



## **Benefits and Challenges in The Utilization of Innovative Teaching Strategies on Inclusive Education Among Filipino Teachers in Thailand**

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### **Abstract**

This study explored the application of new instructional strategies in inclusive education by Filipino instructors in Thailand with the view to ascertaining the benefits, issues, and the profile variables influencing instructional practice. By utilizing a mixed-method research approach, this study gathered quantitative data via structured questionnaires from 100 Filipino inclusive education instructors and qualitative data via semi-structured interviews. The results revealed that Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) were employed to a significant extent in classrooms, with strength in the use of multimedia and lesson planning to the learner's need. Access to augmentative technology, lack of specialized training, and concerns to do with the culture were the most reported issues. Correlational analysis determined a significant impact of teaching experience in years on the extent of strategy employment. The study concluded that while the Filipino instructors were committed to inclusive pedagogy, more institutional and policy-level facilitation is needed to empower effective instructional practice. Implications of the findings point to the necessities of targeted continuing education and context-aware support mechanisms to serve inclusive education in foreign teaching schools.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Innovative Strategies, Filipino Teachers, Universal Design For Learning, Differentiated Instruction, Thailand

### **1. Introduction**

#### **Background and Rationale**

Inclusive education, grounded in social justice and equity, has remained a global priority agenda with the global frameworks of the Education for All 2030 agenda (EFA 2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) calling for educational systems to become inclusive and equitable for everyone, with particular regard for learners with disability (UNESCO, 2020). These ambitions were brought to life in policies such as the National Education Act (1999) and the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act (2007) that incorporated provisions in inclusive education. Implementation varies, however, particularly in multicultural settings where linguistic and cultural diversity adds another layer of complexity. Large segments of the international teaching corps in Thailand are composed of Filipino teachers, particularly in the area of special education. Through creative instruction—such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, the employment of assistive technologies, flipped

classrooms, and gamification—these teachers strive to bridge instructional disparities and accommodate the varied demands of their students. Even with the adaptability and dedication of these teachers, they continue to face system, cultural, and institutional barriers to comprehensive application of inclusive practice.

### Significance of the Study

This study holds relevance for several stakeholder groups:

1. **School administrators** can use the findings to enhance professional development programs and allocate resources to support inclusive practices.
2. **Policy makers** may find empirical evidence to refine inclusive education policies and teacher training mandates.
3. **Curriculum developers** can utilize insights to design learner-responsive modules anchored in inclusive pedagogy.
4. **Special education teachers** will benefit from documented best practices and practical coping strategies for managing instructional challenges.
5. **Learners with disabilities** stand to gain the most, as the findings contribute to building more responsive, equitable learning environments.

### Aim of the Study

To examine the extent to which Filipino teachers in Thailand utilize innovative teaching strategies in inclusive education and to determine the benefits, challenges, and demographic factors that influence these practices.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To describe the profile of Filipino special education teachers in Thailand in terms of age, sex, civil status, years of teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and specialization in inclusive education.
2. To assess the extent of utilization of innovative teaching strategies, particularly Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction, in inclusive classroom settings.
3. To determine the perceived benefits of applying innovative strategies on student engagement, learning outcomes, and classroom inclusivity.
4. To evaluate the severity of challenges encountered in implementing inclusive strategies, including access to resources, institutional support, and cultural barriers.
5. To analyze the statistical relationship between teacher profile and the degree of utilization of inclusive teaching strategies.
6. To explore the coping mechanisms adopted by Filipino teachers in managing instructional challenges within diverse and resource-constrained environments.
7. To recommend evidence-based capacity-building programs and policy initiatives aimed at strengthening inclusive education delivery in multicultural international school contexts.

