

# Bridging Gaps in Instructional Delivery and School Culture in Inclusive Education

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**Abstract:** This study addresses the critical role of special education and inclusive education teachers in promoting equity, inclusion, and diversity in educational systems globally, with a specific focus on the Philippines. This research seeks to assess the effectiveness of inclusive education delivery, school culture, identify barriers, and explore interventions. Doing so aims to enhance inclusive education practices and support all students in accessing quality education. Ultimately, effective instruction in inclusive education can be achieved through customization to meet specific student needs, equipping educators with the necessary knowledge and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, thereby creating an inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and supported. This study utilized the descriptive research method and involved 34 Special Education Teachers and 58 Inclusive Education teachers enrolled in the Master’s Program in Special Education. The study established that in delivering instruction to learners with disabilities, the Special Education teachers and Inclusive Education teachers have highly utilized teaching strategies, instructional resources, classroom management strategies, and assessment of learning but sometimes utilized blended learning platforms. With opportunities for enhancement, a highly evident school culture thrives and functions in the school setting. However, some problems impacted the delivery of instruction. An intervention measure entitled “Instructional Enhancement Development Program” is proposed as a capacity-building activity that supplements instruction and enhances the competencies of special education teachers and inclusive education teachers.

**Keywords:** special education teachers, inclusive education teachers, special education, school culture

## Introduction

Special Education presents a significant opportunity globally to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity within educational systems. By providing tailored support and accommodations for students with diverse learning needs, special education teachers and inclusive education teachers play a crucial role in ensuring that all individuals have access to quality education. Moreover, special needs education teaching fosters greater awareness and understanding of disabilities, promoting societal empathy and acceptance. As the importance of inclusive education continues to be recognized worldwide, teaching learners with special needs offers opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and cross-cultural exchange, ultimately contributing to the creation

In the Philippines, special education weaves through regular and specialized settings, aiming to empower learners with diverse needs. From bustling mainstream classrooms to dedicated centers, dedicated educators strive to personalize instruction and cultivate inclusive learning for all. Special Education in the Philippines is supported by several key legal instruments and policies that ensure the rights and access to education for individuals with disabilities. Republic Act No. 7277 also known as Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities mandates the provision of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in various aspects of life, including education. It prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and mandates the creation of programs and services to promote their full participation in society, including access to education.

Furthermore, Republic Act No. 11560 further strengthens the right of students with disabilities to inclusive education. It clarifies and expands their rights and entitlements, such as access to Individualized Education Plans, reasonable accommodations, and inclusive learning environments.

Presidential Decree No. 603, labeled one of the first efforts to institutionalize Special Education in the Philippines. also known as the Child and Youth Welfare Code, played a significant role in establishing the foundation for Special Education (SPED) in the Philippines. Navigating a sea of diverse needs with limited resources, SPED teachers in the Philippines grapple with delivering effective instruction. Teachers encounter a variety of challenges and obstacles when instructing students with different disabilities such as juggling crowded classrooms, lack of specialized materials, and varying abilities, their ingenuity and dedication are stretched thin. Inclusion offers hope, but accessibility barriers and societal stigmas create additional hurdles, leaving them facing a continuous struggle to empower every student, and school administrations play a pivotal role in successfully implementing inclusion. However, challenges abound, including the need for specialized training, addressing individual learning differences, and fostering an inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and supported.

The primary goals of this research are as follows: first, to assess whether the delivery of instruction in inclusive education adequately meets the needs of children with disabilities and facilitating their progress; second, to identify the barriers educators face; third, to identify an intervention measure which will enhance the wholistic environment for engagement of learners with disabilities. Effective instruction in special and inclusive education can be achieved through customization to meet the specific needs of learners with disabilities in Special education and inclusive education classes, by equipping teachers with the requisite knowledge, and by fostering collaboration, trust, and teamwork among students, teachers, parents, and administrators, creating a sense of unity and support.

Advancing the welfare and providing a comprehensive educational response to learners with special needs requires closer collaboration, a stronger partnership, a positive attitude and perception toward Special Education Needs (SEN) learners, and gaining proficiency in special education through regular and special education teachers. Teachers need to adopt a positive attitude and perception toward SEN students and to achieve this, there is a need to provide preservice and in-service education to promote among teachers the notions inherent to inclusive education. (Zagona, Kurth, & MacFarland, 2017; Yong, 2013). One of the most effective and efficient ways of gaining proficiency in special education is to engage in professional development activities such as pursuing graduate studies, listening to lectures, attending seminars, and self-initiated informal engagements like watching educational and informative YouTube channels. With this perspective, this study explores the avenue of capacity-building activities that can be adopted as a strategy to supplement instruction and enhance the competencies of special needs education teachers and inclusive education teachers.

