

Analysis of Teaching Methods and Challenges in Self- Contained Classes in Special Needs Education in Bahrain: Strategies for Adaptation in the Philippine Educational Context

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the teaching methods and challenges in self-contained classes for learners with special needs in Bahrain, as well as strategies for adaptation in the Philippine educational context. The researcher employed qualitative descriptive research. The researcher used a purposive sampling method. The researcher used the semi-structured interview method to allow participants to elaborate on their points and provide rich data for the study. Utilizing Stevick-Colaizzi's approach by incorporating Keen's thematic analysis process. The simplified SCK method includes the following steps: Bracketing, Horizontalizing, Clustering, Textural Description, Structural Description, Composite Description, and Verification. The findings showed five main themes: individualized instruction through IEPs, differentiated teaching, behavioral and functional skill development, collaboration across disciplines, and classrooms that are open to everyone. Even though they work well, teachers have problems like too much work, not enough resources, and parents not being involved enough. Emotional and behavioral problems make teaching even harder, which adds to the stress on teachers. The study recommends culturally responsive, affordable, and technology-integrated strategies, focusing on professional development, collaboration, and contextualized learning—strategies that can be adapted to the Philippine context to foster inclusivity and sustainable educational outcomes.

Keywords: Self- Contained, Special Needs Education, Strategies For Adaptation

INTRODUCTION

As educational systems around the world strive to provide equitable and accessible learning opportunities for all students, special needs education continues to evolve. In Bahrain, self-contained classrooms serve as a structured educational setting for students with diverse disabilities who require individualized instruction and specialized support. These classrooms are designed to provide academic, behavioral, and functional assistance within a smaller and more controlled learning environment.

As a Special Education (SPED) teacher in Bahrain, I have witnessed firsthand both the strengths and challenges present in self-contained classrooms. While effective teaching practices are being implemented, several concerns remain, including resource allocation, teacher preparation, curriculum adaptation, and policy implementation. These realities highlight the need for a deeper investigation into the teaching strategies used in these classrooms and the challenges that significantly affect instructional delivery.

Moreover, my experience as a Filipino teacher in the Bahraini educational system provides a unique comparative perspective. Although the Philippines continues to strengthen its inclusive education programs, many public schools still face systemic challenges such as limited SPED centers, insufficient teacher training, and inadequate instructional materials. Through this study, I aim to examine existing practices in Bahrain and explore how adaptable strategies may help improve special education in the Philippine context.

International studies also provide valuable insights into inclusive and student-centered education. In Australia, for example, the educational system emphasizes inclusivity and learner-centered approaches (Mofield et al., 2023). Technology is widely integrated into classrooms, with both teachers and students regularly using digital

tools to support instruction. The national curriculum promotes the use of digital technologies and differentiated instruction to address diverse learning needs. Students with disabilities benefit from assistive technologies such as text-to-speech, speech-to-text, and individualized learning applications, all of which positively influence educational outcomes.

Similarly, studies comparing educational practices in Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, and the United States reveal a variety of strategies that support inclusive learning environments. These include differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), collaborative learning, assistive technology, and positive behavior support systems (Chano et al., 2023). The integration of these approaches enables educators to address the diverse needs of learners and promote academic success for all students, including those with disabilities.

Bahrain has also demonstrated strong support for the educational rights of individuals with disabilities. According to The Daily Tribune News of Bahrain (2021), the country is considered one of the pioneers in the Gulf and Arab regions in adopting early intervention programs and providing special classes in schools. Internationally recognized programs such as TEACH, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), and the Portage Program for early childhood development have been introduced to support students with special needs.

Furthermore, the Bahrain News Agency (2023) reported that government schools offer separate classes for students with autism spectrum disorder while still promoting inclusion through participation in special subjects such as sports, music, drawing, design, technology, and computer classes alongside their peers.

Al Hashimi et al. (2021) also highlighted the effectiveness of collaborative learning approaches for deaf and hard-of-hearing learners in Bahrain. These approaches help students feel engaged, understood, and capable of accomplishing tasks. Additional effective strategies include fostering peer relationships to build students' confidence and sense of security, creating structured calendars to support planning and learning assessment, and providing professional development opportunities for teachers working with hearing-impaired students. Such training equips teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to better support students with special needs and facilitate successful classroom integration.

In contrast, studies in the Philippines reveal ongoing challenges in special education. According to Allam and Martin (2021), many teachers in Ilagan City who handle students with learning difficulties did not receive formal SPED training during their teacher education programs. As a result, many feel unprepared and lack confidence in teaching students with special needs. Teachers assigned to SPED classrooms are often inadequately equipped to address the complex needs of these learners.

Additionally, recent studies on children with autism in the Philippines show that special education teachers use various strategies to manage challenging behaviors such as aggression, hyperactivity, resistance, motor difficulties, self-stimulatory behaviors, and speech delays. These strategies include classroom modifications, adjustments to daily routines, and behavior management techniques. Since these behaviors often occur repeatedly, teachers frequently implement multiple interventions regularly. However, Miguel (2020) emphasized that selecting the most effective strategy depends on understanding the underlying cause of the behavior, the child's response, and the effectiveness of the intervention.

This study examined various educational strategies used in self-contained classrooms that may also be applicable in the Philippine setting. It further explored the everyday challenges faced by educators in delivering instruction to students with special needs. The findings of this study are intended to contribute to future research and support improvements in instructional practices within special education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on teaching strategies and difficulties in Bahraini self-contained classes for students with special needs education is reviewed in this chapter, along with suggestions for adapting them to the Philippine school setting.

The primary objective of this study is to record the various teaching strategies utilized in self-contained special education settings in Bahrain, to examine the practical and systemic challenges faced by educators, and to assess how certain practices may be suitably adapted in accordance with Philippine educational policies, cultural norms, teacher training frameworks, and resource limitations. By systematically comparing these two systems, the research seeks to propose evidence-informed recommendations that can strengthen special-education provision in the Philippines.

