



Coordinating Individualized Support and Whole-Class Teaching in a Philippine Public Elementary School

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Abstract

Inclusive elementary teachers are expected to provide individualized support while sustaining whole-class learning, yet how they coordinate these responsibilities under everyday classroom constraints remains insufficiently understood. This study aims to examine teacher-reported learner support needs, instructional adaptations, time allocation, and coping practices in a public elementary school in Pagadian City, Philippines. The study employed a qualitative case study design involving individual interviews with seven teachers, one principal, and two parents during the 2023–2024 school year. Data were analyzed through categorical aggregation and cross-category comparison of teacher interview excerpts; the findings reported here are attributable to the seven teachers. The findings revealed four interrelated patterns: teachers identified support needs involving academic work, communication, and participation; combined differentiated tasks with encouraging classroom interactions; adjusted instructional time in response to competing demands for attention; and supplemented introductory training through self-directed learning and individualized planning. Together, these findings suggest that inclusive classroom practice involves coordinating pedagogical responsiveness, instructional time, and professional support rather than implementing accommodations in isolation. The study contributes context-specific insights into teachers' coordination practices, with implications for school-supported planning and practice-oriented professional development in inclusive elementary education.

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1. Introduction

Inclusive elementary education requires more than mainstream placement; it requires access to learning, meaningful participation, and responsiveness to pupil diversity. Teachers must respond to individual needs while sustaining whole-class learning. Inclusion entails removing barriers to participation, not placement alone (Ainscow, 2020). Primary teachers' attitudes vary according to learner needs (Lindner et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2025). The problem is how teachers operationalize inclusion amid finite time, attention, and support.



This problem is particularly salient in the Philippines, where Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) provides a statutory framework for inclusive education services for learners with disabilities, including individualized planning and family participation. These obligations do not establish that every school has adequate specialist expertise, instructional materials, or planning time. Studies of teachers in Ghana, Mozambique, and Pakistan also report difficulties involving preparation, resources, and classroom inclusion, although their findings cannot be generalized to Philippine schools (Franco, 2023; Kazmi et al., 2023; Naami & Mort, 2023). A qualitative case study from an Indonesian elementary school illustrates how leadership and adaptive pedagogy can intersect in inclusive practice (Hasanah & Suprihatiningrum, 2026). Philippine research has also described interprofessional collaboration between primary teachers and allied health professionals (Villon et al., 2026). Although these studies identify possible organizational resources, neither establishes how teachers in the present school negotiated individual pupil support alongside whole-class responsibilities.

One strand of scholarship focuses on teacher preparedness, attitudes, and perceived capability. A systematic review associates inclusive-teaching self-efficacy with preparation, experience, and contextual support (Wray et al., 2022), while studies in primary education link teachers' perceived competence and institutional circumstances to their confidence in inclusive practice (Chow, 2024; Franzen et al., 2024). Research concerning autistic learners distinguishes willingness to accommodate from confidence in providing appropriate instruction (Baek et al., 2024), while work with pre-service teachers examines self-efficacy as a factor in attitudes toward inclusion (Bowman & Harrison, 2025). Studies of teacher learning also highlight the need to address situated, sometimes challenging, classroom conditions (Saka & Celik, 2024). However, reported efficacy cannot establish the implementation or effectiveness of classroom adaptations. Evidence on the relationships among attitudes, instructional behavior, and student-related indicators (Yang et al., 2024) reinforces the importance of studying reported pedagogical decisions without assuming that favorable intentions produce specific learning outcomes.

A second strand examines the practical design of differentiated and accessible instruction. Differentiation involves adjusting tasks, materials, pacing, assessment opportunities, or classroom participation in relation to pupils' needs; it requires instructional judgment rather than simply assigning different activities to different children. Studies of curriculum resources emphasize the planning needed to translate materials into differentiated teaching (Grecu, 2023), while a review of professional preparation identifies active learning, collaboration, and reflection as important features of differentiation-focused development (Langelaan et al., 2024). Research on universal design for learning similarly describes teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and situated choices as interconnected (Lambert et al., 2023). Collaboration involving exchange, co-construction, or

synchronization may also be relevant to differentiated practice (Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023). These studies clarify pedagogical responses but provide less detail on the attention and time required for specific adjustments in ordinary lessons.

