

Teachers' Competence and Performance in Inclusive Literacy Practices for Diversity-Focused Educational Environment

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the competence, performance, and inclusive literacy practices of elementary educators in the Mercedes District. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the research assessed performance through IPCRF ratings and inclusive practices via a validated questionnaire. Teachers achieved an "Outstanding" performance level across all Key Result Areas, particularly in Content Knowledge and Pedagogy. Inclusive literacy dimensions were consistently practiced, with Assessment and Evaluation and Cultural Competencies emerging as the most evident practices. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between professional competence and inclusive practices, notably between Community Linkages and Cultural Competencies. Conversely, challenges were "sometimes experienced," with Differentiated Instruction and Instructional Strategies identified as the primary obstacles. A significant negative relationship confirms that increased proficiency in inclusive practices reduces the frequency of encountered challenges. While teachers exhibit high professional mastery and a strong commitment to equity, environmental barriers such as resource scarcity and rigid curriculum planning hinder seamless implementation. The results suggest that teacher willpower alone is insufficient; institutional support is vital to mitigating obstacles in diversity-focused environments. The study proposes Project MELODY (Mobilizing Educators for Literacy Optimization and Diversity-Yielding Practices) to bridge gaps in action research and community mobilization. Recommendations include providing greater administrative flexibility for differentiation, prioritizing funds for diverse literacy tools, and establishing peer-mentoring systems through School-based Learning Action Cells (SLAC).

Keywords: inclusive literacy, diversity, competence, teachers, cultural competencies, differentiated instruction, assessment and evaluation, instruction strategies, collaborative skills, professional development practices

INTRODUCTION

Globally, inclusive literacy is recognized as the primary vehicle for ensuring equitable access to quality instruction. According to Koch (2023), these practices encompass differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), culturally responsive pedagogy, and assistive technologies, all of which foster a sense of belonging. International research consistently demonstrates the efficacy of these approaches; Kelley (2021) highlights how tailoring content to individual needs improves student outcomes, while Deignan (2022) notes that UDL significantly enhances literacy skills in both general and special education contexts. Furthermore, Horrace (2024) emphasizes that integrating students' cultural identities into pedagogy boosts engagement, and Kampen (2020) identifies collaborative learning as a cornerstone for building academic and social growth within diverse communities.

In the Philippines, inclusive literacy is anchored in legislative frameworks such as Republic Act No. 10533, which mandates a responsive curriculum, and the Inclusive Education Act. Macabenta et al. (2023) note that these practices are further supported by DepEd Order No. 044, s. 2021, which provides services for learners with disabilities, and DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2012 (MTB-MLE), which uses the mother tongue to enhance early comprehension. To ensure teacher quality, DepEd Order No. 2, s. 2015 (RPMS) and DepEd Order No.

42, s. 2017 (PPST) establish standards for professional competence across Key Result Areas (KRAs), including diversity of learners and community engagement.

Despite these strong policies, implementation remains difficult. Lebeco and Verano (2023) identify large class sizes, resource limitations, and resistant teacher attitudes as significant barriers. Additionally, Gandara et al. (2021) argue that without sufficient professional development, educators struggle to bridge the gap between instructional strategies and learners' diverse identities.

In the Mercedes District, elementary teachers encounter specific localized challenges. Preliminary interviews revealed difficulties in cultural competencies, differentiated instruction, and fair assessment. Factors such as time constraints and inconsistent parental involvement further complicate the creation of collaborative partnerships.

This study, therefore, aimed to evaluate the competence and performance of teachers in the Mercedes District regarding inclusive literacy. It focused on dimensions such as instructional strategies, collaborative skills, and professional development. By determining the relationship between teachers' Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) ratings and their actual literacy practices, the research identified critical gaps and challenges.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative method utilizing descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between teachers' competence, performance, and inclusive literacy practices. The respondents comprised 124 elementary school teachers from the Mercedes District, Schools Division of Camarines Norte, who were selected through total enumeration sampling technique to ensure they met the specific criteria for the investigation. Data collection was facilitated through the adopted questionnaire from the teachers' Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) ratings for School Year 2023–2024 and a researcher-made survey questionnaire, which was rigorously validated by experts and yielded a high Cronbach's Alpha during reliability testing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Teachers' Competence and Performance in Fostering Inclusive Literacy Practices in Diversity-Focused Educational Environments. The data and findings below present the levels of teacher competence and performance in promoting inclusive literacy practices in the context of diverse learning settings. The results highlight the extent to which the teacher-respondents are equipped to respond to the diverse learning needs and employ inclusive literacy strategies and practices.

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy. Table 1 presents the level of teachers' competence and performance in fostering inclusive literacy practices specifically within the area of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy. The data reveals that the teachers in Mercedes District achieved a high level of proficiency across all indicators. The indicator that received the highest weighted mean of 4.91 is "Applied knowledge of content within and across curriculum teaching areas," which is interpreted as Outstanding. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "Displayed proficient use of Mother Tongue, Filipino, and English to facilitate teaching and learning," with a score of 4.78, interpreted as Outstanding. This result implies that while teachers are very good at using different languages, they might occasionally find it tricky to balance all three languages when explaining complex ideas. The overall weighted mean for Content Knowledge and Pedagogy is 4.84, which is interpreted as Outstanding. This high rating shows that the teachers of Mercedes District are very competent in using their knowledge and teaching methods to create an inclusive learning environment. The findings were corroborated by Vinoya (2024) and Armentano (2024), who both identified high proficiency and outstanding performance levels among Filipino educators in various school divisions. They reinforce the present data by demonstrating that public school teachers often achieve an outstanding level of performance across multiple Key Result Areas (KRAs). This suggests that the systems used to evaluate and support teachers, such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), are effective in maintaining high-quality instruction.

