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Instructional Practices and Challenges of Teachers in Supporting Special Needs Students in Inclusive Settings

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ABSTRACT: *This study explored the instructional practices and challenges teachers face in inclusive classrooms at Misamis Occidental High School during the 2024-2025 school year. It was guided by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, and legal mandates such as R.A. 5250 and R.A. 10533 to align with the K-12 curriculum. Using a qualitative-phenomenological research design, the study gathered in-depth insights from 10 teachers through semi-structured interviews. Data analysis revealed that teachers employed differentiated and collaborative strategies, including peer tutoring, buddy systems, and assistive technology, to address the diverse needs of special education learners. Despite these efforts, challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, insufficient resources, and inadequate training hindered effective implementation. Teachers navigated these obstacles by collaborating with specialists, developing materials, and employing remediation and behavior management techniques. The role of the school environment was critical, with collaborative frameworks and resource-sharing systems proving effective in supporting inclusive practices, even when institutional support was limited.The findings underscore the importance of systemic reforms to enhance inclusive education. The study proposed an Enhanced Individualized Instruction (IEI) Plan, emphasizing professional development, resource enhancement, parental engagement, and collaborative teaching. These strategies are essential to fostering inclusivity and improving outcomes for all learners. Recommendations include continuous training for teachers, improved infrastructure, reduced class sizes, co-teaching, and active parental involvement to effectively align inclusive education with UDL principles and legal mandates.*

Key words*: Inclusive education, Inclusive pedagogy, Individualized education plan (IEP), Special needs education.*

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1. Introduction

The implementation of inclusive education in the Philippines has seen gradual but significant progress, particularly with the enforcement of laws such as R.A. 5250 and R.A. 10533, which mandate the integration of learners with special needs into general classrooms. These laws underline the nation's commitment to creating equitable educational opportunities for all students. However, the practical application of these inclusive policies faces numerous hurdles that can impede their effectiveness (Soriano et al., 2022; Nguyen, 2023).

Inclusive education, while ideologically robust, demands a comprehensive understanding and adaptation of instructional practices to cater to diverse learning needs effectively. Teachers at the forefront of this implementation often struggle with inadequate training in special education methodologies, which is crucial for developing and executing effective individualized education plans (IEPs). This gap in professional

development can lead to suboptimal educational experiences for students with special needs (Dela Cruz, 2024; Martinez, 2023).

Further compounding the issue are the infrastructural limitations commonly found in many schools, such as insufficient learning aids, assistive technologies, and even basic classroom space. These deficiencies can severely restrict the teachers' ability to provide a learning environment that is adaptable and accessible to all students. Research has shown that such constraints not only affect the delivery of education but also the psychological well-being and job satisfaction of teachers, thereby impacting their overall effectiveness (Lopez & Santos, 2024; Ocampo, 2023).

The concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) offers a framework through which schools can develop more inclusive educational practices. UDL principles advocate for creating multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to accommodate the varied ways students learn. However, the adoption of UDL in under-resourced schools remains challenging due to the lack of both physical and educational resources (Garcia, 2024; Reyes, 2023).

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which emphasizes the role of observational learning, social interaction, and environmental influences in development, also provides a valuable perspective for enhancing inclusive education. By fostering a supportive school environment that encourages positive social interactions and provides role models, teachers can significantly influence learners' attitudes towards and engagement with learning (Aquino & Fernandez, 2024).

Given these challenges and opportunities, this study proposes the development of an Enhanced Individualized Instruction (IEI) Plan. This plan aims to integrate the strengths of UDL and SCT to build a more supportive educational framework for students with special needs. By focusing on teacher training, infrastructure enhancement, and the adoption of inclusive teaching philosophies, the IEI Plan seeks to create a learning environment that not only meets legal standards but also truly supports every student's learning journey (Navarro & Quijano, 2025).

