



## Strategies for Inclusive Learning that Enhance Participation and Development of Children with Special Needs Holistically

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### Abstract

**Background:** Inclusive education requires learning practices that respond to the academic, social, and emotional diversity of children with special needs in regular elementary schools. Despite increasing policy attention, empirical descriptions of how inclusive strategies are enacted in resource constrained classrooms remain limited. Understanding practical adaptations implemented by teachers is essential to strengthen equitable participation and holistic student development.

**Aims:** This study aimed to analyze inclusive learning strategies that enhance participation and support the holistic development of children with special needs at the elementary school level.

**Methods:** A qualitative descriptive case study was conducted at SD Negeri Bumirejo 1 involving classroom teachers and the school principal selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi structured interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns of inclusive practice.

**Result:** The findings indicate that inclusive learning is implemented through adaptive classroom arrangements, varied instructional methods, individualized mentoring, and flexible assessment adjustments supported by empathetic communication and child friendly school programs. However, challenges such as behavioral regulation difficulties, limited adaptive facilities, and the absence of special assistant teachers remain significant.

**Conclusion:** The findings indicate that inclusive learning is implemented through adaptive classroom arrangements, varied instructional methods, individualized mentoring, and flexible assessment adjustments supported by empathetic communication and child friendly school programs. However, challenges such as behavioral regulation difficulties, limited adaptive facilities, and the absence of special assistant teachers remain significant.

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### INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is an educational approach that affirms the right of every student, including children with special needs, to have a fair and meaningful learning experience in regular school. Inclusion is not only understood as the openness of physical access, but also requires curriculum adaptation, differentiation of learning strategies, and management of a school environment that is responsive to the diversity of needs and characteristics of students. This approach aims to ensure the active involvement of ABK in the academic process and social life of the school, so that their participation is functional and sustainable (Florian, 2019; Nilholm & Göransson, 2017). Recent studies have shown that appropriately designed inclusive educational practices contribute positively to increased independence, communication skills, emotional regulation, and

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learning outcomes of students with special needs (Hehir et al., 2016; Szumski et al., 2017; Ruijs et al., 2020).

Conceptually, inclusive education theory places diversity as a normal condition in learning and emphasizes the responsibility of schools to create an educational system that is adaptive, flexible, and supportive for all students. This framework is in line with the 21<sup>st</sup> century educational paradigm that emphasizes the holistic development of cognitive, social, emotional, and moral aspects through the principles of learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. In practice, various education policies at the national and international levels continue to encourage the strengthening of ABK-friendly education services through curriculum adjustments, teacher competency improvements, provision of professional support, and the creation of a non-discriminatory learning environment (Florian & Beaton, 2018; Slee, 2018). However, recent research shows that the implementation of inclusive education in schools still faces real challenges, especially related to teacher readiness, limited support facilities, and gaps between inclusion policies and classroom learning practices (Sharma & Sokal, 2016; Walton & Rusznyak, 2020).

At the empirical level, inclusive education practices in elementary schools are generally characterized by teachers' efforts to implement adaptive learning strategies according to the characteristics of ABK. Teachers organize the learning environment to support student focus, integrate various learning methods such as interactive lectures, demonstrations, educational games, and discussions, and provide additional assistance for students who have learning difficulties. Assessment adjustments are also made through simplification of response forms, verbal assistance, or observation-based evaluations to ensure fairness in assessment.

These practices reflect teachers' commitment to accommodating the diversity of students. However, the implementation of inclusion still faces various obstacles, such as the limitation of teachers with special educational competencies, the absence of special assistant teachers, challenges in the behavior of children in the classroom, and the lack of media and adaptive learning facilities. In addition, the dynamics of social interaction with peers often trigger certain emotional responses in children with special needs, thus demanding more complex and reflective classroom management skills from teachers (De Boer et al., 2018; Loreman et al., 2020).

