



ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES OF RECEIVING TEACHERS IN TEACHING MAINSTREAMED DEAF LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the adaptive strategies of receiving teachers in handling mainstreamed deaf learners in selected public schools in Legazpi City. With the increasing implementation of inclusive education, particularly the mainstreaming of learners with special educational needs (LSEs), it becomes imperative to examine how teachers adjust their instructional approaches to accommodate deaf students. Employing a mixed-method design that integrated quantitative survey data with qualitative narrative interviews, the research provided a comprehensive understanding of teaching adaptations. Findings revealed that teachers “often” employed adaptive strategies across four core domains—lesson delivery, providing instructions, facilitating breakout groups, and conducting formative and summative assessments—with the highest level of adaptation observed in assessment strategies. The study also highlighted key challenges, including communication barriers, lack of training in sign language, and limited instructional resources. In response, teachers implemented differentiated instruction, peer tutoring, visual aids, simplified assessments, and collaborative learning structures to support deaf learners. Opportunities for improved mainstreaming were seen in professional development, enhanced resource support, and stronger collaboration with school administrators and the community. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on inclusive education, support UNESCO’s global advocacy for mainstreaming, and align with national and regional SPED policies. The study recommends sustained teacher

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training, robust SPED support mechanisms, and policy-driven interventions to reinforce inclusive practices at the grassroots level.

Keywords: *mainstreaming, deaf learners, adaptive strategies, inclusive education, formative and summative assessments*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, inclusive education has become a key focus in global education reform, emphasizing the need to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners, including those with disabilities. According to the International Bureau of Education at UNESCO, mainstreaming refers to the integration of learners with special educational needs (LSENs) into regular education settings. This approach promotes academic and social inclusion by enabling all students to learn, interact, and grow together in shared environments. Inclusive mainstream classrooms should not only welcome diversity but also actively support it through barrier-free infrastructure, responsive pedagogy, and accessible learning materials. UNESCO further reinforces that inclusive education contributes to equity, social cohesion, and the development of inclusive societies—objectives enshrined in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

In the Philippine context, inclusive education is recognized through various policies and programs. Among all disability types, hearing impairment remains one of the most prevalent. The Department of Health reports it as the most common disability in the country. A 2020 study by Fuentes-Santamaria et al. and data from the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Medicine and Surgery suggest that up to 15% of the Philippine population may suffer from moderate to severe hearing loss. The World Health Organization estimates that approximately 430 million people worldwide require rehabilitation for hearing loss. These figures reveal the urgent need for inclusive strategies that address the unique needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) learners within general education environments. If left

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unaddressed, these learners may face academic struggles, social isolation, and long-term disadvantage.

The successful mainstreaming of deaf learners depends significantly on the teachers who receive them in general classrooms. Alasim (2018) highlighted the pivotal role that teacher attitudes, awareness, and preparation play a vital role in promoting the engagement and interaction of DHH learners. One of the most cited challenges is the presence of language and communication barriers, especially in classrooms where teachers lack proficiency in Filipino Sign Language (FSL). DHH students are often expected to multitask—watch the teacher, follow the interpreter, and perform classwork simultaneously, which can result in delays in comprehension and learning fatigue. Alshutwi et al. (2020) also found that inclusive settings positively impact the academic performance, self-esteem, and social interaction of DHH learners, if schools actively create supportive environments through proper training and resources. In line with the School Improvement Plan, resources for learners with disabilities have been incorporated, including the provision of hearing aids.

In response to such needs, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, titled "Policy Guidelines on Providing Educational Programs and Services for Learners with Disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program." Based on the DepEd order, the learners with disabilities shall refer to those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Sec. 4 (o) of RA 1 I 5 IO). Hence, the order mandates inclusive education by ensuring access to appropriate administration, infrastructure, and training. It outlines the delivery of individualized programs, establishes protocols for curriculum modification, and calls for the active participation of all school personnel in implementing inclusive practices. However, the effective implementation of this policy remains inconsistent across regions. Many schools lack the necessary training, manpower, and facilities to support DHH learners. Moreover, mainstream teachers often

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report being unprepared and under-resourced, which hinders their ability to deliver equitable instruction.

A recent study by Cruz (2023) on inclusive practices in the Bicol Region found that hearing impairment was the third most common disability among 358 mainstreamed learners. While schools had integrated mainstreaming objectives into their School Improvement Plans (SIPs), most did not have enough trained personnel or clearly defined strategies to support DHH students. This determines a gap between policy and practice, underscoring the importance of understanding the specific difficulties and coping mechanisms of receiving teachers. Although the study acknowledged the presence of DHH learners in the region, it did not comprehensively examine the instructional adjustments and challenges faced by mainstream teachers. The enhancement of trainings and seminars for receiving teachers, as reflected in the School Improvement Plan, represents a positive institutional response. However, for such initiatives to be effective, they must go beyond one-time seminars and instead provide sustained professional development focused on practical competencies—such as basic Filipino Sign Language (FSL) skills, inclusive instructional design, classroom communication strategies, and culturally responsive practices for the Deaf community. Ongoing mentoring, peer collaboration, and monitoring mechanisms are also necessary to ensure that training translates into improved classroom practice.

Thus, this study was conceived to explore the lived experiences and adaptive strategies of receiving teachers of mainstreamed deaf learners in selected public schools in Legazpi City. The research aimed to investigate how teachers navigate instructional delivery, communication, peer collaboration, and assessment when working with DHH students. Using a mixed-method design, the study combined quantitative data from structured questionnaires with qualitative insights from narrative interviews. The goal was to capture both the frequency and nature of teaching adaptations and the subjective experiences of the educators involved.

The findings revealed that teachers “often” employ adaptive strategies in four primary domains: lesson delivery, providing instructions, facilitating group work, and conducting

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assessments. Assessment practices showed the highest level of adaptation, including the use of simplified formats, extended time, and alternative outputs. However, teachers also reported significant difficulties, particularly in communicating with deaf learners due to the lack of sign language skills, as well as limited access to interpreters, visual aids, and training. In response, many developed coping strategies such as peer tutoring, differentiated instruction, visual presentations, and collaborative learning.

Despite the challenges, receiving teachers identified key opportunities for strengthening inclusive education. These include professional development programs in sign language and inclusive pedagogy, increased SPED support, access to instructional resources, and better coordination among teachers, school administrators, parents, and community stakeholders. Teachers emphasized the need for school-wide and system-level changes that prioritize the needs of learners with disabilities, especially through sustained policy implementation and resource allocation.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on inclusive education by documenting the on-the-ground realities of teachers tasked with implementing mainstreaming. It supports the goals of DepEd Order No. 44, as well as UNESCO's global advocacy for equity and inclusion. The findings also reinforce the principles of Republic Act 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) and Republic Act 11650 (Inclusive Education Act of 2022), both of which mandate equal access to quality education for all Filipino learners, regardless of ability.

The implications of this study extend to several stakeholder groups. Receiving teachers can gain practical insights and validated strategies for accommodating DHH learners. School administrators may use the data to improve training programs, allocate resources, and create supportive school climates. SPED coordinators and educational researchers can utilize the findings to identify gaps and design context-specific interventions. Policymakers may find the study useful for refining policies and tracking the impact of inclusive education initiatives. By highlighting both challenges and promising practices, this research paves the way for a more

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equitable and inclusive educational system in the Philippines—one that values diversity and empowers all learners to reach their full potential.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to assess receiving teachers' adaptive teaching strategies and difficulties in handling mainstreamed deaf learners in the Schools Division of Legazpi City. Specifically, it:

1. Identified the adaptive strategies that receiving teachers employ in handling deaf learners during the following activities:

- a. Lesson Delivery
- b. Providing Instructions
- c. Managing Breakout Groups
- d. Formative and Summative Assessments

2. Determined the level of difficulty that receiving teachers experience in handling deaf learners during the following activities:

- a. Lesson Delivery
- b. Providing Instructions
- c. Managing Breakout Groups
- d. Formative and Summative Assessments

3. Evaluated the opportunities gained by receiving teachers in handling deaf learners.

4. Recommended policies to enhance instruction to support deaf learners in mainstream classes.

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METHODOLOGY

This part discusses the methods and procedures used to gather and interpret the data needed for this investigation. It emphasizes the description of the method or design, subjects of the study, and sampling design. This also includes the sources or instruments used and the statistical measures employed in interpreting the data.

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating both descriptive quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the adaptive strategies of receiving teachers and the difficulties they encounter in handling mainstreamed deaf learners. The quantitative component utilized a structured survey questionnaire, which gathered measurable data on specific teaching strategies and the levels of difficulty experienced during various classroom activities. This data allowed for a statistical assessment of patterns and trends among the respondents.

The qualitative component complemented the quantitative data through thematic analysis of in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted with selected receiving teachers who provided detailed narratives about their personal experiences, challenges, and coping strategies when teaching deaf learners in mainstream classrooms. Thematic analysis was then used to identify recurring themes and insights, which enriched the interpretation of the quantitative results.

