

Strategies Enhancing Inclusive Education in Early Childhood and Special Education for Special Needs Children: A Case Study

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Received: 15 July 2024 | Accepted: 1 December 2024 | Published: 1 March 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55057/ajress.2025.7.2.34>

Abstract: *This study aims to explore how future educators might improve inclusive education in the fields of early childhood and special needs education. The research, which employs a qualitative inquiry methodology, focuses on teachers working with students who have learning difficulties in inclusive classes. A case study technique was used to identify participants based on their relevant knowledge and expertise through semi-structured interviews with three prospective early childhood instructors and three prospective special needs education instructors. The investigation aimed to provide light on the experiences, difficulties, varied viewpoints, and tactics these teachers used to provide inclusive education to young children with learning problems. Six active prospective pre-service teachers participated in the study; three are from Albukhary International University (AIU), while the other three from National University Malaysia (UKM). The emphasis was on inclusive education, specifically looking at various viewpoints and approaches to meeting the needs of young learners with learning difficulties. The study's conclusions provide light on instructional strategies and techniques intended to improve inclusive education instruction. In summary, this research advances knowledge on inclusive education by examining the complex viewpoints and methods used by students enrolled in Early Childhood and Special Needs Education to establish inclusive learning environments.*

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Diverse Perspectives, Strategies, Implementation, Challenges

1. Introduction

Inclusive education is a fundamental principle that aims to ensure all students, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or differences, have equal access to quality education within mainstream classrooms. It goes beyond merely integrating students with disabilities into regular classrooms; instead, it seeks to create environments that celebrate diversity and provide tailored support to meet the individual needs of every learner. Inclusive education recognizes the inherent value of diversity and acknowledges that all children can benefit from learning together in inclusive settings. Inclusive education is increasingly recognized globally within educational discourse and policies, emphasising equity, diversity, and inclusion. It focuses on providing a tailored education to every child, fostering academic success, social skills, empathy, and understanding. The implementation of inclusive education presents challenges for educators and practitioners who must develop effective strategies to embed inclusive practices within educational systems. The perspectives and experiences of prospective teachers in Early Childhood Education and Special Needs Education, are vital in shaping the discussion on inclusive education.

The term "inclusive education" often refers to including individuals with physical and mental impairments, as well as broader access for marginalised groups in society and schools. This broader definition of inclusion aims to create accessible environments for all students, not just those with impairments, to promote social justice (Kirschner, 2015). Inclusive curriculum in Malaysia nowadays have a potential positive impact on the inclusive education atmosphere. The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Malaysia offers the Inclusive Education Programme (Program Pendidikan Inklusif – PPI), which integrates students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms either fully or partially for certain subjects. However, despite MOE's support, inclusive education has not become the norm in Malaysian mainstream classrooms, posing challenges to widespread implementation. Administered by MOE's Department of Special Education, the PPI aims to encourage mainstream schools to adopt inclusive practices. Data from 2020 indicates that 6,404 primary and secondary schools have adopted PPI (MOE, 2024). Nevertheless, not all schools have embraced this program, as decisions regarding support for students with disabilities within mainstream classrooms are often left to the discretion of school leaders and teachers. Accessing education in mainstream settings for students with disabilities remains arduous, often necessitating persistent advocacy efforts from parents and allies. Within the broader context of inclusive education, this study focuses on exploring the diverse perspectives and strategies employed by students specialising in Early Childhood Education and Special Needs Education. Early childhood education lays the foundation for lifelong learning and development, making it a critical stage for promoting inclusivity and addressing diverse learning needs. Special Needs Education, on the other hand, focuses on providing specialised support and services to children with disabilities or special educational needs, ensuring their inclusion in mainstream educational settings. The intersection of Early Childhood Education and Special Needs Education offers a unique vantage point for examining the intricacies of inclusive education. Students enrolled in these programs are not only future educators but also advocates for inclusive practices within educational settings. Their insights, experiences, and strategies can provide valuable contributions to the discourse surrounding inclusive education, offering fresh perspectives and innovative approaches to address the challenges and complexities of implementation. By delving into the perspectives and strategies of students specialising in Early Childhood Education and Special Needs Education, this study seeks to enhance understanding of inclusive education and identify effective practices for creating inclusive learning environments. Through a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts to enhance inclusive education practices and promote the holistic development of all learners.