Although the study of inclusive education has evolved in recent years, most research still focuses on policy aspects, conceptual frameworks, or general approaches to inclusion, while empirical descriptions of learning practices at the elementary grade level are still relatively limited. Studies that review in depth learning strategies, assessment systems, and obstacles and solutions faced by teachers in the context of inclusive primary schools in areas with limited resources are still rare. Based on the results of initial observations and preliminary interviews at SD Negeri Bumirejo 1, it is known that this school has implemented various child-friendly practices and modified learning to accommodate the needs of students with special needs. However, until now there has been no research that specifically documents and analyzes inclusive learning practices that take place in these schools. This condition shows that there are research gaps that need to be filled through empirical studies that can provide a comprehensive picture of the implementation of inclusive education in the context of elementary schools with limited resources.

Departing from this research gap, the present study concentrates on three interconnected dimensions of inclusive education implementation at SD Negeri Bumirejo 1, namely adaptive learning strategies enacted by teachers, assessment systems designed to monitor the progress of students with and without special needs, and the obstacles encountered alongside the practical solutions developed within everyday classroom practice. This analytical focus seeks to illuminate how teachers negotiate complex classroom realities, respond to diverse learner characteristics, and sustain meaningful participation despite structural limitations. By examining these aspects holistically, the study positions inclusive education as a dynamic, reflective, and contextually grounded pedagogical process effectively.

In alignment with this focus, the study aims to analyze inclusive learning strategies that enhance participation and support the holistic development of children with special needs across academic, social, and emotional domains. The research aspires not only to expand theoretical discussions regarding inclusive pedagogy but also to provide practical insights that may guide teachers, school leaders, and policymakers in designing humane and equitable learning environments. By documenting adaptive practices and contextual challenges, the study offers a

reflective reference for other elementary schools facing similar constraints, encouraging sustainable innovation, collaborative practice, and continuous professional growth within inclusive educational settings globally today.

## METHOD

### *Research Design*

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to understand in depth the practices of inclusive learning that occur naturally in the elementary school environment, especially related to learning strategies, assessment adjustments, and obstacles and solutions faced by teachers in real contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guest et al., 2024). The case study design allows researchers to explore the phenomenon holistically in one specific context that has unique characteristics, namely an inclusive primary school with limited supporting resources (Yin, 2018). SD Negeri Bumirejo 1 was chosen as the research location because the school has implemented various inclusive educational practices, such as curriculum modifications, adaptive learning strategies, and child-friendly school programs, but has not been empirically studied in previous research. With this design, the research is expected to be able to produce a rich contextual understanding of the implementation of inclusive learning at the elementary school level.

### *Participant*

The research participants consist of classroom teachers and school principals who are directly involved in the implementation of inclusive education at SD Negeri Bumirejo 1. The selection of participants was carried out using the purposive sampling technique, which is the deliberate selection of informants based on considerations of their involvement, experience, and knowledge of the research focus (Etikan et al., 2016). Classroom teachers are chosen because they have a central role in designing and implementing inclusive learning strategies, making assessment adjustments, and managing classroom dynamics involving students with and without special needs. School principals are involved because they play a role in school policymaking, the provision of structural support, and the supervision of the implementation of inclusion programs. The number of participants is flexible and determined based on the principle of information power, which is that data collection is stopped when the information obtained has been repeated and does not produce significant new findings (Malterud et al., 2016).

### *Instrument*

In qualitative research, the researcher plays the role of the main instrument, which is responsible for the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. To support this process, this study uses three supporting instruments, namely semi-structured interview guidelines, class observation sheets, and document analysis sheets. The interview guidelines were prepared to explore the experiences and views of teachers and principals regarding inclusive learning strategies, forms of assessment adjustments, and obstacles and solutions faced in daily practice. The interviews are semi-structured so that the researcher has a clear framework of questions, but still provides room for in-depth exploration according to the participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The observation sheet is used to directly record the learning process in the classroom, including seating arrangements, teacher-student interactions, responses of special needs students, and adaptive strategies applied by teachers. Observation is carried out in a naturalistic manner to capture the dynamics of learning as it takes place in a real context (Guest, 2024). Document analysis sheets are used to examine learning documents, such as Learning Implementation Plans (RPP), assessments, modified curriculum, and child-friendly school program documents. Document analysis serves as a source of supporting data to verify the alignment between inclusive learning planning and practice (Bowen, 2009).