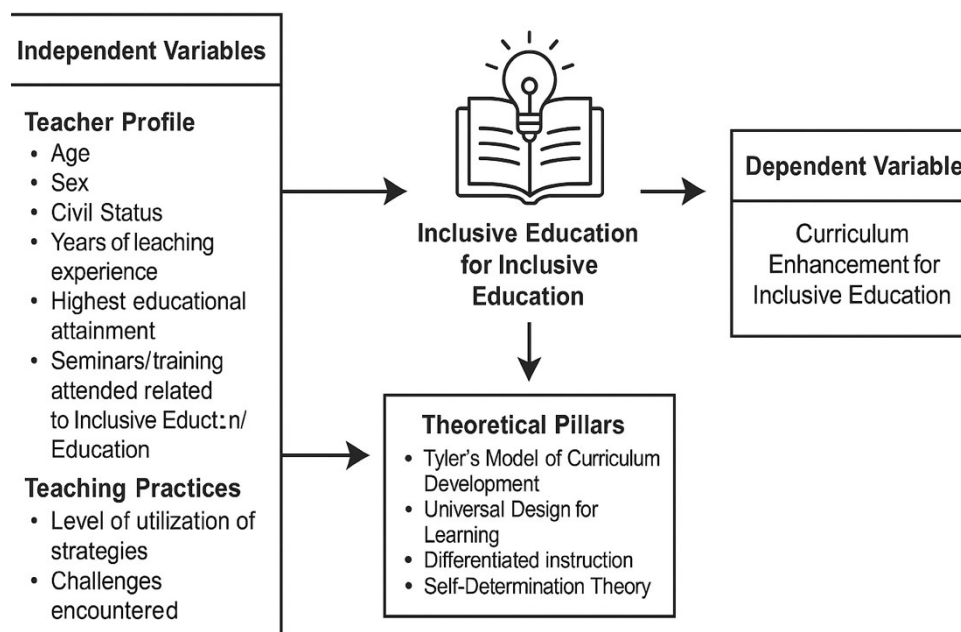
### Hypothesis of the Study

The following hypothesis was tested at a 5% level of significance:

**Null Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of Filipino teachers and their level of utilization of innovative teaching strategies. The null hypothesis was **rejected** based on statistical

findings. Significant relationships were found between certain demographic factors (years of experience) and the extent of utilization of specific strategies.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of the Conceptual Framework of the Study**

Figure 1 illustrates a model of teaching for the Filipino teachers in Thailand to ensure the improvement of special needs education. It reflects the impact of teacher profile—age, sex, civil status, experience, level of education, and seminar participation—on curriculum enhancement. Teaching approaches are Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction, and Project-Based Learning, as well as the corresponding implementation issues.

The model "Inclusive Education for Inclusive Education" connects teacher input to outcomes using four pillars: Tyler's Curriculum Model, Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction, and Self-Determination Theory. Tyler's model is centered on systematic curriculum design with specific goals and assessment. UDL and Differentiated Instruction speak to varied learning in inclusive classrooms. Self-Determination Theory emphasizes the significance of teacher motivation and participation, particularly in professional growth and new approaches. The dependent variable is the inclusive education curriculum development to establish a learning model in the context of practitioners' constraints. The diagram shows how teacher practice and profile, driven by pertinent theories, shape curriculum development. It shows how the experiences of the Filipino teachers can affect inclusive reforms in Thailand.

## 2. Literature Review

Inclusive education came to the forefront of international education policies via, for instance, the demands of Sustainable Development Goal 4 to offer learners with equitable and inclusive quality education (UNESCO, 2020). Thai country policies, including the National Education Act B.E. 2542 and the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act B.E. 2550, accommodate students with disabilities in general education. Its implementation is still sporadic, however, because of language issues, the absence of teacher preparation, and contextual issues in multicultural classrooms (Lersilp et al., 2022). Filipino educators in Thailand are the major drivers in the

operationalizing of inclusive education via the use of context-responsive and culturally adaptive instructional strategies with no institutional backing nor specialized instructor preparation (Ulla, 2018; Bayot & Asio, 2021). They are especially important considering the paucity of special education professionals in elite Thai schools and the growing variability of learners' needs.

Effective instructional strategies are essential in creating inclusive classrooms with varying learner needs. Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction, Flipped Learning, and Assistive Technologies are the most recommended strategies (Meyer et al., 2014; Sancar & Atasoy, 2023). UDL ensures flexible learning from various representations, engagement, and expressions, thus making learning possible to every learner in spite of ability (Lowrey et al., 2020). Differentiated Instruction is based on adjusting instructions to suit students' readiness, interests, and learning profile, which is more effective in inclusive classrooms with different abilities (Tomlinson, 2017). Empirical research exists to affirm that if these strategies are consistently practiced, there is enhanced student engagement, enhancement of academic performances, and enhanced learner autonomy (Alnahdi, 2020; Almogren, 2023). In spite of this, international teachers in the country report continued concerns, with limitations in accessing instructional facilities, unfamiliarity with the policies of the host country, and lack of sufficient professional development (Yazon et al., 2022).

Successful implementation of inclusive approaches depends significantly on the ability and motivation of the teachers. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has become a key facilitator, provided that this is work-based and sensitive to classroom realities (Loreman, 2021). Overseas Filipino teachers, however, might not have access to localized CPD, which jeopardizes the sustainability of inclusive practice. Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) explains how teacher investment is influenced by satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Teachers become more adoptive and sustainable with new approaches if they are facilitated, feel competent, and relationally part of the profession community. In Southeast Asia, studies affirm that people who are facilitated by peer support and mentoring are more resilient and are more willing to implement inclusive teaching in the face of resource-poor conditions (Alghamdi & Abdulaziz, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2022).