The prevalence of learners facing learning difficulties and disabilities necessitates a significant shift in the classroom environment to accommodate diverse needs effectively. Inclusive education has elicited diverse opinions among professionals, researchers, and policymakers, as highlighted by Artiles (2016). Previously, special education students were segregated from mainstream classrooms, leading to academic disparities (National, 2020). However, recent decades have witnessed positive changes in special education through the promotion of inclusive environments in mainstream classrooms. This shift aims to reintegrate students into regular classrooms, fostering a sense of belonging and social skill development for all learners. Embracing inclusion not only promotes respect and empathy but also encourages educators to adopt diverse instructional strategies, accommodating various learning styles and holding all students to higher academic standards (Ferri, 2015). The implementation of inclusive education in Malaysia presents numerous challenges, including misunderstandings among school administrators, teachers, and parents regarding the integration of special needs children with mainstream students. Key issues involve the roles of special and mainstream education teachers, the students themselves, support staff, teaching aids, curriculum, and teaching

processes. The Malaysian Special Education Philosophy emphasises the need for both integration and segregation of special needs children based on their education. A professional body assesses whether a child is suitable for inclusive or integrated programs or special schools. Despite efforts to integrate visually impaired students with support from special education teachers and accommodate hearing impaired and learning-disabled students in mainstream classrooms, significant challenges remain in effectively implementing these inclusive education initiatives (Ghani & Ahmad, 2012). This study aims to explore how inclusion is practised in the classroom by examining learners' experiences, interactions, and relationships, as well as teachers' perspectives on organising and facilitating inclusive learning environments.

Research Objective

There are several significant linkages on strategies in enhancing inclusive education towards children's education potential and their academic performance. Thus, a study is needed to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To explore various approaches to identify best strategies for inclusive education
- ii. To examine insight into fostering an inclusive learning environment
- iii. To identify the challenges of inclusive education from teacher perspective

Significance Of Study

This study is significant for early childhood and special needs prospective teachers by enhancing inclusive education best strategies and the diversity of perspective towards inclusivity among children. This study also provides preservice teachers a deeper understanding on how to tailor and use various approaches in inclusive education and create a better learning atmosphere. Researchers in the future can get more insight on the effectiveness of inclusive education for their research while also giving them the opportunity to explore and inspire more in promoting inclusive education.

2. Literature Review

Different strategies for embracing inclusive education

Inclusive education, guided by the social model, centers on ensuring the full participation of every child within the school environment while holding the school responsible for providing necessary support and modifications to meet individual needs. Avramidis & Norwich (2002) and Fox, Farrell & Davis (2004) have underscored crucial factors influencing inclusion success. It is imperative to establish a unified policy on inclusive education and ensure efficient management of quality support and resources (Fox, Farrell & Davis 2004; Lo, 2007). This support encompasses various resources, including adequate funding, facilities, equipment, and teaching materials (Lo, 2007). However, the linchpin of successful inclusion remains human capital: teachers equipped with the knowledge and expertise to tackle pedagogical challenges inherent in inclusive education (Farrell, 2001). Furthermore, the presence of trained supportive personnel is crucial for ensuring the efficacy of inclusive practices (Farrell, 2001). A dynamic idea, inclusive education strives to provide education for all by addressing a range of impairments and learning challenges. Effective instructors should maintain well-managed classrooms, create maximum learning opportunities, set high academic goals, and use a work-oriented style with passion, according to Westwood and Graham (2003). In order to maintain students' attention and productivity, effective teachers use techniques including step-by-step training, clear instructions, and regular feedback. They use engaging whole-class teaching methods, guarantee active involvement, and modify education to meet the requirements of each individual student. Additionally, Westwood and Graham (2003) emphasised special education techniques that have been shown to benefit children with learning and developmental

challenges. These tactics include lots of guided practice, encouraging feedback, active student engagement, quick lessons, and peer support. To improve student learning and engagement, teachers employ dynamic group instruction, abundant practice opportunities, and a carefully planned curriculum. Adopting inclusive education means giving educators the tools and resources they need to successfully execute inclusive practices, including supportive policies and resource management. Fostering a truly inclusive learning environment also requires using specialised teaching tactics that are adapted to the requirements of varied learners.