### *Procedures*

Data collection is carried out through four main stages, namely preparation, field data collection, data verification, and data organization. In the preparation stage, the researcher compiles research instruments and validates the content through expert review by involving inclusive

education experts and qualitative research methodologies. After that, the researcher takes care of the research permit to the school. The data collection stage was carried out through three main techniques: (1) classroom observation, (2) in-depth interviews, and (3) document analysis. Class observations were carried out to see firsthand the implementation of inclusive learning strategies and the behavior of ABK students during learning. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with teachers and principals to explore their experiences, challenges, and applied adaptive practices. Document analysis was carried out to examine the suitability of learning practices with school planning and policy documents. The data verification stage is carried out through triangulation of sources and methods, namely comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documents. Furthermore, member checking is carried out by asking participants to review the summary of the interview results to ensure accuracy and suitability of meaning (Nowell et al., 2017). The final stage is the organization of the data in the form of transcripts, field notes, and data matrices to facilitate the analysis process.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis as proposed by Braun dan Clarke (2021). The analysis process begins with the transcription of interview data and the incorporation of observation notes and documents into one data corpus. Furthermore, the researcher reduces the data by sorting out information that is relevant to the focus of the research. The next stage is initial coding, which is coding meaningful data units, such as teaching strategies, assessment adjustments, and learning barriers. The codes are then grouped into categories and synthesized into key themes that represent inclusive learning practices in schools. To maintain the credibility of the analysis, the researcher applied trail audits and peer discussions to minimize interpretation bias. (Guest et al., 2024).

The validity of the data is guaranteed through four trustworthiness criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is strengthened through triangulation and member checking. Transferability is achieved by presenting a detailed description of the research context. Dependability is maintained through systematic documentation of the research process, while confirmability is achieved by ensuring that research findings are based on field data, not mere assumptions of researchers (Nowell et al., 2017).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The findings reveal that inclusive learning at SD Negeri Bumirejo 1 is implemented through adaptive classroom strategies designed to accommodate the diverse characteristics of children with special needs. Classroom observations indicate that adaptive seating arrangements constitute a foundational practice, with students requiring additional support positioned at the front of the classroom to reduce distraction and facilitate teacher guidance. One participant explained, *"I intentionally place certain students near my desk because they lose focus easily and need quick reminders"* (T1 – Classroom Teacher). Similarly, another teacher noted, *"When they sit closer, I can immediately give nonverbal cues, and it prevents disruptive behavior before it escalates"* (T2 – Classroom Teacher). These testimonies demonstrate that seating arrangement is not merely logistical but pedagogical, reflecting teachers' efforts to regulate attention and participation. In essence, adaptive classroom organization emerges as an initial structural strategy that supports inclusive engagement and minimizes behavioral barriers.

Building upon the physical arrangement of the classroom, teachers also employ varied instructional methods to sustain student involvement. Observations show that lessons combine questioning, demonstrations, discussions, and educational games rather than relying solely on lecture-based instruction. A participant stated, *"If I only explain verbally, some students disengage, but when I add demonstrations or simple games, they participate more actively"* (T3 – Classroom Teacher). Another teacher emphasized the importance of multimodal explanations: *"I repeat instructions using gestures and examples so students with learning difficulties can understand step by step"* (T1 – Classroom Teacher). The variation in teaching approaches indicates an intentional shift toward flexible pedagogy, where instructional diversity becomes a response to heterogeneous learning

needs. Therefore, inclusive learning in this context is characterized by pedagogical adaptability that encourages participation through multisensory and interactive experiences.

The implementation of additional mentoring outside regular lesson hours further strengthens inclusive practice. Teachers allocate special sessions for students who struggle with comprehension or task completion. One participant explained, *"After class, I usually sit with certain students to review the material slowly because they need more repetition than others"* (T2 – Classroom Teacher). The school principal reinforced this observation by stating, *"We encourage teachers to provide extra guidance because not all students can reach the same pace during regular lessons"* (P1 – Principal). These statements reveal that individualized assistance functions as an extension of classroom instruction, bridging gaps that emerge during formal learning time. Consequently, additional mentoring represents a compensatory strategy that ensures continuity of learning support beyond standard instructional hours.

