Challenges Encountered by General Education Teachers in Handling Learners with Special Needs in an Inclusive Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the challenges faced by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom at Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. during School Year 2026–2027. It aimed to identify challenges, strategies, the influence of teaching experience, training, and class size, available support, and perceived capability. A qualitative descriptive research design was employed. Ten general education teachers were selected through purposive sampling. A semi-structured interview guide was used to gather qualitative data. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview responses. Findings revealed challenges involving individualized attention, instructional adaptation, learner behavior and communication, limited resources and specialized assistance, and competing responsibilities. Teachers addressed these challenges through task modification, multimodal supports, peer-assisted participation, flexible activity and assessment adaptation, parent communication, consultation, and continuous adjustment. Experience strengthened practical judgment and confidence, while training enhanced inclusive knowledge; however, large class sizes constrained individualized support. Teachers received support from colleagues, school leaders, SPED personnel, parents, and professional development activities, although limitations in personnel, resources, time, and specialist access remained. Teachers generally perceived themselves as capable, but capability varied with learner complexity, classroom conditions, resources, and support. It was concluded that effective inclusive practice requires teacher adaptability and sustained support. An Action Plan was recommended to strengthen instructional, behavioral, assessment, collaborative, and professional learning practices for inclusive education.

Keywords: Special Education, Challenges, Strategies, Support, Perceived Capability, Qualitative Descriptive Research Design, Action Plan, Newtown School of Excellence, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

General education teachers are instrumental in supporting learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms, but they might find it difficult to meet diverse educational needs while managing the academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of the whole class. These may be related to changing the methods of teaching, addressing behavior and communication issues, catering to individual needs, managing large classes and workload, and getting the right materials and expert help. These demands can be compounded when teachers have little preparation or opportunity to develop specialized knowledge and skills. Thus, the experiences of general education teachers are critical to understand how inclusive classroom practices are implemented in real school settings and what conditions may affect their effectiveness in addressing learners with special needs.

Internationally, research has documented that teacher experience various challenges when implementing inclusive education, particularly when they are expected to address diverse learner needs without sufficient preparation and support. Wray et al. (2022), in their systematic review of teacher self-efficacy for inclusive education, found that teachers' perceived capability was associated with factors such as knowledge,

professional development, teaching experience, and previous experiences with learners with disabilities. Similarly, Subban et al. (2022) reported that teachers' beliefs, instructional practices, relationships, and access to appropriate support influenced the implementation of inclusive education. These findings indicate that the challenges encountered by general education teachers are closely related to their preparation, classroom experiences, and the support available within their educational environment.

The international literature also indicates that classroom-level challenges are influenced by broader school and system conditions. Research has identified inadequate training, limited resources, insufficient specialist support, workload, and difficulties in adapting instruction as continuing concerns among teachers responsible for inclusive classrooms. Forlin et al. (2024) emphasized that teacher education and professional development, resources and support, policy implementation, and collaboration remain important considerations in strengthening inclusive education across the Asia-Pacific region. Such findings demonstrate that teachers' difficulties cannot be viewed solely as individual limitations because their experiences are also influenced by the availability of institutional support, professional learning opportunities, and classroom conditions. Understanding these challenges from teachers' own experiences is therefore important in identifying practical ways to strengthen inclusive classroom practice.

In the Philippine setting, general education teachers have increasingly been expected to accommodate learners with disabilities and other special educational needs in regular classrooms. Republic Act No. 11650 (2022), or the Inclusive Education Act, strengthened the national policy on inclusion and recognized the need for appropriate educational support, teacher preparation, reasonable accommodations, and related services for learners with disabilities. Despite this policy direction, Philippine research has continued to identify concerns related to teacher preparation, instructional adaptation, resources, facilities, and support. Allam and Martin (2021) reported that teachers encountered difficulties related to identifying individual needs, selecting appropriate teaching strategies, accessing instructional materials, and receiving adequate training and support. These concerns suggest that the implementation of inclusive education continues to place substantial demands on general education teachers.

Within the local context, general education teachers in Philippine schools continue to encounter conditions that may affect their ability to handle learners with special needs effectively. Studies conducted in Cebu and other Philippine school settings have examined teachers' preparedness, attitudes, knowledge, practices, and experiences in implementing inclusive education, with findings pointing to continuing concerns involving training, resources, instructional practices, and support. Alido et al. (2023), for instance, examined receiving teachers in Talisay City and highlighted the importance of teacher preparedness in handling learners with special educational needs. Similarly, local research has indicated that teachers may recognize the value of inclusion while still experiencing difficulties in translating inclusive principles into daily classroom practices. These conditions make it necessary to examine the experiences of teachers within their actual school environment rather than relying solely on broader findings from other educational contexts.

Although previous studies have established that teachers encounter challenges in implementing inclusive education, a gap remains in understanding how general education teachers experience and respond to these challenges within the specific context of Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. Existing studies have frequently focused on teachers' preparedness, attitudes, knowledge, or perceived competence using quantitative approaches, while fewer studies have explored the experiences behind these conditions through qualitative approaches. In particular, limited attention has been given to how teachers describe the challenges they encounter, the strategies they employ, the influence of teaching experience, training, and class size, the support available to them, and their perceived capability in handling learners with special needs. Addressing this gap is important because teachers' personal experiences may reveal practical classroom concerns that may not be fully captured through numerical measures.

Thus, this study examined the challenges faced by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom at Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. during the School Year 2026–2027. Specifically, it sought to identify the significant challenges encountered by teachers, determine the strategies they employed to address these challenges, examine the influence of teaching experience, level

of training, and class size, determine the forms of support available to teachers, and explore their perceived capability in handling learners with special needs.

Theories and Legal Bases

The study was anchored on three theories and supported by three legal bases that provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the challenges faced by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom. The theories included Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework of CAST, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which provided perspectives on teachers' perceived capability, instructional responses to diverse learning needs, and the influence of classroom, school, and environmental conditions on teachers' experiences. These theoretical perspectives helped explain how teachers' knowledge, skills, experiences, instructional practices, and available support shaped their responses to the demands of inclusive classroom instruction. The study was also supported by Republic Act No. 11650 or the Inclusive Education Act of 2022, Republic Act No. 7277, as amended by Republic Act No. 9442 or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability, and Republic Act No. 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. These legal bases established the policy foundations for inclusive, accessible, equitable, and learner-centered education and emphasized the responsibility of educational institutions to ensure appropriate support and opportunities for learners with special needs.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory explains human behavior as the result of the reciprocal interaction among personal factors, behavior, and the environment. A central concept of the theory is self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in his or her capability to organize and perform actions necessary to achieve desired outcomes. In the teaching context, self-efficacy influences how teachers approach instructional tasks, respond to difficulties, persist when challenges arise, and adapt their practices to different classroom situations. Accordingly, the theory recognizes that teachers' beliefs about their capabilities are influenced not only by their personal knowledge and experiences but also by the conditions and support present in their teaching environment.

In this regard, Social Cognitive Theory was relevant to the present study because the study examined the challenges faced by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs, including their perceived capability to respond to diverse classroom needs. Teachers who encounter difficulties in managing behavior, communication, learning differences, workload, and limited resources may also develop varying levels of confidence in their ability to handle inclusive classrooms. Moreover, teaching experience, training, classroom conditions, and support may influence how teachers perceive their own capabilities and how they respond to challenges. Thus, the theory provided a basis for understanding the relationship between teachers' experiences, their perceived capability, their instructional responses, and the environmental conditions surrounding inclusive classroom practice.

Consistent with this perspective, recent studies supported the relevance of Social Cognitive Theory to inclusive education. Wray et al. (2022), in a systematic review, found that teaching experience, knowledge of inclusive education, professional learning, and experience with persons with disabilities were among the factors associated with teacher self-efficacy for inclusive education. Similarly, Woodcock et al. (2022) found that teachers with different levels of self-efficacy demonstrated differences in their inclusive teaching practices, with higher-efficacy teachers more likely to focus on student success, accessibility, and confidence building. Taken together, these findings support the present study's focus on teachers' experiences, training, challenges, strategies, and perceived capability in handling learners with special needs.

