

PREPAREDNESS, IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN REGULAR GRADE 1 CLASS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the preparedness, implementation, and challenges of inclusive education in regular Grade 1 classes in the BIBACASIPI Sub-Congressional District for School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it described the teachers' demographic profile, assessed their level of preparedness and inclusive practices, identified the challenges encountered, and determined the relationships among these variables. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using a modified survey questionnaire as the primary data-gathering instrument. The respondents were 39 selected Grade 1 public school teachers handling inclusive classes. Descriptive statistics, including frequency count and percentage, were used to describe the respondents' demographic profile, while weighted mean was used to determine the levels of preparedness, implementation, and challenges encountered. For inferential analysis, multiple regression was used to determine the significant association between the demographic profile and the variables under study, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the significant relationship among preparedness, implementation, and challenges. Findings revealed that teachers exhibited a moderate level of preparedness for inclusive education, particularly in terms of positive attitudes and commitment to inclusion. However, gaps were identified in professional training, instructional strategies, and availability of resources. Inclusive education practices were moderately implemented, while challenges such as large class sizes, limited instructional materials, and insufficient support services affected effective implementation. No significant relationship was found between teacher preparedness and the level of inclusive education practices. The study further revealed that although teachers were academically qualified, professionally experienced, and exposed to inclusive education trainings, institutional support systems such as continuous professional development, availability of inclusive materials, collaboration with SPED specialists, and sufficient time allocation remained inadequate. Despite these limitations, teachers consistently implemented inclusive practices such as differentiated instruction, learner-centered approaches, peer support, and parental involvement. The study concludes that strengthening professional development programs, improving resource allocation, and enhancing institutional support are essential to ensure more effective implementation of inclusive education in public schools.

Keywords: *LMS-based blended learning, digital resilience, institutional support, sustainability, rural education*

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a critical role in shaping foundational learning, particularly in the early years of schooling. Globally, inclusive education has been recognized as a key strategy for ensuring equitable access to quality education for all learners, including those with special educational needs. In the Philippines, the Department of Education introduced the MATATAG Curriculum to strengthen foundational skills, streamline content, and promote inclusive and learner-centered instruction. This reform emphasizes that all learners, regardless of ability, should be given equal opportunities to participate and succeed in the classroom.

Inclusive education in the Philippine context is supported by policies such as Republic Act No. 11650 (Inclusive Education Act of 2022) and DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, which mandate the integration of learners with special educational needs (LSEN) into regular classrooms. While these policies provide a strong legal and institutional foundation, their effectiveness largely depends on teachers' preparedness and the availability of support systems within schools. Teachers are expected to implement differentiated instruction, manage diverse classrooms, and collaborate with stakeholders. However, evidence suggests that many teachers still experience limitations in readiness due to gaps in training and professional development opportunities (Mamites et al., 2025).

The implementation of inclusive education also presents several challenges. Teachers frequently encounter issues such as large class sizes, limited instructional materials, insufficient support services, and increased workload, which may affect instructional effectiveness and contribute to stress. Despite generally positive attitudes toward inclusion, teachers often struggle with adapting instruction, managing diverse learners, and sustaining engagement in the classroom. These challenges indicate a persistent gap between policy and actual classroom practice, particularly in resource-constrained settings (Beltran et al., 2025; Manos, 2024).

The study is anchored on several theoretical perspectives relevant to inclusive education. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) emphasizes the development of flexible curricula that accommodate diverse learners (Almeqdad et al., 2023). Sociocultural theory highlights the importance of social interaction, scaffolding, and guided learning in supporting learner development (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995). Ecological systems theory explains that learner development is influenced by multiple environmental systems, including the school, family, and community (Darling, 2007). These frameworks collectively suggest that effective inclusive education requires adaptive teaching strategies, collaboration, and systemic support.

Despite the growing body of literature, there is limited research focusing specifically on Grade 1 teachers handling LSEN under the MATATAG Curriculum, particularly in localized settings such as the BIBACASIPI Sub-Congressional District. Most existing studies address inclusive education at a general level, leaving a gap in understanding the preparedness, implementation, and challenges experienced by early-grade teachers in specific contexts.

Given these conditions, this study examined the preparedness, implementation, and challenges of inclusive education in regular Grade 1 classrooms. Specifically, it assessed teachers' readiness to handle LSEN, evaluated the extent of curriculum implementation, and identified the challenges encountered in inclusive teaching. The findings of this study aimed to provide empirical evidence that can inform the development of targeted interventions, strengthen teacher support systems, and improve the implementation of inclusive education in the Philippine basic education system.