Teaching Methods in Special Education

Children with special needs require additional support due to medical, emotional, or learning disabilities (Gavin, 2021). To meet these diverse needs, teachers often use innovative and individualized teaching strategies, including modified lessons and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) (Lovett, 2021). Special education teachers also manage both instructional and non-instructional responsibilities while addressing different student needs within one classroom.

Research shows that technology and specialized instructional approaches can improve student outcomes in special education. Assistive tools such as speech-to-text applications, communication devices, videos, and hands-on activities help students participate more actively and develop skills effectively (Howorth et al., 2024; Pocaan, 2022). Shadow teaching has also emerged as an effective strategy in inclusive settings, where support staff assist students with special needs academically and behaviorally (Buenrostro-Jocson, 2024).

In Bahrain, teachers use individualized assessments and strategies such as Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) to support students' writing, organizational, and thinking skills (Alkashami et al., 2025). Other studies highlight the benefits of collaborative and scaffolded learning approaches, which improve communication, social interaction, critical thinking, and academic engagement among students with diverse abilities (Chaudhary, 2024).

Despite the growing literature on differentiated instruction, assistive technology, and collaborative learning, limited research focuses specifically on how these strategies are implemented in self-contained classrooms in Bahrain and how they may be adapted to the Philippine educational context. This study aims to address this gap by examining effective teaching strategies and the challenges faced by educators in self-contained special education settings.

Policies and Best Practices

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines issued DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, which outlines the roles of schools in supporting students with disabilities and ensuring access to quality education. Depending on their needs, students may be placed in general education classes, resource rooms, or self-contained special education classrooms (Department of Education, 2024).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promote equal access to education for all, including individuals with special needs. In the Philippines, the Constitution prioritizes education, while *AmBisyon Natin 2040* emphasizes lifelong learning, skills development, and local government support for special education programs (Pocaan, 2022).

Republic Act No. 11650, or the Inclusive Education Act of 2022, was enacted to strengthen inclusive education and provide a framework that supports students with disabilities in the Philippines.

Bahrain supports the rights of individuals with disabilities through international agreements and national laws, including the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through Law 22/2011. Both Bahraini and non-Bahraini students have access to special education services in public and private schools (UNESCO, 2021).

Through its Education 2030 Strategy, Bahrain continues to improve educational quality and inclusivity by promoting technical training, digital skills, and workforce readiness to support sustainable development (Khalifa et al., 2023).

The reviewed policies and legal frameworks show that both the Philippines and Bahrain recognize the educational rights of students with disabilities and support inclusive education through laws, programs, and international commitments. These policies emphasize access to quality education, specialized support services, and inclusive learning opportunities. However, despite these initiatives, limited research examines how these policies are effectively implemented in self-contained classrooms, particularly regarding instructional practices, teacher preparedness, and resource availability. There is also a lack of comparative studies exploring how Bahrain's educational strategies and policies may contribute to improving special education implementation in the Philippine context. This study seeks to address these gaps by examining the practices and challenges within self-contained special education classrooms.

Challenges in Implementation

According to Al Aqsha and Emilzoli (2024), every student with special needs has unique learning strengths, styles, and needs. Teachers who are properly trained in special education are better equipped to support these learners, while those without adequate preparation may struggle to meet students' educational needs. Continuous professional development is essential, particularly in areas such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, creativity, and working with students with disabilities.

Special education teachers work in various settings, including general education classrooms, resource rooms, and self-contained classes. In self-contained classrooms, teachers provide individualized instruction across subjects for students requiring intensive support. Beyond teaching, special educators also develop Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), monitor student progress, and collaborate with other school personnel to address students' needs (Gilmour et al., 2024).

Teacher shortages remain a major concern in special education. Izak (2023) identified high turnover rates, inadequate preparation programs, and compensation issues as key factors contributing to the shortage of SPED teachers.).

In the Philippines, several barriers continue to hinder the effective implementation of special education, including limited funding, insufficient teacher training, rigid curricula, stigma, and inadequate infrastructure (Espeño et al., 2024). Teachers also face challenges in adapting instructional materials due to time and financial constraints, often leading to stress and burnout (Pocan, 2022).

Parents of children with special needs also experience difficulties, particularly anxiety regarding their children's education (Campado et al., 2021). In response, SPED teachers support families through communication, family engagement, homeschooling assistance, and emotional support (Vezz & Sawey, 2024).

Rosales (2023) emphasized that children with special needs should have access to trained personnel, educational resources, and inclusive learning environments. Rather than relying on isolated facilities, Bahrain's education system should continue improving inclusive infrastructure and promote empowerment-focused education for learners with disabilities.

The reviewed literature emphasizes the importance of qualified teachers, individualized instruction, inclusive practices, and strong support systems in improving education for students with special needs. Studies from Bahrain and other countries highlight effective strategies such as differentiated instruction, assistive technology, collaborative learning, and continuous teacher training, while research in the Philippines reveals challenges related to limited resources, insufficient SPED training, teacher burnout, and inadequate support systems. Although self-contained classrooms provide structured and individualized learning environments, limited studies focus on the actual teaching strategies and challenges experienced by educators in Bahrain, particularly in relation to how these practices may help improve special education in the Philippines. Thus, this study aims to address this gap by examining instructional strategies and challenges in self-contained classrooms and identifying practices that may be adapted to the Philippine SPED context.

Adaptation Strategies and Interventions

Creating a safe and supportive environment helps children of all abilities feel included and confident in school. Inclusion promotes belonging, social interaction, and participation through support, access, and engagement.

Stanczak et al. (2023) explained that students with special needs require accommodations during assessments to ensure equal participation. These accommodations may include extended time, modified tests, readers, scribes, or assistive learning tools.

Research shows that interaction with peers improves the speech, confidence, and academic performance of students with disabilities in self-contained classes (Alshahrani, 2023). Positive peer relationships are more effective when interactions are encouraged naturally rather than forced (Alant, 2021).

Barber (2024) stated that parental involvement greatly influences student learning and academic success in special education. Parents participate in IEP planning, advocate for their children's needs, and benefit from training and workshops about special education.

Inclusive employment practices and assistive technologies help improve learning, motivation, and future employment opportunities for persons with disabilities (Asian Development Bank, 2022). SPED teachers also reported that assistive technology makes teaching more engaging and effective for learners with special educational needs (Campado et al., 2023).