Table 1 Level of Teachers' Competence and Performance along Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Applied knowledge of content within and across curriculum teaching areas	4.91	O
2. Used a range of teaching strategies that enhance learner achievement in literacy and numeracy skills	4.85	O
3. Applied a range of teaching strategies to develop critical and creative thinking, as well as other higher-order thinking skills	4.82	O
4. Displayed proficient use of Mother Tongue, Filipino and English to facilitate teaching and learning	4.78	O
Overall Weighted Mean	4.84	O

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Interpretation:
4.50-5.00 -	Outstanding (O)
3.50-4.49 -	Very Satisfactory (VS)
2.50-3.49 -	Satisfactory (S)
1.50-2.49 -	Unsatisfactory (US)
1.00-1.49 -	Poor (P)

Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners. Table 2 presents the level of teachers' competence and performance in fostering inclusive literacy practices specifically within the area of Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners. The data shows that the teachers in Mercedes District achieved high scores across all indicators. The data reveals that the indicator which obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.82 is Indicator 2, "Maintained learning environments that promote fairness, respect and care to encourage learning," which is interpreted as Outstanding. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is Indicator 4, "Adapted and used culturally appropriate teaching strategies to address the needs of learners from indigenous groups," with a weighted mean of 4.55, also interpreted as Outstanding. While still considered "Outstanding," this lower score highlights the technical difficulty of "Indigenization" in the curriculum. The overall weighted mean for learning environment and diversity of learning is 4.72, which is interpreted as Outstanding. This overall result implies that teachers in the district have successfully moved beyond traditional "one-size-fits-all" teaching. The findings were corroborated by Raguindin et al. (2020), who observed that teachers often struggle with integrating cultural diversity into curriculum-based instruction due to the vast individual differences of learners. Additionally, Macabenta et al. (2023) emphasized that maintaining mastery in diverse home languages and cultural contexts is a significant hurdle even for highly competent teachers.

Table 2 Level of Teachers' Competence and Performance along Learning Environment and Diversity of Learning

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Established safe and secure learning environments to enhance learning	4.81	O
2. Maintained learning environments that promote fairness, respect and care to encourage learning	4.82	O

3. Established a learner-centered culture by using teaching strategies that respond to their linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and religious backgrounds	4.70	O
4. Adapted and used culturally appropriate teaching strategies to address the needs of learners from indigenous groups	4.55	O
Overall Weighted Mean	4.72	O

Rating Scale:

4.50-5.00	-	Outstanding (O)
3.50-4.49	-	Very Satisfactory (VS)
2.50-3.49	-	Satisfactory (S)
1.50-2.49	-	Unsatisfactory (US)
1.00-1.49	-	Poor (P)

Descriptive Interpretation:

Curriculum Planning and Assessment and Reporting. Table 3 presents the level of teachers' competence and performance regarding Curriculum and Planning and Assessment and Reporting. The data reveals that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 4.90 is Indicator 1, "Set achievable and appropriate learning outcomes that are aligned with learning competencies," which is interpreted as Outstanding. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is Indicator 3, "Utilized assessment data to inform the modification of teaching and learning practices and programs," with a score of 4.76, also interpreted as Outstanding. The overall weighted mean for curriculum planning and assessment and reporting, is 4.81, which is interpreted as Outstanding. This result implies that teachers possess a strong command over the entire instructional cycle from the initial setting of goals to the final assessment of student progress. The findings were corroborated by Basco et al. (2022) and Quizada (2023) who demonstrated that teachers attain high performance and proficiency levels when their planning is aligned with core competencies. They emphasized that the alignment of teaching strategies to the specific needs of learners is a continuous, labor-intensive process that requires constant professional reflection. Asserting that teachers' competence in delivery and assessment is a primary driver of student success in diverse educational environments.

Table 3 Level of Teachers' Competence and Performance along Curriculum Planning and Assessment and Reporting

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Set achievable and appropriate learning outcomes that are aligned with learning competencies	4.90	O
2. Used strategies for providing timely, accurate and constructive feedback to improve learner performance	4.79	O
3. Utilized assessment data to inform the modification of teaching and learning practices and programs	4.76	O
Overall Weighted Mean	4.81	O

Rating Scale:

4.50-5.00	-	Outstanding (O)
3.50-4.49	-	Very Satisfactory (VS)
2.50-3.49	-	Satisfactory (S)
1.50-2.49	-	Unsatisfactory (US)
1.00-1.49	-	Poor (P)

Descriptive Interpretation:

Community Linkages, Professional Engagement, Personal Growth and Professional Development. Table 4 presents the level of teachers' competence and performance regarding Community Linkages, Professional Engagement, Personal Growth, and Professional Development. The data reveals that the indicator which obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.79 is "Built relationship with parents/guardians and the wider school community to facilitate involvement in the educative process," which is interpreted as Outstanding. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "Developed a personal improvement plan based on reflection of one's practice and on-going professional learning," with a score of 4.62, also interpreted as Outstanding. The overall weighted mean for community linkages, professional engagement, personal growth, and professional development is 4.69, which is interpreted as Outstanding (O). This result implies that the teachers are well-rounded professionals who understand that education does not happen in a vacuum. These was conformed by Dulay (2024) who cited that teachers as active implementers of inclusive education practices also initiate to strengthen and enhance their partnership and collaborative relationship with the parents and community because these stakeholders actually reflect the diversity of cultural identities and values that need to be recognized by its partner schools. Also, Estanislao (2023) who mentioned that in order to attain enhancement in these best practices in teaching and professional engagements, teachers typically design and adopt professional development plans and personal enhancement blueprints that serve as their concrete guide towards their aspired success in the diverse pedagogical and professional areas where they are engaged.

