**The Impact of Small Group Strategies on Students with Learning Disabilities**

**ABSTRACT**

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| This study aimed to explore what happened in the experiences of eight Grade 3-5 teachers when they provided small group strategies to students with learning disabilities at United Cerebral Palsy of Central Florida, Pine Hills. The research employed semi-structured interviews to investigate difficulties and perceptions. Teachers discussed positive effects on students' performance, engagement, and confidence. But there were many hurdles too, like managing a wide range of behaviors and skill levels, toggling between small-group and whole-group instruction, and meeting the emotional needs of each student. Resource constraints (material, technology, support personnel) only compounded these challenges. Thematic analysis highlighted the following themes: Classroom management, time constraints, different learning requirements, resource constraints, and social-emotional challenges. This study adds to the fund of knowledge by identifying the challenges and successes of small group strategies for LD. The importance of improving teacher preparation about inclusive practice, differentiation, and behaviour management, as well as providing more resources and support staff, is highlighted. Small group instruction significantly improves academic performance among students with learning disabilities by allowing for personalized instruction and increased engagement. However, its success depends on adequate support, including time, staffing, and behavioral strategies, to ensure effective and sustainable implementation. Continuous professional development and strong institutional backing are crucial to empower teachers in delivering dynamic, differentiated instruction tailored to diverse learner needs. Based on the conclusions, it is recommended that schools formally adopt small-group instruction as a core strategy in inclusive education and provide dedicated time and support staff for its implementation. Training in differentiated instruction, behavior management, and collaborative planning should be regularly conducted to equip teachers with inclusive practices. Adequate learning resources, assistive tools, and data-informed grouping strategies are essential to address diverse student needs. Lastly, applying the Enhanced Support Program for Students with Learning Disabilities (ESP-SLD) and fostering teamwork among educators, parents, and peers will strengthen inclusive efforts and improve student outcomes. |

*Keywords:* *learning disabilities, differentiated instruction, small group strategies, collaboration*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Learning disabilities (LD) affect a significant proportion of the school-aged population worldwide and are estimated to occur in 15–20% of children in the United States. These disabilities frequently affect a student’s ability to take in information, causing difficulties in the areas of reading and writing, mathematics, as well as sometimes social behavior. Accordingly, students with LD are repeatedly confronted by persisting difficulties in school-related activities that promote a sense of being incompetent, low self-worth, and the incidence of academic failure. As the National Center for Learning Disabilities (2022) reported, millions of school-aged children have one or more LDs, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and ADHD, which necessitate instruction that is tailored to their learning needs for these students to perform well academically.

According to UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, children with disabilities make up 15% of all children who are not in school. People with disabilities, including those with sensory, physical, or intellectual challenges, are 25 times more likely to have never gone to school compared to people without disabilities.

Due to persistent barriers stemming from stigma and discrimination, as well as the reluctance of policymakers to incorporate disability into educational programs, children with disabilities are among the most likely demographic to remain out of school. Their denied right to education restricts their ability to engage in their communities, participate in the workforce, or influence decisions that significantly impact their lives.

Furthermore, small-group work enables peers to support and encourage students with learning disabilities, fostering confidence and helping them develop essential social skills through collaboration. Numerous studies indicate that small-group techniques can substantially improve academic performance among students with learning impairments. The focused and intensive instruction available in smaller group settings can facilitate better concept comprehension (Vats and Dey, 2022).

Additionally, small groups can invigorate the classroom environment, enabling students to participate fully in class discussions and activities that enhance their understanding of the subject matter and overall engagement in the learning process. While small-group strategies offer numerous advantages, teachers must also be aware of potential drawbacks.

This rationale underpins the need for this study. The researcher will investigate the effects and application of the small group approach among students with learning disabilities.

This study aims to explore the challenges of teachers in implementing Small Group Strategies for Students with Learning Disability.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges they face in implementing small group strategies for students with learning disabilities?

2. What are the themes that can be derived from the teachers’ responses that reflect the broader issues or patterns related to the implementation of small group strategies for students with learning disabilities?

3. What are the insights gained from the teachers’ responses?

4. Based on the results, what output can be proposed to help students with learning disabilities improve their academic performance?

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Inclusive education has been a focus of considerable attention recently, emerging as an approach to make sure every student can access a quality education no matter what their abilities or disabilities may be.

