# Effective Strategies to Improve Teaching and Learning in an Inclusive ECE Classroom Setting

## Izawati Ngadni, Ida Yasmine Binti Ahmad, Fong Jia Yean

Faculty of Education and Humanities, UNITAR International University
School of Social Sciences, Corresponding Author Email: izawati@unitar.my

**Abstract**
Early Childhood Education is the foundation of every child's development, and inclusive education also plays an important role in helping children with disabilities progress. Teachers play a crucial role in an educational setting and ensure that an inclusive education is implemented smoothly. The aim of this study is to determine the effective strategies that can help in the teaching and learning process in an inclusive early childhood education (ECE) classroom setting. For this study, a qualitative method was chosen with the use of an open-ended questionnaire survey. The survey was done via Google Forms and distributed through e-mails and social media platforms. The questionnaire was sent to participants, specifically teachers who work in or have experience teaching in an inclusive classroom in an Early Childhood Education setting. A total of 14 participants from diverse backgrounds and locations have sent their responses for this study. The responses from the participants recorded the strategies and methods that the teachers used to help them with their teaching strategies in the classroom. A few strategies have been identified through the responses to improve teaching and learning in an inclusive ECE classroom setting, including engagement and collaboration, teaching approaches, individualized and motivating, and classroom management. This study also made some recommendations and suggestions to address the current issues and for further studies to be done.
**Keywords:** Inclusive Classroom, Early Childhood Education, Teachers, Effective Strategies, Special Education Need and Disability (SEND), Inclusive Education Programme (IEP)

**Introduction**
*What is early childhood education, and why is it important?*
According to Kapur (2018), early childhood education (ECE) is an important area of an individual's life. Early childhood is generally defined as the period from birth to about eight years of age. This period is considered the most important, as children experience the most intense and rapid development and growth and are most influenced and shaped by the environment. Early childhood education settings can be divided into several different settings such as childcare centers and preschools.

The importance of early childhood education (ECE) in a person's life cannot be overemphasized. A fundamental goal of early childhood education is to promote the effective development of children. It can lay the foundation for children's learning and effectively develop their talents and skills from an early age. ECE is fundamental to spreading knowledge and information that promotes the holistic growth of man.

### Inclusion and the Early Years

A broader definition of inclusion in the early stages includes guidelines for making sure everyone feels "belonging," including children and their parents, staff, and others involved in the situation. Inclusion is also commonly used to refer to children with special needs who attend a common school setting. According to Ackah-Jnr and Udah (2021), inclusive Education (IE) aims to provide quality education and equal opportunities for all children, including children with disabilities, within their right to education.

Children with special needs and challenges benefit from being in the company of more highly skilled peers because they feel more engaged. The Malaysia Child Act Amendment 2006 (Act 611) includes the 'Right to Education for All' stipulating that all children, regardless of their origin, have the right to education. The extensive term "no one gets left behind" means that every child has the right to an education and should attend school under the Child Act 2001 (Act 611) (Malaysia). In Malaysia nowadays, inclusion is no longer a strange issue but a struggle for the education system, schools, teachers, students, and families. Unfortunately, although society has become progressively used to children with diverse challenges and needs, our education system still faces challenges in accommodating these children in a common early childhood setting.

### Teacher and Inclusive Education

Inclusion means teachers are responsible for providing an early childhood setting where all children can grow and feel a sense of belonging. The teacher is very important because the main role of the teacher is to motivate children, especially those who may have learning difficulties, and to minimize performance gaps. Several barriers to building effective inclusive schools have been identified, and the way suggested to overcome these challenges is to reassess the roles, responsibilities, and values of teachers. Teachers of children with special needs have a wide range of educational duties and responsibilities.

Teachers are the driving force in deciding what takes place in the classroom, and there are some claims that developing more inclusive classrooms requires teachers to adapt or modify the curriculum to meet different teaching and learning needs. While many schools are beginning to introduce inclusive learning to accommodate children's diversity and support children's right to get an education regardless of their background, teachers are still facing challenges in implementing inclusive teaching and learning.

Implementing inclusive education makes it difficult for teachers to carry out their regular duties. Teachers face challenges because they focus on embracing diverse learning styles, especially with their perspectives on school readiness and special education for children with disabilities.

### Problem Statement

Inclusion means that teachers are responsible for creating learning environments in which all students can succeed and experience a sense of belonging. Teachers play a crucial role in this position because of their primary function of increasing engagement and reducing

achievement gaps, particularly with kids who are believed to have learning difficulties. Reevaluating teachers' roles, responsibilities, and ideals is suggested to address some of the obstacles to the development of successful inclusive schools (Tyagi, 2016). Special needs educators oversee a variety of educational tasks and responsibilities. As a result, different teachers have different viewpoints that fluctuate according on the situation. Some contend that in order to create more inclusive classrooms, educators must adapt or modify the curriculum in order to meet different teaching and learning requirements. Teachers play a crucial role in determining what happens in classes (Tyagi, 2016).

Teachers still encounter difficulties adopting inclusive teaching and learning, despite the fact that many schools are starting to do so in an effort to embrace children's diversity and promote their right to an education regardless of their background. Even while inclusive education appears to have attracted interest from all corners of the world, it is still regarded as a serious challenge in the global educational system. The role that educators play in implementing inclusive education will determine how effective the policy is. The implementation of the policy presents teachers with a number of challenges, which are harmful to the success of inclusive education. The adoption of inclusive education has made it challenging for teachers to fulfill their regular duties (Dorji, 2018).

The findings of this study will demonstrate how stakeholders, school administration, parents, and the community can understand the challenges faced by teachers who manage inclusive classrooms. They will also highlight the most efficient methods for enhancing teaching and learning in inclusive ECE classroom settings, as well as strategies to support the professional growth and performance of the participating teachers. Finding a group technique that can improve both the work performance of the participating teachers and the performance of the special needs kids will depend heavily on this discovery.

## Research Objective

This study aims to determine the effective strategies that can help in the teaching and learning process in an inclusive early childhood education classroom setting.

## Research Question

The research question of this study is

1. What are the most effective strategies to improve teaching and learning in an inclusive ECE classroom setting?

## Literature review

Social constructivism is a learning theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky in 1968. This is a learning theory that emphasizes how language and culture impact how we perceive the world (Akpan et. al., 2020). Vygotsky believes that language and culture are essential to human intellectual development and perception. According to social constructivism, peer, teacher, and student collaboration is how knowledge is developed. This approach emphasizes how learning should be collaborative, whether with the help of a facilitator or by interacting with other students.

According to Vygotsky's theory, learning contributes to cognitive growth and our development depends on social interactions. As a result, children can complete any type of learning task, no matter how difficult, with the help of peers or adult advice. This method encourages students to collaborate with teachers and peers to broaden their knowledge.

According to Kapur (2018), knowledge is socially constructed in diverse ways and settings, such as group discussions, teamwork, and interactions in educational institutions, online forums, religious spaces, and markets (Akpan et. al., 2020). Students get experiences from interacting with others and their environment that help them lead lives of success. Collaborative learning, or social constructivism, emphasizes student participation, the exchange of ideas, and sharing. Different groups and interactive tactics, such as whole-class presentations, small-group discussions, or paired projects, are offered by this teaching methodology. The basic idea is that students work together, exchanging concepts and looking into ways to solve issues, which eventually adds to the foundation of knowledge.