The study was carried out in two phases. The first phase, the quantitative stage, involved administering the structured survey to all identified receiving teachers in the Schools Division of Legazpi City. The second phase, the qualitative stage, engaged a purposive sample of these teachers in interviews to explore their perspectives more deeply. This sequential explanatory design allowed for an initial broad understanding of the phenomenon followed by a more nuanced exploration of the emerging patterns.

Research Instrument

The researcher utilized a validated structured survey questionnaire to investigate receiving teachers' difficulty level in instructing mainstreamed deaf learners. The questionnaire

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addressed various aspects, including lesson delivery, providing instructions, managing breakout groups, and conducting assessments. Additionally, the researcher interviewed selected receiving teachers to explore strategies for coping with the struggles encountered and gain further insights beyond the questionnaire. In the interview, receiving teachers had the opportunity to suggest improvements in these areas. The research questionnaire is found in Appendix C, page 90.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedures of this study were conducted systematically to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings. Before data collection, the researcher secured approval from the Schools Division Office of Legazpi City and obtained consent from the school heads and teacher-participants involved in the study. Once approval was granted, the researcher identified and selected receiving teachers from various schools within the division who had experience handling mainstreamed deaf learners. A validated research instrument, which included both quantitative survey questionnaires and a qualitative interview guide, was distributed to the selected respondents.

The quantitative data were collected through the administration of the survey questionnaires designed to assess the level of difficulty encountered by teachers and the adaptive strategies they employed in lesson delivery, providing instructions, managing breakout groups, and conducting formative and summative assessments. Respondents were given ample time to answer the survey, and the researcher ensured that all questions were clearly understood before they completed the form.

To supplement the quantitative data, individual interviews were conducted with selected teacher-participants using a semi-structured interview guide. These interviews aimed to gather deeper insights into the teachers' experiences, perceived opportunities, and reflections on handling deaf learners in inclusive classrooms. The responses were recorded with the participants' permission and later transcribed for thematic analysis.

All gathered data were organized and tabulated accordingly. Quantitative data were subjected to statistical treatment, including the computation of weighted means and rankings,

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while qualitative responses were analyzed thematically to extract relevant patterns and significant narratives related to the research objectives.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were fifty-three receiving teachers from the Schools Division of Legazpi City who implement mainstream programs for deaf learners. Specifically, the study focused on teachers from Legazpi City National High School, Banquerohan National High School, and Banquerohan Elementary School. Across these schools, there were 15 mainstreamed deaf learners and 53 receiving teachers who work directly with them. In the quantitative part, total enumeration was used, and all 53 available receiving teachers were given a chance to participate in the survey. This technique enabled the capture of a full representation of the population of all the teachers dealing with deaf students in the selected learning institutions and the measurement of the challenge they encounter in the classroom activities.

For the qualitative study, purposive sampling was applied to identify teachers who had a considerable amount of experience working with mainstreamed deaf students. The purposive sampling method was adopted to guarantee that the research was based on professionals who had hands-on experience in inclusive education, and this was an essential requirement for conducting an intensive investigation on their experiences and strategies to cope with their constraints. The selection of professionals who were actively working under inclusive education settings provided a detailed insight into the actual conditions of the receiving teachers.

Although convenience sampling is a non-probability method of selecting participants for convenience or ease of access, purposive sampling was intentionally used in the interview phase of the study to make certain that the respondents have had direct experiences related to mainstreaming deaf learners. This method allowed the study to obtain targeted qualitative insights from teachers who are directly involved in inclusive education, complementing the quantitative findings from the survey.

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Sampling Technique

Total enumeration was used as the sampling technique in this study. This approach involved including all receiving teachers in the Schools Division of Legazpi City who were handling mainstreamed deaf learners during the study's conduct. Total enumeration was chosen to ensure that the data gathered represented the complete perspectives and experiences of the entire population of teachers involved in the study. Since the number of eligible respondents was manageable and clearly defined, this method was appropriate for obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the struggles, adaptive strategies, and opportunities encountered by receiving teachers. Additionally, total enumeration enhanced the accuracy and credibility of the findings by eliminating sampling bias and allowing for the inclusion of all available sources within the target group.

Study Site

This research was conducted within the Schools Division of Legazpi City, specifically in three public schools that implement mainstream programs accommodating deaf learners: Legazpi City National High School, Banquerohan National High School, and Banquerohan Elementary School. These schools were chosen due to their active participation in inclusive education, providing a setting for learners with special needs within the regular education framework.

Legazpi City National High School is one of the largest secondary schools in the region, offering a wide range of academic and vocational programs. It is recognized for its commitment to inclusive education and has made strides in accommodating students with disabilities, including those who are deaf.

Banquerohan National High School is another key school in the study, serving a diverse student population. Known for its efforts in integrating learners with special needs into general education classrooms, it has become a model for inclusive education in the area.

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Banquerohan Elementary School caters to younger learners and is part of the community's educational network, providing inclusive services at the elementary level. The school has adopted various strategies to support deaf learners, ensuring that they can engage in mainstream learning alongside their hearing peers.

These three schools were specifically chosen for their role in implementing mainstream programs for deaf learners, making them ideal settings for examining the adaptive strategies and challenges faced by receiving teachers in inclusive classrooms.

Statistical Treatment

In the treatment of data, descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the responses for the first objective, which aimed to assess the level of difficulty that receiving teachers experience when handling mainstreamed deaf learners. The main statistical tools used for this objective were frequency (f), percentage distribution (%), and the Weighted Mean (WM). The Weighted Mean formula, represented as $WM = \frac{\sum fw}{N}$, where "f" denotes frequency (the number of responses), "w" is the weight (numerical rating), and "N" is the total number of respondents, was applied to quantify the data. This approach allowed for a clear understanding of how frequently specific difficulties were encountered by teachers. The weighted mean provided a numerical value that could be categorized according to different levels of difficulty. To guide the analysis, numerical values were assigned an adjectival description: 3.50 – 4.00 indicated "Very Hard," 2.50 – 3.49 indicated "Difficult," 1.50 – 2.49 signified "Slightly Hard," and 1.00 – 1.49 was categorized as "Not At All Hard." This categorization helped the researcher to understand which aspects of teaching mainstreamed deaf learners were most challenging and which were less problematic for the teachers.

For objective number 2, which focused on the strategies used by receiving teachers, the responses were coded and grouped into specific categories. The numerical value and adjectival description for the frequency of these strategies were also categorized: 3.50 – 4.00 for "Always," 2.50 – 3.49 for "Often," 1.50 – 2.49 for "Sometimes," and 1.00 – 1.49 for

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"Never." This categorization helped to quantify how often particular strategies were implemented in the classroom, providing a clear picture of teachers' practices in inclusive settings.

Objective number 3, which sought to explore the recommendations provided by teachers for improving the mainstreaming process, was also analyzed through the responses to the interviews. In this phase, the interview data were carefully examined to identify key themes related to the challenges and strategies that teachers felt could improve the educational experiences of deaf learners. The responses from teachers were categorized into various recommendations, such as the need for more professional development, improved teaching resources, better classroom support, and enhanced collaboration among educators. This qualitative data helped to generate in-depth insights into what changes were necessary to improve the mainstreaming process. By employing both descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, the researcher ensured a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, strategies, and recommendations relevant to mainstreamed deaf learners, and the findings from these analyses will contribute to informing policy recommendations and enhancing teaching practices in inclusive education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part presents the tables, figures, and analysis of the variables gathered from the respondents through reading tests and interviews. It also includes the interpretation of the data gathered to show the receiving teachers' adaptive teaching strategies and difficulties in handling mainstreamed Grades 7-12 deaf learners in the Schools Division of Legazpi City.

Survey questionnaires that were distributed to the receiving teachers in the Schools Division of Legazpi City served as the basis to identify the level of difficulty they experienced in handling deaf learners considering lesson delivery, providing instructions, managing breakout groups and formative and summative assessments.

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Strategies of Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners

This study also identified the adaptive strategies that receiving teachers employ in handling deaf learners during lesson delivery, providing Instructions, managing breakout groups, and formative and summative assessments.

Lesson delivery is a critical aspect of instruction that directly affects how well deaf learners can access and understand the curriculum in mainstream classrooms. This study assessed the adaptive strategies employed by receiving teachers in the Schools Division of Legazpi City to determine how often they implement inclusive methods when delivering lessons to mainstreamed deaf learners.

Table 1a presents the weighted mean, descriptive interpretation, and rank of the strategies receiving teachers use during lesson delivery for mainstreamed deaf learners.

Teachers interviewed expressed that they primarily rely on visual aids, clear articulation, and written materials to ensure comprehension among deaf learners.

Qualitative interviews provided valuable context to these findings. Teacher A explained,

"I try my best to face my deaf students and speak slowly, especially when I know they are lip-reading. Sending visual materials before or after class really helps them."