The Bahrain Ministry of Education continues to strengthen special education programs through inclusion initiatives, qualified staff, counseling services, and integration programs for students with disabilities (Bahrain News Agency, 2025).

The literature shows that effective special education depends on individualized instruction, inclusive practices, qualified teachers, parental involvement, and supportive policies. Although Bahrain and the Philippines both support inclusive education, challenges such as limited resources, insufficient training, and social stigma continue to affect implementation.

Despite increasing research on special education, few studies compare self-contained classroom practices in Bahrain and the Philippines. Limited attention has also been given to how culture, teacher preparation, and resources influence the effectiveness of these strategies. This study aims to address these gaps by examining Bahrain's self-contained classroom practices and their possible application in the Philippine SPED context.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on constructivism and social constructivism, which emphasize that learning occurs through the active construction of knowledge and is strengthened through interaction, language, and cultural context (Baron, 2023). In self-contained classrooms, this is reflected in individualized instruction, SRSD, assistive technologies, and small-group teaching, where lessons are adapted to learners' developmental levels and prior knowledge. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) further explains the need for guided learning, where students perform better with appropriate support than independently.

In Bahrain, these principles are applied through strategies such as shadow teaching, scaffolding, peer interaction, and assistive technology, which help address both academic and socio-emotional needs. Scaffolding, through structured routines, visual aids, and guided instruction, is central to supporting learners' ZPD, although its consistent use is often limited by teacher workload, training gaps, and resource constraints. Similarly, social constructivist practices highlight the importance of peer collaboration, which improves communication, confidence, and inclusion among students with special needs (Dela Peña, 2022). However, effective implementation requires strong teacher preparation, structured systems, and manageable class sizes, which remain challenges in both Bahrain and the Philippines.

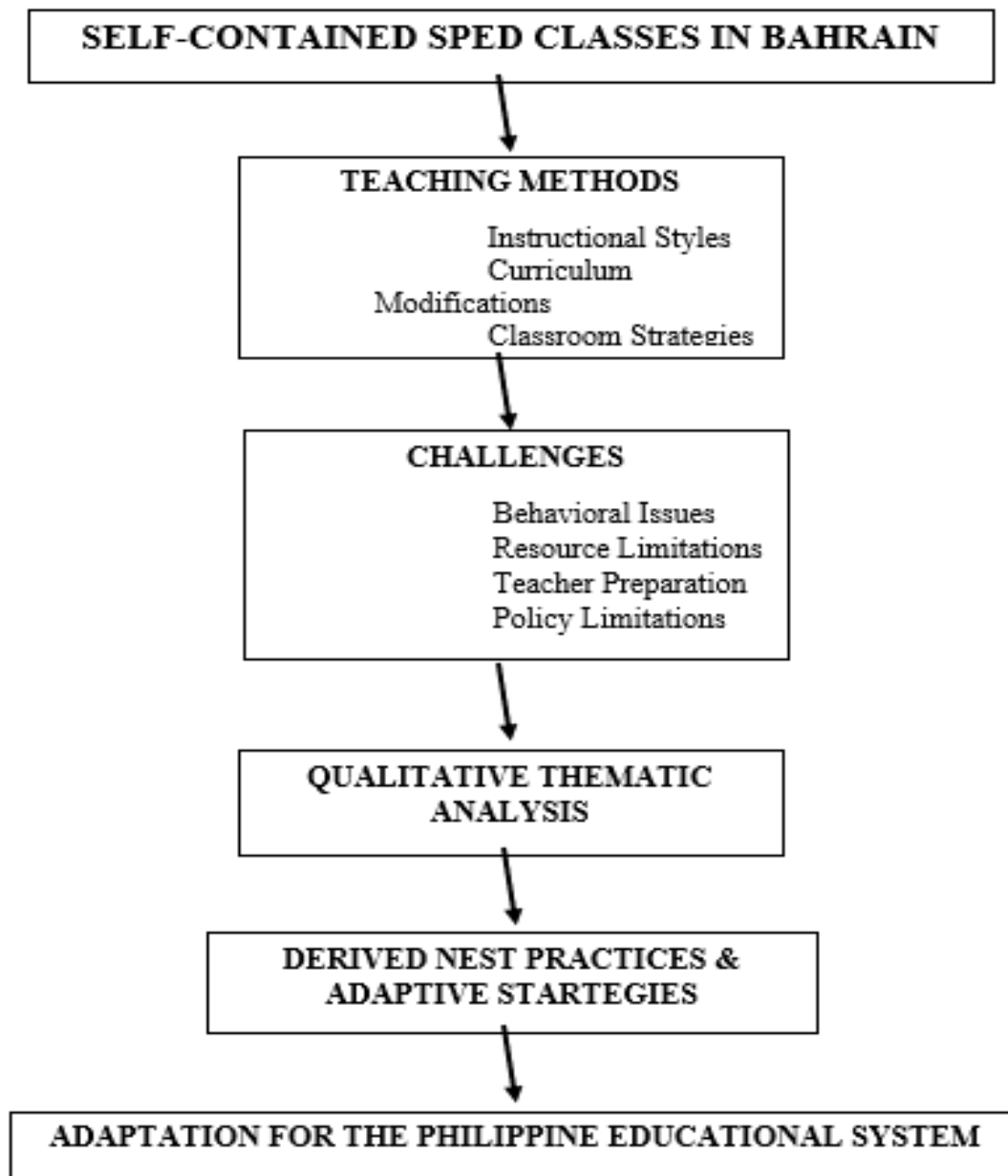
Overall, constructivism and social constructivism provide a clear framework for understanding effective teaching in self-contained special education classrooms by emphasizing interaction, scaffolding, and culturally

responsive practices. These theories also highlight the importance of teacher collaboration and professional support systems, as teachers themselves require structured guidance to effectively implement inclusive strategies (Lightner, 2021). In this way, the framework guides the study in analyzing current practices in Bahrain and identifying adaptable, evidence-based strategies that can strengthen special education in the Philippine context.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework outlines the progression of the study from examining self-contained SPED classes in Bahrain to developing adaptive strategies for the Philippine educational context. It focuses on identifying instructional practices such as teaching approaches, curriculum modifications, structured routines, and behavior management, alongside the challenges teachers face, including resource limitations, student behavior issues, policy constraints, and insufficient training. These elements are analyzed together to show the relationship between effective practices and existing difficulties in classroom implementation.

