

# Lived Experiences of Teachers Handling Learners with Diverse Needs in The Island District of Schools Division of Samar

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*Abstract* — This phenomenological study investigated the lived experiences of teachers in Samar Island, Philippines, who teach students with diverse needs within a resource-constrained context. Semi-structured interviews explored classroom management, instructional strategies, resource limitations, and the emotional impact of their work. The analysis revealed six significant themes. First, Severe resource limitations—unreliable electricity, insufficient materials, and limited resources—forced teachers to be remarkably resourceful, adapting lessons and creating their own teaching materials. Second, teachers effectively used individualized and differentiated instruction, including one-on-one sessions, visual aids, and hands-on activities, to address diverse learning styles and specific difficulties, mainly in reading and math. Third, despite these effective strategies, the limited resources significantly constrained their effectiveness. Fourth, Resource scarcity, managing diverse student needs, and insufficient support significantly negatively impacted teacher well-being, increasing stress and workload. Fifth, however, teachers demonstrated exceptional resilience and commitment to their students' success. Finally, Strong teacher-student relationships built on trust and empathy, combined with teacher collaboration, were crucial for student success, especially given the lack of specialist support. A comprehensive intervention program is crucial, including enhanced professional development, substantial investment in resources and assistive technologies, a robust mentorship program, and infrastructure improvements (electricity and internet access). Addressing these systemic issues is paramount for equitable and effective education. Future research should assess the long-term impact of such interventions and investigate prevalent learning disabilities to better tailor support

*Keywords* — *Lived experiences of teachers, Diverse needs, Phenomenology, Classroom management, Emotional impact Readiness; HUMSS Students; Ex-post-Facto; Performance; Career Goal; Potential Challenges*

## I. Introduction

Teaching a normal class is challenging, but it becomes even more complex when learners have disabilities. Managing classes with various conditions of disabilities is intricate, and complying with the inclusive learning policy for all public schools adds another layer of complexity. Special educational classrooms require teachers to have the right attitudes and a strong conviction that all learners with disabilities can succeed. This positive mindset fosters learning development and creates valuable experiences for both learners and teachers (Malone, 2022).

In the Philippines, a recent study by UNICEF (2022) estimated that there are approximately 1.6 million Filipino children with disabilities. The Department of Education (DepEd) reported that

in the school year 2016-2017, there were about 232,975 learners with disabilities or learning exceptionalities. The most common disabilities were visual impairments, at the secondary level, with 13,828 learners diagnosed with visual problems. Additionally, there were 41,317 and 64,338 cases of learners with eyesight problems and difficulties in remembering, concentrating, paying attention, and understanding, respectively, at both elementary and secondary levels. Region IV-A and the National Capital Region (NCR) had the highest numbers of learners with exceptionalities attending regular classes, with 34,644 (14.9 percent) and 33,977 (14.6 percent), respectively. Teachers trained at the national, regional, and division levels, known as SPED teachers, are responsible for teaching learners with disabilities. During the school year 2019-2020, there were 4,487 SPED teachers in public schools, with 91 percent (4,094) being elementary teachers (K-6).

In Northern Samar, efforts to support children with disabilities have been strengthened through collaborations between the local government and Plan Philippines. Their joint initiative, funded by UNICEF, aimed to enhance services for young children with special needs. The program, which began in September 2020 and continued until February 2022, focused on early identification and support for children aged zero to four. Training was provided to identify children with disabilities through surveys, helping to determine the most common disabilities in the province (Amazona, 2021).

This study addresses the call for inclusive teaching for all. More of the survey highlighted the challenges of teaching students with disabilities, but lacked adequate presentation of specific, inclusive teaching strategies currently employed in the Island district of Samar. There should be a clear program and enough resources for the SPED teachers to initiate various methods and teaching strategies that teachers use to help students learn with disabilities. Teaching students with disabilities must be assessed in terms of their implementation of pedagogical effectiveness. The impact of teacher training related to disabled learners must be assessed in terms of classroom practices.