Fostering an inclusive education learning environment

In an educational landscape where diversity is celebrated and embraced, multicultural diverse classrooms serve as deliberate creations fostered by educators to cultivate an inclusive atmosphere characterised by acceptance and tolerance of differences. According to Hoffman et al. (2019), while diversity in such classrooms may manifest in various forms, including ethnic backgrounds or learning abilities, the overarching goal remains to create a cohesive and supportive learning environment where every student feels valued and empowered (Allen, Paasche, Langford, & Nolan, 2002). Central to the concept of inclusive classrooms is the belief that all students are entitled to the same opportunities for learning and growth within the school community (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Hutchinson, 2007). These classrooms prioritise a sense of belonging and agency for every student, ensuring that they feel valued and respected for their individual identities and choices. The researchers such Hoffman et al. (2019), also highlight that inclusive education extends beyond mere representation of diversity to actively integrating elements of diversity into the curriculum, thereby enabling students with varying abilities to participate fully in general education settings (Artiles & Dyson, 2005). Multicultural diverse classrooms are characterised by an ethos of acceptance and support for all children and their families, fostering an environment where every student can thrive (King, Hunter, & Karten, 2009). The promotion of diversity and inclusive strategies that had been highlighted in emerald publishing findings in classrooms is intricately linked to the beliefs, values, and experiences of educators, who play a pivotal role in shaping the classroom environment and guiding student interactions (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007). The use of catalytic teaching is to see individual needs of their students and adapt their approaches accordingly (Horsley, 2012). Some characteristics identified by students of influential and significant teachers include a passion for teaching, strong knowledge of content, high yet realistic expectations and a conveyance of the belief that every student can achieve and will be supported to do so (Horsley, 2012). This approach of teaching can benefit multicultural diverse classrooms and represent a commitment to creating inclusive learning environments where every student feels empowered, valued, and supported, guided by educators who recognize the transformative potential of inclusive education.

Challenges of inclusive education from teacher perspective

The concept of inclusive classrooms, where all children can actively participate in class activities, is a fundamental aspect of inclusive education. However, achieving this goal presents challenges for teachers, particularly when faced with a scarcity of technical expertise and adaptable interaction and linguistic tools. Despite being a commendable idea, inclusive classrooms demand extensive preparation, tolerance, and compassion from teachers, given the diverse range of students they accommodate, from typically developing children to those with severe disabilities (Ramos, 2022). Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) play a crucial role in supporting the development of children with special needs in inclusive classrooms. Teachers must manage multiple IEPs while catering to each student's learning abilities, which vary widely within the diverse classroom environment. For some teachers, especially those lacking experience with children with special needs, transitioning from typical teaching methods to

more specialised approaches can be challenging. This shift requires adjustments to teaching routines and lesson plans to effectively accommodate students with diverse needs (Ramos, 2022). Teachers' competencies are essential components of successful inclusive education, as they play a pivotal role in managing inclusive classrooms. Thwala (2015) categorised the challenges faced by educators into themes such as lack of teacher training, competencies, concrete materials, large classrooms, time management, and assessment. Many typical educators perceive children with disabilities as disruptions in the classroom and may overlook their needs, focusing instead on delivering standard instructional content. This attitude is often rooted in inadequate teacher training, which fails to equip educators with the skills and understanding needed to effectively support children with special needs (Gulzar, 2021). In inclusive classrooms, both regular teachers and special needs specialists are typically present, with the support of teacher assistants being crucial given the nature and size of the class. However, inadequate resources, including a shortage of teacher assistants, hinder teachers' ability to effectively support students with special needs. Additionally, limited educational tools and facilities further impede the success of inclusion initiatives, with budget constraints often cited as a primary reason for these shortcomings (Parveen & Qounsar, 2018). The challenges encountered in inclusive classrooms highlight the need for comprehensive teacher training, sufficient resources, and a supportive learning environment to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education practices. Addressing these challenges is crucial for promoting equity and creating inclusive learning environments where all students can thrive.

3. Methodology

A qualitative method will be used to answer the research questions since this is a case study and this method is the best method fit for it. Considering that this data collection must be done very carefully, respondents will be directly treated with in-depth interviews, commonly called "intensive" interviews (Esterberg, K. G. (2002). Respondents were asked to choose when the interview would take place so that they wouldn't feel pressured. Then, after getting the respondent's permission, the interview was recorded and transcribed to collect data and information then compiled to adjust to the theme. According to the research aims, two groups of students from special needs education background and early childhood education be selected to participate in the interview. Their views and opinions are needed to fulfill the requirements of the study and criteria of sample groups. This study has been approved by the subject lecturer along with details of the title, method, a series of questions, etc.