Research Questions

This study examined the preparedness, implementation, and challenges of inclusive education in a regular Grade 1 class in the BIBACASIPI Sub-Congressional District for School Year 2025–2026.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the Grade 1 teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 sex;
 - 1.3 civil status;
 - 1.4 highest educational attainment;
 - 1.5 teaching position;
 - 1.6 years of teaching experience;
 - 1.7 number of LSEN; and
 - 1.8 trainings attended related to SPED or inclusive education?
2. What is the level of preparedness of the Grade 1 teachers to teach learners in inclusive education?
3. What is the level of implementation of inclusive education in Grade 1 classrooms under the MATATAG Curriculum?
4. What is the level of challenges encountered in teaching inclusive education in Grade 1 classes?
5. Is there a significant association between the demographic profile and the;
 - 5.1 preparedness,
 - 5.2 implementation, and
 - 5.3 challenges encountered?
6. Is there a significant relationship among the preparedness,
 - 6.1 implementation, and
 - 6.2 challenges encountered?
7. What action plan can be proposed based on the results of the study?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-survey research design. This approach was appropriate as it aimed to describe the level of teachers' preparedness systematically,

the extent of implementation, and the challenges encountered in inclusive education within Grade 1 classrooms under the MATATAG Curriculum.

Research Environment

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools in Bilar, Batuan, Carmen, Sierra Bullones, and Pilar Districts in Bohol, collectively known as the BIBACASIPI Sub-Congressional District. These schools operate under the Department of Education (DepEd) and are implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, which promotes inclusive education in regular classrooms.

Research Participants

The participants of the study were 39 Grade 1 teachers who were currently handling learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SNED) in regular classrooms. Out of the total 191 Grade 1 teachers in the BIBACASIPI Sub-Congressional District, only those with direct experience in implementing inclusive education were included. Complete enumeration was employed; thus, all 39 identified teachers served as respondents of the study.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a modified survey questionnaire adapted from existing validated instruments and contextualized to reflect inclusive education practices under the MATATAG Curriculum for Grade 1 teachers. The instrument was simplified to ensure clarity, relevance, and suitability for public school settings, consistent with recommendations on questionnaire design and adaptation (Creswell, 2014; DeVellis, 2017).

Prior to data collection, the questionnaire was pilot tested among eight (8) teachers handling learners with special needs and disabilities (SNED) who were not part of the actual respondents. These included Kindergarten, Grade 2, and Grade 3 teachers from Sierra Bullones District, with one having prior experience as a Grade 1 teacher. The pilot testing aimed to establish the clarity, appropriateness, and reliability of the instrument.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts: Part I gathered the demographic profile of the respondents; Part II assessed teachers' level of preparedness in inclusive education; Part III measured the level of implementation of inclusive practices; and Part IV identified the challenges encountered in teaching LSEN. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the respondents' perceptions and experiences.

Research Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured written approval from the Campus Director through the Dean of the School of Advanced Studies (SAdS). Permission was also obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent, Public Schools District Supervisors, and School Heads to conduct the study.

The researcher personally distributed the survey questionnaires to the identified Grade 1 teachers. The purpose of the study was clearly explained, and participants were informed that their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed, and all collected data were used solely for academic purposes in accordance with ethical standards.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. For descriptive statistics, frequency and percentage were used to present the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, teaching position, years of teaching experience, number of learners with special educational needs (LSEN), and relevant trainings attended.

The weighted mean (WM) was utilized to determine the level of teachers' preparedness, implementation, and challenges in inclusive education, based on responses measured through a 5-point Likert scale.

For inferential statistics, multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and their levels of preparedness, implementation, and challenges. In addition, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson *r*) was used to determine the relationship among preparedness, implementation, and challenges in inclusive education.

RESULTS

This section presents and interprets the data on the preparedness of Grade 1 teachers, the implementation of inclusive education, and the challenges encountered in teaching learners with special needs in the BIBACASIPI Sub-Congressional District for School Year 2025–2026. It includes discussions on the demographic characteristics of teachers, such as age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, teaching position, and years of teaching experience, as well as their exposure to trainings related to Special Education (SPED) and inclusive education. It also examines the level of teachers' preparedness, the extent of implementation of inclusive education in Grade 1 classrooms under the MATATAG Curriculum, and the challenges encountered in practice.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Grade 1 Teachers
n= 39

PROFILE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
AGE		
22-25	3	7.7
26-30	7	17.9
31-35	9	23.1
36-40	7	17.9
41-45	8	20.5
46-50	5	12.8

SEX		
Male	1	2.6
Female	38	97.4
CIVIL STATUS		
Single	4	10.3
Married	35	89.7
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		
Bachelor's degree	10	25.6
With masteral unit	22	56.4
Masteral graduate	6	15.4
With PhD units	1	2.6
TEACHING POSITION		
Teacher 1-Teacher 2	4	10.3
Teacher 3	26	66.7
Master Teacher	9	23.1
YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE		
1 – 5 years	4	12.8
6-10 years	26	28.2
11 – 15 years	9	59.0
NUMBER OF LSEN/SNED CURRENTLY ENROLLED		
1	26	66.7
2	6	15.4
3	3	7.7
4	3	7.7
5	1	2.6
TRAININGS RELATED TO SPED OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION		
MFAT (Multi-factored Assessment Tool)		
Orientation and Training	12	30.8
District Training in Inclusive Education	22	56.4
Both Trainings	3	7.7
None	2	5.1

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of Grade 1 teachers. Most respondents were aged 31–35 (23.1%), followed by 41–45 (20.5%), indicating a predominantly experienced and professionally active group. The teaching workforce was largely female (97.4%) and mostly married (89.7%), reflecting common patterns in elementary education.

