

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Immersive Training in Enhancing Special Education Teachers' Readiness and Capacity to Support Learners with Disabilities

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Abstract: This study evaluated the effectiveness of immersive training in enhancing Special Education (SPED) teachers' readiness and capacity to support learners with disabilities. Using a descriptive–correlational research design, data were collected from 25 SPED teachers across eight public elementary schools under the Department of Education, Cebu Province Division. A validated researcher-made questionnaire assessed the impact of immersive training on teachers' pedagogical competence, confidence, and instructional adaptability. Findings revealed that teachers who underwent extensive immersive experiences—such as practicum, internships, and supervised classroom engagements—demonstrated higher levels of readiness and effectiveness, particularly in behavior management, instructional planning, and IEP implementation. Gaps remained in managing learners with multiple disabilities and in the consistent use of evidence-based interventions. Statistical analysis showed a moderate positive correlation between immersive training and teacher readiness and effectiveness ($r = 0.594$, $p = 0.002$), confirming that immersive training significantly enhances SPED teachers' professional competence. The study concludes that immersive training fosters reflective practice, confidence, and adaptability essential for inclusive education. Based on these findings, the Proposed Strategies for Enhanced SPED Teacher Readiness were developed, emphasizing structured mentoring, reflective learning, and continuous professional development. Strengthening partnerships among DepEd, CHED, and Teacher Education Institutions is recommended to institutionalize standardized, evidence-based immersive training programs that equip SPED teachers to meet the diverse needs of learners with disabilities.

Keywords: immersive training, SPED teacher readiness, inclusive education, teacher effectiveness, professional development.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

The demand for proficient and responsive Special Education (SPED) teachers continues to grow as educational systems transition to inclusive learning settings. Research constantly demonstrates a continuous gap between theoretical preparation and practical performance. Almahdi (2020) and Hassanein et al. (2021) discovered that numerous novice special education teachers in various countries exhibit confidence in theoretical knowledge yet feel ill-equipped to navigate the intricate realities of classroom management and differentiated instruction. In nations like Australia, immersive experiences—such as prolonged practicums and mentor-supported internships—are essential to teacher training, with a minimum of 60 days of mandated practicum guaranteeing genuine interaction with learners with disabilities (Delaney & Macquarie, 2023). Fairbrother et al.

(2024) similarly highlighted that mentorship and immersive experiences mitigate first-year burnout and bolster confidence in inclusive classrooms.

The Philippines continues to have systemic obstacles in the preparation of SPED teachers, notwithstanding the demands of Republic Act No. 11650, known as the Inclusive Education Act. Entrampas (2024) indicated that more than 70% of pre-service special education instructors have low confidence in managing learners with various disabilities, despite having completed their courses. Espeño et al. (2024) additionally cited challenges including underfunded schools, inflexible curricula, and restricted practicum opportunities. These obstacles impede the execution of inclusive education policy and restrict educators' capacity to conduct evidence-based solutions. Conventional training methods sometimes prioritize theory over practical application, resulting in educators being inadequately equipped to address the varied requirements of students with disabilities.

In the Cebu Province Division, numerous SPED educators persist in managing inclusive classrooms with insufficient practical training and restricted access to organized mentorship. Educational institutions frequently lack the capability to offer genuine training environments that foster reflective practice, classroom flexibility, and personalized instruction. Immersive training—via prolonged practicum, simulation, or supervised internships—provides a potential remedy by connecting theoretical knowledge with practical application. Buragohain et al. (2024) and American University (2024) endorse this methodology, highlighting that experiential learning cultivates empathy, adaptability, and confidence—qualities vital for proficient special education instruction. Notwithstanding these insights, a dearth of empirical studies exists in the Philippine setting that quantitatively investigates the impact of immersion training on the preparation and effectiveness of SPED teachers. This disparity constrains evidence-based enhancements in teacher education programs and professional development efforts.

This study aims to ascertain the correlation between immersive training and the preparedness and efficacy of SPED instructors in public elementary schools in Cebu. This study investigates the impact of immersive exposure on teacher proficiency in behavior management, instructional planning, and the execution of individualized education programs (IEPs), with the objective of producing actionable insights to enhance local teacher preparation frameworks.

The results of this research are anticipated to inform the improvement of special education teacher training and professional development programs in the Philippines. Findings may substantiate the establishment of immersive, mentor-assisted training inside Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) and advocate for the alignment of DepEd and CHED policies to guarantee coherence between pre-service preparation and in-service practice. The study reinforces the national objective of providing equal, high-quality, and inclusive education for those with disabilities.

Theoretical Background of the Study

This study is anchored on a synthesis of proven learning theories that collectively illustrate how immersive training improves the preparedness and efficacy of Special Education (SPED) teachers. These theories, by incorporating experiential, apprenticeship, and motivational views, establish a multifaceted basis for comprehending how genuine, field-based experiences create professional competence in inclusive educational settings.

John Dewey's Theory of Learning by Doing (1938) underpins this study, asserting that knowledge is optimally acquired by active engagement and practical problem-solving. Dewey contended that learning attains significance when learners interact directly with their environment—an idea that remains crucial in special education teacher preparation. His concept emphasizes that pre-service teachers gain the most by applying theoretical knowledge through organized, practical experiences that reflect genuine classroom environments. Modern academics, including Solayao and Dizon (2022) and Timmons et al. (2022), advocate for enhanced incorporation of experiential learning to bolster the preparedness and practical proficiency of SPED educators.

In conjunction with Dewey's framework, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) conceptualizes learning as a cyclical process comprising active experimentation, abstract

conceptualization, real experience, and reflective analysis. Immersive training facilitates the internalization of knowledge for teachers through actual or simulated classroom experiences. Empirical research confirms that Kolb's paradigm fosters reflective practice, adaptability, and instructional flexibility—essential characteristics of proficient SPED educators (Rowe et al., 2020; Test et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2023; Anselmann, 2023; Wijnen-Meijer et al., 2022). Through iterative experiences and reflection, educators tailor classes to diverse student requirements and enhance tactics depending on feedback and contextual variations.

The Cognitive Apprenticeship Model by Collins, Brown, and Newman (1989) is equally pertinent, emphasizing learning via directed involvement and expert modeling. This paradigm elucidates the process by which pre-service teachers acquire expertise as mentors exemplify excellent practices, offer scaffolding, and progressively delegate teaching duties. Research conducted in the Philippines by Rayos and Capulong (2022) and Jumawan (2021) underscores the necessity of mentorship and structured reflection in immersive programs for enhancing the competence and confidence of SPED instructors. Recent studies corroborate this paradigm, demonstrating that mentorship-based immersive experiences improve adaptive competence and reflective decision-making (Lee, 2023).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (1985; 2017), introduces a motivational aspect to the frameworks focused on skills in special education teacher development. The theory asserts that individuals exhibit heightened engagement and efficacy when their innate psychological drives for social belongingness, personal agency, and competence, are met. In immersive training environments, when educators feel empowered to make instructional choices, proficient in implementing interventions, and engaged with peers and mentors, they demonstrate increased motivation and professional development. Empirical data substantiates this connection, demonstrating that surroundings that satisfy needs improve engagement, perseverance, and instructional effectiveness (Wang et al., 2024; Yurou et al., 2024).

Collectively, these theoretical approaches establish a unified framework that links experiential practice, directed mentorship, and intrinsic motivation. They jointly demonstrate how immersive training fosters the knowledge, confidence, and professional autonomy necessary for SPED instructors to excel in inclusive educational settings.

Legal Bases

The integration of immersive training in special education teacher preparation is strongly rooted in Philippine legislation and policies that advocate for inclusive education and professional proficiency among educators. These legal foundations underscore the significance of structured, experiential learning as a crucial element in equipping educators for the varied and intricate realities of special education practice.

Republic Act No. 5250 (1968) established the basis for formal Special Education (SPED) training in the Philippines by requiring supervised education for educators working with children with special needs. This initial legislation underscores the significance of practical experience in developing pedagogical proficiency, closely correlating with Dewey's Learning by Doing and Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which stress reflective and genuine involvement in real-world situations.

Republic Act No. 7277, known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities, ensures access to inclusive education and emphasizes the importance of specialized teacher training. The law acknowledges that successful inclusion relies on educators' ability to modify curriculum, formulate Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and engage with interdisciplinary teams—all essential elements of comprehensive training models.

Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) further reinforces this duty by institutionalizing inclusive education at all educational levels and mandating the implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), family engagement, and inter-agency collaboration. These provisions reflect the competencies cultivated by immersion SPED programs, which replicate real duties to equip pre-service teachers for genuine teaching contexts.

Republic Act No. 11713, referred to as the Excellence in Teacher Education Act, mandates curriculum reform that prioritizes practice-based and supervised learning. This corresponds with the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model, wherein directed involvement and feedback from seasoned mentors facilitate professional development and preparedness for classroom dynamics.

DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021 mandates the creation of self-contained classes for learners with mild to profound disabilities. It underscores the necessity for proficient SPED educators adept in personalized education, behavioral intervention, and program modification—essential competencies cultivated through comprehensive training. These laws and rules collectively establish a robust legislative framework that facilitates the use of experiential and immersive methodologies in special education teacher training, guaranteeing that teacher preparedness is both theoretically informed and contextually relevant.

Local Context

In the Philippines, immersive training is an essential element of SPED teacher preparation, acting as the link between theory and practical application in the classroom. Notwithstanding its acknowledged significance, inconsistency endures in program design, mentor oversight, and placement contexts. Gallarde, Torres, and Yanga (2022) discovered that although practicum experiences are greatly esteemed, preservice instructors frequently have restricted exposure to the comprehensive range of disability categories or behavioral management situations. Rectifying these disparities via organized, supervised, and extended field placements can guarantee that training goals are effectively realized in inclusive classroom proficiency.

Despite advanced legal and institutional frameworks, a significant disparity persists between anticipated teacher competencies and actual classroom performance. Entrampas (2023) highlighted that numerous SPED educators still perceive themselves as inadequately equipped to execute inclusive tactics, especially in behavior management and the formulation of customized education. Espeño et al. (2024) identified systemic obstacles, including inflexible curricula, restricted school partnerships, and inadequate practicum time, as significant problems impacting teacher preparedness and sustained professional development.

In rural SPED classrooms, where educators encounter multi-grade and multi-disability environments, differentiated teaching frequently constitutes the principal method for inclusion in the context of limited resources. Solayao and Dizon (2022) noted that educators utilize adaptive ways to mitigate the absence of specialist materials, whereas Abad and Sumayo (2024) highlighted that the inventiveness and contextual adaptation of Filipino SPED teachers facilitate the maintenance of inclusive learning despite limitations. These findings underscore the Self-Determination Theory's principles of competence and autonomy, demonstrating that teachers cultivate resourcefulness when aided by reflective and experiential learning frameworks.

Espeño, Santos, and Villanueva (2024) observed that elevated caseloads and concurrent duties in rural schools intensify the necessity for differentiated instruction and IEP-based planning, emphasizing the requirement for ongoing mentoring and systematic professional development. Delaney and Macquarie (2023) asserted that alignment between academic coursework and practical experience reinforces confidence and proficiency, especially when practicum programs are overseen by adept mentors. This discovery corresponds with the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model, wherein modeling, mentoring, and reflection create professional expertise.

The integration of IEPs has emerged as a crucial indicator of instructional quality in inclusive education. Graham, Berman, and Van Bergen (2024) discovered that proficient IEP execution promotes collaboration, accountability, and uniformity in lesson planning. Educators skilled in IEP-driven instruction have enhanced differentiating abilities and better student results, highlighting the significance of experience immersion in cultivating these skills.

Recent local and global studies corroborate that immersive training improves teacher readiness in special education. Nguyen and Torres (2024) and Walker (2023) both indicated that experiential immersion—integrating direct classroom practice with reflective supervision—substantially

enhances teacher confidence and the efficacy of inclusive instruction. Similarly, the Camarines Norte Learning Delivery Readiness study (2024) and Magallanes (2025) confirmed that genuine field interaction enhances readiness and reflective competency in preservice SPED teachers. This corresponds with DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, which advocates for genuine classroom immersion as an integral component of preservice training.

Carvalho, Gonçalves, and Santos (2023) shown that virtual simulations and video coaching can significantly boost immersive learning, fostering reflective practice and preparedness for various learners. Alibudbud (2024) determined that continuous and reflective immersion professional development enhances the long-term instructional competence, classroom management, and differentiating skills of SPED instructors. Furthermore, Fairbrother, Liu, and Reyes (2024) emphasized the advantages of technology-assisted IEP tools in improving data recording, progress monitoring, and communication among educators, especially in under-resourced schools.

These studies collectively confirm that structured and reflective immersive training, whether via physical placements or digital simulations, enhances SPED instructors' preparedness, instructional efficacy, and ability to provide fair learning experiences. In the Philippine context, it is imperative to guarantee that immersion programs adhere to legislation while simultaneously addressing the distinct realities of local SPED classrooms. This study aims to assess how effectively well-structured immersive training may reconcile the disparity between policy objectives and classroom implementation, connecting teacher preparedness with the abilities necessary for inclusive education.

Empirical Evidence on Immersive Training

An increasing amount of empirical research highlights the crucial importance of immersive training in improving the readiness, confidence, and efficacy of special education (SPED) teachers. In contrast to conventional coursework, immersive learning places pre-service and in-service educators in genuine classroom environments, where theoretical knowledge is converted into practical application. Immersive training cultivates adaptive expertise, resilience, and professional confidence through structured interaction, reflective supervision, and feedback-driven experiences—qualities vital for managing inclusive and self-contained special education environments. These results embody the fundamental principles of Dewey's Learning by Doing, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, Cognitive Apprenticeship, and Self-Determination Theory, which collectively elucidate how practical experience, guided mentorship, and intrinsic motivation coalesce to foster teacher readiness and instructional efficacy.

