

Silent Struggles, Hidden Triumphs: A Case Study of Receiving Teacher Handling Learner with Adaptive Difficulties in an Inclusive Setting

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Abstract

Discriminatory attitudes continue to undermine inclusive education. Using qualitative case study design, I investigated the challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights of a receiving teacher liberating a learner from difficulties in learning, by applying adaptive skills in inclusive classroom. I conducted semi-structured interviews with one purposively selected case subject and four key informants. I analyzed the data using thematic analysis. The case revealed that welcoming classroom encompasses environmental, attitudinal, and institutional barriers. Adaptive support is sustained through instructional adjustments, behavioral and emotional support strategies, reading interventions, differentiated instruction, and collaborative partnerships with parents and the school community. Receiving teachers may promote inclusive classroom culture, clear instructional guidance, and collaborative support systems to strengthen learner engagement and participation. Future studies may adopt a predictive mediation design linking classroom barriers to learner engagement through adaptive teaching practices in inclusive educational settings.

Keywords: Silent struggles-hidden triumphs, case study, receiving teacher handling learner with adaptive difficulties, inclusive setting

Introduction

Globally, I observed that the implementation of inclusive education was hindered by discriminatory attitudes toward learners with special needs (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024). As a receiving teacher responsible for accommodating these learners, I frequently encounter negative perceptions that limited my ability to apply inclusive practices effectively.

In several international contexts, I noted that discriminatory attitudes remained a significant barrier. In Norway, studies showed that negative social perceptions complicated the practical implementation of inclusive education (Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2021). Similarly, research in Switzerland highlighted persistent biases that obstructed the integration of learners with special needs into mainstream classrooms (Garrote et al., 2020). In Indonesia, prevailing social and institutional attitudes within schools reinforced discriminatory perceptions, which further restricted teachers' capacity to implement inclusive practices (Dewi, 2024).

In my country, Philippines, I experienced similar challenges. As emphasized by Kilag et al. (2025) and Beltran (2025), discriminatory attitudes from colleagues, parents, and the wider community constrained one's ability to implement inclusive education effectively. Despite the existence of inclusive policies, I recognized that there is still a local gap in understanding how these attitudes specifically shaped the experiences of general education teachers in newly implementing schools.

Addressing this problem was essential because it shifted the focus from individual limitations to systemic barriers, aligning with the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 2004). By reflecting on how discriminatory attitudes manifested and influenced my teaching experiences, I sought to answer questions about how I navigated these challenges and why such barriers persisted, ultimately aiming to generate insights to guide targeted interventions, professional development, and policy reforms that promoted genuinely inclusive classrooms.

METHODS

This chapter presents research design, sample and sampling, data gathering technique, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Research Design

I employed a case study design. According to Yin (2018), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary issue within its real-life context. This made the design ideal for examining the challenges I encountered as a teacher in an inclusive classroom setting. Crowe et al. (2011) further explained that this design enables a holistic understanding of a single unit of analysis. I considered this design appropriate for my research because it allowed me to gain a rich and detailed understanding of the challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights of a receiving teacher handling a learner with difficulty in applying adaptive skills within an inclusive classroom. Moreover, the case study approach offers several advantages, including the ability to generate contextualized insights, capture the complexity of real classroom interactions, utilize multiple sources of data through key informants, and produce in-depth findings that may inform inclusive educational practice and future research.

Sample and Sampling

I conducted the study with the primary participant, a receiving teacher who was handling a learner with difficulty in applying adaptive skills in a mainstream classroom. He was selected based on the criteria that he had direct experience teaching such a learner and is employed in a school within the Mati North District that was gradually implementing inclusive education. To enrich and validate the data, I also included key informants who had direct and sustained interaction with the teacher in relation to the learner's classroom engagement and school-based activities. The key informants were chosen because they possessed sufficient knowledge of the case subject's instructional practices, challenges, and support needs in handling the learner.

I selected my primary participant and key informants through purposive sampling because, as noted by Etikan (2016), this method allows intentionally to choose an individual who possessed specific characteristics relevant to the inquiry, ensuring that the participant could provide rich and meaningful insights regarding the phenomenon under investigation.

Data Gathering Techniques

I utilized In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) as the primary data collection method to examine the challenges and coping mechanisms of the receiving teacher handling a learner with difficulty in applying adaptive skills in a mainstream classroom. IDIs are appropriate for this inquiry as they provided detailed, context-specific information (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). This helped uncover the environmental, attitudinal, and structural factors influencing the teacher's ability to deliver inclusive instruction. Through this method, the receiving teacher

shared reflective and authentic accounts of the classroom situations, instructional demands, and support needs encountered while facilitating the learner's integration.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis to systematically examine the participants' narratives. I began by immersing myself in the data through repeated reading of the interview transcripts to develop a deep understanding of the participants' experiences. I then generated initial codes by identifying meaningful statements and assigning descriptive labels that captured their core meanings. These codes were subsequently organized into potential themes by grouping recurring patterns related to workplace challenges and coping experiences. I reviewed and refined the emerging themes by continuously comparing them with the coded extracts and the complete dataset to ensure consistency, clarity, and accuracy. Afterwards, I clearly defined and named each theme based on its relevance to the study, and finally presented the findings as a coherent narrative supported by verbatim excerpts from the participants.