Using qualitative thematic analysis, the study organizes recurring patterns and insights from educators to generate meaningful themes. From this analysis, best practices and adaptive strategies are developed based on both effective methods and identified challenges. These evidence-based strategies are then considered for adaptation in the Philippines, taking into account cultural relevance, policy direction, available resources, and teacher support to improve special education implementation.



Statement of the Problem

This study investigated pedagogical practices and related challenges in self-contained classrooms for students with special educational needs in Bahrain, aiming to identify strategies that could be effectively adapted to the Philippine educational system. The research specifically concentrated on the following domains:

1. What specific teaching methods are currently employed in self-contained classes for learners with special needs in Bahrain, and how do these methods align with the national educational goals?
2. What challenges do educators face in implementing these teaching methods, particularly in terms of training, resources, and classroom dynamics?
3. Which adaptable teaching strategies can they identify based on the Bahrain Educational System that would effectively address the needs of learners with special needs in the Philippine educational context?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive research design to examine teaching methods and challenges in self-contained classes for students with special needs in Bahrain, as well as their potential adaptation to the Philippine context. This approach provides a clear and detailed description of real-world practices without focusing on theory building or deep interpretation.

The design is appropriate as it documents teaching strategies, teacher experiences, and classroom challenges in detail. It addresses key questions on who is involved, what practices are used, where they occur, and how they are implemented providing a basis for practical, evidence-based recommendations for improving special education (Suresh, 2023).

Population and Sampling

After permission was granted at Britus International School–Special Education in Bahrain, the researcher began selecting seven participants from self-contained classrooms serving students with mild to severe disabilities.

The study used purposive sampling, a non-probability method where seven participants are selected based on their relevance to the research aims (Bisht, 2024). It focused on special education teachers with direct experience in self-contained classrooms to ensure rich and relevant data.

Participants were required to meet the following criteria: (1) currently or recently working as a teacher in a self-contained SPED classroom in Bahrain, (2) at least one year of experience teaching students with special needs, and (3) direct involvement in planning, delivering, and assessing instruction. Teachers without self-contained classroom assignments or direct teaching responsibilities were excluded.

A total enumeration approach was also applied to include all eligible participants and reduce sampling bias. The final participants consisted of seven Filipino SPED teachers who had at least two years of experience in self-contained classrooms, were trained in special education, and were willing to participate in the study (Cagape, 2023)

Research Instruments

The researcher used interviews to gather the comprehensive information necessary for the research. This method allowed for a complete understanding of human behavior. The semi-structured interview method was used to allow participants to elaborate on their ideas and provide additional useful information for the research. Semi-structured interviews are a useful qualitative research method that allows for flexibility and depth of gathered information. The semi-structured interview method allows researchers to modify questions in the study while remaining on time (Mashuri et al., 2022).

A pilot test of the interview was conducted to establish the reliability of the instrument. The pilot test was done with one of the special education teachers at Britus International School–Special Education. Pilot tests are used to see what terms need to be rephrased, whether certain interview questions were unclear, and whether questions are clear to elicit the type of response needed from the participant.

Data Gathering Procedures

The study began after receiving permission from the principal of Britus International School–Special Education in Bahrain. Once ethical approval was secured, purposive sampling was used to select special education teachers, and participants were informed about the study's purpose and asked to provide consent before data collection.

After approval from the Ethics Review Committee, participants were given consent forms outlining their rights and the study details. A 45-minute face-to-face interview was scheduled with each participant, and the interview guide was validated by experts for clarity and appropriateness. During the interviews, participants were treated respectfully, and consent terms were briefly reviewed at the start.

All interviews were recorded and documented through notes, then securely stored in encrypted institutional or approved cloud storage with restricted access. Data were transcribed using Voice Recorder and analyzed using Hyper Research with thematic coding. Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity, and all data were kept strictly confidential in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, with records stored for one year before secure deletion.

Mode of Analysis

This study focused on participants' assessment of whether findings of teaching methods in self-contained classes for special needs learners in Bahrain could work in the Philippines educational context. This study utilized Creswell's shortened version of Moustakas's adaptation of the "Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen" (SCK) qualitative data analysis method. This method is based on the original Stevick-Colaizzi method, which has integrated Keen's thematic analysis process. Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed that thematic analysis should constitute a core process in qualitative analysis since it develops key skills needed to carry out many other forms of qualitative analysis. Many authors, building on this basic methodological proposition, argue that while thematic analysis is an analytic strategy in various qualitative approaches, it is "not much of a method at all" (Braun & Clarke, 2013), it is an analytic process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Utilizing interviews as key methods of data collection, the researcher gathered valuable insights. As a result, this chapter presents the findings, discussions, and interpretations derived from the collected data. The discussions are organized according to specific research questions, with each one supported by transcriptions of the group discussions and the information from the participants' interview responses. The grouped interview responses offer a clear and efficient summary of the extensive data collected.

Teaching Methods Currently Employed in Self-Contained Classes for Learners with Special Needs in Bahrain, and how these methods align with the national educational goals

The teaching methods currently employed in self-contained classes for learners with special needs, and whether they were aligned with the national educational goals, were investigated to determine the methods and their alignment. Participants' opinions and sentiments regarding the teaching methods and alignment are revealed. These experiences are, therefore, thoroughly described in this section.

