

Assessment of Teachers' Skills in Handling an Inclusive Classroom and Performance of Learners with Varied Learning Needs

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Abstract

This study on teachers' self-assessment of skills in handling inclusive classrooms and learners with varied needs aimed to evaluate the relationship between teachers perceived pedagogical skills and student performance in Southern Negros Occidental. The research employed a descriptive-correlational design, including fifty-six (56) teachers selected through simple and stratified random sampling. A validated 10-item self-assessment questionnaire measured teachers' skills in differentiated instruction, classroom management, and inclusive strategies, while student performance was taken from secondary data. The reliability test conducted among 15 teachers generated an excellent result using Cronbach's Alpha. Data analysis utilized mean, standard deviation, and Spearman Rho correlation. Results indicated that teachers rated their skills in handling inclusive classrooms as very high across all domains. Learners with varied needs also performed very satisfactorily. A significant positive correlation was found between the use of collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies and learner performance, suggesting that effective pedagogical support directly influenced student outcomes. The findings underscored teachers' high self-efficacy in inclusive education, which contributed to improved learner performance. The study concluded that fostering teachers' competencies in inclusive practices positively impacted student achievement, emphasizing the importance of professional development and collaborative teaching frameworks. Based on these findings, it was recommended that district supervisors support ongoing training, teachers maintain and refine inclusive strategies, and parents actively participate in supporting learners. Additionally, learners with diverse needs should continue to receive tailored support to ensure their full participation and academic success in inclusive settings.

Keywords: Collaborative Teaching; Differentiated Instruction; Inclusive Classroom; Learner Performance; Teacher Assessment; Varied Learning Needs

1. Introduction

Inclusive education necessitates a paradigm shift in pedagogical approaches, where teachers are expected to accommodate the diverse learning needs of all students within a unified classroom setting. The proficiency of educators in implementing differentiated instruction is critical, as a teacher's ability to adapt curricula often serves as a primary determinant of student engagement and academic success (Abuda et al., 2025). Consequently, investigating whether these pedagogical competencies directly correlate with learner outcomes remains a vital area of research (Galanida, 2026a, 2026b). In Southern Negros Occidental, understanding this relationship is essential for addressing local pedagogical challenges and enhancing the quality of support provided to learners with diverse backgrounds (Abiera & Amor, 2026). Teacher preparedness is also important in successful educational reform, particularly in examining how self-assessed pedagogical skills influence academic performance (Saulon & Espiritu, 2025), (Reyes et al., 2025) and the interplay between instructional self-efficacy and student achievement (G, 2026a, 2026b). Examining the alignment between educators' instructional confidence and measurable student outcomes may identify potential gaps in current pedagogical practices (G, 2026), since translating instructional competencies into tangible academic gains for diverse learners remains complex and multi-faceted (Rondina, 2026). Pedagogical adaptability and a supportive classroom climate are likewise essential for equitable learning (Al-Mansoori & Moretti, 2025), making it important to examine whether proficiency in inclusive strategies manifests as improved academic attainment (Manalo, 2024).

Effective inclusive education relies heavily on educators' self-efficacy, positive attitudes, and pedagogical preparedness when managing diverse classrooms. Professional development initiatives can influence teachers' beliefs regarding students with challenging behaviors and encourage engaging adaptations (Aas et al., 2023). Positive teacher attitudes combined with continuous training also predict the successful adoption of inclusive teaching practices (Alhassan, 2024). However, limited planning time and high-class sizes remain challenges in fully embedding inclusive frameworks (Ballesteros, 2026). Managing heterogeneous classrooms also requires continuous resilience and localized support (Hermosa, 2026), while overcoming systemic barriers requires integrated professional preparation, strong administrative backing, and multi-tiered resource systems (Kamenopoulou, 2024). Differentiated instruction serves as a core pedagogical framework for meeting varied student capacities through adjustments in content, process, and learning products. Equity, diversity, and inclusion strategies can enhance teachers' ability to plan and implement differentiated curricula (Estaiteyeh & DeCoito, 2023), while institutional leadership and targeted professional development help educators implement more complex process and product modifications (Gibbs, 2025). Differentiated instruction allows teachers to respond to individual readiness levels and provide tailored scaffolding without lowering academic standards (Nketsia, 2025). Multi-modal instructional formats, including hands-on exploration, graphic organizers, and scaffolded assignments, can also boost student motivation (Naanep, 2025), while digital tools and game-based learning scaffolds facilitate individualized pacing (Sun et al., 2023).