In terms of assessment practices, the findings indicate significant adjustments designed to maintain fairness for students with special needs. Teachers frequently modify the delivery of instructions by simplifying language or reading questions aloud. One teacher described, *"Some students cannot read long sentences, so I rephrase the instructions verbally to make sure they understand what to do"* (T3 – Classroom Teacher). Another participant added, *"For students with writing difficulties, I sometimes help them fill in the answer sheet while they explain verbally"* (T1 – Classroom Teacher). These practices highlight a shift from rigid assessment procedures toward flexible and responsive evaluation methods. Thus, assessment adjustment in this setting emphasizes accessibility without compromising the measurement of essential competencies.

Beyond instruction delivery, teachers also provide alternative response formats that align with students' abilities. Observations revealed that students were allowed to point to images, give short verbal responses, or demonstrate understanding through gestures. As expressed by a teacher, *"I do not always require written answers; sometimes showing or choosing is enough to demonstrate learning"* (T2 – Classroom Teacher). The principal further noted, *"Our assessment system focuses on individual progress rather than uniform standards for all students"* (P1 – Principal). This flexibility suggests a broader conceptualization of assessment, where participation and behavioral engagement become valuable indicators of development. Overall, assessment practices reflect an individualized approach that prioritizes meaningful demonstration of learning over standardized output formats.

Despite these adaptive practices, several challenges persist in the implementation of inclusive learning. Teachers reported behavioral regulation as one of the most significant obstacles, including students leaving their seats unexpectedly or showing emotional outbursts. One participant explained, *"Sometimes a student suddenly cries when disturbed by peers, and I have to pause the lesson to calm them down"* (T3 – Classroom Teacher). Another teacher added, *"Managing the whole class while giving special attention is very demanding, especially without additional support staff"* (T1 – Classroom Teacher). These statements reveal the emotional and professional complexity faced by teachers in inclusive classrooms. Hence, behavioral challenges highlight the need for continuous classroom management strategies that balance collective instruction and individual support.

The absence of special assistant teachers and limited adaptive facilities further intensify these challenges. Participants emphasized that all responsibilities rest on classroom teachers. As one teacher expressed, *"We try our best, but sometimes it is difficult because we handle both regular students and those with special needs alone"* (T2 – Classroom Teacher). The principal acknowledged institutional limitations, stating, *"We do not yet have specialized learning media, so teachers often create their own modifications"* (P1 – Principal). These findings illustrate a gap between inclusive ideals and available resources, emphasizing the reliance on teacher creativity and resilience. In summary, structural constraints necessitate innovative yet demanding adaptive efforts from teachers to sustain inclusive learning practices.

To address these obstacles, teachers employ various coping strategies, including empathetic communication, individualized attention, and the use of child-friendly school programs as institutional support. One participant reflected, *"Building trust through gentle communication helps students feel safe and reduces disruptive behavior"* (T3 – Classroom Teacher). Another teacher highlighted the importance of consistent adaptation: *"We continuously adjust our methods because every child responds differently each day"* (T1 – Classroom Teacher). These adaptive responses demonstrate that inclusive learning is not a fixed model, but an evolving process shaped by daily

classroom dynamics. Ultimately, the findings indicate that inclusive learning success depends largely on teachers' reflective adaptability supported by a collaborative school environment.

Overall, the findings collectively indicate that the research questions are answered through a coherent pattern of adaptive inclusive practices shaped by teachers' responsiveness and contextual constraints. Inclusive learning strategies at SD Negeri Bumirejo 1 are manifested through flexible classroom organization, varied instructional approaches, individualized mentoring, and empathetic communication, which together enhance the participation and holistic development of children with special needs. Assessment practices further reflect a shift toward fairness-oriented evaluation by simplifying instructions, diversifying response formats, and emphasizing observation-based evidence of learning progress. At the same time, persistent challenges such as behavioral regulation issues, the absence of special assistant teachers, and limited adaptive resources highlight the complex realities of implementing inclusion in resource constrained settings. Nevertheless, teachers' reflective adaptations and the support of child friendly school programs demonstrate that inclusive education can remain meaningful and sustainable despite structural limitations. In conclusion, the study affirms that effective inclusive learning is not solely determined by policy frameworks but by the dynamic interplay between teacher agency, contextual adaptation, and supportive school culture that collectively enable equitable participation for all learners.