Although some impact the world continues to make in advancing an inclusive education agenda, students with learning disabilities (LD) with regard to educational indicators (e.g., years of schooling, school attendance, academic outcomes) are still significantly behind (Rangvid 2022). This begs the question about the repercussions of placing a child with LD in a regular educational setting on the academic achievement success of their same non-LD peers within the inclusive education umbrella.

Also, there are so many potential benefits for creating inclusive education settings for children with disabilities, particularly for social participation and future employment. Educational inclusion has tremendous positive ramifications for people with disabilities that cannot be overlooked, economically and otherwise. Above all, the benefits for educational inclusion in lifelong learning and development processes for people with disabilities go far beyond educational experiences (which include formal, nonformal education experiences and life skills) to be considered extremely valuable.

Historically, children with disabilities have been assigned to "special schools," which are separate from the mainstream educational system. In many cases, these children receive no education whatsoever and are sometimes removed from their families and placed in long-term care facilities, isolating them from social interactions (Page 48, UNICEF, 2022).

Furthermore, the presence of LD students in regular classrooms tends to have a neutral influence on their non-LD peers. However, an in-depth analysis reveals a varied impact based on the specific types of LD. This difference corresponds with the knowledge that LD is a broad term that encompasses varying degrees and types of individual abilities, which include physical, psychological, cognitive, and sensory needs. Therefore, the impact of inclusion likely varies based on the profile of the student with LD integrated into a conventional classroom. Also, it is worth noting that results emphasize the importance of understanding temporal parameters and phases of education when considering the effect of LD students on their non-LD peers. This observation aligns with our notion that various results were highlighted across different academic phases (Garcia & Renteria, 2024).

Even though Dell'Anna et al. (2021) imply that positive peer attitudes can develop in inclusive contexts, LD students and the experiences and academic outcomes of non-LD peers can vary, with exceptional non-LD peers possibly benefitting more than typical students and low-ability peers.

Everyone has the right to an education, and everyone with a disability has the right to obtain inclusive education (IE), which means meaningful access and participation. IE is important for getting all kids and teens, including those with disabilities and special needs, a good education because it lets them go to school without facing unfair barriers and with the right help (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2020). It makes children feel like they belong and builds a culture of respect by giving each student a positive place to learn where they may grow socially, emotionally, academically, and physically.

These competencies cannot be developed on their own without educational support. However, there are questions about whether the education system can adequately prepare students with the necessary components for their successful entry into society or if the educators themselves even understand what is needed (Sacco et a., 2022).

The groundwork for 21st-century skills is established earlier (Sumardi et al., 2020), in fact, in some contexts, for example, early childhood education. However, it is important to note that even in early childhood education, observable differences in the development of language, emergent literacy, and numeracy are already evident among children from differing socio-economic strata (Sylva et al, 2020).

In addition, the assessment of individuals’ 21st-century skills, how well they performed (at what possible levels), and the design of interventions have significance for students’ development in all contexts of education (Kennedy & Sundberg, 2020). It is important to recognize groups that are potentially, across many reasons related to their background, deficient in the necessary skills, and of course, students with learning disabilities (LD) are already at an elevated risk.

Also, children with disabilities are often at a disadvantage in completing their primary, secondary, and postsecondary education than students without disabilities. Initially targeting high school to postsecondary age students to systematically and progressively develop their 21st-century skills, while they are still transitioning into adulthood, should greatly improve their likelihood of societal contributions and sustainable employment.

Additionally, a study on educational challenges for people with disabilities was produced in 1994 by the International Assembly on Teaching Children with Disabilities, a group connected to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

 The Salamanca Statement stressed a balance of mainstream/inclusive schools for removing prejudice, fostering inclusive environments, and equitable educational opportunity for all people, particularly those with diverse and special academic needs. For the period since the Salamanca declaration, there has been a strong push internationally for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in global society.

Farrell (2020) discusses a recurring issue in inclusive education, namely the lack of awareness among educators about how to create an inclusive classroom and the persistent segregation in educational practices. Research indicates that while there may be consensus on the benefits of inclusion, actual implementation remains difficult due to differing beliefs among educators and parents regarding its suitability.