Managing inclusive environments requires balanced strategies that maintain order while sustaining student motivation and participation. Structured programs, small-group reassignments, and multi-modal instructional formats can help manage diverse classroom behavior while improving student engagement (Rubio, 2023). Active learning strategies and visual aids can further support students' cognitive and emotional needs (Ballesteros, 2026). Supportive school climates and proactive behavioral management are also associated with sustained student involvement (Cambay & Paglinawan, 2024), while positive behavioral interventions, flexible assignment extensions, and student-centered routines can help create inclusive learning environments (Ruesch & Sarvary, 2023). Collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies also influence learning outcomes for students with varied needs. Structured teacher collaboration can result in broader implementation of differentiated practices (Pozas & LetzelAlt, 2023), while differentiated instruction in multigrade and inclusive settings has shown positive effects on reading abilities, mathematical comprehension, and overall task performance (Abao, 2026; Estaiteyeh & DeCoito, 2023). Synchronized planning, shared instruction, and joint assessments can improve the academic and social development of children with disabilities (Carlson, 2025). Collaboration extending beyond teachers to include parents, specialists, and community networks can also create stronger support systems for learners (Devi & Mondal, 2025).

Despite the importance of these inclusive practices, the translation of teachers' competencies into tangible academic gains remains complex (Rondina, 2026). Thus, this study focused on teachers' assessment of their skills in handling an inclusive classroom in terms of differentiated instruction, classroom management and engagement, and collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies, as well as the performance of learners with varied learning needs and the relationship between these variables. The study is aligned with SDG 4 – Quality Education through its focus on inclusive and equitable learning opportunities. It also contributes to educational and institutional sustainability by emphasizing inclusive teaching practices, professional preparation, collaboration, and continued support for learners with varied learning needs.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative method and a descriptive-correlational type of research design. The descriptive type focused on teachers' assessment of their skills in handling an inclusive classroom, such as differentiated instruction skills, classroom management and engagement, and collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in one of the Districts in the Division of Sipalay City, Negros Occidental.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were fifty-six (56) teachers from one district in the Division of Sipalay City, Negros Occidental who were currently teaching in inclusive classrooms. The sample consisted of teachers handling inclusive classrooms based on their tagging in the Learners' Information System.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The researcher made use of simple and stratified random sampling techniques to determine the sample respondents based on the actual population in one district in Southern Negros. Out of 65 identified teachers handling inclusive classrooms, 56 were taken as the sample size of the study.

2.5 Research Instrument

The validated instrument was composed of 10-item questions about teachers' self-assessment based on the skills in handling inclusive classrooms in terms of differentiated instruction skills, classroom management and engagement, and collaborative and inclusive teaching. The scale used was 5 as strongly agree (very high), 4 as agree (high), 3 as moderate (neutral), 2 as disagree (low) and 1 as strongly disagree (very low).

The researcher used the validity tool by Good and Scates, and the rating obtained was 4.21, which was interpreted as very valid. On the other hand, reliability was conducted in other schools not included as the actual respondents of the study. Cronbach's Alpha was used by the researcher to determine the reliability rating obtained, which was .92, which was interpreted as excellent.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought approval from all offices and asked permission to conduct the study with teachers in selected schools in one of the districts in Southern Negros. Then, the researcher reproduced the research instrument and ensured that each respondent has 1:1 ratio to the questionnaire. The researcher also personally administered the questionnaire to ensure 100% retrieval of the instrument. Lastly, the data gathered were encoded, tabulated, and analyzed to answer the specific problems. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage count distribution, mean and standard deviation, and Spearman Rho.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the extent of teachers' assessed skills in handling inclusive classrooms. Scores from 4.21–5.00 were interpreted as very high, 3.41–4.20 as high, 2.61–3.40 as neutral, 1.81–2.60 as low, and 1.00–1.80 as very low. Learner performance was also analyzed using mean and standard deviation, with grades of 90–100 classified as Outstanding, 85–89 as Very Satisfactory, 80–84 as Satisfactory, 75–79 as Fairly Satisfactory, and below 75 as Did Not Meet Expectations. Spearman Rho was used to determine the significant relationship between teachers' assessed skills in handling inclusive classrooms and the performance of learners with varied learning needs.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Strict ethical measures were taken throughout the research process. The researcher presented ethical permission to the district supervisor, school heads, and teacher respondents for the conduct of the study. All respondents were informed from the onset of the research that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point, without penalty. To obtain informed consent, respondents expressed their voluntary participation in the survey; they were not promised any remuneration or anything with monetary value in exchange for their participation. To ensure participant validation or member checking, the researcher asked about the accuracy or precision of the statement and the corresponding participation, considering their responses. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, respondents and participants were assigned codes and fictitious names to hide their identity. Lastly, the respondents were informed that the data gathered was used for research purposes only and should be destroyed 3 months after the completion of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Teachers' Skills in Handling Inclusive Classrooms and Learner Performance