In order to guarantee the reliability and accuracy of the interviews, two sample groups of active undergraduate students at Albukhary International University (AIU) and National University Malaysia (UKM) were selected. Three AIU students are studying early childhood education, while the other three are studying special needs education with a focus on inclusive education for children. Both groups are pre-service teachers with knowledge and experience in inclusive education. Both of the sample group were chosen because they answered the purpose and research questions. This research requires specific respondents, so a purposeful sample will be utilised to compare and contrast the answers. All of the respondents for the research have been selected and set up to be interviewed for this research. A purposive sampling is being directed in this research.

Characteristics of respondents selected are as follows:

- i. Teach inclusive education
- ii. Pre-service teachers
- iii. Existing undergraduate students

- iv. The group of respondents come from 2 difference institutions which is AIU and UKM
- v. The group of respondent enrol in programme of Early Childhood Education and Special Needs Education that teach inclusive education
- vi. Age range between 23-25 years old
- vii. Different gender

Table 1: Background Of The Respondents

Respondents	Gender	Age	Nationality	Programme	University
A	Male	23	Malaysia	Bachelor Of Education with Honours (Special Education)	UKM
B	Female	24	Malaysia	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (Honours)	AIU
C	Female	25	Malaysia	Bachelor Of Education with Honours (Special Education)	UKM
D	Male	24	Malaysia	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (Honours)	AIU
E	Female	23	Malaysia	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (Honours)	AIU
F	Female	25	Malaysia	Bachelor Of Education with Honours (Special Education)	UKM

The instrument applied in this study is a qualitative methodology and a semi-structured interview. The interview is set up like a normal conversation, but the conversation will be directed toward seeking answers related to the topic. Several questions will be provided, which will be answered by the respondents. In this session, the respondent may say anything and give their opinion according to the question given. In this study, interviews were used to find out what respondents thought about inclusive education strategies for children and their perspective towards it. Respondents may come up with their own words, phrases, sentences or reactions.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Findings (1): Engaging lesson plan involving various teaching strategies

Four out of six respondents in this research mentioned that engaging lesson plans need to involve various teaching strategies of inclusive education to create an effective learning and interactive lesson with the children.

Respondent A:

“...I actively engage in collaborative discussions with my friend to identify effective strategies for inclusive education. We usually review and analyse our lesson plans and teaching strategies by seeking feedback from one another that meet the diverse needs of inclusive children...”

Respondent B:

“...In my class, I always do some reflective practices to get an understanding of inclusive education and the best strategies that can be used for an effective classroom. For me, engaging lesson plans are important to create a conducive inclusive learning environment...”

Respondent C:

“...Most of the effective approaches that we found inside books or any educational platforms, we can integrate it inside our teaching plan for a more effective teaching...”

Respondent D:

“...I learn about effective strategies in inclusive education via observing and learning from experienced educators that specialise in inclusive education such as my lecturer. Based on my observation, I plan my lesson well and utilise the strategies in my mock teaching...”

Respondent E:

“...I think working closely with parents really helps. It gives me a better understanding of the kids’ needs...”

Respondent F:

“...Using tools like technology makes a big difference. It helps the kids participate and feel included, which is what really matters...”

4.1.1 Engaging Lesson Plans Involving Various Teaching Strategies

Findings:

The majority of respondents highlighted the need for engaging lesson plans that incorporate diverse teaching strategies for inclusive education. Four out of six respondents emphasized that effective lesson planning involves integrating inclusive strategies to meet the diverse needs of students.

Respondent A: Stressed the importance of collaborative discussions with peers to review and enhance lesson plans.

Respondent B: Highlighted reflective practices to understand and implement the best teaching strategies for inclusive classrooms.

Respondent C: Advocated for integrating approaches from educational resources into lesson planning.

Respondent D: Shared the value of learning from experienced educators and applying those strategies in mock teaching.

The findings of this research are supported by the previous research paper by Malata and Muzata (2022), which focuses on lesson preparation for inclusive teaching of learners with disabilities by creating a distinctive approach to ensure all students, including those with disabilities, are accommodated within the same classroom. Effective educational planning involves selecting and organizing learning content and methods across the curriculum, strategies, syllabus, and lesson plans. This enables teachers to use available resources to make the curriculum accessible to all students.

4.2 Finding (2): Collaborative Learning and Professional Development

5 out of 6 respondents give feedback about collaborative learning and professional development that contribute to an effective learning in inclusive education.

Respondent A:

“...During my leisure time, I explore various academic journals, attend seminars, and engage in discussions with friends and lecturers to gather insights into innovative approaches of inclusive education...”