Themes

Individualized Instruction and IEP Implementation

Differentiated and Adaptive Teaching Strategies

Behavior and Functional Development

Theme 1: Individualized Instruction and IEP Implementation

Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) and individualized instruction both involve developing lesson plans aligned with the learner, lesson objectives, and the learner's skills. This requires forward thinking and a great deal of collaboration with the IEP's supervisor to ensure that the curriculum is explicitly modified and that instruction is differentiated to meet the learning style and skill set of the individual being tutored. Proper planning of IEPs creates a safe learning environment that promotes learner engagement, progress, and achievement in one-on-one lessons, if necessary. As Eurydice (2023) stated, the effective and impactful implementation of IEPs depends on the teacher's knowledge

Instructional strategies guide how well schools provide equal learning opportunities for students who need the most support. Participants in the research found that providing education for students with disabilities involves planning and implementing Individualized Education Programs. Marierose shared:

Marierose and Mabel's statements clearly show evidence-based practices in special education, especially in creating and using Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to meet academic and behavioral needs.

Marierose explains, "I designed and implemented individualized educational programs for students with diverse learning and behavioral needs" (Marierose, Phase 1, Page 2, Line 24). This is in line with the basic ideas behind special education law and practice, which stress planning that is based on individual needs and data. Research consistently validates the efficacy of well-structured Individualized Education Programmes (IEPs) in enhancing academic and functional outcomes for students with disabilities. Hugh (2024) emphasize that high-quality, quantifiable IEP goals markedly improve student progress when correlated with assessment data. Langelaan et al. (2024) also stress that individualized planning makes sure that lessons are suited to the student's current level of performance, which is necessary for real educational progress.

The term "diverse learning and behavioral needs" acknowledges the variability among students, aligning with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework (CAST, 2018), which advocates for adaptable instructional methods to meet the needs of diverse learners. Mills (2021) contend that differentiated and individualized instruction enhances student engagement and achievement by catering to readiness, interests, and learning profiles. So, Marierose's role in both making and carrying out IEPs shows that she is actively involved in teaching that is based on evidence and focused on the student.

Mabel adds, "We also work to implement individualized plans that address specific behavioral issues" (Mabel, Phase 1, Page 4, Line 86). This statement shows that behavioral intervention planning is now a part of the IEP process. Research substantiates the significance of personalized behavior intervention plans (BIPs) formulated from Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs). Gresham, Watson, and Skinner (2001) assert that interventions informed by functional assessment data are markedly more effective than those not grounded in functional analysis for mitigating problem behaviors. Goyibova (2025) also found that behavior plans that are based on the function of behavior lead to measurable improvements in how students behave in class and how interested they are in learning.

The phrase "we also work" implies cooperation between different fields, which is widely accepted as necessary in special education. Jacobsen (2025) stresses that when teachers, specialists, and families work together, it makes individualized plans more consistent and effective.

In general, both statements show how research-backed methods can be used to make personalized plans for academic and behavioral success. The teachers follow established guidelines that encourage fairness, responsiveness, and intervention based on evidence. Their experiences correspond with extensive literature that confirms individualized, data-driven, and collaborative methodologies are essential for enhancing outcomes for students with varied needs.

Theme 2: Differentiated and Adaptive Teaching Strategies

In the context of special education, differentiated and adaptive teaching methods modify instruction to meet a learner's unique needs, skills and learning styles. These methods focus on modifying processes, materials and

end products to create personalized experiences in learning to invite participation and success. Important methods include the use of choice boards and learning stations which provide options for learning through multiple types of activities, tiered assignments to varying degrees of difficulty while still meeting the same learning target, and lasting students based on their interest or readiness to learn.

Langelaan et al. (2024) explain that differentiated instruction is a broad teaching approach aimed at improving learning outcomes through modification of content, processes, and assessment, and is based on the individual differences of learners. The teaching method of adaptive instruction depends on formative assessment and reflective instruction, which enables teachers to modify their teaching approach for individual student requirements while students maintain their focus on critical thinking and problem solving.

Marierose relayed: “I also made sure to differentiate instruction using multiple strategies—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.” (Marierose, Phase 1, Page 2, Line 30)

Moreover, Ian revealed, “My main goal is to create an inclusive and nurturing environment that supports each child’s unique abilities. “(Ian, Phase 1, Page 14, Line 406). Teachers who use adaptive instruction need to keep checking on their students’ needs so they can make the right changes to their lesson plans. The educational approach used a variety of teaching methods and flexible teaching styles to create a fair learning environment. This was done through support-based instruction, which helped students improve their academic and practical skills. Teachers who worked with students with special needs used these methods in all of their class activities.

A recent experimental study by Goyibova (2025) discovered that systematic task modification and ability-based grouping markedly enhanced reading accuracy and comprehension in primary-aged students with learning difficulties. These findings correspond with the differentiation practices evident in current Bahraini classrooms, where educators consistently modified materials, pacing, and grouping configurations to align with individual skill levels. Such targeted adaptations were consistently associated with higher student engagement and reduced frustration during literacy activities.

Theme 3: Behavior and Functional Development

The main focus of behavior and functional development in special needs is for people with disabilities to develop necessary skills for daily living, social interaction, and adaptive behavior. Progress in daily living skills, communication, emotional self-regulation, and motor abilities generally depends on targeted therapeutic interventions tailored to each student’s specific impairments. Teachers and therapists promote positive behavior, independence, and the ability to participate in daily activities, with both individualized interventions and consistent monitoring.

Prioritizing behavior and functional development in special needs education will ensure each person can reach their fullest potential and improve their quality of life. Liu (2025) researched the impact that inclusive education settings have on students with special needs and determined that through cooperative peer learning, students with special needs have better self-efficacy and social skills development. In addition, the findings showed that Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) and Behavioral Intervention Plans in a thoughtfully designed inclusive setting reduce inappropriate behavior, while at the same time developing social skills.

“My main responsibilities included doing Functional Behavior Assessments.” (Marierose, Phase 1, Page 2, Line 30)

Furthermore, Darra stated, “My responsibilities include managing classroom behavior. (Darra, Phase 1, Page 6, Line 145). Classroom management consists of tracking student progress and employing positive reinforcement rather than punishment to decrease undesired behaviors and encourage positive behaviors. By monitoring a student’s progress on a regular basis, the teacher will be able to make adjustments to their instruction and practice. Juma and Mussa (2024) looked at the social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) competences of students both with and without specific learning needs. They found that students with special needs frequently exhibited some SEB difficulties; however, targeted interventions can improve these skills, which is essential for the continued development and success in the classroom. They found that all behavioral interventions should be done as a

prevention strategy at the early stages and behavioral interventions should also be connected to academics as early and as often as possible, for the purpose of developing a whole, fully-developed child.