In terms of educational attainment, the majority had master's units (56.4%), while 15.4% were master's degree holders, suggesting a strong academic foundation. Most respondents were Teacher III (66.7%) and had 11–15 years of teaching experience (59.0%), indicating substantial classroom exposure. With regard to inclusive education, most teachers handled at least one learner with special educational needs (66.7%). In terms of training, 56.4% attended district-level inclusive education training, while a small proportion (5.1%) had no training. Overall, the profile indicates that teachers possess adequate experience and academic preparation; however, gaps in specialized training remain, which may influence their readiness to effectively implement inclusive education.

Table 2
Level of Preparedness of the Grade 1 Teachers to Teach Learners in Inclusive Education
n=39

Statements	WMS	DI
1. Training programs on inclusive education are regularly available.	3.33	Neither
2. Learning materials and guides for inclusive teaching are accessible to teachers.	3.33	Neither
3. There is a system in place to evaluate teachers' readiness in handling inclusive classrooms.	3.10	Neither
4. Collaborative planning with SPED professionals or coordinators is encouraged.	3.36	Neither
5. Opportunities for peer learning and experience sharing on inclusive practices are available.	3.39	Neither
6. Confident in identifying learners with special educational needs.	3.44	Prepared
7. Trained in managing behavioral issues among learners with special educational needs.	3.28	Neither
8. Attended seminars or workshops on differentiated instructions.	3.87	Prepared
9. Understands how to conduct informal assessments to evaluate learner needs.	3.72	Prepared
10. Emotionally and mentally prepared to support inclusive education.	3.77	Prepared
11. My training and specialization are sufficient to effectively teach LSEN learners.	3.23	Neither
12. Finding time enough time to provide individualized attention to LSEN learners.	3.23	Neither
13. I can allocate sufficient time to support the learning needs of LSEN learners.	3.28	Neither
14. I need further guidance from teachers who specialize in handling LSEN learners.	3.67	Prepared

Legend:

WPS	DI
4.21 - 5	- Very Prepared
3.41 - 4.20	- Prepared
2.61- 3.40	- Neither
1.81- 2.60	- Unprepared
1.0-1.8	- Very Unprepared

Table 2 presents the level of preparedness of Grade 1 teachers in implementing inclusive education. The overall results indicate a moderate level of preparedness, with most indicators interpreted as “Neither Prepared nor Unprepared.” This suggests that teachers possess foundational knowledge and skills, but their readiness remains insufficient for consistent and effective inclusive practice. The highest mean was recorded in attendance to seminars on differentiated instruction (WM = 3.87), followed by emotional and mental readiness (WM = 3.77) and ability to conduct informal assessments (WM = 3.72), all interpreted as “Prepared.” These findings indicate that teachers demonstrate positive attitudes and basic competencies essential for inclusive education. This aligns with previous research emphasizing that teacher beliefs, assessment skills, and responsiveness to learner diversity are critical in fostering inclusive classrooms (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). However, most institutional and support-related indicators were rated “Neither,” including availability of training programs (WM = 3.33), access to learning materials (WM = 3.33), readiness evaluation systems (WM = 3.10), and collaboration with SPED professionals (WM = 3.36). These results indicate gaps in systemic and organizational support. Areas such as managing behavioral issues (WM = 3.28), sufficiency of training (WM = 3.23), and time allocation for individualized instruction (WM = 3.23–3.28) also remained at a moderate level. These findings suggest that teachers face practical challenges in addressing diverse learner needs, particularly due to limited training and time constraints. Similar findings were reported by Ainscow (2020), who noted that inadequate support structures and workload pressures hinder inclusive teaching practices. Notably, the need for guidance from SPED specialists (WM = 3.67) was rated “Prepared,” indicating teachers’ recognition of the importance of expert support in inclusive settings. Overall, the results reveal that while teachers demonstrate preparedness in selected competencies, the general level remains moderate, highlighting the need for strengthened training programs, improved access to resources, and enhanced collaboration with specialists to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education.