The research here is grounded in four related theoretical bases. Tyler's (1949) instructional design model is presented as a recursive process requiring specific goals, aligned content, and recursive assessment. Universal Design for Learning, as conceptualized by Meyer et al. (2014), is a theoretical basis in inclusive pedagogy assuming diversity of the learners from the outset. Differentiated Instruction adds to this by enabling the possibility of adapting content and process to learner diversity (Tomlinson, 2017). Self-Determination Theory, finally, explains the way intrinsic motivation can influence the persistence of instructors in implementing inclusive approaches (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These four theories collectively underpin the current research in the analysis of how Thai-based Filipino instructors implement new approaches, face limitations, and add to inclusive education curriculum development.

### 3. Methodology

The study used a mixed-methods approach with the combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques for the comprehensive study of the use of creative teaching approaches by special education teachers from the Philippines in inclusive schools in Thailand. Its quantitative component used a standard survey questionnaire administered to 100 purposefully sampled Filipino special education teachers who were actually serving in urban and suburban Thai cities from 2023 to 2024. It collected demographic backgrounds, frequency of practice, perceived usefulness, and ease of implementation using a five-point Likert scale. Supplementing the former, the qualitative component used semi-structured interviewing of a purposive subsample of respondents to provide in-depth feedback on their experiences and coping strategies. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Spearman-rank and point biserial association tests to identify the demographic variables and the use of the teaching strategies. Thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data to identify the emerging themes and contextual issues. Permission to conduct the research was obtained, and the participants' informed consent was elicited to provide confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection in the conduct of the study.

#### 4. Results/Findings

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Filipino Teachers (n = 100)**

Profile Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	21–30	48	48.0%
	31–40	26	26.0%
	41–50	13	13.0%
	51–60	12	12.0%
	61–65	1	1.0%
Sex	Male	22	22.0%
	Female	78	78.0%
Civil Status	Single	63	63.0%
	Married	34	34.0%
	Widowed	1	1.0%
	Separated	1	1.0%
	Others	1	1.0%
Years of Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	36	36.0%
	5–10 years	29	29.0%
	11–15 years	15	15.0%
	16–20 years	12	12.0%
	More than 20 years	8	8.0%
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	78	78.0%
	With Master's Units	16	16.0%
	Master's Graduate	3	3.0%
	With Doctorate Units	2	2.0%
	Others	1	1.0%
Specialization in Special Education	Emotional & Behavioral Disorders	22	40.7%
	Learning Disabilities	13	24.1%
	Autism Spectrum Disorder	13	24.1%
	Intellectual Disabilities	10	18.5%
	Gifted Education	10	18.5%
	Physical Disabilities	6	11.1%
	Sensory Impairments	7	13.0%
	Early Intervention	7	13.0%
	Transition Services	2	3.7%
	Multiple Disabilities	2	3.7%
	Others	10	18.5%

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of 100 Filipino teachers in Thailand. Most respondents were aged 21–30 (48%) and predominantly female (78%), with the majority being single (63%). A large portion had less than five years of teaching experience (36%) and had a bachelor's degree (78%). The most common specialization in special

education was Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (40.7%), followed by Learning Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder (each at 24.1%). These figures reflect a young, early-career, and academically qualified teaching workforce engaged in diverse special education roles.

**Table 2.** Level of Utilization of Universal Design for Learning Strategies

Indicator	Mean	Description
Multimedia and visual tools	4.58	Very Highly Utilized
Multiple content formats	4.57	Very Highly Utilized
Diverse expression formats	4.49	Highly Utilized
Instructional adaptation	4.40	Highly Utilized
Flexible assessments	4.28	Highly Utilized
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.46</b>	<b>Highly Utilized</b>

Table 2 shows the level of utilization of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies among Filipino teachers. The highest-rated indicators were the use of multimedia and visual tools (mean = 4.58) and multiple content formats (mean = 4.57), both classified as *Very Highly Utilized*. Other strategies like allowing diverse forms of student expression, adapting instruction, and using flexible assessments were also *Highly Utilized*, with means ranging from 4.28 to 4.49. The overall average of 4.46 indicates that UDL strategies are consistently and effectively applied in inclusive classrooms.

**Table 3.** Level of Utilization of Differentiated Instruction

Indicator	Mean	Description
Tailored lesson plans	4.39	Highly Utilized
Modified resources	4.32	Highly Utilized
Alternative materials	4.27	Highly Utilized
Adjusted pacing	4.14	Highly Utilized
Targeted grouping	4.13	Highly Utilized
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>Highly Utilized</b>

Table 3 presents the utilization of Differentiated Instruction strategies by Filipino teachers. All indicators, including tailored lesson plans (mean = 4.39) and targeted grouping (mean = 4.13), were rated as *Highly Utilized*. The overall average of 4.25 confirms that teachers actively apply differentiated methods to address diverse learner needs in inclusive classrooms.