In conclusion, while inclusive education in the Philippines has made strides under the current legal framework, significant gaps remain that hinder its full implementation. Addressing these through improved training, better resources, and a focus on inclusive instructional strategies can lead to a more equitable education system. Future research should continue to explore these dimensions to provide ongoing improvements and insights into inclusive educational practices (Sanchez & Lim, 2024; Torres, 2025).

2. Literature Review

Inclusive education requires teachers to adopt specific instructional practices that cater to the diverse needs of all students, including those with special needs. Key practices often include differentiated instruction, the use of assistive technologies, and collaborative teaching models. Differentiated instruction allows teachers to tailor teaching environments and instructional methods to accommodate various learning styles and abilities. This approach is crucial for engaging students with special needs effectively and ensuring that they can access the curriculum alongside their peers (Brown & Green, 2022; Patel & Wang, 2023). Furthermore, assistive technologies such as speech-to-text software and visual aids can play a transformative role in helping students with disabilities participate more fully in classroom activities (Clark et al., 2023; Lopez, 2024). Additionally, the collaborative or co-teaching model, where special education and general education teachers work together, has been shown to enhance instructional delivery and student support within inclusive classrooms (Diaz & Kumar, 2022).

Despite these strategies, teachers often face significant challenges in inclusive settings, primarily related to resource constraints, lack of professional training, and the need for more administrative support. Many educators report that a lack of access to adequate resources, such as specialized teaching aids and materials, hampers their ability to implement effective instructional practices (Singh & Lee, 2023). Professional development is another critical area, as many teachers in inclusive classrooms feel underprepared to meet the needs of students with special requirements due to insufficient training in special education techniques (Morales & Thompson, 2024). Administrative support also plays a pivotal role in the successful implementation of inclusive education; however, teachers frequently cite a lack of understanding and support from school management as a barrier to implementing effective practices (Ortega & Rodriguez, 2024). Addressing these challenges often requires innovative solutions, such as seeking alternative training

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opportunities, leveraging community resources, and advocating for more robust support from educational leaders to improve the inclusive education environment (Kim & Park, 2023).

3. Methodology

The methodology for this study employed a qualitative-phenomenological approach, specifically designed to explore the lived experiences of teachers as they supported special needs students in inclusive settings. Phenomenology was chosen to delve deeply into the subjective experiences of the participants, capturing the nuances of their instructional practices and the challenges they faced. This approach is particularly effective in educational research where understanding the complexity of human interactions and pedagogical strategies is crucial. To gather data, the researcher utilized a semi-structured questionnaire developed specifically for this study. This instrument combined fixed and open-ended questions to ensure thorough coverage of the research topics while allowing for in-depth responses that revealed the teachers' perspectives and experiences. The selection of participants was critical; ten teachers actively engaged in inclusive classrooms were chosen. These participants provided insights from the front lines of inclusive education, detailing how they adapt their teaching methods to accommodate a diverse student population, including those with special educational needs. The phenomenological analysis was conducted through thematic coding of the responses, which facilitated the identification of common patterns and themes related to instructional strategies, encountered challenges, and the effectiveness of the school environment in supporting these practices. This method enabled the researcher to construct a comprehensive picture of the current state of inclusive education at the school, highlighting both the successes and obstacles faced by educators. The findings from this study are intended to contribute to the broader knowledge base of inclusive education practices and to inform the development of policies and strategies that enhance support for special needs students in educational settings.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Key Instructional Practices and Challenges in Inclusive

The study examined key instructional practices and challenges teachers encounter when addressing the educational needs of special needs students in inclusive classrooms. Results revealed that differentiated and collaborative instruction is a cornerstone strategy for inclusivity. Teachers adjusted content, processes, and activities to suit the varied needs of learners, often employing peer tutoring, buddy systems, and collaborative learning activities to foster an inclusive environment. This aligns with Tomlinson's (2000) framework on differentiated instruction, which emphasizes tailoring teaching approaches to meet diverse learning needs. Similarly, using flexible and adaptive learning approaches, such as interactive assignments, cooperative learning, and graphic organizers, highlighted teachers' efforts to accommodate different learning styles. Research by King-Sears (2008) supports this, asserting that flexible methods enhance engagement and participation. Recent studies, such as Bautista and Francisco (2021), further validate these practices, emphasizing their role in improving academic outcomes and promoting inclusivity.