Challenges Educators face in implementing these teaching methods, particularly in terms of training, resources, and classroom dynamics

Inevitably, teachers who have the opportunity to teach learners with special needs in a self-contained environment will encounter difficulties and risks. In self-contained classrooms, special education teachers have to face these following challenges: institutional and administrative support challenges, behavior and emotional challenges, lack of special education implementation resources, parent involvement & collaboration challenges, time and workload, and adapting instruction, modifying methods and techniques.

Themes

Institutional and Administrative Support Challenges

Behavioral and Emotional Challenges

Resource Constraints in Special Education Implementation

Parental Involvement and Collaboration Challenges

Theme 1: Institutional and Administrative Support Challenges

A lack of funding, improper allocation of resources, and misunderstandings are common concerns regarding institutional and administrative support in special education that hinder access to necessary programming, assistive technologies, and educational materials for children with disabilities. Many schools cannot deliver customized and inclusive teaching because of a lack of professional development opportunities and qualified special education teachers. There are also administrative burdens, such as excessive paperwork and complex compliance requirements, which reduce the time allocated to curricular design and direct student support, and enhance the mental and emotional stress on the special education teacher trying to provide individualized instruction.

Overcrowded classrooms and high student-teacher ratios can also interfere with a teacher's ability to provide individualized instruction. Negative attitudes among some colleagues, parents, or administrators toward full inclusion frequently increase the emotional burden on special education teachers and undermine school-wide efforts to establish genuinely supportive classrooms. Effective administrative support is essential for sustaining high-quality special education provision. Institutions contain multitudes of roles responsible for quality education, including the role of administrative support in developing the conditions needed to cultivate an ideal learning environment for students (The University of Kansas, 2023).

Marierose mentioned:

“Sometimes it’s difficult to collaborate with school leaders who may not fully grasp the specific needs of SPED learners or the importance of individualized support.” (Marierose, t. 2, p. 1, lines 6–8)

Moreover, Diana and Nica stated respectively;

“There’s a lack of specific guidelines, and sometimes inconsistent support from leadership. Also, funding for SPED—especially for tools and professional development—is still limited.” (Diana, t.2.p. 7, lines 168-169)

There’s also a shortage of trained support staff, and we don’t get enough time for collaboration or planning. Administrative tasks can also eat up a lot of teaching time. (Nica, t.2, p. 6, lines 20–24)

Heavy workloads, adherence to numerous laws, and the lack of comprehensive support for teachers and learners are examples of administrative support challenges. Teachers' capacity to provide tailored, inclusive teaching is

hampered by this shortage. Therefore, special education teachers with positive administration assistance had higher levels of job satisfaction, whereas those with little to no administrative support had lower levels of job satisfaction (Mills, 2021).

Theme 2: Behavioral and Emotional Challenges

Students with emotional behavioral disabilities have challenges controlling their emotions, forming and maintaining relationships, and demonstrating socially acceptable behavior. These issues, which significantly impact the student's ability to engage and achieve academic success, may include anxiety, depression, anger, defiance, moodiness, and withdrawal. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states that emotional disturbance can affect one's ability to learn, interact with peers, and receive general education in the long term, and receive general education in the long term, making specially designed instruction important. The law emphasizes the excessive levels of stress and factors associated with resilience among students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), and importantly, the role of social stigma, discrimination, and challenges in schools (Stein et al., 2024).

Mabel express, “Many students in special education have behavioral or emotional needs sometimes disrupt the learning environment. These challenges range from attention difficulties, impulsive, and anxiety to more severe behaviors like aggression or self-harm.” (t. 2, p. 2, lines 5–9)

Furthermore, Darra revealed, “Many of my students use gadgets at home, so sometimes it’s hard for them to differentiate between playtime technology and learning technology. That’s really a struggle sometimes.” (t. 2, p. 3, lines 6–9)

These difficulties may hinder the efficiency of the classroom and have a detrimental impact on the learning environment for every student. They frequently involve emotional dysregulation, frequent outbursts, hostility, disengagement, and disruptive behavior. Students with behavioral disabilities exhibit behaviors that are detrimental to both themselves and other people, as well as interfere with classroom operations (Loveless, 2023).

Theme 3: Resource Constraints in Special Education Implementation

Educators find themselves addressing unique challenges that exceed the responsibilities of teaching in a self-contained classroom. Special education teachers in particular can find themselves confronting a complex constellation of issues, including few resources and even systemic issues. Each of these issues is with reference to a set of challenges identified by Pantia (2025) in a qualitative study on inclusive education, which include teacher resource scarcity, lack of assistive technology, and limited educator training. Despite changes in teaching practices and collaborative planning in supporting the program, limited resources compromised the effectiveness and sustainability of some of these initiatives in practice. These problems were a lack of access to specialized supports, instructional resources or tools, funding, or teaching materials.

Sarah, Diana, and Nica indicated respectively, “One major challenge is limited resources. Sometimes we don’t have enough visual or sensory materials to support every student.” (t.2, p. 4, lines 6–7)

“There’s also limited access to specialists and adaptive materials, which makes it hard to apply certain strategies effectively.” (t.2, p. 4, lines 133-134)

Sometimes, we face a lack of resources or not enough trained assistants to support the individualized work we want to do.”(Diana, t.2, p. 5, lines 8–10)

Sometimes there’s also a lack of materials or specific tools needed for certain interventions.” (Nica, t.2, p. 6, lines 9–10)

In addition to delivering knowledge, teaching in self-contained special education classrooms involves managing a challenging environment with limited resources, unfair policies, and inadequate training while attending to the diverse needs of students. Teachers are dedicated and flexible despite these problems, which shows how important it is for schools to get help and make changes to their structures.

Special education teachers frequently deal with challenging circumstances. such general education teachers, they deal with issues such student poverty, poor parental involvement, student absenteeism, and a lack of resources. However, the quality and accessibility of special education programs are generally lowered by common problems such poor infrastructure and restricted financial help (Espeño, 2024).