An additional issue is that academic performance alone may not capture a pupil's opportunities for participation. Difficulties with written responses, communication, interaction, or activity pacing can require different forms of support, even within the same classroom. Research on individualized education plans emphasizes the need to examine the coherence of documented supports rather than infer their quality from the existence of a plan (Kurth et al., 2025). Similarly, research that distinguishes between selective mutism and social anxiety highlights the importance of separating educational observations from clinical assessment (Poole et al., 2021). For a study based on teacher interviews, these distinctions matter because participants' descriptions of learners' characteristics and individualized plans cannot, on their own, establish diagnoses, formal compliance, or intervention outcomes. Therefore, the analytical focus is on teachers' perceived barriers and responses.

A third strand concerns workload and the organization of teachers' time. Inclusive education studies highlight concerns about classroom challenges, resources, and workload (Jury et al., 2023), and research on special education working conditions documents how support responsibilities can coexist with professional strain (Hester et al., 2020; Sujarwanto et al., 2024). Research on inclusive school teachers also links professional motivation to school-level support and relationships (Xie et al., 2024). In JIEEd, Gan (2022) reports a qualitative survey of Chinese primary teachers in which extensive duties constrained opportunities for professional inquiry. However, that study did not examine disability inclusion; it highlights time as an organizational resource. Taken together, the evidence raises a more specific question than whether teachers experience heavy workloads: when individual assistance is needed, is support embedded in regular lessons, distributed across activities, or shifted to additional teaching time?

Collaboration may shape these choices, but the forms of collaboration documented in prior research are not interchangeable. Studies have explored inclusive practice in relation to teacher teamwork (Schnepel et al., 2025), the deployment of teaching assistants in primary classrooms (Lewis & Pulsford, 2025), professional learning communities (Johansson & Herrebrøden, 2025), and instructional collaboration (Abu-Alghayth, 2025). The Philippine study of interprofessional collaboration by Villon et al. (2026) adds a culturally situated perspective; nevertheless, it cannot be assumed that comparable partnerships operated in the school examined here. Family contact, teacher-to-teacher collaboration, and specialist consultation should therefore be distinguished

analytically rather than treated as one undifferentiated source of support. This is essential when interview evidence comes predominantly from teachers.

Taken together, the literature establishes that inclusive teaching involves teacher preparedness, responsive pedagogy, workload, and relationships with other adults. However, these dimensions are frequently examined as separate concerns or through measures of attitudes, confidence, collaboration, and broad school practices. Less explicit in this body of evidence is how teachers in a single bounded elementary school setting connect the recognition of a learner's support needs to decisions about classroom participation, task modification, instructional time, and responses to constraints. There is a need for an integrated, context-sensitive account of the relationships among these reported decisions. Such an account can clarify a coordination dilemma without establishing causality or national representativeness.

To address this gap, the present qualitative case study examined elementary teachers' reported experiences in supporting learners with additional educational needs at one public school in Pagadian City during the 2023–2024 school year. It was guided by three questions: (1) How did teachers describe learners' support needs and their preparation for inclusive instruction? (2) What adjustments to participation, learning tasks, and instructional time did they report? (3) What constraints did they identify, and how did they respond? By examining these domains together, the study seeks to contribute a bounded, teacher-centered understanding of inclusive instruction as the coordination of pedagogical responsiveness, classroom participation, instructional time, and professional support.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative case study design, informed by Merriam (1998), to examine how elementary teachers described and responded to learner diversity in their everyday classroom work. The bounded case was a public elementary school in Pagadian City, Philippines, during the 2023–2024 academic year. A case study was appropriate because the research questions concerned instructional decisions as they were understood within a specific school context, including adjustments to learning activities, classroom participation, instructional time, and professional support. The analytic focus was on teachers' reported experiences within this case. The design was not intended to compare schools, evaluate the effectiveness of accommodations, or estimate the prevalence of particular support needs.

