



AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION LEARNERS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF ZAMBOANGUITA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the level of inclusive assessment practices of teacher-respondents and examine the significant relationship between these practices and the challenges encountered in assessing learners with special needs education (SNEd) learners. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, specifically a descriptive-correlational design for the quantitative component and thematic analysis for the qualitative component. Quantitative data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire and analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and correlation analysis. Qualitative data were gathered through open-ended responses and analyzed to identify emerging themes related to the challenges experienced by the teacher-respondents. The findings in the quantitative study revealed that the teacher-respondents were predominantly female, with an average age of 41.8 years, moderate teaching experience, and limited formal training in SNEd. The results showed a high level of inclusive assessment practices across planning, implementation, documentation, and feedback. Qualitative study findings identified major challenges encountered by teachers, including structural and resource constraints, time and workload pressures, learner diversity and communication barriers, gaps in training and assessment competence, and concerns regarding the validity and fairness of assessment. Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated adaptive practices such as collaboration, modification of materials, and use of technology, although they emphasized the need for stronger systemic support. In conclusion, while teachers demonstrate a high level of inclusive assessment practices, the presence of both systemic and professional challenges underscores the need for

targeted professional development, adequate resources, and sustained institutional support to enhance inclusive assessment for learners with special educational needs.

Keywords: *challenges, inclusive education, Special Needs Education (SNEd), assessment practices*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a worldwide priority in the quest for equitable and quality access to education for all, including those with special educational needs (SNEd). This has been reinforced by the need for the education system to adapt and accommodate diverse learning needs, which are catered for in the classroom (Krischler, Powell, & Pit-Ten Cate, 2019). Despite the growing worldwide commitment to the implementation of inclusive education, many countries face challenges in the effective implementation of inclusive education. According to the study of Atanasova and Papen (2025), there are still many implementation issues being encountered in various schools in Southeast Asia, which necessitate the assessment and improvement of inclusive education programs to ensure that students with special educational needs are provided with the necessary support for their development. These include teacher training, learning resources, and the availability of specialized services, as well as the challenge of catering for diverse learning needs in the classroom (Namanyane & Shaoan, 2021). This has created a significant concern in the gap between inclusive education and its implementation in the classroom.

At the national and local levels, the Philippines has adopted inclusive education as an integral part of its education system through various policies that provide equal learning opportunities to all learners, including those with disabilities and other special educational needs (Dep. Ed. Order No. 21, s. 2019; R.A. No. 11650, 2022). Despite various efforts to promote inclusive education at all levels of education, there have been problems with its implementation at many public elementary schools, especially in rural and developing districts. At the elementary schools of Zamboanguita District, there is an increasing number of learners with diverse needs in regular classrooms. There is concern about providing appropriate learning strategies and materials to effectively respond to the educational needs of learners (Oswal, et.al, 2025).

Although there are already various studies that have attempted to examine and explore inclusive education in relation to the broader context of education, there is still little research available on the assessment of inclusive education practices at the district level, specifically in elementary schools within Zamboanguita District. This is another reason why there is still a need to conduct localized studies to examine the status of the implementation of inclusive education, as well as to identify and determine areas that need improvement (Avramidis & Norwich, 2022).

Therefore, this study was carried out with the objective of evaluating the practice of inclusive education among learners with special educational needs in the elementary schools of Zamboanguita District. The findings of this research study are hoped to

generate valuable insights that may be instrumental in improving the practice of inclusive education among learners with special educational needs. Therefore, this study is hoped to make a positive contribution to improving inclusive education practices in elementary schools to enable all learners to realize their full potential.

Research Questions

This study aimed to assess the inclusive assessment practices of teachers handling Special Needs Education (SNEd) learners in the elementary schools of Zamboanguita District. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teacher-respondents handling Special Needs Education in terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 sex;
 - 1.3 educational attainment;
 - 1.4 SPED specialization or relevant training;
 - 1.5 teaching experience;
 - 1.6 years of experience in teaching SNEd learners;
 - 1.7 grade level handled;
 - 1.8 academic workload;
 - 1.9 class size; and
 - 1.10 types of exceptionalities/difficulties handled?
2. What is the level of inclusive assessment practices of teacher-respondents in Special Needs Education in terms of:
 - 2.1 assessment planning;
 - 2.2 assessment implementation;
 - 2.3 assessment documentation; and
 - 2.4 feedback?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the challenges encountered by teacher-respondents and their inclusive assessment practices in terms of:
 - 3.1 assessment planning;
 - 3.2 assessment implementation;
 - 3.3 assessment documentation; and
 - 3.4 feedback?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the teacher-respondents and their inclusive assessment practices?
5. What challenges do teachers encounter in assessing SNEd learners?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research study was conducted using a mixed-method research approach, specifically the descriptive-correlational method combined with the qualitative method, in

order to comprehensively investigate the inclusive assessment practices of teachers who handle Special Needs Education (SNEd) learners in public elementary schools in the Zamboanguita District, Division of Negros Oriental. This triangulated research approach was deemed appropriate as it enabled the researcher to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data, thereby providing a more complete understanding of the phenomenon being researched. The quantitative part of the study, which was based on the descriptive-correlational method, was used to describe and analyze the inclusive assessment practices of teachers who handle learners with special needs. The descriptive part of the method identified the profile of the teacher-respondents based on the following: age, sex, educational attainment, SNEd specialization or training, teaching experience, experience in handling SNEd learners, grade level handled, academic workload, class size, and exceptionalities of learners in the classroom. Moreover, it established the level of inclusive assessment practices of teachers in terms of assessment planning and implementation. The study also included a qualitative research design. This was done through the use of interviews with teacher-respondents to gain deeper insights into their experiences and the challenges they face when assessing learners with special educational needs. The results of the interviews were audio-recorded and analyzed to obtain deeper insights into the experiences of teachers when assessing learners with special educational needs.

By using a mixed research design, the study was able to not only describe the research problem and relationships between variables but also to gain deeper insights into the experiences of teachers when assessing learners with special educational needs. The use of a mixed research design helped to increase the validity of the study as the results can be triangulated to gain deeper insights into the research problem.

Research Environment

This study was conducted in Zamboanguita District, located in the municipality of Zamboanguita in Negros Oriental, Philippines. The municipality lies along the southeastern coast of Negros Island, approximately 28 kilometers south of Dumaguete City and is bounded by the municipalities of Dauin to the north and Siaton to the south, with coastal areas facing the island province of Siquijor. Zamboanguita is a fourth-class municipality composed of ten barangays, with a relatively 30, 000 people that reflects a close-knit rural community. The local economy is primarily based on fishing and agriculture. Many residents depend on marine resources for their livelihood, while others engage in farming activities such as the cultivation of rice, coconut, corn, and sugarcane. Small-scale businesses and local markets also contribute to the economic life of the community.

In terms of education, Zamboanguita is divided into two districts namely Zamboanguita Districts 1 and 2, which comprise several public elementary and secondary schools, and a few private institutions. These two districts provide a suitable research environment due to its rural setting, socio-economic characteristics, and educational conditions. It offers a meaningful context for examining educational practices, particularly in

relation to inclusivity, community engagement, and resource management in public schools.