Table 1a

Adaptive Strategies Employed by Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners on Lesson Delivery

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Description | Rank |
|--|---------------|-------------|------|
| a. I use sign language. | 2.60 | Often | 10 |
| b. I face my deaf learners when I speak. | 3.28 | Often | 3.5 |

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| | | | |
|--|-------------|-------|-----|
| c. I usually speak clearly, emphasizing keywords. I repeat and rephrase when necessary. | 3.19 | Often | 6.5 |
| d. I give my deaf learners time to look at the visual content and take it in before I start speaking. (They need time to switch between the visual and the auditory.) | 3.33 | Often | 1 |
| e. If I use video in my class teaching, I try to find captioned or sign language-interpreted options. If these aren't available, I consider how else to engage my deaf learners with the learning material in the video. | 2.95 | Often | 9 |
| f. I reduce the background noise in the room | 3.05 | Often | 8 |
| g. I repeat questions or responses from other learners. | 3.21 | Often | 5 |
| h. I ask my deaf learners how they feel most comfortable participating in class discussions. | 3.19 | Often | 6.5 |
| i. I send copies of my teaching notes and any visual aids I use in the lesson to deaf learners. | 3.30 | Often | 2 |
| j. I adjust my teaching strategies according to whatever deaf learners feel comfortable with. | 3.28 | Often | 3.5 |

LEGEND: Range Adjectival Description

- 3.50 – 4.00 – Always
- 2.50 – 3.49 – Often
- 1.50 – 2.49 – Sometimes
- 1.00 – 1.49 – Never

This highlights the importance of both visual orientation and pre/post-lesson reinforcement through materials. Teacher B emphasized student-centeredness, saying,

"I always ask my deaf students if they prefer notes, drawings, or even simple gestures—whatever makes them more comfortable."

Such flexibility indicates a deepening practice of responsive and adaptive pedagogy. Teacher C shared,

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"Wala akong formal training sa sign language kaya nagiimprovise na lang ako. Minsan nagsusulat na lang ako sa papel or sa board para mas maintindihan nila."

This underscores the need for structured training, especially in basic sign communication, which remains underutilized despite its importance.

Teacher D pointed out the sensory environment, stating:

"Pinapapatay ko muna ang electric fan kapag mag-e-explain ako, kasi mahirap para sa kanila kapag maingay. Tinutulungan ko silang makita ang labi ko habang nagsasalita."

This illustrates thoughtful strategies to reduce distractions and enhance lip-reading. Teacher E added:

"Kung walang captions ang video, sinasamahan ko na lang ng kwento o paliwanag habang pinapanood nila. Pero mas maganda talaga kung may caption o interpreter."

Her comment supports the quantitative data showing lower scores for captioned or interpreted videos, which suggests both a lack of resources and an opportunity for improvement.

The most frequently employed strategy, with the highest weighted mean (3.33), was giving deaf learners time to absorb visual content before speaking, indicating an awareness of the visual-auditory processing gap. This highlights teachers' sensitivity to the cognitive needs of deaf learners. Similarly, sending teaching notes and visual aids (3.30), and adjusting strategies based on learner preferences (3.28), ranked highly, demonstrating the practice of differentiated instruction.

Interestingly, the use of sign language ranked lowest (2.60), suggesting a potential gap in teacher training or proficiency in this area. This aligns with concerns raised in the qualitative interviews, where many teachers admitted they lacked formal sign language training and relied heavily on improvised gestures or written cues. Meanwhile, teachers

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moderately practiced the use of accessible instructional materials, such as finding captioned or sign language–interpreted videos (2.95), and reducing background noise in the classroom by turning off fans and other devices (3.05) to support better communication and comprehension for deaf learners. These practices indicate teachers’ efforts to create a more inclusive learning environment despite limitations in formal training.

These findings underscore the importance of equipping receiving teachers with formal training in sign language and inclusive strategies to enhance lesson delivery. The relatively lower use of videos with captions or interpreted content (2.95) also suggests the need for improved access to multimedia resources. These findings support the study's objective to assess the current strategies and struggles of receiving teachers and inform policy recommendations for inclusive education.

This study reinforces the principles found in the Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2018) and Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson, 2001), both of which advocate for multiple means of content delivery and response to individual learning needs. The results also align with Vygotsky’s (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes scaffolding in the learning process. The relatively low use of sign language as a scaffold reflects an ongoing gap that must be addressed through targeted training and support. Research by Antia et al. (2002) similarly found that while many mainstream teachers are willing to support deaf learners, a lack of specialized training often hinders their effectiveness. In the context of providing instructions to mainstreamed deaf learners, teachers demonstrated consistent efforts to modify their instructional delivery to ensure clarity and accessibility.

Providing instructions is a vital part of classroom communication that affects how students engage with learning tasks. For deaf learners in mainstreamed settings, the clarity and accessibility of instructions are essential for full participation and academic success. This portion of the study investigated how receiving teachers in the Schools Division of Legazpi City adapt their methods when delivering instructions to deaf learners, aiming to understand

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which inclusive practices are consistently used and how these practices support learner understanding.

Table 1b shows the weighted mean scores, descriptive interpretations, and ranks of adaptive instructional strategies utilized by receiving teachers to assist mainstreamed deaf learners in providing instructions.

In addition to the quantitative findings, teachers identified a wide variety of instructional adaptations. Common themes include the use of peer tutoring, writing instructions on the board, visual and multimodal aids, differentiated and personalized instruction, and even using chat on paper or phones to bridge communication gaps. Teacher A said,

"Lagi kong sinisigurado na makita ako ng deaf learners habang nagsasalita ako. Tinutulungan ko rin sila sa pamamagitan ng pagsusulat ng instructions at pagpapagamit ng visual aids."

Table 1b

Adaptive Strategies Employed by Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners on Providing Instructions

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Description | Rank |
|---|---------------|-------------|------|
| a. I use sign language. | 2.67 | Often | 5 |
| b. I face my deaf learners when I speak. | 2.93 | Often | 4 |
| c. I usually speak clearly, emphasizing keywords. I repeat and rephrase when necessary. | 3.33 | Often | 3 |
| d. I give my deaf learners time to look at the visual content and take it in before I start speaking. (They need time to switch between the visual and the auditory.) | 3.35 | Often | 2 |
| e. If I use video in my class teaching, I try to find captioned or sign language-interpreted options. If | 3.47 | Often | 1 |

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| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| these aren't available, I consider how else to engage my deaf learners with the learning material in the video. | | | |
|---|--|--|--|

LEGEND: Range Adjectival Description

- 3.50 – 4.00 – Always
- 2.50 – 3.49 – Often
- 1.50 – 2.49 – Sometimes
- 1.00 – 1.49 – Never

This demonstrates an intuitive application of multimodal support strategies. Teacher B noted:

"Kapag nagbibigay ako ng instructions, binibigay ko rin ito in advance sa papel o minsan pinapasa sa chat para masundan nila kahit di nila agad marinig."

This use of written or digital messaging platforms indicates the teacher's proactive effort to bridge auditory gaps.

Teacher C shared,

"I always supplement spoken instructions with written instructions and ask peers to explain them again to our deaf students."

This echoes the importance of peer scaffolding, showing how regular learners can become allies in ensuring comprehension. Teacher D highlighted the role of gestures and classroom culture:

"Simple gestures and a buddy system help a lot, especially when I'm busy with the whole class."

Such strategies reflect an inclusive environment where collaboration helps fill instructional gaps.

Teacher E further elaborated on adapting instruction by saying,

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"Kung may visuals ako sa PowerPoint, binibigyan ko sila ng printout ahead of time.

Kung may video, tinitingnan ko muna kung may captions—kung wala, sinasamahan ko ito ng kwento o simpleng explanation."

This aligns directly with the top-rated strategy in Table 2b and shows how inclusive practices are being applied even with limited multimedia resources. These strategies reflect grassroots, collaborative effort to support the learning needs of deaf students despite limited resources.

The highest-rated strategy was the use of captioned or sign language-interpreted videos (3.47), emphasizing the value teachers place on accessible media in instruction. Providing time for students to process visual content before speaking (3.35) and speaking clearly while emphasizing keywords (3.33) were also frequently used, showing teachers' awareness of communication pacing and clarity. However, the use of sign language (2.67) received a lower score compared to other strategies, suggesting a persistent gap in sign language proficiency among receiving teachers. Notably, while ranked lower, this strategy is still used "often," indicating that teachers make efforts to overcome communication barriers even without formal training.

The results affirm that teachers are actively trying to accommodate the needs of deaf learners through varied instructional methods, but also reveal limitations in formal preparation, particularly in the use of sign language. This highlights the need for institutional support, such as sign language training, access to assistive technologies, and professional development in inclusive instruction. These findings contribute directly to the study's goal of evaluating teacher strategies and proposing policies and amending existing ones that will enhance inclusive classroom practices.

The findings are supported by the principles of Multimodal Learning Theory (Mayer, 2009), which advocates for using various channels—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—for instruction. They also resonate with Inclusive Pedagogy frameworks (Florian & Black-Hawkins,

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2011), which emphasize adapting instruction to respond to the needs of all learners. The continued reliance on visual, peer-assisted, and written forms of instruction aligns with the findings of Antia et al. (2002), who stressed the importance of social and instructional support for deaf students in mainstream classrooms. Moreover, the emphasis on flexibility and learner-centered methods reflects Tomlinson's (2001) model of differentiated instruction.