Table 3
Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education of the Grade 1 Teachers to Teach
in Inclusive education
n =39

Statements	WMS	DI
1. I use different ways of teaching to reach learners with different needs.	3.95	Implemented
2. I include both LSEN and regular learners in classroom activities.	3.95	Implemented
3. I provide support based on each learner’s needs when possible.	3.97	Implemented
4. I try different strategies to help LSEN learners during lessons.	4.13	Implemented
5. I maintain a classroom environment where every learner feel respected.	4.18	Implemented
6. I use visual, auditory, and kinesthetic materials in my lessons.	4.21	Implemented
7. I assign tasks according to the strength of each learner.	4.05	Implemented
8. I create seating arrangements that encourage interaction among all learners.	4.08	Implemented
9. I maintain communication with parents of learners with special educational needs.	4.18	Implemented
10. I allow peer tutoring and cooperative learning to		

support inclusion.	4.10	Implemented
11.I adjust the pace of lessons when necessary for LSEN	3.95	Implemented
12.I assess learners using various methods suitable for their needs.	3.95	Implemented
13.I celebrate small achievements of LSEN to motivate them.	3.97	Implemented
14. I use behavior management strategies that support inclusive practices.	3.87	Implemented

Legend:

WMS	DI
4.21 – 5	- <i>Highly Implemented</i>
3.40 – 4.20	- <i>Implemented</i>
1.81-2.60	- <i>Unimplemented</i>
1.0-1.8	- <i>Highly Unimplemented</i>

Table 3 presents the level of implementation of inclusive education practices among Grade 1 teachers. Overall, all indicators were rated “Implemented,” indicating that inclusive practices are consistently applied in the classroom. The highest mean was recorded in the use of multisensory instructional materials (WM = 4.21), followed by maintaining a respectful classroom environment and parent communication (WM = 4.18). These results suggest that teachers prioritize learner engagement, inclusivity, and collaboration with stakeholders. Such practices are consistent with the principles of differentiated instruction emphasized by Tomlinson (2014), which highlight the importance of adapting teaching to diverse learner needs.

Other high-performing indicators included the use of varied strategies (WM = 4.13), peer tutoring (WM = 4.10), and flexible seating arrangements (WM = 4.08). These findings indicate that teachers actively create learner-centered environments that promote participation and interaction. This supports the work Florian & Black-Hawkins, (2011), who emphasized that inclusive pedagogy requires active participation and equal learning opportunities for all students.

The lowest mean was observed in the use of behavior management strategies (WM = 3.87), although it remained within the “Implemented” level. This suggests that while classroom management practices are applied, they may require further strengthening, particularly in handling diverse behavioral needs. Additionally, teachers reported implementing individualized support, varied assessment methods, lesson pacing adjustments, and recognition of learner achievements (WM = 3.95–3.97). These practices contribute to both academic and socio-emotional development, reinforcing inclusive learning environments. Effective inclusive education requires not only instructional adaptation but also strong support systems that promote learner motivation and engagement (Sharma, 2024). Overall, the findings indicate a high level of implementation of inclusive education practices, demonstrating that teachers are able to translate inclusive principles into classroom practice. Despite only moderate preparedness levels, the results suggest strong teacher commitment and adaptability in implementing inclusive education.

Table 4
Level of Challenges Encountered in Teaching Inclusive Education in Grade1
Classes
n=39

Statements	WMS	DI
1. I need more time to prepare lessons for all learners.	4.15	Challenging
2. I need more materials for LSEN learners.	4.28	Very Challenging
3. I teach learners with different learning speeds.	4.05	Challenging
4. I adjust to the space and set up of my classroom.	3.92	Challenging
5. I work even with limited help from specialists and parents.	4.05	Challenging
6. I lack formal training in handling specific educational needs.	4.10	Challenging
7. I find it difficult to modify lessons for multiple needs.	3.97	Challenging
8. Managing inclusive education is challenging.	4.23	Very Challenging
9. I encounter large class sizes that limit effective inclusive strategies.	3.79	Challenging
10. I lack sufficient guidance on interpreting assessments for LSEN.	4.00	Challenging
11. I feel stressed when dealing with LSEN-related challenges.	4.13	Challenging
12. I have difficulty collaborating with specialists due to availability.	3.95	Challenging
13. Understanding the unconventional language or communication styles of LSEN learners	4.08	Challenging
14. Finding enough time to provide individualized attention to LSEN learners.	4.08	Challenging

Legend:

WMS	DI
4.21 - 5	– Very Challenging
3.41 – 4.20	– Challenging
2.61- 3.40	– Neither
1.81 – 2.60	– Unchallenging
1.0 – 1.8	– Very Unchallenging