Research Respondents

The respondents to the study included 78 teachers from the public elementary schools within the Zamboanguita District, Negros Oriental, who handles SNEd learners. The teachers play an important role in the effective implementation of inclusive education, especially in the assessment of learners with special needs. The data gathered from the survey questionnaire provided by the teachers served as the quantitative data, while the data gathered from the interviews provided qualitative data, which offered deeper insights into the challenges faced by the teachers in the assessment of SNEd learners.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a structured survey questionnaire to gather quantitative data on the inclusive assessment practices of teachers handling Special Needs Education (SNEd) learners. The instrument consisted of two parts: (1) the teachers' profile, including demographic and professional characteristics, and (2) their level of inclusive assessment practices in terms of planning, implementation, documentation, and feedback, measured using a five-point Likert scale. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in Special Education, Educational Measurement, and Educational Research, and revised accordingly. It was then pilot-tested among 16 teachers from Sibulan District to assess clarity and reliability, leading to further refinement. For the qualitative component, a semi-structured interview guide was used to explore the challenges teachers face in assessing SNEd learners. Responses were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using coding to identify themes and patterns, providing deeper insights into teachers' experiences.

Data Gathering Procedures

The study employed analytical triangulation by integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Prior to data collection, permission was secured from the Schools Division Office of Negros Oriental and school heads in Zamboanguita District. Teacher-respondents were oriented on the study's purpose, ethical considerations, and their rights, and informed consent was obtained.

Data collection was conducted from February to March 2026. Survey questionnaires were administered through video calls, physical distribution, and Google Forms to ensure accessibility. The researcher provided instructions and assistance to ensure accurate responses, while confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. For the qualitative phase, selected teachers participated in interviews conducted either face-to-face or virtually. Responses were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes. All collected data were securely stored and organized. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and correlational statistics, while

qualitative findings complemented the results by providing deeper insights into teachers' challenges. Ethical standards were observed throughout the study.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were systematically organized, coded, and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques to address the study objectives. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to quantitative data, while thematic analysis was used for qualitative data. To ensure credibility and depth of analysis, the study employed analytical triangulation by integrating statistical results with qualitative themes. Frequency count and percentage were used to describe the profile of the teacher-respondents, providing a clear overview of their demographic and professional characteristics. The weighted mean was utilized to determine the level of inclusive assessment practices in terms of planning, implementation, documentation, and feedback, based on a five-point Likert scale. To determine significant relationships between teachers' profiles and their assessment practices, Spearman's Rho and Fisher's Exact Test were employed. These inferential statistics measured the strength and direction of associations among variables. For the qualitative data, responses from interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, themes, and subthemes related to the challenges faced by teachers in assessing SNEd learners.

Overall, triangulation allowed the integration of quantitative trends and qualitative insights, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of inclusive assessment practices and the challenges encountered by teachers.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study evaluated the inclusive assessment practices of teachers handling Special Needs Education (SNEd) learners in public elementary schools in Zamboanguita District, Negros Oriental. It examined teachers' profiles and their practices in terms of planning, implementation, documentation, and feedback, as well as the relationship between these variables. A qualitative component was also included to explore the challenges teachers encounter in implementing inclusive assessment.

The study focused on selected teacher characteristics such as age, sex, educational attainment, training, teaching experience, workload, class size, and types of exceptionalities handled. It was limited to public elementary schools within the district during the 2024–2025 academic year, excluding private schools and other educational levels. Several limitations were noted. The small sample size may affect the generalizability of the findings, and limited access to assessment records restricted document analysis. Responses may have been influenced by social desirability and recall bias, while some subjectivity in qualitative interpretation was unavoidable. Additionally, time constraints and external factors such as scheduling, internet connectivity, and weather conditions affected data collection. Despite these limitations, the study provides meaningful insights into inclusive assessment practices and highlights the challenges faced by teachers, offering implications for professional development and policy improvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.1: Age Distribution of Teacher-Respondents Handling Special Needs Education

	N	Missing	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age	78	0	41.8	40	10.2	28	60

Table 1.1 shows that teacher-respondents have a mean age of 41.8 years, indicating a predominantly mid-career workforce with moderate variability. This suggests that inclusive assessment practices are largely carried out by experienced teachers who rely on accumulated knowledge and classroom experience, especially in a resource-constrained setting like Zamboanguita District.

However, the relatively high average age points to a potential gap in the entry and preparation of younger teachers in SNEd, resulting in a reliance on experiential learning rather than updated training. While experienced teachers demonstrate adaptability, they may have limited exposure to modern inclusive assessment strategies such as assistive technologies and data-driven approaches. Overall, the findings highlight the need for continuous professional development and stronger preparation of younger teachers to sustain and enhance inclusive assessment practices in the long term.

Table 1.2: Frequency Distribution of Sex Among Teacher-Respondents Handling Special Needs Education

Sex	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Female	69	88.50	88.50
Male	9	11.50	100.00

Table 1.2 reveals that 88.50% of the teacher-respondents are female, indicating a strong gender imbalance in handling SNEd learners. This reflects a common trend and suggests that inclusive practices may be shaped by care-oriented and relational teaching approaches, which support individualized attention and positive classroom environments.

However, the underrepresentation of male teachers limits diversity in teaching styles and perspectives, which are important in addressing varied learner needs. While female teachers contribute strong nurturing skills, inclusive assessment also requires technical competencies that must be supported through continuous professional development. Overall, the findings highlight the need for greater gender diversity and balanced workforce development to strengthen inclusive education practices.

Table 1.3: Frequency Distribution of the Educational Background of Teacher-Respondents Handling Special Needs Education

Educational Attainment	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Bachelor's Degree	32	41.00	41.00
Master's Degree	14	17.90	59.00
Bachelor's Degree with Education Units	29	37.20	96.20
EdD/PhD	2	2.60	98.70
Bachelor's Degree, MA/MS	1	1.30	100.00

Table 1.3 shows that most teacher-respondents hold undergraduate qualifications, with 41.0% having a Bachelor's Degree and 37.2% with additional education units, totaling 78.2%. Only a small proportion have graduate degrees, with 17.9% holding a Master's and 2.6% a Doctorate.

This indicates that teachers handling SNEd learners generally have basic professional preparation, but limited advanced specialization. As a result, inclusive assessment practices are largely grounded in general pedagogy rather than specialized training, which may affect the depth of strategies such as individualized assessment and data-driven feedback. Overall, the findings highlight a need for greater access to graduate studies and specialized training to strengthen teachers' capacity in inclusive education.

Table 1.4: Frequency distribution of the teacher respondents with relevant SNEd trainings handling special needs education

SNEd Specialization	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
No	70	89.70	89.70
Yes, SNEd-trained/certified	8	10.30	100.00

Table 1.4 shows that 89.7% of teacher-respondents have no Special Needs Education (SNEd) specialization, while only 10.3% are trained. This indicates that most teachers rely on general teaching experience rather than formal SNEd training.

The findings suggest a gap between the demand for inclusive education and the availability of trained teachers. Without specialized preparation, teachers may struggle with individualized assessment, instructional adaptation, and targeted feedback for learners with special needs. Overall, the results highlight the need for stronger and more accessible SNEd training programs to improve teachers' competence in implementing inclusive education effectively.

Table 1.5: Teaching Experience of Teachers Handling Special Needs Education

	N	Missing	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Teaching Experience	78	0	14.4	13	8.69	1	34

Table 1.5 shows that teacher-respondents have an average teaching experience of 14.4 years, with a median of 13 years and a range of 1 to 34 years, indicating a generally experienced workforce with moderate variability.

The findings suggest that experienced teachers dominate SNEd handling, which may positively influence inclusive education through stronger classroom management, confidence, and practical strategies. However, experience alone does not ensure expertise in inclusive assessment, especially without continuous training. Overall, the results highlight that while the district benefits from experienced teachers, there is still a need for ongoing professional development to align long-serving educators with updated inclusive education practices.