Group work is an essential component of inclusive education as it fosters collaboration, communication, and peer support. For deaf learners in mainstreamed settings, participating in breakout groups presents both opportunities and challenges due to communication barriers and potential exclusion. This part of the study sought to explore the specific adaptive strategies employed by receiving teachers to ensure that deaf learners are meaningfully included in group activities, a critical domain of classroom instruction that promotes social-emotional and academic growth.

The data in Table 1c illustrate the strategies employed by receiving teachers to support deaf learners in group activities. All items fall within the "Often" range, suggesting consistent effort among teachers to ensure participation and equitable learning experiences in collaborative settings.

Teachers shared a wide array of practices beyond those listed in the table, highlighting their creativity and commitment to inclusion. Some noted using peer tutoring, individualized activity sheets, and multimodal instructional strategies like picture analysis, PowerPoint, and manipulatives.

In interviews, teachers shared additional strategies that reflect a deeper level of inclusion. Teacher A stated,

"I make sure that each group has members who are patient and willing to work with our deaf learners. Minsan, ako mismo ang pumipili ng grupo nila para may mag-aalaga sa kanila."

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Table 1c

Adaptive Strategies Employed by Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners on facilitating Break-Out Groups

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Description | Rank |
|--|---------------|-------------|------|
| a. I allow my deaf learners to participate in group activities whenever possible. | 3.42 | Often | 2.5 |
| b. I let regular students use sign language and other forms of communication when interacting with people who are deaf or hard of hearing. | 3.37 | Often | 4 |
| c. I monitor the participation of my deaf learners. | 3.33 | Often | 5 |
| d. I employ different rubrics in grading my deaf learners. | 3.44 | Often | 1 |
| e. I provide other activities to my deaf learners whenever they cannot do the group tasks. | 3.42 | Often | 2.5 |

LEGEND: Range Adjectival Description

- 3.50 – 4.00 – Always
- 2.50 – 3.49 – Often
- 1.50 – 2.49 – Sometimes
- 1.00 – 1.49 – Never

This demonstrates intentional group composition and emphasizes the role of empathy in collaboration.

Teacher B explained,

"I assign specific roles within the group to ensure that both deaf and hearing students participate and feel included. Visual aids and manipulatives help a lot, especially in Math."

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This structured approach helps mitigate communication barriers while maintaining meaningful engagement.

Teacher C shared,

"I allow my deaf learners to choose their groupmates so they feel at ease, and I provide written and visual instructions."

Here, learner choice fosters comfort and confidence, while differentiated modes of instruction bridge understanding.

Teacher D elaborated,

"Kapag hindi nila kaya yung group task, binibigyan ko sila ng similar individual task. After class, chinicheck ko din ang participation nila one-on-one."

This response highlights the teacher's awareness of individual capacity and their effort to personalize group work alternatives.

Teacher E added,

"I encourage my hearing students to learn basic signs. Sabi ko nga, communication is everyone's responsibility. Masaya kasi nakikita ko silang nagtutulungan, kahit iba-iba ang gamit na paraan."

Such an approach fosters a collaborative, inclusive classroom culture where both deaf and hearing students benefit.

Among the strategies, allowing deaf learners to participate in group work (3.42) and providing alternative tasks when group participation isn't feasible (3.42) received the highest weighted means. These reflect strong teacher initiative in maintaining equity and engagement. Interestingly, the lowest-rated item, employing differentiated rubrics (3.44), still falls within the upper "Often" range, suggesting that while grading adaptations are considered, they may

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require more clarity or consistency in practice. The qualitative responses also reveal teachers' awareness of both the academic and emotional needs of deaf learners, often creating a more inclusive and personalized group work experience.

The findings reinforce the importance of inclusive group facilitation and underscore the need for teachers to receive continued support in designing differentiated assessments, peer-mediated instruction, and accessible group dynamics. These strategies directly support the study's objective of identifying adaptive instructional methods and challenges in handling mainstreamed deaf learners. The consistent use of flexible practices demonstrates the willingness of teachers to adapt but also points to the need for structured training in collaborative inclusion models.

These results echo the conclusions of Friend and Cook (2010), who emphasized the value of cooperative learning in inclusive settings when supported by planning and role assignment. They also align with Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which highlights the significance of social interaction in learning, especially when mediated by more knowledgeable peers. Moreover, these practices align with UNESCO's 2009 Inclusive Education Guidelines, which emphasize the importance of using varied teaching approaches and encouraging peer support as key elements in fostering inclusive learning environments.

Assessments serve as critical checkpoints for both teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. However, for deaf learners in mainstreamed settings, conventional assessment formats often pose comprehension barriers due to the complexity of language and time constraints. This variable explores the strategies receiving teachers employ to ensure that both formative and summative assessments are accessible, fair, and inclusive to deaf learners without compromising educational standards.

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Table 1d

Adaptive Strategies Employed by Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners on Conducting Formative and Summative Assessments

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Description | Rank |
|--|---------------|-------------|------|
| a. I give test questions different from the ones I give the regular learners. | 3.42 | Often | 3 |
| b. I use simple words and sentences. | 3.60 | Always | 2 |
| c. I shorten test items. | 3.63 | Always | 1 |
| d. I employ different rubrics in rating essays and other non-multiple types of test items. | 3.37 | Often | 4 |
| e. I extend time. | 3.35 | Often | 5 |

LEGEND: Range Adjectival Description

- 3.50 – 4.00 – Always
- 2.50 – 3.49 – Often
- 1.50 – 2.49 – Sometimes
- 1.00 – 1.49 – Never

The results in Table 2d show that most teachers often or always adjust their assessment methods to accommodate the unique needs of deaf learners.

The narrative data collected from interviews provide a richer understanding of these practices. Teachers shared their strategies that demonstrate responsiveness, creativity, and a genuine concern for the learning success of deaf students.

Teacher A noted,

"My deaf students often come to my table before exams to clarify the example questions, I give them. It helps build their confidence and reduces anxiety."

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This emphasizes the role of pre-assessment scaffolding in improving comprehension and emotional preparedness.

Teacher B shared,

"I prepare visual-based tests. May mga picture identification, matching types with images, at minsan ay puzzle format na mas naiintindihan nila."

Such techniques highlight the use of visual modalities as alternative formats for expressing understanding.

Teacher C stated,

"Sa mga role-play assessments, I allow my deaf learners to present using gestures or signs. Sometimes, we use cellphone apps with sign language support."

This points to the integration of technology and multimodal expression in assessments, consistent with UDL principles.

Teacher D explained,

"I usually give fewer items—halimbawa 30 lang sa kanila, 50 sa iba—but with similar levels of difficulty. I also give extra time kung kailangan."

This reflects differentiation not in difficulty but in quantity and pacing, allowing for equity without lowering standards.

Teacher E added,

"Nagbibigay ako ng practice test a day before the actual quiz para may time silang magtanong. Mahalaga yung may prior exposure."

The most frequently practiced adaptive strategy is shortening test items (3.63), closely followed by simplifying language (3.60), both rated as "Always." These highlight teachers'

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awareness of language processing challenges for deaf learners and their proactive efforts to increase clarity. Conversely, while still within the “Often” range, extending time (3.35) and adjusting rubrics (3.37) were rated slightly lower, suggesting that while these are used, they may not be as systematically applied as language-based modifications. Qualitative data further reinforce the importance of differentiated instruction, peer support, and individualized materials, echoing a flexible and learner-centered assessment culture among teachers.

These findings provide evidence that teachers strive to create equitable assessment opportunities for deaf learners. This supports the study’s overarching goal to identify adaptive teaching practices for mainstreamed deaf students. It emphasizes the importance of institutionalizing support mechanisms such as training on differentiated rubrics, assessment scaffolding, and inclusive assessment design. Additionally, the use of visual, auditory, and tactile supports in testing indicates a strong alignment with universal design for learning (UDL) principles, which should be encouraged through policy and professional development programs.

The strategies observed align with Tomlinson’s (2014) principles of differentiated instruction, which advocate for modifying content, process, and product based on student needs. These also reflect CAST’s Universal Design for Learning (2018) guidelines that emphasize offering multiple means of representation and expression to support diverse learners. The use of simplified language, extended time, and visual aids is consistent with research by Luckner and Bowen (2006), which highlights that adapted assessments improve learning outcomes for students with hearing loss.

Inclusive education requires the adaptation of teaching strategies to accommodate the learning needs of students with disabilities, particularly those with hearing impairments. This variable consolidates and examines the overall adaptive strategies employed by receiving teachers across four critical instructional areas: lesson delivery, providing instructions, break-out group facilitation, and the administration of formative and summative assessments. Understanding the overall trends in teacher practices helps to identify which areas are most

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and least responsive to the needs of mainstreamed deaf learners, thus guiding more targeted professional development and instructional interventions.

The summary of teacher strategies across the four categories is shown in Table 1e. All domains fall under the "Often" category based on their weighted means, suggesting consistent but not always systematic use of adaptive strategies.