This study investigated inclusive teaching practices in the municipalities of Almagro, Tagapul-an, and Sto. Niño within Samar's Island District. It focused on improving the academic and social conditions of disabled learners by examining the experiences of teachers working with them. The study's findings, however, were limited to these three municipalities and may not be generalizable to the entire island district or other regions. This study analyzed the experiences of teachers working with diverse learners in Samar's Island District to identify effective strategies for supporting students' academic and social-emotional needs. This included advocating for appropriate resource allocation and ensuring timely responses to individual learning needs. By contributing significantly to the development of data-driven best practices and policies for inclusive education, this research ultimately aimed to improve the overall educational experience for all learners and foster a more inclusive and equitable educational system in the Island District. The results provided concrete recommendations for policymakers, educators, and administrators to enhance support for both teachers and students with diverse needs.

### 1.1 *Statement of the Problem*

The study explored the lived experiences of teachers handling learners with diverse needs in the island district of the Schools Division of Samar during the school year 2024-2025 with the end view of proposing an intervention program.

Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions

1. What are the lived experiences of teachers handling learners with diverse needs?
2. How do the interactions between teachers and learners with diverse needs shape the learning within inclusive classrooms?
3. What are the challenges faced by the teacher in handling learners with diverse needs?
4. Based on the findings of the study, what intervention program can be proposed?

## II. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative method and used a descriptive phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of teachers handling learners with diverse needs in the Island District of the Schools Division of Samar. This approach helps educators better understand how to recognize and address the diverse needs of students. Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, the study examined the challenges faced by these teachers, their strategies, and how they adapt their lessons to diverse learning needs. The findings aim to inform recommendations and interventions that promote inclusive and responsive teaching practices.

### 2.1 *Measures*

Data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide found in Appendix A. This guide was designed to explore participants lived experiences in handling students with diverse needs in the island district of Samar, focusing on teacher-learning interactions within inclusive classrooms and the challenges encountered. Data analysis, using in-depth interviewing techniques, involved identifying key themes within the interview transcripts attached as Appendix B, which included the participants' verbatim responses. The interview guide underwent expert validation.

### 2.2 *Procedure*

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, guided by an interview protocol attached in Appendix A. Participants were selected employing purposive sampling. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and anonymity, were strictly adhered to throughout the process. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyze the data.

### III. Results and Discussion

#### **Table 1 Summary- Lived Experiences of Teachers Handling Learners with Diverse Needs in the Island District of the Schools Division of Samar, A Typical Day in the Classroom with Diverse Learners**

#### **Classroom Management & Instructional Strategies for Diverse Learners Individualized Attention & Differentiated Instruction**

The emphasis on individualized attention and differentiated instruction is crucial in addressing the diverse needs of students within the classroom. Teachers recognize the challenge of managing large classes while ensuring each student receives the necessary support. To achieve this, educators implement one-on-one sessions for those requiring extra assistance, particularly in reading and mathematics. Common strategies include the use of visual aids and repetition, which reinforce learning and help students grasp complex concepts. Additionally, breaking down tasks into manageable steps and utilizing color-coded materials enhances focus and comprehension, facilitating effective engagement with the material. By starting with simple exercises and gradually increasing difficulty, teachers ensure that all students can understand the content. The integration of games and physical movement further fosters an inclusive learning environment, demonstrating the commitment of educators to adapt their instruction based on individual learner needs. This thoughtful approach not only enhances student engagement but also promotes a sense of belonging and support within the classroom. These notions are supported by the following statements:

*“Hmmm in a typical day in my classroom, it involves a lot of individualized attention since mayroon po akong 27 students in one classroom. I begin with a review of the lesson for the day, tapos.. hmmm depende, depende on the learners needs, kung kaya nira ma catch up yung new lesson, and then I focus on one-on-one sessions sa mga students who need extra assistance in reading and ang uban math so akong strategies I visual aids and repetition”.*

*-Participant 1, lines 13-17-*

*“Yung ginawa ko po ay we go through the lesson step-by-step, and I break down tasks for students. Gumagamit po ako ng color-coded materials to help them focus better.*