Table 1.6: Distribution of the Years of Experience in Teaching Special Needs Education

	N	Missing	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Years Handling SNEd learners	78	0	7.6	5.5	6.2	1	21

Table 1.6 shows the distribution of the experiences of the teachers in handling learners with special needs. The results show that the teachers have an average experience of 7.6 years in handling learners with special needs, a median of 5.5 years, and a standard deviation of 6.2 years. The range of the experiences of the teachers in handling the needs of the learners with special needs is from 1 year to 21 years.

The results have shown that the teachers have a lot of experience in teaching, but the experience of the teachers in handling the needs of the learners with special educational needs is moderate, averaging 7 years. Experience gained in teaching learners with special needs is another factor that affects teachers' effectiveness in implementing effective inclusive practices. Teachers who have worked for longer periods teaching learners with special needs are likely to gain insight into effective approaches for teaching learners with special needs. They are likely to gain experience and insight into effective approaches for designing learning activities that cater to learners' diverse learning abilities and encourage learners' effective participation in class activities. Fuego (2024) noted that teachers who have extensive experience teaching learners with special needs are likely to develop effective instructional adaptability and confidence in teaching learners with special needs. Kleinlein (2025) noted that experience gained by teachers in inclusive education is likely to enhance effective teaching and effective approaches for assessing learners.

The results, therefore, point out the significance of enhancing teachers' special expertise in special needs education. As indicated, teachers have substantial general expertise in teaching, but more opportunities for professional development in special needs education may be beneficial in improving their capabilities in handling special educational needs. Some suggestions for schools and education institutions for improving teachers' capabilities in handling SNEd may involve mentorship programs, training, and continuous professional development that focus on special education practices. These programs can be beneficial for teachers in improving their capabilities in handling SNEd learners. Although teachers have substantial general teaching experience, their average of 7.6 years in handling SNEd learners indicates only moderate specialization. This gap highlights a critical issue: inclusive education is being implemented by teachers whose expertise in SNEd is still developing. In the district context, this suggests that many teachers may have been assigned to SNEd roles without formal preparation, learning through exposure rather than structured training. This contributes to variability in practice and may explain why teachers experience challenges in adapting assessments effectively.

Pedagogically, experience in SNEd is crucial because it builds: understanding of diverse learner profiles, familiarity with adaptive strategies, and confidence in modifying assessments. The moderate level of experience implies that while teachers are not novices, they may still be in a transitional stage of competence, where support systems such as mentoring, coaching, and collaborative learning are essential. This reinforces the importance of targeted capacity-building programs that focus specifically on SNEd, rather than general teaching skills.

Table 1.7: Frequency Distribution of Grade Levels Handled by Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education

Grade Level (s) handled	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Grade 3	13	16.70	48.70
Grade 1	12	15.40	26.90
Grade 2	11	14.10	62.80
Grade 5	9	11.50	11.50
Grade 4	9	11.50	92.30
Kinder	7	9.00	71.80
Grade 6	7	9.00	80.80
Multi-grade	3	3.80	96.20
SPED Non-graded	2	2.60	30.80
SPED HI	1	1.30	28.20
Kindergarten	1	1.30	32.10
SNEd Non-Graded	1	1.30	97.40
Kinder and Grade 1	1	1.30	98.70
SNEd	1	1.30	100.00

Table 1.7 shows that teacher-respondents are distributed across Kindergarten to Grade 6, with most handling lower grades, particularly Grade 3 (16.7%), Grade 1 (15.4%), and Grade 2 (14.1%). Smaller proportions handle upper grades, multi-grade classes, and non-graded SNEd learners.

The findings indicate that teachers in SNEd manage diverse grade levels, requiring flexibility and differentiated instruction to address varying learner needs. Lower grades focus on foundational skills, while upper grades involve more complex curriculum adjustments and accommodations. Overall, the results highlight the need for continuous training in differentiated instruction and support systems, as teachers are required to manage both grade-level and learning diversity in inclusive settings.

Table 1.8: Academic Workload of Teachers Handling Special Needs Education (Average Hours per Day)

Academic Workload	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
6 hours	71	91.00	91.00
5 hours	2	2.60	93.60
8 hours	2	2.60	96.20
7 hours	2	2.60	98.80
4.5 hours	1	1.30	100.10

Table 1.8 shows that most teachers (91%) have an average workload of 6 hours per day, with only a few working slightly less or more. This indicates a generally consistent teaching schedule among SNEd teachers.

A balanced workload supports effective planning, implementation, and assessment of inclusive education by allowing teachers time for individualized instruction and learner monitoring. However, in practice, teachers also perform additional tasks such as lesson adaptation, assessment modification, and feedback provision, which extend beyond formal teaching hours. Overall, the findings suggest that while teaching hours are manageable, attention should be given to workload quality and support systems to ensure effective implementation of inclusive assessment practices.

Table 1.9: Frequency Distribution of Class Size Handled by Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education

Class size	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
31-40	36	46.20	46.20
21-30	26	33.30	87.20
20-Nov	7	9.00	98.70
10 below	3	3.80	53.80
40 and up	2	2.60	50.00
11-20, 21-30	2	2.60	89.70

40 and up	1	1.30	47.40
21-30, 31-40	1	1.30	100.00

Table 1.9 shows that most teachers handle class sizes of 31–40 learners (46.2%), followed by 21–30 learners (33.3%), while only a few manage very small classes. This indicates that teachers generally work with medium to large class sizes.

Class size is a key factor in inclusive education, as larger groups may limit teachers’ ability to provide individualized attention and implement effective assessment strategies. Even moderate class sizes can become challenging in SNEd settings due to the diverse needs of learners. Overall, the findings highlight class size as a structural barrier to effective inclusive assessment, suggesting the need for support systems such as teaching assistants or reduced learner loads.

Table 1.10: Frequency Distribution of the Types of Exceptionalities Handled by Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education

Types of Exceptionalities You Handle	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Mixed Group of Learners with Difficulties	28	35.90	35.90
Difficulty in Remembering/Understanding	12	15.38	51.28
Difficulty in Concentrating	11	14.10	65.38
Difficulty in Reading/Counting/Calculating	7	8.97	74.36
Difficulty in Communicating	6	7.69	82.05
Difficulty in Displaying Interpersonal Behavior	6	7.69	89.75
Difficulty in Seeing	2	2.56	92.31
Difficulty in Hearing	2	2.56	94.87
Difficulty in Performing Adaptive Skills	2	2.56	97.43
Difficulty in Mobility	2	2.56	100.00
Difficulty in Writing	0	0.00	0.00
Others:	0	0.00	0.00

Table 1.10 shows that teachers handle a wide range of learner exceptionalities, with Multiple Difficulties (35.90%) being the most common, followed by difficulty in remembering and understanding (15.38%) and concentrating (14.10%). Other cases include reading, counting, and calculating difficulties, as well as slow learners and non-graded SNEd learners.

The findings indicate that teachers are working in highly diverse and complex classrooms requiring differentiated instruction and individualized assessment. Managing learners with multiple exceptionalities demands advanced skills, flexibility, and collaborative support from specialists. Overall, the results highlight the need for continuous training,

specialized resources, and multidisciplinary support systems to effectively address the diverse needs of SNEd learners.