Participants were purposively recruited based on their relevance to the school's experience in supporting pupils with additional educational needs. Seven elementary teachers who could describe such experiences were interviewed,

along with one school principal and two parents, for a total of ten interview participants. The analysis reported in this article centers on the seven teachers because the available study record identifies their statements using participant codes T1–T7. Although the principal and parents were interviewed, the documented findings contain neither separately attributable excerpts from these participants nor a systematic comparison of their perspectives with teachers' accounts. Their participation is therefore acknowledged without claiming cross-stakeholder triangulation. The source report does not provide teachers' years of experience, grade assignments beyond those identified in individual excerpts, detailed recruitment procedures, or additional eligibility criteria. The sample is treated as a source of situated qualitative accounts rather than as statistically representative. Neither the number of participants nor the reporting available here is sufficient to establish that saturation was assessed or achieved (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

The study generated data through scheduled, one-to-one interviews using prepared questions and follow-up prompts. The reported interview topics addressed six areas: the support needs teachers encountered; their preparation for inclusive instruction; adjustments to classroom interaction and learning activities; management of instructional time; challenges experienced; and responses to those challenges. These areas correspond to the study's three research questions concerning perceived needs and preparation, instructional and time-related adjustments, and constraints and coping practices. Permission to conduct the interviews was obtained from the school principal before data collection. The research record does not specify the interview length, mode, language, audio-recording arrangements, question-guide development, or procedures for transcription and translation. It also does not document separate classroom observations, the collection of lesson plans, or the inspection of individualized education plans. Accordingly, the findings presented here are grounded in the attributed interview excerpts and descriptive accounts contained in the available research record, rather than in independently inspected instructional or clinical documents.

The original analysis was described as categorical aggregation informed by Merriam (1998), in which interview responses were examined for recurring meanings and organized into descriptive categories. Six domains were identifiable in the reported material: perceived learner-support situations, teacher preparation, accommodations, time management, constraints, and coping responses. For the revised analytical presentation, these documented domains were compared across the available teacher excerpts to identify where accounts complemented, qualified, or complicated one another. For example, T4 and T5 described extending or rearranging time for individual assistance, while T6 emphasized the difficulty of dividing attention between one pupil and the wider class; T7 also connected instructional adaptation with the limits of general

training. The resulting cross-domain synthesis was organized into four evidence-led findings: varied participation and learning needs; instructional and relational accommodations; scheduling and competing attention demands; and preparation and self-directed responses. These four headings are an integrative presentation of the six previously reported domains, not newly generated themes from a fresh analysis of complete interview transcripts. They are presented through attributable quotations and carefully bounded descriptions, without calculating theme frequencies or implying causal relationships.

The reporting strategy was designed to make the relationship between claims and available evidence explicit. Each finding is linked to identifiable teacher codes, and the manuscript distinguishes participants' descriptions of practice from independently observed implementation or demonstrated pupil outcomes. Statements about autism, developmental delay, or selective mutism are treated as teachers' accounts, not as researcher-verified diagnoses. Likewise, references to individualized plans are not presented as proof that formally approved individualized education plans were prepared or implemented. Because complete transcripts, an original codebook, and an audit trail were not available for this reporting, the article does not claim independent recoding, intercoder agreement, member checking, saturation, or reflexive thematic analysis. This restraint is consistent with the need to identify analytical procedures accurately rather than apply methodological terminology retrospectively (Braun & Clarke, 2023, 2024).