Theme 4: Parental Involvement and Collaboration Challenges

Collaboration and support in special education require coordinated efforts from educators, experts, families, and the community. However, parents are also prevented from implementing professional and educational recommendations at home due to lack of awareness regarding the cause and prognosis of a learner's disability, which eventually affects the learner's overall development and academic results. The participants describe parental involvement and collaboration with other professionals as difficult.

Sarah echoed, “Right, that’s definitely a common struggle among SPED teachers. Parental consistency can really make or break progress sometimes. There’s the issue of inconsistent parental support—not all parents have the time or understanding to follow through at home, which can slow down progress.” (t.2, p. 4, lines 10–12)

To add, Diana mentioned, “Another challenge is getting consistent parent involvement or follow-through at home.” (t.2, p. 5, lines 10–11)

Many students come from different language backgrounds and speak local dialects or languages other than English, which are often used in school. Many issues or challenges stem from language difficulties (Buarqoub, 2019). Nica stated. “Communication barriers also come up—like language differences or varying levels of parental involvement. And scheduling conflicts with other professionals can make coordination difficult.” (Nica, t.2, p. 6, lines 11–13)

For students to succeed academically and develop well, families and schools must work together. However, this is a relatively recent problem because historically, families and schools have had distinct roles: the school was responsible for children's formal education, while the family was in charge of extracurricular engagements (Paccaud et al., 2021). Parental involvement enhances the school setting, boosts teacher competency and fulfillment, and enables families to exchange experiences, resulting in an outstanding

Adaptable Teaching Strategies identified in Bahrain that would effectively address the needs of learners with special needs in the Philippine educational context

The study revealed the variety of instructional strategies that Philippine special education teachers can use to support student learning. Table 3 presents the teaching strategies used by special education teachers to address the needs of students in a self-contained classroom. These main themes also appeared in the findings with sub-themes and codes: culturally responsive and contextualized teaching, low-cost, practical and flexible strategies, policy and training that allow for flexible teaching, and the use of technology and innovative methods.

Themes

Culturally Responsive and Contextualized Teaching

Low-Cost, Practical, and Flexible Approaches

Policy and Training Support for Adaptability

Integration of Technology and Innovative Methods

Theme 1: Culturally Responsive and Contextualized Teaching

In special needs education (SPED), culturally responsive and contextualized instructional strategies incorporate learners' varied cultural, linguistic, and experiential backgrounds across all aspects of teaching to promote engagement and learning success. Paculan and Maguilang (2024) conducted research in the Mountain Province

of the Philippines to explore how special education teachers use culturally responsive methods in their teaching practice. The research used quantitative descriptive methods to show how special education teachers incorporated indigenous cultural elements into their teaching which resulted in better student participation and inclusion and higher motivation levels. Teachers reported measurable gains in student engagement, reasoning skills, and academic attainment, together with a narrowing of performance gaps among learners with disabilities. Consistent administrative support for diversified practice and ongoing professional training was directly associated with these results.

Marierose, Sarah, and Diana mentioned, respectively, “We need stronger policy support and curriculum flexibility from DepEd. Also, more teacher training and better parental engagement. And, you know, we could use low-cost local versions of assistive tools and solutions that fit larger, mixed-ability classrooms. (Marierose, t.3, p. 2, lines 9–14)

“Materials should be adapted to local languages and cultures. Using Filipino or regional dialects and locally familiar examples would make lessons more relatable. (Sarah, t.3, p. 5, lines 136-137)

“Teaching visuals and social stories should reflect local contexts—like familiar places, customs, or school routines.” (Diana, t.3, p. 6, lines 188-190)

It supports and accepts children with special needs who may feel ashamed of their cultural identities and disabilities, their beliefs, actions, and points of view. This method supports personalised teaching methods that make the material more relevant and get students more involved through connections to their cultural experiences. “Working with families and communities is very important, and to check your own biases regularly, and for teachers’ ongoing growth in cultural competence.

Culturally responsive teaching in special education enhances academic outcomes for students and creates a more inclusive environment where all students are valued and given an opportunity to succeed. Magallanes (2025) stresses the need to help students with disabilities in the Philippines to cope with a variety of social and cultural situations in culturally sensitive ways. The study emphasises the need for specific approaches and support measures tailored to the diverse needs of learners typically found in the local cultural community.

Theme 2: Low-Cost, Practical, and Flexible Approaches

In special needs education (SPED), effective, affordable, useful, and flexible methods focus on making the most of the resources available while providing inclusive and rewarding learning experiences. These strategies often involve cooperative learning, which helps people connect with each other and learn from each other without costing a lot of money. Project-based learning, changes to the curriculum based on each student's interests and skills, and activities that are relevant and useful all encourage participation. To solve problems like specialized teacher training and outdated teaching materials, we can slowly introduce assistive technologies and make strategic partnerships with government and non-governmental organizations and schools. To make sure that the programme runs smoothly, it is recommended that management use techniques like naming a coordinator and doing regular programme evaluations. There are many ways to pay for the programme, such as the school budget, the Special Education Fund (SEF), help from the local government, and donations from the community (Manggay et al., 2025). Mabel and stated:

“So, it’s really important to focus on low-tech solutions using visual aids, manipulatives, and local materials that are both affordable and accessible.” (Mabel, t.3, p. 2, lines 148-150)

Furthermore, Nica, Darra, and Ian expressed respectively, “Because many schools in the Philippines have limited resources, strategies should be simple, low-cost, and flexible.” (Nica, t.2, p. 8, lines 248-249)

“So, there should be stronger investment in teacher hiring, better compensation, and greater access to digital tools. (Darra, t.2, p. 3, lines 92-95)

If we can blend conventional teaching with modern, tech-based strategies, we can create a more inclusive learning environment that fits the needs of Filipino students—especially in today’s digital world. (Ian, t.2, p. 10, lines 297-298)

Students' accessibility and independence are enhanced by the use of assistive technology, such as free or reasonably priced digital tools. It turns out that low-tech devices often have the greatest influence on students. According to Georgia Tech, low-tech devices for children with disabilities include ones that don't need a lot of training, might be less expensive, and don't have complicated or mechanical parts (Lightner, 2021).