Table 2.1: Level of Inclusive Assessment Practices of Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education in Terms of Assessment Planning

Criteria	VD	SD	Rank	
I align assessment objectives with the learners IEP goals.	3.69	Highly Practiced	1.03	3
I select assessment tools appropriate to the learner's mode of communication (e.g., non-verbal, sign, pictorial).	3.90	Highly Practiced	0.91	1
I plan alternative assessment tasks for learners who cannot take standard tests.	3.86	Highly Practiced	0.91	2
I consult SPED/resource teachers when preparing assessments for SNED learners.	3.40	Highly Practiced	1.34	7
I allow extended time when planning summative assessments for SNED learners.	3.68	Highly Practiced	1.07	4
I include family/parents input when planning assessment goals.	3.58	Highly Practiced	1.10	5
I use curriculum-mapped target when writing assessment items for SNED learners.	3.44	Highly Practiced	1.16	6
Grand	3.65	Highly Practiced		

Legend:

- 4.20-5.00 Very Highly Practiced
- 3.40-4.19 Highly Practiced
- 2.60-4.39 Moderately Practiced
- 1.80-2.59 Slightly Practiced
- 1.00-1.79 Not Practiced

Table 2.1 shows the level of inclusive assessment practices of teacher-respondents in special needs education in terms of assessment planning. From the table, it is seen that there is a high level of practice in terms of assessment planning, as supported by the grand mean of 3.65. This shows that inclusive assessment planning is highly implemented in the classroom by the teacher-respondents. The highly implemented inclusive assessment practices are selecting appropriate assessment tools in line with the

learner’s mode of communication (mean = 3.90), developing alternative assessment strategies for learners who cannot be assessed through standard tests (mean = 3.86), and establishing alignment with learner IEP goals (mean = 3.69). This shows that the teacher-respondents are aware of the needs of the learners and are able to address these needs by developing strategies that are learner-centered and inclusive. The least implemented inclusive assessment practices are consulting SPED/resource teachers in developing assessment strategies (mean = 3.40) and developing curriculum-mapped targets in writing assessment items (mean = 3.44).

The results indicate that the teacher is a proactive and thoughtful individual in planning the assessment in an inclusive manner, reflecting a high level of understanding and awareness of the different abilities and communication skills that the special needs education students may require. This proactive approach in planning the assessment creates a solid base for a successful and inclusive assessment planning, ensuring that the students with different abilities are assessed in a fair and appropriate manner. However, the lower-ranked areas, such as consulting the resource teacher and using the targets mapped in the curriculum, may require specific attention and improvement to ensure the same level of success and comprehensiveness in all the planning areas.

Research highlights the importance of planning as a fundamental aspect in the development of inclusive assessment, where the objectives are well-aligned with the ability and communication styles of the learners (Kleinlein, 2025). Teachers are encouraged to develop alternative assessment strategies for the learners who are unable to undertake the standard assessment tests. Additionally, the assessment objectives are well-aligned with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals to ensure that the assessments are meaningful and provide a true reflection of the learners’ progress and ability (Xu & Kutj, 2021).

Table 2.2: Level of Inclusive Assessment Practices of Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education in Terms of Assessment Implementation

Criteria	VD	SD	Rank
I provide verbal, written, and/or pictorial instructions depending on learner needs.	3.94 Highly Practiced	1.00	1
I provide accommodations during assessment (e.g. scribe, reader, extra time).	3.14 Highly Practiced	1.21	8
I modify test formats (shortened items, simplified language) when necessary.	3.65 Highly Practiced	1.12	4
I administer assessments in a familiar and low-distraction environment.	3.51 Highly Practiced	1.14	6

I allow alternative modes of response (oral, typed, point-to-picture).	3.68	Highly Practiced	1.03	3
I monitor and record behavior/cues that affect test performance.	3.79	Highly Practiced	1.00	2
I pilot or try out assessment tasks with the learner before the actual assessment.	3.25	Moderately Practiced	1.11	7
I adapt the level of difficulty without compromising the learning target.	3.61	Highly Practiced	0.96	5
Total	3.57	Highly Practiced		

Legend:

- 4.20-5.00 Very Highly Practiced
- 3.40-4.19 Highly Practiced
- 2.60-4.39 Moderately Practiced
- 1.80-2.59 Slightly Practiced
- 1.00-1.79 Not Practiced

Table 2.2 shows the level of teacher-respondents' inclusive assessment practices in implementing assessment, specifically in special needs education. From the results, it can be observed that teacher-respondents exhibit a high level of inclusive assessment implementation, with a grand mean of 3.57, meaning that teachers are consistent in their application of inclusive assessment strategies.

The top-rated practices include giving verbal, written, or pictorial instructions based on students' needs, with a mean of 3.94; monitoring and recording behavior or cues that affect test performance, with a mean of 3.79; and allowing alternative modes of response, with a mean of 3.68. These practices reflect teachers' responsiveness to students' individual needs, thus ensuring that assessment tools can accurately reflect students' understanding and performance. Lower-rated practices, though still moderate to high, include giving accommodations such as scribe-reader, or separate room, with a mean of 3.14; and piloting test before conducting the actual test, with a mean of 3.25.

The findings indicate that teachers are accommodating and sensitive in the implementation of the assessment, using techniques that foster equal evaluation of learners with special educational needs. Through the provision of instructions based on learners' modes of communication, monitoring of learners' behavior, and offering alternative response methods, teachers are ensuring that learners are evaluated based on their true abilities. However, the lower-ranked aspects, such as providing accommodation and piloting the assessment tasks, indicate that teachers need training and support to ensure effective implementation of such techniques within all classrooms. Overall, the findings indicate teachers' dedication to ensuring inclusive evaluation, considering the needs of each learner and the curriculum requirements to ensure equality and relevance.

Inclusive assessment implementation, as highlighted by various researchers, entails flexible instructions, multiple choices, and observing learner behavior (Kleinlein, 2025). Teachers are also required to make the necessary accommodations by modifying the assessment tools to meet the needs of learners who have different cognitive, behavioral, and communication difficulties (Vasquez et al., 2025).

Effective implementation of an inclusive assessment process requires teachers to offer flexible instruction, multiple response mechanisms, and observation of learner behavior so that assessment can be an accurate measure of learners' abilities (Tai et al., 2021). Teachers must also offer appropriate accommodation for learners with different cognitive, behavioral, and communicative abilities. Recent research has also highlighted these practices for the effective implementation of an inclusive assessment process. Lucena-Rodríguez et al. (2025) have emphasized that continuous observation of learners' behavior and adjusting assessment mechanisms in real time can enhance the validity of assessment outcomes. Lawi & Muzata (2025) have also pointed out that piloting assessment mechanisms before the actual assessment process helps teachers identify barriers for learners and adjust assessment mechanisms for maximum learner engagement and understanding.

Table 2.3 Level of Inclusive Assessment Practices of Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education in Terms of Assessment Documentation

Criteria	VD	SD	Rank
I maintain a portfolio of learner work to document progress over time.	3.84 Highly Practiced	1.00	1
I complete and update the ILP/Individual Learning Plan regularly.	3.29 Moderately Practiced	1.04	7
I use progress-monitoring tools (checklists, graphs) to track growth.	3.32 Moderately Practiced	1.02	6
I keep detailed anecdotal records after assessment.	3.33 Moderately Practiced	1.09	5
I share documented progress with parents/guardians on a regular basis.	3.73 Highly Practiced	0.96	2
I use assessment data to set short-term and long-term learning goals.	3.55 Highly Practiced	1.03	4
I store and organize assessment records securely and accessibly.	3.66 Highly Practiced	1.01	3
Grand	3.53	Highly Practiced	

Legend:

- 4.20-5.00 Very Highly Practiced
- 3.40-4.19 Highly Practiced
- 2.60-4.39 Moderately Practiced
- 1.80-2.59 Slightly Practiced
- 1.00-1.79 Not Practiced

Table 2.3 below shows the level of inclusive assessment practices among teacher-respondents in special needs education in relation to assessment documentation. From the results, it is evident that teacher-respondents have a high level of practice in relation to assessment documentation, with a grand mean of 3.53. The practices that were ranked as having the highest levels of practice among teacher-respondents were having a portfolio of learners' work that can be used for documenting learners' progress over time (mean = 3.84), sharing learners' documented progress with parents/guardians on a regular basis (mean = 3.73), and storing and organizing assessment records securely and accessibly (mean = 3.66). The practices that were ranked as having low levels of practice among teacher-respondents were completing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) on a regular basis (mean = 3.29), and using progress monitoring tools such as checklists and graphs (mean = 3.32).