When integrated with triangulation, thematic analysis allowed me to validate and enrich the emerging themes by comparing the perspectives of the case owner and key informants, thereby strengthening the credibility and rigor of the findings. Guided by Palmar-Santos et al. (2023), I analyzed the data from the case owner, colleagues, and family members separately, developed codes and themes for each source, and then compared, refined, and integrated convergent and divergent patterns through iterative cycles of analysis.

Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, guided by Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria, I adhered to rigorous ethical standards in accordance with republic Act No. 10532 and the Society of Moral Integrity and Legal Ethics (SMILE) of Holy Cross of Davao College, to safeguard the rights, dignity, and welfare of the participants. I established credibility through informed consent, prolonged engagement, and member checking with the case subject and key informants to verify the accuracy of my interpretations. I strengthened transferability by providing thick and rich descriptions of the research context, participants, and classroom realities. I maintained dependability through transparent documentation of the research procedures, interview protocols, and analytical processes using an audit trail. Lastly, I upheld confirmability through continuous reflexivity, bracketing, and the use of a reflexive journal to monitor my personal assumptions and potential biases throughout the research process. To protect participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms were used: Sir Roberto for the case subject handling a learner with difficulty in applying adaptive skills; Ma'am Nida for his wife; Rosa for the learner's parent; Sir Jose for the school principal; and Ma'am Rica for the co-teacher. Moreover, I securely stored all research data in password-protected files. Collectively, these measures strengthened the ethical rigor, integrity, and trustworthiness of my findings.

RESULTS

3.1 Hidden Roadblocks to Learning (Environmental Barriers)

3.1.1 Noisy and Distracting Classroom Environment. I noticed that the classroom environment often became a source of disruption, especially when noise, movement, and competing stimuli filled the learning space. As I observed the learner struggling to maintain focus, I felt the quiet frustration and vulnerability that came with trying to learn amid constant distractions. Mr. Roberto shared his reflections, and I could sense the concern in his voice as he described how these interruptions affected the learner's concentration and

engagement. In that moment, I realized that for some learners, finding focus is not simply an academic task, but a daily struggle against an environment that rarely becomes still.

Sir Roberto shared:

“Ang usa sa mga hagit ani para sa mga bata. Una kanang palibot nga saba kaayu nga dili sila maka concentrate sa ilang pag-study, adunay kalisod sa pag follow-up sa ilang pagstudy kay adunay daghang maka distract, unya ilabi na kanang bata nga permi e bully.” “One of the challenges for these children is the environment, especially when it is very noisy, making it difficult for them to concentrate on their studies. They also experience difficulty keeping up with their lessons because there are many distractions around them, especially those children who are constantly being bullied.” [F1-IDI-Page 1 L6-8-P1].

His co-teacher, Ma’am Rica supported this reality, stating:

“One of the biggest challenges...is the noise and constant distractions,” [F4- IDI-Page 4 L141-142-P4]

“Difficult for some learners-especially those with difficulty in adaptive skills to focus on the task.” [F4-IDI-Page 4 L143-144-P4],

Sir Jose further validated this by sharing:

“Large class size and classroom noise” [F2-IDI-Page 9 L298-299-P2]

3.1.2 Overwhelming Classroom Demands. As I listened to Sir Roberto, I noticed that the classroom often became overstimulating, with an excess of materials and activities that seemed to confuse rather than support learning. I could feel how easily the learner could lose focus and direction in such an environment. He reflected on this challenge, saying:

“Usahay lisod para sa uban bata nga makaapas sa standard nga expectation sa klase kay lahi-lahi man ang pacing sa ilang pagkat-on” “Sometimes it is difficult for some learners to keep up with the standard expectations in the classroom because each child learns at a different pace.” (F1-IDI-Page 5 L155-159-P1)

Ma’am Rica supported this by noting:

“Visual materials or activities happening at the same time” [F4-IDI-Page 5 L156-157-P2]

This sense of overwhelm is confirmed by the parent’s perspective, who shared that her child finds it difficult to concentrate when the room is loud or when they are faced with. Mrs. Rosa, the parent, said:

“Usahay pag abot sa balay sa akoang bata, ginapangutana nako siya sa iyahang scores, naay mga parte didtoa nga wala siyay answer ug gina pangutana nako, ngano, dipud siya mutug-an. Siguro, maglisod syag catch up sa klase.” “Sometimes when my child gets home, I ask about his scores, and I notice there are parts where he has no answers. When I ask him why, he does not tell me. Maybe he is having difficulty keeping up in class.” [F5-IDI-Page 5 L220-222-P5]

3.1.3 Lack of Academic Reinforcement in the Home Environment. Hearing Mr. Roberto describe his classroom experiences, I sensed his frustration and concern when the progress made during school hours was

not reinforced at home. I could see how learners with adaptive difficulties were especially vulnerable to forgetting lessons without consistent support. He shared:

“Makalimot na na dyon sila kay prone ning mga bataa sa difficulty in remembering. Ug ang isa sa makapalisod kay ang mga parent mismo walay follow-up, walay pangumusta kung unsay progress sa ilang mga bata.” “They tend to forget easily because these children are prone to difficulty in remembering. One thing that also makes it more challenging is when parents themselves do not follow up or check on the progress of their children.” [F1-IDI-Page 1 L13-15-P1]