Table 1e
Adaptive Strategies of Receiving Teachers in Handling
Mainstreamed Deaf Learners

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Description | Rank |
|--|---------------|-------------|------|
| a. Lesson Delivery | 3.14 | Often | 4 |
| b. Providing Instructions | 3.15 | Often | 3 |
| c. Breakout Groups | 3.40 | Often | 2 |
| d. Formative and Summative Assessments | 3.47 | Often | 1 |
| Total | 3.29 | Often | |

LEGEND: Range Adjectival Description

- 3.50 – 4.00 – Always
- 2.50 – 3.49 – Often
- 1.50 – 2.49 – Sometimes
- 1.00 – 1.49 – Never

The qualitative data provide a more nuanced understanding of teacher strategies. Teachers emphasized the use of differentiated instruction, written instructions, peer tutoring, and visual aids across all domains. In assessment, teachers shared that they shorten test items, simplify language, and allow the use of sign language apps or example-based clarifications before exams. For group work, teachers apply buddy systems or allow deaf learners to choose groupmates they feel comfortable with. Instructional delivery often includes sign language, simple gestures, written directions, and multimodal resources such as

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PowerPoint and videos with captions. These testimonies highlight teacher creativity and a learner-centered approach, even in the absence of formal training in special education.

Among the four areas, formative and summative assessments (3.47) ranked highest, showing that teachers put considerable effort into ensuring equity during evaluations. The area of break-out groups followed closely (3.40), reflecting the effectiveness of collaborative learning when supported with peer mentoring and role assignments. Providing instructions (3.15) and lesson delivery (3.14), though still rated as "Often," received lower scores. This suggests a need for more structured adaptation in how teachers explain and present content. These results imply that while teachers are responsive in adjusting assessments, they may require more support and resources to consistently integrate inclusive practices into everyday lesson delivery and instruction.

The findings affirm the presence of inclusive strategies in mainstream classrooms, particularly in assessment practices. However, the relatively lower scores in lesson delivery and instructional clarity suggest areas where professional development is crucial. These insights can guide training programs focused on universal design for learning, sign language basics, and multimodal teaching strategies. The study's results support the objective of promoting equitable education by identifying both strengths and gaps in teacher practices. This aligns with DepEd's push toward inclusive education frameworks as per DO No. 72, s. 2009, and the global thrust of SDG 4 on inclusive and quality education for all.

The findings support Tomlinson's (2014) advocacy for differentiated instruction and connect with Luckner and Bowen's (2006) emphasis on tailored classroom strategies for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Furthermore, the consistent use of simplified language and multimodal aids aligns with CAST's (2018) Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, which encourage multiple means of content representation, engagement, and expression. While positive practices are evident, the study echoes Pagliano and Gillies (2012), who argued that inclusive success relies on continued training, resource allocation, and mindset shift among educators to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

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Struggles of Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners

Lesson delivery plays a crucial role in inclusive education, especially in mainstreamed settings where deaf learners are integrated into regular classrooms. For receiving teachers, delivering lessons that are accessible, clear, and inclusive for deaf students can present multiple challenges. This section evaluates the specific areas where teachers experience varying degrees of difficulty in lesson delivery, providing insights into the practical barriers of inclusive instruction for deaf learners.

Table 2a presents the weighted mean scores and corresponding descriptions of the level of struggles experienced by receiving teachers in delivering lessons to deaf learners. The highest-rated struggles, both with a weighted mean of 3.14 and ranked 1.5, include: (a) ensuring effective communication through sign language, facial expressions, and natural gestures, and (e) finding captioned or sign language-interpreted options for video content or suitable alternatives. These were followed by items (b), (d), and (g), each with a weighted mean of 2.98, indicating consistent challenges in maintaining visual communication and facilitating classroom interactions. The least difficult task, based on the lowest weighted mean of 2.35, was (i) sending copies of teaching notes and visual aids to deaf learners, which fell under the "Slightly Hard" category.

The results highlight that the most significant struggle for teachers lies in non-verbal and multimedia communication strategies. The need to master sign language, gestures, and facial expressions (3.14) shows that communication remains the biggest barrier in teaching deaf learners. Closely tied to this is the difficulty in sourcing accessible multimedia materials (3.14), suggesting a lack of readily available inclusive resources. Moderate struggles include maintaining visual focus during speech (2.98) and modifying peer interactions (2.98), indicating that even seemingly simple interactions require deliberate planning. On the lower end, tasks such as sharing visual materials (2.35) and using visual labels (2.77) are less burdensome, possibly because these are easier to prepare and implement. This pattern

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suggests that real-time, dynamic classroom communication is more challenging than pre-prepared materials.

Table 2a
Level of Struggles of Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners on Lesson Delivery

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Description | Rank |
|--|---------------|-------------|------|
| a. Ensuring effective communication through sign language, facial expressions, and natural gestures. | 3.14 | Hard | 1.5 |
| b. Facing the deaf learners when speaking to ensure they can see facial expressions and lip movements. | 2.98 | Hard | 4 |
| c. Speaking slowly in a normal tone and emphasizing key words, and repeating (and) or rephrasing when necessary. | 2.84 | Hard | 8 |
| d. Giving deaf learners time to switch between visual and auditory content. | 2.98 | Hard | 4 |
| e. Finding captioned or sign language-interpreted options for video content or finding alternative ways to engage deaf learners with the material. | 3.14 | Hard | 1.5 |
| f. Reducing visual distractions in the classroom. | 2.70 | Hard | 10 |
| g. Modifying questions or responses from other learners to ensure that deaf learners can follow the conversation. | 2.98 | Hard | 4 |
| h. Asking deaf learners how they feel most comfortable participating in class discussions. | 2.86 | Hard | 7 |
| i. Sending copies of teaching notes and visual aids to deaf learners. | 2.35 | Hard | 11 |
| j. Adjusting/Modifying teaching strategies to meet the appropriate educational needs and preferences of deaf learners. | 2.95 | Hard | 6 |
| k. Using labels, captions, and pictures all the time when presenting lessons. | 2.77 | Hard | 9 |

LEGEND: Range Adjectival Description

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- 3.50 – 4.00 – Very Hard
- 2.50 – 3.49 – Hard
- 1.50 – 2.49 – Slightly Hard
- 1.00 – 1.49 – Not at All Hard

These findings reinforce the need for policy support, teacher training, and accessible resources, which directly address the research objective of evaluating the opportunities and challenges that receiving teachers face. The high level of difficulty in communication tasks suggests a gap in teacher preparedness, which in turn informs the second objective—to propose policy recommendations that enhance instructional delivery. For instance, the findings can justify the integration of sign language training and multimedia adaptation strategies in teacher development programs. The least difficult tasks show that when support materials are accessible, teachers are more capable of meeting inclusive needs, suggesting that institutional support in materials preparation can ease instructional burden.

The findings align with existing literature that underscores the lack of adequate training and preparation of teachers in handling deaf learners. Marschark and Spencer (2010) argue that effective education for deaf students requires specialized instructional strategies, particularly in communication and resource adaptation. Similarly, Antia, Jones, Reed, and Kreimeyer (2011) emphasize that successful inclusion depends on the teacher’s ability to manage classroom communication and peer interactions effectively. The difficulty in accessing captioned or sign-interpreted media supports the observations of Bautista (2019), who found that inclusive learning materials remain limited in mainstream Philippine schools. These studies reinforce the urgent need for institutional training and material support for teachers, findings that support the proposed policy direction of this research.

Providing instructions is a fundamental aspect of classroom teaching, but in inclusive settings with deaf learners, this task can become significantly more complex. Instructions must be clear, accessible, and inclusive, requiring receiving teachers to adopt communication strategies that are often beyond their typical training. This variable seeks to measure the

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degree of difficulty that receiving teachers face in delivering instructions to deaf learners in mainstreamed classrooms.

According to the data in Table 2b, the highest-rated challenge was "Using sign language to effectively communicate instructions and information," with a weighted mean of 3.37, described as Hard and ranked first. This finding strongly suggests that the use of sign language is a major hurdle for teachers, many of whom lack formal training in it. "Animatedly giving instructions" followed with a mean of 2.98, also rated Difficult, indicating that while teachers attempt to compensate through expressive gestures, it still presents difficulty. Similarly, "Modifying instructions" had a mean of 2.86, ranked third, also in the Difficult category. On the other hand, both "Assigning regular learners as buddies" and "Writing clear instructions" were rated 2.26, falling under Slightly Hard, and sharing the fourth and fifth ranks.

Insights from qualitative interviews help to contextualize these quantitative findings. Teacher A shared:

"As a receiving teacher, using sign language is my biggest struggle. I try to act things out, use visuals, and write notes, but I know it's not enough. I feel limited and worry that the students might not fully understand the instructions."