This shows that teachers understand the significance of documenting students' progress as a way of guiding them, as well as individualizing their support and assessing the effectiveness of their inclusion. By using portfolios, organizing their records, and sharing students' progress with parents, teachers are able to promote collaborative planning and provide students with special educational needs with individualized opportunities. However, the lower practices in updating ILPs, using structured tools, and recording anecdotal notes indicate that schools could greatly benefit from professional development opportunities that can improve these documentation practices.

Documentation tools, such as portfolios, anecdotal records, and progress-monitoring tools, are critical in tracking learner progress and identifying specific areas of support that may be needed. Current research also supports the role of structured documentation in effective inclusive assessment. Lucena-Rodríguez et al. (2025) emphasized that structured documentation, such as portfolios and progress-monitoring tools, plays a critical role in improving the accuracy of learner evaluation.

Table 2.4: Level of Inclusive Assessment Practices of Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education in Terms of Feedback

Criteria	VD	SD	Rank	
I provide timely and constructive feedback to learners after assessments.	con-3.57	Highly Practiced	1.08	4
I communicate assessment results in accessible formats to parents/caregivers.	3.73	Highly Practiced	1.08	1

I collaborate with multidisciplinary teams (SPED teachers, therapists) to interpret results.	3.09	Moderately Practiced	1.15	6
I use assessment results to modify daily instruction and learning activities.	3.53	Highly Practiced	1.11	5
I use assessment outcomes to plan remedial or enrichment programs.	3.69	Highly Practiced	1.03	2
I involve learners (as appropriate) in reflecting on their assessment results.	3.62	Highly Practiced	1.08	3
Grand	3.58	Highly Practiced		

Legend:

- 4.20-5.00 Very Highly Practiced
- 3.40-4.19 Highly Practiced
- 2.60-4.39 Moderately Practiced
- 1.80-2.59 Slightly Practiced
- 1.00-1.79 Not Practiced

Table 2.4 describes the level of inclusive assessment practice in the aspect of providing feedback as perceived and responded to by the teacher-respondents in special needs education. The data revealed that the overall level of practice among the respondents is high, as shown in the grand mean of 3.58.

In the top tier, the most practiced inclusive assessment practices in the aspect of providing feedback are: the communication of assessment results to parents/caretakers in a manner that is easily understood (mean = 3.73); using assessment results in planning remedial and enrichment classes (mean = 3.69); and involving the learner in reflecting on the assessment results (mean = 3.62). Conversely, the least practiced aspect in this category is working together with a team of experts, including SPED specialists and therapists, in providing feedback (mean = 3.09).

The results suggest that teachers offer timely, constructive, and accessible feedback, which is crucial for supporting learner growth, individualized instruction, and parental participation in the learning process. Encouraging learners to reflect on their assessment results fosters a sense of agency and ownership of their learning. The lower level of collaboration with multidisciplinary teams highlights the need for enhancing strategies that involve expert input, which can improve the accuracy of assessment interpretation and the effectiveness of instructional adjustments. Robust feedback practices contribute to an inclusive and responsive learning environment, supporting the use of assessment results to inform teaching and enhance special needs education.

Research supports these findings. Communicating results in a clear manner to parents and involving learners in reflecting on their progress fosters collaborative and student-centered instruction, enhancing engagement and motivation (UNESCO, 2023). Collaboration with various experts, including SPED teachers, therapists, and allied professionals, allows for more accurate interpretation of results and application of interventions. Moreover, feedback practices that integrate learner reflection, parental involvement, and teamwork are essential in facilitating adaptive and responsive teaching that meets the diverse needs of learners while aligning with curriculum requirements (Sharma, 2024). Collectively, these practices emphasize the significance of feedback in creating an inclusive, supportive, and equitable learning environment for learners in special needs education.

Table 3.1: Relationship Between the Assessment Planning of Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education and Their Profile

Profile	Treatment	Value	P-value
Age	Spearman's rho	-0.416	<0.001*
Teaching Experience	Spearman's rho	-0.396	<0.001*
Years handling SNEd Learners	Learn-Spearman's rho	-203	0.077
Sex	Fisher's Exact Test		0.597
Educational Attainment	Fisher's Exact Test		0.587
SPED specialization	Fisher's Exact Test		0.583
Grade Level Handled	Fisher's Exact Test		0.245
Academic Workload	Fisher's Exact Test		0.136
Class Size	Fisher's Exact Test		0.936
Exceptionalities Handled	Fisher's Exact Test		0.177
<i>*Significant at P <0.05</i>			

Table 3.1 shows the relationship between assessment planning practices of teacher-respondents in special needs education and their professional profiles. The results revealed that age is negatively correlated with inclusive assessment planning practices ($\rho = -0.416$, $p < 0.001$), and teaching experience is also inversely related to assessment planning practices ($\rho = -0.396$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that as teachers' age and experience increase, their engagement in inclusive assessment planning slightly decreases.

Other professional profile variables—including years handling SNEd learners, sex, educational attainment, SPED specialization, grade level handled, academic workload, class size, and exceptionalities handled—were not significantly related to assessment planning practices ($p > 0.05$).

This suggests that continuing professional development (CPD) is essential for all teachers, regardless of age or experience, in reinforcing and advancing best practices in inclusive assessment planning. While formal qualifications, specialization, or workload may not significantly influence assessment planning, teacher attitudes, flexibility, and

engagement in CPD are critical, particularly for veteran teachers. Promoting a culture of continuous learning encourages all educators to maintain and enhance inclusive assessment practices.

Research supports this assertion. Teacher involvement in inclusive assessment is influenced by experience, but ongoing training is crucial in sustaining high standards of inclusive assessment (Vergara, et.al 2025). Professional development activities improve teachers' abilities to plan, adapt, and differentiate instruction, enabling them to meet the diverse needs of learners with special educational needs (UNESCO, 2023). Recent studies also emphasize that age and experience alone are insufficient for effective inclusive assessment; reflection, continuous learning, and targeted training are vital for maintaining high-quality assessment planning (Loreman et al., 2022).

Table 3.2 Relationship Between the Assessment Implementation of Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education and Their Profile

Profile	Treatment	Value	P-value
Age	Spearman's rho	-0.458	<0.001*
Teaching Experience	Spearman's rho	-0.42	<0.001*
Years handling SNEd Learners	Spearman's rho	-0.226	0.048*
Sex	Fisher's Exact Test		0.846
Educational Attainment	Fisher's Exact Test		0.923
SPED specialization	Fisher's Exact Test		0.82
Grade Level Handled	Fisher's Exact Test		0.719
Academic Workload	Fisher's Exact Test		0.812
Class Size	Fisher's Exact Test		0.751
Exceptionalities Handled	Fisher's Exact Test		0.623
<i>*Significant at P <0.05</i>			

Table 3.2 presents the correlation between the assessment implementation practices of teacher-respondents in special needs education and their professional profiles. The results revealed negative correlations between age ($\rho = -0.458$, $p < 0.001$), teaching experience ($\rho = -0.42$, $p < 0.001$), and years handling SNEd learners ($\rho = -0.226$, $p = 0.048$) with the implementation of inclusive assessments. This indicates that as teachers' age, teaching experience, and years of handling learners with special needs increase, their engagement in implementing inclusive assessments tends to decrease. Other professional profile variables—including sex, educational attainment, SPED specialization, grade level handled, academic workload, class size, and types of exceptionalities handled—did not show significant correlations ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that these factors do not significantly affect the implementation of inclusive assessment practices.