## Discussion

The results of the study show that the implementation of inclusive learning at SD Negeri Bumirejo 1 takes place through the adaptation of learning strategies, assessment adjustments, and various efforts of teachers in responding to behavioral barriers and limited resources. These findings confirm that inclusion practices at the elementary school level do not only depend on formal policies but are highly determined by teachers' reflective and adaptive capacities in managing heterogeneous classroom learning.

Theoretically, inclusive education places the diversity of students as a normal condition in learning and emphasizes the importance of access, participation, and ongoing support for all students. The findings of this study show that teachers have applied the three principles contextually. Adaptive seating arrangements for students with needs, provision of verbal and nonverbal assistance, and additional assistance outside of class hours reflect real efforts to provide more equal access to learning. This practice is in line with the view that environmental adaptation and learning strategies are at the core of inclusive pedagogy, not just temporary individual adjustments (Florian & Beaton, 2018; Florian, 2019).

The use of varied learning strategies such as demonstrations, educational games, simple discussions, and questions and answers, shows the efforts of teachers to increase the active participation of students with special needs. This strategy aligns with the findings of cutting-edge research that emphasizes that multisensory and activity-based learning can improve the cognitive and social engagement of students with special needs in an inclusive classroom (Szumski et al., 2017; Ruijs et al., 2020). Thus, the findings of this study reinforce the argument that effective inclusive learning does not demand entirely different methods, but rather flexibility in applying diverse approaches according to the needs of students.

The findings on assessment adjustments show that teachers apply the assessment principle that is flexible and oriented to the individual abilities of students with special needs. Practices such as reading out questions, simplifying the form of responses, helping to fill in answers, and using observations as the basis for assessment reflect efforts to realize fair and meaningful assessments. This approach is in line with the concept of inclusive assessment which emphasizes that equality in assessment does not always mean equal treatment, but equal treatment according to the needs and capacity of learners (DeLuca et al., 2018; Nieminen & Pesonen, 2020).

The assessment adjustments found in this study also show alignment with the practice of differentiated assessment, which aims to capture student learning development more authentically. Observation-based assessments of the participation and learning behavior of students with special needs allow teachers to understand the student learning process holistically, not just focusing on academic outcomes. Thus, these findings confirm that inclusive assessments play an important role in supporting the academic, social, and emotional development of students with special needs in an integrated manner.

Although inclusive learning practices have been running in a meaningful way, this study reveals several obstacles that teachers still face. Behaviors of students with special needs such as being easily distracted, walking directionless, or crying suddenly are real challenges in managing inclusive classrooms. These findings are in line with previous research that has stated that classroom management is one of the biggest challenges for teachers in the context of inclusion, especially when additional professional support is limited (De Boer et al., 2018; Walton & Rusznyak, 2020). The absence of special assistant teachers aggravates the role of classroom teachers who must manage regular and special needs students at the same time.

This condition reflects the gap between inclusion policies and the reality of implementation on the ground, especially in schools with limited resources. Recent studies have shown that without the support of trained personnel and adequate adaptive facilities, the emotional and professional burden of teachers in inclusive classrooms tends to increase (Loreman et al., 2020). However, the findings of this study also show that teachers seek to overcome these limitations through an individualized approach, empathic communication, and the use of child-friendly school programs as a source of institutional support.

Compared to previous research that focused heavily on policies or conceptual models of inclusive education, this study provides a more contextual and detailed empirical contribution. This study directly captures the dynamics of inclusive classrooms, including the concrete behavior of students with special needs and teachers' responses in daily learning situations. Such empirical descriptions are still relatively rarely reported in inclusion research at the elementary school level, especially in the context of resource-constrained regions. In addition, this study integrates the discussion of learning strategies, assessment adjustments, obstacles, and solutions in one complete analytical framework. This approach provides a holistic picture of the implementation of inclusive education, while strengthening the understanding that the success of inclusion is not only determined by one aspect, but by complex interactions between teachers, students, school policies, and the learning environment.