Respondent B:

“...Another effective strategy that I have encountered is peer-mediated interventions. These interventions involve pairing students with and without disabilities to engage in collaborative learning activities. This approach promotes social inclusion and fosters positive relationships among students...”

Respondent C:

“...In my experience, collaborative teaching models play a crucial role in identifying and implementing effective strategies for inclusive education. By working collaboratively with friends from diverse backgrounds, educators can use their prior knowledge to design and implement inclusive practices...”

Respondents D:

“...For example, co-teaching is a collaborative teaching model that I have found to be particularly effective...”

Respondent E:

“...Collaborative problem-solving sessions involving teachers, students, and parents can also facilitate the identification and implementation of effective strategies for inclusive education...”

Respondent F:

“...Ongoing learning helps educators stay updated and better support special needs children...”

4.2.1 Collaborative Learning and Professional Development

Findings:

Five out of six respondents acknowledged that collaborative learning and ongoing professional development are crucial for effective inclusive education.

- Respondent A: Engages in academic journals, seminars, and discussions to learn about innovative approaches.
- Respondent B: Mentioned peer-mediated interventions that foster social inclusion and collaborative learning.
- Respondent C: Highlighted collaborative teaching models that utilize diverse backgrounds for inclusive practices.
- Respondent D: Found co-teaching particularly effective for implementing inclusive strategies.
- Respondent E: Emphasized collaborative problem-solving sessions involving various stakeholders.

This finding shows the importance of collaborative learning and professional development as one of the effective strategies in inclusive education. These strategies are also supported and linked to Holmqvist and Lelinge (2020) that also support the idea of collaborative learning as main components to promoting effective inclusive learning.

4.3 Finding (3): Effective Collaboration and Communication in Inclusive Learning

All respondents have positively responded to the questions and said that collaboration and communication are important in inclusive education

Respondent A:

“...During my practicum, I witnessed a teacher discuss with parents about gathering insights into each child's needs and strengths. This communication showed me that all parties involved

in the decision-making process, leading to an inclusive and supportive classroom environment...”

Respondent B:

“...In my class, we often do discussion projects on topic inclusive education where we collaborate together to solve the hand-on-activity...”

Respondent C:

“...I had a workshop last time focusing on inclusive education. A guest speaker said that as educators, we need to be more open with our students in socialisation and communication in a way that can positively affect them self...”

Respondent D:

“...For me, I think interactions play an important role in fostering inclusive education. It involves the holistic understanding of such empathy and humanism when it comes into an inclusive learning environment...”

Respondent E:

“...An inclusive learning environment depends on parents, teachers, and students working together and communicating effectively. Student participation creates a feeling of community, and open communication allows for customised support for a range of student needs...”

Respondent F:

“...During our lesson in the class, I participated in role-playing activities where we simulated parent-teacher conferences to discuss students' progress and individualised support plans. These activities helped us to develop effective communication skills and strategies for engaging parents as partners in their children's education...”

4.3.1 Effective Collaboration and Communication in Inclusive Learning

Findings:

All respondents unanimously agreed that collaboration and communication are vital for fostering inclusive learning environments.

Respondent A: Observed the benefits of teacher-parent discussions during practicum experiences.

Respondent B: Highlighted the role of collaborative projects in promoting inclusivity.

Respondent C: Shared insights from workshops on the importance of open communication with students.

Respondent D: Discussed the role of empathy and humanism in fostering inclusive classrooms.

Respondent E: Emphasized the collaborative role of parents, teachers, and students in creating a sense of community.

Respondent F: Participated in role-playing activities to enhance communication strategies for engaging parents and supporting inclusive education.

This finding shows the effectiveness of collaboration and communication in inclusive education that is supported or linked by Adams et al. (2016) in his research on teacher-parent

collaboration for every success of children. We can say that collaboration and communication play a vital role in implementing effective inclusive education while also promoting a positive learning environment for children with learning disabilities.

4.4 Finding (4): Anticipated Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

4 out of 6 respondents give feedback about anticipated challenges that will happen in inclusive education. By identifying these challenges, we can support individualised strategies and accommodations of the students with various abilities, learning styles.

Respondent A:

“...One of the main challenges I anticipate is meeting the diverse needs of all students in the classroom. It can be discouraging to ensure that every student, regardless of their abilities, receives the support and accommodations they require to succeed...”

Respondent B:

“...I think, to provide personalised attention to each student while also managing the overall classroom dynamic is challenging as a prospective teacher...”