Table 2b

Level of Struggles of Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners on Providing Instructions

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Description | Rank |
|--|---------------|-------------|------|
| a. Using sign language to effectively (to) communicate instructions and information. | 3.37 | Hard | 1 |
| b. Animatedly giving instructions to help deaf learners understand the content. | 2.98 | Hard | 2 |

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| | | | |
|---|-------------|---------------|-----|
| c. Modifying instructions to ensure deaf learners can grasp the information. | 2.86 | Hard | 3 |
| d. Assigning regular learners as buddies to help provide instructions in a way accessible to deaf learners. | 2.26 | Slightly Hard | 4.5 |
| e. Writing instructions for deaf learners to read, ensuring the language is clear and concise. | 2.26 | Slightly Hard | 4.5 |

LEGEND: Range Adjectival Description

- 3.50 – 4.00 – Very Hard
- 2.50 – 3.49 – Hard
- 1.50 – 2.49 – Slightly Hard
- 1.00 – 1.49 – Not At All Hard

This aligns with the top-rated difficulty in the quantitative data and highlights the communication gap experienced by many educators. Teacher B emphasized the relative ease of written communication:

"Writing clear instructions is easier for me, especially with visual aids. I sometimes ask a regular student to help explain to the deaf learner, and that helps bridge the gap."

This underscores the effectiveness of peer support and written instruction as practical, accessible strategies in inclusive settings.

Meanwhile, Teacher C reflected on the challenge of modifying instructions for clarity:

"Even when I simplify my instructions, I still have to check if they get it. It's not just about using easier words—it's about making sure they understand, and that takes time and patience."

Teacher D noted the emotional and instructional toll of the communication barrier:

"Sometimes, I feel helpless. I want to connect with my deaf students, but without proper training in sign language, I can't be the teacher they need me to be. It affects my confidence."

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And Teacher E offered a balanced perspective, stating:

"I find animated instructions helpful. I make eye contact, use gestures, and sometimes even act out instructions. It works for some tasks, but it's not always enough for complex topics."

These insights demonstrate how teachers rely on a mix of improvised communication, peer support, and written strategies to bridge the gap in instruction delivery. However, their reflections also reveal an overarching theme: the lack of formal training in deaf education, particularly in sign language, is a significant barrier to effective inclusive teaching. While written instruction and peer assistance ease some burdens, they cannot entirely replace the need for direct and accessible teacher-student communication.

This struggle aligns with findings from Marschark and Spencer (2010), who argue that communication competence is central to effective instruction for deaf learners. Antia et al. (2011) further assert that general education teachers often lack the specialized skills required to meet the needs of deaf students, leading to inconsistencies in instructional quality. Similarly, Bautista (2019) supports the use of written instruction and buddy systems, which are seen as manageable yet limited stopgaps rather than sustainable solutions. These findings suggest a critical gap in teacher preparation programs and point to the need for mandatory training in sign language and inclusive teaching methods. By addressing these gaps, educators can become more confident and capable in delivering meaningful instruction, ultimately improving the learning outcomes of mainstreamed deaf learners.

Facilitating break-out groups is a commonly used instructional strategy to promote collaborative learning. However, in inclusive settings with deaf learners, it presents unique challenges that require teachers to adapt their group facilitation methods. This variable explores how receiving teachers cope with the demands of managing deaf learners within small group activities, which are essential for developing communication, teamwork, and comprehension skills.

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As reflected in Table 2c, the most difficult tasks identified by receiving teachers were “Animatedly giving instructions to help deaf learners understand the content” and “Modifying instructions to ensure deaf learners can grasp the information,” both with a weighted mean of 2.60, described as Hard and jointly ranked 1.5. These are tasks that require the teacher to be spontaneous, adaptive, and highly aware of both verbal and non-verbal cues. Closely following these were “Writing instructions for deaf learners” (2.58, Hard, rank 3) and “Assigning regular learners as buddies” (2.56, Hard, rank 4). Interestingly, the task perceived as the least difficult was “Using sign language to effectively communicate instructions,” with a mean of 2.33, rated Slightly Hard and ranked last.

Qualitative feedback from the teacher interviews gives depth to these findings. Teacher A shared:

“In break-out groups, it’s challenging to manage everything at once—especially ensuring the deaf learner understands their role. Sometimes, I rely on written instructions or ask a peer to help, but it’s not always effective.”

Table 2c

Level of Struggles of Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners on Facilitating Break-out Groups

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Description | Rank |
|---|---------------|---------------|------|
| a. Using sign language to effectively (to) communicate instructions and information. | 2.33 | Slightly Hard | 5 |
| b. Animatedly giving instructions to help deaf learners understand the content. | 2.60 | Hard | 1.5 |
| c. Modifying instructions to ensure deaf learners can grasp the information. | 2.60 | Hard | 1.5 |
| d. Assigning regular learners as buddies to help provide instructions in a way accessible to deaf learners. | 2.56 | Hard | 4 |

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| | | | |
|--|------|------|---|
| e. Writing instructions for deaf learners to read, ensuring the language is clear and concise. | 2.58 | Hard | 3 |
|--|------|------|---|

LEGEND: Range Adjectival Description

- 3.50 – 4.00 – Very Hard
- 2.50 – 3.49 – Hard
- 1.50 – 2.49 – Slightly Hard
- 1.00 – 1.49 – Not At All Hard

This reflects the difficulty in balancing group management while supporting individual comprehension needs. Teacher B emphasized her efforts to use expressive communication:

"I try to gesture and act out the instructions more during group activities. But I still worry that the deaf student might not fully grasp the task, especially when the group moves ahead quickly."

Teacher C echoed similar concerns, stating:

"Facilitating group tasks takes extra effort because I have to constantly check if the deaf learner is following. Sometimes they just watch because they're not sure what to do. That's heartbreaking."

This sentiment highlights how communication gaps can lead to passive participation or exclusion.

On the other hand, Teacher D observed:

"Written instructions work better during group activities, especially if they're simplified and paired with visual cues. Still, I feel like I'm rushing to do all that and guide the other learners too."

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This suggests that even seemingly manageable strategies like written instructions can become burdensome when combined with broader teaching responsibilities. Teacher E added a perspective on peer support:

"I usually assign a buddy to help the deaf learner during group work. Most of the time, it helps—but only if the assigned student is responsible and willing to assist. Otherwise, the deaf learner gets left out."

This highlights the limitations of relying on buddy systems without proper training and oversight. Together, these narratives underscore that while sign language posed the least difficulty in this domain, it may be underused, with teachers defaulting to written or peer-assisted strategies due to a lack of fluency or confidence.

These findings suggest that break-out group facilitation presents a unique set of challenges that are distinct from whole-class instruction. The nature of group work—fluid, fast-paced, and dependent on peer interaction—amplifies the communication barriers faced by deaf learners and the instructional difficulties faced by teachers. Although written instructions and buddy systems offer some relief, they are only partially effective without proper structure and support. Moreover, the relatively lower rating for sign language use in this context may reflect avoidance rather than actual ease, pointing to a critical area for growth in inclusive teaching practices.

The results reinforce literature that points to the vulnerability of deaf learners in mainstream group settings. Marschark and Spencer (2010) emphasized how informal communication in groups often leaves deaf learners isolated. Antia et al. (2011) stressed that without planned inclusion strategies, these learners miss out on peer collaboration, a core aspect of group learning. Similarly, Bautista (2019) advocated for the institutionalization of visual tools and structured peer mediation in the Philippine setting—strategies that align well with the current study's findings. Therefore, these results advocate for professional development focused on inclusive facilitation methods, integration of sign language training,

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and the establishment of structured group protocols to ensure that all learners—especially the deaf—can actively and equitably participate in collaborative learning environments.

Assessments play a vital role in evaluating student progress, understanding, and mastery of competencies. In inclusive settings with deaf learners, formative and summative assessments must be adjusted to align with learners' language access and comprehension levels. This variable explores the extent to which receiving teachers struggle in modifying assessment practices to accommodate deaf students in mainstreamed classes.

Table 2d presents the challenges encountered by receiving teachers in modifying these assessments. The most difficult task was "Employing different rubrics for rating essays and other non-multiple types of test items," with a weighted mean of 2.58, categorized as Hard and ranked first. This was followed by "Simplifying the wording of test questions" (2.56, Hard, rank 2), and "Modifying instructions using simple words and sentences" (2.51, Hard, rank 3). In contrast, "Shortening test items" and "Extending the time allowed for deaf learners," both received a mean of 2.37, rated Slightly Hard and tied at rank 4.5.

The qualitative insights from teachers further illustrate the complexities of inclusive assessments. Teacher A shared:

"Pakiramdam ko minsan ay hindi patas ang paggawa ng hiwalay na rubric, pero alam kong iba ang paraan ng pagpapahayag ng kaalaman ng mga deaf learners. Mahirap hanapin ang tamang balanse."

This highlights the internal conflict teachers feel when trying to maintain fairness while accommodating different expressive modalities. Teacher B expressed concern about the clarity of interpretation:

"Madalas kong isinusulat muli ang mga tanong sa pagsusulit upang mas madali itong maintindihan, pero nag-aalala pa rin ako na baka mali ang pagkaintindi nila sa

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kahulugan. Nakakatulong ang pagbigay ng dagdag na oras, pero hindi nito palaging natutugunan ang pangunahing problema."