### *Implications*

The findings of this study carry important pedagogical and institutional implications for the development of inclusive education at the elementary school level, particularly in resource constrained contexts. First, the study highlights that inclusive learning does not solely depend on sophisticated infrastructure, but rather on teachers' adaptive capacity to design flexible instructional strategies, adjust assessments, and build empathetic classroom relationships. This implies that professional development programs for teachers should emphasize reflective practice, differentiated instruction, and inclusive assessment literacy as core competencies. Second, the presence of child friendly school programs as a supporting structure suggests that institutional culture plays a crucial role in sustaining inclusive practices. Schools are therefore encouraged to integrate inclusive values into daily routines, collaborative planning, and school wide policies rather than treating inclusion as an isolated intervention. Finally, for policymakers, the findings underscore the need to provide structural support such as special assistant teachers, adaptive learning resources, and continuous mentoring systems to reduce the emotional and professional burden experienced by classroom teachers implementing inclusion.

### *Research Contribution*

This study contributes to the field of inclusive education by providing a contextualized empirical description of inclusive learning practices within a primary school that operates under limited resources. Unlike many previous studies that primarily focus on policy discourse or theoretical frameworks, this research offers detailed insights into how inclusive pedagogy is enacted in everyday classroom interactions through adaptive seating arrangements, varied instructional strategies, individualized mentoring, and flexible assessment practices. The integration of learning strategies, assessment adjustments, challenges, and adaptive solutions into a single analytical framework represents a significant contribution, as it demonstrates that inclusive education should be understood as a dynamic process rather than a fixed model. Moreover, the study enriches the existing literature by emphasizing teacher agency and reflective adaptation as central elements in

sustaining inclusive learning environments, thereby extending current theoretical discussions on inclusive pedagogy within real world educational settings.

### *Limitations*

Despite its contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged to provide a balanced interpretation of the findings. The research was conducted within a single school context, which may limit the transferability of the results to other educational environments with different cultural, institutional, or policy backgrounds. The qualitative case study design prioritizes depth of understanding rather than generalization, and therefore the findings should be interpreted as context specific insights rather than universal conclusions. In addition, the study primarily focuses on teachers' and school leaders' perspectives, while the voices of students with special needs and their peers were not extensively explored. Future studies could benefit from incorporating multiple stakeholder perspectives to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of inclusive learning experiences. Another limitation lies in the relatively short observation period, which may not fully capture the long term development of inclusive practices and their sustained impact on students' academic, social, and emotional growth.

### *Suggestions*

Based on these limitations, several directions for future research are recommended. Subsequent studies may adopt multi-site or comparative designs to examine how inclusive learning practices vary across different schools and socio educational contexts. Combining qualitative approaches with quantitative measures of student participation, engagement, or developmental outcomes could also strengthen the evidence base and provide a more holistic understanding of inclusive education effectiveness. Future research is further encouraged to explore the perspectives of students with special needs, parents, and peer groups in order to deepen the relational dimension of inclusion. Additionally, longitudinal studies are needed to investigate how adaptive teaching strategies and inclusive assessment practices influence long term learning trajectories and emotional well-being. Such efforts will help advance inclusive education research toward more sustainable, contextually responsive, and human centered educational practices.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study demonstrate that the expectations formulated in the Introduction, particularly regarding the implementation of adaptive inclusive learning strategies that enhance participation and holistic development, are empirically reflected in classroom practices at SD Negeri Bumirejo 1. The findings reveal that inclusive education is not merely a conceptual framework but is translated into concrete pedagogical actions through adaptive classroom arrangements, varied instructional methods, individualized mentoring, and flexible assessment practices. These practices confirm that teachers actively respond to the diversity of academic, social, and emotional needs of children with special needs, thereby fulfilling the initial research aim to analyze inclusive learning strategies that support holistic development within real classroom contexts.