Beyond teachers' beliefs and capabilities, however, the way instruction is designed also plays an important role in responding to learner diversity. In this connection, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework provides an instructional perspective for understanding how teachers can anticipate and address differences among learners. UDL is an educational framework that encourages teachers to design learning experiences that reduce barriers and provide multiple opportunities for learners to engage with content,

access information, and demonstrate what they have learned. Rather than designing instruction for an assumed "average" learner and making adjustments only after difficulties occur, UDL encourages educators to consider learner variability during the planning and design of instruction. Consequently, the framework is particularly relevant to inclusive education because it promotes flexible and accessible learning experiences for learners with different abilities and needs.

More specifically, the UDL framework was relevant to the present study because several of the challenges examined involved teachers' efforts to address diverse learning needs, behavioral and communication difficulties, and differences in learners' abilities within the same classroom. General education teachers may need to modify instructional approaches, learning materials, classroom activities, assessment practices, and methods of presenting information to accommodate learners with special needs. In this sense, the strategies identified by the participants could be understood in relation to the principles of providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. Furthermore, UDL helped frame the challenges encountered by teachers not simply as learner-related difficulties but as concerns that may arise when instructional environments are not sufficiently flexible or accessible.

Supporting this instructional perspective, recent studies further demonstrate the application of UDL to inclusive classroom practice. Zhang et al. (2024), in a systematic review, identified continuing challenges in implementing UDL and emphasized the importance of teachers' knowledge, beliefs, resources, and professional development in translating the framework into practice. Likewise, Roldán et al. (2024) found that UDL implementation was associated with teacher self-efficacy, motivation, and preparation, highlighting the importance of developing teachers' capacity to apply UDL principles in inclusive settings. In addition, research by King-Sears et al. (2023) found a positive effect of UDL-based instruction on learner achievement, demonstrating the potential of flexible instructional design to support diverse learners. Taken together, these studies strengthened the use of UDL in the present study as a framework for examining the instructional strategies and challenges experienced by general education teachers.

While Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes teachers' personal beliefs and behavioral responses and UDL focuses on instructional responses to learner variability, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory broadens the perspective by examining how different levels of the environment influence individuals' experiences. The theory proposes that human development and behavior are influenced by interconnected environmental systems, including immediate settings such as the classroom and school and broader social, institutional, and policy environments. From an educational perspective, this recognizes that teachers' experiences are shaped not only by their individual knowledge and skills but also by relationships, school structures, available resources, administrative practices, policies, and other conditions surrounding the teaching and learning process.

Accordingly, Ecological Systems Theory was particularly relevant to the present study because the challenges faced by general education teachers may be influenced by several interconnected conditions within and beyond the classroom. Class size, workload, availability of instructional materials, access to specialized personnel, administrative support, collaboration with colleagues and parents, professional development opportunities, and school policies may affect how teachers handle learners with special needs. Thus, the theory provided a framework for examining the forms of support available to teachers and understanding how classroom and school conditions may contribute to or alleviate the challenges they experience. Moreover, it complemented the study's examination of teaching experience, level of training, and class size by situating these factors within the broader environment in which teachers perform their responsibilities.

This ecological perspective is further supported by recent research. Mdikana (2022) used Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory as a framework for examining inadequate teacher support and found that teachers experienced difficulties implementing inclusive education because of insufficient training, resources, and support structures. Similarly, in the Philippine context, Español et al. (2024) applied Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to examine the lived experiences of special needs education teachers and found that interactions across different ecological systems influenced inclusive education practices, including

teaching adaptations, collaboration, institutional policies, and teacher perspectives. Overall, these findings support the present study's examination of teacher challenges within the interconnected classroom and school environment and emphasize the importance of considering support systems when understanding teachers' experiences in inclusive education.

The three theories provided a complementary basis for understanding the challenges faced by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom. Social Cognitive Theory explained the role of teachers' perceived capability, experiences, and training in responding to classroom challenges, while Universal Design for Learning emphasized flexible and accessible instructional approaches that address differences among learners. In addition, Ecological Systems Theory explained how classroom conditions, school resources, professional relationships, and other forms of support influenced teachers' experiences and responses. Taken together, these theoretical perspectives guided the study in examining the challenges encountered by teachers, the strategies they employed, the influence of teaching experience, training, and class size, the support available to them, and their perceived capability in handling learners with special needs. Moreover, the theories emphasized that effective inclusive classroom practice depends on teachers' competencies, appropriate instructional responses, and supportive conditions within the school environment.

Building on these theoretical perspectives, the study was further anchored on Philippine laws that established the rights of learners with disabilities and the responsibilities of schools and teachers in ensuring inclusive and accessible education. The legal bases of the study were Republic Act No. 11650, Republic Act No. 7277 as amended by Republic Act No. 9442, and Republic Act No. 10533. Collectively, these laws provided the policy and institutional context within which general education teachers handled learners with special needs in regular classroom settings.

Among these legal foundations, Republic Act No. 11650, known as the Inclusive Education Act of 2022, institutionalized a policy of inclusion and services for learners with disabilities in the Philippine basic education system. The law recognized inclusive education as a process of addressing the diverse needs of learners through accommodation, modification, adaptation, and individualization of content, approaches, structures, and strategies. It also established Inclusive Learning Resource Centers and emphasized the provision of appropriate support and related services to learners with disabilities. Furthermore, the law recognized the need to train and equip teachers and other school personnel with the capabilities necessary for the education and support of learners with disabilities.

In relation to the present study, Republic Act No. 11650 was directly relevant because it established legal responsibilities and expectations surrounding the inclusion of learners with disabilities in the general education system. The challenges experienced by general education teachers may be understood in relation to these requirements, particularly those concerning teacher preparation, instructional adaptation, resources, technical assistance, and support services. Likewise, the law relates directly to the study's examination of the strategies employed by teachers, the training they received, the support available to them, and their perceived capability in handling learners with special needs. Thus, its provisions provided a legal basis for examining whether teachers had adequate conditions and support to fulfill their responsibilities in inclusive classrooms.

Furthermore, the provisions of Republic Act No. 11650 strengthened the relevance of examining teachers' actual experiences in implementing inclusive education. The law recognized the importance of training teachers and providing technical assistance, consultation, instructional materials, and related support for learners with disabilities and their teachers. These provisions corresponded closely with the concerns examined in the present study, particularly challenges related to limited resources and specialized support and gaps in training and specialized knowledge. Consequently, Republic Act No. 11650 served as the primary legal foundation for understanding the responsibilities of general education teachers and the support structures required for inclusive classroom practice.

Alongside Republic Act No. 11650, Republic Act No. 7277, known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability, established the rights of persons with disabilities and provided for their integration into the mainstream of society. Its educational provisions required the State to ensure adequate access to quality education and opportunities for persons with disabilities. The law also directed educational institutions to consider the special requirements of persons with disabilities in educational policies, programs, facilities, schedules, and other relevant considerations. Subsequently, Republic Act No. 9442 amended Republic Act No. 7277 and strengthened protections and benefits for persons with disabilities, including educational assistance and protection against discrimination and social practices that may diminish their dignity and self-esteem.

In this context, the law was relevant to the present study because the challenges faced by general education teachers were connected to the broader responsibility of schools to ensure that learners with disabilities could participate meaningfully in education. Teachers were expected to consider learners' individual needs and provide appropriate classroom experiences despite differences in abilities, behavior, communication, and learning requirements. Therefore, the difficulties encountered by teachers in adapting instruction, managing diverse needs, and accessing appropriate resources had implications for the educational rights protected by the law. These legal provisions supported the study's focus on identifying teachers' challenges and strategies and examining the forms of support available to them.

Moreover, the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability provided a rights-based perspective to the study. It emphasized that persons with disabilities were entitled to educational opportunities and that educational institutions should consider their special needs in the formulation and implementation of educational programs. This perspective further highlighted the importance of understanding the experiences of general education teachers because effective inclusion involves more than placing learners with disabilities in regular classrooms. Rather, it requires teachers and schools to create conditions that allow these learners to participate and learn with appropriate support. Hence, the law provided an important basis for examining whether the challenges experienced by teachers affected their ability to respond adequately to the educational needs of learners with special needs.