The source account states that participation was voluntary, that interview responses were intended for research purposes, and that school-level permission was secured. Teacher statements are attributed to codes T1–T7, and no pupils are named. Children were discussed in adult interviews, but were not reported as interview participants. However, the study record does not document an institutional ethics committee determination, the manner in which informed consent was obtained or documented, data storage arrangements, or the researchers' relationships with the school and participants. These details require author verification before submission and are not asserted here without evidence. The single-school setting, interview-based evidence, and limits of the available procedural record constrain transferability and the strength of conclusions that may be drawn from the case.

3. Results

The findings draw on attributed interview excerpts from seven elementary teachers (T1–T7) at a public school in Pagadian City, Philippines. The reported accounts covered six domains—perceived learner-support needs, preparation, classroom accommodations, time management, constraints, and coping responses—which are presented below as four connected patterns. Although a

principal and two parents also participated in interviews, the available findings do not contain separately attributable excerpts from these participants. Accordingly, the results reflect the teachers' reported experiences rather than cross-stakeholder comparisons. Descriptions of particular conditions or disabilities are attributed to the teachers and were not independently verified through clinical records.

3.1 Learner-support needs differed across academic work, communication, and participation

Teachers described support needs that varied across the pace of classroom work, oral communication, and participation in social interaction. T6 reported that a pupil identified by the teacher as having global developmental delay completed writing tasks slowly and gave brief verbal answers, but did not consistently perform below classmates in academic activities: "In my experience handling this globally delayed learner, he often writes very slowly and only uses a few words when I ask him questions. Compared to his other classmates, he can keep up with them in terms of their studies." (T6)

Communication-related concerns were also evident in other accounts. T4 described difficulty engaging a Grade 1 pupil, whom the teacher identified as autistic, in conversation when the pupil was focused on another activity. T3 reported that a pupil described as selectively mute was reluctant to answer questions in class. However, T3 also recounted a different pattern of communication at home, based on contact with the pupil's family: "I also approached the parents of this pupil, and their child is not that mute inside their home." (T3)

These accounts identified different aspects of support need rather than a uniform profile: slower written responses could coexist with academic participation, while limited classroom speech did not necessarily correspond to the same behavior at home. The evidence records the teachers' observations and descriptions, not independent diagnoses or the prevalence of particular conditions.

3.2 Classroom accommodations addressed both participation and differentiated learning tasks

Teachers reported modifying classroom interactions and learning activities to support pupils with different needs. T3 described encouraging participation by making classroom exchanges less intimidating and using prompts, cues, and affirmative feedback. As the teacher explained: "I offer prompts, cues, and opportunities for them to contribute their thoughts and ideas; after that, a teacher should also use a word of appreciation or positive responses." (T3)

Where T3 emphasized opportunities for pupils to communicate and contribute, T7 foregrounded adjustments to instruction itself. The teacher described differentiation as a way of responding to differences in learners' needs

and preferences: “You can differentiate your instruction by modifying the content, the process, the product, or the environment of your lessons.” (T7)

A further form of accommodation was described by T4, who reported setting aside time to discuss which parts of classroom activities or assessments a pupil found difficult. This account concerned identifying instructional difficulties through individual conversation rather than applying the same activities without adjustment. Taken together, the excerpts show that teachers framed accommodation in two complementary ways: facilitating pupils’ participation in classroom exchanges and modifying the demands or support associated with learning tasks. The available evidence documents these reported approaches but does not establish how consistently they were implemented or whether they improved learning outcomes.

3.3 Additional support involved schedule changes and competing demands for teacher attention

Individualized support was also described in terms of time allocation. T4 reported modifying the usual school timetable to provide individual assistance after dismissal or immediately following the lunch break: “I ensured that I would not stick with the class schedule given by our head. Somehow, I would change the schedule by giving this learner at least 30 minutes daily right after dismissal or right after the lunch break.” (T4)

T7 described a different scheduling adjustment: spreading tasks and assessments across successive days rather than requiring pupils to complete them within a single lesson. The teacher stated: “In dealing with diverse learners, I give them basic activities, assessments, or exercises, then another activity the next day to minimize overload.” (T7)