However, the study also identified significant challenges in implementing inclusive education. Large class sizes and limited resources, such as assistive technology and sensory-friendly spaces, were noted as primary obstacles. Overcrowded classrooms hinder individualized attention, a finding consistent with earlier work by Kurth and Keegan (2014). Recent studies, such as De Boer et al. (2020), highlight that insufficient resources exacerbate disparities, underscoring the need for systemic investment in inclusive education infrastructure. Teachers also reported insufficient training and preparation, with limited access to professional development opportunities. Giangreco's (2011) research on the importance of specialized training remains relevant, and recent findings by Florian et al. (2021) emphasize ongoing professional development as a critical enabler of inclusive practices. Furthermore, behavioural and social challenges, particularly those associated with ADHD and other emotional needs, were significant barriers to effective instruction. Garnett et al. (2019) stress that behavioural management is pivotal, a conclusion echoed by more recent studies like Wood et al. (2022), which advocate for integrating behavioural support frameworks in teacher training programs.

The findings underscore the importance of equipping teachers with resources, training, and support to implement inclusive education effectively. Investments in assistive technology, reduced class sizes, and sensory-friendly environments are critical to addressing infrastructure challenges. Professional development programs focusing on differentiated instruction, adaptive strategies, and behavioural management should be prioritized to build teachers' capacity to meet the needs of special needs students. Moreover, fostering

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collaboration among educators, parents, and support staff can create a more cohesive approach to inclusive education.

Integrating technology assistive devices and adaptive software inspires students with auditory, visual, and mobility impairments to surmount accessibility barriers. Fernández-Batanero et al. Technology is the critical factor to access and engage in inclusive education (2022), which supports personalized and blended instruction and provides more opportunities to be independent. For example, text-to-speech tools or interactive whiteboards can help promote participation for students who might otherwise find engaging more difficult.

These include peer tutoring, buddy systems, and cooperative learning, all of which encourage collaboration and enable students to learn from and with each other, thus promoting inclusivity. Most of all, these practices empower both academic performance and social integration of special needs students. Sharma and Loreman (2023) state that collaborative activities help reduce stigmas and build a safe environment where students feel valued.

One such situation is peer tutoring, where students with more excellent capabilities walk their peers through material they have already learned, reinforcing their understanding while helping others learn! At the same time, more structured activities, such as “Think-Pair-Share,” not only promote participation, but also help students clarify their thinking and build confidence and skills related to critical thinking.

The emergence of technology has revolutionized the inclusive education field by introducing devices that assist specific types of disabilities. For example, speech recognition software allows students with limited movement to communicate with others. Because students with autism or ADHD often need to remain focused, and structured information that is illustrated increases their comprehension (Liu et al., 2024), visual aids, such as digital storyboards or interactive simulations, are especially helpful when learning.

With such powerful strategies, practical training on differentiation and collaborative learning strategies should be embedded into the professional development program for teachers. Therefore, schools must focus on purchasing assistive technologies that fit these practices. Furthermore, policymakers must push for inclusiveness in frameworks that set aside monetary and other resources towards these pedagogical tools and methods so that no student is left behind.

Differentiated and collaborative instruction implemented with appropriate technology are crucial instructional practices supporting effective inclusive education. Teachers can implement these strategies to meet the needs of a variety of learners, create an environment of engagement, and provide a culture of inclusivity. The negative impact will be reversed in aggregate while not violating the standards of inclusiveness globally.

In conclusion, while differentiated and adaptive instructional practices are vital for inclusivity, systemic challenges such as large class sizes, limited resources, and insufficient training must be addressed to ensure equitable education for all students. Recent literature highlights that inclusive education success requires a multi-faceted approach, combining effective pedagogy with adequate support systems. Addressing these gaps can enhance the implementation of inclusive education, leading to better academic and social outcomes for students with special needs.