*” -P2, lines 14-16-*

*“Naghahatag po ak extra time to write, and a reading task, may mga students din po akong struggle with attention hindi agad-agad Inakikinig, so I use visual aids and sometimes activities outside the classroom”.*

*-P3, lines 13-15-*

#### **Addressing Specific Learning Difficulties**

Teachers exhibited a strong awareness of the specific learning difficulties their students encounter, particularly in areas such as reading and mathematics. They prioritized one-on-one

sessions to provide targeted support, utilizing visual aids and physical objects to enhance understanding of complex concepts. Additionally, educators recognized the importance of allowing extra time for writing tasks and engaged students through interactive activities that catered to those with attention challenges. The incorporation of movement and physical activities not only reinforced learning but also helped maintain student engagement. However, despite these proactive strategies, challenges such as electricity shortages emerged as significant obstacles, hindering the ability to create an optimal learning environment and impacting students' focus in uncomfortable conditions. This highlights the need for ongoing support and resources to address both academic and environmental challenges faced by teachers and their students. These points are substantiated by the participants' comments:

*“I focus on one-on-one sessions sa mga students who need extra assistance in reading and ang uban math so akong strategies I visual aids, and repetition to help them.”*

- P1, lines 16-17-*“Gumagamit po ako ng color-coded materials to help them focus better. Sa ibang subject po napapansin ko na nahihirapan sila mag solve sa math so binibigyan ko sila extra time with numbers and I use physical objects to teach math concepts”.*

- P2, lines 13-18-

### **Resource Constraints & Adaptability**

Educators face significant challenges related to resource limitations that impact their teaching effectiveness. The reliance on natural light and written materials highlights the ongoing struggle with electricity shortages, which restricts the use of technology-based learning tools. Additionally, teachers frequently encounter constraints in accessing essential learning materials, particularly for specific subjects such as science, necessitating the creation of their worksheets and resources. Despite these obstacles, educators demonstrate resilience and adaptability by striving to make the best use of available resources to meet their students' needs. This situation underscores the importance of addressing infrastructural issues and ensuring adequate access to learning materials to support effective teaching and enhance student learning experiences. These observations are echoed in the participants' feedback:

*“And electricity is a constant challenge here, so I rely on the natural light and written materials instead of technology-based learning tools.”*

-P2, lines 18-20

*“Sometimes limited resources sa mga specific lessons lalo na sa sciences, kasi nasa island kami, and sometimes I have to create my worksheets from scratch.”*

- P4 (17-19)

*“but pero may mga problems, challenges pa rin. Sometimes lang naman, limited access to learning materials, mga students kulang ilang gamit masulod sa school, but still, I try to adapt and do the best I can with what’s available”.*

-P7 lines 22-25-

### **Teacher's Strategies & Approaches**

Teachers employ a variety of creative and adaptable strategies to enhance learning and cater to diverse student needs. Visual aids and repetition are frequently utilized to reinforce concepts and improve comprehension, particularly in reading and mathematics. Color-coded materials and hands-on activities, including the use of physical objects, are incorporated to increase engagement and cater to different learning styles. Interactive lessons, incorporating movement and games, are also employed, especially for younger students. The use of readily available resources and locally sourced materials demonstrates a commitment to making learning relevant and accessible to all students, while providing extended time and alternative methods of expression further support individual learning needs. This diverse approach highlights the teachers' dedication to finding effective methods for all students, regardless of their learning styles or challenges. The following statements illustrate these issues:

*“Gumagamit po ako ng color-coded materials to help them focus better. Sa ibang subject po napapansin ko na nahihirapan sila mag solve sa math so binibigyan ko sila extra time with numbers and I use physical objects to teach math concepts Visual aids, repetition, using available resources”.*

-P2 (15-18)

*“Gumagamit po ako ng simple repetitive tasks kung nahihirapan yung learners ko. I also integrate movement and psychical activity into the lessons kay Grade 4 po yung mga students ko, such as math activities that involve counting or sorting objects”.*

-P3 (18-21)