Table 4 presents the level of challenges encountered by Grade 1 teachers in implementing inclusive education. Overall, all indicators were interpreted as “Challenging” to “Very Challenging,” indicating that teachers face considerable demands in inclusive classrooms despite their readiness to manage them. The highest mean was recorded in the need for more materials for LSEN learners (WM = 4.28), followed by managing inclusive education (WM = 4.23), both interpreted as “Very Challenging.” These findings highlight resource limitations and the complexity of inclusive teaching. Other indicators such as the need for more time to prepare lessons (WM = 4.15), stress in handling LSEN (WM = 4.13), and lack of formal training (WM = 4.10) further suggest that teachers experience workload pressures and gaps in professional preparation. The lowest mean was observed in large class sizes (WM = 3.79), although still categorized as “Challenging.” This indicates that while class size remains a concern, issues related to resources, time, and training are more pressing. Challenges in lesson modification (WM = 3.97), collaboration with specialists (WM = 3.95), and providing individualized attention (WM = 4.08) also suggest that inclusive education is largely teacher-driven rather than

system-supported. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers demonstrate strong commitment and adaptability; however, inclusive education is constrained by limited resources, insufficient training, and lack of institutional support. These results are supported by Forlin (2010), who emphasized that insufficient training limits teachers' effectiveness in inclusive settings, and Avramidis and Norwich (2002), who argued that teacher readiness alone is insufficient without adequate structural and systemic support.

Table 5.1
Significant Association between the Demographic Profile and the Preparedness
n=39

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Age	-.03	.31	-.05	-.09	.93	No significant association
Civil Status	-.68	1.06	-.24	-.64	.54	No significant association
Highest Educational Attainment	-.30	.57	-.23	-.53	.61	No significant association
Teaching Position	.14	.70	.09	.21	.84	No significant association
Teaching Experience	.87	.56	.66	1.56	.15	No significant association
Number of LSEs currently enrolled	-.06	.26	-.09	-.25	.81	No significant association
Trainings related to SPED or Inclusive Education	.54	.35	.57	1.54	.16	No significant association

Table 5.1 presents the association between the demographic profile of Grade 1 teachers and their level of preparedness in implementing inclusive education. The results reveal that none of the variables show a significant association ($p > .05$). Specifically, age ($p = .93$), civil status ($p = .54$), highest educational attainment ($p = .61$), teaching position ($p = .84$), teaching experience ($p = .15$), number of LSEN ($p = .81$), and SPED-related trainings ($p = .16$) all indicate no significant relationship with preparedness. These findings imply that teachers demonstrate relatively similar levels of preparedness regardless of differences in their demographic and professional background. This suggests that preparedness for inclusive education is not determined by factors such as age, experience, or educational attainment alone. Instead, the results indicate that preparedness may be more influenced by contextual and institutional factors, including access to instructional resources, school support systems, and opportunities for continuous professional development. These findings support previous studies which

emphasize that effective inclusive practice is shaped more by support mechanisms, teacher efficacy, and ongoing professional learning rather than demographic variables (Forlin, 2010; Sharma, 2024). Overall, the findings suggest that demographic characteristics are not sufficient predictors of teachers' preparedness, highlighting the need to strengthen institutional support to enhance inclusive education practices.

Table 5.2
Significant Association between the Demographic Profile and the Implementation
n=39

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Age	-.04	.13	-.19	-.37	.72	No significant association
Civil Status	.18	.44	.16	.42	.68	
Highest Educational Attainment	-.29	.24	-.54	-1.25	.24	
Teaching Position	.24	.29	.35	.82	.44	
Teaching Experience	.09	.23	.17	.40	.70	
Number of LSENs currently enrolled	-.02	.11	-.05	-.14	.89	
Trainings related to SPED or inclusive Education	.06	.14	.14	.38	.71	

Table 5.2 presents the association between the demographic profile of Grade 1 teachers and their level of implementation of inclusive education. The results indicate that no variable shows a significant association ($p > .05$). Specifically, age ($p = .72$), civil status ($p = .68$), highest educational attainment ($p = .24$), teaching position ($p = .44$), teaching experience ($p = .70$), number of LSEN ($p = .89$), and SPED-related trainings ($p = .71$) all revealed no significant relationship with implementation. These findings imply that the level of implementation of inclusive education is generally consistent across teachers, regardless of differences in demographic and professional characteristics. Teachers appear to demonstrate similar levels of inclusive practices in their classrooms, suggesting that implementation is not dependent on individual background factors. Instead, the results suggest that implementation is more likely influenced by contextual and institutional conditions, such as the availability of instructional resources, administrative

support, collaborative practices, and actual classroom experiences. This indicates that teachers rely more on practical strategies, adaptability, and professional commitment in carrying out inclusive practices. Overall, the results highlight the importance of strengthening institutional mechanisms to sustain and enhance inclusive education practices.