4.2. Challenges in Delivering Instruction to Special Needs Students in Inclusive Settings

Teachers in inclusive classrooms face numerous challenges that hinder effective instruction for special needs students. One significant issue is large class sizes and limited resources, such as inadequate assistive technology and the absence of sensory-friendly spaces. Overcrowded classrooms often limit teachers' ability to provide individualized attention, a critical component of special education. This finding aligns with Kurth and Keegan's (2014) observation that large class sizes negatively impact instructional quality for special needs students. Recent studies, such as De Boer et al. (2020), further highlight the persistent inequities caused by resource scarcity, calling for increased investments in inclusive education infrastructure to support both students and teachers.

Another major challenge is the lack of specialized training and preparation among teachers. Many educators reported insufficient professional development opportunities tailored to the needs of special education, leaving them underprepared to address diverse learner requirements. Giangreco (2011) emphasized the importance of training in building teachers’ competence and confidence. More recently, Florian et al. (2021) argued that sustained professional development focusing on inclusive practices is essential for

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equipping teachers with effective strategies. This gap underscores the urgent need for teacher training programs that integrate evidence-based approaches to special needs education.

Moreover, teachers face behavioral and social challenges, particularly when addressing the needs of students with ADHD and other emotional or behavioral disorders. Managing these needs requires specialized skills and support systems. Garnett et al. (2019) underscored the importance of behavioural management in ensuring success in inclusive settings. More recent research by Wood et al. (2022) highlights the value of incorporating positive behavioral interventions and support frameworks in classroom settings, emphasizing the need for schools to prioritize such programs.

These findings suggest that systemic reforms are necessary to address teachers' challenges in inclusive classrooms. Policymakers and school administrators must work to reduce class sizes, enhance access to assistive technology, and create sensory-friendly environments to ensure inclusivity. Furthermore, sustained investments in professional development programs focusing on differentiated instruction, adaptive teaching strategies, and behavioural management are crucial to empowering teachers.

Inclusive education promises equitable learning opportunities for all students, but its implementation often confronts significant challenges. Large class sizes were consistently highlighted as a barrier. Overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention to students with special needs. For example, managing 45–50 students, including those with disabilities, strains teachers' capacity to cater to diverse learning requirements (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022). Limited resources, such as insufficient assistive technologies, sensory-friendly spaces, and appropriate learning materials, exacerbate these difficulties. These inadequacies hinder teachers' ability to create an optimal learning environment.

Behavioural challenges, particularly with students exhibiting conditions like ADHD, add another layer of complexity. Such students often require personalized interventions and consistent behaviour management strategies to thrive in inclusive classrooms (Liu et al., 2024). Teachers may struggle to implement effective approaches to address these needs without adequate training. Moreover, the lack of specialized training was a recurring theme. Many teachers reported that their professional development opportunities are not focused on inclusive practices, leaving them underprepared to manage diverse learning needs.

Addressing these challenges requires systemic reform. Reducing class sizes should be a priority, as lower student-to-teacher ratios enable more personalized and practical teaching (Sharma & Loreman, 2023). Policymakers must allocate resources for assistive technologies and infrastructure enhancements, including sensory-friendly classroom designs. Furthermore, professional development tailored to inclusive practices is crucial. Training programs should focus on behaviour management, adaptive teaching strategies, and assistive technology (Alkahtani, 2023).

Studies support these implications. Chen et al. (2021) found that teachers trained in inclusive methodologies report greater confidence and effectiveness in managing diverse classrooms. Similarly, Alkahtani (2023) demonstrated that behavioral training equips educators to better support students with ADHD and similar challenges, fostering improved classroom dynamics and learning outcomes.

The challenges teachers face in inclusive settings underscores the urgent need for comprehensive systemic support. Smaller class sizes, resource allocation, and specialized training are essential to a robust, inclusive education framework. By addressing these areas, schools can empower teachers to meet the needs of all learners, promoting equity and quality education for students with and without disabilities. This aligns with global educational goals, including the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), which emphasizes inclusivity as a cornerstone of educational excellence.