In addition to these disability-related laws, Republic Act No. 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, established the enhanced basic education program and emphasized the development of a learner-oriented and responsive educational system. The law required the basic education curriculum to be learner-centered, inclusive, developmentally appropriate, relevant, responsive, research-based, and flexible. It also recognized the diversity of learners, schools, and communities and required the curriculum to respond to these differences. Furthermore, the law provided for teacher education and training to ensure that teachers possessed the competencies needed to implement the enhanced basic education program.

Accordingly, Republic Act No. 10533 was relevant to the present study because its emphasis on learner-centered and inclusive education placed general education teachers in a position where they needed to respond to varying learner characteristics and educational needs. The challenges identified in the study, including managing diverse learning needs, adapting instruction, addressing behavioral and communication difficulties, and dealing with workload and class size, were related to the responsibility of teachers to implement responsive instruction. Similarly, the provisions on teacher education and continuing professional development were consistent with the study's examination of teachers' training and perceived capability in handling learners with special needs.

In addition, the provisions of Republic Act No. 10533 highlighted the importance of teacher preparation in achieving quality and inclusive basic education. The law provided for continuing teacher education and training and recognized the need to upgrade teachers' skills through professional development programs. This supported the present study's attention to training as one of the factors influencing teachers' experiences in handling learners with special needs. It also provided a policy basis for the development of an Action Plan that could address identified gaps in teachers' knowledge, skills, instructional strategies, and professional support.

Taken together, the three legal bases established a clear policy foundation for the inclusion and education of learners with special needs in the Philippine basic education system. Republic Act No. 11650 emphasized inclusive education, teacher preparation, and support services; Republic Act No. 7277, as amended by Republic Act No. 9442, protected the educational rights and welfare of persons with disabilities; while Republic Act No. 10533 emphasized learner-centered, inclusive, responsive, and flexible basic education as well as continuing teacher development. Thus, these laws supported the present study by establishing that addressing the challenges of general education teachers was not only an instructional concern but also part of the broader responsibility of schools to uphold the right of learners with special needs to accessible, appropriate, and quality education.

In summary, the theoretical and legal foundations provided interconnected bases for understanding the experiences of general education teachers in inclusive classrooms. The theoretical perspectives explained teachers' perceived capability, instructional responses, and the influence of their classroom and school environments, while the legal bases established the rights of learners with disabilities and the responsibilities of schools and teachers. Consequently, these foundations guided the study in examining teachers' challenges, strategies, training, class size, available support, and perceived capability in handling learners with special needs.

Significance of the Study

This study examined the challenges faced by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom at Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. during the School Year 2026–2027. The findings provided an understanding of the challenges encountered by teachers, the strategies they used to address these challenges, the influence of teaching experience, level of training, and class size, the support available to them, and their perceived capability in handling learners with special needs. The findings also served as the basis for an Action Plan intended to strengthen teachers' competencies, enhance support systems, and improve inclusive classroom practices.

Objectives of the Study

This study determined the challenges encountered by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom at Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. during the School Year 2026–2027.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following queries:

- What are the significant challenges encountered by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom?
- What strategies do general education teachers employ to address the challenges they encounter in handling learners with special needs?
- How do the challenges encountered by general education teachers vary according to their teaching experience, level of training, and class size?
- What forms of support are available to general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom?
- To what extent do general education teachers perceive themselves as capable of handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom?

Research Methodology

This part of the study presented the research methods and procedures employed to examine the challenges faced by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom at Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. during the School Year 2026–2027. It discussed the research design, research environment, participants, research instrument, data gathering procedures, ethical considerations, and data analysis procedures that guided the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of qualitative data. The procedures ensured that the participants' experiences concerning the challenges, strategies, available support, and perceived capability in handling learners with special needs were documented, analyzed, and interpreted systematically and ethically.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the challenges faced by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom. The design was appropriate because the study aimed to obtain a detailed description of teachers' experiences, challenges, strategies, support needs, and perceived capability based on their own accounts and perspectives. It enabled the researcher to examine how teachers described the challenges they encountered in addressing diverse learning needs, managing behavioral and communication difficulties, accessing resources and specialized support, managing workload and class size, and applying knowledge gained from training. It also allowed the researcher to explore the strategies employed by teachers, the influence of teaching experience, training, and class size, the support available to them, and their perceived capability in handling learners with special needs.

Anta et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of understanding teachers' competencies and the conditions that supported the inclusion of learners with special educational needs. Consistent with this perspective, the qualitative descriptive design enabled the present study to examine teachers' experiences directly and describe the challenges, strategies, conditions, and forms of support associated with handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom.

Environment

Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. is a private educational institution located along Newton Boulevard in The Mactan Newtown, Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. The school offers a comprehensive academic program from Nursery to Grade 10 and utilizes individualized learning approaches to address the varied educational needs of its learners. As an inclusive school, it provides opportunities for both regular learners and learners with special educational needs to develop their abilities and participate in meaningful learning experiences. Its facilities, programs, and instructional practices are designed to respond to diverse learning needs and foster an environment where learners can participate, develop their skills, and achieve their educational goals.

As an inclusive educational institution, Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. provides a relevant environment for examining the experiences of general education teachers in handling learners with special needs.

Instrument

The study used a semi-structured interview guide as the research instrument for gathering qualitative data from the teacher participants. The interview guide was developed based on the five specific problems of the study and focused on the participants' experiences in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom at Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. It consisted of five main questions that explored the challenges encountered by teachers, strategies employed to address these challenges, the influence of teaching experience, training, and class size, the support available to teachers, and their perceived capability in handling learners with special needs.

The interview guide was subjected to expert validation to ensure the relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and alignment of the questions with the objectives of the study. The validators' comments and recommendations

were considered in revising the instrument before its administration to the participants. Each main question was accompanied by possible probing questions that allowed the researcher to clarify responses and obtain more detailed descriptions of the participants' experiences. The probes covered specific concerns such as diverse learning needs, behavioral and communication difficulties, workload, resources, instructional modifications, classroom strategies, collaboration with parents and other professionals, training gaps, class size, administrative and school-based support, and teachers' confidence and areas requiring further development. A closing question was also included to provide participants an opportunity to share additional experiences or information that might not have been covered by the main questions. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to maintain consistency across interviews while providing sufficient flexibility for participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives.

Data Gathering Procedure

This part of the study presented the procedures undertaken in conducting the research, including the stages of securing approval, conducting the semi-structured interviews, processing the interview data, and observing ethical considerations. It described the systematic steps followed to ensure that the study was conducted in an organized and ethically responsible manner in examining the challenges faced by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom at Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. during the School Year 2026–2027.

Preliminary Stage. The study began with the researcher securing formal approval from the administration of Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. through the submission of a transmittal letter. Upon approval, coordination was established with the school administration to identify teachers who met the inclusion criteria of the study. The researcher explained the purpose, objectives, and significance of the study, particularly its focus on the challenges encountered by general education teachers, the strategies they employed, the influence of teaching experience, training, and class size, the support available to them, and their perceived capability in handling learners with special needs. Participation was voluntary, and the participants were informed that all information gathered would be treated with confidentiality. An informed consent form was provided and accomplished by the participants before the conduct of the interviews to confirm their willingness to participate in the study.

Data Gathering. The primary instrument used for data collection was a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide consisting of open-ended questions organized according to the five areas of inquiry of the study. The questions explored the challenges encountered by general education teachers, strategies employed to address these challenges, the influence of teaching experience, training, and class size, available forms of support, and teachers' perceived capability in handling learners with special needs. The researcher conducted individual interviews with the selected participants and used probing and follow-up questions when necessary to clarify responses and obtain detailed descriptions of their experiences. The interviews were documented, and the participants' responses were securely recorded and organized for subsequent transcription and analysis.

Post Data Gathering. After the completion of the interviews, the gathered responses were organized, transcribed, reviewed, and prepared for qualitative analysis. The researcher examined the transcripts to identify significant statements, recurring ideas, and patterns relevant to the five areas of inquiry. Similar responses were grouped according to shared meanings, which led to the development of categories and emerging themes. The themes were analyzed and interpreted in relation to the research questions and supported by relevant participant statements and literature. The findings served as the basis for the formulation of an Action Plan aimed at strengthening teachers' instructional strategies and capabilities, improving access to resources and support, and enhancing inclusive classroom practices.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to systematically analyze and interpret the interview responses of the general education teachers regarding their experiences in handling learners with special needs in an

inclusive classroom at Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. The analysis followed a systematic and primarily inductive approach in which patterns, meanings, and themes were identified from the participants' responses. The analysis focused on the five areas of inquiry of the study, namely, the challenges encountered by teachers, strategies employed to address these challenges, influence of teaching experience, training, and class size, support available to teachers, and their perceived capability in handling learners with special needs. The following steps were undertaken in analyzing the data:

Transcription was the initial step, wherein the recorded interviews were transcribed into written text. The transcripts were reviewed, cleaned, and checked against the recorded responses to ensure accuracy and completeness before analysis.

