing differentiated instruction requires a long time for assessing learners' needs, identifying key concepts, and designing suitable activities.	3.88	VC
2. Managing the class during differentiated instruction is difficult	3.61	VC
3. Shifting my role from a knowledge-giver to a learning facilitator is difficult.	3.39	MC
4. Selecting the most appropriate strategy for each lesson is a challenge.	3.66	VC
5. I feel I lack the necessary skills to implement differentiated instruction strategies effectively.	3.39	MC
6. Planning effective differentiated lessons is difficult.	3.56	VC
7. I need more training on how to apply DI strategies effectively.	3.68	VC
8. The large number of students in my classroom makes differentiation challenging.	3.80	VC
9. Arranging the physical space in my classroom to support student grouping is a challenge.	3.71	VC
10. I struggle with maintaining strong belief in the importance of differentiated instruction.	3.54	VC
11.. I face difficulty accessing or using teaching media and technology for DI.	3.34	MC
12. School administrators lack strong belief in the implementation of differentiated instruction.	3.41	MC
13. I receive little administrative support when planning for differentiated instruction.	3.63	VC
14. There is a lack of support from administrators when explaining DI to parents or caregivers.	3.51	VC
Grand Mean	3.58	VC

Legend: Extremely Challenging (EC): 4.50 – 5.00, Very Challenging (VC): 3.50 – 4.49, Moderately Challenging (MC): 2.50 – 3.49, Slightly Challenging (SC): 1.50 – 2.49, Not Challenging (NC): 1.00 – 1.49

Table 23 highlights the perceived challenges faced by teachers in implementing differentiated instruction (DI). The mean values across various challenges indicate that the most commonly perceived difficulty is managing the large number of students in the classroom, with a mean of 3.80, falling within the Very Challenging (VC) range. Additionally, challenges such as the long time required for assessing learners' needs and designing activities (mean = 3.88) and planning effective lessons (mean = 3.56) are also seen as very challenging. This suggests that teachers struggle with the logistical demands of DI, particularly in large classrooms where differentiation becomes more complex.

The data also reveal that teachers feel moderately challenged by shifting from the role of a knowledge-giver to a learning facilitator, as evidenced by a mean of 3.39. Similarly, selecting the most appropriate strategy for each lesson and feeling a lack of necessary skills to implement DI effectively were rated as moderately challenging, with means of 3.66 and 3.39, respectively. These results underscore the importance of teacher preparedness and the need for targeted professional development in the application of DI strategies.

In terms of administrative support, very challenging concerns were identified, with a mean of 3.63 for the lack of support when planning DI, and 3.51 for explaining DI to parents. This suggests that systemic barriers, such as insufficient administrative support and resources, contribute significantly to the difficulties teachers face. It is important to address these issues by ensuring strong administrative backing and providing teachers with the necessary resources to implement DI effectively.

The Grand Mean of 3.58 places the overall perception of challenges in the Very Challenging range, reinforcing the view that while teachers recognize the value of differentiated instruction, they encounter significant barriers in its implementation. These findings align with previous studies that highlight the importance of continuous professional development, administrative support, and classroom resource management to address the challenges of DI (Tomlinson, 2022; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). Furthermore, the data suggest that strategic interventions aimed at reducing class sizes, improving teacher training, and enhancing technological access could help mitigate these challenges, enabling more effective differentiation in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

This study assessed the readiness of Master of Arts in Education students specializing in Special Education (MAEd SPED) at Cebu Technological University–Main Campus for the execution of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in inclusive classrooms. The findings indicated that the participants were predominantly prepared in all seven domains of Differentiated Instruction: student learning characteristics, clarity of learner objectives, pre-assessment processes, instructional strategies, individualized supports, flexible grouping, and learning environment. The clarity of learning objectives and the creation of supportive learning environments were acknowledged as strengths, while personalized supports and flexible grouping were identified as areas requiring further enhancement.

The results indicate that graduate students possess the requisite knowledge and attitudes for inclusive teaching; yet, institutional constraints, such as limited resources, time, and training opportunities, continue to pose challenges. These findings highlight the imperative for ongoing institutional support, targeted professional development, and curricular improvements that integrate both theoretical and practical dimensions of differentiated education.

Future research and practice should focus on examining the influence of demographic factors—such as teaching experience, academic background, and prior exposure to inclusive environments—on readiness for differentiated instruction (DI). It is recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of mentorship, collaborative learning initiatives, and resource availability in improving instructors' proficiency and assurance in executing differentiated instruction. Moreover, the integration of technological tools and flexible instructional resources must be examined as potential enablers of differentiation, particularly in resource-constrained classrooms. By concentrating on these domains, teacher education programs and policymakers may assist educators in creating inclusive and equitable classrooms for all kids, irrespective of their needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study's findings and conclusions suggest multiple strategies to enhance future research and increase the efficacy of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in inclusive classrooms. Future study should examine how demographic factors, including age, teaching experience, educational qualifications, and prior exposure to inclusive education, influence educators' preparedness for differentiated instruction. Comprehending these relationships can yield significant insights for enhancing teacher preparation programs and formulating targeted professional development initiatives. It is essential to examine how institutional support, resource accessibility, and mentorship affect instructors' capacity and motivation to implement differentiated instruction methodologies. Enhancing these support mechanisms will guarantee that educators possess the necessary abilities, resources, and assistance to perform their duties proficiently.

Moreover, educators should be incentivized to collaborate and mentor one another to share best practices and address shared challenges in inclusive education. It is advisable to investigate the utilization of technology and adaptable instructional resources in the classroom. These can enhance course adaptability, maintain student engagement, and promote differentiation in resource-constrained environments. Ultimately, longitudinal research must be undertaken to evaluate the extent to which instructors' perceived preparedness translates into enduring classroom practices. These findings emphasize the significance of diverse instruction in achieving equitable educational outcomes.

The study's suggestions emphasize the significance of ongoing professional development, institutional backing, and innovation in inclusive education. By narrowing the disparity between preparation and actual achievement in the classroom, educators can guarantee that all children, irrespective of ability, background, or learning style, have equitable and significant learning opportunities.

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