In conclusion, while inclusive education provides opportunities for special needs students to thrive alongside their peers, its success is contingent on addressing significant challenges. Schools can create more effective and equitable learning environments by improving infrastructure, providing specialized training, and offering behavioural support systems. These reforms will support teachers and enhance academic and social outcomes for special needs students in inclusive settings.

4.3. Addressing Challenges in Instructing Special Needs Students in Inclusive Settings

Teachers employ various strategies to address the challenges of instructing special needs students in inclusive classrooms, demonstrating adaptability and commitment to fostering inclusive education. One key approach is collaboration with specialists and peers. Educators work closely with special education (SPED) teachers, therapists, and colleagues to share strategies, resources, and expertise. Collaborative practices

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enhance instructional quality and student outcomes, as noted by Solis et al. (2012). More recent research by Sharma et al. (2021) reinforces this, highlighting that interdisciplinary collaboration supports teachers in managing the complexities of inclusive education while promoting positive academic and social outcomes for students.

Another strategy is teachers' extra effort in resource development, where they create or research instructional materials, attend workshops, and actively seek additional resources to address the gaps in available support. This proactive approach bridges resource deficits and enhances teachers' sense of self-efficacy, as Hattie (2012) supports. Recent studies, such as those by Putri and Santoso (2021), emphasize the value of teacher-initiated resource development in improving instructional effectiveness, particularly in resource-constrained environments.

Teachers also employ remediation and behaviour management strategies to address learning gaps and maintain a conducive classroom environment. Remediation sessions conducted after class help students reinforce their understanding of lessons, while behavioural interventions ensure classroom order and support students' emotional needs. Research by Simpson et al. (2014) underscores the importance of these practices in fostering an inclusive and productive learning atmosphere. Additionally, contemporary studies by Papoutsaki et. al. (2022) emphasizes the effectiveness of evidence-based behavioural management frameworks in reducing classroom disruptions and promoting student engagement.

The findings highlight systemic support's importance in complementing teachers' efforts in addressing challenges in inclusive settings. Schools and policymakers should prioritize the development of structured collaboration frameworks that facilitate partnerships between general and special education teachers, therapists, and other specialists. Providing access to professional development opportunities and resources for material creation can further empower teachers to deliver effective instruction. Additionally, incorporating evidence-based behavioral management strategies into teacher training programs can enhance educators' ability to create inclusive learning environments.

Teachers in inclusive classrooms face numerous challenges, but they adopt various proactive strategies to bridge the gaps and improve outcomes for students with diverse needs. Collaborating with specialists emerged as a key approach. General education teachers often sought guidance from SPED educators, therapists, and school counsellors to enhance their teaching strategies and address complex behavioural and academic challenges. This collaboration provided teachers with tailored interventions and insights into effective instructional practices (Chen et al., 2021).

Another significant strategy was resource development. In response to limited institutional support, teachers invested time and effort into creating customized materials and integrating technology to meet the needs of their students. For instance, developing visual aids, using digital resources, and modifying existing lesson plans were common practices. Research by Liu et al. (2024) highlights that teachers who engage in resource development improve student outcomes and gain a deeper understanding of their students' needs.

Remediation sessions and behaviour management techniques were frequently employed to address learning gaps and social challenges. These sessions allowed teachers to support students struggling with the curriculum. Behaviour management strategies, such as positive reinforcement and clear behavioural expectations, helped maintain a conducive learning environment for all students.

Institutionalizing co-teaching models can significantly enhance collaboration between general education and SPED teachers. Co-teaching allows for shared expertise, differentiated instruction, and better student engagement. According to Lee and Kim (2023), co-teaching improves academic outcomes for students with special needs and boosts teacher satisfaction by reducing the workload and fostering professional growth.

Schools should also invest in professional learning communities (PLCs) that encourage teacher resource-sharing. These communities provide a platform for educators to discuss challenges, share strategies, and collaboratively develop solutions. Technology integration is another area requiring attention; equipping classrooms with assistive devices can empower teachers to implement differentiated instruction effectively.