These findings underscore the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers, regardless of their level of experience, to ensure active and effective implementation of inclusive assessments. While experience and length of service contribute to knowledge, this alone does not guarantee the use of best practices in inclusive assessment. Promoting a culture of reflection, flexibility, and ongoing

engagement is essential for ensuring that assessments are responsive to the diverse needs of learners in SNEd programs.

Research supports this conclusion. Continuous professional development is critical for teachers to implement inclusive assessment strategies effectively, irrespective of their years of experience (Van Mieghem et al., 2023). Even experienced teachers may default to habitual practices, highlighting the need for ongoing learning to maintain high standards in inclusive education (UNESCO, 2023). Moreover, effective inclusive assessment requires teachers to continuously reflect, adapt, and collaborate to ensure assessments are fair, student-centered, and responsive to learners' diverse abilities and capacities (Lawi et al., 2025; Nieminen, 2025). These findings emphasize that experience alone is insufficient to guarantee the effective implementation of high-quality assessment strategies for SNEd students.

Table 3.3: Relationship Between the Assessment Documentation of Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education and Their Profile

Profile	Treatment	Value	P-value
Age	Spearman's rho	-0.265	0.02*
Teaching Experience	Spearman's rho	-0.273	0.016*
Years handling SNEd Learners	Spearman's rho	-0.135	0.243
Sex	Fisher's Exact Test		0.463
Educational Attainment	Fisher's Exact Test		0.832
SPED specialization	Fisher's Exact Test		0.445
Grade Level Handled	Fisher's Exact Test		0.223
Academic Workload	Fisher's Exact Test		0.258
Class Size	Fisher's Exact Test		0.43
Exceptionalities Handled	Fisher's Exact Test		0.197
<i>*Significant at P < 0.05</i>			

Table 3.3 presents the relationship between the assessment documentation practices of teacher-respondents in special needs education and their professional profiles. The results indicate a negative correlation between age and assessment documentation practices ($\rho = -0.265$, $p = 0.02$), suggesting that older teachers tend to document assessment practices less frequently than younger teachers. Similarly, teaching experience is negatively correlated with assessment documentation ($\rho = -0.273$, $p = 0.016$), indicating that more experienced teachers are less likely to engage consistently in documentation practices compared to less experienced teachers. Other professional profile variables—including years handling SNEd learners, sex, educational attainment, SNEd specialization, grade level handled, academic workload, class size, and types of exceptionalities handled—did not show significant correlations ($p > 0.05$). This implies that these factors do not significantly influence teachers' assessment documentation practices.

These findings highlight the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) in assessment documentation for teachers, regardless of age or years of experience. Proper and consistent use of assessment documentation is critical for tracking

learners' progress, informing instructional decisions, and sharing results with parents and multidisciplinary teams.

Research supports the role of documentation as a central component of inclusive assessment. Regular documentation enables teachers to monitor progress, plan lessons, and make informed instructional decisions (Kavale et al., 2022). Although experienced teachers understand the significance of inclusive assessment, they may default to habitual practices, underscoring the need for refresher training and professional development (UNESCO, 2023; Rodriguez et al., 2025). Furthermore, structured documentation is essential for accountability, individualized planning, and effective support for learners with diverse and complex needs (Loreman et al., 2022; Conception et.al., 2025). In summary, age and teaching experience alone do not guarantee optimal assessment documentation; ongoing engagement in relevant professional development is necessary to enhance teachers' competencies in this critical aspect of inclusive education.

Table 3.4: Relationship Between the Feedback Practices of Teacher-Respondents in Special Needs Education and Their Profile

Profile	Treatment	Value	P-value
Age	Spearman's rho	-0.279	0.014*
Teaching Experience	Spearman's rho	-0.262	0.021*
Years handling SNEd Learners	Spearman's rho	-0.181	0.116
Sex	Fisher's Exact Test		0.768
Educational Attainment	Fisher's Exact Test		0.065
SPED specialization	Fisher's Exact Test		0.882
Grade Level Handled	Fisher's Exact Test		0.109
Academic Workload	Fisher's Exact Test		0.739
Class Size	Fisher's Exact Test		0.531
Exceptionalities Handled	Fisher's Exact Test		0.935

*Significant at $P < 0.05$

Table 3.4 presents the relationship between the feedback practices of teacher-respondents in special needs education and their professional profiles. The results indicate a negative correlation between age and feedback practices ($\rho = -0.279$, $p = 0.014$), as well as between teaching experience and feedback practices ($\rho = -0.262$, $p = 0.021$). These findings suggest that teachers who are older or have more teaching experience tend to engage slightly less in active feedback practices compared to their younger or less experienced peers. Other professional profile variables—including years handling SNEd learners, sex, educational attainment, SPED specialization, grade level handled, academic workload, class size, and types of exceptionalities handled—were not found to have significant relationships with feedback practices ($p > 0.05$). This implies that these factors do not significantly affect teachers' feedback practices.

These findings highlight the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) in effective feedback strategies for all teachers, regardless of age or teaching experience. Timely, constructive, and learner-centered feedback is critical for supporting

student reflection, promoting progress, and guiding instructional adaptations in inclusive classrooms. The negative correlation with age and experience suggests that veteran teachers may rely on habitual routines, emphasizing the need for ongoing training to maintain best practices in feedback.

Research underscores that effective feedback—when timely, constructive, and accessible—fosters inclusion, learning, and motivation, particularly for students with special educational needs (Plúa Alarcón & Vidal Velásquez, 2025). CPD ensures that all teachers, irrespective of experience, maintain consistent and effective feedback strategies, avoiding the pitfalls of routine practice (UNESCO, 2023). In conclusion, the findings highlight that feedback practices should not rely solely on teachers' age or experience; instead, active engagement in professional development and the application of evidence-based feedback strategies are essential to ensure quality inclusive education in SNEd classrooms.

4. Relationship Between Inclusive Assessment Practices and Challenges Encountered in Assessing SNE Learners

The research indicated a significant relationship between teachers' inclusive assessment practices and the challenges they face while assessing with SNEd learners. Looking at all the themes, it is apparent that the challenges teachers face, whether structural, professional, or pedagogical, have a significant influence on the application of inclusive assessment practices. The teachers cited challenges, which included a lack of specialized assessment tools, a lack of assistive devices, large classes, and a lack of support from their institutions. The structural challenges sometimes compel teachers to develop their own tools, which might not be as effective as the standard tools. The research indicates that systemic barriers and a lack of resources have a significant influence on the quality of assessment in inclusive classes, as teachers face a challenge in ensuring individualized and equitable assessment for learners. Time constraints and workload pressures were also identified as being significant issues. As inclusive assessment is by its very nature time-consuming, especially if differentiation and adaptation are required, it is clear why time constraints are a significant issue. Teachers have many roles, including teaching, marking, planning, and administrative roles, all of which require time, yet they are trying to be inclusive in assessment. As research has identified, without adequate time allocation and workload management, inclusive assessment is not as effective, leading to teacher burnout (Pocan, 2022).

The diversity of learners, including differences in abilities, learning styles, and communication styles, is another factor that adds another layer of complexity. Teachers are required to use various forms of assessment, including oral, written, and visual, to cater for all learners, yet differences in communication styles, attention spans, and engagement levels all add another layer of difficulty in assessing learners effectively. This is in line with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), but as research has identified, teachers are not adequately prepared or resourced to effectively implement Universal Design for Learning (Seymour, 2024). Inadequate training and professional competence add to the complexities of the challenges faced. Most teachers indicated that their training

was mostly theoretical and generalized without adequate applied learning, collaborative learning, or continuous professional learning. Research supports the fact that applied learning is critical to the teacher to effectively apply inclusive assessment strategies (Sargoca et al, 2025; Dayso, 2025). Without adequate training, the teacher is left to their own learning and experience, which may result in a lack of uniformity in the application of assessment strategies and uncertainty about the validity of the assessment.