Global Perspectives on Immersive SPED Training

Global empirical investigations confirm that immersive training integrates theory and practice by offering organized opportunities for reflection

and contextualized learning. Almahdi (2020) discovered that 70% of pre-service teachers in Bahrain perceived themselves as inadequately prepared for inclusive classrooms due to insufficient practical experience, exemplifying Dewey's assertion that experiential involvement is essential for substantive learning. Chadwell, Wills, and Taylor (2022) revealed that mixed-reality simulations improved the teaching skills and confidence of SPED candidates in the United States, directly reflecting Kolb's experiential learning cycle. Tibi et al. (2023) similarly demonstrated that even short, genuine interactions with learners with intellectual disabilities can enhance self-efficacy when guided reflection is incorporated. Global study correlates immersive learning with educators' ability to implement differentiated teaching proficiently. Flores and Ferreira (2023) noted that professional development that combines theory with practice enhances teachers' preparedness for varied classrooms, whereas Tomlinson and Murphy (2021) recognized mentoring—a fundamental component of the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model—as essential for achieving mastery in differentiation. Australian research (Delaney & Macquarie, 2023; Graham et al., 2024) indicates that prolonged practicums with continuous mentorship enhance adaptation and instructional efficacy. These data collectively confirm that immersive methods translate theoretical learning into

practical ability. **Immersive Training and Teacher Readiness**—Immersive and experiential teacher education programs routinely improve preparedness by augmenting pedagogical knowledge, reflective ability and instructional confidence (Buragohain, Saikia, & Bhuyan, 2024). Continuous mentorship throughout the practicum enhances teacher self-efficacy and adaptive behavior management (Buragohain, Das, & Deka, 2024). These findings align with Kolb's focus on introspection and active experimentation as catalysts for competence. Cahapay (2023), Campado et al. (2023), and Gallarde et al. (2022) discovered that experiential programs enhance instructors' confidence in managing various difficulties, corroborating Dewey's claim that genuine experiences foster enduring comprehension. Exposure to diverse learner profiles (Martinez et al., 2023; Yekegat Primary School, 2024) fosters cognitive

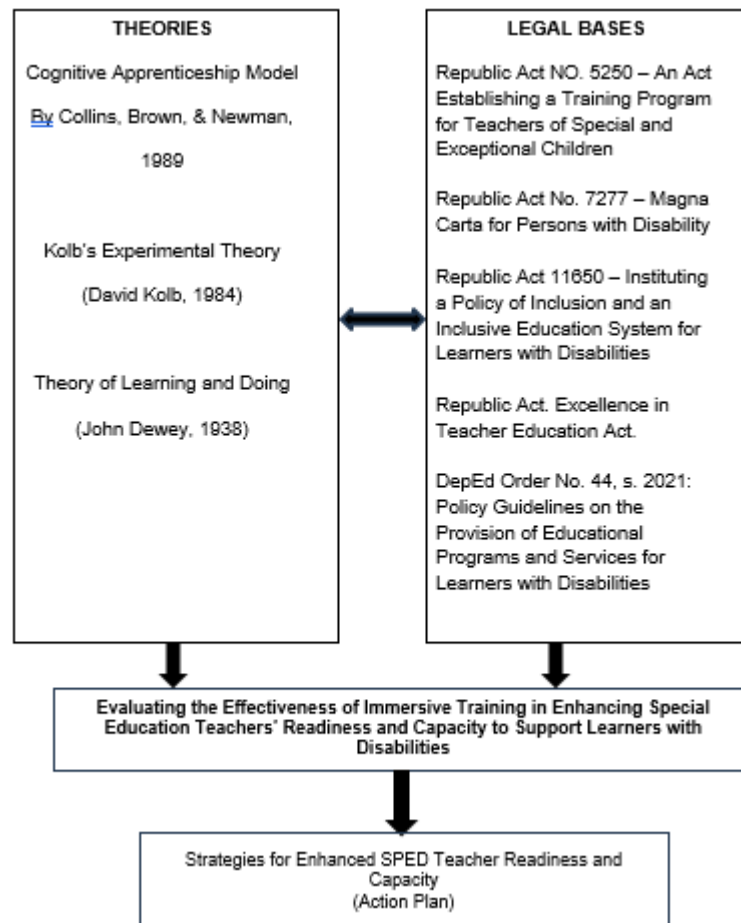


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Study

flexibility and resilience—results associated with the emphasis on autonomy and competence in Self-Determination Theory.

Instructional planning and IEP preparation are significantly enhanced by immersive interaction. Graham et al. (2024), Espeño et al. (2024), and Delaney and Macquarie (2023) demonstrated that mentorship and structured practice improve teachers' proficiency in developing IEP-aligned curriculum. These results explicitly illustrate the focus of Cognitive Apprenticeship on instructional demonstration, guided practice, and scaffolding in genuine circumstances

Empirical research (Campado, Toquero, & Ulanday, 2023; Test et al., 2022) demonstrates that immersive programs lasting several weeks result in enhanced professional competence, aligning with Kolb's experience learning cycle. Research indicates that graduate-level education and pedagogical experience enhance this effect by integrating theoretical knowledge with reflective and practical application (Abu-Hamour et al., 2022; Buragohain et al., 2024).

Moreover, research on classroom management (Reyes & Santos, 2023; Nguyen & Pham, 2024; Alcantara & Villanueva, 2025) indicates that immersive training improves teachers' proficiency in applying behavior management frameworks like PBIS and culturally responsive strategies—

competencies bolstered by guided reflection and mentorship, as posited by Cognitive Apprenticeship theory.

Simulation and Virtual Practicum Models

A recent study indicates that simulation-based and virtual immersive models enhance access to experiential learning. Kwon and Jeong (2023) and Carvalho, Gonçalves, and Santos (2023) discovered that multi-scenario simulations enhance decision-making, reflective capacity, and confidence, exemplifying Kolb's learning cycle of active experimentation and reflection. Lee (2023) established that simulation-based practicums, when coupled with feedback, yield results comparable to conventional fieldwork. These findings correspond with the principles of Cognitive Apprenticeship, which highlight the need of guided practice and scaffolding.

Martinez, Anselmann, and Wijnen-Meijer (2023) together with Yekegat Primary School (2024) indicated that virtual and hybrid practicums improve flexibility and instructional planning. These programs enable educators to implement theoretical frameworks in regulated yet genuine settings, fostering self-efficacy aligned with the notion of autonomy in Self-Determination Theory.

Challenges and Innovations in SPED Teacher Development

Research identifies persistent demographic, institutional, and systemic elements that influence immersive training results. The SPED workforce is primarily female, with mid-career educators demonstrating increased stability and receptiveness to mentorship-oriented professional development (Myrie et al., 2024; Delaney & Macquarie, 2023). These patterns corroborate the Cognitive Apprenticeship perspective that seasoned practitioners gain advantages from reflective and mentor-facilitated learning contexts.

Professional growth is crucial for maintaining inclusive practices. Research (Jumawan, 2021; Solayao & Dizon, 2022; Timmons et al., 2022) indicates that engagement in ongoing training bolsters confidence and instructional flexibility; yet, obstacles remain in rural regions due to restricted access (Rayos & Capulong, 2022). The number of classes and the diversity of learners exacerbate these issues (Buragohain, Das, & Deka, 2024; Smit & Humpert, 2022), underscoring the necessity for comprehensive, guided preparation.

Evidence-based practices (EBPs) and assistive technologies are fundamental to effective training. Hume et al. (2021) and Stahmer et al. (2023) highlighted that immersive training enhances teachers' adherence to evidence-based practices, whereas Reyes and Santos (2023) and Alcantara and Villanueva (2025) demonstrated that practice-based mentoring improves behavioral management results. This aligns with the ideas of Dewey and Kolb, which assert that practical involvement, reflection, and ongoing improvement are fundamental to professional development.

Gaps and Implications for Local SPED Programs

Notwithstanding the broad acknowledgment of the efficacy of immersive training, discrepancies in execution persist. Timmons et al. (2022) and Cahapay (2023) observed discrepancies in program duration and feedback quality, influencing teacher preparedness. Integrating continuous mentorship and courses centered on differentiation may enhance outcomes.

Camarines Norte Learning Delivery Readiness (2024) and Gallarde et al. (2024) emphasized that localized immersive programs, when matched with the principles of Self-Determination Theory about autonomy and competence, enhance teacher confidence and instructional flexibility. However, insufficient exposure to intricate special education environments and deficiencies in mentorship persist in obstructing effectiveness.

The examined research confirms that immersive training improves SPED teacher preparedness and efficacy via experiential engagement (Dewey, Kolb), structured mentorship (Cognitive Apprenticeship), and motivational reinforcement (Self-Determination Theory). These interconnected frameworks offer a unified basis for elucidating how genuine, reflective, and guided experiences cultivate professional competence and self-efficacy in special education settings.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

It was evident that several SPED teachers felt unprepared **to** handle the diverse demands of self-contained learning environments despite having completed their internships and classroom deployment. Hence, this study aimed to assess how the extent and quality of immersive training experiences impacted teacher readiness and effectiveness among SPED teachers in self-contained classroom settings. Specifically, this research addressed the following questions:

1. What was the profile of the SPED teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 age and gender,
 - 1.2 highest educational attainment,
 - 1.3 length of service,
 - 1.4 number and type of SPED-related seminars/trainings attended,
 - 1.5 type of SPED learners handled, and
 - 1.6 number of learners with special needs handled?
2. What was the level of impact of immersive training experiences on SPED teaching?
3. What was the level of teacher readiness and teaching effectiveness among SPED teachers in self-contained classroom settings in terms of:
 - 3.1 knowledge of diverse disabilities,
 - 3.2 instructional planning and use of IEPs,
 - 3.3 confidence in handling multi-disability learners,
 - 3.4 implementation of differentiated instruction,
 - 3.5 use of evidence-based teaching strategies, and
 - 3.6 effectiveness in managing student behavior?
4. Was there a significant relationship between immersive training experiences and teachers' readiness and effectiveness in handling students with special needs?
5. Based on the findings, what strategies were proposed to develop a training model that would enhance the structure, delivery, and effectiveness of immersive training programs for SPED teachers?

Statement of the Null Hypothesis

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypothesis was **tested** at the 0.05 level of significance:

H₀: There **was no significant relationship** between immersive training and teachers' readiness and effectiveness in handling students with special needs.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it provides empirical evidence on how immersive training strengthens the readiness and capacity of Special Education (SPED) teachers to support learners with disabilities. By analyzing the correlation between experiential learning and teacher effectiveness, the findings aim to contribute to the enhancement of teacher preparation, instructional quality, and inclusive education practices in the Philippines. The results of this study will benefit several stakeholders, each of whom plays a vital role in the advancement of special education.

SPED Teachers. As the primary beneficiaries, SPED teachers will directly gain from the insights of this study. The results highlight how immersive, mentor-guided experiences enhance

instructional competence, classroom management, and reflective practice. The findings can also guide teachers in identifying areas requiring further development—particularly in handling multi-disability learners and implementing evidence-based teaching strategies.

Students with Disabilities. The ultimate beneficiaries of improved teacher preparation are students with disabilities. Strengthened SPED teacher readiness ensures that learners receive more differentiated, adaptive, and inclusive instruction. As teachers become more confident and effective, students are more likely to experience meaningful participation, improved academic outcomes, and supportive learning environments.

School Administrators and SPED Coordinators. The results provide school leaders with a framework for assessing and improving immersive programs and teacher support systems. Administrators can use the findings to enhance mentoring structures, allocate resources efficiently, and promote continuous professional development programs tailored to SPED teachers' needs.

Department of Education (DepEd). At the policy level, DepEd can utilize the study's findings to refine existing SPED teacher preparation and certification standards. The research outcomes can inform updates to DepEd Orders and program implementation guidelines, ensuring that immersive training aligns with national goals under Republic Act No. 11650 or the Inclusive Education Act.

Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs). This study offers valuable input for curriculum developers and teacher-training institutions. Findings may guide the redesign of practicum and immersive components within SPED education programs, ensuring they integrate reflective practice, mentorship, and sufficient duration to achieve maximum professional growth.

Parents and Families of Learners with Disabilities. Families stand to benefit indirectly through the improved competence of SPED teachers. When teachers are better equipped to meet learners' needs, parents gain greater confidence in the educational system and are more encouraged to collaborate in individualized educational planning and implementation.

Local Government Units (LGUs) and Community Organizations. LGUs and advocacy groups can use the study's insights to strengthen partnerships with schools and support inclusive education initiatives at the local level. The findings may inspire programs that promote teacher training, community awareness, and resource mobilization for SPED classrooms.

Researchers and Future Scholars. Finally, this study serves as a foundation for further inquiry into experiential training and inclusive education. It contributes to the growing body of literature on SPED teacher development and offers a framework for replication or longitudinal analysis in various educational contexts, both locally and globally.

Scope and Limitations

This study focused on Special Education (SPED) teachers employed in selected public elementary schools under the Department of Education, Cebu Province Division. It aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of immersive training—such as practicum, internship, or other extended field experiences—in enhancing teachers' readiness and capacity to support learners with disabilities. The investigation centered on how immersive training contributes to teacher preparedness, emphasizing competencies in classroom management, instructional strategies, adaptability, and confidence in handling diverse learner needs.

The scope of the study was limited to SPED teachers who have undergone immersive training prior to or during their teaching employment. It did not distinguish between newly hired and tenured teachers, nor did it compare readiness levels based on academic qualifications (e.g., Bachelor of Special Needs Education, Diploma in SPED, or graduate studies). Instead, the emphasis was placed on the quality, structure, and meaningful aspects of their immersive experiences. Teachers who have not participated in immersive training were excluded from this study.

While other forms of professional development—such as workshops, webinars, and in-service training—may have contributed to teacher growth, these were not the primary focus of this

research. The study confined its analysis to the relationship between immersive training and teacher readiness and effectiveness, as measured through self-reported questionnaires. Variables outside the scope, including administrative support, availability of school resources, and individual motivation, are acknowledged but not directly examined.

Additionally, this study focused on public school settings and did not include private institutions or non-DepEd programs. Findings, therefore, were intended to inform policy and practice within the public education system, particularly in the context of SPED teacher preparation and capacity building at the local division level.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used in conducting the study, including the research design, flow of the study, research environment, respondents, instrument description, data gathering procedures, statistical treatment, scoring procedures, ethical considerations, and operational definition of key terms. Each section is intended to provide a structured and detailed account of how the investigation was carried out, ensuring transparency, coherence, and alignment with the study's research objectives.

Design

This study **employed** a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design, which **was deemed appropriate** for investigating and describing the current state of SPED teacher readiness and instructional effectiveness, as well as for examining the relationship between immersive training experiences and key teaching outcomes.

The **descriptive component** enabled the researcher to gather and organize data on the current profile of SPED teachers, including their demographic characteristics and experiential background. It also **captured** their self-reported perceptions regarding immersive training and its relevance to their teaching roles. The **correlational component**, meanwhile, **aimed to determine statistically** whether a significant relationship **existed** between immersive training experiences and the levels of teacher readiness and effectiveness.

In this study, the **Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r)** was used to assess the relationship between the specified variables. This statistical method **is commonly used** in educational research involving interval or ratio-scaled variables and **is appropriate** for non-experimental designs that do not involve manipulation of variables (Almahdi, 2020; Buragohain et al., 2024; Angeles, 2019).

This research design **is suitable** for studies that **aim to analyze** real-world phenomena as they occur naturally in educational settings, where control or manipulation of independent variables **is not possible**. It **supports** the study's goal of answering both descriptive and correlational subproblems aligned with the research questions.

This approach **has been employed** in recent quantitative SPED studies exploring factors that influence teacher development and instructional success (e.g., Jumawan, 2021; Rowe et al., 2020; Timmons et al., 2022). Relevant respondent characteristics, as well as the operational definitions of immersive training quality, readiness, and effectiveness, **are discussed** in the succeeding sections on Respondents, Instrument Description, and Definition of Terms.