Data familiarization was conducted by reading and rereading the interview transcripts to develop a thorough understanding of the participants' experiences, perspectives, and responses regarding inclusive classroom teaching.

Initial coding was then performed systematically across the transcripts. Meaningful statements and relevant portions of the participants' responses were identified and assigned descriptive codes related to the challenges, strategies, influencing factors, available support, and perceived capability of general education teachers.

Theme identification involved examining the initial codes to identify recurring patterns, similarities, and relationships across the participants' responses. Related codes were grouped together to develop preliminary themes that represented shared experiences of the teachers.

Theme review and refinement were undertaken to determine whether the emerging themes accurately represented the participants' responses and were consistent with the research questions. Similar themes were consolidated when appropriate, while distinct themes were separated to ensure clear and meaningful representation of the teachers' experiences.

Theme definition and naming involved developing clear descriptions and appropriate labels for each final theme. The themes were defined based on the central ideas and meanings reflected in the participants' responses and were organized according to the major areas examined in the study.

Finally, **report writing** involved presenting the identified themes and supporting them with relevant statements from the teacher participants. The findings were interpreted in relation to the research questions and presented systematically to provide a clear account of the challenges, strategies, influencing factors, available support, and perceived capability of general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom at Newtown School of Excellence, Inc.

Ethical Consideration

In conducting this study on the challenges faced by general education teachers in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom, ethical principles were strictly observed to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of all participants from Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. The researcher ensured that the entire research process adhered to ethical standards in qualitative educational research by promoting transparency, respecting participants' autonomy, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring the responsible handling of all information gathered during the interviews.

Informed Consent. All participants were provided with clear information regarding the purpose, objectives, procedures, and significance of the study before their participation. The researcher explained the nature of the semi-structured interview, including the areas concerning challenges, strategies, teaching experience, training, class size, available support, and perceived capability in handling learners with special needs. Each participant was required to accomplish an informed consent form to confirm voluntary participation and

acknowledge their right to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences to their professional responsibilities.

Confidentiality and Anonymity. The privacy and confidentiality of the participants' information were strictly maintained throughout the conduct of the study. Personal identifying information, such as names and other details that could reveal the identity of the participants, was not included in the presentation, analysis, or reporting of the findings. Participant codes were used in organizing and presenting the interview data to maintain anonymity. All interview records, transcripts, and related research documents were securely stored and accessed only for academic and research purposes.

Voluntary Participation. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. The participants were not subjected to any form of pressure, coercion, or obligation to participate. Their decision to participate or decline involvement in the study did not affect their employment status, professional evaluation, teaching responsibilities, or relationship with the administration of Newtown School of Excellence, Inc.

Beneficence and Non-Maleficence The study upheld the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence by ensuring that participation did not expose the participants to harm, unnecessary risk, or undue inconvenience. The interview questions focused on the participants' professional experiences in handling learners with special needs and did not require disclosure of unnecessary personal or sensitive information. The study aimed to generate relevant insights that could contribute to strengthening inclusive classroom practices, improving teacher preparation, and identifying areas requiring additional support.

Ethical Approval and Coordination. Prior to the implementation of the study, the researcher secured formal approval from the administration of Newtown School of Excellence, Inc. through proper communication and submission of the necessary research documents. Coordination with the school administration and designated personnel was conducted to facilitate the identification of qualified participants and the proper scheduling and conduct of the interviews. These procedures ensured that the study was conducted in accordance with institutional requirements and established ethical guidelines for qualitative educational research.

RESULTS

This chapter presented, analyzed, and interpreted the results of the data gathered pertaining to the challenges encountered by general education teachers in teaching learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom, the strategies they employed to address these challenges, the influence of teaching experience, training, and class size, the support available to them, and their perceived capability in teaching learners with special needs.

The findings from the semi-structured interviews of the 10 teacher participants were analyzed through thematic analysis. The responses revealed distinct patterns across the five areas explored in the interview. The findings concerning the challenges encountered by general education teachers were organized into five themes: 1) Time Demands of Individualized Attention; 2) Adapting Instruction Without Separating Learners; 3) Interpreting Learner Behavior and Communication; 4) Gaps in Resources, Information, and Specialized Assistance; and 5) Competing Responsibilities in Inclusive Practice. The strategies employed by teachers revealed five themes: 1) Breaking Learning Tasks into Manageable Steps; 2) Using Multimodal and Alternative Learning Supports; 3) Peer-Assisted and Collaborative Participation; 4) Flexible Adaptation of Activities and Assessment; and 5) Reflective Adjustment and Consultation. The influence of teaching experience, training, and class size revealed five themes: 1) Experience as a Source of Practical Judgment; 2) Training as a Foundation for Inclusive Knowledge; 3) Class Size as a Constraint on Individualized Practice; 4) The Interaction of Experience, Training, and Classroom Conditions; and 5) The Continuing Need for Specialized Learning. The available support revealed five themes: 1) Collegial Exchange as Immediate Classroom Support; 2) School Leadership and SPED Assistance; 3) Parents as Sources of Learner Information; 4) Professional Development as Continuing Support; and 5) Limitations in the Availability and Continuity of Support. Finally, teachers' perceived capability revealed five themes: 1)

Experience-Based Confidence; 2) Capability Through Instructional Adaptability; 3) Conditional Confidence in Complex Cases; 4) Resources and Working Conditions as Influences on Capability; and 5) Capability as Collaborative and Continuing Professional Growth.

Challenges Encountered by General Education Teachers

Theme 1: Time Demands of Individualized Attention

The participants described the allocation of time as a major challenge in providing support to learners with special needs. Their responses showed that some learners required repeated explanations, close supervision, one-on-one guidance, and additional assistance while the teacher was simultaneously responsible for the rest of the class. The concern was therefore not only the presence of diverse learner needs but also the limited time available to respond to them individually. Teachers recognized what particular learners needed but sometimes had to postpone assistance because other learners also required attention.

Participant 1 described the difficulty of attending to different learners within the same school day:

"Some learners can follow the lesson independently, while others need repeated instructions and close supervision. It is difficult to give individual attention when I also have to attend to the needs of the whole class."

The response indicated that differences in learner independence directly affected the teacher's allocation of attention. While some learners could proceed with minimal assistance, others required repeated interaction and monitoring. This created a situation in which the teacher had to continuously shift attention between individual needs and whole-class instruction.

Participant 6 similarly emphasized the limitation of remaining with one learner while managing the entire class: "There are learners who require one-on-one guidance, but I cannot stay beside one learner throughout the entire lesson because I have other students to teach."

This response demonstrated that individualized assistance was sometimes difficult to sustain even when the teacher recognized its importance. The teacher had to balance direct intervention with the responsibility of ensuring that other learners continued participating in the lesson.

Participant 7 likewise explained that experience could help teachers prioritize but could not completely eliminate the problem of limited time:

"Even if I know what strategy to use, it is difficult to provide one-on-one assistance when many learners are waiting for help."

The statement showed that knowledge of appropriate strategies did not automatically translate into sufficient individualized support. The number of learners requiring assistance affected how much time could be devoted to each learner.

The responses indicated that time was a practical condition affecting the implementation of inclusive education. Teachers had to prioritize immediate concerns, move between learners, and sometimes return to an individual learner after attending to the broader class. The challenge therefore involved not merely knowing what support to provide but having sufficient time to provide it consistently.

The finding implied that inclusive classroom practice required realistic time allocation for individualized instruction, monitoring, and intervention. Classroom conditions that allowed teachers to provide targeted assistance without neglecting other learners could have strengthened the implementation of inclusive practices.