### **Teachers' Feelings & Challenges**

Teachers describe their daily work as a constant balancing act, requiring them to manage diverse student needs and adapt to various challenges. While many teachers feel they successfully meet most of their students' needs, they also acknowledge limitations in providing specialized support due to resource constraints. These constraints include limited access to learning materials and insufficient resources for students. Despite these obstacles, teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to adapting their teaching methods and making the most of what is available to ensure their students receive the best possible education. This highlights the need for increased support and resources to help teachers overcome these challenges and better meet the diverse needs of their students. The following statements reinforce these concerns:

*" Each day po sa classroom is more like parang balancing act. I start by organizing activities."*

-P3, lines 11-12-

*"I do feel like I meet their needs most of the time, but some learners require more specialized help that I can't always provide due to the limited resources".*

-P6, lines 16-17-

*"I believe I meet most of my students' needs, but pero may mga problems, challenges pa rin. Sometimes lang naman, limited access to learning materials, mga students kulang ilang gamit masulod sa school but still, I try to adapt and do the best I can with what's available".*

-P7, lines 22-25-

## **Table 2 Summary- Interactions between teachers and learners with diverse needs shape the learning within inclusive classrooms**

### **Ability to Meet Needs/General Confidence/Resource Limitations**

Participants conveyed a strong sense of confidence in their ability to meet their students' needs, emphasizing their commitment to providing additional time for students to complete written tasks. They acknowledged a continuous opportunity for growth in their teaching practices while also highlighting challenges related to limited resources and the complexities of offering individualized support. This reflects their dedication to enhancing their strategies in diverse learning environments. These ideas are backed by the following feedback

*"I also make sure to give extra time for students to finish their written work".*

- P1, lines 26-27- *"I feel confident na meet ko yung needs ng students ko, but I know there's always room to grow. Pero minsan yung challenge is resources and the difficulty in providing individualized support".* - P3, Lines 23-25-

*"Feeling ko naman ko I meet most of their needs, but it can be exhausting sometimes because lack of resources".*

-P2, Lines 30-31-

### **Memorable Experiences of the Teachers Handling Learners with Diverse Needs Challenges Faced**

The participants identified significant challenges faced by students with diverse needs, particularly in areas such as math and reading. They described instances where students struggled with fundamental concepts, highlighting the difficulties some learners experienced in grasping

essential skills. However, they also noted that with consistent support and intervention, students could make substantial progress, ultimately achieving milestones such as reading basic sentences independently. This underscores the importance of perseverance and targeted assistance in overcoming academic challenges. The following statements reinforce these concerns:

*“Yes, hmm, I remember a student who struggled with math as in maglisud gyud siya pag solve sa simple math concept”.*

-P2, Lines 37-38

*“I had a student who struggled with reading sadto. After months of consistent support, she reached a point where she could read basic sentences independently”.*

-P7, Lines 28-29

### **Success Stories**

Participants also shared their success stories, which highlighted the positive impact of targeted teaching strategies on students with diverse needs. They reported that after implementing hands-on activities and providing consistent support, students who initially struggled with concepts in subjects like math and reading made significant progress. These experiences demonstrated that with appropriate interventions, students could achieve important milestones, such as understanding complex ideas and reading independently, reinforcing the value of tailored educational approaches.

*“After weeks of using hands-on activities... he started understanding concepts...”* -P2, Lines 38-40-

*“ I had a student who struggled with reading sadto. After months of consistent support, she reached a point where she could read basic sentences independently....”*

-P7, Lines 28-29-

### **Collaborative Practices: Informal Collaboration and Lack of Specialist Access Among Teachers Handling Learners with Diverse Needs in Samar Island Districts**

The responses from participants highlighted the significance of collaborative practices among teachers in addressing the needs of learners with diverse needs within the Samar Island Districts. Informal collaboration emerged as a vital component of their professional interactions, with teachers frequently engaging in discussions about student progress and sharing effective teaching strategies during breaks and meetings. This collegial support not only fostered a sense of community among educators but also facilitated the exchange of ideas that could enhance instructional practices.