Table 4 Level of Teachers' Competence and Performance along Community Linkages, Professional Engagement, Personal Growth and Professional Development

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Built relationship with parents/guardians and the wider school community to facilitate involvement in the educative process	4.79	O
2. Participated in professional networks to share knowledge and to enhance practice	4.67	O
3. Developed a personal improvement plan based on reflection of one's practice and on-going professional learning	4.62	O
Overall Weighted Mean	4.69	O

Rating Scale:

4.50-5.00 -

3.50-4.49 -

2.50-3.49 -

1.50-2.49 -

1.00-1.49 -

Descriptive Interpretation:

Outstanding (O)

Very Satisfactory (VS)

Satisfactory (S)

Unsatisfactory (US)

Poor (P)

Inclusive Literacy Practices of the Teachers of Mercedes District in Diversity-Focused Educational Environments. The findings below reflect the level of inclusive literacy practices of the teachers in support of diversity-focused learning environments in terms of the following: cultural competencies, differentiated instruction, assessment and evaluation, instructional strategies, collaborative skills, and professional development practices.

Cultural Competencies. Table 5 presents the inclusive literacy practices of teachers in Mercedes District specifically regarding Cultural Competencies. The data reveals that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 3.78 is "I ensure my teaching approaches do not reinforce cultural stereotypes and biases," which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "I celebrate and integrate cultural events and practices into classroom activities to promote inclusivity," with a weighted mean of 3.65, also interpreted as Consistently Practiced. The overall weighted mean for Cultural

Competencies is 3.69, which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. This result implies that teachers in Mercedes District are culturally responsive practitioners who move beyond traditional teaching by acknowledging the diverse identities of their learners. The findings are corroborated by Wakat et al. (2023) and Deignan (2022), who identified that surfacing inclusive strategies in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms is a primary practice among Filipino educators. They also argued that inclusive literacy must remove all barriers and hindrances including psychological and cultural biases to ensure equal student participation. Integrating cultural diversity into curriculum-based instruction is often hindered by the high volume of instructional requirements. They emphasized that inclusive practices require a deep alignment of the language and context of teaching with the learners' heritage, a process that is often labor-intensive.

Table 5 Inclusive Literacy Practices of Teachers along Cultural Competencies

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I incorporate my pupils' cultural backgrounds and identities into the curriculum lessons and materials.	3.71	CP
2. I use text and learning materials that respond to the diverse cultures and languages of my pupils.	3.66	CP
3. I use the home language of my pupils in developing their literacy skills together with English, Filipino, and other languages.	3.67	CP
4. I celebrate and integrate cultural events and practices into classroom activities to promote inclusivity.	3.65	CP
5. I ensure my teaching approaches do not reinforce cultural stereotypes and biases.	3.78	CP
Overall Weighted Mean	3.69	CP

Rating Scale:

3.25-4.00

-

2.50-3.24

-

1.75-2.49

-

1.00-1.74

-

Descriptive Interpretation:

Consistently Practiced (CP)

Often Practiced (OP)

Sometimes Practiced (SP)

Not Practiced (NP)

Differentiated Instruction. Table 6 presents the inclusive literacy practices of teachers in Mercedes District concerning Differentiated Instruction. The data indicates that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 3.76 is "I modify the learning activities based on my pupils' learning readiness," which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "I provide differentiated assignments to address varying levels of literacy proficiency among learners," with a weighted mean of 3.48, also interpreted as Consistently Practiced. The findings were supported by Montano (2022) and Tjenberg and Forsling (2023), who argued that providing equal access to diverse resources and instruction is the most effective way to support inclusive literacy. They identified "didactic flexibility" or the ability to change teaching methods based on the situation as a core practice in inclusive classrooms. Also, Macabenta et al. (2023), who noted that high student-to-teacher ratios often make it difficult for educators to provide highly individualized materials for every learner. Additionally, Wakat et al. (2023) pointed out that while teachers strive to use diversified instructional materials, the lack of time and resources remains a significant hurdle. They explained that inclusive literacy practices are those that enable students to participate equally and freely by meeting them at their current level of proficiency.

Table 6 Inclusive Literacy Practices of Teachers along Differentiated Instruction

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I employ flexible grouping to meet the learners' diverse literacy levels.	3.70	CP
2. I modify the learning activities based on my pupils' learning readiness.	3.76	CP
3. I integrate varied instructional methods to match learners' needs and preferences.	3.69	CP
4. I provide differentiated assignments to address varying levels of literacy proficiency among learners.	3.48	CP
5. I offer personalized support for learners struggling with literacy concepts.	3.56	CP
Overall Weighted Mean	3.64	CP

<i>Rating Scale:</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation:</i>
3.25-4.00 -	Consistently Practiced (CP)
2.50-3.24 -	Often Practiced (OP)
1.75-2.49 -	Sometimes Practiced (SP)
1.00-1.74 -	Not Practiced (NP)

Assessment and Evaluation. Table 7 presents the inclusive literacy practices of teachers in Mercedes District regarding Assessment and Evaluation. The data indicates that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 3.89 is "I conduct formative assessments to track and support learners' literacy development," which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "I use different assessment tools to give feedback and match my teaching with my pupils' needs," with a weighted mean of 3.57, also interpreted as Consistently Practiced. The overall weighted mean for Assessment and Evaluation is 3.73, which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. This result implies that the teachers in Mercedes District treat assessment not just as a way to give grades, but as a "compass" to guide their instruction. The "Consistently Practiced" rating suggests that evaluation is an ongoing process that supports inclusivity. It shows that teachers are dedicated to gathering evidence of learning to ensure that their teaching remains effective for a diverse group of pupils. The findings were corroborated by Basco et al. (2022), which emphasized that high proficiency in assessment is a hallmark of effective teaching in the Philippine context. Also, Basco et al. noted that inclusive literacy practices must remove barriers to engagement by providing constant support throughout the learning process. This supports the notion that the teachers utilize variety of assessment tools and practices to collect concrete and valid information and data on the learners' achievements and progress. Specifically, these assessment tools include quizzes, rubrics and digital assessment tools and platforms. These varied assessment tools allow teachers to offer specific, timely and constructive feedback to guide and direct the learners towards learning opportunities.