**Method**

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational method of research that assessed the delivery of instruction by Special Education teachers and Inclusive Education teachers and its relation with school culture. It involved the participation of 34 Special Education teachers and 58 Inclusive Education teachers enrolled in the Master’s Program in Special Education. The researcher-constructed survey questionnaire consisted of statements on blended learning platforms, teaching strategies, instructional resources, classroom management strategies; and assessment of learning and school culture. The reliability of the items was determined with a dry run to establish good internal consistency and reliability.

**Result and Discussion**

Table 1. *Assessment of the Delivery of Instruction*

Criteria	SPED Teachers		Inclusive Teachers		Composite		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. Blended learning modalities	2.89	SU	3.38	OU	3.14	SU	5
2. Teaching strategies	4.34	AU	4.79	AU	4.57	AU	2
3. Instructional resources	4.43	AU	4.69	AU	4.56	AU	3
4. Classroom management strategies	4.49	OU	4.74	AU	4.62	AU	1
5. Assessment of learning	4.37	OU	4.65	AU	4.51	AU	4
General Assessment	4.10	OU	4.45	AU	4.28	AU	

<i>Legend:</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	<i>Symbol</i>
	5	4.20-5.00	Always Utilized	AU
	4	3.40-4.19	Often Utilized	OU
	3	2.60-3.39	Sometimes Utilized	SU
	2	1.80-2.59	Rarely Utilized	RU
	1	1.00-1.79	Not Utilized	NU

From Table 1, the general assessment by both special needs education teachers and inclusive teachers the delivery of instruction is always utilized. As regards the specific dimensions of the delivery of instruction, blended learning modalities are sometimes utilized by both special education teachers and inclusive education teachers while both teachers always utilize teaching strategies, instructional resources, and classroom management strategies. Likewise, both teachers use various and relevant teaching

strategies to enable students to get engaged with the instructional processes in the classroom. However, only inclusive teachers always use active learning strategies while special needs education teachers only often use them with their learners. This further implies that learners with special needs require more teacher-centered instructional strategies. As regards instructional resources, these are maximized by both types of teachers to provide a meaningful teaching-learning environment for learners with special needs. As regards classroom management strategies, both SNED teachers and inclusive education teachers gain control over the classroom environment by utilizing various classroom management strategies to ensure that learning will take place and minimize distractions and disruption during class sessions. Concerning the assessment of learning, both SNED teachers and inclusive education teachers gainfully utilized various strategies and methods to assess the learning and performance of learners with special needs. These findings are strongly supported by the feelings of unpreparedness of teachers to work effectively with learners with special needs and learners with inclusive classrooms but these can be addressed by a culture of shared responsibility, high expectations for all students, and a sense of a professional community within the schools. (Smith & Tyler, 2011; Caron & McLaughlin, 2002).

Table 2. *Assessment of School Culture*

Criteria	SPED Teachers		Inclusive Teachers		Composite		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. Collegial awareness	4.11	E	3.84	E	3.98	E	4
2. Shared values	4.52	HE	4.20	HE	4.36	HE	2
3. Decision making	3.78	E	4.14	E	3.96	E	5
4. Risk-taking	4.53	HE	3.82	HE	4.18	E	3
5. Communication	4.81	HE	4.65	HE	4.74	HE	1
General Assessment	4.35	HE	4.13	E	4.24	HE	

<i>Legend:</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	<i>Symbol</i>
	5	4.20-5.00	Highly Evident	HE
	4	3.40-4.19	Evident	E
	3	2.60-3.39	Moderately Evident	ME
	2	1.80-2.59	Least Evident	LE
	1	1.00-1.79	Not Evident	NE

As reflected in Table 2, a highly evident school culture thrives in the school setting. Shared values and communication are strongly supportive of generating a functioning school culture. Nonetheless, collegial awareness, decision-making, and risk-taking are areas that provide opportunities for enhancement that can be pursued for the school-inclusive culture thru collaboration and compromise (Kugelmass, 2001).