The "zone of proximal development" (ZPD), a key concept in Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, emphasises the role that teachers have in a student's education. The ZPD includes tasks that students can do on their own and those that need guidance from a teacher. Students can learn and master skills and information that are beyond their particular capabilities with the right instruction (Schreiber & Valle, 2013). After learning a skill, students are able to use it on their own. This idea emphasises the teacher's active involvement in students' knowledge acquisition compared to a passive position (Chen, 2012; Davis, Witcraft, & B, 2017; Schreiber & Valle, 2013).

Besides that, Vygotsky highlighted conversation or communication as an important component between teachers and students. Students can use this connection as a tool to help them acquire more complex abilities and concepts. The ZPD framework refers to the assistance given during learning as "scaffolding." When a child is scaffolded, people such as peers, parents, teachers, or guardians help them do tasks that are beyond their level of independence.

The research objective of this study is to determine the effective strategies to improve teaching and learning in an inclusive ECE classroom setting. Teachers must understand that not all kids have had prior experience with people with specific needs. Lack of compassion and harshness must not be accepted in any way in the classroom. No matter their intellectual standing, teachers must stress the need to treat all children with respect. In a study done by Shevchenko et al (2020) on the roles of teachers in inclusive education of primary school pupils, the author stated that the success of inclusion is ensured by teachers' self-efficacy. Due to the interaction of these elements, organising inclusiveness will be successful and have the following positive social effects: developing interpersonal relationships between students and instructors; providing primary school students with a place in society that is deserving of them; and fostering a favourable attitude toward the integration of students with special educational needs in society. Stronger efforts to enhance teaching techniques and behaviours can be made by teachers who feel more confident in their own abilities as educators. Therefore, teacher self-efficacy affects their classroom behaviour, instructional effectiveness, and beliefs (You, 2019).

Finding strategies to communicate with pupils and seeing each student as an individual are both aspects of personalization. In this situation, teachers' fundamental skills include the capacity to identify the assets of younger students with special education needs and their assistance, as well as the ability to create engaging lessons and manage students' weaknesses. Utilising several teaching techniques and having the flexibility to use them in accordance with the needs of the learner are both aspects of differentiation. The amount of alternative teaching techniques used while using engaging content is a sign of how effective differentiation is (Shevchenko et al., 2020).

In order to organise the teaching practice in inclusive education, while also considering the individual and age-specific development of children with disabilities, teachers must have a limited set of professional knowledge, skills, and abilities. They lack a thorough understanding of the details governing the administration of educational and correctional activity. They only displayed a partially formed conception of inclusive education for kids with impairments (Karynbaeva et al., 2020).

To distinguish between a student who needs more or different teaching and one who has an educational disability, teachers must have a fundamental understanding of the special education process. Additionally, as many students with disabilities attend general education classes, teachers must be familiar with the traits of each disability group in order to both understand the condition in general and implement inclusive teaching methods that will benefit their students. All pupils should be able to access the curriculum, thus teachers should be able to differentiate a lesson. Differentiation is a difficult skill to learn and calls for practice opportunities (Ibeagha & Ulochukwu, 2019).

The instructors' attitudes toward inclusion and its tenets serve as one of the key obstacles to the implementation of inclusive education. The degree of the students' difficulties, the type of the students' disabilities, the teachers' experience with students with special needs, their confidence in their ability to implement inclusive activities (the teachers' readiness for inclusive teaching), or their expectations for the students regardless of their differences, the educational standards, among other things, all have an impact on these perceptions (Kielblock, 2023).

In a study done in China by Jia et al (2022), they stated that the teachers' knowledge, opinions, and attitudes are among the most important variables that should be carefully considered while implementing inclusive education. The outcome of inclusive education "will be stress instead of accomplishment" unless teachers feel they are able to comprehend inclusive education and are ready and able to support pupils with disabilities. In the eyes of teachers, inclusive education causes disruptions for other kids. Since the Chinese educational system is mostly exam-focused and prioritises student achievement, including disabled individuals in the classroom may have a negative impact on other students' academic success.

Other educators see inclusive education as a dynamic process that requires schools and their teaching staff to evolve in order to better serve the different needs of their students. All of the teachers working on this dynamic process make an effort to give each kid a high-quality education. Finding a spot for children with disabilities in regular classes is one way that some teachers define inclusive education. However, teachers felt helpless to instruct them when it came to whether they could learn or not. Teachers cited two causes for this insight: first, their lack of competence in special education due to the scarcity of such preparation; second, the large number of kids in each class, which leaves teachers with little time and resources to devote to students with disabilities (Jia et al., 2022).

A factor that influenced the success of inclusive education is the curriculum. Children with moderate to severe learning difficulties shouldn't follow the national curriculum as their entire course of study throughout their entire schooling because it prevents them from focusing on curricula that are more suited to their needs, which causes many of them to struggle to keep up and, as a result, become disenchanted with learning. Many children's placement in an inappropriate curriculum either results in the emergence of emotional or behavioural difficulties or magnifies pre-existing issues, which makes them unruly and ultimately leads to some of them being expelled from school. Instead of trying to shoehorn children with special needs into an education system that was created for the traditional

school, it must be a focus for them to have accessibility to pedagogies that are suitable for them (Hornby, 2015).

Hornby (2015) also mentions that the goal of inclusive special education is to give students with special needs the information, abilities, and mindsets they need to be as successful and independent as possible once they graduate from high school. The priority is to provide financial support to ensure that all children with special needs, regardless of the nature or magnitude of their special needs, have educational services that are adequately funded to ensure their overall growth and development, whether these services are provided in regular classrooms or in special schools, special classes, or resource rooms. With adequate financial support, an inclusive classroom seems to be more possible as there will be appropriate equipment, support staff, and resources to ensure that the learning process will go smoothly.

A classroom that is inclusive of all students faces additional difficulties and restrictions. Since many years ago, there has been ongoing discussion on the difficulties and constraints teachers, particularly those working in inclusive environments, experience, but no clear answer has yet been discovered. To ensure that the teaching and learning process runs smoothly every day and that the children's learning needs are all satisfied, educators and support staff have been using the trial-and-error method to identify the best answer.

The "complete inclusivity" Strategy, with its idealised vision of providing each child with an education in a regular classroom for all or most of their schooldays, is now widely understood to be practically challenging to implement. The percentage of children who can successfully be educated in conventional schools is capped because it is believed that some Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) students can never be properly integrated into normal educational environments.

"Inclusive special education" refers to an integration of inclusive education and special education techniques and philosophies. It entails educating children with SEND in the most inclusive settings where their special educational needs can be met successfully and efficiently as well as using the most effective teaching strategies in order to enable the highest level of inclusion in society for all young people with SEND after school (Hornby, 2015).

Children who have moderate to severe learning difficulties shouldn't spend their entire school life following the national curriculum for common children because it prevents them from concentrating on curricula that are better suited to their needs, which leads to many of them struggling to keep up and, as a result, losing interest in learning. The placement of many children in an improper curriculum either causes an outbreak of emotional or behavioral challenges or contributes to existent problems, making the children rebellious and ultimately leading to some of them being expelled from school. It must be a priority for them to have access to pedagogies that are appropriate for them, rather than trying to fit special needs kids into a system of education that was designed for a normal early childhood education setting (Hornby, 2015).