One of the central findings concerns the implementation of adaptive seating arrangements designed to improve focus and reduce behavioral distractions. Classroom observations show that teachers strategically position students with special needs in locations that enable closer interaction and immediate support. This practice reflects the expectation presented in the Introduction that inclusive education requires environmental adaptation and responsive classroom management. The adaptive organization of physical space allows teachers to provide continuous guidance, strengthen communication, and foster a more supportive learning atmosphere. As a result, inclusive learning is realized not only through curriculum modification but also through intentional structuring of the learning environment that encourages participation and engagement.

The results further indicate that teachers employ varied instructional strategies to maintain active involvement among students with diverse learning characteristics. Learning activities combine explanations, demonstrations, simple discussions, questioning techniques, and educational games, reflecting a shift toward flexible pedagogy. This finding aligns with the theoretical expectation that inclusive learning requires differentiated approaches rather than uniform teaching methods. Through multimodal explanations and concrete examples, teachers create opportunities for students

with special needs to access learning materials in ways that are meaningful and understandable. Consequently, instructional diversity becomes a key mechanism for promoting inclusive participation and reducing barriers to learning.

Another important finding relates to the provision of individualized mentoring beyond regular classroom hours. Teachers allocate additional time to review materials, simplify explanations, and assist students who experience learning difficulties. This practice illustrates the commitment to ensuring equitable learning opportunities, which was emphasized in the Introduction as a core principle of inclusive education. The existence of additional mentoring demonstrates that inclusive practices extend beyond formal instruction and involve continuous adaptation based on students' individual progress. Such practices indicate that holistic development is supported through sustained teacher engagement and personalized learning experiences.

Assessment practices also undergo significant adaptation to accommodate the diverse abilities of students with special needs. Teachers simplify instructions, provide verbal guidance, allow alternative response formats, and utilize observation-based assessments to capture learning progress more comprehensively. These findings reflect the expectation that inclusive education requires flexible evaluation systems that prioritize fairness and meaningful learning outcomes. Rather than emphasizing standardized performance, assessment practices focus on students' developmental progress, participation, and behavioral engagement. This approach reinforces the principle that inclusion involves equitable opportunities to demonstrate learning in ways that align with individual capabilities.

Despite these positive developments, the results reveal persistent challenges in implementing inclusive learning, particularly related to behavioral regulation, the absence of special assistant teachers, and limited adaptive learning facilities. Teachers frequently encounter situations where students display emotional responses or difficulties maintaining focus, requiring immediate intervention and classroom management adjustments. These findings correspond with the issues highlighted in the Introduction regarding gaps between inclusion policies and practical implementation. The challenges experienced by teachers emphasize the complexity of inclusive education in resource constrained contexts and highlight the importance of institutional support systems.

In response to these challenges, teachers demonstrate reflective and adaptive strategies, including empathetic communication, individualized attention, and the integration of child friendly school programs as institutional support. These adaptive responses confirm that inclusive learning is a dynamic process shaped by ongoing reflection and collaboration rather than a static instructional model. The findings therefore illustrate how teacher agency becomes a central element in sustaining inclusive practices, enabling classrooms to remain responsive despite structural limitations.

Overall, the results indicate that the expectations articulated in the Introduction are realized through interconnected practices that combine adaptive pedagogy, flexible assessment, and empathetic classroom management. The compatibility between the research aims and empirical findings strengthens the argument that inclusive education at the elementary level can be effectively implemented through contextualized strategies developed by teachers. Furthermore, these findings open opportunities for the development of future research that explores long term impacts of inclusive learning on students' academic, social, and emotional outcomes, as well as comparative studies across schools with varying levels of resources. The practical insights generated by this study also provide a foundation for designing professional development programs, policy interventions, and collaborative frameworks aimed at strengthening inclusive education practices in broader educational settings.

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### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

IAC and CL collaboratively conceptualized the study, designed the research framework, and developed the theoretical foundation of inclusive learning explored in this manuscript. IAC conducted field data collection, including classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis, as well as performed the initial data coding and thematic interpretation. CL contributed to methodological refinement, analytical validation, and critical review of the interpretation to ensure conceptual rigor and international scholarly relevance. Both authors were actively involved in drafting, revising, and approving the final version of the manuscript, and they share equal responsibility for the integrity, accuracy, and ethical standards of the research process and publication.

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