3.1.1 Teachers' Skills in Handling Inclusive Classrooms

Teachers assessed their skills in handling inclusive classrooms as very high across all areas. Classroom management and engagement obtained the highest mean of 4.377 ($SD = .369$), followed by collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies with a mean of 4.364 ($SD = .349$), and differentiated instruction with a mean of 4.316 ($SD = .382$). These findings indicate that teachers perceived themselves as highly capable of addressing the varied learning needs of their pupils. The findings suggest that teachers possessed high confidence in implementing adaptive teaching methods, managing learning environments, and engaging diverse learners. According to Woodcock et al. (2023), teachers possessing elevated self-efficacy in inclusive domains display greater competence and confidence in implementing adaptive teaching methods, maintaining well-structured learning environments, and engaging heterogeneous student cohorts. Furthermore, empirical findings by Pozas et al. (2025) highlight that high levels of teacher self-efficacy strongly predict the systematic adoption of differentiated instruction, as educators feel empowered to adjust task complexity and delivery modes to match individual readiness levels. Modern evidence by Shuakbayeva et al. (2025) underscores that robust self-efficacy across classroom management and collaborative practices fosters a resilient classroom culture where diverse academic, social, and behavioral needs are effectively addressed without compromising instructional flow.

3.1.2 Performance of Learners with Varied Learning Needs

Learners with varied learning needs obtained a mean performance score of 88.39 with a standard deviation of 3.730, interpreted as Very Satisfactory. The result indicates that learners with varied learning needs demonstrated favorable academic performance within the inclusive learning environment. The finding suggests that the instructional strategies, differentiated interventions, and inclusive learning environments implemented were effective in supporting diverse student capabilities. According to Melesse and Belay (2022), customizing instructional components such as process, content, and learning environment significantly enhances cognitive engagement and academic achievements across heterogeneous student populations. Expanding on this, research by Özüdoğru (2022) confirmed that flexible pedagogical approaches and differentiated learning frameworks yield consistently strong performance outcomes and narrow achievement gaps among students with specialized needs. Most recently, empirical evaluations conducted by Kavut (2024) demonstrated that implementing structured inclusive strategies not only elevates overall academic metrics but also fosters high-performance stability, as evidenced by low variance in student output.

3.2 Relationship Between Teachers' Inclusive Classroom Skills and Learner Performance

The analysis showed that differentiated instruction had a correlation coefficient of .117 with a p-value of .392, while classroom management and engagement had a correlation coefficient of .111 with a p-value of .416; both relationships were not significant. In contrast, collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies had a correlation coefficient of .771 and a p-value of .040, indicating a significant relationship with the performance of learners with varied learning needs. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected only for collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies. The significant relationship suggests that learner performance was positively associated with collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies. Recent empirical work by Bondie et al. (2022) demonstrated that implementing tailored, flexible pedagogical models directly elevates academic engagement and skill retention among learners with diverse educational profiles. Expanding upon this, systematic evidence provided by Mader and colleagues (2024) revealed that co-teaching frameworks and peer-assisted learning mechanisms consistently produce a strong, positive association with overall academic gains, as joint instructional planning enables educators to meet varied learning paces and styles more effectively. Most recently, research conducted by Wang (2026) reinforced these findings, showing that structured collaborative environments significantly optimize academic interventions and reduce achievement gaps among students with specialized requirements.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that teachers demonstrated very high levels of perceived competence in differentiated instruction, classroom management and engagement, and collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies, while learners with varied learning needs achieved very satisfactory academic performance. Among the assessed teaching skills, only collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies showed a significant positive relationship with learner performance, emphasizing the importance of collaborative approaches in creating an effective and supportive inclusive learning environment.

District supervisors, teachers, parents, and learners with varied learning needs should continue collaborating to promote inclusive and collaborative teaching strategies. District supervisors should support professional development that reinforces teachers' skills in differentiated instruction, classroom management, and inclusive practices, while teachers should maintain and refine these strategies. Parents should remain actively involved in

supporting inclusive learning at home and in school, and learners with varied needs should continue receiving appropriate support and opportunities for full participation in inclusive classrooms.

The study was limited to 56 teachers handling inclusive classrooms from one district in Southern Negros Occidental, selected from 65 identified teachers based on their tagging in the Learners' Information System. Teachers' inclusive classroom skills were measured through self-assessment, while the study focused specifically on differentiated instruction, classroom management and engagement, and collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies in relation to learner performance. The original manuscript does not provide a separate limitations section; therefore, this paragraph reflects only limitations directly evident from the stated scope and methodology and does not introduce additional limitations.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflict of interest. No external funding was reported for this study. The researchers acknowledge the district supervisor, school heads, and teacher respondents from the participating schools in Southern Negros Occidental; participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and data were collected using non-invasive survey methods. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of codes and fictitious names, with no identifying information disclosed.

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