A parent supported this observation by admitting that her own daily burdens often interfere with their ability to act as a guide. Mrs. Rosa, the parent, shared:

“Usahay dili pud nako ma follow-up dayon ang iyang assignment tungod sa trabaho ug ubang responsibilidad sa balay” “Sometimes I am not able to follow up on his assignments right away because of work and other responsibilities at home.” [F5-IDI-Page 7 L231-232-P5]

3.2 Steering through Learning Obstacles (Coping Mechanisms for Environmental Barriers)

3.2.1 Simplifying Tasks and Instructional Adjustments. As I watched complex activities transformed into smaller, manageable steps, I felt a quiet sense of hope and relief replacing the learner’s initial hesitation. Mr. Roberto shared his experiences, and I could sense the patience and dedication in his voice as he described how he simplified tasks to make learning less overwhelming. In that moment, I realized that sometimes the most powerful teaching happens not by demanding more, but by reshaping instruction so every learner can experience success.

“Sa akong class, kasagaran nkong ginabuhay is ginapasayun ang kada task or activities [F1-IDI-Page 2 L51-52-P1]”

Ma’am Rica supports this approach by describing the hands-on nature of their support, noting that when an activity is too complex, it is broken down into smaller steps. Specifically, Ma’am Rica said:

“Amo siyang ginabreak down into smaller steps” “We break it down into smaller steps.” [F4-IDI-Page 5 L179-P4].

This strategy aligned with the Sir Jose’s vision. Pertaining to the task, he said:

“Encouraged to apply task simplification to accommodate diverse learners.” [F2-IDI-Page 9 L310-311-P2]

Even within his personal life, Ma’am Nida affirmed his dedication saying:

“He tries to simplify tasks and give additional guidance to the learners.” [F3-IDI-Page 8 L269-270-P3]

3.2.2 Behavioral and Emotional Support Strategies. There were moments when I see that behind every disruptive behavior was an emotion waiting to be understood. In the pauses between correction and guidance, I could feel the tension, the frustration, and at times the quiet need for reassurance from the learner. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, his words carried both resolve and genuine care as he spoke about setting boundaries while nurturing confidence. He said:

“Dili jud maiwasan nga makagamit kog pagpanghadlok sa ilaha labina kanang magpadadlong unya mo aksyon nag sukol, usahay akong ingnon dal-on nkko sila sa principal or guidance office.” “There are times when I cannot avoid using firm warnings, especially when I am trying to correct them and they become resistant. Sometimes, I tell them that I will bring them to the principal’s office or the guidance office.” [F1-IDI-Page 2 L59-61-P1]

His co-teacher highlighted a shift toward softer strategies when students are struggling, noting:

“Instead of focusing on mistakes, ginapraise namo ang small achievements like ‘Maayo kaayo imong effort.’” [F4-IDI-Page 5 L185-186-P4].

This aligned with the Sir Jose’s directive. He emphasized:

“Guided to provide positive behavioral support and create a classroom culture that promotes respect and empathy.” [F2-IDI-Page 9 L314-315-P2].

Even at home, Ma’am Nida sees the effort he puts into this balance. She shared her observation saying:

“He also tries to manage behavioral concerns through reminders and encouragement.” [F3-IDI-Page 8 L273-P3]

3.2.3 Teacher–Parent and School Collaboration. In every conversation, follow-up, and shared concern, I could feel a quiet sense of commitment flowing between the teacher, the family, and the school. As Mr. Roberto spoke about maintaining constant communication and seeking support from others, his words reflected both responsibility and trust in the people around him. Through these moments, I realized that meaningful progress often begins when those who guide a child choose to move.

Sir Roberto shared:

“Sa akong pamaagi, permi jud nga adunay consultation sa parent ug bisan sa teacher labina sa adviser mahitungod sa progress sa iyaha/ilang anak.” “In my approach, I always make sure there is regular consultation with the parents and with the teachers, especially the adviser, regarding the progress of his or their child.” [F1-IDI-Page 2 L72-73-P1]

Mrs. Rosa, the parent, reinforced this bond, acknowledging the necessity of a united front by stating,

“Importante nga ang parent ug teacher magtinabangay aron matabangan ang learner.” “It is important that the parent and teacher work together in order to help the learner.” (F5-IDI-Page 2 L77-78-P5)

Furthermore, Sir Jose highlighted that this is not just an individual effort but an institutional priority. He affirmed:

“The school encourages collaboration among teachers, parents, and guidance personnel to address recurring adaptive difficulties.” [F2-IDI-Page 9 L318-319-P2]

3.3 Wisdom Carved from Obstacles (Insights from Environmental Barriers)

3.3.1 Need for Structured Classroom Organization. I began to see how order and predictability created a sense of calm for learners who often struggled with uncertainty. Every assigned seat, familiar routine, and clearly stated expectation seemed to offer quiet reassurance, allowing the learner to settle, focus, and engage with less hesitation. When Sir Roberto spoke about organizing his classroom with intention, I could sense the thoughtfulness and care behind every structure he put in place.