In conclusion, the teachers applied teacher adaptability through collaborative learning, the use of technology, and creativity to meet the learners' needs. Although the teachers applied inclusive assessment strategies, the literature shows that inclusive assessment requires adequate resource support, small class sizes, teacher mentorship, and continuous professional learning to be effective (Kleinlein, 2026).

5. Challenges SNEd teachers encounter in assessing SNEd Learners

Theme Discussion: Teachers' Challenges in Assessing SNEd Learners

- A. **Structural and Resource Constraints.** One of the most common issues identified by the teacher-respondents is the lack of assessment tools and resources designed to meet the unique requirements of the SNE learners. The teachers indicated that the majority of the assessment tools available to them were designed to cater to the regular learners, which necessitated the teachers to modify the tools extensively or develop their own tools to meet the requirements of the SNE learners. Research studies have indicated how teacher shortages can be a hindrance to the assessment of learners with disabilities (Dayso, 2025). In such situations, the teachers have to manage the responsibilities without the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the assessment of the learners with disabilities individually. Moreover, the larger the number of students in the classrooms of such teachers, the greater the difficulties faced in providing the necessary assessment tools to the SNE learners.
- B. **Constraints and Workload Pressure.** Time constraints and workload pressure have been identified as a major challenge, especially in designing, modifying, administering, and grading the assessments. The teachers have pointed out that individualized assessments take much longer to be conducted, and the continuous process of adaptation and modifications becomes repetitive and tiring. The global discussion on the development and administration of inclusive assessments has pointed out that authentic and performance-based assessments take much longer to be conducted and graded, compared to traditional assessments, and this puts pressure on teachers without allocating time for the same (Kauffman, et. al, 2022). This has a major impact on the burnout and affects the quality of the development and administration of inclusive assessments.
- C. **Complexity of Learner Diversity and Communication Barriers.** The complexity of learner diversity, which includes learners with different abilities, styles, and communication needs, was cited as a significant barrier to inclusion. SNE learners, for instance, often require a number of assessment approaches, which might include

oral, written, and visual forms, to fully assess their understanding. Moreover, communication barriers, which might take the form of delayed speech or non-verbal learners, pose a significant barrier to effective assessment. Studies have shown that the complexity of learner diversity requires a range of approaches to inclusion, which might not always be effective, as teachers often lack the ability to execute this approach well (Dayso, 2025). The use of a number of approaches to assess learners aligns with the principles of Universal Design for Learning, which emphasizes the use of diverse representation and engagement strategies.

- D. **Gaps in Training and Assessment Competence.** A need for further, in-depth training in inclusive methodologies of assessment was highlighted. Many teachers reported that their training was lacking in terms of scope, with a general introduction to concepts of inclusion rather than practical application of the skills required in assessing students with varying learning needs. This mirrors the international literature, which indicates that training that is theoretical and lacking in continuity does not adequately equip teachers with the competencies required to effectively address the demands of the classroom. In a study conducted on attitudes toward inclusion, it was noted that whilst having a theoretical knowledge of inclusion does not automatically translate into competent practice, having a training that is application-based, practice-embedded, and collaborative is vital if teachers are to feel competent in their practice (Saragoca, et al. 2025). If they have not received adequate training, they have to rely on self-learning and experiences gained through practice.
- E. **Challenges in Ensuring Valid, Fair, and Effective Assessment.** There were uncertainties regarding the effectiveness of the modified assessment in measuring the learners' abilities and the fairness of the grading systems. This was a challenge because the teachers were concerned about the validity and fairness of the assessment results in evaluating learners along a highly diverse range. Inclusive and equitable assessment research suggests that the assessment processes must be subjected to critical examination to ensure that learners with specialized needs are not at a disadvantage (Jabri, 2025). Inequity may arise if the assessment processes are not adapted according to the learners' profiles. Without a framework for inclusive assessment practices, it is difficult for the teachers to ensure fairness and effectiveness. Feedback and constant evaluation, which are important principles in inclusive education, may not be consistent or possible (Felder, 2022).
- F. **Adaptive Teaching Practices and Need for Systemic Support.** In spite of the challenges, the teaching staff showed their resourcefulness by developing their own teaching materials, working together, and taking advantage of the use of technology. This is a manifestation of the dedication and ingenuity of the teaching staff. This type of approach is in line with the literature that promotes the need for continuous and flexible processes to assess, rather than fixed and standardized criteria (Beltran, et al, 2025; Evans, et. al. 2021). The teaching staff, however, pointed to the need for systemic support, indicating that perhaps the resourcefulness of

the teaching staff alone may not be enough to address the challenges. This resonates with the literature on the need for coherent and comprehensive approaches to inclusive assessment, taking into account the relevance to teaching, equity, and support for teachers.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the profile of the teacher-respondents handling Special Needs Education indicates that most are female, with an average age of 41.8 years, moderate teaching experience, and limited formal SPED training. They handle a wide range of grade levels, class sizes, and types of exceptionalities, demonstrating versatility and adaptability in their roles as SPED teachers.

The study revealed that teachers generally practice inclusive assessment at a high level across planning, implementation, documentation, and feedback. Key practices include selecting assessment tools aligned with learners' communication modes, providing alternative response options, using portfolios, informing parents of student progress, and using assessment results to guide instruction. Some practices, such as consultation with resource teachers, piloting assessment tools, updating ILPs, and working with multidisciplinary teams, were moderately implemented. However, the study also found that teachers face significant challenges in implementing inclusive assessment. Structural limitations, time constraints, learner diversity, communication barriers, and gaps in training were identified as factors that influence the effectiveness and consistency of assessment practices. While adaptive strategies such as collaboration, creative modifications, and digital tools help mitigate these challenges, systemic support is essential to sustain and enhance inclusive assessment practices.

Furthermore, age and teaching experience were negatively correlated with inclusive assessment, suggesting that more experienced teachers may be less active in certain stages of assessment. Other profile factors—sex, educational attainment, SPED specialization, grade level handled, academic workload, class size, and type of exceptionalities—showed no significant impact on assessment practices.

In conclusion, although teachers demonstrate a high level of inclusive assessment practices, the challenges they encounter can constrain the quality and effectiveness of these practices. This highlights the need for targeted professional development, adequate resources, and systemic support to empower teachers—particularly experienced ones—to implement inclusive assessment consistently and effectively for SNE learners.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the researcher would like to present recommendations. First, school administrators and Schools Division of Negros Oriental should institutionalize a continuous professional development program for the implementation of inclusive assessment strategies. These training programs should cover the aspects of planning, implementation, documentation, and feedback mechanisms for the

implementation of effective assessment strategies for SNEd learners. Second, teachers handling SNEd learners, especially those who are not yet SNEd-certified, should be encouraged or assisted to take a SNEd specialization or certification course. This will enhance the effectiveness of the teachers in the implementation of effective assessment strategies for the learners. Teachers should be given opportunities to develop their documentation skills in assessing learners, such as portfolios, progress monitoring, anecdotal recording, and ILPs. Schools should also enhance collaboration between general education teachers, SPED/resource teachers, and other specialists (such as therapists) to enhance the implementation of effective assessment strategies for the learners. Meetings or mentorship programs can be arranged for this purpose. Also, there should be a stronger collaborative relationship between general education teachers and SNEd/resource teachers, as well as other professionals (e.g., therapists), in planning, interpreting, and giving feedback on assessment results. Team meetings or mentorships could be arranged to encourage this collaborative relationship. As the older, more experienced teachers were slightly less active in inclusive assessment practices, training programs for such teachers should be conducted to improve their flexibility and participation in inclusive assessment. Additionally, school districts or schools may tap Local Government Unit (LGU) to allocate budget for free assessment for low-income families of identified SNEd learners as per the Multi-Factored Assessment Tool (MFAT) result. Schools should also strengthen budget allocation through MOOE to provide assessment accommodations, distraction-free environments, and alternative assessment tools to cater to the needs of the diverse population of SNEd learners. Lastly, future research could be conducted to examine the influences of the moderately practiced strategies, such as consultation with resource teachers and piloting assessment tasks, and the effects of teacher training programs on the outcomes of learners.