For T5, extending teaching time was linked to the intention that an individual pupil should continue learning alongside classmates. The teacher said that additional support required more time because ‘you need to extend your time for him because no one should be left behind, so that he must also learn what others learned’ (T5). Beyond the duration of individual support, T6 described a competing demand: attending to a pupil who needed additional attention while remaining responsible for the rest of the class: “It is challenging to balance focusing on his attention and the other pupils.” (T6)

The accounts thus distinguish two forms of time-related adjustment—adding individual support sessions and distributing activities over a longer period—alongside the difficulty of dividing attention within a shared classroom. The 30-minute period is T4’s reported arrangement, not an independently measured or school-wide estimate of additional teaching time.

3.4 Limited specialized preparation prompted self-directed learning and individualized planning

Teachers' accounts of preparation combined attention to individual learner characteristics with concerns about the specificity of professional training. T3 stressed understanding pupils' strengths, difficulties, preferences, and academic objectives before selecting instructional approaches. T7 acknowledged having attended seminars but characterized their content as introductory rather than specific to particular support needs: "We do have seminars for this, but just an overview of how we can handle it if we encounter these learners inside the classroom." (T7)

In describing their responses to these challenges, teachers referred to independent information-seeking and reflection. T7 reported, 'I research and study how to help or assist them' (T7). T1 similarly connected reflection and research with breaking instruction into smaller steps: "I reflected and did some research; as much as possible, I should deal with breaking tasks into smaller steps." (T1)

The teachers also described making individual adjustments through flexible tasks and planning documents. T3 mentioned offering different levels of assistance, alternative tasks, or assessment methods. T5 reported inserting remedial classes or tutoring into a daily schedule. Two teachers referred to individualized plans, although they used different terms. T4 stated: "I create an Individualized educational plan to handle their differences, including the learner's short attention span." (T4). T2 used the abbreviation IEP for a different description of classroom planning: "To cater to the diverse needs of my learners, I make sure I have an Individualized lesson plan (IEP) to handle various behaviors." (T2)

These excerpts document teachers' reported responses through self-study, task simplification, flexible support, extra tutoring time, and individually described plans. Because no planning documents were available for inspection, the accounts do not establish whether the plans met formal individualized education plan requirements. Similarly, the descriptions of seminars and self-directed learning do not provide an independent evaluation of teacher competence or training effectiveness. Table 1 summarizes the relationships documented across the teachers' accounts without treating the listed participants or excerpts as frequency estimates.

Table 1.
Reported patterns and supporting interview evidence

Reported pattern	Teacher codes	Illustrative evidence in the reported accounts
Variation in perceived learner-support needs	T3, T4, T6	Slow writing with variable academic performance; difficulty in conversation; different reported speech patterns at school and home
Participation and instructional accommodation	T3, T4, T7	Prompts and affirmative feedback; individual discussion of difficult tasks; differentiated content, process, product, or environment
Time allocation and competing classroom demands	T4, T5, T6, T7	Additional reported support time, activities distributed across days, extended tutoring, and divided teacher attention.
Preparation and coping responses	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7	Introductory training; self-directed research and reflection; simplified tasks; flexible assistance; individual plans and revised schedules

Note. Teacher codes identify participants whose attributed quotations appear in the study record. The patterns are based on the available excerpts, not a new analysis of complete interview transcripts. No observational or student-outcome evidence was reported.

4. Discussion

The four findings suggest that the participating teachers understood inclusive instruction as a continuing negotiation between individual learner support and the responsibilities of teaching an entire class. Differences in communication and task completion shaped the support teachers considered necessary; accommodations combined instructional and interpersonal adjustments; additional support affected scheduling and attention; and teachers described supplementing general training through self-directed learning and individualized planning. Considered together, these accounts offer a teacher-centered explanation of a coordination problem rather than evidence that particular accommodations were implemented consistently or improved pupil outcomes. The following discussion considers the educational significance of these relationships, their connections with existing scholarship, and the limits of the available evidence.