He said:

“Sa classroom set-up ang mga badlongon ipa-una jud na sila, unya ang kanang medyo mahina diri na sila permi sa likod sa mga badlongon, unya naa jud permi kanag ginatawag na pairing.” “In the classroom setup, those who need closer supervision are placed in front, while those who are a bit slower are seated behind them, and we always apply what we call pairing.” [F1-IDI-Page 3 L110-112-P1]

Ma’am Rica reinforced this by noting:

“Classrooms should have structured seating arrangements, clear routines, and differentiated instruction” [F4-ID-Page 9 L199-200-P4]

3.3.2 Structured Classroom Management. As I spent time in the classroom, I noticed how consistency shaped the atmosphere, turning what could have been chaotic into a space of clarity and purpose. The routines, gentle reminders, and clearly established expectations seemed to guide learners like quiet signposts, helping them understand where to go, what to do, and how to belong. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, I could feel the discipline, patience, and intentionality behind every rule he upheld and every routine he maintained.

Sir Roberto shared:

“Sa akong classroom, importante gyud nga naa koy klaro nga rules ug routines. When the learners know what to do, mas dali nila ma-follow ang lesson.” “In my classroom, it is very important that I establish clear rules and routines. When learners know what to do, it becomes easier for them to follow the lesson.” [F1-IDI-Page 1 L18-19-P1]

Mrs. Rosa shared that the classroom's structure has a direct impact on their child's confidence. She expressed:

“Mas dali daw niya masabtan ang lesson kay ginahatagan sila ug klaro nga instructions sa teacher.” “He said that it becomes easier for him to understand the lesson because the teacher gives them clear instructions.” [F5-IDI-Page 6 L215-216-P5]

3.3.3 Collective Support for Inclusive Education. As I listened to the participants’ stories, I began to feel that inclusion was never the work of one teacher alone, but a journey carried by many hearts moving in the same direction. In every shared decision, follow-up conversation, and act of support, there was a quiet strength that came from knowing the learner was surrounded by people who genuinely cared. As Sir Roberto spoke about working closely with parents, colleagues, and school leaders, I could sense both gratitude and responsibility in his voice.

Sir Roberto shared:

“Importante gyud nga magtinabangay ang teacher, parent, ug ang school aron matabangan ang mga bata nga adunay kalisod sa pag adapt sa classroom.” “It is very important for the teacher, parents, and the school to work together in order to support children who have difficulty adapting in the classroom.” [F1-IDI-Page 3 L-76-78-P1]

This sentiment was institutionalized by the School Principal, who gave this affirmation:

“Inclusive education requires collective effort from teachers, parents, and school administrators.” [F2-IDI-Page 8 L280-281-P2]

3.4 Shadows of Judgment (Attitudinal Challenges)

3.4.1 Peer Teasing and Bullying. I could feel the quiet pain that lingered behind moments of teasing, laughter, and careless words spoken within the classroom. What seemed small to others often left deep marks on the learner, hesitant hands, lowered eyes, and a growing fear of being noticed. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, I sensed the concern in his voice as he described how repeated ridicule slowly silenced learners who once tried to participate.

“Sa makadghang panahon ang isa maka impluwensiya nga dili na ganahan mo participate ang akong mga bata kay kanang sungog-sungog, mahulog japon nan ga bullying kanang tawgon ang usa ka bata ug bulok, pangit, di-kamao.” “Most of the time, one factor that influences my learners to no longer want to participate is teasing, which can already be considered bullying—such as calling a child ‘stupid,’ ‘ugly,’ or ‘incapable.” [F1-IDI-Page 1 L32-34-P1]

Ma’am Rica supported this by describing subtle reactions:

“Naay times nga if the learner makes mistakes, some pupils react with laughter or teasing like “sayop man na” or “dili kabalo.” “There are times when, if the learner makes mistakes, some pupils react with laughter or teasing, saying, ‘That’s wrong’ or ‘He/She doesn’t know.” [F4-IDI-Page 5 L164-166-P4]

Mrs. Rosa reinforced this reality, sharing what other children say about her child:

“Usahay muingon ang uban bata ug “dili kabalo” or “hinay siya,” which makes my child feel embarrassed” “Sometimes other children say, ‘He/She doesn’t know’ or ‘He/She is slow,’ which makes my child feel embarrassed.” [F5-IDI-Page 6 L212-214-P5]

Sir Jose validated these concerns from a broader perspective, saying:

“Peers lack awareness about inclusion, which can lead to teasing or social exclusion.” [F2-IDI-Page 9 L302-303-P2]

3.4.2 Low Self-Confidence and Fear of Participation. I began to notice how fear could quietly overshadow the desire to participate. Behind every lowered gaze, unfinished response, and hesitant movement, I could feel the weight of past mistakes, embarrassment, and the worry of being judged once again. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, his voice carried both concern and compassion as he described learners who slowly withdrew despite having the ability to try. In that moment, I realized that sometimes the greatest barrier to participation is not a lack of ability, but a confidence that has been quietly shaken by fear.