Flow of the Study

This research adopted the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model as a systematic framework to organize and guide the investigation into the effectiveness of immersive training in enhancing the readiness and capacity of Special Education (SPED) teachers to support learners with disabilities, particularly within self-contained classroom settings. The IPO model, which is widely used in educational research (Morningstar, Kurth, & Johnson, 2022), ensured a clear, coherent flow from data collection through analysis to

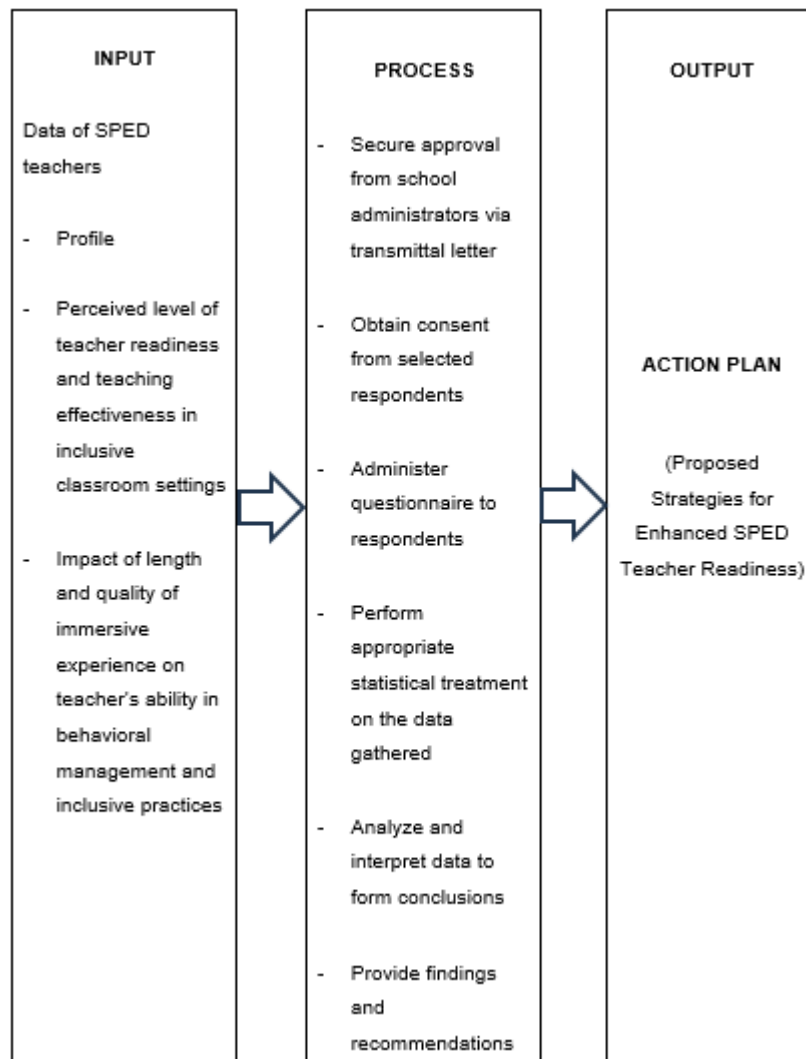


Figure 2. Flow of the Study

actionable outcomes, supporting the study's goal of evaluating immersive training as a means of improving SPED teacher preparedness and instructional capacity.

Input: The input phase involved the comprehensive collection of baseline data relevant to each research question. Demographic variables included participants' age, gender, school affiliation, institutional classification (public elementary and high schools), and the educational level at which they taught. Additional data included years of teaching service, number and types of SPED-related seminars or trainings attended, and details about learners with disabilities currently or previously handled. Crucially, this phase captured specifics on immersive training experiences such as the type (e.g., practicum, internship, simulation), length of exposure, and perceived quality. The input phase also gathered self-assessed metrics on teacher readiness and instructional effectiveness, operationalized through competencies in managing diverse disabilities, classroom and behavior management, instructional planning, confidence in supporting multi-disability learners, and the use of evidence-based strategies.

Process: The process phase described the organized steps undertaken in conducting the study. This included the development and modification of a structured questionnaire, divided into three sections: (I) Profile of Respondents, (II) Impact of Immersive Training Experience on SPED Teaching, and (III) Teacher Readiness and Effectiveness. The instrument underwent pilot testing with 15 respondents who were not part of the actual study sample to ensure reliability and clarity. Participants in the pilot test were excluded from the main study to prevent data contamination. Following pilot validation, data collection for the main study utilized digital forms (Google Forms) distributed to SPED teachers who met the inclusion criteria.

The study adhered to established research ethics, ensuring that participants provided voluntary and well-informed consent, and that all information shared was treated with strict privacy and discretion. During data handling, responses were systematically coded, organized, and examined through statistical methods using suitable analytical software. To interpret the findings, descriptive analyses were conducted to outline teacher demographics and readiness indicators, while correlational techniques, specifically the Pearson r , were applied to explore the association between immersive training elements and the teachers' overall preparedness and performance.

Output: The output phase synthesized analyzed data to provide evidence-based recommendations aligned with the study's focus on the effectiveness of immersive training in enhancing SPED teachers' readiness and capacity to support learners with disabilities. The findings were expected to highlight the essential components of immersive training that contributed to stronger teacher preparation, including extended exposure, structured mentorship, and guided experiential learning. These results aimed to serve as a reference for improving practicum programs, informing policy development, and strengthening institutional support for SPED teacher training.

This structured flow, from input to output, supported the study's overarching goal of empirically establishing how immersive training experiences influenced SPED teachers' readiness and effectiveness. It also ensured that the research outcomes were actionable, practical, and directly relevant to improving teacher education practices in special education environments.

Environment

This study **was conducted** in eight purposively selected public schools under the supervision of the Department of Education – Cebu Province Division. These schools **served** as the research environments for investigating the **effectiveness of immersive training in enhancing Special Education (SPED) teachers' readiness and capacity to support learners with disabilities**.

The research sites **included** Lipata Central Elementary School, Lipata National High School, Pinamungajan Central School, Jose Chona Jo Memorial National High School, San Fernando Central School, Sangat Central Elementary School, Dalaguete Central Elementary School, and Cawayan Central Elementary School. The schools **were purposively chosen** based on their having the **largest number of SPED teachers and/or accessible locations**, ensuring a practical and representative sample for the study.

These schools **operated** active SPED programs through either dedicated self-contained classrooms or inclusive education models staffed by licensed SPED teachers who **had completed** immersive practicum or field-based training intended to **enhance their teaching readiness and effectiveness**. Learners in these environments **presented** a variety of disabilities, including intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, speech or language impairment, and specific learning disabilities.

Each school **featured** individualized education plans (IEPs), adapted learning spaces, and structured routines that **supported** differentiated instruction. A total of **25 SPED teachers participated** as respondents. This selection **provided** a relevant and practical context for examining the **effects of immersive training on SPED teachers' readiness and instructional capacity** in diverse public school settings.



Figure 3. Location Map of the Research Environments

Respondents

The respondents of this study were twenty-five (25) current Special Education (SPED) teachers assigned to self-contained classrooms in various public schools under the Department of Education (DepEd) – Cebu Province Division. These teachers were selected through purposive sampling based on their completion of immersive training experiences, such as practicum, field study, internship, simulation, or extended classroom placement, which involved direct and hands-on teaching of learners with disabilities. Such training had been undertaken as part of a bachelor’s degree in SPED, a diploma program, or other formal teacher preparation pathway aimed at enhancing their readiness and capacity to support diverse learners.

Table 1 Distribution of the Respondents		
SPED Teachers with Immersive Training from	f	%
Cawayan Central Elementary School	1	4.76
Dalaguete Central Elementary School	2	9.52
Lipata Central Elementary School	4	19.05
Lipata National High School	4	19.05
San Fernando Central School	3	14.29
Sangat Central Elementary School	3	14.29
Pinamungajan Central School	4	19.05
Jose Chona Jo Memorial National High School	4	19.05
TOTAL	25	100%

Table 1 presents the distribution of the respondents according to their assigned schools. As shown, the highest number of participants came from Lipata Central Elementary School, Lipata National High School, Pinamungajan Central School, and Jose Chona Jo Memorial National High School, each contributing four (4) SPED teachers or 19.05% of the total respondents. San Fernando Central School and Sangat Central Elementary School each accounted for three (3) respondents or 14.29%, while Dalaguete Central Elementary School had two (2) respondents or 9.52%. Finally, Cawayan Central Elementary School had one (1) respondent, representing 4.76% of the total.

The distribution indicated that while some schools had a relatively higher number of SPED teachers, others were represented by only one or two participants, reflecting the varied allocation of SPED teachers across the Cebu Province Division. It was important to note that Cebu Province had a limited number of SPED teachers, and the schools where the respondents were assigned were geographically dispersed. This context highlighted the challenges of gathering data across multiple sites while also underscoring the diversity of teaching environments represented in the study.

Description of the Questionnaire

This study utilized a researcher-made structured questionnaire developed to assess the perceived impact of immersive training experiences on SPED teachers' readiness and effectiveness in self-contained classrooms. The instrument was carefully designed based on a review of relevant literature and adapted frameworks, particularly those of Karynbaeva (2022) and Selvakumar and Sivakumar (2025). It consisted of four main sections, each addressing a specific sub-problem of the research.

Section I: Demographic Profile

This section gathered essential background information about the respondents, including age, sex, teaching experience, SPED background, number of SPED learners handled, and details about their immersive training experience. These data allowed for respondent profiling and helped contextualize responses in relation to experience levels and training exposure. This section was composed of categorical, multiple-response, and open-entry items.

Section II: Impact of Immersive Training Experience on SPED Teaching

This section evaluated the depth, quality, and perceived outcomes of the respondents' immersive practicum or extended teaching placements. The evaluation consisted of ten Likert-scale statements that measured the perceived impact of the training across several dimensions, including the length and comprehensiveness of the immersive experience, the quality of mentor guidance and supervision, the extent of exposure to students with diverse disabilities, the development of instructional and behavior management strategies, and the respondents' overall preparedness for SPED classroom instruction.

These items were adapted from Selvakumar and Sivakumar's (2025) study on immersive learning for SPED teacher preparation. Respondents again utilized a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

Section III: Teacher Readiness and Effectiveness in SPED Classrooms

This section comprises 18 Likert-scale items organized into seven subdomains, reflecting the various competencies expected from teachers of learners with disabilities. The items were primarily adapted from Karynbaeva (2022), who focused on assessing teaching readiness in inclusive and self-contained educational settings.

The study assessed six key areas of teacher competency. These included knowledge of diverse disabilities, which examined the teachers' understanding of various learner needs; instructional planning and the use of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), which evaluated how effectively teachers designed and implemented individualized learning plans; and confidence in handling multi-disability learners, which measured their ability to manage classrooms with students exhibiting multiple exceptionalities. Also assessed were the implementation of differentiated instruction, which reflected teachers' adaptability in addressing varied learning styles; the use of

evidence-based teaching strategies, which focused on the application of research-supported instructional methods; and effectiveness in managing student behavior, which evaluated the teachers' classroom management and behavioral intervention skills.

Respondents rated each item using a 5-point Likert scale, indicating the extent to which they agreed that immersive training impacted their competence in the specified area.

Overall Validity and Alignment

The instrument was developed in alignment with the objectives of the study and was reviewed against existing validated tools in the field of teacher education and SPED training. It aimed to comprehensively measure the impact of immersive training on teacher readiness, instructional effectiveness, and potential areas for improvement in future SPED teacher development programs.

The questionnaire underwent pilot testing with fifteen (15) teachers to establish its reliability using Cronbach's alpha, with the threshold set at $\alpha > 0.70$ as recommended by Taber (2018). The results indicated high internal consistency for both constructs: Impact of Immersive Training ($\alpha = 0.931$) and *Teacher* Readiness and Effectiveness ($\alpha = 0.956$). These values suggest that the instrument is highly reliable for measuring the intended constructs in the study.

Data Gathering Procedures

This study followed a systematic process for data collection, which included preparatory activities, the actual administration of the questionnaire, and post-collection procedures. The researcher ensured the reliability and ethical integrity of the process by adhering to standard research protocols and safeguarding participant welfare. Data collection involved digital methods—pilot testing, and actual data was collected digitally via Google Forms. Each stage of the process was carefully designed to ensure the accuracy, validity, and ethical compliance of the research.

Preliminary Stage

Before formally conducting the study, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of related literature and existing studies to establish a strong theoretical foundation. A self-made research instrument was then developed and subjected to validation by experts in the field of Special Education to ensure content relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study's objectives. The pilot testing was administered via Google Form to a group of SPED teachers who share the same environment type but are not included in the actual study sample. Feedback from this stage guided necessary revisions to the final instrument.

Data Gathering Stage

Once the instrument was finalized, the researcher secured formal permission and ethical clearance from the school administrators of their assigned research sites. This step ensured adherence to institutional protocols and ethical research practices. Upon approval, the actual data collection was conducted using a Google Form. The digital questionnaire was distributed to available and willing SPED teachers within the target locality. A digital letter of informed consent accompanied the form, clearly explaining the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and confidentiality safeguards. This method ensured efficient data collection while respecting participants' time and privacy.

Post-Data Gathering Stage

After collecting the completed digital responses, the researcher, alongside a statistician, systematically organized, tabulated, and encoded the data for analysis. All responses were treated with strict confidentiality and stored securely. Only the researcher and the statistician had access to the raw data, which was solely used for academic purposes related to this study. The findings were analyzed and summarized in the research report. A summarized version of the results was also shared with participating schools or stakeholders upon request, ensuring the anonymity of respondents.

Through this structured data gathering process—from careful preparation to ethical administration and organized post-collection handling—the researcher obtained valid and meaningful data that contributed to understanding the impact of immersive training on SPED teacher readiness and effectiveness. The process upheld academic rigor and ethical responsibility, ensuring the credibility and relevance of the study's findings.

Statistical Treatment of Data

This study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data collected from the respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic profile of respondents and their perceptions of the immersive training experience, teacher readiness, and teacher effectiveness. Inferential statistics were applied to determine the degree of relationship between immersive training and the level of SPED teacher readiness and effectiveness. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$).

The statistical tools used were appropriate to the nature of the data and the objectives of the study, as outlined below:

Frequency and Percentage. These were used to describe the distribution of respondents according to demographic variables such as age, sex, educational attainment, school type (public or private), and years of teaching experience. Frequency refers to the number of occurrences of each category, while percentage expresses this number relative to the total number of respondents.

Weighted Mean. This was used to determine the composite mean of responses in the Likert-type questionnaire regarding the perceived impact of immersive training, as well as the levels of teacher readiness and effectiveness. The weighted mean provides a single summary value by considering both the frequency and weight (rating) of each response category, reflecting the overall tendency of respondents' perceptions.

Standard Deviation. This measure of variability was computed to assess the degree of dispersion or consistency in the respondents' scores for immersive training, readiness, and effectiveness. A smaller standard deviation indicates that responses are more clustered around the mean, signifying consistency in perceptions.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). This inferential statistical tool was employed to determine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the independent variable (immersive training experience) and the dependent variables (teacher readiness and teacher effectiveness). A positive correlation coefficient (r) indicates that higher levels of immersive training are associated with higher readiness and effectiveness, while a negative value suggests an inverse relationship.

The computed *p-value* was compared to the 0.05 level of significance to decide whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis.

Scoring Procedure

The data collected through the researcher-made survey questionnaire were scored, interpreted, and analyzed based on both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, and weighted mean were used to present the respondents' profile and their perceptions of the quality and impact of immersive training, as well as their self-reported readiness and teaching effectiveness.

To quantify the levels of impact of immersive training, teacher readiness, and teaching effectiveness, the responses were numerically coded and interpreted according to the following Likert scale:

Scale	Numerical Rating	Descriptive Rating	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree	The respondents are greatly impacted by their immersive training (s).

4	3.41 - 4.20	Agree	The respondents are impacted by their immersive training (s).
3	2.61 - 3.40	Neutral	The respondents are moderately impacted by their immersive training (s).
2	1.81 - 2.60	Disagree	The respondents are slightly impacted by their immersive training (s).
1	1.00 - 1.80	Strongly disagree	The respondents are not impacted by their immersive training (s).

Ethical Considerations

To ensure the ethical integrity of the study and uphold the rights and dignity of all participants, the researcher adhered to the following principles:

Informed Consent. All participants received a digital informed consent form together with the questionnaire, clearly explaining the study’s purpose, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, and data usage. Only those who provided explicit consent were allowed to participate.

Voluntary Participation. Participation was entirely voluntary. Respondents could withdraw at any time without penalty or consequence.

Confidentiality and Anonymity. Personal identifiers such as names and school affiliations were kept confidential. Data were reported in aggregate form only, ensuring anonymity.

Data Protection. Collected data were securely stored, accessible only to the researcher and the statistician. Data will be retained following standard institutional guidelines (typically 1–3 years) and destroyed afterward.