Regardless of whether a school is inclusive or traditional, finance is always a major concern. The aim of inclusive special education, according to Hornby (2015), is to provide students with special needs with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets they need to graduate from high school as successfully and independently as possible. The top priority is to secure funding to guarantee that all children with SEND, regardless of the type or severity of their SEND, receive educational services that are adequately funded to ensure their overall growth and development, regardless of whether these services are delivered in regular classrooms, special schools, special classes, or resource rooms.

An inclusive classroom appears more likely with sufficient financial support because there will be the right tools, employees, and resources to make sure that the learning process runs smoothly. Teachers are typically reluctant to modify their pedagogical approaches to include the wide range of student differences in their classrooms, even though they are more likely to do so when such modifications can be incorporated into the daily routines of the classroom as opposed to when they are specialized to meet the needs of individual students. A successful implementation of inclusive classrooms appears to depend on modifications and flexibility. The teacher must frequently adapt their teaching strategies to meet the needs of the varied students' backgrounds.

Making a special effort to work one-on-one with a student who has a disability enables the teacher to ensure that the student comprehends the instructions and is able to accomplish the assignment. Teacher-student interaction is seen to be at the foundation of active learning in the classroom. Effective teachers refer to this as dialogic responsiveness, where they "apprentice students in the language, conversation, and actions of the skilled problem solver." Effective teachers can meet a range of student requirements in the classroom by tailoring their lessons to suit the responses of their students in a series of teacher-student conversations (McGhie-Richmond et al., 2007).

In a Utah Valley University publication titled Tips and Strategies to Create an Inclusive Classroom, the strategy that was recommended was creating a sense of belonging for students with special needs, wherein the teacher uses strategies that facilitate approachable, engaging instruction for all students and fosters a sense of community to encourage student achievement. Some of these strategies aim to promote community. They also stress the significance of the curriculum as one of the tactics to use. Ensure that everything is included in the teacher's curriculum. Students may not read it thoroughly, but they can still consult it for information when they need it. When preparing the course calendar and scheduling important projects, presentations, exams, and other course activities. Due to issues with their self-esteem, some students may decide to skip class and exams rather than ask for modifications. The teacher should add an inclusion and diversity statement in the course syllabus to help students understand the importance and relevance of diversity and inclusion. A diversity and inclusion statement shows the students that the teacher cares about and values everyone.

To effectively tailor the planned lesson to the students' requirements and abilities, it is also advised to modify the teaching tactics, such as by looking at the students' prior knowledge of the relevant field and its topics. Use interesting or interactive lectures as the delivery method. This format is used to convey lecture materials. Giving students regular, detailed feedback on their efforts enables them to change their study strategies or look for extra help. In general, this is a fantastic teaching technique. When giving clear, timely feedback, use language that conveys warmth and compassion (University, 2017).

Children with special needs frequently struggle to adapt to normal classroom learning. For obvious reasons, they have difficulty processing information at the same rate as other students and take longer to understand what is being said. They are more likely to understand the given task when it is simplified for them. Additionally, when the teacher tries to spend extra time personally explaining the lessons to the students with special needs, it improves the effectiveness of the instruction since the student will actually understand the material and complete the assignment.

The "psychological warmth" of the classroom, according to Polirstok's (2015) research, has an immediate effect on motivating students to follow the rules, offer answers, or take on

more challenging assignments. Students must comprehend that if they take a chance and respond to a challenging topic or activity, they will be "safe" from criticism. In a classroom where the "emotional temperature" is warm and friendly, students will be more likely to accept intellectual challenges and be more willing to move somewhat outside of their comfort zone.

The author additionally stated that applying the Selective Ignoring strategy, which gives teachers the ability to focus on positive behaviours and praise children for their cooperation, is extremely helpful in managing a classroom with a varied group of children. Teachers can reduce the overwhelming negative bombardment that is frequently seen in classrooms when teachers are continuously calling out students who are misbehaving and off-task by choosing to adopt this position. Selective Ignoring provides teachers with different approaches that can assist them in maintaining an emotionally safe and organized classroom while reducing criticism.

One of the strategies for an inclusive classroom is to establish a schedule and some structure. Regularity and organization also include academically beneficial activities. The teacher is required to notify the students in advance of any modifications to the daily plan or routine, so they are informed about the changes. Some students need reminders a few days in advance of expected appointments or schedule changes (Polirstok, 2015).

There have been a few studies on this subject over the years, but recent trends indicate that there is a growing global understanding of the positive impact of inclusive education. Additionally, little research has been done on instructors in the field of early childhood education; most have focused on teachers in upper primary and higher grades. Since education begins in early childhood settings, more research needs to be done on this subject. Educators and the educational system must confront the difficulties and come up with the best solutions for them.

## Methodology

This research aims to effective strategies that can help in the teaching and learning process in an inclusive early childhood education classroom setting. This chapter will discuss the research design, setting descriptions, data collection procedures, data analysis processes, and legality and trust data.

This research has chosen qualitative phenomenological research as the researcher wants to investigate the effective strategies that can help in the teaching and learning process in an inclusive early childhood education classroom setting. Qualitative research is a systematic way of defining an individual's perceptions and emotional sentiments. It may be considered that using a practical approach, qualitative research produces a rich representation while also providing a full and in-depth analysis of a topic. This approach presents qualitative data that has been obtained in the form of non-numerical data (Naderifar et al., 2017).

The implemented approach is phenomenological research. The goal of phenomenology is to discover the underlying meaning of all things, including the meaning of the world. Finding new perspectives and reasons for things is the main goal of education. The subject of phenomenology is an individual's perception. It only focuses on testimonies of a unique view (Kiymet, 2008). As a result, this phenomenological research uses qualitative research techniques to gather the necessary information in accordance with the research questions.

The snowball sampling method has been used in this research to gather the data. The targeted participants of this study are teachers who teach in an inclusive ECE class. The

snowball sampling method is the most effective method when it is difficult to find a sample of the desired quality. This study presents snowball sampling as a deliberate technique for gathering data in qualitative studies.

### *Participants*

A total of 14 teachers have been chosen to participate in this study. The chosen participants are focused on the teachers who are currently practising or teaching in an inclusive Early Childhood Education classroom setting.

Based on the information from Table 1.0, shows the number of students with special needs in an early childhood education classroom setting and the age group taught by the participants.

Table 1.0
*Number of students with special needs in an early childhood education classroom setting.*

| Participant | Age group (Class) | Number of students in class |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5-6 years old | 10-18 students with 1 for monitoring |
| 2 | 5 years old | 8 students including 1 Special Need |
| 3 | 4-6 years old | Not teaching (Principle) |
| 4 | 3-7 years old | Operator of Montessori school |
| 5 | 3-5 years old | 17 students |
| 6 | 3-6 years old | 10 students with 10% students with Special Needs |
| 7 | 3-5 years old | 8 students including 1 Special Need |
| 8 | 3-4 years old | 16 students including 4 Special |
| 9 | 3-5 years old | 8 students |
| 10 | 8-12 years old | 10 students with Special Needs |
| 11 | 6-7 years old | 30 students including 2 with Special Needs |
| 12 | 6-10 years old | 14 students including 1 with Special Needs |
| 13 | 5-9 years old | 17 students including 1 with Special Needs |
| 14 | 3-5 years old | 9 students including 1 with Special Needs |

### *Data Collection Procedure*

A set of questionnaires with open-ended questions related to the research question has been created. Questionnaires were set in a Google form format and distributed to the targeted participants via social media such as WhatsApp, Telegram, LINE, and e-mail. The first group of participants for the current research are acquaintances of the researcher and they are asked to further distribute the questionnaires to their contacts. The data collection will end when the respondents show the same emerging themes are recorded (data saturation).