Sir Roberto expressed:

“Kung permi sila sungogon o kataw-an, usahay mahadlok na sila mo participate sa activities kay basin masayop na pud sila ug kataw-an napud.” “If they are constantly teased or laughed at, there are times when

they become afraid to participate in activities because they fear making mistakes and being laughed at again.” [F1-IDI-Page 1 L37-39-P1]

Mrs. Rosa supported this, sharing how the external pressure erodes her child's internal strength. She said:

“If classmates tease him, mawala iyang confidence. Mao nga sometimes dili na siya ganahan mo participate kay mahadlok siya masayop ug kataw-an.” “If his classmates tease him, he loses his confidence. That is why sometimes he no longer wants to participate because he is afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at.” [F5-IDI-Page 6 L223-224-P5]

3.4.3 Lack of Awareness and Empathy. I began to see how misunderstanding could quietly create distance among learners who shared the same classroom. Simple differences in pacing, behavior, or responses were sometimes met with confusion, insensitive remarks, or actions that unintentionally caused pain. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, I could sense the concern in his voice as he described how a lack of awareness often shaped the way some learners treated their struggling classmates.

He said:

“Usahay ang uban bata dili pa kaayo makasabot nganong lahi ang pacing sa ilang classmate, mao nga usahay masayop sila sa ilang pag trato sa ila.”

“Sometimes other children do not fully understand why their classmate learns at a different pace, so there are times when they treat them the wrong way.” [F1-IDI-Page 2 L39-40-P1]

Ma’am Nida supported this reality by noting how the absence of awareness leads to casual cruelty. She shared:

“Some pupils may not understand the condition of their classmates and may tease them unintentionally.” [F5-IDI-Page 8 L260-261-P5].

3.5 Bridging the Gap of Mindsets (Coping Mechanisms for Attitudinal Barriers)

3.5.1 Positive Reinforcement and Encouragement. I noticed how a few sincere words of encouragement could slowly change hesitation into courage. A simple praise, a gentle reminder, or recognition of even the smallest progress seemed to light something within them that fear had once dimmed. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, I could feel the warmth and sincerity in his voice as he spoke about celebrating effort rather than focusing on mistakes.

Sir Roberto expressed:

“Gina encourage jud nako sila nga mo try gihapon bisan lisod para sa ilaha aron dili mawala ilang confidence.” “I always encourage them to keep trying even when it is difficult for them, so that they do not lose their confidence.” [F1-IDI-Page 2 L62-63-P1]

Ma’am Rica reinforced this shift in focus by describing how they intentionally pivot away from error-correction to celebrate progress. She noted:

“Instead of focusing on mistakes, ginapraise namo ang small achievements like ‘Maayo kaayo imong effort.’” “Instead of focusing on mistakes, we praise their small achievements by saying, ‘You did a very good job’ or ‘Your effort is really commendable.” [F4-IDI-Page 5 L185-186-P4]

This same spirit of persistence is mirrored in the home environment, where the parent supports the teacher's work. Ma'am Nida emphasized:

"Gina encourage nako siya nga mag try gihapon." "I encourage him/her to keep trying." [F5-IDI-Page 5 L237-238-P5]

3.5.2 Behavioral Guidance and Discipline. Sir Roberto experiences behavioral guidance as a necessary boundary for maintaining a safe learning environment, recognizing that he must act decisively when a student's conduct disrupts the peace or safety of others. He reflects on his role as a firm yet protective figure.

He explained:

"Kung naay learner nga magpasaway o dili maminaw, akong duolon, storyahan ug tarong, ug pahinumdoman sa classroom rules aron makasabot siya sa sakto nga binuhatan." "When a learner becomes disruptive or does not listen, I approach them, talk to them calmly, and remind them of the classroom rules so they can understand the appropriate behavior." [F1-IDI-Page 2 L61-62-P1]

Sir Jose reinforced this approach, stating:

"Teachers are also guided to provide positive behavioral support and create a classroom culture that promotes respect and empathy." [F2-IDI-Page 9 L314-315-P2]

3.5.3 Promoting Inclusive Classroom Culture. I began to see that inclusion was quietly built through the everyday choices made inside the classroom. In the simple acts of teaching respect, encouraging kindness, and guiding learners to support one another, I could feel an atmosphere where differences were slowly embraced rather than questioned. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, his words carried a deep sense of purpose as he spoke about shaping not only academic growth, but the character of every learner in the room.

Sir Roberto said:

"Importante nga tudloan pud ang ubang bata unsaon pag respeto ug pagtabang sa ilang classmates nga naglisod." "It is also important to teach other learners how to respect and support their classmates who are struggling." [F1-IDI-Page 2 L63-64-P1]

Ma'am Rica supported this approach by highlighting the power of social connection. She noted:

"Peer pairing strategies are effective because learners are encouraged to help each other." [F4-IDI-Page 6 L204-205-P4].

This localized effort is validated by Sir Jose, who gave this affirmation:

"Teachers promote respect and empathy in the classroom" [F2-IDI-Page 9 L314-315-P2]

3.6 Reflections Beyond the Barriers of Attitude (Insights from Attitudinal Barriers)

3.6.1 Building Learners' Confidence. There were moments when I witnessed how confidence in a learner was slowly awakened, not through pressure, but through patience, trust, and unwavering belief. In every hesitant

response, trembling attempt, and quiet success, I could feel a courage beginning to emerge where doubt once lived. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, his words carried both tenderness and hope as he described guiding learners to recognize their own strengths despite their struggles. Through these moments, I came to realize that confidence is not instantly found; it is gently built each time a learner feels seen, supported, and capable of trying once more.