Respect and Professional Conduct. The researcher conducted all interactions professionally and sensitively, ensuring respondents felt comfortable sharing their experiences.

Definition of Terms

This section provides operational definitions of key terms used in the study to ensure clarity and consistency. The meanings were framed within the context of this research on evaluating the effectiveness of immersive training in enhancing Special Education (SPED) teachers’ readiness and capacity to support learners with disabilities.

Diverse Special Needs. This term refers to the wide range of learning, behavioral, developmental, and physical disabilities that students may present. It includes conditions such as autism, learning disabilities, ADHD, and intellectual disabilities commonly encountered in inclusive or self-contained classrooms. In this study, it referred to the types of disabilities the respondents engaged with during their immersive training experiences.

Immersive Field Experience. This is a structured, school-based learning engagement where pre-service teachers participate in authentic classroom settings under supervision. It allows them to apply pedagogical theories, interact with learners with disabilities, and reflect on their instructional practices. In this study, it referred to the respondents’ participation in supervised teaching experiences within Special Education environments.

Immersive Training. This refers to the practical component of teacher preparation that provides sustained, hands-on exposure to real classroom settings. It enables pre-service teachers to apply learned theories, manage diverse learners, and implement instructional strategies. In this study, it referred to the fieldwork component of their Bachelor’s, Diploma, or Master’s in Special Education program, during which respondents worked directly with students with disabilities under supervision. The term immersive training was used interchangeably with practicum or field experience.

Inclusive Education. Inclusive education is an educational approach that ensures all students, including those with disabilities, learn together in general education settings. It promotes equity,

access, and participation through differentiated instruction and collaborative teaching. In this study, it referred to the inclusive practices and classroom strategies that respondents observed or implemented during their immersive training.

Likert Scale. A Likert scale is a five-point response tool used to measure the degree of agreement or disagreement with specific statements. In this study, it was used to assess respondents' perceptions regarding the quality of immersive training, teaching readiness, and effectiveness.

Pre-Service Teacher. A pre-service teacher is an individual enrolled in a teacher education program who has not yet obtained full professional certification. In this study, it referred to respondents who were completing their immersive training as part of their coursework in Special Education.

Quality of Immersive Training. This term refers to the perceived effectiveness, relevance, and authenticity of the field-based training experience. It encompasses supervision quality, exposure to real teaching responsibilities, and alignment with evidence-based Special Education practices. In this study, it was evaluated based on the respondents' experiences during their training placements.

Rural School Context. A rural school context refers to educational settings located in geographically remote or low-population areas. These schools often encounter challenges such as limited resources, multi-grade classrooms, and teacher shortages. In this study, it referred to are schools under the Department of Education (DepEd) Cebu Province Division, where respondents conducted their immersive training.

Self-Assessment Tool. A self-assessment tool is an instrument used by participants to evaluate their competencies and perceptions. In this study, it referred to the researcher-made questionnaire used by respondents to assess their immersive training experiences and teaching readiness.

Self-Contained Classrooms. Self-contained classrooms are specialized educational settings where students with similar disabilities receive individualized instruction separate from the general education population. In this study, they were among the primary settings for respondents' immersive training experiences.

Special Education (SPED). Special Education refers to a specialized instructional framework designed to meet the unique learning needs of students with disabilities. It involves individualized instruction, accommodations, and support services that promote access and success. In this study, it defined the field of training and professional practice in which the respondents were being prepared to teach.

Teacher Effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness refers to a teacher's ability to facilitate meaningful learning, manage classroom behavior, and address diverse learner needs. In this study, it was measured through respondents' self-assessments of their instructional delivery, classroom management, and learner outcomes after immersive training.

Teacher Readiness. Teacher readiness refers to the degree to which a pre-service teacher feels competent and confident to begin professional teaching. In this study, it represented the respondents' perceived preparedness to teach students with special needs after completing their immersive training.

Teaching Competency. Teaching competency refers to the integrated set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for effective teaching. It includes lesson planning, differentiated instruction, behavioral management, and assessment literacy. In this study, it referred to the competencies demonstrated and evaluated during respondents' immersive training experiences.

CHAPTER 2

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the data gathered from selected public schools under the Department of Education (DepEd) Cebu Province. The focus of the analysis is to assess the efficacy of immersive training in improving the preparedness and capacity of special education teachers to assist learners

with disabilities. The presentation of the findings is structured to emphasize the survey responses, followed by an analysis and interpretation that are consistent with the study's objectives.

In alignment with the research cited in Chapter 1, the analysis also examines how immersive training - such as practicums, internships, and other hands-on experiences- enhanced the preparedness and efficacy of special education teachers of the teachers who participated in the study

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The demographic profile of the Special Education (SPED) teachers who participated in the study is presented in this section. The data include their age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, number of SPED-related seminars or training attended, types of learners with disabilities they have managed, the number of SPED learners they have managed, and their most recent SPED-related training or seminar attended. Understanding these characteristics provides essential context in analyzing how immersive training experiences influenced teacher readiness and effectiveness, thereby supporting the study’s goal of evaluating its effectiveness in enhancing SPED teachers’ capacity to support learners with disabilities.

Age and Gender of the Respondents

The distribution of respondents' ages and sexes provided crucial context for comprehending the demographic makeup of SPED teachers. These elements were significant because they could affect receptiveness to immersive training, teaching philosophies, and methods for managing the classroom. While sex distribution highlighted representation and potential gender-related dynamics in the teaching profession, age reflected the stage of professional growth.

Age (in years)	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
above 54	2	8.00	0	0.00	2	8.00
45-54	8	32.00	2	8.00	10	40.00
35-44	5	20.00	0	0.00	5	20.00
25-34	6	24.00	0	0.00	6	24.00
No Response	1	4.00	1	4.00	2	8.00
Total	22	88.00	3	12.00	25	100.00

Table 2 presents the age and gender distribution of the respondents. Out of the 25 Special Education teachers, the majority were female (n = 22, 88.00%), while only a small portion were male (n = 3, 12.00%). In terms of age, the largest group of respondents fell within the 45–54 years old bracket (n = 10, 40.00%), followed by those aged 25–34 years old (n = 6, 24.00%) and 35–44 years old (n = 5, 20.00%). A smaller number of teachers were above 54 years old (n = 2, 8.00%). Additionally, two respondents (8.00%) did not disclose their age.

These results imply that the study's teaching workforce is predominantly female and is composed of mid-career educators, especially those between the ages of 45 and 54. While the small percentage of older respondents shows fewer teachers are approaching retirement, the presence of younger educators (ages 25 to 34), suggests that newer educators are entering the field. The predominance of female teachers reflects broader trends in the teaching profession, particularly in special education, where women are often overrepresented (Myrie, Dowd, & Latiker, 2024; Utah Education Policy Center [UEPC], 2022).

Furthermore, the concentration of teachers in the mid-career bracket aligns with prior studies suggesting that educators in this age range often demonstrate stability in their professional practice and are more likely to pursue further qualifications or specialized training (Delaney & Macquarie, 2023; Abu-Hamour, Al-Khuzai, & Al-Fares, 2022). For learners, this indicates that students benefit from experienced and stable instruction, which can enhance learning outcomes. For schools and DepEd policy, the relatively smaller number of younger SPED teachers underscores challenges in

recruiting and retaining new educators, highlighting the need for strategies to sustain inclusive education reforms (Graham, Berman, & Van Bergen, 2024).

Highest Educational Attainment

A teacher’s educational attainment is a key determinant of professional competence and readiness. Higher academic qualifications are often associated with stronger content mastery, refined pedagogical skills, and greater confidence in classroom practice. In Special Education (SPED), advanced studies are particularly vital as they equip teachers with the theoretical knowledge and applied strategies necessary to address the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities.

Educational Attainment	f	%
With Doctorate Units	4	16.00
Master’s Graduate	4	16.00
With Master’s Units	14	56.00
Bachelor’s Degree	3	12.00
Total	25	100.00

Table 3 shows the highest educational attainment of the SPED teacher-respondents. The majority had pursued graduate-level education, with more than half currently taking units in a master’s program (n = 14, 56.00%). An equal proportion had either completed a master’s degree (n = 4, 16.00%) or earned doctorate units (n = 4, 16.00%). A smaller proportion reported a bachelor’s degree as their highest educational qualification (n = 3, 12.00%).

These results indicate that most respondents are engaged in or have completed postgraduate studies, reflecting a strong commitment to professional growth and specialization. For learners, this suggests that they are supported by educators with advanced knowledge and a capacity for evidence-based instruction. For schools and DepEd policy, the prevalence of graduate-level training among teachers highlights the value of supporting further education to sustain high-quality SPED programs. Empirical studies confirm that advanced academic preparation strengthens teachers’ alignment with evidence-based practices, increases teaching efficacy, and enhances adaptability in inclusive classrooms (Abu-Hamour et al., 2022; Buragohain et al., 2024; Delaney & Macquarie, 2023). Buragohain et al. (2024) further highlight that immersive and advanced teacher education programs significantly enhance instructional confidence, pedagogical content knowledge, and reflective practice through structured experiential learning.

Furthermore, research indicates that higher education and specialized SPED training contribute to improved teacher self-efficacy and preparedness to implement inclusive strategies effectively (Chadwell et al., 2022; Graham et al., 2024). In this context, the respondents’ pursuit of graduate and post-graduate studies demonstrates not only a personal commitment to continuous learning but also a collective effort to improve the quality of SPED instruction within Cebu Province.

Length of Service

The respondents’ accumulated teaching experience reflects their accumulated professional exposure and expertise. This demographic variable provides important context for understanding how immersive training influences teachers’ effectiveness and preparedness. While novice educators gain immediate benefits from structured training interventions, experienced teachers often demonstrate adaptability, refined instructional methods, and a deeper understanding of learner diversity. Prior research affirms that teaching experience significantly shapes the quality of instruction, classroom responsiveness, and professional confidence—particularly in the complex field of special education (Delaney & Macquarie, 2023; Graham, Berman, & Van Bergen, 2024).

Length of Service (in years)	f	%
11 and above	17	68.00
7-10	5	20.00

4-6	2	8.00
1-3	0	0.00
less than one year	1	4.00
Total	25	100.00

Table 4 presents the respondents’ length of service. The data reveal that a majority, 17 or 68%, have been in service for 11 years or more, indicating that most respondents are highly experienced educators. Five respondents (20%) have served between 7 to 10 years, two respondents (8%) have 4 to 6 years of experience, and one respondent (4%) reported less than one year of service. Notably, no respondent has 1 to 3 years of teaching experience

This distribution indicates that the teaching force in this study consists primarily of seasoned teachers with substantial teaching experience. Lengthier service is often associated with greater professional maturity, broader exposure to varied learning environments, and higher levels of instructional competence. For learners, this suggests more consistent, adaptive instruction; for schools and DepEd policy, it underscores the value of leveraging veteran teachers in mentoring programs and implementing sustained training initiatives.

This finding aligns with previous studies (Angeles, 2019; Jumawan, 2021; Rowe et al., 2020; Test et al., 2022), which show that teaching experience influences both professional confidence and the perceived effectiveness of immersive learning. Veteran teachers tend to use immersive training as a reflective platform to refine established practices, while novice educators leverage it to build foundational skills and confidence.

Research on classroom management further emphasizes the relevance of experience. Reyes and Santos (2023) found that implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in Philippine SPED classrooms reduces disruptions and strengthens teachers’ ability to manage diverse learners effectively. Similarly, recent studies highlight that proactive PBIS frameworks, data-based decision-making, and culturally responsive practices improve classroom behavior outcomes and inclusivity. Nguyen and Pham (2024) demonstrated that adapting management strategies to local cultural norms enhances consistency and sustainability, particularly in rural settings. Complementary research by Alcantara and Villanueva (2025) showed that consistent reinforcement and sustained behavioral support correlate with improved learner outcomes in SPED classrooms.

Taken together, these studies affirm that experienced teachers—such as the majority represented in this study—draw on their accumulated expertise to apply immersive training principles with greater depth and contextual understanding. Meanwhile, less experienced teachers rely on immersive experiences as structured opportunities for guided learning and skill development. This dynamic underscores the role of teaching experience as a critical contextual factor in determining how immersive training influences SPED teacher readiness and effectiveness.

SPED- Related Seminars/ Trainings Attended

Table 5. SPED- Related Seminars/ Trainings Attended

Number of Trainings	f	%
5 and above	14	56.00
3-4	2	8.00
1-2	8	32.00
None	1	4.00
Total	25	100.00

Teachers’ knowledge and abilities in meeting the varied needs of learners are enhanced when they participate in professional development activities such as training and seminars. The number of SPED-related trainings attended by respondents provides insight **into** their exposure to ongoing education beyond classroom instruction.

Table 5 presents the number of SPED-related seminars or trainings attended by the respondents. The results reveal that more than half of the participants (56%) attended five or more SPED-related seminars or trainings, reflecting strong engagement in professional development. Meanwhile, 32% participated in one to two trainings, 8% attended three to four sessions, and one respondent (4%) reported not having attended any SPED-related training. These figures indicate a notable commitment to continuous learning and highlight disparities in training access within the group. For teachers, this suggests areas of confidence in evidence-based strategies; for learners, enhanced teaching quality; and for schools and DepEd policy, a need to ensure equitable access to professional development opportunities.

Murray and O’Connor (2021) emphasized the importance of sustained professional learning for SPED teachers to maintain competence in evidence-based practices. Their findings align with Test et al. (2022), who asserted that consistent professional development enhances instructional quality and teacher confidence in applying research-supported strategies.

Existing literature consistently underscores the vital role of professional development in strengthening teacher preparedness, confidence, and instructional competence, particularly in special education. Studies by Jumawan (2021), Solayao and Dizon (2022), and Timmons et al. (2022) highlight that sustained engagement in professional learning fortifies teachers’ capacity to address diverse learner needs and effectively implement inclusive, evidence-based strategies.

In the local context, the active participation of SPED teachers in Cebu Province in multiple trainings demonstrates alignment with national goals for inclusive education and professional growth. However, Rayos and Capulong (2022) pointed out disparities in access to professional development across school contexts, particularly in rural or resource-limited divisions, where opportunities for continuous training remain limited. Such inequities may hinder the consistent implementation of inclusive practices and affect teacher readiness, underscoring the need for equitable and sustained institutional support.

Taken together, these findings affirm that while most SPED teachers actively pursue professional development to enhance their teaching competencies, institutional and systemic support is crucial to ensure that all educators can consistently integrate immersive and experiential learning principles into their practice.

Type of SPED Learners Handled

The variety of SPED students that instructors work with reflects the depth of their professional background and the range of challenges they encounter in the classroom. Teachers exposed to a diverse spectrum of disabilities develop flexible lesson plans and classroom management techniques. Understanding which learner groups respondents have interacted with also provides insight into how effectively they can apply immersive training across different educational settings. For teachers, this indicates areas of expertise and growth; for learners, it informs the quality of support received; for schools and DepEd policy, it highlights the need for targeted training in low-incidence disabilities.

Table 6 lists the various types of SPED students that the respondents worked with. Frequencies may overlap because this was a multiple-response item, and some teachers have experience with multiple student categories.

Table 6. Type of SPED Learners Handled		
Type of SPED learners	f	Rank
Intellectual Disability	16	1
Hearing Impairment	15	2
Autism Spectrum Disorder	13	3
Multiple Disabilities	12	4
Visual Impairment	2	5
*multiple response		

The results indicate that the majority of respondents have experience working with students with intellectual disabilities (n = 16), hearing impairments (n = 15), and autism spectrum disorder (n = 13). Many also reported teaching learners with multiple disabilities (n = 12). In contrast, only a few respondents (n = 2) had experience with students who have visual impairments. This distribution suggests that while teachers regularly encounter high-incidence disabilities such as intellectual and developmental conditions, they may have limited opportunities to engage with low-incidence disabilities, which has implications for teacher readiness and policy planning.