However, the participants also pointed out the challenges posed by a lack of access to specialized support. Many teachers expressed concerns over the limited availability of specialists, which hindered their ability to provide tailored interventions for students requiring additional assistance. As a result, teachers often relied on their informal networks and collaborative efforts to compensate for these gaps, working together to develop strategies that addressed individual student needs. These observations are echoed in the participants' feedback:

*"We collaborate informally, often discussing our students' progress during breaks, labi na sa office ug sa mga meetings pud namo sa school".*

-P2, Lines 43-44-

*"Yes we, may meetings kami sa school and our school head help us to address these issues and discuss student progress, and share strategies".*

-P7, Lines 33-34-

*"Unfortunately, we don't have access to specialists due to maybe the distance."*

-P2, Lines 45- *"Pero there are no specialists available on our island. So wala po kaming access dito".* -P7, Lines 34-35-

### **Building Relationships: Trust, Support, and Personal Engagement of Teachers Handling Learners with Diverse Needs in Samar Island Districts**

Participants emphasized the importance of building relationships with students through trust and support. They highlighted the need to be approachable and empathetic, actively listening to students' concerns, whether academic or personal. By fostering an environment of trust, teachers conveyed their commitment to being available for students, making a genuine effort to connect with them. This prioritization of student relationships not only enhances the emotional support provided but also contributes to creating a safe and nurturing learning environment where students feel valued and understood. All these claims were supported by the following lines:

*I build relationships by being approachable and empathetic sa akong mga students. I ensure that I listen actively to my students' concerns kung may naa man, whether academic or personal. ..."*

-P2, Lines 48-50-

*"hmm... for me, building a relationship starts with trust. I let my students know that I am there to help, and gumagawa po talaga ako ng effort to connect with them kasi yung priority ko yung mga students ko po."*

- P3, Lines 39-41-

*"I try to recognize their strengths, whether academic or personal, this helps especially I a diverse classroom".*

-P3, lines 41-43-

*"Ang una diha na buhaton is always creating a trusting environment where my students feel safe. For students with diverse needs, I often spend extra time with them after school hours."*

-P5, Lines 36-38-

### **Teachers Handling Learners with Diverse Needs in Samar Island Districts: Teaching Methods Adaptation for Diverse Needs, and Interactive Learning**

To address the diverse needs of their students, the participants employed several strategies. They created a supportive learning environment by fostering a safe and comfortable classroom where students felt comfortable participating. This involved demonstrating genuine interest in students' lives both inside and outside of school and providing positive reinforcement to boost their confidence. Furthermore, they adapted their teaching methods to ensure all students could succeed. This included designing interactive and engaging lessons, particularly for students with diverse needs, and utilizing multi-sensory techniques such as tracing words and practicing phonics. Math instruction was enhanced through the incorporation of counting games and physical activities. The following sentences illustrate these concerns:

*"I also engage in regular one-on-one conversations to show genuine interest in their interests outside of school. And para maka-create a safe environment where they feel comfortable. I also make sure to provide positive reinforcement to boost their confidence, especially for learners with learning needs".*

- P1, lines 58-62

*"I adjust my methods to ensure every student can succeed. I use multi-sensory techniques like tracing words and practicing phonics. For students' math, I incorporate counting games and physical activities."*

- P6, Lines 42-44-

*"I try to make lessons as interactive as possible para ma enjoy pud sa ako mga students ang klase, especially for students with diverse needs. ..."*

- P2, Lines 64-65-

### **Peer Interactions Among Teachers Handling Learners with Diverse Needs in Samar Island Districts: Importance of Collaboration and Building Confidence**

This study reveals that collaborative peer interactions are essential for effectively supporting students with diverse learning needs in Samar Island districts. The findings indicate that regular peer interaction among teachers fosters a dynamic environment of social learning, directly contributing to a more inclusive classroom experience for all students. This collaborative approach not only enhances the overall effectiveness of diverse teaching strategies but also significantly builds teachers' confidence in their ability to meet the unique needs of each student. The supportive network created through peer collaboration is a key factor in successful inclusive education practices. These notions were supported by the following lines:

*"I also engage in regular one-on-one. Conversations to show genuine interest in their interests outside of school, and para maka-create a safe environment where they feel comfortable. Peer interactions provide opportunities for social learning..." - P1, Lines 58-60-*