4.1 Recognizing learner diversity beyond diagnostic labels and academic attainment

The first finding indicates that teachers perceived support needs across several dimensions of classroom participation that could not be inferred from academic attainment alone. T6 described slow written responses and limited verbal expression alongside occasions when a pupil kept pace with classmates

academically, while T3 reported different patterns of speech at school and at home. These accounts suggest that teachers' decisions about support may depend on the demands and social conditions of particular learning activities, not simply on whether a pupil completes curricular work successfully. The distinction is educationally consequential: a learner who can demonstrate academic understanding may nevertheless encounter barriers when required to respond quickly, speak publicly, or sustain particular forms of interaction. The data support this interpretation of teachers' perceived needs, although they do not independently establish the pupils' developmental or clinical profiles.

This interpretation is consistent with the broader premise that inclusion concerns participation and access as well as placement (Ainscow, 2020). It also connects with Lambert et al. (2023), who conceptualize universal design for learning as an interaction of teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and situated practices rather than the mechanical application of a fixed strategy. In the present case, the reported contrast between a pupil's academic progress and communicative participation illustrates why responsive decisions may need to address several dimensions of a classroom task. At the same time, research distinguishing selective mutism from related forms of anxiety underscores the need to avoid turning classroom observations into diagnostic judgments (Poole et al., 2021). The contribution of this finding is therefore not evidence about the characteristics of particular disability categories, but an account of how elementary teachers recognized different barriers to participation while working within a common classroom environment.

4.2 Linking instructional differentiation with relational conditions for participation

The second finding suggests that teachers approached accommodation as both a matter of instructional access and a matter of interactional safety. T7 identified possible changes to content, processes, products, and the learning environment, whereas T3 described using cues, opportunities to contribute, and affirming responses during classroom exchanges. T4's account of discussing difficult activities with an individual pupil connects these dimensions: discovering what makes a task difficult may itself require time and a communicative relationship in which a child can respond. This combination can be interpreted as an attempt to make learning activities more accessible without treating academic tasks and classroom participation as independent concerns. Nevertheless, because the evidence consists of reported practices rather than observations, the study cannot determine how such accommodations were delivered or experienced by pupils.

Existing research supports the relevance of this connection while identifying demands that the interview accounts cannot resolve. Grecu (2023) describes curriculum resources as potential supports for differentiated instruction that still

require teachers' active planning, and Langelaan et al. (2024) identify features of teacher preparation and development relevant to differentiation. Lambert et al. (2023) likewise emphasize the situated character of inclusive design. Compared with literature that focuses on the instructional organization of differentiation, the present teachers' accounts place interpersonal participation alongside task modification: prompts and affirmative responses were discussed alongside modified assessments and pacing. The distinction broadens the descriptive focus of this particular case, but it should not be interpreted as proof that either the relational or instructional adjustments produced better learning. For integrated elementary education, the implication is that classroom accessibility warrants attention to both what pupils are asked to do and how they can participate in doing it.

4.3 Understanding instructional time as a shared and potentially displaced resource

The third finding reveals a tension between individual attention and the finite time available for whole-class instruction. T4 reported setting aside approximately 30 minutes after dismissal or following the lunch break for one pupil; T5 similarly described extending support time; T7 described distributing activities across days; and T6 identified difficulty dividing attention between an individual learner and classmates. These are not identical strategies. Adjusting the pacing of tasks reorganizes activities within or across the instructional sequence, whereas adding sessions after class may relocate support beyond the ordinary timetable. This distinction suggests a possible form of temporal displacement: when support cannot readily be accommodated during shared lesson time, teachers may respond by creating additional individual instructional time. It remains unknown whether such arrangements were occasional, formally supported, or typical of school practice.