Theme 2: Adapting Instruction Without Separating Learners

The participants described the difficulty of modifying instruction while maintaining the learner's participation with classmates. Their responses showed that regular classroom activities were not always appropriate for every learner, requiring teachers to adjust instructions, materials, tasks, and expected outputs. At the same time, teachers were concerned that excessive modification might make learners feel separated or treated differently from their peers.

Participant 3 clearly expressed this concern:

"The challenge for me is modifying the lesson without making the learner feel that he or she is being treated differently."

The response demonstrated that instructional modification involved more than changing an activity. The teacher also had to consider the learner's sense of belonging and participation in the classroom. Inclusive instruction therefore required a balance between accessibility and meaningful participation with peers.

Participant 3 further explained:

"We want students with special needs to participate with their classmates, but sometimes the regular activity is too difficult for them."

This response showed that inclusion involved both academic access and social participation. The teacher needed to modify the activity sufficiently to make participation possible while retaining the learner's connection to the common classroom experience.

Participant 8 also described the need to adjust learning materials and assessment conditions:

"Sometimes I use simplified texts, enlarged print, manipulatives, or audio materials depending on the need."

The statement indicated that teachers used different forms of adaptation depending on the learner's requirements. The response also reflected the need for teachers to make practical decisions about which form of accommodation would allow the learner to demonstrate learning.

The responses showed that inclusive instruction required teachers to modify the means of learning without unnecessarily separating learners from their classmates. The challenge involved determining appropriate accommodations, maintaining the intended competency, and ensuring that learners remained active members of the classroom.

The finding implied that teachers needed practical guidance on differentiated instruction and classroom accommodations that preserved both academic expectations and learner participation. Appropriate examples of inclusive adaptations could have helped teachers make modifications more efficiently and confidently.

Theme 3: Interpreting Learner Behavior and Communication

The participants identified difficulty in understanding learner behavior and communication as another challenge. Their responses showed that some learners could not readily communicate whether they were confused, frustrated, uncomfortable, or experiencing another difficulty. Teachers therefore had to observe behavior carefully and interpret possible causes before deciding how to respond.

Participant 5 described this challenge:

"Sometimes you have to observe the learner's actions to understand whether the problem is academic, behavioral, emotional, or physical."

The response demonstrated that learner behavior could have multiple possible meanings. Teachers could not always assume that a behavior was simply a discipline problem because the behavior might reflect an unmet academic, emotional, or physical need.

Participant 2 likewise emphasized the need to understand the causes of behavior:

"The teacher has to understand what causes the behavior while also making sure that the rest of the class can continue learning."

This response showed that behavior management involved both interpretation and classroom continuity. The teacher had to identify possible triggers while maintaining the learning environment for other learners.

Participant 5 also pointed to the importance of having adequate information about the learner:

"I also find it challenging when information about the learner's condition, previous interventions, or needs is incomplete."

The statement indicated that teachers' ability to interpret learner behavior was affected by the availability of background information. Without sufficient information, teachers could have difficulty determining which strategies or accommodations were appropriate.

The responses showed that behavior and communication difficulties required teachers to observe learners closely, understand possible triggers, and gather information from different sources. These demands placed interpretive responsibilities on general education teachers who might not always have specialized training.

The finding implied that teachers could have benefited from practical guidance in behavioral observation, communication strategies, and learner profiling. More complete learner information and access to consultation could also have helped teachers respond to behavior based on identified needs rather than assumptions.

Theme 4: Gaps in Resources, Information, and Specialized Assistance

The participants described limitations in materials, learner information, and access to specialized personnel. Their responses showed that teachers were often willing to provide appropriate support but did not always have the materials, information, or specialists needed to address particular learner needs.

Participant 4 described the difficulty created by limited instructional resources:

"There are activities that I want to implement, but I do not always have the appropriate materials available."

The response indicated that instructional planning was sometimes constrained by the resources available in the classroom. Teachers could identify appropriate activities but had to modify their plans when materials were unavailable.

Participant 10 emphasized the limitation of specialized personnel:

"A learner may need assistance from the classroom teacher, SPED teacher, parents, and other professionals, but these people may not always be available at the same time."

This response demonstrated that inclusive education frequently required coordinated assistance from several individuals. When these sources of support were unavailable, the classroom teacher had to assume additional responsibilities.

Teacher 5 also identified incomplete learner information as a barrier:

"I also find it challenging when information about the learner's condition, previous interventions, or needs is incomplete."

The response showed that support depended not only on physical resources and personnel but also on accurate information about the learner. Without sufficient background information, teachers could have difficulty determining appropriate interventions.

The responses indicated that inclusive classroom challenges were influenced by the availability of materials, specialized personnel, and accurate learner information. Teachers could be resourceful, but resourcefulness could not completely compensate for structural limitations in support.

The finding implied the need for accessible instructional materials, systematic learner information, and more regular access to specialized personnel. A coordinated support mechanism could have reduced the need for general education teachers to address complex needs without sufficient assistance.

Theme 5: Competing Responsibilities in Inclusive Practice

The participants described inclusive education as one responsibility among many demands placed on private school teachers. Their responses showed that teaching, documentation, meetings, assessments, school activities, and other assignments competed for the same limited amount of time needed for individualized support.

Participant 9 explained:

"Aside from teaching, we have reports, documentation, meetings, school activities, assessments, and other assignments."

The response indicated that teachers' responsibilities extended beyond direct classroom instruction. These additional duties could reduce the amount of time available for planning individualized interventions and monitoring learners with special needs.

Participant 1 similarly stated:

"Time is usually the biggest concern because there are many things that need to be accomplished within one school day."

This response showed that the problem was not limited to classroom teaching. Teachers had to complete multiple responsibilities within the same working period, making it difficult to devote additional time to individual learners.

Participant 9 further explained:

"We want to spend more time planning individualized interventions, but there are only so many hours in a day."

The statement reflected a distinction between teachers' willingness and their practical capacity. Teachers recognized the value of individualized intervention but experienced limitations because of competing responsibilities.

The responses indicated that inclusive education was affected by organizational demands that competed with direct learner support. The teachers' accounts suggested that their difficulty was not necessarily a lack of commitment but the limited time created by multiple professional responsibilities. The finding implied that strengthening inclusive education required attention to teachers' workload and preparation time. Providing teachers with sufficient time for planning, documentation, intervention, and consultation could have supported more consistent individualized instruction.

Strategies Used by General Education Teachers

The responses concerning strategies showed that teachers did not rely on a single approach. Instead, they adjusted instruction according to learner needs, used different learning supports, involved peers and parents, modified activities and assessments, and reflected on the effectiveness of strategies before seeking additional assistance.

Theme 1: Breaking Learning Tasks into Manageable Steps

The participants described the use of smaller tasks and simplified instructions to make learning activities more manageable. Their responses showed that teachers reduced the cognitive and procedural demands of activities by presenting instructions gradually, demonstrating tasks, and allowing learners to work through activities in smaller portions.

Participant 1 stated:

"I break the activity into smaller parts and give instructions one at a time so the learner will not feel overwhelmed."

The response demonstrated that teachers adjusted the presentation of tasks rather than simply reducing the learning expectation. Breaking activities into smaller parts allowed learners to approach the same general competency through manageable steps.

Participant 1 also explained:

"I also use examples and demonstrations before asking them to work independently."

This response showed that modeling was used as a bridge toward independent performance. The teacher first provided a concrete example before expecting the learner to complete the task.

Participant 2 similarly reported:

"I also check their understanding before moving to the next activity."

The statement indicated that teachers monitored comprehension continuously rather than assuming that learners had understood the instruction. This allowed them to identify difficulties before proceeding.

The responses showed that task segmentation, modeling, and frequent checking of understanding were practical strategies for reducing barriers to participation. These approaches allowed teachers to maintain learning objectives while adjusting the way activities were presented. The finding implied that teachers were already applying elements of scaffolded instruction in their classrooms. Strengthening their knowledge of systematic scaffolding could have made these practices more intentional and consistent.

Theme 2: Using Multimodal and Alternative Learning Supports

The participants described using visual, tactile, auditory, and other alternative materials to make lessons more accessible. Their responses showed that teachers recognized that learners did not always benefit equally from verbal explanations or standard instructional materials.

Participant 2 stated:

"Pictures, charts, written steps, and actual objects help them follow the lesson better."

The response indicated that teachers used multiple representations to supplement verbal instruction. This provided learners with different ways of accessing information.