Participants must follow open-ended questions, formulate answers in their own words, and communicate this verbally or in writing. Open-ended questions are about text, words, and numbers. They are used for data recording in situations such as assessing knowledge, uncertain range of expected answers, avoiding direct questions, and avoiding unreasonably long answer lists (Züll, 2016).

### Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis is to identify, examine, and interpret the patterns and themes found in the data. Based on the data found, the researchers determined its pattern and themes and how this helps to answer the research question.

To analyse the data collected from the participants in this study, the researcher has utilized the framework analysis method in order to find similar themes from the respondents. The data collected from the questionnaires will be analyse and grouped according to similar keywords and meanings are transcribed. Then, the results collected will be presented in a table form.

The primary participants in this study were verbally asked for their consent via Google form, and social media (WhatsApp, LINE, and emails), and it was extended to the other study participants. Consideration such as the request for hostility will be taken was also orally requested of the primary participants. All participants were informed that they could opt out of the study at any moment. Participants of the study were informed that they could opt out of the research at any time.

### Finding

### Effective Strategies in the Teaching Approach in an Inclusive Classroom

The goal of this research is to identify teaching and learning techniques that can make inclusive classrooms run more effectively. Teachers who work in inclusive settings are more likely to be adaptable and have the expertise to deal with unexpected events. The strategies that the participants mentioned are presented in the table below.

Table 2.0
*Shows the responses provided by the participants.*

| Participants | Effective strategies in the teaching approach in an inclusive classroom |
|---|---|
| 1 | *I usually use effective questioning techniques.* |
| 2 | *Buddy System* |
| 3 | *Working together with other teachers to support the class.* |
| 4 | *Setting rules, routines, and formative assessments for progress and observation.* |
| 5 | *First and foremost, is to get to know each child. I also try to find opportunities to create a collaborative environment where children can learn from each other. I always ensure that the learning environment has materials that are diverse and would cater to many interests. I explicitly teach attributes and attitudes (i.e.. Kindness, growth mindset, perseverance, etc) and emphasize their importance in and out of the classroom.* |
| 6 | *1) Conceptual understanding*<br>*2) Use of manipulatives and visuals*<br>*3) Modelling*<br>*4) Repetition or drills* |
| 7 | *Using visual and signs* |
| 8 | *Constant questioning to check their understanding, switching activities (20 minutes maximum for each activities for example discussion slides, using mini whiteboards, worksheets, activity books etc) to keep them focused.* |
| 9 | *Using real life situation as a practical approach.* |
| 10 | *I believe that every student is unique in their own ways. They will strive when the time is right. Never push and stressed them out. Not only that, having their parents to be involve helps a lot.* |
| 11 | *Routines and rewards* |
| 12 | *Allowing students to express their learning or understanding using their strong areas such as writing, drawing, role-playing and more.* |
| 13 | *Clear boundaries, kindness, endurance, and patience. Everything else depends on the topic and the student behaviour which can change overtime.* |
| 14 | *Most effective strategies for me is differentiation but also works in group.* |

Many educators have subsequently published techniques that make inclusive classrooms easy and enjoyable. As we all know, how children respond to the strategies greatly influences their effectiveness. The guidelines for dealing with children who have special needs or come from different backgrounds are never clear. A certain approach might be effective now, but tomorrow may be a different matter. To prevent disturbances during classes, teachers in inclusive classrooms need to be aware of changes that occur with their students.

***Engagement and Collaboration***

Participants 1, 2, 3, and 5 expressed that the strategies to improve teaching and learning in an inclusive early childhood education classroom setting required engagement and collaboration. Participant 1 implements effective questioning techniques to engage the children in the lesson in an inclusive early childhood education classroom setting.  Effective

questioning strategies include asking open-ended questions to the children. By asking open-ended questions to children, it can encourage them to think critically, express their own perspectives, and engage in deeper discussions. According to Arnerich (2020), open-ended questions provide an opportunity for children to explore, experiment, make hypotheses, and achieve success on their own.

Meanwhile, participants 2, 3, and 5 are more focused on engagement through collaboration. Participant 2 is using a buddy system for the children, which is similar to Participant 5, which creates a collaborative environment for children to learn from each other. Both of them are to foster collaboration among the children. However, Participant 3 has expressed that the target of collaboration is teachers instead of children. Participant 3 is to collaborate with the other teachers in order to support the class's implementation.

Implementation of the buddy system is intended to increase social interaction and proper play among children in the classroom. The peer buddy can assist children who are facing difficulty in transitions, memorizing rules and routines, or who need attention (Lentini & Vaughn, 2005). According to Harshita (2023), in inclusive education, the term "buddy system" refers to the supportive practice of pairing students with special needs or disabilities with children who are usually developing, or "buddies," in a classroom environment. For students with impairments, the buddy system aims to foster social inclusion, peer support, and academic success. In general, the buddy system is intended to facilitate children's social interaction. By having a buddy system, children can collaborate and assist their peers during the teaching and learning process.

Besides that, providing a collaborative environment for children allows them to learn from each other. This happens because a collaborative environment allows children to have peer-to-peer interaction, which is like the buddy system in that they can interact with each other gain new insight, and expand their understanding through peer interaction. Children who collaborate frequently show better levels of motivation and engagement. They experience a sense of ownership and responsibility when they collaborate on important tasks. They actively participate in the learning process, adopting various roles, offering their unique abilities, and feeling a sense of success. Their active involvement increases their desire to study and succeed.

Moreover, by collaborating with the other teachers, teachers are able to share their different experiences and perspectives in planning teaching and learning for the children in an inclusive setting. Working together with other teachers enables the exchange of knowledge regarding various topic areas, methods of teaching, and methods of instruction. This shared knowledge may assist in more skillfully addressing the various demands and learning styles of children.

### Teaching Approaches

Participants 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 expressed that the teaching approaches are strategies to improve teaching and learning in an inclusive early childhood education classroom setting. Participant 4 is setting the rules, routines, and formative assessments for progress and observation. By assessing children regularly, teachers can identify children's understanding and progress. Therefore, teachers can provide timely feedback, and children are able to follow their instructions accordingly.

Participant 6 uses conceptual understanding, manipulatives, visuals, modeling, repetition, and drills as teaching approaches. Meanwhile, participant 7 is using visual aids and signs as the teaching approaches. The similarities between both participants are their use of

visual aids in the lesson.  By introducing real objects and visual aids in the lesson, teachers are able to enhance the children's understanding of the theme and engage them in the lesson. According to Sharafovna and Islomovna (2021), visual aids are the tools used to make the lesson clearer and easier to understand. The visual aids include pictures, models, videos, slides, real objects, and many more. Using the visual aids in the lesson, it allows the children to engage with the learning materials better and develop higher-order thinking skills. Meanwhile, Ordu (2021) indicates that the use of pictures, video clips, objects, and internet facilities helps students have a real-life imagination of the context of what is being taught. Participant 9 uses real-life situations as a practical approach. Using real-life situations in teaching, it allows children to imagine the context delivered by teachers. Children can link the situation to their real-life experiences. Besides that, when teachers integrate real-life examples, it makes the lesson more relevant and applicable to children's experiences.