Respondent C:

“...The lack of resources, including specialised training and support personnel, lead to a significant challenge to implementing inclusive education. Teachers may struggle to effectively address the diverse needs of their students...”

Respondent D:

“...To create a truly inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and included is challenging. It requires ongoing effort to make the student feel belonging among students with diverse backgrounds and abilities...”

Respondent E:

“...I don't think meeting the needs of all students is as hard as it seems. With proper planning and the right mindset, teachers can create an inclusive environment where every child thrives...”

Respondent F:

“...Resources and support for inclusive education are improving. Many schools now have access to training and tools that make it easier for teachers to address diverse learning needs...”

4.4.1 Anticipated Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

Findings:

Four out of six respondents identified anticipated challenges in inclusive education, including meeting diverse needs, lack of resources, and fostering inclusivity.

Respondent A: Expressed concerns about accommodating the diverse needs of all students.

Respondent B: Highlighted the difficulty of balancing personalized attention with classroom management.

Respondent C: Pointed out the challenges posed by limited resources and training.

Respondent D: Stressed the ongoing effort required to create a truly inclusive environment.

This research finding emphasises the challenges that will happen in inclusive classrooms supported and linked by researchers named Sijuola and Davidova (2022). Their research is related to this research which highlights anticipated challenges that will affect inclusive education.

4.5 Finding (5): Strategies for Addressing Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Education

3 Out of 6 respondents give positive feedback about strategies to address challenges when implementing inclusive education.

Respondent A:

“...Collaboration with other teachers, such as special education teachers, can help us find a solution to the challenges of inclusive education by using their expertise and sharing the workload...”

Respondent B:

“...By providing training opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge in inclusive education can help overcome challenges related to lack of knowledge and skill...”

Respondent C:

“...Learning with each other can create a positive and supportive classroom environment that can help foster inclusive education and cater challenges that happen...”

Respondent D:

“...Working with families takes too much time and doesn't always help...”

Respondent E:

“...Even with tools, some children's needs are too hard to meet...”

Respondent F:

“...Not everyone in the school supports inclusivity, so it's hard to do and work effectively...”

4.5.1 Strategies for Addressing Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

Findings:

Three respondents provided positive feedback on strategies to overcome challenges in inclusive education.

- Respondent A: Advocated for collaboration with special education teachers to address challenges.
- Respondent B: Suggested providing training opportunities to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge.
- Respondent C: Highlighted the role of a positive classroom environment in fostering inclusivity.

However, two respondents expressed concerns about the effectiveness of these strategies.

- Respondent D: Believed working with families is time-consuming and not always helpful.
- Respondent E: Noted that some students' needs may still be too complex to meet effectively.
- Respondent F: Shared challenges related to a lack of support for inclusivity within schools.

This finding shows strategies to address challenges in inclusive education. This research is also supported and linked to the previous related research paper from Kocha and Senapathy (2022), where they emphasize the importance of creating an education system that includes all students, welcoming and supporting them in learning, regardless of their abilities or requirements. By implementing these strategies, educators can overcome the barriers to inclusive education, ensuring that all students have equal opportunities to succeed. The focus research also somehow addresses the importance of significant challenges in inclusive education.

Table 2: Results of Findings

Findings	Positive Feedback	Negative Feedback	Neutral Feedback	No Responses
1. Engaging lesson plan involving various teaching strategies	4 Respondents	0	2	0
2. Collaborative learning and professional development	5 Respondents	0	1	0
3. Effective collaboration and communication in inclusive learning	6 Respondents	0	0	0
4. Anticipated challenges in implementing inclusive education	4 Respondents	2	0	0
5. Strategies for addressing challenges of implementing inclusive education	3 Respondents	2	1	0

Discussion

Based on the responses provided, the findings from the interviews with prospective teachers in Early Childhood Education and Special Needs Education reveal valuable insights into various aspects of inclusive education, highlighting both effective strategies and anticipated challenges. These findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in fostering inclusive learning environments and offer valuable suggestions for addressing them.

The majority of respondents emphasised the importance of engaging lesson plans that incorporate various teaching strategies to effectively meet the diverse needs of inclusive classrooms. They highlighted the significance of collaborative discussions, reflective practices, and learning from experienced educators in identifying and implementing effective strategies. This finding aligns with previous research by Malata and Muzata (2022), emphasising the critical role of lesson preparation in inclusive teaching. Respondents' feedback underscores the importance of creating inclusive lesson plans that cater to the individual needs of all students. By actively engaging in collaborative discussions and seeking feedback from peers and mentors, prospective teachers can enhance their pedagogical practices and create a conducive learning environment for diverse learners.