Related studies highlight that teachers with experience across a broad range of disabilities tend to be more adaptive, competent, and effective in addressing diverse classroom needs (Angeles, 2019; Test et al., 2022; Timmons et al., 2022). Exposure to various disability categories enhances preparedness to adopt inclusive pedagogies and strengthens capacity to implement differentiated strategies that accommodate diverse learning needs (Rayos & Capulong, 2022; Rowe et al., 2020).

Recent research also emphasizes that educators with extensive experience across different learner profiles demonstrate higher confidence in using evidence-based and differentiated instructional approaches. They are better equipped to manage classrooms with mixed disabilities and utilize assistive technologies to support diverse learners (Campado, Toquero, & Ulanday, 2023; Cahapay, 2023; Gallarde et al., 2022; Yekegat Primary School, 2024). Systematic reviews and implementation studies further affirm the effectiveness of evidence-based practices (EBPs) and assistive technologies for learners with disabilities, particularly when teachers receive continuous coaching and institutional support. Specifically, studies underscore that visual supports, task analysis, and assistive technology (AT) improve access and engagement, but consistent application depends on adequate training, leadership involvement, and data-driven monitoring systems (Steinbrenner et al., 2020; Assistive Technology Outcomes & Benefits, 2021).

Number of SPED Learners Handled

Teachers’ knowledge and abilities in meeting the varied needs of learners are enhanced when they take part in professional development activities such as training and seminars. The number of SPED learners handled reflects the workload and classroom dynamics that teachers must manage. Smaller class sizes allow for more individualized support, whereas larger groups pose challenges in differentiation, behavior management, and the implementation of inclusive practices. For teachers, this affects instructional planning and workload management; for learners, it influences access to individualized support; for schools and DepEd policy, it highlights the need for strategic class assignments and resource allocation.

Number of SPED learners	f	%
above 20	6	24.00
11-20	12	48.00
1-10	7	28.00
Total	25	100.00

Table 7 summarizes the distribution of SPED learners handled by the respondents. Nearly half of the teachers (48%) managed 11–20 learners, while 28% reported handling 1–10 learners. Notably, 24% of respondents were responsible for more than 20 SPED learners, indicating a considerable workload and a high demand for adaptability in teaching approaches.

Prior studies emphasize that class size and learner diversity significantly affect teacher readiness and effectiveness. Espeño et al. (2024) and Graham, Berman, and Van Bergen (2024) highlight that larger groups of SPED learners intensify instructional demands and require stronger differentiation skills. Similarly, Delaney and Macquarie (2023) and Fairbrother, Liu, and Reyes (2024) note that immersive practicum and mentor-supported experiences are critical in preparing teachers to manage heavier teaching loads.

Recent research also indicates that class size directly influences individualized instruction and the ability to implement inclusive strategies effectively. Larger caseloads increase teacher workload, stress, and the challenge of applying evidence-based practices, making immersive and hands-on training even more essential for preparedness (Blatchford et al., 2021; Sharma & Loreman, 2020).

Comparable findings from Buragohain, Das, and Deka (2024) and Chadwell, Wills, and Taylor (2022) suggest that immersive training enhances classroom management strategies, particularly for teachers handling larger groups of learners with complex needs. These studies underscore that exposure to diverse and sizable classes through structured, experiential training improves adaptability, differentiated instruction skills, and overall instructional effectiveness.

The professional and demographic characteristics of the respondents provide essential context for interpreting the study’s results. The workforce is experienced and continuously engaged in professional learning, as evidenced by high levels of academic attainment, ongoing professional development, the predominance of female teachers, and the concentration of mid-career respondents. However, the wide diversity of circumstances in which SPED teachers work—particularly regarding class size, exposure to different learner needs, and teaching experience—highlights the importance of immersive training in closing preparation gaps, enhancing instructional competence, and supporting inclusive education outcomes.

IMPACT OF IMMERSIVE TRAINING EXPERIENCE ON SPED TEACHING

This section presents the results on the impact of immersive training experiences on SPED teaching. Immersive training plays a critical role in preparing teachers to address the diverse needs of learners with disabilities by connecting theory with actual classroom practice. It enhances teachers’ readiness, instructional competence, and confidence in handling individualized interventions. For teachers, this implies greater preparedness and practical skill acquisition; for learners, it ensures more responsive and adaptive instruction; for schools and DepEd, it supports the implementation of inclusive education policies and promotes professional standards.

Table 8 presents the level of impact of immersive training experiences on SPED teaching as perceived by the respondents. The results reveal an aggregate weighted mean (WM) of 4.41 (SD = 0.68), which falls under the Very High verbal description. This indicates that immersive training experiences were perceived as highly impactful in preparing teachers for SPED instruction, enhancing both their confidence and competence in handling diverse learners. The relatively moderate aggregate standard deviation (0.68) suggests that while respondents generally agreed on the very high impact, some variation in individual perceptions existed.

Among the indicators, the highest-rated statement was, “The immersive training helped me develop practical strategies for managing student behavior in a self-contained SPED classroom” (WM = 4.52, SD = 0.59). This highlights the critical role of immersive experiences in equipping teachers with effective classroom and behavior management strategies, consistent with Test et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of practice-based training for building practical teaching competencies. Similarly, Campado, Toquero, and Ulanday (2023), Cahapay (2023), and Gallarde, Torres, and Yanga (2022) affirmed that mentor- guided, extended practicum experiences significantly strengthen teacher readiness and the acquisition of practical classroom management skills.

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I completed an immersive practicum or internship specifically in a self-contained SPED classroom.	4.36	0.91	Very High
2	The length of my immersive training (e.g., extended practicum) was sufficient to expose me to real classroom situations.	4.40	0.76	Very High

3	I was guided by a mentor or supervisor who provided meaningful feedback during my immersive placement.	4.48	0.59	Very High
4	My immersive exposure lasted for four weeks or longer, allowing me to fully engage with the teaching environment.	4.44	0.71	Very High
5	I worked with students with a wide range of disabilities during my immersive placement.	4.32	0.85	Very High
6	The immersive training helped me develop practical strategies for managing student behavior in a self-contained SPED classroom.	4.52	0.59	Very High
7	I gained greater confidence and readiness to implement inclusive teaching practices after my immersive experience.	4.44	0.58	Very High
8	The immersive training I received was comprehensive and detailed, enhancing my teaching preparedness.	4.28	0.61	Very High
9	I acquired various techniques for addressing the unique needs of learners with disabilities in self-contained settings.	4.44	0.58	Very High
10	I would rate the overall quality of my immersive training as effective in preparing me for behavior management and instructional practices in SPED classrooms.	4.44	0.58	Very High
Aggregate Mean		4.41		Very High
Aggregate Standard Deviation			0.68	
Legend: 4.21-5.00-Very High; 3.41-4.20-High; 2.61-3.40-Moderate; 1.81-2.60-Low; 1.00-1.80-Very Low				

Another highly rated indicator was, “I was guided by a mentor or supervisor who provided meaningful feedback during my immersive placement” (WM = 4.48, SD = 0.59), reinforcing the value of mentorship and feedback in bridging theoretical knowledge with practice (Rowe et al., 2020). Evidence from Yekegat Primary School (2024) supports this, underscoring that structured mentor support enhances SPED teachers’ confidence, adaptability, and instructional competence.

Indicators with WM = 4.44, including “My immersive exposure lasted for four weeks or longer, allowing me to fully engage with the teaching environment” (SD = 0.71); “I gained greater confidence and readiness to implement inclusive teaching practices after my immersive experience” (SD = 0.58); “I acquired various techniques for addressing the unique needs of learners with disabilities in self-contained settings” (SD = 0.58); and “I would rate the overall quality of my immersive training as effective in preparing me for behavior management and instructional practices in SPED classrooms” (SD = 0.58), reflect strong agreement among respondents. These consistently high ratings underscore the importance of extended, structured, and reflective immersive experiences in enhancing SPED teacher readiness. This finding aligns with Dewey’s (1938) Theory of Learning by Doing and Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, both of which assert that direct engagement in authentic experiences fosters professional competence and reflective growth. Supporting evidence from Solayao and Dizon (2022), Timmons et al. (2022), and Campado, Toquero, and Ulanday (2023) further validates the transformative impact of immersive training on teacher preparedness.

The indicator with the lowest rating, “The immersive training I received was comprehensive and detailed, enhancing my teaching preparedness” (WM = 4.28, SD = 0.61), though still under the Very High category, indicates that some respondents perceived gaps in the depth or thoroughness of their training. This observation aligns with Timmons et al. (2022), who noted that variations in program structure, duration, and feedback quality can affect overall teacher readiness. Similarly, Cahapay (2023) emphasized that comprehensiveness and systematic mentorship are vital for ensuring consistent application of learned strategies in inclusive classrooms.

In summary, immersive training experiences substantially enhance SPED instructors’ readiness, behavior management skills, and confidence in inclusive practices. The consistently elevated ratings (Aggregate WM = 4.41) affirm that teachers perceive immersive training as a highly effective

bridge between theory and practice. The findings reinforce theoretical and empirical perspectives that length, mentorship quality, and structured exposure are key factors in maximizing the benefits of immersive learning. Nevertheless, the slightly lower score for training comprehensiveness underscores the need for continuous program improvement, particularly in ensuring depth, reflective supervision, and equitable practicum opportunities. Collectively, these findings validate previous studies (Campado, Toquero, & Ulanday, 2023; Cahapay, 2023; Gallarde, Torres, & Yanga, 2022; Yekegat Primary School, 2024) and align with the theoretical underpinnings of experiential and mentor-supported learning models that strengthen teacher readiness and instructional effectiveness in SPED contexts.

TEACHER READINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS

Access to high-quality education for students with disabilities depends on teachers who are both well-prepared and effective in the classroom. Assessing these aspects provides critical insight into the preparedness of SPED teachers to deliver personalized instruction, implement inclusive practices, and foster their students’ academic and social development. This section presents the findings on teacher readiness and effectiveness derived from respondent data, emphasizing key indicators, trends, and implications for SPED teacher preparation.

Teacher readiness and effectiveness are analyzed across six domains: Knowledge of Diverse Disabilities, Instructional Planning and Utilization of IEPs, Confidence in Managing Multi-Disability Learners, Implementation of Differentiated Instruction, Application of Evidence-Based Teaching Strategies, and Efficacy in Student Behavior Management. Each domain is evaluated using weighted mean and standard deviation to determine strengths, response consistency, and potential areas for improvement.

Knowledge of Diverse Disabilities

The knowledge of various disabilities is essential for the preparedness of special education teachers. A comprehensive awareness of the traits of diverse disabilities and the capacity to implement suitable instructional strategies ensure that learners with varying needs receive fair and effective support. This area evaluates instructors' preparedness in identifying, comprehending, and addressing the varied needs of their students.

Table 9. Level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of knowledge of diverse disabilities				
S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I know the basic characteristics of different disabilities.	4.40	0.82	Very High
2	I understand the need for differentiated support for diverse disabilities.	4.76	0.44	Very High
3	I feel confident applying teaching strategies for diverse disabilities.	4.32	0.63	Very High
	Aggregate Mean	4.49		Very High
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.63	
Legend: 4.21-5.00-Very High; 3.41-4.20-High; 2.61-3.40-Moderate; 1.81-2.60-Low; 1.00-1.80-Very Low				

Table 9 presents the level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of their knowledge of diverse disabilities. The results indicated that the respondents perceived themselves as highly knowledgeable in understanding and supporting learners with diverse disabilities, as reflected by an aggregate weighted mean of 4.49 (Very High). Among the indicators, the highest rating was recorded for the understanding of the need for differentiated support (WM = 4.76, SD = 0.44), showing strong agreement among educators on the necessity of tailoring instruction to address the unique learning profiles of students with disabilities. Meanwhile, confidence in applying teaching strategies received a slightly lower mean (WM = 4.32, SD = 0.63), suggesting some degree

of variability in the respondents’ self-assessed competence when applying instructional techniques for diverse learners.

These findings align with the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model and Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory, which emphasize that teachers develop expertise through situated, hands-on, and reflective learning experiences. In particular, immersive training programs strengthen teachers’ schema for understanding disability characteristics and provide authentic opportunities to observe, practice, and refine differentiated teaching strategies under guided mentorship.

This interpretation is consistent with Timmons et al. (2022) and Rowe et al. (2020), who found that teacher preparedness in addressing diverse learning needs is positively associated with effective individualized instruction and inclusive education outcomes. Similarly, Solayao and Dizon (2022) highlighted that immersive exposure to various learner profiles in rural and resource-limited contexts enhances both knowledge and adaptive competence, while Angeles (2019) emphasized that sustained professional development fosters deeper understanding and long-term readiness in supporting diverse learners.

Recent literature further reinforces these observations. Campado et al. (2023), Cahapay (2023), and Gallarde et al. (2022) reported that practical exposure and reflective engagement lead to higher teacher confidence and more effective differentiation across disability types. Likewise, Martinez et al. (2023) and Yekegat Primary School (2024) underscored that continuous exposure—through immersive or simulation-based training—cultivates instructional adaptability and resilience in complex classroom settings.

Overall, the data highlight that teacher knowledge of disability diversity is not merely theoretical but rooted in experiential practice, validating the importance of immersive and experiential training frameworks in preparing SPED teachers for real-world inclusive education demands.

Instructional Planning and Use of IEPs

Effective educational planning and consistent adherence to IEP guidelines are fundamental in helping special education teachers provide individualized support to students with special needs. This domain assesses educators’ proficiency in crafting lesson plans, integrating IEP objectives into their designs, and rigorously tracking student progress.

Table 10. Level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of instructional planning and use of IEPs				
S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I can create and follow lesson plans for diverse learners.	4.44	0.51	Very High
2	I understand and use IEPs when planning lessons.	4.44	0.58	Very High
3	I monitor student progress based on IEP goals.	4.28	0.79	Very High
	Aggregate Mean	4.39		Very High
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.63	

Table 10 presents the level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of instructional planning and use of IEPs. The findings revealed that participants considered themselves highly proficient in instructional planning and the use of IEPs, as reflected in a cumulative weighted mean of 4.39 (Very High). Both the ability to develop and follow lesson plans for diverse learners and to understand and use IEPs (WM = 4.44) indicate strong consensus on aligning teaching practices with individualized learning goals. Monitoring student progress (WM = 4.28, SD = 0.79), while still very high, reflects some variation among teachers in the frequency and consistency of progress tracking, which may be influenced by differences in training exposure or available support systems.

These results strongly align with Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory and the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model, which emphasize learning through reflection-in-action and mentorship. Immersive training allows teachers to experience authentic IEP implementation, reinforcing their

capacity to integrate assessment data, instructional design, and individualized objectives into coherent lesson planning. Likewise, Dewey’s Learning by Doing underscores the value of direct engagement with real learners to internalize effective instructional decision-making. Through such experiences, teachers build confidence—consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which links mastery experiences to intrinsic motivation and professional self-efficacy.

Supporting literature corroborates these results. Timmons et al. (2022) highlighted that IEP-driven lesson design directly contributes to better student learning outcomes, while Test et al. (2022) stressed continuous progress monitoring as a mechanism for maintaining individualized progress toward learning goals. Rayos and Capulong (2022) underscored that professional development in IEP formulation and use strengthens teacher readiness, and Angeles (2019) emphasized the need for hands-on application to bridge theory and practice.