Families and the community must collaborate and utilize local resources and expertise in order to offer support outside of the classroom. Another strategy to maximize the use of existing human resources is to establish flexible staffing and scheduling choices that enable teachers or paraprofessionals to serve a large number of learners.

Districts have discovered that spending money on qualified personnel and mental health services increases results at a reasonable cost. In the end, these adaptable strategies guarantee that children with special needs receive excellent instruction while honoring financial limitations and real-world difficulties.

Theme 3: Policy and Training Support for Adaptability

Special needs education (SNED) teachers in the Philippines can acquire the skills required to address the various needs of their students through a variety of academic programs, short courses, and professional development activities.

The current state of special education (SPED) in the Philippines indicates that increased government funding, enhanced policy support, and ongoing professional development programs are essential to improve student outcomes and teacher adaptability, despite the establishment of a robust legal framework for inclusive education through laws such as Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons) and Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act) (Kilag et al., 2025). Additionally, online and remote learning options for accessible certification programs provide practical training in areas such as behavioral techniques, autism spectrum disorder, and early childhood special education.

Marierose and Diana expressed, respectively, “Filipino teachers would really benefit from clear policy guidance and strong administrative support. They also need specialized, practical training, adequate learning materials, and dedicated time for planning.” (Marierose p. 2, lines 27–28)

“First, we need clear national SPED guidelines and policies that schools can actually follow. Then, hands-on training, not just theoretical workshops—but practical sessions that teachers can apply right away.” (Diana, t.3, p. 7, lines 209-210)

Government policy support for specialized teacher training and ongoing professional development programs in the Philippines helps them become stronger. This is because these programs help teachers become more flexible, promote inclusive practices, and improve educational outcomes for students with special needs in different settings. Pombo et al. (2025) say that the policy measures at Jose C. Catolico Sr. Elementary School are meant to help community partnerships, improve ongoing teacher development, and give teachers materials to help them better adapt their teaching strategies to meet the needs of different student groups.

Theme 4: Integration of Technology and Innovative Methods

The use of advanced teaching techniques and technology in special education in the Philippines aims to improve educational opportunities and accessibility for students with a range of disabilities. Assistive technologies, including interactive multimedia, educational apps, and traditional teaching methods, are used to support learning and inspire students. Technological developments have the power to completely change special education students' educational paths. From augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices that facilitate student communication to adaptive software that tailors lessons for various learning preferences, technology has transformed how we serve diverse learning demands in modern classrooms (Cube Creative, 2025). Despite the challenges, integrating technology has shown a lot of promise for making training and skill learning more personalized.

Ian and Mabel stated respectively, “Regular training sessions are also crucial—teachers need ongoing opportunities to refresh their skills and learn new methods. Continuous professional development helps us meet

the diverse needs of our students more effectively and keeps our teaching dynamic and responsive.” (Ian, t.5, p. 8, lines 145-50)

“Teachers should feel equipped and supported both structurally and emotionally to meet diverse student needs.” (Mabel, t.3, p. 3, lines 24–25)

The impact of technology is mediated through professional development, emotional and administrative support for teachers, and investments in infrastructure to improve access to digital learning environments. Professional development programs and training of teachers can enhance the effectiveness of special education teachers and the student outcomes (K. Suresh Kumar, 2023). Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and adaptive learning technologies are gradually opening the door to more personalized learning experiences in the Philippines. “This is helping to make special education more flexible and more efficient,” she said.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that effective special education is based on inclusive, flexible and collaborative approaches that respond to the diverse and changing needs of the students. It emphasizes the development of learning environments which promote collaboration between educators, families and specialists and validates Vygotsky’s theory of Social Constructivism, which says that important learning occurs through guided interaction and shared experiences within a community.

Tomlinson's Theory of Differentiated Instruction is supported by consistent use of flexible teaching methods and personalized educational planning. Tomlinson’s Differentiated Instruction Theory is supported by flexible teaching methods and individualized educational plans. The research shows that true equity in education is not a “one size fits all” proposition, but by tailoring instruction based on the different readiness levels, interests and profiles of learners. Environmental systems that influence both learner development and teacher effectiveness include family engagement, institutional arrangements, cultural context, and policy structures. For a sustainable special education, these systems need to work together for a long-term effect.

In conclusion, this study shows that inclusive education works best when it is based on social cooperation, individualized instruction, and strong systemic support. These ideas come together to form a comprehensive plan to enable students with different needs to learn in a meaningful, equitable and sustainable way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Department of Education (DepEd). DepEd should strengthen SPED policies for self-contained programs by providing clear guidelines, standardized but flexible IEP templates, appropriate teacher–student ratios, and allocated time for planning and documentation. It should also require regular SPED training on inclusive practices, behavior management, differentiated instruction, and assistive technology, alongside dedicated funding for low-cost learning materials and adaptive tools.

School Administrators. School leaders should establish regular collaboration mechanisms such as case conferences with teachers, therapists, and parents. They should also allocate budgets for essential assistive technologies and learning materials, and provide access to mental health support, mentoring, and professional learning communities to sustain teachers’ well-being and inclusive practice.

Special Education Teachers. SPED teachers should consistently implement data-driven IEPs, differentiated instruction, and structured classroom strategies such as routines, visual supports, and positive reinforcement. These approaches should also focus on developing students’ independence and life skills.

Teachers. General and SPED teachers should regularly monitor learner progress, collaborate with families and specialists, and engage in continuous professional development. They are also encouraged to advocate for adequate resources, manageable workloads, and institutional support to sustain effective and healthy teaching practice.

Learners. Learners with special needs should be guided through structured goal-setting activities that promote independence and self-regulation. Support from teachers and families should help them build strengths, achieve

academic and behavioral goals, and engage in therapy, school programs, and social activities, with responsible use of assistive technology.

Future Researchers. Future studies are encouraged to examine SPED implementation across different regions in the Philippines and explore long-term effects of parental involvement and teacher support on student and teacher outcomes.

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