Participant 8 similarly reported:

"Sometimes I use simplified texts, enlarged print, manipulatives, or audio materials depending on the need."

The statement demonstrated that teachers selected materials according to specific learner characteristics. The strategy involved adapting not only the content but also the mode through which the learner accessed the content.

Participant 8 also explained that additional time was sometimes provided when learners required it. This showed that accessibility involved both materials and conditions for completing the activity.

The responses demonstrated teachers' use of multimodal supports to increase learner access. The strategies reflected an effort to make classroom content available through different sensory and instructional pathways.

The finding implied that teachers needed continued access to adaptable instructional materials and guidance on selecting appropriate supports. A wider range of prepared resources could have reduced the time required for teachers to create alternative materials independently.

Theme 3: Peer-Assisted and Collaborative Participation

The participants described peer assistance and flexible grouping as strategies for providing support while encouraging social interaction and learner independence. Rather than having the teacher provide all assistance directly, teachers sometimes used classmates as learning partners.

Participant 3 stated:

"I try flexible grouping in my class. Sometimes I pair the learner with a classmate who can assist, but I make sure that the learner also has a chance to participate independently."

The response showed that peer assistance was not intended to replace the learner's participation. Instead, the peer was used as a support while the learner remained responsible for participating in the activity.

Participant 6 similarly explained:

"I explain to the peer first how to assist without doing the task for the learner."

This demonstrated that teachers were conscious of the potential problem of excessive assistance. The goal was to provide support while preserving learner independence.

The responses indicated that peer-mediated approaches could provide practical assistance while also promoting social participation. These strategies helped teachers manage classroom demands without positioning the learner with special needs outside the regular peer group.

The finding implied that structured peer support could be strengthened through clear guidelines regarding appropriate assistance, independence, and respectful interaction.

Theme 4: Flexible Adaptation of Activities and Assessment

The participants described modifying activities and assessment formats while retaining the main competency. Their responses showed that teachers distinguished between changing the learning target and changing the manner in which learners demonstrated that learning.

Participant 5 explained:

"I modify some activities without changing the main competency that the learners need to achieve."

This response indicated that teachers attempted to preserve curriculum expectations while adjusting the route through which learners could reach them.

Participant 5 further stated:

"Instead of requiring a long-written answer, I may allow a learner to respond orally or use a shorter written output."

The response demonstrated that alternative forms of response were used to provide learners with an opportunity to demonstrate understanding despite difficulties with particular modes of expression.

Participant 8 also reported the use of additional time and alternative materials when necessary.

The responses showed that teachers used flexibility in activity design and assessment to address individual learner needs. The strategy emphasized access to the competency rather than requiring all learners to demonstrate learning in exactly the same way.

The finding implied that continued professional development in accommodations and differentiated assessment could help teachers make these adaptations more systematic while maintaining assessment validity.

Theme 5: Reflective Adjustment and Consultation

The participants described observing learners, trying strategies, evaluating their effectiveness, and modifying approaches when necessary. When concerns exceeded their own knowledge or experience, they sought assistance from colleagues or school personnel.

Participant 10 stated:

"I observe the learner, try an approach, and then adjust it if it does not work."

The response demonstrated a reflective approach to classroom practice. Rather than treating a strategy as permanently appropriate, the teacher evaluated its effect and modified it according to learner response.

Participant 5 similarly stated:

"I document what works so I can use the same approach in succeeding lessons."

This showed that teachers were building practical knowledge from their classroom experiences. Documentation allowed effective strategies to be retained and reused.

Participant 10 also explained:

"When I encounter a concern beyond what I can handle, I consult other teachers or the school personnel who can provide additional guidance."

The response demonstrated that consultation formed part of the teachers' problem-solving process.

The responses indicated that teachers addressed inclusive education challenges through continuous adjustment rather than fixed procedures. Their practices involved observation, experimentation, documentation, and consultation.

The finding implied that schools could strengthen inclusive practice by creating regular opportunities for teachers to discuss classroom cases, share effective strategies, and reflect on interventions.

Influence Of Teaching Experience, Training, And Class Size

Theme 1: Experience as a Source of Practical Judgment The participants consistently described teaching experience as a source of confidence, patience, observation, and practical decision-making. Their responses indicated that experience helped teachers recognize learner differences and respond more efficiently to classroom situations.

Participant 1 stated:

"My years of teaching have helped me become more patient and observant of different learner behaviors."

The response indicated that experience contributed not only to technical knowledge but also to teachers' ability to observe learner behavior and respond with greater patience.

Participant r 4 similarly stated:

"My experience has helped me recognize their strengths and limitations more quickly."

This response demonstrated that repeated exposure to diverse classroom situations helped teachers develop faster judgment concerning learner needs.

Participant 10 also described becoming more resourceful through experience:

"Experience has made me more resourceful because I have learned to work with whatever materials and support are available."

The response showed that experience helped teachers make practical use of available resources despite limitations.

The responses indicated that experience contributed to teachers' practical judgment and adaptability. However, experience did not eliminate all difficulties, particularly when several learners required assistance simultaneously.

The finding implied that experienced teachers possessed valuable classroom knowledge that could be shared through mentoring, peer consultation, and collaborative professional learning.

Theme 2: Training as a Foundation for Inclusive Knowledge

The participants described training as an important source of knowledge concerning accommodations, differentiated instruction, behavior, and inclusive practices. At the same time, several teachers indicated that training needed to be more practical and connected to actual classroom situations.

Participant 2 stated:

"Training has helped me understand that behavior is sometimes connected to the learner's needs and not simply a discipline problem."

The response showed that training influenced how teachers interpreted learner behavior. It encouraged teachers to consider underlying needs rather than immediately treating behavior as misconduct.

Participant 8 explained:

"The training I attended introduced me to different ways of modifying instruction and assessment."

The response indicated that professional development expanded teachers' knowledge of practical instructional adaptations.

Participant 4, however, emphasized that continued learning remained necessary:

"I believe continuous training would help me become more capable in handling more complex cases."

The response showed that training was viewed as an ongoing process rather than a one-time requirement.

The responses indicated that training contributed to teachers' knowledge and confidence but was most useful when it addressed practical classroom situations. The participants valued training while recognizing that some learner needs required more specialized preparation.

The finding implied that professional development should include concrete examples, case-based learning, classroom demonstrations, and opportunities for follow-up consultation.

Theme 3: Class Size as a Constraint on Individualized Practice

Class size emerged consistently as a factor that affected teachers' ability to apply individualized strategies. Even when teachers possessed the necessary knowledge and experience, large classes reduced the time available for direct assistance and progress monitoring.

Participant 6 stated:

"A smaller class would make it easier to apply individualized strategies."

The response directly connected class size with the feasibility of individualized instruction.

Participant 7 similarly stated:

"My experience helps me prioritize, but it cannot completely solve the problem of limited time."

This demonstrated that experience could help teachers manage classroom demands but could not remove the structural limitations associated with large classes.

Participant 8 also explained:

"My experience helps me adjust, but a crowded classroom limits how much adjustment I can actually provide."

The statement showed that teachers could know what to do but still encounter difficulty implementing the strategy fully because of classroom conditions.

The responses indicated that class size affected the practical implementation of inclusive practices. The larger the number of learners requiring attention, the more difficult it became to provide individualized support consistently.

The finding implied that manageable class sizes could strengthen teachers' ability to apply accommodations, monitor individual progress, and provide targeted intervention.

Theme 4: The Interaction of Experience, Training, and Classroom Conditions

The participants described experience, training, and class size as interconnected rather than independent factors. Experience helped teachers manage situations, training provided knowledge, and classroom conditions determined how easily that knowledge could be implemented.

Participant 9 explicitly stated:

"I think experience, training, and class size are connected."

The response reflected the broader pattern found across the interviews. No single factor completely explained teachers' ability to address learner needs.

Participant 2 similarly explained:

"With a large class, applying what I learned becomes more difficult because I also have to attend to the other learners."

This response demonstrated that training could provide knowledge while classroom conditions could influence whether that knowledge could be applied.

Participant 3 stated:

"Training gives me additional ideas, especially about accommodations and differentiated activities. Class size remains a concern because individual support takes more time when there are many learners."

The response showed the relationship between professional knowledge and the practical conditions of implementation.