Proactive strategies such as collaboration, resource development, and targeted remediation sessions enable teachers to navigate the challenges of inclusive education. These approaches are particularly impactful when supported by institutional frameworks like co-teaching and PLCs. By fostering a collaborative culture and providing access to essential resources, schools can enhance educational outcomes for all learners. Ultimately, these strategies reflect a commitment to inclusivity, aligning with the global imperative of ensuring equitable and quality education for every student.

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4.4. The Role of the School Environment in Supporting Instructional Practices for Special Needs Students

The school environment significantly influences the effectiveness of instructional practices for special needs students. One prominent barrier is limited institutional support, which manifests in inadequate funding, overcrowded classrooms, and the lack of sensory-friendly spaces. These challenges impede teachers' ability to implement inclusive practices effectively. Florian (2014) emphasized the critical role of institutional support in fostering inclusivity. Recent studies, such as those by Abdulrahman et al. (2021), reaffirm that insufficient resources and overcrowding disproportionately affect special needs students, highlighting the need for targeted investments in school infrastructure and teaching aids.

Conversely, schools with collaborative support systems create a more conducive environment for inclusive education. Institutions that prioritize teamwork among teachers, administrators, and support staff foster better instructional practices. For example, providing basic accommodations like improved lighting or ergonomic classroom layouts can enhance the learning experience for students with sensory needs. Solis et al. (2012) stressed the positive impact of collaboration on teacher and student outcomes. More recent research by Hornby and Hall (2022) highlights that schools with well-structured collaboration frameworks and adequate accommodations see improved teacher morale and student engagement.

These results underscore the dual nature of the school environment's role—it can either hinder or enhance inclusive practices. To address limitations, school administrators and policymakers must prioritize funding for inclusive education to alleviate overcrowding, equip classrooms with sensory-friendly features, and provide necessary teaching resources. Schools should also cultivate a culture of collaboration by creating interdisciplinary teams and offering professional development programs that emphasize teamwork and shared responsibility for special needs students' success.

A supportive school environment was mentioned as a crucial factor in allowing teachers to enact effective inclusive practices. Yet a lack of funding and overcrowded classrooms was among the biggest barriers, teachers explained, making it impossible to provide the individualized instruction that students with disabilities need. Furthermore, inadequate sensory-friendly facilities and basic accommodations made it impossible for them to assist students with specific needs (e.g., autism or sensory processing disorder). Alternatively, schools that adopted collaborative structures, including Learning Action Cells (LACs), and offered basic accommodations, including improved classroom lighting and quieter spaces, improved the support system for both teachers and students (Avramidis & Norwich, 2021).

Schools should also focus on providing QA inclusively by providing adequate funding for devices like sensory-friendly spaces, assistive technology, and specialized instructional materials. The Common Core State Standards initiative has spurred the creation of collaborative frameworks, like professional learning communities (PLCs) that can support teachers in exchanging resources and designing strong instructional approaches. Setting up these empathetic schools can create an esprit de corps around teaching that serves students in the long run.

The school atmosphere is an important factor in the success of inclusive education. Teachers must be equipped with these vital resources and have conducive support systems in place through professional learning communities to adequately teach and support students with disabilities. Schools that provide such an environment are creating an inclusive and effective education.

Thus, the type of school environment is an instrumental factor in determining the effectiveness of teaching practices for children with special needs. Although institutional barriers are limiting, low-hanging fruit solutions such as collaborative publishing and the right accommodations do propel education. If schools fill resource gaps and cultivate collaborative frameworks, both teachers and students can thrive in inclusive settings.

4.5. Proposed Enhanced Individualized Instruction (IEI) Strategies Plan

An Enhanced Individualized Instruction (IEI) strategy plan is proposed to address the diverse needs of special needs students effectively, focusing on professional development, infrastructure, parental involvement, and collaboration.