By using the repetition approach, it is possible to help children learn. Repetition is crucial, as this assists children in memorizing the knowledge being taught by the teachers. It is good to repeat multiple times when the teacher is conducting storytelling sessions, teaching nursery rhymes, or enrichment activities, as this is to ensure the children fully understand the knowledge delivered. Research shows that if children repeat something 10 times instead of once, this will help them remember it better ("Repetition in Toddler and Preschool Learning", 2022).

Participant 8 has emphasized the use of constant questioning, switching activities, and various instructional materials. By utilizing the method of constant questioning, it is possible to encourage the children to participate actively by asking questions and promoting discussion. When children is engaged in a discussion, they are able to develop their critical thinking as they generate ideas. Critical thinking skills are essential for children, as this is one of the 21st-century skills that need to be nurtured. Besides, children's attention spans are not long, therefore, it is needed to incorporate multiple activities in order to keep children engaged in the class and grab their attention to maintain focus. According to Lin (2022), the reasonable attention span for children is 2-3 minutes per year of the child's age. For example, the attention span for a six-year-old child is 12-18 minutes. It showed that the attention span is not long for young children, therefore, it is essential to switch the activities to grab the child's attention. Focused attention is an important skill that actually acts as a gatekeeper to acquiring other skills, thus, it is a great skill to improve for young children (Lin, 2022; Wass et al., 2012).

### *Individualized and Motivating*
According to Moses (2021), individuality involves recognizing and being responsive to the unique strengths, interests, experiences, and needs of each child and family. There are three participants who recognize individuality, which consist of participants 5, 10, and 12. Participant 5 utilizes the methods of getting to know each child and catering to their interests, which is similar to Participant 10, who recognizes the uniqueness of every student, and Participant 12, who allows children to express their learning using their strengths. All three participants are emphasizing the significance of acknowledging and appreciating individuals. Teachers are adjusting their teaching approach to motivate children by identifying their needs, interests, and strengths. Teachers can plan for and implement inclusive practices and environments when they understand that each individual is different (Moses, 2021).

Besides that, Participant 10 involves the parents in the learning process of young children to improve the teaching and learning process. Involving the parents can foster a

supportive environment where the parents are able to contribute by understanding the child's strengths and motivation. This is able to create a cohesive learning experience that aligns with a child's interests when the parents contribute to their understanding of the child's interests.

Moreover, participant 14 also recognized the differentiation of each child and group work. By recognizing the differentiation, it is able to promote child-centered learning by allowing children to take an active role in their teaching and learning process. Child-centered learning allows children to conduct the activity based on their own interests. Therefore, by accommodating the learning preferences of young children based on their strengths, teachers are able to motivate children in their learning process. Conducting group work activities also allows children to conduct their learning based on their strengths. In conclusion, these findings emphasize the importance of recognizing individuality, involving parents, and practicing child-centered strategies. These strategies help promote learning experiences that allow children to succeed academically and personally.

### *Classroom Management*

Classroom management is a systematic application process of a theory regarding planning, guiding, applying, and evaluating actions to realize specific goals (Koçyiğit et al., 2020; Erdoğan, 2001). Classroom management is critical as teachers establish a set of standards that the children need to follow, including routines, and rules that create a positive learning environment for young children. When asked how the participants manage their everyday classes, a few of the participants responded with a well-planned routine as their respond. Some of the participants responded that they would put an effort into planning ahead of the lesson to ensure that the teaching and learning to go smoothly. Another participant responded by setting clear boundaries and rules to manage their class. For students with special needs, establishing routines and rules is important. This is so that they understand what is to be expected and what behaviour or response is appropriate. The repetition of routines helps the students with special needs to navigate their daily tasks.

The table below shows the responses from the participants on how they handle their classroom every day.

Table 3.0
*Classroom Management Strategies*

| Participants | Everyday classroom management strategies |
|---|---|
| 1 | *I will follow my lesson plan and conduct my teaching as planned.* |
| 2 | *We will teach per normal but spend an extra 5-10 minutes to assist those children in need* |
| 3 | *Need to plan a few activities that will allow me to achieve the learning objectives* |
| 4 | *Well-planned and well-prepared to ensure that the lesson will go smoothly* |
| 5 | *Advanced preparation for my lessons. I also make sure to teach the children routines from the beginning and implement them consistently. I also recorded my observations on the students with special needs and will give regular feedback to the parents as soon as I can.* |
| 6 | *Routines are very important to all student with or without needs. They need to know what to expect. In case of any changes occur in the routines or circumstances, they need to understand the reason for such. Careful planning of the sitting arrangements is also important. Students should be in a place that will be conducive for learning. The seats should be away from distractions, is comfortable and gives enough space for learning. Rules or essential agreements should be implemented, sustained and clear to the students. Positive reinforcements should be practise and it should focus on giving credits on the positive behaviour.* |
| 7 | *Plan ahead!* |
| 8 | *Routines!* |
| 9 | *The assistant teacher and I take turns leading the lessons on alternative days and whoever is not leading will take on the role as shadow teacher for the student with special needs. Timetable are set in a standard manner across the whole school so lessons are conducted accordingly.* |
| 10 | *By establishing solid classroom rules and routines.* |
| 11 | *Having a good teamwork among colleagues and brief colleagues on the lesson plans for the day to ensure everyone will be on the same page.* |
| 12 | *We follow a routine on managing behaviour. We also try to differentiate activities as much as we can.* |
| 13 | *I set clear boundaries and rules for my class. I plan according to my students needs but I also try to be spontaneous. But on some days, I just survive on my own.* |
| 14 | *I usually have a short session as a full group and then split them into smaller and more specific grade levels.* |

This research also focuses on finding out what strategies can help the teaching and learning process in an inclusive classroom go smoothly. When teaching in an inclusive classroom, teachers are bound to be more flexible and have the skills to adapt quickly and efficiently to sudden situations. The table below shows the strategies and suggestions that the participants recorded.

Table 4.0
*Effective Strategies of Teaching Approach in an Inclusive Classroom*

| Participants | Effective strategies in the teaching approach in an inclusive classroom |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | *I usually use the effective questioning techniques.* |
| 2 | *Buddy System* |
| 3 | *Working together with other teachers to support the class.* |
| 4 | *Setting rules, routines and formative assessments for progress and observation.* |
| 5 | *First and foremost, is to get to know each child. I also try to find opportunities to create a collaborative environment where children can learn from each other. I always ensure that the learning environment has materials that are diverse and would cater to many interests. I explicitly teach attributes and attitudes (i.e.. Kindness, growth mindset, perseverance, etc) and emphasize their importance in and out of the classroom.* |
| 6 | *5) Conceptual understanding* <br> *6) Use of manipulatives and visuals* <br> *7) Modelling* <br> *8) Repetition or drills* |
| 7 | *Using visual and signs* |
| 8 | *Constant questioning to check their understanding, switching activities (20 minutes maximum for each activities for example discussion slides, using mini whiteboards, worksheets, activity books etc) to keep them focused.* |
| 9 | *Using real life situation as a practical approach.* |
| 10 | *I believe that every student is unique in their own ways. They will strive when the time is right. Never push and stressed them out. Not only that, having their parents to be involve helps a lot.* |
| 11 | *Routines and rewards* |
| 12 | *Allowing students to express their learning or understanding using their strong areas such as writing, drawing, role-playing and more.* |
| 13 | *Clear boundaries, kindness, endurance, and patience. Everything else depends on the topic and the student behaviour which can change overtime.* |
| 14 | *Most effective strategies for me is differentiation but also works in group.* |

Over time, many educators published strategies that help in making an inclusive classroom smooth and pleasant. As we know, the effectiveness of the strategies heavily depends on how the students react to them. When it comes to teaching students with special needs or diverse backgrounds, the rules are always unclear on how to handle them. One strategy might work today but tomorrow is another story to tell. Teachers in an inclusive classroom need to be alert to the changes that occur with their students to avoid disruptions during lessons.