Kart and Kart (2021) note that the presence of students with disabilities in the morally correct regular classroom settings provides advantageous outcomes for nondisabled students. Classmates without disabilities have experienced social benefits from having classmates with disabilities included in the general classroom community. The main societal effects of inclusion, according to Kart & Kart, are the decrease of prejudice, hatred, fear, and hostility while also promoting empathy, sympathy, and respect. This study reflects the massive, positive, and impactful purposes of inclusion in classrooms, which create more empathetic and compassionate communities.

Additionally, social engagement among students with disabilities and students without disabilities promotes acceptance, empathy, and understanding, which contributes to minimizing social relationship barriers, such as peer rejection, in inclusive education. With meaningful interactions with others and good facilitation, through the development of understanding, relationships, and awareness of each other's perspectives and skills, students can develop acceptance, understanding, and empathy. Social interaction can challenge stereotypes, diminish prejudice, and develop inclusive communities, where all individuals are treated in a way that promotes inclusion and respect, by instilling cooperation and teamwork in an inclusive environment.

Moreover, teachers endure a multitude of challenges as they transition from segregated classrooms to integrated classrooms. With inclusive education, teachers, bastions of the teaching-learning process, face a series of issues. One barrier to educational success is that teachers report insufficient instruction for dealing with students who have special needs (Materechera, 2018).

There is an increasing worldwide awareness of the right of people with disabilities to have continued access to opportunities to engage fully in inclusive education. Inclusive education, especially with children with disabilities, becomes a foundation for achieving equitable and quality learning experiences for every student, including those with unique educational needs and varying skill levels. With inclusive education policy and practice, it achieves both cognitive and academic success and aims to develop what Barry and McMahon (2020) described as a respectful, inclusive classroom culture where students' cognitive, emotional, social and physical development can be attained.

However, implementing inclusive education remains challenging for many teachers, particularly due to limited instructional time and overcrowded classrooms. As noted by Materechera (2018), educators often face significant hurdles when transitioning into inclusive environments. These challenges include adapting to unfamiliar educational philosophies, adjusting expectations, and navigating systemic barriers. Although many teachers possess training in special education, they may still struggle with institutional limitations and a lack of peer or administrative support. This underscores the urgent need for continued professional development and mentoring programs to guide teachers through the complexities of inclusive practice.

Collaborative learning is among the most common pedagogical strategies used in inclusive classrooms, such as for learners with disabilities. This topic has been recently studied by Strnadová and colleagues (2023) analysed how different groups, such as teachers, families, and allied health professionals, collaborated in improving the educational experience and outcomes for students with disabilities.

In a different study, a set of articles showcased in Frontiers in Education (2022), the factors affecting the social inclusion of learners with SEN were examined. From the Faculty Of Education, using a multi-perspective methodology--interviews with teachers, parents, and pupils--the researchers collected information. The findings highlighted the significance of individuals' characteristics, interaction effects, and teaching approaches in contributing to a cooperative and inclusive learning climate.

Klang et al. (2020) emphasized that cooperative learning methods are crucial to facilitating interaction between students with and without disabilities. Their research indicated that structured group assignments promote vital social skills development in students with disabilities and promote peer acceptance and empathy, themes that are endorsed by the United Nations CRPD (United Nations, 2006).

Aftab et al. (2024) specifically concentrated on the benefits of inclusive classroom environments with a focus on collaboration for students with intellectual disabilities. They found that both academic performance and social interaction had improved, and this provided evidence that educational inclusion could be beneficial in enhancing learning.

In 2024, an article was published in Teaching Exceptional Children that further examined the federal role of collaboration in planning for special education under the IDEA. It was emphasized in the article that the importance of teamwork is in developing educational programs that can fit students with specialized requirements and capabilities.

Gilbert (2021) noted the benefits of collaborative learning in creating a setting in which interactive reading skills are acquired implicitly. Likewise, Mende et al. (2021) stated that cooperative groups improve students’ mastery of content knowledge, promote critical thinking, and support creative problem solving.

Ho (2021) also indicated that students can academically and socially prosper in the shared learning space as they are learning from each other. In pedagogical terms, collaborative learning promotes the active construction of knowledge while in groups through interactions and dialogue. It is servicing the creation of necessary skills and maintaining the interest of the learner.

According to Wagino et al. (2023), to maximize the learning potential of collaborative work, support for students and well-organized group formations is needed. This approach is likely to still be necessary as pedagogical strategies change to educate learners for success in today's academic and professional environments.