Recent studies echo these findings. Graham, Berman, and Van Bergen (2024) asserted that well-developed IEPs foster collaboration and accountability among teachers and support staff. Espeño et al. (2024) and Delaney and Macquarie (2023) found that immersive practicum experiences and sustained mentorship enhance teachers’ ability to modify lesson plans and monitor outcomes effectively. Moreover, Fairbrother, Liu, and Reyes (2024) reported that technology-assisted IEP tools and data-driven monitoring promote consistent learner tracking, particularly in inclusive or resource-limited schools.

Collectively, these findings reinforce that mastery of instructional planning and IEP utilization is a key indicator of teacher readiness and effectiveness in special education. The high proficiency levels observed among respondents reflect the effectiveness of immersive and experiential training models, which transform theoretical understanding into actionable, goal-oriented instructional practices. This outcome supports both national mandates—such as Republic Act 7277 (Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities) and Republic Act 11650 (Inclusive Education Act)—and international frameworks advocating individualized, inclusive instruction.

Confidence in Handling Multi-Disability Learners

Teacher confidence in managing students with multiple disabilities is a vital component of special education preparedness. Confidence influences not only instructional delivery but also classroom management, problem-solving, and the capacity to accommodate varied learning requirements. This domain assesses teachers' confidence in instructing students with diverse disabilities, adapting their teaching methods, and independently managing self-contained classrooms.

Table 11. Level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of confidence in handling multi-disability learners				
S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I feel confident teaching students with different disabilities.	4.20	0.65	High
2	I am comfortable adjusting instruction for diverse learning needs.	4.28	0.61	Very High
3	I believe I am prepared to manage a self-contained classroom independently.	4.40	0.58	Very High
	Aggregate Mean	4.29		Very High
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.61	

Table 11 presents the level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of confidence in handling multi-disability learners. The results indicated a very high overall confidence (Aggregate WM = 4.29, SD = 0.61), reflecting that most respondents felt capable of teaching and managing classrooms with learners of varying disabilities. The highest-rated indicator—“I believe I am prepared to manage a self-contained classroom independently” (WM = 4.40, SD = 0.58)—suggested that immersive experience builds strong teacher confidence in independent management of SPED settings. Meanwhile, the indicator “I feel confident teaching students with different disabilities” received a slightly lower mean (WM = 4.20, SD = 0.65), indicating that a minority of

teachers may still require additional exposure or targeted support to strengthen their confidence in instructing learners with multiple or complex disabilities.

These findings align with Self-Determination Theory, which posits that confidence and perceived competence are essential for motivation and professional performance, and with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, where authentic practice in diverse contexts reinforces adaptive teaching competence. Furthermore, the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model emphasizes the importance of guided mentoring and modeling—elements that contribute to teachers' readiness in managing multi-disability classrooms. Consistent with Dewey's Learning by Doing, the act of teaching varied learner groups allows educators to refine judgment and problem-solving skills essential for SPED environments.

Empirical evidence supports these interpretations. Rowe et al. (2020) found that teacher self-efficacy positively correlates with effective classroom management and adaptive instructional strategies. Timmons et al. (2022) emphasized the value of hands-on immersive experiences in developing confidence for teaching students with multiple disabilities. Similarly, Solayao and Dizon (2022) noted that exposure to varied classroom scenarios enhances teacher readiness, particularly in rural or resource-limited contexts, while Angeles (2019) highlighted that sustained professional development and practical application build teacher self-efficacy and instructional competence in SPED practice.

Recent studies reinforce these findings by demonstrating that diverse exposure to multiple disability types strengthens teachers' adaptive competence and instructional flexibility. Campado, Toquero, and Ulanday (2023) observed that teachers who engage with a wide range of SPED learners show heightened confidence in classroom management and individualized interventions. Cahapay (2023) similarly noted that exposure to diverse learner profiles cultivates pedagogical versatility, and Gallarde, Torres, and Yanga (2022) reported that experience with various disability types improves proficiency in assistive technology use. In addition, Buragohain, Das, and Deka (2024) found that reflective mentoring and peer collaboration during practicum training enhance teacher self-efficacy in managing complex learner groups, while Kwon and Jeong (2023) underscored that multi-scenario simulations in SPED training significantly improve preparedness for real-world challenges.

Overall, these results affirm that confidence in handling multi-disability learners is a direct outcome of immersive, experiential, and mentor-supported training. This finding complements national legal frameworks such as Republic Act 11650 (Inclusive Education Act of 2022) and DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, which emphasize capacity-building for inclusive and equitable education. The outcomes also resonate with Republic Act 7277 (Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities), advocating for the professional readiness of educators serving diverse learner populations. The implementation of differentiated instruction operationalizes the intent of these laws, both of which emphasize inclusive and equitable learning experiences for learners with disabilities. These policies advocate individualized approaches and adaptive instruction, aligning with the Department of Education's mandate for teachers to tailor their strategies to meet each learner's functional and academic goals.

Collectively, the evidence suggests that to ensure sustained confidence and effectiveness, immersive training programs should continue to provide exposure to both high- and low-incidence disabilities, supported by structured mentoring and reflective practice. Such approaches promote holistic teacher preparedness and equitable inclusion across SPED settings.

Implementation of Differentiated Instruction

The capacity to execute differentiated teaching is a crucial measure of special education teacher efficacy. Differentiation enables educators to address the varied learning requirements of pupils by modifying content, processes, and evaluation techniques. This domain assesses the effectiveness of teachers in employing diverse instructional strategies, adapting class content, and offering various methods for students to exhibit comprehension.

Table 12. Level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of implementation of differentiated instruction				
S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I use varied learning styles.	4.64	0.49	Very High
2	I modify lesson content to meet individual needs.	4.64	0.49	Very High
3	I provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate understanding.	4.68	0.48	Very High
	Aggregate Mean	4.65		Very High
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.49	

Table 12 presents the level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of the implementation of differentiated instruction. The findings reveal that participants regard themselves as highly proficient in executing differentiated instruction, with a cumulative weighted mean of 4.65, categorized as *Very High*. All indicators received very high ratings, with the highest being the provision of multiple methods for students to demonstrate understanding (WM = 4.68, SD = 0.48). The low standard deviations across all indicators indicate strong consensus among teachers regarding their ability to modify teaching methods, lesson content, and assessments to cater to diverse learner needs.

These results are consistent with existing literature emphasizing the value of differentiated instruction as a cornerstone of effective special education practice. Timmons et al. (2022) asserted that differentiated approaches enhance student engagement and learning outcomes, particularly among learners with diverse abilities and preferences. Rowe et al. (2020) similarly noted that teacher skill in adapting lessons is a central determinant of effective inclusive education, while Panganiban and Laylo (2020) emphasized that modification of content and instructional strategies is vital for addressing the individualized needs of students with disabilities. In rural contexts, Solayao and Dizon (2022) highlighted that SPED teachers depend heavily on differentiated strategies to overcome resource limitations and learner variability.

Further supporting these findings, recent studies underscore the role of continuous professional learning, mentoring, and contextual adaptation in sustaining differentiation practices. Flores and Ferreira (2023) found that teachers' capacity to differentiate effectively depends on consistent professional development opportunities that bridge theoretical understanding with classroom realities. Smit and Humpert (2022) concluded that while differentiated instruction promotes inclusion, its success hinges on teacher confidence and institutional support systems. Tomlinson and Murphy (2021) reaffirmed that school leadership and mentoring programs play a pivotal role in strengthening teacher competence in differentiation. Within the Philippine context, Abad and Sumayo (2024) reported that teachers in inclusive classrooms exhibit increasing readiness and creativity in lesson adaptation, though they continue to encounter challenges related to limited resources and workload.

Overall, these findings align with the present study's results and theoretical foundations, demonstrating that immersive and experiential training enhances teachers' readiness and ability to apply differentiated instruction effectively. High teacher readiness and effectiveness in differentiation are crucial for fostering inclusive, equitable, and learner-centered SPED practices, particularly in settings where teachers manage diverse learning profiles with varying levels of support.

Use of Evidence-Based Teaching Strategies

Employing evidence-based teaching methodologies is essential for guaranteeing that special education training is effective, efficient, and consistent with best practices. This area assesses educators' implementation of evidence-based teaching techniques, incorporation of resources such as visual timetables and assistive technology, and their dedication to remaining informed about innovative tactics for students with disabilities.

Table 13 presents the level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of the use of evidence-based teaching strategies. The statistics reveal that respondents considered themselves highly proficient in implementing evidence-based teaching practices, with an aggregate weighted

Table 13. Level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of use of evidence-based teaching strategies				
S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I apply research-based instructional practices.	4.40	0.65	Very High
2	I use visual schedules, task analysis, and assistive technology.	4.52	0.51	Very High
3	I stay updated on new teaching strategies for students with disabilities.	4.28	0.68	Very High
	Aggregate Mean	4.40		Very High
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.61	

mean of 4.40, classified as *Very High*. The most highly rated indicator was the utilization of visual schedules, task analysis, and assistive technology (WM = 4.52, SD = 0.51), indicating strong consensus among educators regarding the importance of structured and supportive instructional methods. Although all indicators were rated very high, the slightly higher standard deviations for applying research-based practices (SD = 0.65) and staying updated on new strategies (SD = 0.68) suggest some variability in the consistency with which teachers implemented these practices.

These findings are supported by research emphasizing that the use of evidence-based strategies enhances teaching effectiveness and student outcomes in SPED settings. Horner et al. (2005) asserted that evidence-based approaches are essential for improving learning outcomes for students with disabilities by providing instruction grounded in rigorous research. Timmons et al. (2022) highlighted that educators who utilize research-supported strategies and instructional tools can more effectively address diverse learning needs, while Zoana et al. (2023) underscored the importance of individualized approaches, particularly for learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Test et al. (2022) further emphasized the role of continuous professional development in helping teachers maintain and update their instructional competencies. Additionally, Rayos and Capulong (2022) noted that ongoing training in evidence-based practices enhances teacher preparedness and supports the effective implementation of inclusive strategies across varied learning environments.

Recent studies further reinforce these conclusions, showing that teachers' proficiency in evidence-based instruction is strengthened through immersive and experiential learning. Graham, Berman, and Van Bergen (2024) found that teachers exposed to simulation-based and mentored training demonstrated stronger fidelity in applying research-backed methods in diverse classrooms. Similarly, Buragohain, Das, and Deka (2024) highlighted that reflection and guided application during practicum experiences deepen understanding and adaptability in using evidence-based interventions.

Collectively, these findings affirm that sustained engagement in immersive, research-informed practice enables teachers to translate theoretical knowledge into measurable instructional effectiveness. The implications of these results emphasize that continuous professional learning and experiential exposure are vital for fostering teacher readiness and ensuring that SPED instruction remains both inclusive and empirically grounded.

Effectiveness in Managing Student Behavior

Effectively managing student behavior is an essential aspect of special education teacher preparedness, as it directly influences the learning environment and student engagement. This domain assesses educators' proficiency in employing proactive techniques, positive reinforcement, and data-informed interventions to foster appropriate conduct and mitigate behavioral issues in the classroom.

Table 14. Level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of effectiveness in managing student behavior				
S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I reduce challenging behaviors using proactive strategies.	4.44	0.51	Very High
2	I use positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate behavior.	4.52	0.51	Very High
3	I track behavior incidents and adjust interventions accordingly.	4.52	0.51	Very High
	Aggregate Mean	4.49		Very High
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.51	

Table 14 presents the level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents in terms of effectiveness in managing student behavior. The findings revealed that respondents considered themselves highly proficient in managing student behavior, as shown by the overall weighted mean of 4.49, interpreted as Very High. The use of positive reinforcement and behavior-tracking interventions received the highest ratings (WM = 4.52, SD = 0.51), indicating a strong consensus among teachers regarding the implementation of proactive, consistent, and data-driven behavioral management strategies. The relatively low standard deviations across all indicators suggested a high degree of uniformity in teachers' practices, reflecting well-established routines and adherence to structured intervention methods.

These findings aligned with a growing body of research emphasizing the critical role of proactive and evidence-based behavior management in special education environments. Horner et al. (2005) established that systematic behavioral interventions mitigate challenging behaviors and foster conducive learning environments, while Jumawan (2021) highlighted the importance of consistent management practices tailored to individual student needs. Similarly, Carter and Kurth (2021) stressed that preventive and structured behavioral approaches—such as environmental adjustments, pre-correction, and positive reinforcement—help reduce disruptions and sustain engagement, aligning with the high proficiency demonstrated by teachers in this study.

The respondents' strong application of positive reinforcement supported the findings of Reyes and Santos (2023), who demonstrated that implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in Philippine SPED classrooms significantly enhances behavioral outcomes and teacher efficacy. Furthermore, their consistent use of behavior tracking and intervention adjustments corresponded with the findings of Sutherland and Conroy (2022), who noted that data-based decision-making is vital in improving behavioral outcomes and maintaining intervention fidelity. The low variability (SD = 0.51) among the indicators also aligned with Alcantara and Villanueva (2025), who found that teacher consistency in reinforcement practices directly correlates with improved student behavior in rural SPED contexts. This uniformity suggested that educators in the current study implemented behavior management strategies with high reliability and consistency—qualities essential for maintaining classroom stability and student trust.

Finally, the participants' proactive use of culturally responsive strategies reflected the conclusions of Nguyen and Pham (2024), who reported that tailoring behavioral interventions to local classroom norms and cultural contexts enhances inclusivity and long-term effectiveness. Collectively, these findings reinforced the interconnectedness between teacher training, consistent data-driven behavior management, and culturally grounded reinforcement strategies—principles consistently emphasized in both global and local literature.

In summary, the results indicated that SPED teachers demonstrated strong readiness and effectiveness in managing student behavior through proactive, evidence-based, and culturally responsive strategies. The implications of these findings emphasize that continuous professional development and reflective practice are essential in sustaining effective behavioral interventions. This alignment with both international and Philippine research underscores the significance of preventive, consistent, and data-informed management frameworks in promoting inclusive and

effective SPED classrooms (Horner et al., 2005; Jumawan, 2021; Carter & Kurth, 2021; Reyes & Santos, 2023; Sutherland & Conroy, 2022; Nguyen & Pham, 2024; Alcantara & Villanueva, 2025; Timmons et al., 2022; Test et al., 2022; Solayao & Dizon, 2022).

Summary on the Level of Readiness and Effectiveness of the Respondents

In summary, Table 15 presents a comprehensive overview of the respondents' perceived readiness and effectiveness across six critical domains in special education.

Table 15. Summary on the level of readiness and effectiveness of the respondents			
Components	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Knowledge of Diverse Disabilities	4.49	0.63	Very High
Instructional Planning and Use of IEPs	4.39	0.63	Very High
Confidence in Handling Multi-Disability Learners	4.29	0.61	Very High
Implementation of Differentiated Instruction	4.65	0.49	Very High
Use of Evidence-Based Teaching Strategies	4.40	0.61	Very High
Effectiveness in Managing Student Behavior	4.49	0.51	Very High
Grand Mean	4.45		Very High
Grand Standard Deviation		0.58	

The results indicated a consistently high level of self-assessed competence, with a grand mean of 4.45, interpreted as Very High. This suggested that respondents felt well prepared to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Among the domains, Implementation of Differentiated Instruction received the highest rating (WM = 4.65, SD = 0.49), reflecting a strong consensus regarding teachers' ability to adapt teaching methods, lesson content, and assessment strategies to accommodate varied learning needs. Conversely, Confidence in Handling Multi-Disability Learners had a slightly lower mean (WM = 4.29, SD = 0.61), indicating that while respondents demonstrated substantial readiness overall, this area could benefit from targeted professional support and continued capacity building.