Both participants 11 and 13 have implemented strategies related to classroom management. However, participants have developed strategies related to routines and rewards. Implementing consistent routines helps keep the classroom structured and organized in a strategic way. A well-structured routine that included transitions and starting and ending classes enabled children to know what to expect and bring to an organized and

systematic classroom. Moreover, implementing reward systems, it could be an effective tool to motivate positive behavior among the children. A reward can be just verbal praise or small incentives. Recognizing and rewarding the children for their efforts or positive behavior can encourage a positive classroom environment.

Meanwhile, participant 13 implemented clear boundaries and promoted kindness, endurance, and patience at the same time. Implementing clear boundaries is important for managing the classroom. When the teachers set up the rules, children will be able to understand what to do and what not to do in an early childhood setting. This is like what Participant 11 implements by having routines, which allow children to know what to expect. Moreover, practicing kindness, endurance, and patience in the classroom nurtures a positive environment where children will feel respected and valued.

As for the question of whether the school is providing any support to the teachers in an inclusive classroom, half of the responders stated that they did not get enough support from the school and in a way, they are expected to manage on their own. Table 5.0 further elaborates the responses on this topic from the participants.

Table 6.0
*Support from The School*

| Participants | Support from the school in the inclusive classroom |
|---|---|
| 1 | *The school will conduct a mini-workshop twice a year but it is not enough* |
| 2 | *Yes, the school does support me in inclusive settings. Communication with the families of the students with special needs is important. The school also provides a lot of materials and resources that relates to inclusive learning for us to use.* |
| 3 | *Not at the moment* |
| 4 | *We try different ways to teach the student with special needs. Me and the other teachers takes turn to handle the student with special needs.* |
| 5 | *Training during professional development and Special Education Needs teachers to help when needed* |
| 6 | *Yes, workshops and training are provided when requested.* |
| 7 | *They do give support in terms of equipment and manpower by providing them upon request.* |
| 8 | *Yes. Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) training is part of our staff development and there is also a SEND department with a resident SEND Coordinator and teacher to assist with all special needs students in our school. We also conduct weekly individual lessons with them.* |
| 9 | *Yes, we have special education support.* |
| 10 | *Getting help from the Occupational Therapist and Physical Therapist really helps in understanding the students better.* |
| 11 | *No.* |
| 12 | *We get support from our SEND coordinator, but I think we need a formal training to be effective.* |
| 13 | *Not really. Usually, teachers just have to manage an inclusive classroom. When there is a need for more equipment or teaching assistant, usually the school ignores us. If we are lucky, there might be a trained SEND teaching assistant for one lesson or sometimes not qualified teaching assistant for other lessons when available.* |
| 14 | *We used to have a Teaching Assistant but right now there is no extra support.* |

One of the most common limitations in implementing inclusive education is getting support from the school, communities, and even the parents themselves. Sometimes, the school is faced with limited funding and resources to support the inclusive class, so they tend to just let the teacher manage the class on their own. An inclusive classroom requires a lot of resources, and most schools do not have the luxury to spend on getting the adequate materials and resources needed. Also, even though the school is lacking the necessary resources to support an inclusive classroom, they cannot turn down a student with special needs as it is against the education policy. Sometimes, this situation causes more damage than benefits to both the teacher and the student.

When there is a lack of knowledge and skills to handle students with special needs, the teaching will not be effective. This results in poor developmental growth for the student with special needs instead. In order to have an effective inclusive classroom, the school plays an important role in ensuring that the teachers and the students get all the support necessary.

The other objective of this study is also to find out what suggestions from teachers who are practicing in an inclusive classroom in an ECE setting may have. The participants of this study were asked what suggestions can be taken into consideration when it comes to inclusive classrooms.

The majority of the participants wrote that teacher training is crucial in order to handle an inclusive classroom. A lot of time, the teachers are tasked to take over an inclusive classroom without prior knowledge or adequate training causing them to feel lost. New teachers especially will have a hard time handling students with different learning abilities as they have zero skils or experience in this field. This causes stress and sometimes demoralized the teachers' motivation to teach. Working in tandem with other professionals is also one of the suggestions in order to help the teachers in an inclusive classroom. The presence and guidance from the experts are able to give a clearer insight on how to manage children with special needs and also help the teachers to plan a more effective lesson that will benefit the students.

Table 7.0 below shows the responses from the participants regarding suggestions to improve an inclusive classroom in an ECE setting.

Table 7.0
*Suggestions to Improve an Inclusive classroom in an ECE setting.*

| Participant | Suggestions |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | *Collaboration amongst teachers and parents, support from the school through resources, training, manpower and time.* |
| 2 | *Additional manpower especially educators who are trained in this field is the most crucial for effective inclusive classroom.* |
| 3 | *Yearly teachers' training should be provided to make the teachers updated in the teaching methods and improve themselves consistently* |
| 4 | *Ideally to have well trained teachers to handle those students with special needs.* |
| 5 | *Children with special needs should be given therapy or intervention in between school hours.* |
| 6 | *Collaboration between the different stakeholders and members of the school community. Communication and providing support to teachers in the classroom.* |
| 7 | *Work closely with the parents. Parents should be proactive and be involved to make sure both school and parents are in the same page.* |
| 8 | *Ensure that all teachers have basic SEN training to have the skills that needed to work independently with these special needs student particularly the higher functioning ones.* |
| 9 | *Additional support system especially manpower.* |
| 10 | *Working together with the parents and respecting the students.* |
| 11 | *Proper full set up and open-mindedness in embracing new changes.* |
| 12 | *Proper training with resources and collaboration with more professionals.* |
| 13 | *Having a trained SEN teacher in the class to ensure the students get proper help.* |
| 14 | *School need to articulate clear outlines for inclusive settings and gives proper training.* |

## Discussion

According to Moses (2021), inclusion refers to where every child, with and without disabilities, is able to engage as fully as possible in their learning community and have a sense of belonging. Inclusive education is no stranger to the education system especially nowadays where the awareness for equal rights to education regardless of the child's background is becoming a substantial issue. Parents of children with special needs have been fighting for equal rights for their children to be included in mainstream school instead of attending the specialized school provided. The need to be included in the typical community has been and always been a hot topic. Inclusive education in the Early Childhood Education area is even scarier as there are not many early childhood education centres and schools are willing to open their doors.