Furthermore, the ASEAN Magazine (2024) highlighted that Diverse education is the best choice to develop cooperative learning communities. It emphasized the need to design flexible teaching strategies and curriculum adjustments in such a way as to accommodate the variety of learning preferences amongst students in order to encourage meaningful participation by all.

Gabriel and Börnert (2023) looked at the relationship between behavioral problems and learning difficulties in one of their important reviews, contending that children with LD often need both behavioral and academic therapy. The authors concluded that behavioral issues and learning difficulties frequently have a reciprocal relationship after reviewing 48 pertinent research studies. This underscores the necessity of comprehensive therapy approaches.

In addition to identifying difficulties, Raymundo et al.'s systematic study from 2023 looked into the potential use of AI to assist students with learning problems. The results of this review show that AI-based solutions can offer customized learning experiences that better meet the educational demands of children with learning difficulties. Moreover, StatPearls (2023) describes the diagnostic criteria for learning disabilities, highlighting the fact that these diseases may show up in certain academic domains, including reading, writing, and math.

Grigorenko et al. (2020) found that learning difficulties have a neurological foundation and that working memory deficiencies and particular attentional processes are significant cognitive factors that impact academic abilities. The results of Mähler (2020), who also covered the crucial roles that socio-emotional factors play in the emergence and expression of learning difficulties, are in line with this.

In order to implement an LD support plan, teachers must be prepared and possess the knowledge and abilities necessary to provide adequate student assistance in inclusive settings, according to Dignath et al. (2022). This encourages inclusive practice while highlighting the significance of instructors' self-efficacy.

TeachHUB (2020) has more details discussing the advantages of teaching in small groups. Students can practice in a secure setting and get prompt feedback thanks to it. The research also indicated that effective small-group or small-group instruction begins with a pre-assessment of students' instructional level and, after evaluating this level, plans are developed for lessons that incorporate scaffolding techniques such as manipulatives, graphic organizers, and visuals. Overall, this was beneficial as it gives students a frame of reference that builds understanding while engaging students with LD.

A TTAC Online research from 2020 highlighted the value of cooperative learning strategies in small groups. In addition to reinforcing important topics, the idea of student collaboration improves comprehension. Students with disabilities benefit greatly from this kind of collaborative environment since it helps them develop social skills that they might otherwise find difficult.

Building on this, a recent study examining the efficacy of constant time delay protocols in small-group training for children with learning difficulties was published in 2024 by ResearchGate (2024). The findings demonstrated that students' performance considerably improved when they worked in small groups. This study underlined once more how crucial it is to include students in small groups to improve learning outcomes.

Furthermore, according to the ADCET (2020), children with particular learning disabilities benefit greatly from group projects and structured discussions that emphasize time management and organizational abilities. LD children's academic performance will increase, and their anxiety levels will decrease when these elements are incorporated into small group settings.

**3. METHODOLOGY**

The study's methodology is presented in this section. It covers the methods for collecting data, the tools employed, the statistical analysis, and the research design. The purpose of the data collection methodology for this study is to accurately obtain and examine qualitative data about the experiences of multigrade level teachers at United Cerebral Palsy of Central Florida, Pine Hills, Orange County.

**3.1 Research Design**

To better understand and explore instructors' experiences and obstacles when implementing small group strategies with children who have learning disabilities, the study used a phenomenological thematic analysis method. The phenomenological research methodology is very appropriate for exploring third to fifth-grade teachers' perceptions of Strategies for students with learning impairments in small groups. This methodology lends itself to studying how they perceive the strategy is being implemented because research and theory developed around phenomenology are focused on exploring and understanding individuals' lived experiences.

**3.2 Data Generation**

The researcher got legal authorization to interview the participants. Semi-structured interviews were the primary data generation method. The researchers examined the participants' perspectives on how small-group strategies were implemented for students with learning disabilities using a self-structured questionnaire. The researcher created the self-structured questionnaire.

The interviews took place in person. All participants answered the same questions, which also gives room for unique viewpoints and anecdotes. The purpose of the questions is to provoke thoughtful, in-depth answers that offer important new perspectives on the implementation of learning disability strategies for pupils in small groups.

The poll investigates the challenges educators have when implementing small group techniques with a diverse student body. Illuminating the situational and systemic issues that impede successful execution. The questionnaire aims to identify these difficulties.