Table 7 Inclusive Literacy Practices of Teachers along Assessment and Evaluation

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I use different assessment tools to give feedback and match my teaching with my pupils' needs.	3.57	CP
2. I utilize alternative assessment tools that enable my pupils to demonstrate their literacy skills in different ways.	3.65	CP

3. I use rubrics to assess language skills and support my pupils' needs	3.75	CP
4. I conduct formative assessments to track and support learners' literacy development.	3.89	CP
5. I review assessment results to identify patterns and adjust my teaching as needed.	3.77	CP
Overall Weighted Mean	3.73	CP

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Interpretation:
3.25-4.00	- Consistently Practiced (CP)
2.50-3.24	- Often Practiced (OP)
1.75-2.49	- Sometimes Practiced (SP)
1.00-1.74	- Not Practiced (NP)

Instructional Strategies. Table 8 presents the inclusive literacy practices of teachers in Mercedes District regarding Instructional Strategies. The data reveals that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 3.83 is "I promote collaborative learning strategies to support literacy development," which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "I make use of multimodal instruction," with a weighted mean of 3.52, also interpreted as Consistently Practiced. The overall weighted mean for Instructional Strategies is 3.67, which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. This result implies that the educators in Mercedes District are actively diversifying how they deliver their lessons. The findings were corroborated by Gunay and Sila (2023) proving that the teacher-respondents were sustainably engaged in the application and integration of collaborative learning techniques and peer-based learning in classroom-based instruction and learning practices as adherent to the inclusive literacy goals and practices. This is because the respondents were highly cognizant that the collaborative learning was a practical way to make the students feel well-acknowledged and recognized as equal beneficiaries of inclusive literacy instructional services. These are also aligned with Montano (2022) which underscored that the teacher-respondents have active and consistent engagement rate in the utilization of multimodal teaching strategies as one of their best practices under salient pedagogical domains. The study concluded that the multimodal approach to instruction was highly supportive of inclusive literacy support because it gives students with equal and optimize access to diverse and comprehensive educational resources.

Table 8 Inclusive Literacy Practices of Teachers along Instructional Strategies

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I utilize the scaffolding approach in diverse literacy tasks and activities.	3.68	CP
2. I apply the use of technology in literacy instruction.	3.75	CP
3. I make use of multimodal instruction.	3.52	CP
4. I promote collaborative learning strategies to support literacy development.	3.83	CP
5. I create real-world literacy tasks to engage learners meaningfully.	3.57	CP
Overall Weighted Mean	3.67	CP

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Interpretation:
3.25-4.00	- Consistently Practiced (CP)
2.50-3.24	- Often Practiced (OP)
1.75-2.49	- Sometimes Practiced (SP)
1.00-1.74	- Not Practiced (NP)

Collaborative Skills. Table 9 presents the inclusive literacy practices of teachers in Mercedes District regarding Collaborative Skills. The data indicates that the indicator which obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.71 is "I integrate peer learning activities in the teaching-learning process," which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "I collaborate with community stakeholders to support literacy initiatives," with a weighted mean of 3.41, also interpreted as Consistently Practiced. The overall weighted mean for Collaborative Skills is 3.59, which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. This result implies that teachers in Mercedes District view literacy as a collective effort rather than an isolated task. These are affirmed by Quizada (2023) which suggested that the teacher-respondents were also sufficiently involved in the integration of peer learning and cooperative learning approach in the diverse instructional processes and activities. This is because the peer-based learning and collaborative learning were deemed and proven as practical approaches that equally engage, integrate and motivate all students in a classroom towards the diverse educational processes and activities, hence, ensuring and sustaining inclusive literacy climate in the learning environment and system.

Table 9 Inclusive Literacy Practices of Teachers along Collaborative Skills

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I am open to engaging in a co-teaching system of instruction.	3.69	CP
2. I integrate peer learning activities in the teaching-learning process.	3.71	CP
3. I orient and involve parents and families in inclusive literacy development programs.	3.66	CP
4. I collaborate with community stakeholders to support literacy initiatives.	3.41	CP
5. I participate in interdisciplinary teams to address diverse literacy needs in my class.	3.48	CP
Overall Weighted Mean	3.59	CP

Rating Scale:

3.25-4.00

-

2.50-3.24

-

1.75-2.49

-

1.00-1.74

- Not Practiced (NP)

Descriptive Interpretation:

Consistently Practiced (CP)

Often Practiced (OP)

Sometimes Practiced (SP)

Professional Development Practices. Table 10 presents the inclusive literacy practices of teachers in Mercedes District regarding Professional Development Practices. The data reveals that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 3.65 is "I employ reflective practices to assess my own professional development competence in support of inclusive literacy," which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "I actively engage in action research to improve inclusive literacy practices in my classroom," with a score of 3.06, also interpreted as Consistently Practiced. This reflects the significant time, technical skill, and effort required to conduct formal research. The overall weighted mean for Professional Development Practices is 3.49, which is interpreted as Consistently Practiced. This result implies that the teachers in Mercedes District are dedicated professionals who do not view their graduation as the end of their learning. The findings were corroborated by Estanislao (2023) and Basco et al. (2022), who asserted that competent teachers are characterized by their deep mastery of their field and their ongoing ability to respond to individual learner differences through continuous learning. The high score in reflective practice aligns with the study of which emphasized that professional reflection is a key component of high-performing teachers in various school divisions. They also emphasize that teachers must collaboratively

engage in workshops, trainings, peer mentoring and professional learning communities on differentiated learning, universal design for learning and strategies for language-oriented support.