The respondents also highlighted the value of collaborative learning and professional development in promoting effective inclusive education. They mentioned engaging in various academic activities, attending seminars, and participating in discussions to gather insights into innovative approaches. Collaborative teaching models, such as co-teaching and collaborative problem-solving sessions, were also cited as effective strategies. The emphasis on collaborative learning and professional development aligns with previous research by Holmqvist and Lelinge (2020), which emphasises collaborative learning as a crucial component of effective inclusive learning environments. By leveraging collective knowledge and expertise, educators can design and implement inclusive practices that meet the diverse needs of all students.

Respondents highlighted the importance of effective collaboration and communication in fostering inclusive learning environments. They shared experiences of collaborating with colleagues, parents, and students to create a supportive classroom environment. Collaborative problem-solving sessions and role-playing activities were cited as effective strategies for enhancing communication skills and engaging parents as partners in their children's education. This finding underscores the significance of collaboration and communication in implementing effective inclusive education practices. By fostering open communication and collaboration among stakeholders, educators can create a sense of community and provide customised support for a range of student needs.

Respondents also shared their anticipated challenges in implementing inclusive education, such as meeting the diverse needs of all students and creating a truly inclusive classroom environment. They emphasised the importance of personalised attention, lack of resources, and the challenge of ensuring all students feel valued and included. To address these challenges, respondents suggested strategies such as collaboration with other teachers, providing training opportunities for teachers, and creating a positive and supportive classroom environment. These strategies align with previous research by Sijuola and Davidova (2022), emphasising the importance of addressing challenges in inclusive education through collaboration and training.

The findings from the interviews highlight the multifaceted nature of inclusive education and the importance of employing effective strategies to address its complexities. Collaborative learning, professional development, effective collaboration and communication, and strategies to address anticipated challenges are crucial components of fostering inclusive learning environments. By using these strategies and addressing challenges collaboratively, educators can create inclusive classrooms that meet the diverse needs of all students and promote academic success and social inclusion.

5. Conclusion

This research study has investigated various approaches to identifying best strategies for inclusive education, examined insights into fostering an inclusive learning environment, and identified challenges of inclusive education from the teacher's perspective in the context of early childhood and special education for children with special needs. Interviews with prospective teachers provided invaluable insights into the complexity and subtleties of inclusive education approaches. The results show that engaging lesson designs that include a variety of teaching styles, as well as collaborative learning and professional development, play critical roles in supporting successful inclusive education. Prospective instructors emphasised the need for creative methods, collaborative teaching models, and continuous professional development opportunities for meeting students' different needs in inclusive classrooms. This research focus can be classified into three main points.

Different Approaches to Identifying and Evaluating Effectiveness in Inclusive Education

The efficacy of inclusive education programmes is determined by evaluating them using a variety of methodologies. Using data analysis to analyse student success comes first. This method entails comparing the academic accomplishment, growth, and performance of children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms to that of their classmates. Teachers may evaluate how well inclusive practices support equitable learning outcomes for all children by looking at grades, standardised test results, and other academic measures. The effectiveness of inclusive education practices in meeting the learning requirements of children with disabilities can be demonstrated, for instance, if these kids demonstrate equivalent or improved academic development in inclusive settings. Receiving feedback comes in second. It is important to collect feedback from educators and learners in order to assess the efficacy of certain inclusive approaches. Instructors may offer valuable perspectives on executing inclusive tactics, assessing their influence on students' education and well-being, and outlining any obstacles faced. Students can also provide insightful opinions about their educational experiences, sense of community, and the degree to which inclusive policies advance their social and intellectual growth. Positive teacher and student feedback about the advantages of cooperative learning activities, for example, shows how well inclusive practices promote cooperation and peer support. Lastly, but just as important, is doing observational evaluations, which entail methodically monitoring student involvement, engagement, and interactions in an inclusive

learning environment. To assess the inclusiveness of the learning environment, observers might monitor activities including student participation in class discussions, peer cooperation, and teacher interactions. For instance, it indicates that the inclusive classroom encourages social contact and participation for all students, regardless of ability, if students with disabilities actively participate in group activities and are smoothly incorporated into class discussions.