The reported tension helps explain why inclusive teaching cannot be evaluated solely as a set of individual pedagogical techniques. Research has documented teachers' concerns about resources, workload, and classroom demands in inclusive settings (Jury et al., 2023), while studies of special education working conditions have examined experiences of professional strain (Hester et al., 2020; Sujarwanto et al., 2024). Those studies concern different populations and contexts; they cannot establish burnout or an objectively excessive workload among the teachers in Pagadian City. Rather, they suggest a relevant organizational question: whose time is absorbed by the additional work associated with personalized support? In this case, the interview evidence directs attention to the allocation of time and teacher attention as part of inclusive provision. School-level examination of schedules, shared planning arrangements, and feasible in-lesson support could therefore be more informative than assuming that additional teacher hours constitute a sustainable solution.

4.4 Explaining the gap between general preparation and situation-specific decisions

The fourth finding points to a perceived difference between introductory preparation for inclusion and the practical knowledge required for particular classroom decisions. T7 described training seminars as providing an overview and also reported independently seeking information about how to assist learners; T1 similarly connected reflection with dividing tasks into smaller steps. T3 emphasized knowing learners' strengths and needs, while T2 and T4 referred to individual plans, using terminology that was inconsistent across their accounts. These statements suggest that teachers perceived a need to translate general principles into decisions about scaffolding, pacing, assessment, and individual support. They do not demonstrate that the seminars were objectively ineffective or that participants lacked professional competence; the study included no independent assessment of training content or subsequent teaching performance.

The distinction between awareness and situated decision-making is compatible with Wray et al.'s (2022) review of factors shaping teachers' self-efficacy for inclusion and with Langelaan et al.'s (2024) synthesis of preparation and professional-development approaches for differentiation. Larios and Zetlin (2023) likewise address the challenge of preparing teachers for inclusive classrooms, while Vieira et al. (2024) examine training in a different population and with a different design. The studies provide reasons to investigate collaborative, practice-oriented professional learning, but they do not demonstrate the effectiveness of any program in the present school. Moreover, teachers' use of the abbreviation IEP cannot be taken as evidence of compliant individualized education plans; research on plan quality emphasizes that coherence among plan components needs to be examined directly (Kurth et al., 2025). What this case adds is a concrete account of teachers' perceived reliance on self-study and informal adjustments when general preparation does not answer immediate pedagogical questions. A relevant next step would be to examine whether structured opportunities to rehearse accommodations, analyze pupil work, and receive feedback reduce reliance on accommodations.

4.5 A teacher-centered coordination account of inclusive elementary education

Across the four findings, the central interpretive contribution is a provisional coordination account: perceived learner needs prompt decisions about participation and instructional adaptation; those decisions place demands on time and attention; and teachers describe responding through self-learning, flexible planning, and additional support. These relationships emerge from reading the reported categories together, rather than from testing a causal model. They suggest that an accommodation described as an individual teacher's strategy

may have organizational prerequisites that become invisible when instructional practices, timetables, and professional learning are considered in isolation. This is the study's principal contribution beyond simply documenting that some teachers encounter inclusion-related challenges in a Philippine public school.

This coordination account complements, rather than replaces, research on the collaborative conditions of differentiation and inclusion. Pozas and Letzel-Alt (2023) address forms of teacher collaboration associated with differentiated instruction and work on professional learning communities and inclusive teaching, identifying potentially relevant organizational relationships (Johansson & Herrebrøden, 2025; Schnepel et al., 2025). Villon et al. (2026) provide a Philippine perspective on interprofessional collaboration through bayanihan. However, their concept cannot be attributed to the present participants: the available interviews do not show that it emerged as a theme or that such a partnership operated in this school. T3's reported conversation with a parent suggests one instance of family contact, not evidence of systematic collaboration. Likewise, the participation of a principal and two parents in data collection cannot substantiate agreement among stakeholder groups, as their accounts are not included in the reported findings. The statutory commitment to inclusive services under Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) supplies relevant policy context but does not establish local implementation. The appropriate scholarly claim is consequently bounded: these teachers' accounts make visible the possible interdependence of pedagogical, temporal, and professional-support decisions in one school setting.