Professional development and training for teachers are essential in equipping them with the skills to implement differentiated instruction, utilize assistive technologies, and manage diverse behaviours effectively. Gianfranco (2011) emphasized that ongoing professional development is pivotal for inclusive teaching. Recent studies, such as those by Asad et al. (2021), stress the importance of providing continuous, targeted

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training that aligns with modern, inclusive education demands. Programs focusing on pedagogical and technological competencies will empower teachers to adapt their instruction to meet varied learner needs.

Infrastructure and resource enhancement also play a crucial role in supporting individualized instruction. Recommendations include providing assistive technology, sensory-friendly classrooms, and smaller class sizes to ensure students receive tailored attention. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) highlighted the importance of adequate resources for individualized learning. A recent study by Abdulrahman et al. (2021) further emphasizes that access to inclusive infrastructure directly impacts student engagement and academic success. Addressing these needs will create an environment conducive to personalized learning.

Parent and community engagement is another key component of the IEI strategies plan. Actively involving parents in developing and monitoring Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and leveraging community resources can enhance the support system for special needs learners. Epstein (2018) demonstrated that parental involvement improves students' academic and social outcomes. More recently, Tamtik and Guenter (2022) highlighted that fostering strong home-school partnerships strengthens the educational framework, benefiting all stakeholders.

Collaboration and peer learning further enhance the inclusive educational experience. Co-teaching models, peer interaction, and collaborative teaching strategies promote inclusivity and improve student engagement and academic outcomes. Murawski and Swanson (2001) demonstrated the effectiveness of collaborative models, and more recent research by Sokal and Sharma (2021) reaffirms the value of peer-assisted learning in fostering both academic and social integration for students with special needs.

4.6. Interpretation and Implications

The findings propose that an effective IEI strategies plan requires a multifaceted approach that integrates teacher training, resource availability, stakeholder engagement, and collaborative practices. Schools should invest in professional development programs that are context-specific and focus on inclusive methodologies. Furthermore, improving classroom infrastructure and reducing class sizes will create more opportunities for individualized attention. Strengthening partnerships with parents and communities can also extend the support network for special needs students beyond the classroom.

In this paper, the strategies proposed to ensure Individualized Instruction (IEI) in inclusive classrooms include specialized teacher training, better infrastructure, parents' engagement, and collaborative teaching model usage. Teachers stressed the need for professional development programs explicitly designed to teach staff working with students with disabilities. This would help educators to be more accommodating toward the unique challenges faced by students with special needs (Liu et al., 2024) by including training on differentiated instruction, assistive technology, and behavioural management strategies in these programs.

Infrastructure improvements (e.g., sensory-friendly classrooms, assistive technology, and flexible classroom designs) were also recognized as important in helping make a measurable impact on developing an inclusive environment. Teachers asserted that access to such resources has the potential to dramatically improve their ability to provide individualized instruction (Tomlinson, 2022). Also emphasized was involving parents in developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The involvement of parents ensures that one can closely have an eye on the learning objectives and how they are by students' needs and family context, supporting a holistic way of learning (Smith & Smith, 2023). In addition, collaborative teaching models were recommended whereby general education and special education teachers work together in the same room (Lee & Kim, 2023).

The results indicate several important areas for policy and school improvement. By investing in these teacher career development programs, focusing on inclusive education practices, like differentiated education, behavioural management, and integrated assistive technology policies. As Liu et al. With data going up to October 2023 (2024), teachers having the tools and knowledge to provide effective individualized instruction through such investments can make substantial differences to O outcomes for special needs students. Moreover, assistive technologies (such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, and augmentative and alternative communication devices) are also fundamental for students with disabilities to access the curriculum (Katz & Davey, 2022).

Creating structured parent and community engagement opportunities is also necessary for parent and community involvement in the educational process, such as participating in IEP formation and communicating with teachers. Aligning home and school can allow for some focus on achievement, making students feel like

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editors at home and in the classroom. Lastly, facilitating a collaborative culture in schools' systems by executing a co-teaching model in systems, team-based systematic problem-solving can serve as a prerequisite for teacher support around the needs of all students.