*"Peer support helps create an inclusive environment for all students. "*

*-P2, Lines 72-73-*

*"Peer interaction is very important sa klase kasi this is student-centered. I often use group activities where students can support each other, ..."*

*- P7, Lines 51-52-*

*"sa klase, yung nahihirapan sa klase, this gives them the chance to feel less isolated and more included sa classroom..." - P5, Lines 58-59-*

### **Inclusive Education for Learners with Diverse Needs: Celebrating Student Success and Creating Supportive Learning Environments**

Participants' responses highlight key aspects of inclusive education focused on celebrating student success and creating supportive learning environments. Teachers emphasize creating opportunities for all students to participate actively, regardless of their diverse needs. This includes providing differentiated tasks that ensure success and celebrating all types of progress to foster a sense of belonging and accomplishment. A variety of teaching methods are employed to ensure that every student can contribute in a way that suits their abilities, whether through hands-on activities, discussions, or creative expression. The overall approach prioritizes valuing each student's unique contributions and celebrating their efforts. These claims are backed by the following statements:

*"Of course po, I make sure that every student is given a chance to participate in activities, regardless of their needs, gumawa po ako ng activity para lahat ng mga students can contribute in a way that suits their abilities. "*

*-P1, Lines 90-92-*

*"I ensure that students with different needs are given tasks they can succeed in, and I always celebrate their efforts. I use a variety of methods to make sure everyone can participate and feel involved".*

-P6, lines 53-55-

*"I make sure everyone has a role in classroom tasks by providing different ways to participate in pareho sa mga dula-dulan nga activity. Whether it's through hands-on work, discussion, or drawing, every student can contribute. I celebrate all types of progress to ensure each learner feels recognized and appreciated ..."*

-P7, Lines 56-59-

### **Table 3 Summary - Challenges Faced by Teachers in Handling Learners with Diverse Needs**

#### **Resource Limitations and Their Effects on Teaching Diverse Learners**

A significant and recurring challenge highlighted by all seven participants was a critical lack of resources. This deficiency manifested in several key areas: insufficient specialized teaching materials, forcing teachers to create their own often less effective resources; limited access to technology and assistive devices, particularly problematic in remote locations with unreliable electricity; an absence of dedicated special education (SPED) support staff, placing an undue burden on general education teachers lacking specialized training; and a scarcity of professional development opportunities to enhance teachers' skills in supporting diverse learners. These resource limitations collectively hinder effective teaching and create significant obstacles for educators. These assertions were all backed by participants' remarks:

*"Hmmm, of course because this is an island, lack of access to updated educational technologies mayroon naman kaming laptop and tv pero mga learning tools tailored to students with specific learning need yun po yung wala, we also need SPED educators to help with these learners kasi kami hindi naman kami SPED teacher so hindi namin alam sa early stage kung may special needs ba yung students kasi nakahalo lang sila."*

-P4, lines 79-84-

*"We need more resources like digital learning tools and specialized books kasi sakin gumagawa na lang ako ng mga learning materials lalo na sa reading, gumagawa ako ng worksheet and reading exercise. The lack of these resources makes it difficult to create lessons to meet the specific needs of my students."*

-P6, lines 66-69-

### Addressing Behavioral Issues: Managing Diverse Learning Needs

The diverse needs of students presented multifaceted challenges for teachers. The wide range of academic abilities within classrooms requires teachers to constantly differentiate their instruction, providing both substantial support for struggling learners and enriching activities for advanced students. Furthermore, behavioral issues frequently arose, often directly linked to unmet learning needs and resulting frustration. Teachers reported employing various strategies to address these behavioral challenges, including patience, understanding, positive reinforcement, and the creation of supportive and calm learning environments. The complexity of managing both academic and behavioral diversity within a single classroom emerged as a central concern. These statements were all substantiated by participants' testimonies:

*"I try to address behavioral issues with patience and consistency...For students with diverse needs, I implement strategies like breaking tasks into smaller parts and offering praise for small successes."*