Inclusive education is no stranger to the education system especially nowadays where the awareness for equal rights to education regardless of the child's background is becoming a substantial issue. Parents of children with special needs have been fighting for equal rights for their children to be included in mainstream school instead of attending the specialized school provided. The need to be included in the typical community has been and always been a hot topic. An inclusive classroom does not mean that it can shy away from the challenges of the 21$^{st}$ century. The fast-paced world of television, high-action movies, computer games, and the excitement of the outside world provide teachers with obstacles in the classroom. As a result, the teachers must accept the challenge and build an engaging environment where all students can actively participate. Learning will be more effective and pleasurable if students are allowed to choose how and what they study, and if they are given a variety of experiences that appeal to their innate curiosity (Behera, 2021).

Inclusive education in the Early Childhood Education area is even scarier as there are not many early childhood education centres and schools are willing to open their doors. This is mainly because of the challenges they faced in trying to adopt inclusive education especially challenges faced by the teachers. From the feedback in the questionnaire, the teachers faced a lot of barriers in adopting inclusive teaching and learning. Although all the participants show positive outtakes on inclusive education, not many are willing to take on the responsibility. The right of all children to a proper education, irrespective of their differences is a crucial idea for the inclusion of children with disabilities, according to the ideology of educational principles of justice and equity. A significant number of educators think that an evaluation of the syllabus and the instructional techniques used in classrooms with students who have special educational needs should be the foundation for the effective implementation of inclusive practices (Unianu, Teachers' attitude towards inclusive education, 2011).

Teacher training programmes play a significant role in encouraging inclusive attitudes. The main obstacles to inclusive education include those related to teacher preparation, attitudes toward students with disabilities, and the policies and practice surrounding the use of inclusive education resources (Chhetri et al, 2020). Both pre-service and in-service training are required in the field of education to develop human resources. Pre-service training is the term used to describe the preparation of people to become teachers. This includes instruction at national and regionally accredited teacher education institutions. In an ideal world, all teacher candidates would be required to take inclusive education as part of their coursework. Teacher aspirants should receive extensive training in the fundamental knowledge and abilities of inclusive education, such as comprehending the needs and capacities of children with special needs and pedagogical abilities like instructional accommodations and activity differentiation (Nguyet & Ha, 2010).

Many academic institutions have long placed a high priority on effective learning. It is regarded as one of the most significant classroom educational processes. Teachers that have been eager to learn how to achieve successful learning work hard to find the best pedagogical approaches that will allow them to enhance the classroom experience and accommodate all types of pupils. Learners can benefit from what they learn both in and out of the classroom when effective learning is accomplished in the classroom. It may be vital for teachers to become knowledgeable about students' learning strategies and ideas to implement effective teaching and learning (Yassin & Almasri, 2015).

The structure, planning, and delivery of teaching techniques in the classroom are essential for student understanding. They perform the part of tying teaching tactics to the study styles of the learners. The learning styles of students must be taken into consideration while designing teaching methods. Lesson plans can also be developed by teachers to inspire students and inform them of the precise learning goals for the class and how to reach them. Teachers are continuously conscious of the fact that the major objective is for the pupils to develop independence and decision-making skills. Giving pupils the option to work at their own pace helps achieve this. It is the responsibility of the professors to give the students direction during this process, so they stay on the correct path. The fact that varied learning styles let students adapt to the adoption of information as necessary by the present field of education rather than limiting them to a single method of learning is another crucial truth. The experience has shown that if several approaches are employed for various areas, kids respond quite effectively (Academy, 2021).

Learning in the classroom should accommodate the different learners' intellectual, social, and personal demands. The different perspectives on content, methodology, and evaluation procedures should be embraced by pedagogical approaches. By modifying the curriculum, the teaching methods, and the evaluation, the teachers must be ready to deal with inclusion in the classroom setting. To cater to the range of individual competencies, interests, requirements, and talents, the teacher should use cooperative learning groups and independent study. Differentiation learning takes a lot of effort for it to be implemented successfully.

An excellent teacher should be able to manage the classroom well, emphasize academic skills, set high standards, be enthusiastic, use effective techniques to keep pupils on task, and use a range of teaching and resource types while presenting the subject matter. Additionally, an effective teacher uses straightforward teaching methods, is direct in their instruction, clearly explains and outlines the material being covered, frequently observes what students are doing while taking into account the differences among them, re-teaches, when necessary, frequently provides feedback to all students, and checks for understanding by asking probing questions (Sakarneh, 2004).

The learning environment also plays a very crucial role, especially in Special Needs. The learning environment or the classroom must be suitable to address the learner's suitability. For example, for a student diagnosed with ADHD, the classroom setting s should be in a less distracting setup. The classroom should not be too noisy, too crowded, or too decorated as it may distract the students from the lessons or even trigger a tantrum. The classroom location should also be considered for students with a physical disability so that it will be accessible. Also, the setup in the class should take into consideration that should the need arises, there will be a space for the student with special needs to "shelter" and calm down when they become overwhelmed. For the teacher to have an appropriate setting, the teacher needs to collaborate with other professionals to ensure that everything is in place.

Classroom management is one of the strategies that might be able to help when it comes to inclusive classrooms. Schools or academic institutions that provide services to children with special needs have class management that is designed so that the class is congenial and makes the learning process successful and efficient. Many things must be prepared in order to implement inclusive classrooms. Inclusive classroom management is a method or an ongoing effort by an educator to methodically arrange and prepare classroom management to create interactive and desirable classroom environments to create an atmosphere of productive and pleasurable learning that can motivate students to learn well in accordance with their abilities. A teacher must be able to comprehend and be able to select the appropriate management strategy for the class in order to provide a conducive environment for learning so that learning objectives can be successfully met (Dwansi et al., 2020)

Creating a solid routine would also help teachers in an inclusive classroom in an ECE setting for a smooth teaching and learning process. Creating a routine or schedule for the students helps them to navigate easily throughout the day as they will understand what should happen next and what is expected of them. The teacher should also take into consideration that should there be any changes that will occur, they need to clearly explain the details of the changes so that the student with special needs does not get overwhelmed by the sudden situation (Monash, 2021). Clearly state your goals and objectives for learning. The ideal expectations are a few, brief, and straightforward ones that instruct pupils on what to do (instead of what to ignore) and are constantly evaluated. The concept of creating a solid routine in the inclusive classroom is well aligned with the social constructivism theory through scaffolding and zone of proximal development (ZPD). When the teachers effectively operate as a scaffold to support students, especially those with special needs, in managing daily activities by establishing an organised routine, this routine provides a solid framework that fits into the student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), allowing them to work on assignments with guided support. When the routine is clearly explained, it not only encourages students to work together and achieve common goals but also makes sure that learning progresses in line with each student's own educational progress, which is consistent with Vygotsky's theory.

Collaboration among teachers and other support staff such as therapists, shadow teacher, parents, and the school also help in managing the challenges in an inclusive classroom. As we know, children with special needs require specialized intervention for them to progress developmentally. When the teachers and these professional support teams cooperate, both parties will be able to understand the child more and therefore, an effective individualized lesson plan to cater to the academic needs of the student can be achieved (Jurkowski et al., 2023). Compared to general education teachers, special educators felt more prepared to collaborate with their peers. Teacher preparation courses should seek to ensure that general education teachers have the chance to learn and practice skills for engaging in IEP teams given the differences between general and special educators in their training for collaborative skills. The chance to study and put into practice strategies and mechanisms for delegating responsibility for instruction and IEP goal implementation must be provided to pre-service general education teachers (Zagona et al., 2017).