Table 10 Inclusive Literacy Practices of Teachers along Professional Development Practices

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I pursue continuous learning programs to enhance my inclusive literacy practices.	3.63	CP
2. I seek partnerships with my colleagues and fellow professionals in knowledge sharing on best practices in inclusive literacy.	3.64	CP
3. I employ reflective practices to assess my own professional development competence in support of inclusive literacy.	3.65	CP
4. I attend training or seminars focused on inclusive education and literacy instruction.	3.48	CP
5. I actively engage in action research to improve inclusive literacy practices in my classroom.	3.06	OP
Overall Weighted Mean	3.49	CP

Rating Scale:

3.25-4.00	-
2.50-3.24	-
1.75-2.49	-
1.00-1.74	-

Descriptive Interpretation:

Consistently Practiced (CP)
Often Practiced (OP)
Sometimes Practiced (SP)
Not Practiced (NP)

Relationship between Teachers' Competence and Performance and their Inclusive Literacy Practices in Diversity-Focused Educational Environments. The significant relationship that may exist between the teachers' competence and performance and their inclusive literacy practices in diversity-focused educational environments were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). Table 11 reveals that the teachers' competence along content knowledge and pedagogy obtained significant relationships in the inclusive practices along instructional strategies ($r=.231$, $p\text{-value}=.010$), collaborative skills ($r=.196$, $p\text{-value}=.029$), and professional development practices ($r=.200$, $p\text{-value}=.026$). These findings indicate that teachers who demonstrate strong mastery of subject matter and effective pedagogical skills are more capable of implementing inclusive instructional strategies that address the diverse literacy needs of learners, such as adapting lessons, using varied teaching approaches, and employing learner-centered methodologies. At the same time, pedagogically competent teachers are more likely to engage in collaborative practices, including working with colleagues, parents, and school stakeholders, to support inclusive literacy initiatives.

Similarly, significant relationships exist in the teachers' competence and performance along learning environment and diversity of learning and the inclusive literacy practices in terms of cultural competencies ($r=.205$, $p\text{-value}=.022$); assessment and evaluation ($r=.192$, $p\text{-value}=.033$); collaboration skills ($r=.279$, $p\text{-value}=.002$); and professional development ($r=.313$, $p\text{-value}=.000$). These significant relationships highlight the crucial role of an inclusive learning environment and responsiveness to learner diversity in enhancing teachers' inclusive literacy practices in diversity-focused educational settings. Likewise, significant relationship exists in curriculum planning and assessment and reporting and differentiated instruction ($r=-.217$, $p\text{-value}=.015$). The negative correlation suggests that as teachers place greater emphasis on standardized curriculum planning and formal assessment and reporting requirements, their implementation of differentiated instructional strategies tends to decrease.

Table 11 Test for Significant Relationship between Teachers' Competence and Performance and their Inclusive Literacy Practices

Inclusive Literacy Practices	Teachers' Competence and Performance							
	Content Knowledge and Pedagogy		Learning Environment and Diversity of Learning		Curr. Planning and Assessment and Reporting		Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, Development	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Cultural Competencies	.154	.088	.205*	.022	-.034	.709	.334**	.000
Differentiated Instruction	.044	.629	.064	.477	-.217*	.015	.147	.104
Assessment and Evaluation	.145	.109	.192*	.033	-.082	.363	.184*	.041
Instructional Strategies	.231**	.010	.169	.060	-.008	.929	.113	.210
Collaborative Skills	.196*	.029	.279**	.002	-.065	.472	.302*	.001
Professional Development	.200*	.026	.313**	.000	-.075	.405	.313**	.000

*Correlation is Significant @ 0.05

**Correlation is Significant @ 0.01

Finally, significant relationships exist between the teachers' competence and performance in terms of community linkages, and professional engagement and development and the inclusive literacy practices along cultural competencies ($r=.334$, $p\text{-value}=.000$); assessment and evaluation ($r=.184$, $p\text{-value}=.041$); collaborative skills ($r=.302$, $p\text{-value}=.001$); and professional development ($r=.313$, $p\text{-value}=.000$). These results indicate that teachers who actively engage with parents, community partners, and professional networks are better able to integrate learners' cultural backgrounds into literacy instruction, thereby enhancing cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

These findings are corroborated by Raguindin et al. (2020), who concluded that a salient correlation exists between teachers' pedagogical approaches and their active participation in professional learning communities (PLCs) that support inclusive education services. Specifically, the study emphasizes that a solid foundation in content knowledge is essential for teachers, as it enables them to establish clear instructional goals, align with the overarching mission of inclusive education, and develop informed perspectives on how to support diverse learners effectively. In other words, teachers who possess deep understanding of the subjects they teach are better equipped to implement pedagogically sound strategies while engaging collaboratively with colleagues in PLCs. This engagement, in turn, fosters shared learning, reflection on teaching practices, and the adoption of inclusive instructional approaches that address the varied needs, abilities, and cultural backgrounds of learners. Therefore, the relationship between pedagogical competence and professional collaboration underscores that knowledge of content is not only foundational for effective teaching but also crucial in promoting a culture of continuous professional growth that strengthens inclusive literacy practices.

Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Diversity- Focused Educational Environments. In diversity-focused educational environments, teachers encounter challenges that may affect their competence and performance in fostering inclusive literacy practices. These challenges relate to areas such as cultural competencies, differentiated instruction, assessment and evaluation, instructional strategies, collaborative

skills, and professional development. Identifying these obstacles is essential for understanding how they influence teachers' practices and for developing interventions to enhance inclusive literacy in the elementary schools of Mercedes District.

Cultural Competencies. Table 12 presents the challenges encountered by teachers in Mercedes District along Cultural Competencies within diversity-focused environments. The data reveals that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 2.98 is "Difficulty in integrating pupils' diverse cultural backgrounds into the curriculum," which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. On the other hand, the lowest weighted mean of 2.76, also interpreted as Sometimes Experienced (SE), was shared by two indicators: "Limited familiarity with the home languages of pupils" and "Challenges in addressing cultural stereotypes and biases in the classroom." The overall weighted mean for Challenges along Cultural Competencies is 2.87, which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This result implies that while teachers in Mercedes District are not overwhelmed by cultural barriers, these challenges remain a "background noise" in their professional lives. The findings were corroborated by the research of Raguindin et al. (2020), who observed that teachers often struggle to balance the rigid requirements of a national curriculum with the vast individual and cultural differences of their learners. Furthermore, Macabenta et al. (2023) noted that handling large, diverse classes often makes it difficult for teachers to move away from "one-size-fits-all" materials.