Table 5.3
Significant Association between the Demographic Profile and Challenges
n=39

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Age	.05	.14	.19	.35	.74	No significant association
Civil Status	-.02	.46	-.02	-.034	.97	No significant association
Highest Educational Attainment	-.05	.25	-.09	-.20	.85	No significant association
Teaching Position	.20	.31	.28	.65	.54	No significant association
Teaching Experience	-.11	.25	-.19	-.44	.67	No significant association
Number of LSEs currently enrolled	-.05	.11	-.15	-.41	.70	No significant association
Trainings related to SPED or Inclusive Education	-.10	.15	-.26	-.68	.52	No significant association

Table 5.3 presents the association between the demographic profile of Grade 1 teachers and the challenges encountered in implementing inclusive education. The results reveal that none of the variables show a significant association ($p > .05$). Specifically, age ($p = .74$), civil status ($p = .97$), highest educational attainment ($p = .85$), teaching position ($p = .54$), teaching experience ($p = .67$), number of LSEN ($p = .70$), and SPED-related trainings ($p = .52$) all indicate no statistically significant relationship.

These findings suggest that the challenges experienced by teachers in inclusive education are relatively uniform across different demographic and professional groups.

Regardless of variations in background characteristics, teachers tend to encounter similar levels of difficulty in inclusive classroom settings.

The results further imply that these challenges are largely influenced by contextual and institutional factors rather than individual characteristics. Factors such as limited instructional materials, insufficient support services, large class sizes, time constraints, and workload demands appear to play a more critical role. This indicates that the difficulties in implementing inclusive education are systemic rather than personal.

Table 6
Significant Relationship among the Preparedness, Implementation, and
Challenges Encountered
n=39

Source of relationship	Mean	Std. Deviation	Comp. r	Comp. p value	Critical p value	Interpretation
Preparedness	3.44	.70	0.25	0.12	0.05	No significant relationship
Implementation	4.07	.32				
Preparedness	3.44	.70	-0.05	0.75	0.05	No significant relationship
Challenges	4.05	.41				
Implementation	4.07	.32	0.20	0.22	0.05	No significant relationship

Table 6 presents the relationships among teachers' preparedness, implementation of inclusive education, and challenges encountered. The results reveal that no significant relationships exist among the three variables ($p > .05$). Specifically, preparedness and implementation show a weak positive correlation ($r = 0.25$, $p = .12$), preparedness and challenges show a negligible negative correlation ($r = -0.05$, $p = .75$), and implementation and challenges also show a weak positive correlation ($r = 0.20$, $p = .22$). All computed p-values exceed the 0.05 level of significance, indicating no statistically significant associations. These findings suggest that teachers' level of preparedness does not necessarily influence how inclusive education is implemented nor determine the extent of challenges encountered in the classroom. Likewise, the degree of implementation is not significantly related to the challenges experienced by teachers. Despite moderate preparedness and high implementation levels, challenges remain present, indicating that these variables operate independently in this context.

The results imply that other factors beyond individual preparedness—such as institutional support, availability of resources, collaboration with specialists, and classroom conditions—may play a more substantial role in shaping both implementation and challenges. This suggests that inclusive education is a complex process influenced by multiple interacting factors rather than a direct linear relationship among preparedness, practice, and difficulty. Overall, the results highlight the need to strengthen contextual and institutional mechanisms to support teachers in implementing inclusive education effectively while managing associated challenges.

DISCUSSION

This section synthesizes the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study on the preparedness, implementation, and challenges of inclusive education among Grade 1 teachers in the BIBACASIPI Sub-Congressional District for School Year 2025–2026. The study involved thirty-nine (39) Grade 1 teachers selected through complete enumeration, ensuring full representation of those handling learners with special educational needs (LSEN). The discussion integrates the major results in relation to the research questions and hypotheses. Conclusions are drawn based on the analyzed data, and recommendations are proposed to enhance inclusive education practices and inform future research.

Findings

Demographic Profile. The majority of the respondents were female, married, and within the early to mid-career age range. Most had master's units, held Teacher II or Teacher III positions, and had 11–15 years of teaching experience. Most teachers handled at least one learner with special educational needs (LSEN) and had attended district-level training related to inclusive education.

Level of Preparedness. Teachers demonstrated a moderate level of preparedness. They were prepared in terms of identifying LSEN, conducting informal assessments, and showing positive attitudes toward inclusive education. However, gaps were noted in institutional support, including limited access to training, instructional materials, collaboration with SPED specialists, and time for individualized instruction.

Level of Implementation. The implementation of inclusive education was rated as Implemented. Teachers consistently applied differentiated instruction, multisensory strategies, peer tutoring, and inclusive classroom practices, indicating effective classroom-level implementation despite moderate preparedness.

Challenges Encountered. Teachers experienced moderate to high challenges, particularly in terms of lack of instructional materials, limited time for individualized instruction, large class sizes, insufficient SPED training, and workload-related stress. These challenges reflect systemic and resource-related constraints.

Significant Relationship and Association. The results revealed that there was no significant association between demographic and professional characteristics and the variables of preparedness, implementation, and challenges. Likewise, there was no significant relationship among preparedness, implementation, and challenges, indicating that these variables operate independently and may be influenced by external factors.