The responses indicated that teacher preparation and classroom conditions worked together in shaping inclusive practice. Experience and training could strengthen teachers' capacity, but the actual classroom environment could either facilitate or restrict their application.

The finding implied that professional development should be accompanied by supportive classroom conditions. Training alone could not fully resolve challenges created by large classes or insufficient time.

Theme 5: The Continuing Need for Specialized Learning

Although teachers valued experience and training, they recognized that some learner needs required specialized knowledge beyond what they had already acquired. Participants acknowledged situations in which consultation or additional training was necessary.

Participant 6 stated:

"There are still needs that require specialized knowledge, so training and consultation are important."

The response demonstrated that teachers recognized the limits of general classroom experience.

Participant 8 similarly stated:

"I still need more practical training related to specific disabilities."

This response indicated that teachers viewed general inclusive education training as helpful but not always sufficient for specific learner conditions.

Participant 10 also explained:

"There are situations that are difficult to handle without more specialized guidance."

The response reinforced the need for professional assistance when classroom concerns exceeded the teacher's current knowledge.

The responses indicated that effective inclusive practice required both general teaching competence and access to specialized knowledge. Teachers did not view asking for assistance as failure but as a necessary component of responsible practice.

The finding implied that schools could strengthen teacher capacity by establishing accessible consultation mechanisms involving SPED personnel and other professionals.

Forms of Support Available to General Education Teachers

Theme 1: Collegial Exchange as Immediate Classroom Support

The participants consistently identified fellow teachers as one of the most accessible sources of support. Teachers exchanged materials, discussed learner concerns, and shared practical strategies that had worked in their classrooms.

Participant 5 stated:

"Most of the support I receive comes from my co-teachers because we often share materials and discuss how we handle particular learners."

The response demonstrated that collegial interaction provided immediate and practical assistance.

Participant 9 similarly stated:

"Collaboration among teachers is the support I find most useful because we can exchange practical strategies that have worked in our classrooms."

The response indicated that teachers valued experience-based advice that could be directly applied to classroom situations.

Participant 3 also described the sharing of instructional materials and experiences among teachers.

The responses showed that collegial support served as an important informal professional resource. Teachers could obtain ideas from colleagues who had encountered similar classroom situations.

The finding implied that schools could strengthen this form of support through structured peer consultation, learning action cells, case discussions, and collaborative planning.

Theme 2: School Leadership and SPED Assistance

The participants identified school heads and SPED personnel as important sources of guidance. School leaders provided assistance in addressing classroom concerns, while SPED personnel offered specialized advice concerning learner behavior, strategies, and needs.

Participant r 2 stated:

"Our SPED personnel are one of the main sources of support when we have concerns about learners with special needs."

The response demonstrated the importance of specialized personnel in helping general education teachers address concerns beyond their existing knowledge.

Participant 1 stated:

"We usually receive support from our school head and fellow teachers, especially when we need advice about handling a particular learner."

This response showed that school leadership played a role in addressing classroom concerns and supporting teachers' decision-making.

Participant 7 likewise explained that teachers received support from the school head, grade-level teachers, and SPED personnel when available.

The responses indicated that formal school support existed but depended partly on the availability of personnel. Teachers valued access to school leaders and SPED personnel because these sources could provide guidance beyond informal peer advice.

The finding implied that school-level support could be strengthened by ensuring that teachers had clear procedures for requesting consultation and assistance.

Theme 3: Parents as Sources of Learner Information

The participants described parents as valuable sources of information concerning learner behavior, needs, and experiences outside school. At the same time, the level of parent involvement differed across families.

Participant 6 stated:

"Parents are an important source of information because they know the learner's behavior and needs outside school."

The response demonstrated that parents could provide information unavailable through classroom observation alone.

Participant 7 emphasized the importance of consistent communication:

"We also give parents updates about the learner's progress instead of contacting them only when there is a problem."

This approach reflected a more collaborative relationship between home and school. Communication was viewed as an ongoing process rather than something reserved for difficulties.

Participant 3, however, noted:

"Parent support is important too, but the level of involvement differs from one family to another."

The response showed that the availability of parental support was not uniform.

The responses indicated that parents could strengthen teachers' understanding of learners and contribute to consistent support between home and school. However, differences in availability and involvement could affect the continuity of this support.

The finding implied that schools could strengthen parent-school communication through accessible, regular, and flexible communication mechanisms.

Theme 4: Professional Development as Continuing Support

The participants described training and professional development as important sources of support for improving their understanding of inclusive education. However, they also emphasized that training needed to continue beyond a single session.

Participant 4 stated:

"Training programs have helped us become more familiar with inclusive education and different classroom strategies."

The response indicated that professional development contributed to teachers' knowledge of inclusive practices.

Participant 4 also stated:

"What we still need is more continuous guidance because one training session is not always enough to address actual classroom situations."

The response emphasized the limitation of one-time training. Teachers needed opportunities to apply, discuss, and refine what they had learned.

Participant 8 similarly described professional development activities as opportunities to discuss concerns with other teachers.

The responses indicated that professional development was valued when it supported ongoing learning and practical problem-solving. Teachers needed opportunities to connect training content with actual learner situations.

The finding implied that schools could strengthen professional development through sustained programs that included coaching, consultation, follow-up sessions, and classroom-based problem solving.

Theme 5: Limitations in the Availability and Continuity of Support

Although the participants identified several forms of support, they also described limitations in the availability of personnel, materials, time, and consultation. Support existed but was not always immediate or continuous.

Teacher 7 stated:

"The challenge is that everyone has their own workload, so immediate consultation is not always possible."

The response indicated that even available personnel could not always provide immediate assistance because they also had professional responsibilities.

Participant 9 stated:

"Still, we need a more regular system for consulting and monitoring learners with special needs."

The response demonstrated that teachers perceived a need for more systematic support rather than relying primarily on informal or occasional consultation.

Participant 10 similarly explained:

"The support is sometimes limited by the availability of personnel, materials, and time."

The response showed that support was influenced by broader organizational conditions.

The responses indicated that the school had several sources of support, but these were sometimes constrained by workload, personnel availability, and resources. The issue was therefore not the complete absence of support but the continuity, accessibility, and adequacy of that support.

The finding implied that schools could benefit from a more organized support system involving regular consultation, learner monitoring, accessible specialists, and coordinated communication among teachers, parents, and school personnel.

Perceived Capability of General Education Teachers

Theme 1: Experience-Based Confidence

The participants generally perceived themselves as capable of teaching learners with special needs, with experience serving as a major source of confidence. Their responses showed that repeated classroom exposure helped teachers become more comfortable with learner differences and instructional adjustments.

Participant 1 stated:

“I consider myself fairly capable because of my teaching experience and the different learners I have handled.”

The response indicated that experience provided practical knowledge that strengthened the teacher's confidence.

Participant 5 similarly stated:

“I consider myself capable because experience has taught me how to adjust to different learners.”

The response showed that capability was associated with the teacher's accumulated experience in responding to different learner characteristics.

Participant 8 also explained:

“I have become more confident over the years because I have learned from actual classroom experiences.”

The response demonstrated that confidence developed through repeated exposure to actual classroom situations.

The responses indicated that teachers' perceived capability was strongly connected with practical experience. Classroom exposure allowed teachers to develop familiarity with learner differences and become more comfortable making instructional adjustments.

The finding implied that schools could use experienced teachers as sources of mentoring and peer support for teachers who were less experienced in inclusive education.

Theme 2: Capability Through Instructional Adaptability

The participants associated capability with their ability to adjust instruction, classroom routines, activities, and assessment according to learner needs. Rather than defining capability as the ability to manage every situation independently, teachers emphasized flexibility.

Participant 3 stated:

“I can modify activities, instructions, and assessments when necessary.”

The response demonstrated that instructional adaptability was an important indicator of perceived capability.

Participant 7 stated:

“I am willing to adjust my teaching when the usual approach does not work.”

This response showed that teachers considered flexibility an important component of effective inclusive teaching.

Participant 1 similarly explained:

“I can adjust my lessons and classroom routines based on their needs.”

The response indicated that teachers' confidence was connected to their ability to change classroom practices according to learner needs.

The responses showed that capability involved more than mastery of a fixed set of strategies. Teachers perceived themselves as capable when they could recognize learner needs and adapt their instruction accordingly.