The findings also align with the study of Vinoya (2024) and Estanislao (2023), which suggests that Filipino educators are attaining higher proficiency in classroom management and social sensitivity. They also pointed out, the alignment of teaching strategies to the specific linguistic needs of learners is an ongoing process that requires constant professional reflection. While teachers are competent, they still face complexities when responding to the diverse backgrounds of Filipino learners, requiring continued support from the educational system.

Table 12 Challenges Encountered by Teachers along Cultural Competencies

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Difficulty in integrating pupils' diverse cultural backgrounds into the curriculum.	2.98	SE
2. Lack of access to culturally relevant teaching materials and resources.	2.92	SE
3. Limited familiarity with the home languages of pupils.	2.76	SE
4. Challenges in addressing cultural stereotypes and biases in the classroom.	2.76	SE
5. Insufficient training on incorporating cultural diversity into teaching practices.	2.94	SE
Overall Weighted Mean	2.87	SE

<i>Rating Scale:</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation:</i>
3.25-4.00	- Frequently Experienced (FE)
2.50-3.24	- Sometimes Experienced (SE)
1.75-2.49	- Rarely Experienced (RE)
1.00-1.74	- Not Experienced (NE)

Differentiated Instruction. Table 13 presents the challenges encountered by teachers in Mercedes District regarding Differentiated Instruction. The data shows that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 3.15 is "Time constraints in modifying learning activities to address pupils' readiness," which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This result highlights that time is the primary enemy of inclusive teaching. On the

other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "Challenges in creating differentiated assignments for learners with different proficiency levels," with a score of 2.92, also interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This challenge suggests that teachers have developed a degree of efficiency or have access to some shared materials for varying proficiency levels. The overall weighted mean for Challenges along Differentiated Instruction is 3.02, which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This result implies that while teachers are "Outstanding" in their competence, they are not immune to the logistical realities of a busy classroom. The findings were corroborated by Macabenta et al. (2023) and Raguindin et al. (2020) who identified that the high volume of students and instructional demands often limit the time available for individualized teacher-student interaction. They observed that teachers often face complexities in balancing multiple instructional needs within a single class period. The challenge in creating assignments for different proficiency levels were also noted that while teachers strive to use diversified instructional materials, the lack of resources remains a persistent obstacle.

Table 13 Challenges Encountered by Teachers along Differentiated Instruction

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Difficulty in managing flexible grouping to meet diverse literacy levels.	2.94	SE
2. Time constraints in modifying learning activities to address pupils' readiness.	3.15	SE
3. Lack of resources to implement varied instructional methods effectively.	3.06	SE
4. Challenges in creating differentiated assignments for learners with different proficiency levels.	2.92	SE
5. Insufficient support for personalized learning interventions.	3.05	SE
Overall Weighted Mean	3.02	SE

Rating Scale:

3.25-4.00

-

2.50-3.24

-

1.75-2.49

-

1.00-1.74

-

Descriptive Interpretation:

Frequently Experienced (FE)

Sometimes Experienced (SE)

Rarely Experienced (RE)

Not Experienced (NE)

Assessment and Evaluation. Table 14 presents the challenges encountered by teachers in Mercedes District regarding Assessment and Evaluation within a diversity-focused environment. The data reveals that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 3.02 is "Limited availability of alternative assessment tools for diverse learners," which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "Difficulty in analyzing assessment data to inform instructional adjustments," with a score of 2.90, also interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This challenge suggests that teachers are actually quite skilled at "reading" their students' progress. The overall weighted mean for Challenges along Assessment and Evaluation is 2.96, which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This result implies that the assessment process in the district is functional but strained by resource limitations. The finding was corroborated by Wakat et al. (2023), who noted that the lack of diversified instructional and assessment materials remains a significant barrier for teachers in diverse classrooms. Wakat et al. highlighted that the high volume of daily responsibilities and large class sizes often make it difficult for teachers to move away from traditional, standardized testing methods. The context of assessment, most of the teacher-respondents encountered problems in matching assessment data to the practical instructional modifications due to factors such as huge population of students and time constraints.

Table 14 Challenges Encountered by Teachers along Assessment and Evaluation

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Difficulty in using diverse forms of assessment tools for feedback and alignment.	3.00	SE
2. Limited availability of alternative assessment tools for diverse learners.	3.02	SE
3. Challenges in developing and applying evaluation rubrics for literacy needs.	2.92	SE
4. Insufficient time to conduct formative assessments for all learners.	2.95	SE
5. Difficulty in analyzing assessment data to inform instructional adjustments.	2.90	SE
Overall Weighted Mean	2.96	SE

Rating Scale:

3.25-4.00

-

2.50-3.24

-

1.75-2.49

-

1.00-1.74

-

Descriptive Interpretation:

Frequently Experienced (FE)

Sometimes Experienced (SE)

Rarely Experienced (RE)

Not Experienced (NE)

Instructional Strategies. Table 15 presents the challenges encountered by teachers in Mercedes District regarding Instructional Strategies in diversity-focused environments. The data reveals that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 3.35 is "Limited opportunities to design real-world literacy tasks," which is interpreted as Frequently Experienced. This result suggests a significant gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "Limited access to technology for literacy instruction," with a score of 2.73, which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. The relatively lower frequency of this challenge is an encouraging sign, suggesting that basic technology is becoming more accessible in the district. The overall weighted mean for Instructional Strategies is 2.98, which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This result implies that the instructional environment in Mercedes District is evolving but remains constrained by "curricular pressure." The "Sometimes Experienced" rating suggests that teachers are generally able to deliver their lessons, but they feel a persistent frustration regarding the quality and authenticity of those lessons. The findings were conformed by Montano (2022) and Raguindin et al. (2020) who argued that for inclusive literacy to be effective, it must be "equal-access" and grounded in the students' lived experiences. When teachers cannot provide these tasks, the "accessibility" of the lesson drops. Furthermore, they noted that the integration of cultural diversity into curriculum-based instruction is often hindered by the sheer volume of standardized content that must be covered.