4.6 Implications, limitations, and directions for further inquiry

For practice, the findings suggest questions that school leaders and teacher educators could investigate rather than interventions that have already been validated. Professional learning could focus on concrete classroom scenarios in which teachers examine alternative ways for pupils to participate, adjust tasks and assessments, and evaluate the feasibility of support during ordinary lessons. Schools could review when individualized assistance is scheduled, whether teachers have access to collaborative planning or relevant expertise, and whether the reported need for extra time can be addressed without routinely extending teachers' work. Communication with families may also help teachers understand context-dependent participation, provided that family involvement is approached ethically and does not substitute for appropriate specialist assessment. These directions follow from the difficulties and responses described by participants; their effectiveness requires empirical testing.

The study's evidence imposes significant limits on interpretation. It is based on a single school and a purposively selected group of seven teachers, using excerpts and summaries from interviews rather than a newly analyzed set of complete transcripts. Although a principal and two parents were interviewed, the

available results do not permit triangulation of stakeholders. No classroom observations, time-use records, reviewed lesson plans, formally inspected IEPs, or pupil-outcome measures were reported. The account also does not document all interviews, transcriptions, analytic audits, reflexivity, or ethics review procedures needed for a fuller appraisal of trustworthiness. Consequently, the findings establish reported perceptions and practices, not their implementation fidelity, prevalence, effectiveness, or causal consequences. Such boundaries particularly constrain claims about school-wide working conditions and pupils' learning or well-being.

Future research could combine transparent qualitative analysis of complete interviews with classroom observations, planning artifacts, and time-use evidence across schools with different support arrangements. Carefully consented parent and pupil perspectives could establish whether reported accommodations are experienced as accessible and supportive, while documentary review could distinguish informal individualized planning from formal IEP processes. Comparative or longitudinal designs could also investigate whether collaborative planning and specialist consultation change how teachers distribute individualized assistance within regular instruction. Until such evidence is available, the present case is best understood as a context-specific account of a practical coordination dilemma at the intersection of learner participation, instructional differentiation, teacher time, and professional support.

5. Conclusion

This qualitative case study examined how seven teachers in a public elementary school in Pagadian City perceived learners' support needs, adapted instruction, and managed the demands of inclusive teaching. Their accounts distinguished academic progress from classroom participation: difficulties with task completion or communication could occur even when a pupil was able to keep pace academically with classmates. Teachers reported combining participation-oriented approaches, including prompts and affirmative feedback, with differentiated tasks, individualized guidance, and adjustments to instructional schedules. However, providing additional time and attention to individual pupils created competing demands within whole-class instruction, while professional preparation was sometimes perceived as insufficiently specific to immediate classroom needs. Together, these findings suggest that participating teachers experienced inclusion as the coordination of responsive pedagogy, classroom participation, instructional time, and professional support rather than the application of isolated accommodations.

The study contributes a context-specific, teacher-centered understanding of how pedagogical and organizational demands intersect in inclusive elementary education. Its findings identify practical questions for schools and teacher

educators concerning practice-oriented professional learning, accessible instruction within regular lessons, and feasible arrangements for individualized assistance. These directions require further evaluation rather than being treated as proven solutions. Because the analysis relies on selected teacher interview accounts from one school, without classroom observations, independently reviewed individualized plans, time-use records, or learner-outcome measures, it cannot establish the implementation or effectiveness of reported practices. Future multi-school studies that combine comprehensive interview analyses, classroom observations, instructional artifacts, and appropriately consented pupil and family perspectives could examine how different support arrangements shape teachers' allocation of attention and pupils' opportunities for participation and learning.

Declarations

The five named authors are responsible for reviewing and approving the final manuscript. Individual CRediT roles were not specified in the research material supplied for editorial preparation. No competing-interest information was documented in the research material supplied. The study record reports permission from the school principal and voluntary participation in interviews. The authors retain responsibility for the accuracy of the reported evidence, references, interpretations, and submission.

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