The finding implied that professional development should emphasize flexible decision-making, differentiated instruction, and practical classroom adaptation.

Theme 3: Conditional Confidence in Complex Cases

Although teachers generally perceived themselves as capable, their confidence decreased when they encountered complex or unfamiliar learner needs. The participants recognized that there were situations in which specialized intervention or additional guidance was necessary.

Participant 2 stated:

“I become less confident when I encounter behaviors or learning difficulties that I have not handled before.”

The response demonstrated that confidence was influenced by familiarity with the learner's needs.

Participant 6 explained:

“If the learner has more complex needs, I know that asking for assistance is necessary.”

This response showed that seeking assistance was considered part of responsible professional practice rather than an indication of incompetence.

Participant 4 similarly stated:

“I am confident in handling basic learning and classroom needs, but I know that there are areas where my knowledge is limited.”

The response reflected realistic self-awareness concerning the boundaries of the teacher's expertise.

The responses indicated that teachers did not view capability as absolute. Their confidence varied according to the complexity and familiarity of the learner's needs.

The finding implied that inclusive education should provide teachers with accessible consultation and referral mechanisms so that teachers can obtain specialized assistance when cases exceed their existing expertise.

Theme 4: Resources and Working Conditions as Influences on Capability

The participants emphasized that their ability to apply what they knew depended partly on available resources, personnel, time, and class size. Teachers could feel capable while still being constrained by classroom conditions.

Participant 3 stated:

"The availability of materials, support personnel, and enough time also affects how effectively I can apply what I know."

The response clearly distinguished between having knowledge and being able to implement that knowledge effectively.

Participant 5 similarly stated:

"However, a heavy workload and a large number of learners can affect how well I can provide individualized support."

This indicated that capability was affected by the conditions under which teachers worked.

Participant 10 also stated:

"Having adequate materials, manageable class size, and support from the school also makes it easier for me to provide appropriate instruction."

The response demonstrated that teacher capability was partly dependent on the environment in which professional knowledge was applied.

The responses indicated that perceived capability was not determined solely by individual competence. Resources, class size, workload, and institutional support influenced teachers' ability to translate their knowledge into practice.

The finding implied that improving teacher capability required attention not only to professional development but also to classroom and organizational conditions.

Theme 5: Capability as Collaborative and Continuing Professional Growth

The participants described capability as an ongoing process involving willingness to learn, collaboration, consultation, and continued professional development. Teachers did not perceive capable teaching as knowing everything or handling every learner independently.

Participant 10 expressed this clearly:

"I do not think capability means that I can handle everything on my own."

The statement reflected a collaborative understanding of teacher capability. Knowing when and from whom to seek assistance was viewed as part of professional competence.

Participant 8 stated:

"I believe there is always something more to learn because inclusive education involves different situations and learner characteristics."

The response demonstrated that teachers viewed inclusive teaching as an area requiring continuous learning.

Participant 9 also emphasized the importance of collaboration:

"Collaboration with other teachers and parents also helps me feel more confident in making decisions."

The response showed that confidence was strengthened when teachers had access to other sources of knowledge and support.

The responses indicated that teacher capability was dynamic rather than fixed. It developed through experience, training, collaboration, reflection, and access to support.

The finding implied that schools could strengthen teacher capability by establishing a culture of continuous professional learning and collaborative problem-solving.

The findings revealed that the challenges encountered by general education teachers in inclusive classrooms were multidimensional, involving instructional demands, learner behavior and communication, limited resources, time constraints, assessment concerns, and coordination with other persons involved in the learners' education. These findings imply that inclusive teaching requires more than teachers' willingness to accommodate learners with special needs; it requires adequate preparation, manageable classroom conditions, accessible resources, and sustained professional support. This is consistent with Al Jaffal (2022), who identified barriers related to teacher preparedness, resources, and the demands of including learners with autism in general education classrooms. Similarly, Allam and Martin (2021) emphasized that teachers encounter difficulties associated with instructional adaptation, classroom management, and limited support when addressing diverse learner needs.

The strategies identified by the respondents emphasized instructional flexibility, task modification, multimodal learning supports, peer assistance, alternative assessment, parent communication, and continuous adjustment of teaching practices. These findings imply that effective inclusion is largely dependent on teachers' ability to respond flexibly to individual learner needs while maintaining participation in the common classroom experience. The findings support Balgos and Albores (2024), who reported that general education teachers relied on adaptations, differentiated approaches, collaboration, and practical classroom adjustments in addressing the needs of learners with special educational needs. Likewise, Pasumala et al. (2024) found that generalist teachers developed practical ways of modifying instruction and responding to learner differences despite limitations in their classroom environments. The implication is that teachers need not only knowledge of inclusive strategies but also opportunities to refine and apply these strategies according to actual classroom situations.

The findings further showed that teaching experience, training, and class size were interconnected in shaping teachers' capacity to implement inclusive practices. Experience contributed to teachers' confidence, patience, observation skills, and ability to adjust strategies, while training strengthened their knowledge of accommodations, differentiation, behavior, and assessment. However, large class sizes limited the extent to which teachers could provide individualized attention even when they possessed appropriate strategies. This finding implies that professional competence alone may not be sufficient when classroom conditions restrict the practical application of inclusive practices. Crispel and Kasperski (2021) established the importance of special education training in strengthening the implementation of inclusion, while Larios and Zetlin (2023) emphasized continuing challenges in preparing teachers to address the needs of all learners in inclusive classrooms. Thus, teacher training should be sustained, practical, and connected to actual classroom situations rather than treated as a one-time professional development activity.

The findings concerning available support highlighted the importance of collegial collaboration, school leadership, SPED personnel, parents, and professional development. However, the respondents also indicated that support was sometimes limited by personnel availability, workload, time, and access to specialists and instructional resources. These findings imply that inclusive education should not be viewed

as the sole responsibility of the general education teacher. Rather, it requires a coordinated support system in which teachers can consult with colleagues, school leaders, SPED personnel, parents, and other professionals when learner needs exceed their individual expertise. This supports the findings of Robellos et al. (2024), who identified insufficient resources, professional support, and other institutional limitations as continuing challenges in special and inclusive education. Balgos and Albores (2024) likewise showed that teachers' experiences in inclusive classrooms were influenced by the availability of support and collaboration within and beyond the classroom.

The findings on teachers' perceived capability showed that the respondents generally viewed themselves as capable of handling learners with special needs, particularly when they could draw from previous experience, training, instructional flexibility, and collaboration with others. However, their confidence became conditional when they encountered unfamiliar or complex learner needs, insufficient information, limited resources, or large class sizes. This implies that teacher capability should be understood as developing and context-dependent rather than as a fixed personal attribute. The finding is supported by Crispel and Kasperski (2021), who demonstrated the contribution of special education training to teachers' implementation of inclusive practices, while Larios and Zetlin (2023) highlighted continuing gaps in teacher preparation for inclusive classrooms. The results therefore suggest that strengthening teachers' perceived capability requires continuous professional learning, access to specialized guidance, and working conditions that allow teachers to apply what they have learned.

In synthesis, the findings indicate that the challenges experienced by general education teachers were not attributable solely to individual teacher limitations. They were also shaped by classroom size, availability of resources, access to specialized personnel, opportunities for professional development, and the level of collaboration among school stakeholders.

The literature further supports the view that successful inclusion depends on the interaction between teacher competence and the broader support environment. Therefore, strengthening inclusive education requires a coordinated approach that develops teachers' knowledge and skills while simultaneously improving institutional support, professional collaboration, resources, and opportunities for sustained training.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that general education teachers experienced challenges related to individualized instruction, learner behavior and communication, instructional adaptation, limited resources, time constraints, assessment, and coordination in handling learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms.

Despite these challenges, the respondents demonstrated capability through flexible instructional strategies, collaboration, experience, training, and continuous adjustment of classroom practices, although their effectiveness was influenced by class size, available resources, and access to specialized support.

Recommendations

An action plan may be developed to strengthen teachers' competencies in differentiated instruction, behavior management, assessment accommodations, communication strategies, and other practices for handling learners with special needs. The plan may include sustained professional development, peer mentoring, regular consultation with SPED personnel and school leaders, parent collaboration, and improved access to appropriate instructional resources.

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