Sir Roberto said:

“Kung suportahan ug hatagan sila ug confidence, mas mo try sila mo participate sa activities.” “When they are supported and given confidence, they become more willing to participate in activities.” [F1-IDI-Page 4 L131-132-P1]

Mrs. Rosa supported this by emphasizing:

“Learners like my child need patience, understanding, and consistent guidance” [F5-IDI-Page 7 L241-P5]

This sentiment is echoed by Ma’am Rica, who validated the long-term nature of this work. She noted:

“Learners with adaptive difficulties need patience and consistent guidance.” [F4-IDI-Page 7 L194-195-P4]

3.6.2 Teaching Empathy and Respect Among Learners. I began to see that some of the most meaningful lessons in the classroom were not written on the board, but quietly lived through everyday interactions. In moments of sharing, helping, listening, and standing beside a classmate in need, I could feel young hearts slowly learning the value of compassion and human connection. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, his words reflected a deep intention to shape not only the minds of his learners, but also the way they treated one another. In that moment, I realized that when empathy and respect are intentionally taught, the classroom becomes more than a place of learning; it becomes a place where every child feels accepted, understood, and valued.

Sir Roberto said:

“Dapat tudloan pud ang mga bata sa classroom unsaon pag respeto ug pag support sa ilang classmates.” “Learners in the classroom should also be taught how to respect and support their classmates.” [F1-IDI-Page 3 L101-102-P1]

Sir Jose supported this by affirming:

“Teachers are also guided to provide positive behavioral support and create a classroom culture that promotes respect and empathy.” [F2-IDI-Page 9 L314-315-P2]

3.6.3 Safe and Supportive Learning Environment. I began to understand how deeply learners respond when they feel safe, accepted, and genuinely supported. In the calm routines, encouraging words, and quiet reassurance surrounding them, I could sense fear slowly giving way to comfort, and hesitation gradually transforming into participation. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, his voice carried both care and intention as he described creating a space where learners could express themselves without the fear of judgment or failure. In that moment, I realized that when a classroom becomes a place of safety and belonging, learners find not only the courage to participate, but the confidence to truly grow.

“Kung safe ug supportive ang classroom environment, mas confident ang learner mo apil sa activities.”
 “When the classroom environment is safe and supportive, the learner becomes more confident in participating in activities.” [F1-IDI-Page 3 L102-103-P1]

Mrs. Nida supported this by identifying the immense internal resources an educator must draw upon. She noted:

“Teachers handling inclusive classrooms need patience, resilience, and support from the school community.” [F3-IDI-Page 3 L120-121-P3]

3.7 The Weight of the System (Structural Challenges)

3.7.1 Uniform Academic Expectations for Diverse Learners. There were moments when I could feel the invisible pressure resting on learners who were expected to keep pace with standards that did not always match their readiness, strengths, or way of learning. Some tried to move faster than they were comfortable, others quietly struggled to finish, while a few simply watched as the lesson continued without them. As Sir Roberto shared these realities, I sensed both helplessness and determination in his voice as he spoke of learners doing their best within expectations designed for everyone, yet fitting not all. In those moments, I came to realize that true inclusion begins when education stops measuring every learner by one timeline and starts honoring the unique rhythm of each child’s growth.

Sir Roberto shared:

“Usahay lisod para sa uban bata nga makaapas sa standard nga expectation sa klase kay lahi-lahi man ang pacing sa ilang pagkat-on.” “Sometimes it is difficult for some learners to keep up with the standard expectations in class because each learner has a different pace of learning.” [F1-IDI-Page 2 L52-53-P1]

Ma’am Rica supported this by identifying the systemic nature of the problem. She noted:

“one school routine that sometimes becomes challenging is the uniform expectation of output for all learners.”

Mrs. Rosa, the parent reinforced the need for flexibility. She shared:

“Sometimes school expectations are the same for all learners. But my child needs more time to finish tasks.”
 [F5-IDI-Page 7 L227-228-P5]

3.7.2 Limited Parental Participation in School Collaboration. Some stories carried the weight of missed meetings, unanswered follow-ups, and unfinished conversations, leaving teachers to carry concerns they wished could be shared with families. As Sir Roberto came when opportunities for partnership were left unmet. In those moments, I came to realize that when parental involvement becomes limited, the learner often stands in the space between two worlds, needing guidance from both, yet sometimes receiving it from only one.

Sir Roberto shared:

“Yes maam, naa gihapon halos Katunga sa akong klase, addunay 13 ka ID’s and halos half sa population ang parent or guardian walay tunga-tunga.” “Yes, Ma’am, almost half of my class is still affected, there are 13 identified learners, and nearly half of their parents or guardians are not actively participating.” [F1-IDI-Page 3 L87-88-P1]

Mrs. Rosa emphasized:

“Usahay dili dayon nako ma guide siya sa iyang lessons,” “Sometimes I am not able to guide him/her with the lessons right away.” [F5-IDI-Page 7 L232-233-P5]

3.7.3 Pressure from Academic Targets. At certain moments, I could feel the quiet tension that lived behind every lesson plan, deadline, and expected learning outcome. While teachers poured their energy into supporting learners who needed patience and individualized guidance, the rhythm of academic targets continued to move forward, often without pause. As Sir Roberto shared these realities, I sensed the weight in his voice, the constant balancing of meeting institutional demands while ensuring that no learner was left behind. In those moments, I came to realize that inclusive teaching is not simply the delivery of instruction, but the emotional labor of carrying both the standards of the system and the needs of the child at the same time.