Table 3. *Relationship between Delivery of Instruction and School Culture*

Variables	R coefficient	Verbal Interpretation	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Delivery of Instruction & School Culture	0.4229	A weak, positive correlation	.000027	Significant at $p < .05$	Reject $H_0$

As shown in Table 3, although technically a positive correlation, the relationship between delivery of instruction and school culture is weak. However, the result is significant at  $p < .05$ . The coefficient of determination, is 0.1788. This manifests an influence between these two variables which can enhance the educational benefit of the learners with special needs and the general environment that is conducive to learning, growth, and development of all stakeholders. Aligning with this are facilitating factors, work pressures that impact positive outcomes for stakeholders of a collaborative school culture, and collective efficacy for teaching high-ability students, work pressure, and facilitating factors (Gubbels, et al., 2024; Abu-Alghayth, 2024).

Table 4. *Problems Encountered in the Delivery of Instruction*

Criteria	SPED Teachers		Inclusive Teachers		Composite		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. Technical issues such as poor or unreliable internet connection, malfunctioning devices, or software errors that disrupt the delivery of instruction on the blended platform	3.88	OE	3.97	OE	3.93	OE	1
2. Lack of extensive special needs education training for regular classroom teachers	3.26	OE	3.28	SE	3.20	SE	4
3. Constraints in the availability of funds for resources	3.71	OE	3.52	OE	3.62	OE	2
4. Difficulty accommodating diverse student needs and disabilities	3.03	SE	3.07	SE	3.05	SE	5
5. Heavy workload to monitor learning progress	3.59	OE	3.60	OE	3.60	OE	3
General Assessment	3.49	OE	3.49	OE	3.48	OE	

<i>Legend:</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Symbol</i>
	5	4.20-5.00	Always Encountered	AE
	4	3.40-4.19	Often Encountered Sometimes	OE
	3	2.60-3.39	Encountered	SE
	2	1.80-2.59	Rarely Encountered	RE
	1	1.00-1.79	Not Encountered	NE

As reflected in Table 4, there are problems often encountered by both special education teachers and inclusive education teachers. The areas where they often encountered problems are (a) technical issues such as poor or unreliable internet connection, malfunctioning devices, or software errors that disrupt the delivery of instruction on the blended platform, (b) constraints in the availability of funds for resources, and (c) heavy workload to monitor learning progress. Commonly, they sometimes encountered problems with (a) a lack of extensive special needs education training for regular classroom teachers and (b) difficulty accommodating diverse student needs and disabilities. These findings imply that SPED teachers and inclusive education teachers experienced both personal inadequacy and competency deficits in handling classroom management issues and concerns primarily caused by the diversity of student needs and disabilities. More often, this is caused by the multi-disabilities that are present in a class of learners with special needs. Such limitations may cause students' inadequate responsiveness by failing to address the difficulty in students' transitioning from the primary grades to the intermediate grades, insufficient comprehensiveness in the strategies or the skills they address, not teaching for transfer, (d) inadequately addressing the linguistic and cognitive limitations of many struggling students, and (e) not making use of implementation features that can optimize the intensity of instruction (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2015). Likewise, these challenges outweigh the opportunity for inclusive education's full implementation which necessitates a strong collaboration among stakeholders, non-government organizations, and the concerned bodies to achieve inclusive education (Mitiku, Yitayal, Semahegn, 2014).

**Conclusion**

The study established that in delivering instruction to learners with disabilities, the Special Education teachers and Inclusive Education teachers have highly utilized teaching strategies, instructional resources, classroom management strategies, and assessment of learning but sometimes utilized blended learning platforms. With opportunities for enhancement, a highly evident school culture thrives and functions in the school setting. However, some problems impacted the delivery of instruction that need to be addressed in the intervention measure.

**Recommendations**

1. Adopt Development Program. Schools may adopt the intervention measure entitled “Instructional Enhancement Development Program” as a capacity-building activity that supplements instruction and enhances the competencies of special education teachers and inclusive education teachers.

2. Build Communication. Special education teachers and inclusive education teachers may build strong communication with stakeholders, particularly the parents.

3. Promote Stakeholder Engagement. Stakeholders may support the learning process by attending and participating in school events and activities that enhance collaboration and cooperation for the benefit of learners with special needs.

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