This reflects the struggle in ensuring that simplification retains the integrity of the original question. Teacher C added:

"I try to shorten and reword test items, but I always ask myself—am I testing the same competency? That's what makes assessment the hardest part for me."

Table 2d

Level of Struggles of Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners on Conducting Formative and Summative Assessments

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Description | Rank |
|--|---------------|---------------|------|
| a. Simplifying the wording of test questions (Adapting test questions to be different) from those given to regular learners. | 2.56 | Hard | 2 |
| b. Modifying instructions using simple words and sentences to ensure clarity and comprehension. | 2.51 | Hard | 3 |
| c. Shortening test items to reduce the complexity of the questions. | 2.37 | Slightly Hard | 4.5 |
| d. Employing different rubrics for rating essays and other non-multiple-choice types of test items. | 2.58 | Hard | 1 |
| e. Extending the time allowed for deaf learners to complete tests and assignments. | 2.37 | Slightly Hard | 4.5 |

LEGEND: Range Adjectival Description

- 3.50 – 4.00 – Very Hard
- 2.50 – 3.49 – Hard
- 1.50 – 2.49 – Slightly Hard
- 1.00 – 1.49 – Not At All Hard

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This sentiment underscores the cognitive and pedagogical challenges of modifying assessments without altering their intended learning outcomes.

Teacher D provided a practical observation:

"It's easier to give more time or let them answer last, but that doesn't always help if the instructions are not clear to them in the first place. That's why I wish we had a guide for assessment modifications."

This indicates the need for structured assessment tools or protocols specifically designed for deaf learners. Teacher E shared her experience with rating written outputs:

"When checking their essays or reflection papers, I sometimes hesitate. Do I focus more on grammar or ideas? Because some deaf learners write differently, it's hard to gauge fairly."

This feedback reinforces the difficulty teachers face in using uniform standards across diverse learners, especially when written expression is affected by language delays or different grammatical structures.

The findings show that while logistical adjustments like shortening test items or extending time are seen as relatively manageable, the conceptual tasks, such as modifying instructions and creating alternative rubrics, pose greater difficulty. These require more than technical adjustments; they demand pedagogical judgment, empathy, and a nuanced understanding of deaf learners' needs. The data emphasize the importance of targeted professional development in inclusive assessment strategies and the provision of ready-to-use assessment tools that are linguistically and cognitively accessible for deaf students.

These observations support the findings of Marschark, Lang, and Albertini (2002), who highlighted that standard assessments often disadvantage deaf learners unless adapted thoughtfully. Luckner and Bowen (2006) warned of the high risk of misassessment when teachers lack the training to differentiate assessments effectively. In the Philippine context,

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Bautista (2019) reiterated that without localized assessment policies, teachers struggle to implement inclusive practices. This current study validates those claims and adds empirical evidence from a grassroots perspective, calling for urgent reforms in both teacher training and policy to support equitable assessment in inclusive education.

The inclusion of deaf learners in mainstreamed classes presents distinct instructional challenges for receiving teachers. This variable summarizes and compares the overall level of difficulty teachers face across four instructional domains: lesson delivery, providing instructions, facilitating breakout groups, and conducting formative and summative assessments. Understanding these general struggles is critical for shaping responsive teacher support systems and inclusive education policy recommendations.

Table 1e shows that all domains posed moderate difficulties for receiving teachers, with lesson delivery ranked highest with a weighted mean of 2.88, interpreted as Hard. This is followed by providing instructions (2.63, Hard), breakout groups (2.53, Hard), and formative and summative assessments, which registered the lowest difficulty rating at 2.48 (Slightly Hard). The overall mean across the four areas is 2.63, categorizing the general experience of teachers as Hard.

Table 2e

Level of Struggles of Receiving Teachers in Handling Mainstreamed Deaf Learners

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Description | Rank |
|--|---------------|---------------|------|
| a. Lesson Delivery | 2.88 | Hard | 1 |
| b. Providing Instructions | 2.63 | Hard | 2 |
| c. Breakout Groups | 2.53 | Hard | 3 |
| d. Formative and Summative Assessments | 2.48 | Slightly Hard | 4 |
| Total | 2.63 | Hard | |

LEGEND: Range Adjectival Description

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- 3.50 – 4.00 – Very Hard
- 2.50 – 3.49 – Hard
- 1.50 – 2.49 – Slightly Hard
- 1.00 – 1.49 – Not At All Hard

Among the instructional domains, lesson delivery emerged as the most challenging. This includes maintaining visual communication, using gestures, modifying delivery style, and ensuring content accessibility through multiple modes. It requires real-time adjustments that many teachers are untrained for. Providing instructions, often overlooked, also scored high in difficulty. This task requires clarity, consistency, and visual strategies, all of which are demanding without adequate sign language proficiency or training in visual pedagogy.

Facilitating breakout groups, although slightly easier than the top two, still posed significant struggles (2.53). Teachers often rely on hearing students to support deaf peers, which, while helpful, is not always equitable or effective. Formative and summative assessments, though still a concern, were rated the least difficult (2.48, Slightly Hard), possibly because test formats are more flexible and allow for preparation and accommodations such as extended time and simplified instructions.

These findings directly contributed to the study, which is to evaluate the opportunities gained by receiving teachers, as they reveal the areas where teachers are learning to adapt and where they still struggle. The results also provided justifications to propose policy recommendations, especially in terms of capacity-building, development of inclusive lesson delivery tools, and providing institutional support for breakout group facilitation. Teachers are making efforts but lack the technical and institutional scaffolds to fully support deaf learners.

This study echoes the findings of Marschark, Lang, and Albertini (2002), who emphasized the complexity of real-time instruction for deaf learners due to language access barriers. Luckner and Bowen (2006) also pointed out that teachers often feel underprepared in delivering lessons and facilitating peer collaboration in inclusive environments. Similarly,

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Garcia and Tyler (2010) found that while assessments can be accommodated, interactive and group-based settings require more nuanced teacher strategies and greater institutional support. The results from this study locally affirm these observations and call for more structured and sustained support for inclusive education in the Philippines.

Opportunities for Mainstreamed Deaf Learners

Selected receiving teachers from the Schools Division of Legazpi City were interviewed to explore the opportunities and professional growth they experienced in teaching mainstreamed deaf learners. Their narratives revealed a profound transformation in teaching practices, professional empathy, and inclusive values.

Teacher C shared,

"Having deaf learners in my class pushed me to learn basic sign language. I never thought I'd be able to communicate through my hands. It was difficult at first, but it's something I'm now proud of."

This statement highlights not only the teacher's personal learning journey but also their growing sense of competence and confidence in fostering communication.

Teacher B reflected,

"The experience taught me how to modify lessons creatively. I learned to present content visually and make instructions clearer, not just for deaf students but for all learners."

Such experiences show that teaching mainstreamed deaf learners can serve as a catalyst for broader instructional innovation and clarity that benefits the entire classroom.

Teacher A emphasized the importance of mutual respect in communication:

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"At first, it was hard to connect. But over time, we developed our own way of understanding each other—sometimes through pictures, sometimes through gestures. It taught me patience and the importance of being understood."

This testimony underscores the interpersonal growth and communicative flexibility that inclusive education nurtures in teachers.

Teacher D explained,

"Dati, umaasa lang ako sa karaniwang pagsusulit. Pero nang magkaroon ako ng mga estudyanteng bingi, kinailangan kong gumawa ng mas simple at malinaw na mga pagsusulit na may kasamang visual na palatandaan. Dahil dito, muling nabigyan ko ng pansin kung paano ako nagtataya sa lahat ng estudyante. Naging mas mulat ako sa kahalagahan ng pagiging makatarungan at tunay na pag-unawa."

This reflection illustrates how inclusion prompted a deeper understanding of fairness in assessment and the necessity for diverse evaluation methods.

Teacher E shared a broader impact on classroom dynamics:

"What surprised me was how much the whole class changed. My hearing students started helping their deaf classmate more. They learned empathy, patience, and teamwork. It became a classroom where everyone mattered."

This showcases how inclusion not only benefits individual learners but also transforms the classroom culture into one rooted in collaboration and shared responsibility.

Several teachers also reported improvements in assessment design, lesson clarity, and communication techniques. Though these adaptations were initially challenging, the exposure led them to innovate teaching methods, enhance communication skills, and deepen their commitment to inclusive education.

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The most significant opportunity identified was the development of inclusive and multimodal instructional strategies. Teachers reported a shift from traditional auditory-based teaching to more visual, tactile, and experiential learning. This adaptation not only supported deaf learners but also improved learning engagement for the whole class.

The second significant opportunity was the enhancement of communication skills. Many teachers described learning basic Filipino Sign Language (FSL) or using gestures, written communication, and digital tools (e.g., visual messaging apps) to connect with their deaf students. These strategies built stronger teacher-student relationships and fostered mutual respect.

Third, teachers gained increased awareness and sensitivity to student diversity. Teaching deaf learners raised their awareness of other special education needs. This broadened their understanding of differentiated instruction and classroom equity.