Sir Roberto shared:

“Usahay challenge pud sa teacher nga ma meet ang academic expectations sa school while ginatabangan ang mga learners nga naglisod.” “Sometimes it is also a challenge for teachers to meet the academic expectations of the school while at the same time helping learners who are struggling.” [F1-IDI-Page 4 L117-118-P1]

Ma’am Nida supported this reality by noting the rigid framework teachers must operate within. She shared:

“Teachers are also expected to meet certain academic targets and follow structured routines.” [F3-IDI-Page 8 L268-P3]

This individual struggle is validated Sir Jose as a broader institutional challenge. He gave this acknowledgement:

“School policies and standardized academic expectations sometimes create pressure on both teachers and learners.” [F2-IDI-Page 9 L306-307-P2]

3.8 Bending the Rigid Frame (Coping Mechanisms for Structural Barriers)

3.8.1 Reading Intervention Programs. In the midst of academic struggles, I began to notice how progress often started with the smallest sounds, the simplest words, and the patience to begin again from the very beginning. Each repeated syllable, carefully guided reading activity, and slowly completed sentence carried a quiet promise that growth was still possible. As Sir Roberto shared his experiences, I could sense the hope and persistence in his voice as he spoke about guiding learners’ step by step through structured reading support. In those moments, I came to realize that reading intervention is not merely about teaching words; it is about opening doors to confidence, independence, and the belief that every learner can eventually find their voice.

He shared:

“In our school, naa me gina tawag nga TRIP (Teaching Reading in Progress) ... Sugod jud sila sa pinaka sayun, sounds, 3 letter words hangtud sa word by word to simple sentences.” “In our school, we have what we call TRIP (Teaching Reading in Progress) ... They really start from the very basics - sounds, three-letter words, then word-by-word reading up to simple sentences.” [F1-IDI-Page 4 L129-131-P1]

Sir Jose supported this effort by giving this affirmation:

“Programs such as structured reading interventions like TRIP have shown promising results.” [F2-IDI-Page 10 L330-331-P2]

3.8.2 Differentiated Instruction. Sir Roberto experiences differentiated instruction as a daily act of translation, recognizing that for his students to succeed, the curriculum must be reshaped to fit their current reach. He reflects on his practical approach to lesson planning. He explained:

“Sa akong class, kasagaran nkong ginabuhay is ginapasayun ang kada task or activities.” “In my class, what I usually do is simplify each task or activity.” [F1-IDI-Page 2 L53-55-P1]

Ma’am Nida supported this strategy by detailing the mechanics of their method. She said:

“He tries to simplify tasks and give additional guidance to the learners.” “He tries to simplify tasks and provide additional guidance to the learners.” [F3-IDI-Page 8 L269-270-P3]

3.8.3 Strengthening Teacher–Parent Communication. I realized that some of the most meaningful support for a learner began not inside the classroom, but in the conversations that connected home and school. Every follow-up, shared update, and sincere exchange seemed to weave a bridge of understanding between those guiding the child’s journey. As Sir Roberto spoke about maintaining open communication with parents, I could sense the commitment and hope in his voice, the belief that progress becomes stronger when no concern is faced alone. In those moments, I came to realize that when teachers and parents continue to listen, share, and trust one another, the learner is surrounded by a support system that extends far beyond the classroom walls.

Sir Roberto expressed:

“Importante jud nga open ang communication sa parent ug sa teacher.” “It is very important that communication between the parent and the teacher remains open.” [F1-IDI-Page 3 L76-P1]

Mrs. Rosa supported this effort by highlighting her personal responsibility in the partnership. She shared:

“Siguro mas maayo kung naa additional support programs for learners.” “Perhaps it would be better if there were additional support programs for learners.” [F5-IDI-Page 7 L244-P5].

3.9 Lessons from the Walls of the System (Insights from Structural Barriers)

3.9.1 Importance of Reading Interventions. Sir Roberto experiences the urgency of literacy as the primary gateway to all other forms of learning, recognizing that without a strong foundation in reading, a student with adaptive difficulties remains effectively locked out of the rest of the curriculum. He reflects on the need for a more robust instructional focus. He explained:

“Teaching approaches dapat pakusgan pa jud ang reading skills sa mga bata.” “Teaching approaches should further strengthen the reading skills of learners.” [F1-IDI-Page 4 L112-113-P1]

Sir Jose reinforced this necessity by stating:

“Schools should strengthen reading intervention programs, teacher training, and parent engagement initiatives.” [F2-IDI-Page 9 L326-327-P2].