In rich and varied contexts, these recommendations for open-ended and holistic ways forward for Individualized Instruction in inclusive classrooms can reflect some of the best global thinking in the field and thus have strong potential to help account for current gaps in provision. Investing in teacher training, improving infrastructure, engaging parents, and promoting collaborative teaching models can all contribute to creating an environment where all students can thrive, regardless of their abilities. Such work is essential not only to cater to the diverse academic needs of students with disabilities but also to build a more inclusive school culture more broadly.

Adopting these approaches can help close the gaps in inclusive education and work toward providing all students with a high-quality education that meets their individual needs.

Hence, the study on inclusive education in special needs classrooms highlights the effective instructional practices, the challenges that teachers face, and the strategies they employ to navigate these obstacles. The findings demonstrate that differentiated instruction and collaborative teaching are fundamental to meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Teachers rely on tools like peer tutoring, graphic organizers, and assistive technology to foster inclusion and engagement, aligning with recent studies that emphasize the importance of these methods in creating accessible learning environments (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022; Sharma & Loreman, 2023). These practices enable teachers to offer personalized support and ensure that all students can participate in meaningful learning experiences regardless of their abilities.

However, the study also reveals significant challenges, including large class sizes, limited resources, and a lack of specialized training. These barriers prevent teachers from providing individualized attention and effectively managing the behavioural and emotional needs of students, especially those with ADHD and other developmental disabilities. These findings echo those of Alkahtani (2023) and Chen et al. (2021), who highlight the negative impact of inadequate resources and professional development on teachers' ability to address the diverse needs of students in inclusive settings.

The study suggests several strategies to mitigate these challenges, such as collaboration with specialists, resource development, and remediation sessions. These approaches allow teachers to overcome the limitations of overcrowded classrooms and insufficient training. Promoting co-teaching models and peer interaction has also improved academic outcomes and teacher satisfaction (Lee & Kim, 2023). Schools must also create inclusive environments by providing sensory-friendly spaces, reducing student-teacher ratios, and investing in assistive technologies. The importance of a well-supported school environment in fostering inclusive education is supported by studies such as Avramidis and Norwich (2021), which underscores the need for adequate resources and collaborative frameworks to ensure teachers, can effectively support students with special needs.

Furthermore, the proposed Enhanced Individualized Instruction (IEI) strategies align with best practices in inclusive education, including specialized teacher training, better infrastructure, parental involvement, and collaborative teaching models. These strategies emphasize the need for a holistic approach to student support, ensuring teachers have the tools, resources, and knowledge required to deliver high-quality, individualized instruction (Liu et al., 2024). Implementing these strategies is essential for addressing the current gaps in inclusive education, promoting a culture of collaboration, and ensuring that all students, regardless of their abilities, have access to equitable learning opportunities.

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of systemic support for teachers and the adequate provision of resources to ensure the success of inclusive education. By addressing the challenges teachers face and providing them with the necessary support, schools can foster an inclusive educational culture that benefits all students. This comprehensive approach to inclusive education is crucial for meeting the needs of students with disabilities and promoting equitable educational opportunities for all learners.

5. Conclusion

Teachers in inclusive classrooms effectively employed differentiated and collaborative instructional methods, such as peer tutoring, buddy systems, and the use of assistive technology, to address diverse learning needs and empower students. Despite these efforts, systemic gaps, including overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and insufficient institutional support, hindered the full potential of these strategies. Challenges like

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inadequate training, behavioral difficulties, and resource shortages impeded individualized instruction, though teachers demonstrated resilience by collaborating with specialists, developing resources, and using remediation and behavior management strategies. The role of the school environment proved critical, with collaborative frameworks and resource-sharing systems enhancing teacher efficacy in schools that adopted them. To address these issues, teachers proposed an Enhanced Individualized Instruction (IEI) Plan emphasizing professional development, resource allocation, parental engagement, and collaborative teaching models, aligning with best practices to foster inclusivity and improve outcomes for all learners.

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