Less emphasized but still noteworthy was the improved collaboration among students. Through buddy systems and peer mentoring, teachers observed a rise in student empathy, cooperation, and accountability. Deaf learners became more integrated and accepted in classroom activities, especially during breakout groups and collaborative assessments.

These findings support the idea that mainstreaming deaf learners is not merely a challenge but an avenue for professional and pedagogical growth among receiving teachers. The challenges encountered in lesson delivery, group facilitation, and assessments—initially perceived as burdensome—turned into meaningful learning experiences for teachers. They developed new competencies, attitudes, and insights that align with inclusive education principles.

These opportunities can significantly contribute to achieving the goals of inclusive education by transforming general education teachers into advocates of diversity. However, they also challenge existing structures, such as lack of training, the absence of interpreters,

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and limited access to inclusive teaching materials. Thus, the findings highlight the urgent need for systematic support and ongoing capacity-building programs for teachers.

The opportunities gained by teachers reflect the core principles of transformative learning theory, which emphasizes learning through experience, reflection, and change in perspective (Mezirow, 2000). The inclusion of deaf learners prompted receiving teachers to rethink their assumptions and adopt new teaching paradigms.

The experiences also align with Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), who argue that inclusive education is not just about accommodating learners with disabilities but also about enhancing the learning opportunities for all students and professionalizing the teaching workforce. Similarly, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) stress that inclusive environments foster not only academic but also personal growth among educators by developing empathy, creativity, and collaboration.

These insights underscore that inclusive education benefits both students and teachers, a recurring theme in studies advocating for the professionalization of inclusive practices in mainstream classrooms (UNESCO, 2020).

Policy Recommendations to Enhance Instruction among Mainstreamed Deaf Learners

Based on the findings of the study, while receiving teachers are exerting substantial efforts to implement adaptive strategies in handling mainstreamed deaf learners, they continue to experience considerable challenges. Most of the strategies employed were rated as “hard” or “very hard,” indicating a systemic lack of preparedness, insufficient training, and inadequate support mechanisms in place to facilitate inclusive instruction. These difficulties suggest a compelling need for policy reform and capacity-building interventions across all levels of the Philippine education system. In light of Objective 4, the following policy recommendations are proposed to enhance instructional support for deaf learners in mainstreamed classes.

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At the level of the Department of Education (DepEd), policy must prioritize the institutionalization of mandatory professional development programs focusing on Filipino Sign Language (FSL) and inclusive pedagogy through the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) and in-service training (INSET). Teachers must be equipped not only with technical communication skills but also with a deeper understanding of differentiated instruction, visual learning, and multimodal strategies. The DepEd must also develop curriculum supplements and teaching guides that embed deaf awareness and inclusive practices, ensuring that the learning environment respects and supports diverse learners. Furthermore, there is a need to deploy trained instructional aides or interpreters in classrooms with deaf learners and to allocate a budget for accessible instructional materials, such as captioned videos and printed visual aids. Regular monitoring and evaluation of assessment modifications must be implemented to ensure fair and appropriate evaluation measures for deaf learners.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) must also respond to the inclusion challenge by revising its curriculum standards for teacher education institutions. Specifically, CHED should mandate the inclusion of at least six units of coursework on inclusive education and FSL in all teacher education programs. This requirement will ensure that prospective teachers enter the profession with foundational knowledge and readiness to teach in diverse classrooms. Accreditation guidelines should be updated to reflect inclusive education outcomes as a core quality metric, and CHED should incentivize higher education institutions (HEIs) to conduct research and community outreach initiatives related to deaf education and inclusive learning.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are pivotal in laying the groundwork for future teachers. To that end, HEIs must offer practicum experiences in inclusive classrooms where pre-service teachers can directly engage with deaf learners. Faculty members of education colleges should undergo training in inclusive teaching to effectively model such practices to their students. HEIs are also encouraged to establish linkages with the DepEd and non-

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governmental organizations like the Philippine Federation of the Deaf to co-develop training modules, conduct community-based learning activities, and provide inclusive instructional materials.

At the national level, stronger implementation of Republic Act No. 11106, or the Filipino Sign Language Act, is necessary to institutionalize FSL as the primary mode of communication in government services, including public education. There must be a coordinated national effort to fund inclusive education initiatives through the local government units (LGUs) and regional DepEd offices. Awareness campaigns must be launched to combat stigma and promote inclusive values within communities, thereby complementing school-based inclusion efforts. Investment in educational technology that caters to deaf learners, such as sign language apps, captioned video lessons, and interactive software, is critical to bridge the learning gap caused by communication barriers.

The implications of these policy recommendations are far-reaching. If fully implemented, they will not only address the immediate challenges faced by receiving teachers but also strengthen the national commitment to equity, inclusion, and quality education for all learners, as emphasized by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4. These findings affirm the importance of designing systems that are responsive to the needs of both educators and learners. The results support existing literature by UNESCO (2020), which highlights the need for system-wide reforms in inclusive education, and echo the mandates of Republic Act 11106, which calls for the formal recognition and use of FSL across educational and public institutions. Ultimately, the adoption of these recommendations can close the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that deaf learners are not only accommodated but also empowered to thrive in mainstreamed classrooms.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive assessment of the adaptive teaching strategies and the level of difficulty encountered by receiving teachers in handling

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mainstreamed deaf learners within the Schools Division of Legazpi City. Based on the results, the following are the conclusions:

1. Despite the challenges encountered, the receiving teacher is seen to be both flexible and proactive in using a variety of similar coping strategies to assist deaf pupils. Some of these are visual aids, written and simplified instructions, peer tutoring, sign language, and a variety of teaching strategies. While this is indicative of teachers' dedication toward inclusive education, the prevalence of these practices emphasizes the necessity to instigate comprehensive teacher training in Filipino Sign Language as well as in suitable materials for deaf learners.

2. The findings revealed that receiving teachers experience several challenges when teaching deaf learners, particularly in lesson delivery, giving instructions, managing group activities, and conducting assessments. Among these, assessment tasks were identified as the most difficult, especially in designing simplified yet fair evaluation tools. This indicates the need for support and training in developing inclusive and accessible assessment practices for learners with hearing impairments.

3. The study also found that teaching deaf learners contributes to the professional and personal growth of receiving teachers. Many reported increased empathy, creativity, patience, and a stronger appreciation for inclusive and learner-centered pedagogy. However, these positive outcomes were largely developed through experience rather than formal guidance, emphasizing the importance of institutionalized training and mentorship programs in inclusive education.

4. The results highlighted the need for stronger policy support to advance inclusive education for deaf learners. Key recommendations include mandatory Filipino Sign Language training for teachers, the provision of qualified sign language interpreters, integration of deaf education in teacher preparation programs, and the development of clear guidelines for instructional and assessment modifications. Collaborative efforts among the Department of Education (DepEd),

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Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are essential to effectively implement these policies.



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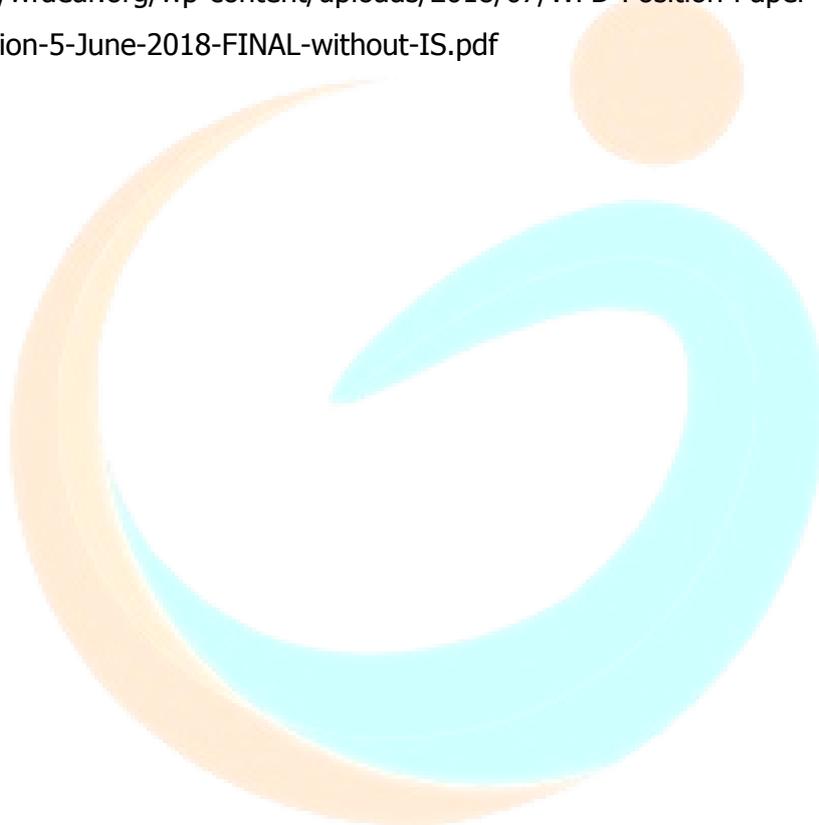
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