3.9.2 Need for Teacher Training in Inclusive Education. Observing Sir Roberto, I realized how he viewed professional development as a vital necessity for his growth. He shared:

“Importante pud nga ang teacher makadawat ug training aron mas masabtan unsaon pag handle sa mga learners nga adunay special needs.” “It is also important for teachers to receive training so they can better understand how to handle learners with special needs.” [F1-IDI-Page 4 L118-120-P1]

Ma’am Rica supported this reality by identifying the need for a broader toolkit. She noted:

“teachers also need additional training in handling learners with diverse needs.” [F4-IDI-Page 6 L200-201-P4].

3.9.3 Strengthening School–Community Collaboration. Sir Roberto experiences the success of inclusive education as a shared responsibility, recognizing that the classroom is only one part of a much larger ecosystem that determines a student's progress. He reflects on the transformative power of unity. He explained:

“Kung magtinabangay ang school, parents, ug community, mas dako ang chance nga matabangan ang learner.” “When the school, parents, and the community work together, there is a greater chance of effectively supporting the learner.” [F1-IDI- Page 3 L78-79-P1]

Sir Jose reinforced this reality by stating:

“Inclusive education requires collective effort from teachers, parents, and school administrators.” [F2-IDI-Page 8 L280-281-P2]

DISCUSSION

On Challenges

The current finding affirms Mills et al. (2025), who highlighted that the environmental barriers significantly hinder learner engagement and academic performance, particularly when overwhelming classroom noise, overstimulation from simultaneous activities, and excessive sensory inputs interfere with concentration and task completion. It likewise supports the claim of Antoniou et al. (2024), noting that large class sizes and distraction-filled learning environments further intensify these challenges, making it more difficult for learners with adaptive difficulties to process information, sustain attention, and participate meaningfully in classroom activities.

The current finding opposes Menesini and Salmivalli (2023), who claimed that negative peer interactions consistently undermine learners’ self-esteem and willingness to engage. As the participant’s narratives revealed, despite teasing, name-calling, and social exclusion, learners were gradually guided to re-engage through continuous support, encouragement, and inclusive classroom practices.

On Coping Mechanisms

The current finding affirms Goyibova et al. (2025), who emphasized that instructional adjustments and flexible teaching strategies enhance accessibility for learners with diverse needs, as the receiving teacher consistently applied task simplification, differentiated instruction, and adaptive pacing to match the learners' individual capacities and readiness. Moreover, the finding supports the claim of Sortwell et al. (2026), noting that simplified instructions, structured routines, and guided support help reduce cognitive overload and improve learner focus, as the findings revealed that breaking tasks into manageable steps enabled learners to engage more confidently despite environmental distractions.

The current finding opposes Liu et al. (2024), who expressed that positive reinforcement, praise, and behavioral support alone are sufficient to build learners' confidence and resilience when facing peer attitudes or social stressors. As the participant's narratives revealed, confidence was not immediately restored through encouragement alone, but required continuous emotional guidance, behavioral redirection, and the gradual rebuilding of trust after repeated social rejection

On Insights

The current finding affirms Martin et al. (2024), who highlighted that the need to create a safe and supporting learning environment and intentional pedagogy are essential in supporting learners with adaptive difficulties, as the receiving teacher consistently established clear routines, strategic seating arrangements, and predictable classroom procedures to promote focus, security, and engagement. It likewise supports the claim of Liu et al. (2024) that a well-structured classroom reduces environmental barriers and enables learners to better anticipate expectations, as the findings revealed that consistency and organization strengthened learners' participation, readiness, and academic involvement.

The current finding opposes Goyibova et al. (2025), who said that programs centered on reading interventions, differentiated instruction, and continuous teacher training consistently strengthen teachers' confidence and improve learner outcomes. As the receiving teacher's narratives revealed, limited resources, competing demands, and insufficient access to professional development often constrained the full implementation of these supports.

Conclusion

The study concluded that effective inclusive education for learners with difficulty in applying adaptive skills requires a collaborative and comprehensive support system involving teachers, school administrators, families, and peers. Teachers play a vital role in implementing structured routines, differentiated instruction, and responsive behavioral support to promote meaningful engagement and learning. Likewise, school administrators contribute by providing institutional support and professional development opportunities that strengthen teachers' capacity to address diverse learner needs. Furthermore, active family involvement and supportive peer relationships are essential in creating a consistent, inclusive, and nurturing environment that fosters learners' academic, social, and emotional development.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following are recommended

1. Future studies may adopt a predictive mediation design in which classroom barriers may be treated as the predictor variable, adaptive instructional practices may serve as the mediating variable, and learner

engagement may be examined as the criterion variable. A structured survey instrument may be developed from the sub-themes generated in this study and validated through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability testing. This design may allow future researchers to determine how adaptive instructional practices mediate the influence of classroom barriers on the engagement of learners with difficulty in applying adaptive skills in mainstream educational settings.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my adviser, Dr. Decano, for the invaluable guidance, expertise, patience, and unwavering support provided throughout the completion of this study. I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to the panel members for their insightful comments, constructive suggestions, and meaningful contributions that helped strengthen this research. My deepest thanks are likewise given to my family and friends for their constant encouragement, understanding, and support during this journey. Above all, I offer my utmost gratitude to God for His endless blessings, wisdom, strength, and guidance that made this achievement possible.

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