Conclusions

Grade 1 teachers in the BIBACASIPI Sub-Congressional District demonstrate a moderate level of preparedness in implementing inclusive education for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN). While they exhibit adequate foundational knowledge and positive attitudes toward inclusion, their readiness remains limited by insufficient specialized training and institutional support. In terms of implementation, inclusive education practices are generally evident and consistently applied in the classroom. Teachers show adaptability and commitment in addressing diverse learner needs under the MATATAG Curriculum. However, the quality and consistency of implementation are influenced by classroom conditions and the availability of resources. Regarding challenges, teachers experience notable difficulties in managing inclusive classrooms, particularly in relation to limited instructional materials, lack of assistive resources, time constraints, and increased workload. These factors hinder the effective and sustained delivery of inclusive education. Overall, inclusive education is actively practiced in Grade 1 classrooms; however, its effectiveness depends largely on strengthened institutional support, adequate resource provision, and continuous professional development for teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1. School leaders** may utilize the findings to better understand the challenges faced by Grade 1 teachers in implementing inclusive education. They may strengthen support systems by providing targeted professional development, continuous mentoring, and technical assistance. In addition, they may ensure adequate provision of instructional materials and promote collaborative practices to create a more supportive and inclusive school environment.
- 2. Grade 1 teachers** may use the results as a guide in improving their inclusive teaching practices. They may enhance their competencies in differentiated instruction, classroom management, and learner assessment to better address diverse needs, particularly of LSEN. Engaging in continuous professional learning, reflective practice, and collaboration with peers and specialists may further improve their effectiveness.
- 3. Parents and guardians** may strengthen their involvement by maintaining open communication with teachers and actively participating in school-related activities. Increased collaboration between home and school may help ensure consistency in supporting LSEN and reinforce learning strategies beyond the classroom.
- 4. Policy makers and educational researchers** may use the findings as a basis for improving policies and programs related to inclusive education. They may focus on enhancing teacher training systems, increasing access to resources, and addressing classroom-level challenges. Future research may also explore additional factors such as school leadership, support systems, and resource availability to further strengthen inclusive education practices.

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR ENHANCING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GRADE 1

Rationale

Inclusive education is a core mandate of the Department of Education that promotes equitable access to quality learning opportunities for all learners, particularly learners with special educational needs (LSEN). The findings of this study revealed that Grade 1 teachers in the BIBACASIPI Sub-Congressional District demonstrate a moderate level of preparedness and a level of implementation rated as Implemented in inclusive education practices. Teachers consistently apply differentiated instruction, multisensory strategies, peer tutoring, and individualized support, reflecting strong commitment and effective classroom-level execution of inclusive education.

However, despite this implementation, the study also revealed key gaps in preparedness, particularly in terms of limited institutional support, insufficient SPED-related training, inadequate instructional materials, and time constraints in providing individualized instruction. In addition, teachers reported persistent challenges such as large class sizes, workload demands, lack of formal SPED specialization, limited collaboration with specialists, and stress in managing diverse learners. These findings indicate that while teachers are capable and committed, their effectiveness is constrained by structural and resource-related limitations.

Furthermore, the results of the study showed no significant relationship between demographic and professional characteristics and the variables of preparedness, implementation, and challenges, as well as no significant relationship among these variables. This suggests that inclusive education outcomes are not determined by teacher profile, but are more strongly influenced by institutional support systems, availability of resources, and school-based mechanisms.

In light of these findings, there is a clear need for a structured and sustainable action plan that will strengthen professional development, improve access to instructional resources, enhance collaboration among stakeholders, and provide continuous technical support to teachers. This action plan aims to bridge existing gaps in preparedness, sustain effective implementation practices, reduce workload-related constraints, and ultimately improve both the academic and socio-emotional development of LSEN learners. Its implementation is essential in ensuring a more inclusive, responsive, and sustainable education system in the district.

Objectives

This proposed development program aims to strengthen the Inclusive Education program for Grade 1 teachers in the BIBACASIPI Sub-Congressional District.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. Enhance the preparedness of Grade 1 teachers in handling LSEN through continuous and specialized SPED training programs.
2. Strengthen institutional support by improving access to inclusive instructional materials, assistive devices, and classroom adaptations.
3. Promote stronger collaboration among teachers, SPED specialists, school administrators, and parents in supporting inclusive education.
4. Address workload and time-related challenges by providing mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance to teachers.
5. Sustain effective and consistent implementation of inclusive classroom practices that support LSEN learners' academic and socio-emotional development.