Table 15 Challenges Encountered by Teachers along Instructional Strategies

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Difficulty in implementing scaffolding approaches for diverse learners.	2.93	SE
2. Limited access to technology for literacy instruction.	2.73	SE
3. Challenges in creating and delivering multimodal instruction.	2.97	SE

4. Difficulty in fostering collaborative learning due to varying pupil engagement levels.	2.91	SE
5. Limited opportunities to design real-world literacy tasks.	3.35	FE
Overall Weighted Mean	2.98	SE

Rating Scale:

3.25-4.00

-

2.50-3.24

-

1.75-2.49

-

1.00-1.74

-

Descriptive Interpretation:

Frequently Experienced (FE)

Sometimes Experienced (SE)

Rarely Experienced (RE)

Not Experienced (NE)

Collaborative Skills. Table 16 presents the challenges encountered by teachers in Mercedes District regarding Collaborative Skills. The data reveals that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 3.12 is "Lack of parental and family involvement in literacy programs," which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This result highlights the "home-school gap" as the most prominent social challenge for teachers. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is "Difficulty in coordinating a co-teaching system with colleagues," with a score of 2.67, also interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. The lower frequency of this challenge is a positive indicator of the internal professional culture in the district. The overall weighted mean for Challenges along Collaborative Skills is 2.90, which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This result implies that the collaborative ecosystem of the district is generally healthy but is weakened by external factors. The findings were corroborated by Vinoya (2024), which highlighted that Filipino educators maintain high levels of professional engagement and social competence within their school divisions. This also supports the assertion of that teachers who master their professional standards are better equipped to build collaborative environments. He pointed out, achieving a truly inclusive literacy environment requires the teacher to act as a bridge between the school and the community, a role that remains complex due to the "individual differences" and varying capacities of the stakeholders involved.

Table 16 Challenges Encountered by Teachers along Collaborative Skills

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Difficulty in coordinating a co-teaching system with colleagues.	2.67	SE
2. Limited pupil engagement in peer learning activities.	2.76	SE
3. Lack of parental and family involvement in literacy programs.	3.12	SE
4. Insufficient collaboration with community stakeholders for literacy initiatives.	2.98	SE
5. Limited time and resources for participation in interdisciplinary team efforts.	2.99	SE
Overall Weighted Mean	2.90	SE

Rating Scale:

3.25-4.00

-

2.50-3.24

-

1.75-2.49

-

1.00-1.74

-

Descriptive Interpretation:

Frequently Experienced (FE)

Sometimes Experienced (SE)

Rarely Experienced (RE)

Not Experienced (NE)

Professional Development Practices. Table 17 presents the challenges encountered by teachers in Mercedes District regarding Professional Development Practices. The data reveals that the indicator with the highest weighted mean of 3.15 is "Insufficient resources to conduct action research for improving inclusive literacy practices," which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This result highlights the gap between the teacher's desire to innovate and the practical means to do so. On the other hand, the lowest weighted mean is 2.81, which is "Lack of opportunities for collaboration with colleagues to share best practices," also interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. The lower frequency of this challenge is a positive sign, indicating that "peer-to-peer" learning is alive and well in the district. The overall weighted mean for Challenges along Professional Development is 2.95, which is interpreted as Sometimes Experienced. This result implies that professional growth in the district is happening, but it is irregular. The finding was corroborated by Macabenta et al. (2023), who identified that the high volume of daily responsibilities often leaves teachers with limited time and resources for specialized professional growth activities. Similarly, Quizada (2023) highlighted that while teachers meet the high standards of the RPMS, the technical demands of conducting research often require more systemic support. The findings were conformed by Vinoya (2024) and Basco et al. (2022), who noted that public school teachers consistently reach outstanding performance levels in professional engagement and teamwork. They support the assertion that high-performing teachers use collaboration as a key tool for maintaining proficiency. That dedicated educators remain committed to their professional duties and continue to seek ways to respond to the individual differences of their learners, even when formal support is "sometimes" lacking.

Table 17 Challenges Encountered by Teachers along Professional Development Practices

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Limited access to professional development programs focused on inclusive literacy.	2.95	SE
2. Lack of opportunities for collaboration with colleagues to share best practices.	2.81	SE
3. Difficulty in employing reflective practices due to workload demands.	2.96	SE
4. Challenges in attending seminars and training on inclusive education.	2.90	SE
5. Insufficient resources to conduct action research for improving inclusive literacy practices.	3.15	SE
Overall Weighted Mean	2.95	SE

Rating Scale:

3.25-4.00

-

Descriptive Interpretation:

Frequently Experienced (FE)

2.50-3.24

-

Sometimes Experienced (SE)

1.75-2.49

-

Rarely Experienced (RE)

1.00-1.74

-

Not Experienced (NE)

Relationship between the Teachers' Inclusive Literacy Practices and the Challenges Encountered in Diversity-Focused Educational Environments. The relationship that may exists between the teachers' literacy practices and the challenges encountered in diversity-focused educational environments along cultural competencies, differentiated instruction, assessment and evaluation, instructional strategies, collaborative skills, and professional development were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r).

It can be observed in Table 18 that a significant relationship only exists between the teachers' inclusive literacy practices and the challenges they encountered along assessment and evaluation ($r=-.240$, $p\text{-value}=.007$). There is an inverse or negative relationship between the variables considered, which means that

an increase in the inclusive literacy practices, corresponds to the decrease in the challenges encountered. The data imply that there is no significant relationship between the teachers' inclusive literacy practices and most of the challenges they encounter because inclusive literacy practices and strategies are often anchored on their personal motivation and dedication, acquired trainings and flexibility in teaching rather than being affected by external aspects and challenges. The diverse challenges may occur but they do not full defer the teachers from the effective execution and provision of inclusive literacy services for the learners. However, assessment and evaluation pose an exception and unique challenge because learning assessment is highly institutionalized and governed by standardized programs and systems that may not at all times adhere or focus with inclusive literacy, as assessment deals more on measure of learning. These are conformed by Montano (2022) which concluded that the teachers typically face issues and challenges in supporting inclusive education along diverse areas except educational assessment aspect because basically, assessment system and tools are standardized in nature.