As mentioned by Naong & Mateusi (2014), the difficulties of inclusive classrooms must be overcome collectively and systemically, with all stakeholders playing their proper parts. It is suggested that first, a revamp of teacher learning strategies and the curriculum should be incorporated to also emphasize on teaching approaches and techniques for cognitively

impaired learners. Secondly, the emphasis should be placed on ongoing in-service professional development, and third, continuing in-service teacher training should be a priority. Like other educational institutions, early childhood settings are a part of the community. Inclusive environments keep a close relationship with the neighborhood and make use of the knowledge that is available there to advance children's education. This notion results in an emphasis on modifying the kid (who is being "included") to "fit" inside a setting, rather than on changing the setting to include the child, with relation to early years settings.

**Conclusion**

This study has shown that support from schools for inclusive classrooms is important because it guarantees equal educational opportunities for all students in addition to promoting diversity and social inclusion which allows for personal learning and subsequently can improve academic results. In addition, developing important life skills, fulfilling legal and ethical responsibilities, engaging the community, preparing students for a diverse society, and promoting educational equity regardless of their skills or background, can help all students achieve success.

Furthermore, it is important to differentiate instruction, use Individualised Education Plans (IEPs), and collaborate with colleagues when teaching in an inclusive classroom. It places a strong emphasis on adaptability, universal design, and creating a respectful learning environment. Communication with parents on a frequent basis, peer support, and collaboration with support personnel are essential. Effective inclusive teaching requires a combination of professional development and culturally relevant instruction.

In addition, this research finds that an essential part of inclusive education's success is effective classroom management. Regardless of each child's unique needs and capacities, they cultivate a climate in which they can all learn, develop, and thrive. The success of inclusive classrooms is largely attributed to effective management, which not only benefits kids but also improves the well-being of instructors.

The findings from this study present effective strategies that participants used to improve teaching and learning in an inclusive early childhood education classroom setting. The strategies that the teachers utilized to improve the teaching and learning in an inclusive early childhood education classroom setting can be categorized into different themes, which includes engagement and collaboration; teaching approaches; individualized and motivating; and classroom management. In order to assist the teaching and learning process in the inclusive classroom, teachers should consist of the ability in manage the classroom, emphasizing academic skills, set high standards, be enthusiastic and utilize effective techniques and variety of teaching resources in their teaching and learning process.

Teachers who feel confident about what inclusion and diversity involve are more likely to foster confidence in their students, creating a welcoming environment that celebrates all kinds of diversity. Inclusion requires that the typical classroom teacher take on responsibility for the entire class; student engagement alone does not constitute inclusion. Teachers can take on responsibility for every child when they receive the proper education. A variety of children can be produced and created in an inclusive classroom by teachers who are knowledgeable about inclusion (Webster, 2014).

Some teachers improperly believe that inclusive classrooms ought to operate much like regular classrooms, with all children receiving the same level of attention and instruction. Without considering the students' degree of interest, participation, or comprehension, teachers may continue to convey information. Although inclusive education is not a new area

in the education system, we are still lacking the appropriate strategies and approaches for it to go smoothly. The notion highlighted the fact that there are plenty of schools where the medical-pathological model still plays a central role in the instructional activity, as many educators hold the opinion that students who are perceived as abnormal are not their obligation.

The program should be revised concurrently with teachers receiving the required training regarding inclusion and its tenets. Any modification or reorganization will be challenging, but it is vital to create an educational system that can adequately address all of the needs, traits, and unique variations of every student enrolled in school (Unianu, Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusive Education, 2012). A future study could be done to focus on the understanding of the teacher in inclusive education.

**References**
Ackah-Jnr, F., & Udah, H. (2021) Implementing Inclusive Education In Early Childhood Settings: The Interplay and Impact of Exclusion, Teacher Qualities, and

Professional Development in Ghana Journal of Educational Research and Practice, 11, 10.5590/JERAP.2021.11.1.08.

Akpan, V. I., Igwe, U. A., Mpamah, I. B., & Okoro, C. O. (2020). Social Constructivism : Implications on Teaching and Learning. British Journal of Education, 8(8), 49-56. Retrieved from https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Social-Constructivism.pdf

Arnerich, M. (2020). How to use open-ended questions in the Early years. Retrieved from Famly: https://www.famly.co/blog/open-ended-questions-early-years

Child Act 2001. (Act 611) (Malaysia), c. 20, Available at
*http://www.jkm.gov.my/mel/aktakk.html*

Davis, M. L., Witcraft, S. M. B. S. O. (2017). Chapter 3 - Learning Principles in CBT. The Science of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, 51-76. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-803457-6.00003-9.

Harshita, J. (2023). Buddy Sytem in Inclusive Education. Retrieved from Prep with Harshita : https://prepwithharshita.com/buddy-system-in-inclusive-education/

Kapur, R. (2018). Early Childhood Education.; Retrieved from Research Gate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323961021_Early_Childhood_Education

Kocyigit, M., Egmir, E., & Erdem, C. (2020). Classroom Management at Preschool Level: An Overview from Pre-Service Teachers' Perspectives. e-ISSN: 2547-9652. Anatolian Journal of Education, Volume 5, pp. 95-108. Retrived from Research Gate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344437934_Classroom_Management_at_Preschool_Level_An_Overview_from_Pre-Service_Teachers'_Perspectives .

Lentini, R., Vaughn, B. J., Fox, L. (2005). Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behavior University of South Florida

Lin, Z. (2022). How Long is a Child's Attention Span? (You May Be Surprised!). Retrieved from Curious Neuron: https://www.curiousneuron.com/blog/2022/10/16/how-long-is-a-childs-attention-span-you-may-be-surprised

Morrison, G. S., Breffni, L., & Woika, M. J. (2022). Early Childhood Education Today (15e ed.). Pearson Education.

Moses, A. (2021). Individuality and Inclusive Practices for Early Childhood. Retrieved from NAEYC : https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/winter2021/inclusive-

practices#:~:text=Individuality%20involves%20recognizing%20and%20being,impleme nt%20inclusive%20practices%20and%20environments.

Naong, M. N., & Mateusi, C. M. (2014). Overcoming inclusive classroom challenges for teachers: a Lesotho case-study. *Journal for new generation sciences*, *12*(2), 59-76.

Sharafovna, S. G., & Islomovna, M. M. (2021). The Importance of Visual Aids in Learning and Teaching. Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN : 2456-6470, Special Issue | International Research Development and Scientific Excellence in Academic Life, pp.92-93

Stephan, K., Stuart, W. (2023).Who's included and Who's not? An analysis of instruments that measure teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. Teaching and Teacher Education. Volume 122. ISSN 0742-051X. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103922.

Susanne, J., Manuela, U., & Bettina, M. (2020): Co-teaching as a resource for inclusive classes: teachers' perspectives on conditions for successful collaboration, International Journal of Inclusive Education, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2020.1821449

Repetition in Toddler and Preschool Learning (2022). Retrieved from kokotree: https://kokotree.com/blog/preschool/repetition-learning-preschoolers

Ordu, U. B. ( 2021). The Role of Teaching and Learning Aids / Methods in a Changing World. Published in BCES Conference Books , Volume 19, ISSN: 2534-8426.

You, S., Kim, E. K., & Shin, K. (2019). Teachers' belief and efficacy toward inclusive education in early childhood settings in Korea. *Sustainability*, *11*(5), 1489.