In Knowledge of Diverse Disabilities (WM = 4.49, SD = 0.63), respondents showed a strong understanding of disability characteristics and appropriate instructional adaptations, consistent with recent findings that teacher content knowledge is a key predictor of positive learner outcomes (Espina & Opingo, 2024). The domain on Instructional Planning and Use of IEPs (WM = 4.39, SD = 0.63) highlighted the importance of aligning instructional goals and lesson designs with individualized education programs, echoing De Arao (2024), who emphasized that well-structured IEP implementation ensures equitable learning experiences.

The domain on Use of Evidence-Based Teaching Strategies (WM = 4.40, SD = 0.61) demonstrated that respondents frequently applied structured and research-supported instructional methods, such as visual schedules, task analysis, and assistive technologies—approaches that enhanced access and engagement among learners with disabilities. Similarly, Effectiveness in Managing Student Behavior (WM = 4.49, SD = 0.51) underscored teachers' proficiency in proactive, reinforcement-based, and data-driven approaches to promote positive behavior and sustain inclusive classroom environments.

Recent empirical studies reinforced these findings. Systematic reviews and implementation studies have established that evidence-based practices—including structured visual supports, task analysis, and assistive technology—consistently improved student learning and behavioral outcomes when paired with sustained mentoring and institutional support systems (NCAEP/Steinbrenner et al., 2020; *Assistive Technology Outcomes & Benefits*, 2021). Likewise, research on immersive and simulation-based practicum models indicated that these experiences led to enhanced teacher confidence, pedagogical flexibility, and generalization of instructional skills (Lee, 2023; *Learning Delivery Readiness — Camarines Norte*, 2024). Such evidence helped explain the high readiness ratings across multiple domains in the present study.

Overall, respondents reported very high readiness and effectiveness across all six dimensions, with notable strength in differentiated instruction and behavioral management. However, the slightly lower rating in handling multi-disability learners highlighted an area for targeted professional development, such as scaffolded immersive placements or focused mentoring programs emphasizing multi-disability instructional management.

The implications of these findings suggest that teacher preparation programs should continue to integrate immersive, evidence-based, and mentored training experiences that address both high- and low-incidence disabilities. Strengthening institutional support systems and ensuring sustained professional development opportunities will be crucial for maintaining teacher effectiveness and promoting inclusive education practices. These outcomes align with current research indicating that readiness and effectiveness in SPED teaching are best achieved when experiential learning, policy frameworks, and institutional capacity-building initiatives are strategically aligned.

SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMMERSIVE TRAINING AND TEACHER READINESS/EFFECTIVENESS

The role of immersive training in shaping special education teachers’ professional competence has emerged as a central focus in understanding how experiential learning influences instructional effectiveness and readiness. Immersive training provided educators with authentic opportunities to apply theoretical principles in real or simulated classroom settings, enabling them to refine instructional practices, strengthen decision-making skills, and respond effectively to the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. This experiential approach bridged the gap between theory and practice by cultivating reflective and adaptive teaching behaviors essential for inclusive education. Examining the correlation between immersive training and teacher readiness or effectiveness offered valuable insights into how sustained, context-rich experiences promoted mastery of individualized education planning, differentiated instruction, and evidence-based teaching. Moreover, understanding this relationship underscored the transformative role of hands-on professional preparation in enhancing teachers’ confidence, pedagogical agility, and long-term capacity to deliver equitable and high-quality learning experiences for students with disabilities.

Relationship Between the Impact of Immersive Training and Readiness and Effectiveness of the Respondents

The correlation between immersive training and teacher preparedness and efficacy is a central focus in examining how experiential learning shapes professional competence in special education. Immersive training offers educators hands-on, practical experience in real-world educational settings, enabling them to apply theoretical knowledge, hone instructional strategies, and strengthen classroom management skills. This study seeks to determine the extent to which practical, immersive experiences contribute to SPED teachers’ preparedness, confidence, and efficacy in addressing the diverse needs of learners with disabilities.

Table 16. Test of relationship between the impact of immersive training and readiness and effectiveness of the respondents					
Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Impact of Immersive Training And Readiness and Effectiveness	0.594*	Moderate Positive	0.002	Reject Ho	Significant
*significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)					

Table 16 presents the results of the correlation analysis between the impact of immersive training and the readiness and effectiveness of the respondents. The analysis reveals a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.594$, $p = 0.002$) between immersive training and teacher readiness and effectiveness. This indicates that educators who engage in extensive and meaningful immersive experiences tend to exhibit higher levels of instructional preparedness, professional competence,

and confidence. The statistically significant result ($p < 0.05$) leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that immersive training is significantly correlated with SPED teacher preparedness and effectiveness.

These findings are reinforced by theoretical models that explain how experiential engagement enhances teaching proficiency. The Cognitive Apprenticeship Model emphasizes learning through guided participation, wherein novice educators develop expertise under expert supervision—mirroring the mentoring and modeling central to immersive training. Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes an iterative learning process consisting of concrete experience, critical reflection, conceptual understanding, and practical application, which collectively foster adaptive teaching skills and reflective professional competence. Likewise, Dewey’s Theory of Learning by Doing underscores that authentic, practice-based academic environments strengthen hands-on knowledge, analytical reasoning, and problem-solving—skills essential for managing diverse SPED classrooms. In addition, Self-Determination Theory posits that immersive learning fosters intrinsic motivation by promoting autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which translate into stronger engagement and self-efficacy (Timmons et al., 2022; Rowe et al., 2020; Solayao & Dizon, 2022).

Empirical studies support these theoretical assertions. The National Clearinghouse for Autism Evidence & Practice (NCAEP; Steinbrenner et al., 2020) and subsequent systematic reviews affirm that teachers who integrate theoretical knowledge with guided real-world application exhibit greater proficiency in implementing differentiated and evidence-based practices. Lee (2023) and Magallanes (2025) similarly reported that immersive, simulation-based, and mentored field experiences significantly enhance teachers’ confidence, adaptability, and reflective decision-making. Furthermore, Walker (2023) and the Camarines Norte Learning Delivery Readiness Report (2024) found that field-integrated practice and reflective supervision strengthen instructional quality and readiness for inclusive classrooms.

Overall, the results demonstrate that immersive training leads to measurable gains in SPED teacher preparedness across multiple domains—including understanding diverse disabilities, instructional planning aligned with IEPs, application of evidence-based strategies, and effective behavior management. Embedding structured, experiential learning opportunities within teacher preparation programs and continuous professional development initiatives can therefore enhance SPED teacher competence and sustain improved learning outcomes for students with disabilities.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE IMMERSIVE TRAINING

PROGRAMS

Based on the study’s findings, several strategies are recommended to strengthen the design, implementation, and impact of immersive training programs for special education teachers. The analyses revealed a generally high level of preparedness and effectiveness among respondents; however, areas for improvement were identified in confidence when handling multi-disability learners, consistency in monitoring IEP goals, and uniform implementation of evidence-based practices. Addressing these areas can further enhance teacher proficiency and, ultimately, improve learning outcomes for students with disabilities.

1. Strengthening Confidence in Handling Multi-Disability Learners

Given the slightly lower weighted mean ($WM = 4.29$) and higher standard deviation ($SD = 0.61$) in this area, immersive training programs should include specialized hands-on modules within multi-disability classroom environments. Teachers can gradually assume more responsibilities through structured supervision, allowing them to apply adaptive strategies in authentic contexts.

Incorporating role-playing, case analyses, and collaborative problem-solving for learners with co-occurring disabilities promotes confidence and situational awareness. These strategies align with the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model, which emphasizes guided practice under expert mentorship, and Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory, which highlights the importance of concrete experience and

reflective observation. Recent studies (Lee, 2023; Magallanes, 2025) support that guided immersive exposure significantly improves teacher adaptability and confidence in handling diverse disabilities.

2. Enhancing IEP-Based Instruction and Monitoring

The variability in IEP monitoring ($SD = 0.79$) underscores the need for structured and sustained professional learning on data-driven IEP implementation. Programs should include mentorship sessions, performance coaching, and observation of expert practitioners to reinforce best practices in IEP-based instruction.

These activities can be complemented by feedback loops and progress-monitoring templates that help teachers link instruction with measurable student outcomes. Embedding these approaches within Self-Determination Theory supports teacher autonomy and competence, increasing motivation to consistently apply IEP goals (De Arao, 2024; Espina & Opingo, 2024).

3. Promoting Consistent Use of Evidence-Based Teaching Strategies

Although respondents reported substantial use of evidence-based practices ($WM = 4.40$), the relatively high standard deviations ($SD = 0.65\text{--}0.68$) suggest inconsistent application. Immersive training programs should therefore integrate modeling and practice of evidence-based interventions, including visual schedules, task analysis, differentiated supports, and assistive technologies.

These should be followed by reflective debriefing sessions that reinforce learning through analysis of real classroom scenarios. This approach resonates with Dewey's Learning by Doing and Kolb's Experiential Learning, which both emphasize iterative cycles of action and reflection. Empirical evidence from Steinbrenner et al. (2020) and NCAEP (2021) also confirms that consistent exposure to evidence-based practices under mentorship strengthens teacher fidelity and effectiveness.

4. Structuring Differentiated Instruction Experiences

Differentiated instruction recorded the highest proficiency rating ($WM = 4.65$), yet maintaining this high standard across educators requires intentional, scaffolded practice. Immersive programs should provide collaborative lesson planning workshops, peer observations, and feedback-based refinement cycles that promote continuous improvement in lesson differentiation, content adaptation, and assessment design.

Such approaches reinforce the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model, where teachers refine their skills through observation, practice, and feedback in authentic teaching contexts. Studies by Timmons et al. (2022) and Walker (2023) highlight that sustained mentorship and peer collaboration are key to ensuring the long-term retention of differentiated instructional skills.

5. Expanding Continuous Behavior Management Training

Findings show high competence in behavior management ($WM = 4.49$, $SD = 0.51$); however, maintaining this requires ongoing training that reinforces proactive and culturally responsive strategies. Immersive programs can integrate simulation exercises, behavior case studies, and structured positive reinforcement systems.

Through repeated practice and reflection, teachers can improve consistency and reduce variance in implementation. These align with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes motivation through competence and relatedness, and experiential frameworks that promote mastery through active engagement (Reyes & Santos, 2023; Sutherland & Conroy, 2022).

6. Integrating Reflective and Collaborative Practices

To ensure sustained professional growth, immersive training programs should embed structured reflection and collaboration mechanisms such as reflective journals, peer dialogues, and mentorship debriefings. These enable educators to critically analyze their experiences, share insights, and identify growth areas.

Engaging in reflective practice enhances teachers' self-awareness, promotes deeper learning, and contributes to the development of their professional identity (Nguyen & Pham, 2024). In line with

Self-Determination Theory, reflective collaboration fosters autonomy and intrinsic motivation, enhancing long-term teacher readiness and effectiveness.

7. Sustaining Professional Development and Support Systems

Finally, immersive training should be supplemented by continuous professional development to sustain gains beyond initial exposure. This includes refresher sessions, online learning communities, and access to current SPED research and pedagogical frameworks that promote continuous professional learning. Ongoing mentorship ensures that teachers continue refining their strategies, maintaining confidence in addressing complex classroom challenges, and aligning their practices with updated educational standards (Camarines Norte, 2024; Alcantara & Villanueva, 2025).

These proposed strategies underscore the importance of practical experience, guided mentorship, reflective inquiry, and continuous professional learning as the core of effective immersive training. By addressing identified gaps in confidence, consistency, and evidence-based implementation, immersive training programs can be further refined to strengthen SPED teacher preparedness and instructional efficacy, thereby improving educational outcomes for learners with disabilities.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a comprehensive synthesis of the study, integrating the major findings, drawing conclusions, and formulating actionable recommendations derived from the results. It evaluates the preparedness and effectiveness of Special Education (SPED) teachers, analyzes the influence of immersive training on their professional competencies, and identifies areas for improvement that could strengthen training implementation. The discussion connects the study's outcomes to its research questions and theoretical underpinnings—specifically the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, Dewey's Learning by Doing, and Self-Determination Theory—to contextualize the significance of immersive learning in SPED teacher preparation.

SUMMARY

This study examined the influence of immersive training on the preparedness and teaching effectiveness of SPED teachers in Cebu Province. Twenty-five respondents from selected public schools participated, representing varied ages, educational attainment, and teaching experience. Majority were female (88%) and mid-career teachers aged 45–54. Most held graduate-level qualifications, with 68% having more than 11 years of experience, reflecting substantial professional exposure. The participants commonly taught learners with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and hearing impairments, managing an average of 11–20 students per class.

The data revealed that immersive training had a strong positive impact on SPED teaching (overall weighted mean = 4.41). Respondents reported high competence in behavior management, instructional planning, and adapting strategies to meet diverse learner needs. However, there was variation in the perceived completeness and duration of training, suggesting areas for program refinement.

Teachers' preparedness and teaching effectiveness were both rated "Very High" (grand mean = 4.45). Differentiated instruction earned the highest mean (4.65), showing teachers' strong capability to adapt instruction, while managing multi-disability learners received the lowest (4.29), identifying a focus area for further support.

A statistically significant positive correlation was found between immersive training and teacher preparedness and effectiveness ($r = 0.594$, $p = 0.002$), affirming that structured experiential learning contributes to higher confidence, competence, and professional efficacy.

Overall, the study demonstrates that immersive, mentor-guided, and reflective experiences substantially strengthen SPED teacher readiness and promote inclusive, evidence-based classroom practices. These findings address the research questions by establishing (a) the profile of SPED teachers, (b) the level of training impact, (c) the dimensions of readiness and effectiveness, and (d) the significant relationship between immersive training and teaching outcomes.

FINDINGS

The study aimed to determine the relationship between the impact of immersive training experiences and the readiness and effectiveness of SPED teachers. The analysis revealed that immersive training experiences significantly influenced the respondents' preparedness and teaching performance across several indicators. Results showed that the respondents perceived immersive training to have a very high impact on their professional development, with particular emphasis on the enhancement of instructional competence, classroom management, and adaptive teaching strategies for learners with disabilities. This demonstrates that exposure to real classroom environments, mentoring support, and hands-on engagement during the practicum effectively reinforced theoretical learning and developed practical teaching skills essential in SPED contexts.

Findings further indicated that respondents demonstrated a high level of readiness and effectiveness after participating in immersive training programs. They reported being more confident in handling diverse learners, implementing individualized education plans (IEPs), and applying inclusive pedagogical approaches aligned with special education principles. Their preparedness extended to communication and collaboration with parents, co-teachers, and specialists, reflecting the holistic professional competencies developed through immersive training. Findings affirm that systematic field engagement serves as a vital link between teacher education coursework and the professional responsibilities encountered in special education classrooms.

Correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between the impact of immersive training and the teachers' readiness and effectiveness. The computed r-value indicated a moderate to strong correlation, while the corresponding p-value was less than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that the higher the perceived impact of immersive training, the greater the level of readiness and effectiveness demonstrated by the respondents. Such findings underscore the vital role of immersive programs in cultivating competence, confidence, and reflective practice among SPED teachers.

Furthermore, demographic variables such as teaching experience, length of service, and type of school revealed only slight differences in the overall correlation outcomes. This suggests that, regardless of background, immersive training consistently enhances teacher readiness and effectiveness when properly implemented. The results affirm that practical exposure through immersion remains a powerful pedagogical approach in preparing teachers to deliver responsive and inclusive instruction to learners with special needs.