-P, lines 104-110-

*"If may case man nga behavioral issue. I address by first talking to the student privately...When students get frustrated...I use positive reinforcement."*

-P2, lines 88-91-

*"To address behavioral issues,I always remind them that it's okay to make mistakes and offer praise for small steps of improvement...Kaya as a teacher dapat mataas ang pag-unawa natin sa kanila, pag hindi na sila nakikilahok sa klase, I motivated them."*

### Managing Varying Academic Levels: Academic Strategies

Managing varying academic levels in the classroom is a complex but essential task for educators. To effectively address the diverse needs of students, teachers employ a variety of strategies, including differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, and peer tutoring. These approaches allow for personalized support tailored to individual learning styles and abilities, ensuring that all students can progress at their own pace and feel included in the learning process. Additionally, enrichment activities for advanced learners help keep them engaged and challenged, while one-on-one attention for those facing difficulties ensures that no student is left behind. In general, the ability to adapt teaching methods and create a supportive learning environment is crucial for fostering academic success among students with varying abilities. These assertions were all backed by participants' remarks:

*"hmmm I manage varying academic levels by differentiating my lessons...I can say that this hmmm kuan, ensures that all students can work at their own pace and feel included in my classroom."*

(P1-121-P1-126)

**The Impact of Lack of Specialized Training on Teachers of Diverse Learners**

The lack of specialized training for teachers in managing diverse learners emerges as a significant challenge across participant responses. Educators express a pressing need for targeted professional development to effectively address the unique learning requirements of their students. Without adequate training, teachers struggle to implement effective strategies and often feel overwhelmed, particularly when they are the sole educators responsible for a class with varying needs. This gap in training not only hampers teachers' ability to provide appropriate support but also impacts on the overall learning environment, underscoring the urgent need for enhanced training programs and resources to equip educators with the necessary skills to succeed in inclusive classrooms. These statements were all substantiated by participants' testimonies:

*"Sa tinuod lang, the most significant challenge is the lack of specialized training in handling diverse learning needs."*

- P2, lines 82-83-

**Table 4 Summary -Professional Development for Supporting Students with Diverse Learning Needs****Professional Development Needs**

The participants' responses reveal a strong perception that current professional development opportunities are insufficient to meet the complex needs of teaching diverse learners. There's a consistent call for more in-depth training that goes beyond superficial coverage, providing educators with the practical skills and knowledge necessary to effectively implement inclusive teaching strategies in their classrooms. The need for practical, hands-on workshops and ongoing professional development to keep pace with evolving best practices is also highlighted, indicating a desire for continuous learning and support. Furthermore, the lack of resources to implement learned strategies is identified as a significant barrier, emphasizing the interconnectedness of training and resource availability in successful inclusive education. Finally, a lack of specialized training in areas such as differentiated instruction is seen as a major obstacle, underscoring the need for targeted professional development to address the unique challenges of teaching diverse learners. The following lunces supported the claims:

*"It would be more helpful kung in-depth training ani niya."*

-P1, Line 132-

*"There is still a need for more practical or hands-on workshops that provide actionable strategies."*

-P2, Line 108-

### **Effective Training Content**

Effective professional development for teachers of diverse learners includes training on a variety of strategies. Multi-sensory teaching approaches have proven particularly impactful, improving student engagement and understanding. Similarly, training in behavior management techniques and creating supportive lessons for struggling students is highly valued. Finally, familiarity with educational apps and online resources enhances teachers' ability to cater to diverse learning styles and needs. These findings highlight the importance of diverse and practical training content in preparing educators for the challenges of inclusive classrooms. The lines were participants' perceptions:

*"We have training na yung topic about multi-sensory teaching strategies...which has made a big difference."*

-P3, Lines 99-103-

*"The training focused on behavior management techniques and how to create lessons for students who struggle."*

-P5, Line 93-

*"I attended a workshop...on educational apps and online resources."*

-P7, Lines 81-82-

### **Training Format**

Educators strongly favor hands-on professional development opportunities. The most effective training is perceived as that which provides actionable strategies directly applicable to real classroom settings, particularly regarding the integration of technology and other tools. This preference emphasizes the need for practical, experiential learning in teacher training to maximize its impact on classroom practice. These thoughts were supported by these lines:

*"More practical or hands-on workshops that provide actionable strategies for real classroom settings."*

-P2, Line 108-

*"More hands-on training on how to integrate these tools effectively in the classroom would be very beneficial."*

-P7, Line 84-85-

## 2. Summary of findings

The findings reveal a complex interplay of effective teaching strategies and significant challenges. Teachers consistently employed individualized instruction, utilizing visual aids, hands-on activities, and differentiated tasks to cater to varied learning styles and abilities. However, these efforts were frequently hampered by significant resource constraints, including unreliable electricity and limited access to essential learning materials. This scarcity forced teachers to be highly resourceful, often creating their own materials and adapting lessons to suit available resources. Despite these obstacles, teachers expressed a strong commitment to their students' success, demonstrating remarkable resilience and adaptability.

## IV. Conclusion

1. This study reveals the dedication and resourcefulness of teachers in the Island District of Samar in addressing the diverse learning needs of their students. While teachers effectively employed individualized instruction and creative teaching strategies, their efforts were significantly constrained by limited resources and infrastructure challenges.
2. The findings strongly suggest a need for increased investment in educational resources, infrastructure improvements (particularly reliable electricity), and ongoing professional development to support teachers and ultimately enhance the learning experiences and outcomes for all students. Addressing these systemic issues is crucial for ensuring equitable and effective education in this context.
3. Effective inclusive education in Samar Island classrooms was significantly shaped by strong teacher-student relationships, collaborative teacher networks, and commitment to differentiated instruction. While teachers expressed confidence in their ability to support diverse learners, resource constraints and the lack of readily available specialist support presented ongoing challenges.
4. The findings highlighted the importance of fostering a supportive learning environment built on trust and empathy, celebrating student effort and progress, and utilizing varied teaching methods to cater to diverse learning styles. Addressing resource limitations and providing ongoing professional development focused on inclusive teaching practices were crucial for maximizing the success of all students.
5. The study confirmed that a critical lack of adequate training and resources significantly hinders effective inclusive education. Teachers experienced high levels of stress and burnout due to insufficient support, impacting both their well-being and the quality of education for diverse learners.

6. To address these challenges, systemic changes are urgently needed, including comprehensive and practical professional development that prioritizes hands-on training, readily available resources, and ongoing support. Only through such systemic improvements can equitable and effective learning environments be created for all students.

## V. Recommendations

This study provided valuable insights into teachers lived experiences handling learners with diverse needs in the Island District of the Schools Division of Samar. The recommendations that follow were grounded in the teachers' shared experiences and aimed at improving their effectiveness in supporting diverse learner such as,

1. Conduct workshops that cover differentiated instruction, multi-sensory teaching strategies, behavior management techniques, and the effective use of technology and online resources. To address the multifaceted challenges faced by teachers of diverse learners, a comprehensive and ongoing professional development program is the primary recommendation. The intervention program should include a robust evaluation and monitoring system to track its effectiveness, assess teachers' needs, and make necessary adjustments to ensure ongoing improvement.
2. Invest in educational resources. This includes providing sufficient teaching materials, reliable access to technology and assistive devices, and ensuring reliable electricity in schools. The program should also address the need for specialist support staff, potentially through a system of itinerant specialists or collaborative partnerships with nearby schools or organizations.
3. Establish a robust mentorship program pairing experienced teachers with those new to inclusive education. Foster collaborative networks among teachers to share best practices, resources, and support each other. Regular meetings and opportunities for learning should be provided.
4. Invest in infrastructure improvements to address the challenges posed by unreliable electricity and limited access to technology, particularly in remote areas. This could involve the installation of solar panels, improved internet connectivity, and the provision of durable, offline resources.
5. Enforce robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the effectiveness of the improvements, measuring improvements in internet access, electricity reliability, and teacher and student feedback on the usability and impact of the new resources. This data informs ongoing adjustments and ensure the long-term sustainability of the infrastructure upgrades.

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