**Table 4.** Challenges in Implementing Innovative Strategies

Category	Challenge	Mean	Interpretation
Resources	Limited assistive tools	3.79	Highly Challenging
Training	Lack of specialization	3.61	Highly Challenging
Institutional	Inadequate support	3.62	Highly Challenging
Cultural	Language barriers	3.75	Highly Challenging

Table 4 summarizes the key challenges faced by Filipino teachers in implementing inclusive strategies. All categories—resources (mean = 3.79), training (3.61), institutional support (3.62), and cultural barriers (3.75)—were rated as *Highly Challenging*. This indicates that teachers consistently encounter significant obstacles, particularly in accessing assistive tools, receiving specialized training, and navigating language and systemic barriers.

## 5. Discussion

The findings from the research are significant in terms of the inclusive pedagogy practice of the Filipino teachers in Thailand and the issues they are faced with. Demographic data reveal a young, female, and new teacher population with minimal experience and formal preparation in special education. This demographic trend recognizes the global appeal of young professionals in international school environments and the urgent need for programs in long-term mentoring and capacity-building. Whereas the majority of the teachers possess a bachelor's degree, few of them have completed postgraduate degrees and higher learning courses in inclusive pedagogy. The findings are in agreement with Loreman (2021), which observed that international teachers lack access to specialist and culturally situated in-service training in inclusive pedagogy.

Despite limitations in experience and training, Filipino teachers reported applying strategies to a significant extent, with emphasis on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI). From Tables 2 and 3, the use of multimedia material, multiple content formats, and differentiated instruction was reported as highly or very highly. These results account for the high readiness and adaptability of teachers to apply flexible instruction despite resource limitations. High frequency of attention to applying UDL and the use of DI supports previous research findings that inclusive strategies contribute significantly to enhanced learner engagement and performance (Lowrey et al., 2020; Tomlinson, 2017). Lower ratings in flexible assessment and focused grouping aspects, however, reveal that more complex instructional adaptations would require additional support and training.

In regard to difficulties, Table 4 testifies that there is a chain of difficulties that face the Filipino teachers in the full implementation of inclusive education. Lack of assistive tools, no preparation, no institutional support, and language mismatch were all Highly Challenging. The findings are in agreement with Ulla (2018) and Bayot and Asio (2021), who established that migrant teachers are destined to face contextual adjustment problems and insufficient professional support. The fact that these difficulties still persist is testimony to the fact that host institutions need to establish inclusive support systems that cater to the foreign teachers' issues of professional development. Not doing this will undermine the sustainability of inclusive practice.

These outcomes attest to the pragmatic application of the theoretical model of the study. The successful application of UDL and DI is a demonstration of the workability of Tyler's curriculum model and confirmation of Meyer et al.'s (2014) inclusive design principles. Moreover, the problems encountered are in line with the Self-Determination Theory dimensions of Ryan and Deci (2020), insofar as the competence and relatedness sense of the teachers is seemingly curtailed by institutional and societal constraints. Where autonomy and professionalism are not facilitated, even highly motivated teachers can burn out or make minimal impact. Inclusive education improvement in transnational spaces requires not only pedagogical innovation but also systems-level investment in teacher capacity development, institutional support, and policy reform.

## 6. Conclusion & Recommendations

### Conclusion

This study confirmed that the Filipino teachers in Thailand are deeply invested in inclusive education through frequent use of such new learning approaches as Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction. Despite a lack of preparation and institutional support, teachers adopt flexible instructional approaches to address varying learning demands in multicultural classrooms without hesitation. Problems of access to tools, career development, and cultural adaptation still remain but significantly affect the extent and sustainability of these practices. The study also untangled the significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of teachers—years of experience especially—and the extent of the implementation of strategies. These results reaffirm the key role of teachers' motivation, flexibility, and awareness in contextual issues in the implementation

of inclusive education and stress the necessity of institutional support to maximize instructional outcomes for students with disabilities.

### Recommendations

There is a need to support foreign teachers, particularly in the arena of special education, with the provision of longitudinal and localized in-service courses in inclusive teaching. Schools are to include in their capacity-building programs mentoring programs, exposure to the use of assistive technology, and Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instructional workshops. Schools need to implement inclusive systems of support that are culturally relevant and that foster collaboration between foreign and local teachers. Policies also need to be developed to institutionalize systematic training and incentives for the teachers to pursue increased specialization in inclusive education. Strengthening such systems of support will enable the teachers to overcome the contextual constraints and establish equitable learning conditions for all the learners.

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