Mechanics of Implementation

The implementation of the Inclusive Education Enhancement Program shall follow a structured top-down approach to ensure alignment with national and division-level policies and the effective delivery of inclusive education practices. Initially, the Division Office may provide clear policy direction, technical assistance, and potential resource allocation to strengthen the implementation of inclusive education across schools. The Division's Curriculum and Instruction Unit shall spearhead orientation programs and capacity-building activities for school heads, guidance counselors, and SPED coordinators. These activities shall focus on strengthening understanding of inclusive education policies, assessment procedures, and appropriate intervention strategies for learners with special educational needs (LSEN).

At the school level, the School Head together with the Inclusive Education Coordinator shall lead the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the program. They shall facilitate school-based training sessions for Grade 1 teachers focusing on differentiated instruction, classroom management strategies, inclusive assessment practices, and learner-centered approaches. They shall also oversee the acquisition, allocation, and utilization of inclusive instructional materials, assistive devices, and necessary classroom modifications to support LSEN learners.

At the classroom level, Grade 1 teachers shall directly implement inclusive education strategies through differentiated activities, individualized learning plans, formative assessment practices, and consistent collaboration with parents, guardians, and support personnel. Teachers shall ensure that instructional delivery is responsive to the diverse needs of learners while maintaining an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Active participation of parents and guardians shall be encouraged through regular orientations, consultation meetings, and home-based support activities to reinforce school-based interventions and ensure continuity of learning support at home.

Finally, a continuous monitoring and evaluation system shall be established, where teachers regularly submit progress reports to the School Head. The School Head shall

consolidate and analyze these reports for submission to the Division Office to ensure ongoing assessment, feedback, and continuous improvement of inclusive education practices.

Schedule of Implementation

The implementation of the Inclusive Education Enhancement Program may be carried out in a step-by-step schedule throughout the school year. At the beginning of the school year, the Division Office may conduct orientation sessions and provide guidelines on inclusive education. Planning meetings with school heads and key personnel may also be conducted to prepare for proper implementation.

In the first quarter, school leaders may organize training and capacity-building activities for Grade 1 teachers. These activities may focus on differentiated instruction, classroom management, and assessment strategies for learners with special educational needs (LSEN). During the same period, instructional materials and learning resources may be prepared and distributed.

In the second to third quarters, Grade 1 teachers may implement inclusive education strategies in their classrooms. They may use differentiated activities, provide individual support, and conduct regular assessments for learners. Parent meetings and consultations may also be conducted during this period to strengthen home-school collaboration.

Throughout the school year, monitoring and feedback activities may be conducted regularly. Teachers may submit progress reports, while school heads may review and use these reports to improve instruction and support.

At the end of the school year, all reports and outputs may be consolidated and used as basis for evaluating the implementation and improving future inclusive education programs.

Table 7
Proposed Action Plan

Areas of Concern	Objectives	Strategies / Activities	Persons Responsible	Proposed Budget	Source of Budget	Success Indicators (MOV's)
1. Teacher Preparedness	Strengthen the existing system in assessing and ensuring teachers' preparedness in handling LSEN and implementing inclusive education	Conduct initial and regular assessments of teacher readiness; provide mentoring and coaching; and hold SPED-focused LAC sessions and INSET training.	School Heads, Master Teachers, SPED Coordinators	₱50,000	School MOOE , DepEd Funds	Copy of teacher readiness assessment tools, summary of results, IPCRF/PPST-related self-assessment forms, LAC session outputs, coaching and mentoring logs with signatures

2.Implementation (Delivery of Inclusive Education Practices in Classrooms)	Ensure effective implementation of inclusive education strategies aligned with MATATAG Curriculum	Classroom observation and feedback (COT-based); demonstration teaching; integration of differentiated instruction strategies in daily lesson implementation	School head, Master Teacher, Teachers	₱30,000	School MOOE	Classroom Observation Tool (COT) results, lesson plans with annotations, sample daily lesson logs, photos of actual classroom teaching with LSEN engagement
3.Challenges 3.1 Lack of Instructional Materials (Resource Provision)	Provide sufficient, developmentally appropriate, and differentiated instructional materials for LSEN	Develop and reproduce learning materials such as flashcards, number charts, alphabet charts, picture cards, visual aids, and manipulatives; establish resource corner in classrooms	Teachers, LRMDS Coordinator, School Head	₱40,00	School MOOE /LGU Support	Printed and laminated flashcards (numbers, letters, shapes), picture-based learning charts, manipulatives (blocks, counters), reading charts, classroom photos showing resource corner.
3.2 Classroom Management in Inclusive Education	Improve teachers' ability in managing diverse learners within inclusive classrooms	Conduct coaching on behavior management strategies; peer sharing of best practices; training on positive discipline	School Head, Master Teachers	₱20,000	School Fund	Behavior management plan per classroom, classroom rules posters, observation notes on learner behavior, teacher reflection journals, coaching documentation.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study adhered to established ethical standards in educational research. Prior approval was obtained from the appropriate school authorities, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. All data collected were used solely for academic purposes and were handled with strict privacy and ethical consideration throughout the research process.

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