Overall, the findings highlight that immersive training serves as a critical foundation for teacher preparation in special education. It strengthens the alignment between theory and practice, develops essential classroom skills, and promotes the professional growth necessary for effectively supporting diverse learners. The significant relationship found between immersive training and teacher readiness and effectiveness provides empirical support for sustaining and improving experiential learning models in SPED teacher education.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that immersive training experiences play a significant role in enhancing the readiness and effectiveness of SPED teachers. Findings revealed that respondents who participated in immersive field experiences demonstrated higher confidence, stronger instructional competence, and better preparedness to address the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. Immersion allowed teachers to connect theoretical learning with real classroom practice, refine their adaptive teaching strategies, and foster collaborative relationships with colleagues and parents. These

outcomes affirm the importance of experiential learning as a cornerstone of SPED teacher education.

Despite these positive outcomes, the findings also revealed notable areas for improvement. Some respondents reported variability in the depth and quality of their immersive experiences, particularly in terms of duration, mentoring support, and exposure to a wide range of disability cases. Others expressed that while the training provided meaningful experiences, it lacked uniformity and continuity across placements. These observations suggest that while immersive training successfully builds competence and confidence, it requires more structured supervision, standardized implementation, and consistent opportunities for reflective feedback to ensure equitable learning experiences for all pre-service teachers.

The results further highlight that demographic factors such as teaching experience and school type did not significantly alter the relationship between immersive training and teacher readiness. This consistency suggests that well-designed immersion programs benefit teachers across different backgrounds. However, the gaps identified also emphasize the need to strengthen linkages between training institutions and partner schools to ensure a balanced and comprehensive exposure to SPED practices.

In conclusion, immersive training serves as a vital bridge between theory and practice, equipping SPED teachers with the professional skills and values necessary for inclusive education. Its strengths lie in its ability to develop confidence, practical competence, and reflective practice. Yet, for its impact to be maximized, program implementers must address inconsistencies in training experiences, reinforce mentoring and supervision mechanisms, and expand the diversity of classroom placements. By refining these areas, teacher education institutions can further enhance the effectiveness of immersive programs and better prepare future SPED teachers to deliver quality, inclusive, and compassionate instruction to learners with special needs.

Ultimately, the study affirms the hypothesis that immersive training has a significant positive relationship with teacher preparedness and effectiveness, validating its essential role in advancing quality SPED instruction in Philippine schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of immersive training programs and strengthen SPED teacher readiness. These recommendations target key stakeholders involved in policy development, program execution, and the provision of professional support to teachers. By addressing the identified gaps through collaborative and evidence-based approaches, the outcomes of immersive training can be further optimized to ensure better educational services for learners with disabilities.

1. Department of Education (DepEd)

DepEd should strengthen the implementation and monitoring of immersive training partnerships between universities and public schools. Establishing standardized national guidelines for SPED practicum and internships would help ensure consistency in training quality and learning outcomes. DepEd is also encouraged to institutionalize a post-immersion mentoring program for novice SPED teachers, wherein experienced mentors provide classroom-based guidance during the first year of teaching. Furthermore, integrating immersive field experiences as part of continuing professional development (CPD) credits may encourage teachers to engage in sustained reflective practice and skill enhancement.

2. Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs)

CHED and TEIs should review and align their SPED practicum curricula with the real-world demands of inclusive education. This includes reinforcing field-based supervision, reflective journaling, and exposure to diverse learner profiles in both urban and rural school settings. Collaboration with local DepEd divisions should be strengthened to ensure that preservice teachers are deployed in authentic SPED environments rather than general education placements. TEIs may

also explore integrating international best practices—such as competency-based assessment and collaborative co-teaching models—into their practicum design to elevate teacher readiness and global competitiveness.

3. School Administrators and SPED Coordinators

Principals and SPED coordinators are encouraged to create a supportive school culture that sustains the gains of immersive training. This may include structured onboarding programs, peer mentoring, and regular feedback mechanisms that promote reflective teaching and professional growth. Administrators should also advocate for school-based learning communities focused on inclusive education strategies, where teachers share effective practices and co-develop interventions tailored to the needs of learners with disabilities.

4. SPED Teachers

SPED teachers are encouraged to take an active role in continuous self-assessment and reflective practice to reinforce the skills gained through immersive training. Engaging in collaborative lesson studies, peer observations, and action research can further refine instructional strategies and strengthen teacher confidence. Teachers should also participate in professional learning communities (PLCs) and advocate for inclusive practices that align with the goals of equitable education for all learners.

5. Policy Makers and Local Government Units (LGUs)

Policy makers and LGUs should consider providing budgetary support and incentives for programs that strengthen SPED teacher preparation and retention. Establishing localized training hubs or “SPED Centers of Excellence” within each division may serve as venues for immersive training, mentoring, and inclusive education innovation. LGUs can also support initiatives that bridge school–community partnerships to facilitate smoother transitions for learners with disabilities from school to employment or community life.

6. Future Researchers

Future studies may explore the long-term effects of immersive training on actual classroom performance and learner outcomes, as well as compare variations between rural and urban contexts. Mixed-method or longitudinal designs are encouraged to capture the evolving perspectives of SPED teachers as they progress through their professional journey. Future research may also examine the role of administrative support, collaboration, and school climate in sustaining the benefits of immersive experiences.

CHAPTER 4

THE OUTPUT OF THE STUDY

ACTION PLAN

Rationale

The findings of this study demonstrate that immersive training significantly enhances SPED teachers’ readiness and effectiveness, particularly in behavior management, instructional planning, IEP implementation, and differentiated instruction. Despite these gains, gaps remain in areas such as confidence in managing learners with multiple disabilities, continuous monitoring of IEPs, and systematic application of evidence-based interventions.

This Action Plan is designed to address these gaps through structured, practical, and reflective training experiences, fostering a cadre of SPED teachers who are highly skilled, confident, and capable of meeting the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. The plan emphasizes hands-on engagement, mentorship, reflective practice, and sustained professional development, aligning directly with the study’s evidence-based recommendations.

Objectives

The primary goal of this Action Plan is to enhance the effectiveness of immersive training programs in improving the readiness and capacity of Special Education (SPED) teachers to support learners with disabilities. Anchored in the study's findings and conclusions, the plan seeks to transform identified gaps—such as inconsistent training depth, limited exposure to multi-disability learners, and uneven mentoring support—into opportunities for professional growth and systemic improvement. The ultimate objective is to institutionalize a standardized, reflective, and evidence-based immersive training framework that promotes excellence in SPED instruction and inclusive education practices.

1. **Standardize the structure and implementation** of immersive training programs in partnership with DepEd, CHED, and TEIs to ensure quality, consistency, and alignment with the realities of inclusive education.
2. **Enhance mentorship and supervision systems** that provide continuous guidance and reflective coaching for preservice and in-service SPED teachers, ensuring sustained competence beyond immersion.
3. **Address existing gaps in SPED teacher readiness**, particularly in managing learners with multiple disabilities, maintaining IEP fidelity, and applying evidence-based instructional and behavioral interventions.
4. **Integrate reflective and experiential learning mechanisms**—such as journaling, peer collaboration, and action research—into immersion and post-immersion phases to deepen learning and self-evaluation.
5. **Foster institutional collaboration** among DepEd, CHED, TEIs, and local government units to build SPED Centers of Excellence that serve as training hubs for inclusive education innovation and practice-based learning.
6. **Promote continuous professional development (CPD)** by linking immersive training outcomes to teacher certification, promotion, and career advancement pathways, encouraging lifelong learning and accountability.
7. **Establish monitoring and evaluation frameworks** to measure the impact of immersive training on SPED teacher performance, learner outcomes, and overall program effectiveness.

Scheme of Implementation

To operationalize the proposed Action Plan, implementation will follow a phased, cyclical approach that integrates experiential learning, mentorship, reflection, and continuous development. Each phase builds upon the previous one, ensuring that SPED teachers progressively strengthen their readiness and capacity to support learners with disabilities. The plan also promotes collaboration among key stakeholders—DepEd, CHED, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), school administrators, and SPED coordinators—to ensure coherence and sustainability.

1. **Preparatory Phase.** This phase focuses on groundwork and orientation. Participating teachers, mentors, and administrators will undergo a structured orientation to clarify the program's objectives, expectations, and evaluation processes. Coordination meetings between DepEd divisions and TEIs will be conducted to align schedules, roles, and supervision protocols. Training materials, monitoring tools, and reflective templates will also be developed and disseminated.
2. **Immersive Training Phase.** This is the core of the action plan, where teachers engage in hands-on classroom practice under guided supervision. Activities include role-playing, case analyses, differentiated instruction planning, and direct teaching of learners with varying disabilities. Mentors will provide structured coaching, ensuring fidelity to Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and evidence-based practices.
3. **Reflective Phase.** After the immersive experience, teachers will participate in structured debriefings, reflective journaling, and peer discussions. These reflective activities help participants

analyze challenges, consolidate learning, and identify growth areas. Mentorship feedback will be integrated to strengthen self-awareness and continuous improvement.

4. Assessment and Monitoring Phase. This phase centers on evaluating the impact of immersive training. Assessment tools and rubrics will be utilized to measure teacher readiness, effectiveness, and adherence to IEP goals. Monitoring will be both formative (during immersion) and summative (after completion), with emphasis on the consistent use of evidence-based strategies. Regular reporting to DepEd and TEIs will ensure accountability and data-driven decision-making.

5. Continuous Professional Development Phase. The final phase ensures sustainability through ongoing professional support. Teachers will have access to refresher sessions, webinars, and online learning platforms. Localized SPED learning communities and “Centers of Excellence” will serve as venues for continuing mentorship, collaborative lesson studies, and innovation sharing. This phase reinforces the principle of lifelong learning and reflective practice as essential components of SPED teacher growth.

Proposed Strategies for Enhanced SPED Teacher Readiness

Areas of Concern	Objectives	Strategies	Persons Involved	Budget	Source of Budget	Time Frame	Expected Outcome	Actual Accomplishment	Remark
Confidence in Handling Multi-Disability Learners	Enhance teacher competence and confidence in managing learners with multiple disabilities	-Hands-on modules in multi-disability classrooms- Role-playing, case analyses, collaborative problem-solving- Gradual responsibility under structured supervision	SPED Teachers, Mentors, School Administrators, TEIs	5,000–10,000	DepEd / TEIs / School funds	6 months	Teachers demonstrate improved confidence and skill in managing multi-disability learners. KPI: ≥80% of teachers rated “Good” or “Excellent” in observation rubrics		
IEP Implementation	Improve fidelity and consistency in planning, implementing, and monitoring IEP goals	-Structured mentoring on IEP monitoring- Use of progress-monitoring templates- Feedback loops and performance coaching	SPED Teachers, Mentors, TEIs, DepEd Coordinators	3,000–5,000	DepEd / TEIs	6 months	Teachers consistently implement and monitor IEPs aligned with learner needs. KPI: ≥85% completion and accuracy rate in IEP implementation checklists		
Evidence-Based Strategies	Strengthen teachers’ use of research-supported instructional methods	- Modeling and practice of visual schedules, task analysis, assistive technologies- Reflective debriefing after classroom application	SPED Teachers, Mentors, TEIs	5,000–8,000	DepEd / TEIs	6–12 months	Teachers consistently apply evidence-based strategies with fidelity. KPI: ≥80% of lessons incorporate at least 3 evidence-based methods		
Differentiated Instruction	Maintain and enhance ability to adapt content, process, and assessments	- Collaborative lesson planning workshops- Peer observation and feedback cycles- Mentorship for differentiation strategies	SPED Teachers, Mentors, TEIs	5,000–7,000	DepEd / TEIs	6–12 months	Teachers demonstrate highly effective differentiated instruction. KPI: ≥85% of teachers rated “Good” or “Excellent” in differentiation rubric		
Behavior Management	Promote proactive, positive, and culturally responsive behavior management	- Simulation exercises, case studies, structured positive reinforcement systems- Reflection and analysis of classroom scenarios	SPED Teachers, Mentors, School Administrators	3,000–6,000	DepEd / TEIs	Continuous	Teachers consistently implement positive behavior strategies. KPI: ≥80% of teachers maintain low classroom disruption rates; ≥80% rated “Good” or “Excellent” in behavior		

							management rubric		
Reflective and Collaborative Practices	Strengthen reflective and collaborative professional habits	- Reflective journaling, peer discussions, mentorship debriefings- Action research projects or collaborative lesson studies	SPED Teachers, Mentors, TEIs	2,000–5,000	DepEd / TEIs	Continuous	Teachers demonstrate reflective practice and collaboration. KPI: ≥80% of teachers submit reflective journals and participate in peer discussions		
Continuous Professional Development	Ensure sustained professional growth and lifelong learning	- Access to refresher sessions, webinars, online platforms- Participation in SPED learning communities and Centers of Excellence	SPED Teachers, Mentors, DepEd, LGUs	3,000–6,000	DepEd / LGUs	Continuous	Teachers engage in ongoing learning and maintain/improve competencies. KPI: ≥75% participation in CPD activities; evidence of applying new learning in classrooms		

SPED Teacher Readiness Monitoring & Evaluation Rubric

Teacher Information

Teacher Name _____

School / Placement Site _____

Date of Evaluation _____

Immersion Phase / Period Preparatory Core Immersion Reflective
 Post-Immersion Follow-up

Evaluator / Mentor Name _____

Evaluator Role / Position _____

Observation Type Classroom Observation Reflective Journal
 Peer Collaboration Other: _____

Performance Evaluation Table

Areas of Concern	Performance Indicators	Monitoring & Evaluation Method	Rating (1–4)	Comments / Evidence
Confidence in Handling Multi-Disability Learners	Teacher demonstrates competence and confidence in managing learners with multiple disabilities.	Classroom observation, learner progress reports, supervisor checklist	1-Poor 2-Fair 3-Good 4-Excellent	
IEP Implementation	Teacher consistently applies IEP goals, adjusts instruction, and monitors learner progress effectively.	Review of IEP documentation, observation, feedback from SPED coordinator	1-Poor 2-Fair 3-Good 4-Excellent	
Evidence-Based Strategies	Teacher utilizes research-supported methods, including visual schedules, task analysis, assistive technology, and differentiated supports.	Lesson plan review, teaching demonstration, portfolio evidence	1-Poor 2-Fair 3-Good 4-Excellent	
Differentiated Instruction	Teacher adapts content, process, and assessments to meet diverse learner needs.	Classroom observation, learner output analysis	1-Poor 2-Fair 3-Good 4-Excellent	
Behavior Management	Teacher implements proactive, positive, and culturally responsive behavior strategies consistently.	Behavior incident records, classroom walkthrough, reflection journal	1-Poor 2-Fair 3-Good 4-Excellent	
Reflective and Collaborative	Teacher engages in reflective journaling, peer discussions, and	Reflective logs, peer coaching records, meeting	1-Poor 2-Fair 3-Good 4-	

Practices	collaborative problem-solving.	minutes	Excellent	
Continuous Professional Development	Teacher actively participates in ongoing learning, workshops, and professional networks to enhance SPED practice.	Training attendance records, certificates, mentoring logs	1-Poor 2-Fair 3-Good 4-Excellent	

Summary and Recommendations

Overall Score / Average _____

Strengths _____

Areas for Improvement _____

Action Recommendations _____

Follow-up Observation Date _____

Signatures

Evaluator / Mentor _____

Teacher Acknowledgment _____

Notes / Guidelines

- **Rating Scale:** 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent
- **Comments / Evidence:** Include specific examples or observations to justify the rating.
- **Follow-up Observation Date:** Set to track longitudinal progress.
- **Usage:** Can be applied during each immersion phase or post-immersion evaluation

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