Output

(Proposed Action Plan)

1. Proposed Action Plan for District-Wide Inclusive Assessment Seminar for Teachers Handling Special Needs Education

The proposed action plan is directly derived from the key gaps and patterns identified in the study's findings, which consistently show that while teachers demonstrate a generally high level of inclusive assessment practices, there are specific areas that require targeted strengthening to ensure more consistent and effective implementation across schools in Zamboanga Districts.

First, the results on assessment planning, implementation, documentation, and feedback indicate that teachers are already practicing inclusive assessment at a high level. However, the detailed item analysis shows recurring lower-performing areas such as limited collaboration with SNEd/resource teachers, less frequent piloting of assessment tasks, inconsistent updating of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), and weaker engagement in multidisciplinary collaboration during feedback. These gaps suggest that while foundational knowledge is present, there is a need for structured capacity-building to refine and standardize best practices. This directly informs the design of the seminar, particularly the

focus on differentiated assessment strategies, ILP crafting, and strengthened documentation and feedback systems.

Second, the inferential results reveal that age, teaching experience, and years handling SNEd learners are negatively correlated with certain inclusive assessment practices, particularly implementation, documentation, and feedback. This indicates a potential tendency for more experienced teachers to rely on routine or traditional assessment practices over time. In response, the action plan emphasizes continuous professional development (CPD) for all teachers regardless of experience level, ensuring that both novice and veteran teachers are regularly updated on evolving inclusive assessment approaches. The seminar is therefore designed not as a one-time intervention but as a professional renewal mechanism to address this identified drift in practice.

Third, the qualitative findings on challenges provide a clear explanation for why some practices remain moderate or inconsistent. Teachers reported structural constraints such as lack of specialized assessment tools, large class sizes, insufficient assistive resources, and limited access to training focused on practical application. These constraints directly justify the inclusion of hands-on training activities in the proposed seminar, such as demonstrations of differentiated assessment strategies and workshops on ILP development. The action plan is therefore not theoretical but response-oriented, addressing both skill gaps and contextual limitations.

Finally, the recommendation to engage LGUs for financial and medical assessment support is grounded in the identified systemic barriers, particularly the lack of resources and external support systems for proper diagnosis and assessment of learners with special needs. This aligns the action plan with a broader ecosystem approach, recognizing that effective inclusive assessment is not only dependent on teacher competence but also on institutional and community-level support.

Overall, the proposed action plan translates the findings into targeted interventions that address three core issues identified in the study: (1) gaps in specific inclusive assessment practices, (2) the need for continuous upskilling across all teacher profiles, and (3) systemic and resource-related barriers that limit effective implementation of inclusive assessment in SNEd classrooms. The results of the study revealed the need to strengthen teachers' competencies in implementing inclusive assessment practices for learners with Special Needs Education (SNEd). In response, the researcher proposes a District-Wide Inclusive Assessment Seminar aimed at enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and practices in planning, implementing, documenting, and providing feedback on assessments for learners with diverse learning needs. The seminar will also serve as a professional development opportunity to support teachers in delivering equitable and responsive assessment strategies aligned with inclusive education principles.

1. General Objective

To enhance the competencies of elementary school teachers in Zamboanguita Districts 1 and 2 in implementing effective inclusive assessment practices for learners with Special Needs Education.

2. Specific Objectives

- a. To deepen teachers' understanding of inclusive assessment principles and strategies for learners with diverse needs.
- b. To strengthen teachers' skills in assessment planning that accommodates learners with exceptionalities.
- c. To enhance teachers' capacity in implementing differentiated and inclusive assessment strategies.
- d. To craft an Individualized Learner's Plan (ILP) for SNEd learners.
- e. To discuss the financial assistance proposal with LGU about SNEd learners' needs , especially medical assessment/diagnosis aid.

Proposed Matrix

Project Title	Objectives	Activities	Persons Responsible	Time Frame	Expected Output	Budget Source
District-Wide Inclusive Assessment Seminar for Teachers Handling SNEd	To enhance teachers' knowledge of inclusive assessment practices	Orientation on Inclusive Education and Assessment Principles	District Supervisor, School Heads, SNEd Teachers, General and Receiving Teachers	Beginning of Year IN-SET	Teachers gain deeper understanding of inclusive education and assessment principles	District MOOE / School Funds
District-Wide Inclusive Assessment Seminar for Teachers Handling SNEd	To improve teachers' skills in planning and implementing inclusive assessments	Demonstration of Differentiated Assessment Strategies	SNEd Teachers, General and Receiving Teachers, Resource Speakers	Beginning of Year IN-SET	Teachers learn practical strategies for implementing inclusive assessment	District Training Funds
District-Wide Inclusive Assessment Seminar for Teachers Handling SNEd	To enhance teachers' competence in documenting assessment results	Training on Documentation of Learner Progress and Providing Feedback	SNEd Teachers, General and Receiving Teachers, SNEd Coordinator, District Supervisors	Beginning of Year IN-SET	Teachers improve documentation of learner performance	District / School Funds
District-Wide Inclusive Assessment Seminar for Teachers Handling SNEd	To craft an Individualized Learner's Plan (ILP) for SNEd learners.	Workshop on Crafting ILP	Master Teachers, SNEd Teachers, General and Receiving Teachers	Beginning of Year IN-SET	Teachers practice crafting and using ILP for SNEd learners	District MOOE

Compliance with Ethical Standards

In carrying out this study on assessing the inclusive education practices for SNEd learners in Zamboanguita Schools District, there was a strict compliance with ethical principles to guarantee the rights, dignity, and welfare of all the study participants.

Before actual data collection, the participation of all participants was accompanied by an informed consent form that described the goal of the study, the processes involved, the expected length of their participation, and any possible risks or benefits. The form also explicitly outlined that their participation is completely voluntary, and they can refuse or withdraw from the study at any time without fear of punishment or adverse consequences. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, all personal identifiers, including names of teachers, schools, or exact locations, were omitted from the final report and any published outputs. Responses were coded and only employed for the purposes of analysis. Data was securely stored, accessed only by the researcher and academic advisers. Any data that may lead to participants or schools being identified were meticulously excised or anonymized in the reporting of the findings. It takes care to safeguard the identities and professional standing of the participants during and after the study.

Additionally, involvement in the study was voluntary. Teachers were not pressured or coerced; they were asked in a respectful manner and were provided with sufficient time to make a decision regarding participation or not and were informed that this study should not affect their teaching hours. No incentive or reward was applied to influence their participation. The researcher made sure that participants' questions or concerns were clarified before signing the consent form and starting to fill out the research instrument. Finally, the research met academic and institutional ethical standards. The researcher also followed the directions from the Department of Education- Division of Negros Oriental as stated in the approval letter. With these safeguards in place, the study upholds high ethical standards and contributes to the body of educational research in a responsible and respectful manner.

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