Table 18 Test for Significant Relationship between Teachers' Inclusive Literacy Practices and the Challenges Encountered in Diversity-Focused Educational Environments

Teachers' Inclusive Literacy Practices vs Challenges Encountered	Coefficient (r)	p-value	Remarks
Cultural Competencies	.005	.095	Not Significant
Differentiated Instruction	-.056	.546	Not Significant
Assessment and Evaluation	-.240**	.007	Significant
Instructional Strategies	-.120	.183	Not Significant
Collaborative Skills	-.128	.157	Not Significant
Professional Development	-.081	.370	Not Significant

*Correlation is Significant @ 0.05 level

**Correlation is Significant @ 0.01 level

Proposed Intervention to Enhance Teachers' Competence in Fostering Inclusive Literacy Practices. The findings of the study on the "Teachers' Competence and Performance in Inclusive Literacy Practices for Diversity Focused Educational Environment" serve as the direct empirical evidence and blueprint for the creation of **Project MELODY: Mobilizing Educators for Literacy Optimization and Diversity-Yielding Practices**. While the results predominantly show that our educators possess an "Outstanding" level of competence, a closer look at the lowest weighted means reveals that there are specific "bottlenecks" where this expertise is hindered by logistical and social barriers. Specifically, in the area of Instructional Strategies, the practice of using multimodal instruction (3.52) and the frequent challenge of designing real-world literacy tasks (3.35) indicate that teachers feel restricted by the traditional curriculum. They have the knowledge to be creative, but they lack the specific "opportunities" and "tools" to bring literacy to life beyond the textbook.

The study further identified significant hurdles in the area of Differentiated Instruction, where providing differentiated assignments (3.48) was highlighted as a difficult task. Teachers pointed to time constraints (3.15) and the limited availability of alternative assessment tools (3.02) as the primary reasons for this struggle. This suggests that the teachers in Mercedes District understand the need to cater to different reading levels, but they are "timed out" by the fast pace of the school day and the lack of ready-made materials. By addressing these specific low-mean indicators, Project MELODY seeks to provide a collaborative "Resource Bank" during the SLAC sessions on February 27 and March 6, 2026. This initiative is specifically designed for the 37 teachers of Grades 4-6, ensuring they no longer have to struggle alone to create varied assessments

under tight deadlines. By focusing on this specific group of intermediate teachers, the project can produce highly targeted materials that bridge the transition from basic decoding to complex comprehension.

Furthermore, the data regarding Collaborative Skills and Professional Development provided a clear call for action. The lowest scoring inclusive practice in the entire study was actively engaging in action research (3.06), which teachers attributed to insufficient resources (3.15). This was paired with a significant social challenge: the lack of parental and family involvement (3.12) and the difficulty of collaborating with community stakeholders (3.41). These findings prove that teachers feel the heaviest burden when it comes to formalizing their classroom successes through research and extending literacy support into the homes of their students.

In summary, Project MELODY: Mobilizing Educators for Literacy Optimization and Diversity-Yielding Practices, was built by taking every "lowest mean" found in the research and turning it into a specialized training topic. The researcher has prioritized Action Research, Community Mobilization, and Differentiated Tool-making because the data shows these are the areas where our teachers feel the most "stretched." Instead of a generic seminar, this proposal offers a targeted intervention. By providing simplified research templates and structured community engagement plans, the training aims to remove the specific roadblocks identified in the study. Ultimately, Project MELODY is designed to bridge the gap between our teachers' "Outstanding" potential and the real-world challenges they face, ensuring that inclusive literacy becomes a manageable and sustainable reality in every classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that teachers in the Mercedes District demonstrate exceptional professional proficiency, as reflected in their "Outstanding" performance, which signifies a high level of mastery in both content and pedagogy that upholds rigorous educational standards. Educators have effectively integrated inclusive literacy practices into their daily routines, showing a strong commitment to equity through consistent assessment and culturally responsive strategies. Professional competence emerges as a key driver of inclusive literacy implementation; however, a notable tension persists wherein rigid curriculum planning may unintentionally limit the flexibility needed for differentiated instruction. Despite the high level of teacher competence, persistent environmental constraints particularly in terms of limited resources and time continue to hinder the smooth delivery of fully inclusive literacy experiences. The quality of inclusive teaching is therefore highly sensitive to external barriers, as evidenced by the significant negative relationship between such constraints and effective practice, underscoring that teacher dedication must be complemented by adequate institutional support. In response to these challenges, Project MELODY stands out as a vital strategic intervention, empowering teachers to innovate through action research and community engagement to address gaps and strengthen inclusive literacy within diversity-focused educational environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that School Heads and District Supervisors provide greater flexibility in instructional planning to ensure that administrative requirements do not impede the effective implementation of inclusive literacy strategies. Elementary school teachers are encouraged to take a proactive role in their professional development by initiating school-based Learning Action Cells (SLAC) that focus on sharing localized literacy materials and effective practices. School Heads may prioritize the allocation of funds for diverse literacy resources, assistive technologies, and multicultural materials to better address varied learner needs, while also establishing Inclusive Literacy Partnerships with community leaders to enhance teachers' understanding of students' cultural contexts. Master Teachers may implement peer-mentoring or coaching systems to support colleagues in managing the demands of differentiated instruction and assessment. Furthermore, it is strongly recommended that School Heads formally integrate Project MELODY into the district's Faculty Development Plan to address gaps in action research engagement and community mobilization. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to undertake longitudinal or qualitative studies that explore teachers' lived experiences and incorporate student perspectives to more directly assess the impact of teacher competence on learner outcomes.

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