Insight into Fostering an Inclusive Learning Environment

Educators gain insight into fostering an inclusive learning environment through professional development, collaboration with colleagues, and ongoing reflection on their teaching practices. Workshops and training sessions focused on professional development provide teachers the tools and tactics they need to successfully handle a diverse student body. For instance, seminars on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) or differentiated instruction give instructors the skills they need to meet the unique requirements of children with disabilities or a range of learning preferences. Working together with colleagues such as school psychologists, speech therapists, and special education teachers, allows educators to discuss best practices, share ideas, and create inclusive lesson plans that are catered to the requirements of every kid. Additionally, educators may modify and improve their methods to create an inclusive atmosphere where all students feel valued and supported by engaging in constant reflection on classroom dynamics, student interactions, and teaching tactics.

Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education Practices

When putting inclusive education methods into reality, teachers face a number of difficulties, such as a lack of resources, insufficient training, and opposition from stakeholders. Teachers may find it more difficult to successfully address the varied needs of children with disabilities if they have limited access to specialist support services, such as paraprofessionals with training or assistive technology. Inadequate training in inclusive pedagogy and classroom management techniques can also make instructors feel unprepared to handle the particular difficulties inclusive classrooms bring. Implementation hurdles may also arise from opposition from supervisors, parents, or other educators who harbour misgivings or doubts about inclusive education. Reluctance or opposition towards inclusive methods may be attributed to worries about upholding academic standards, handling behavioural concerns, or providing enough time and attention to all pupils. It will need a team effort to overcome these obstacles, including continual professional development, access to tools and support services, and a change in mindset towards accepting diversity and inclusion in education. Teachers may foster a more diverse and inclusive learning environment that is advantageous to all students by proactively addressing these issues.

This research has investigated best practices for inclusive education by examining approaches to identifying strategies, fostering an inclusive learning environment, and addressing challenges in implementing inclusive practices, particularly in early childhood and special education. The study highlights several key findings that reinforce its main contributions:

i. Key Finding 1: Engaging Lesson Designs and Collaborative Learning

Engaging lesson plans that incorporate diverse teaching styles are critical for supporting inclusive education.

Collaborative teaching models and continuous professional development were emphasized as pivotal strategies by prospective teachers to address diverse learning needs in inclusive classrooms.

ii. Key Finding 2: Effective Evaluation of Inclusive Education

Data analysis to compare academic progress of children with disabilities against their peers. Feedback from educators and students, highlighting the positive impact of inclusive practices on cooperation and social development.

Observational evaluations, which showed evidence of active participation and social integration of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

iii. Key Finding 3: Fostering an Inclusive Learning Environment

Professional development opportunities, collaboration with colleagues, and reflective practices were identified as vital for creating inclusive learning environments.

Strategies such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction were noted to empower educators in catering to diverse student needs.

iv. Key Finding 4: Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

Teachers face significant challenges such as limited resources, insufficient training, and resistance from stakeholders.

These challenges necessitate systemic solutions, including better institutional support, access to tools, and a cultural shift towards embracing diversity in education.

By focusing on these areas, the study provides actionable insights and reinforces the importance of innovative teaching methods, collaborative approaches, and institutional support in advancing inclusive education. It underscores the need for further research into evidence-based strategies to address these challenges and improve outcomes for children with special needs.

The results of this study support recommendations for further research, such as enhanced professional development. Comprehensive and continuous professional development opportunities for early childhood and special education teachers should be given top priority by educational institutions. To effectively promote inclusive education methods, this should involve training in creative teaching techniques, collaborative learning approaches, and cultural competence. Institutional Support: Schools and other educational settings need to provide instructors the tools and assistance they need to successfully implement inclusive education. This includes having access to specialised training, educational resources, and staff members such as special education experts and teaching assistants. Additionally, research and innovation are also crucial for promoting and funding studies that aim to find novel strategies and cutting-edge methods for inclusive education in special education and early childhood. The creation of evidence-based practices and policies to improve inclusive education outcomes may be guided by the findings of this study.

Acknowledgments

This study is made under the subject Teaching English in Education by degree course in Elementary Education from Albukhary International University, Alor Setar, Kedah, Malaysia. A special thanks and gratitude to Albukhary International University, to my lecturer Madam Aini Syahira Jamaluddin, and to pre-service teachers from National University Malaysia (Special Needs Education) and Albukhary International University (Early Childhood Education) that sacrificed their time and willingness contribute to the research and their continuous support from the beginning until the end of this research finished. It is my pleasure to have all the positive support to complete this research.

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