Additionally, it investigates successful strategies teachers use to get around these challenges, providing insightful information about methods that are effective in practical contexts. implement the small group strategies.

In order to further support inclusive practices, the questions also assess the efficacy of current support systems, such as peer collaboration, administrative help, and community involvement, highlighting areas that need improvement. Teachers' real-world experiences are reflected in the examination of feasible adjustments, which offer helpful suggestions to improve the implementation of the strategy.

Finally, the questionnaire promotes cooperation and understanding among participants by asking them to share their experiences and advice. This approach fosters group discussion of ideas that could guide and motivate broader educational reforms in inclusive education, while also validating their experiences.

To ensure accuracy and enable a thorough analysis of the responses, each interview was audio recorded. Following that, the recordings were carefully transcribed, converting the spoken words into written form for detailed examination. The integrity of the participants' contributions is preserved in this process.

Following transcription, the main ideas and themes of each teacher's comments were encapsulated in a narrative summary. To find recurring trends, difficulties, solutions, and insights, these summaries were subjected to thorough qualitative analysis using techniques like thematic coding. The teachers' individual and collective experiences were understood as a result of this process, which ultimately led to practical suggestions for enhancing the conduct of small group strategies.

The researcher guarantees that the data gathered is trustworthy, thorough, and useful for addressing the study objectives by adhering to this methodical procedure.

**3.3 Selection of Participants**

Purposive sampling is used in the study, which deliberately chooses individuals according to predetermined standards that support the investigation's goals. This approach is especially suitable for qualitative research when the objective is to obtain a profound and significant knowledge of a specific phenomenon rather than to generalize findings.

The study's participant selection criteria are meticulously crafted to guarantee the inclusion of people whose backgrounds are directly related to the investigation's subject.

Participants must have at least two years of experience teaching grade three to five students, especially those with diverse learning needs, such as students with disabilities, learning difficulties, or language challenges.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section shows the qualitative information gathered in interviews with Special Education Teachers (SPETs) concerning their experiences, challenges, problems, and perceptions regarding the use of small group strategies for students with learning. It emphasizes a complete understanding of the realities faced in different educational settings by pointing out the unique contribution of SPETs in terms of a structured report of the findings.

**4.1 Respondents’ Insights**

**Table 1: Summary of Insights from the Teachers’ Responses**



provides a synthesized view of the key themes derived from the participants' interview responses regarding the use of small group strategies for students with learning disabilities. It organizes the findings into thematic areas such as time management, group composition, behavioral needs, resource limitations, collaboration, instructional flexibility, and teacher well-being.

Each theme is presented with specific observations shared by teachers, followed by implications or recommended actions. For example, teachers highlighted that managing small groups while ensuring the rest of the class is engaged poses a challenge, indicating a need for classroom aides or better scheduling. The table also reflects the difficulties in grouping students effectively due to varied learning needs and IEP goals, suggesting the use of flexible and ongoing assessments. Additionally, it underscores the importance of emotional support, collaboration with stakeholders, and teacher resilience.

In summary, the table serves as a concise yet comprehensive tool for understanding the practical realities faced by educators and the systemic adjustments needed to implement inclusive and effective small-group instruction.

**4.2 Themes Derived from the teachers' responses that reflect the broader issues or patterns related to the implementation of small group strategies for students with learning disabilities**

**Table 2: Themes and Subthemes of the Teachers' Responses on the Issues or Challenges Related to the Implementation of Small Group Strategies for Students with Learning Disabilities**

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| **Themes** | **Subthemes** | **Evidence** |
| Class ManagementTime Management/ConstraintsDiverse Learning NeedsResource LimitationsAddressing Emotional Needs | Managing Diverse BehaviorManaging Multiple Small GroupsBalancing the TimeManaging Time EffectivelyDifferent Learning ProfilesVarying Skill LevelsAvailability of ResourcesEmotional Regulation IssuesCommunication Barriers | (P1) It can be hard to find time in the day to run consistent small groups while managing the rest of the class. (P2, P7) Managing diverse behaviors within a small group can be difficult, especially when some students struggle with attention, self-regulation, or social interactions (P4) Managing multiple small groups at once can be challenging, especially ensuring that students working independently stay on task while the teacher provides direct instruction.(P5) It’s hard to manage multiple small groups in one setup. (P2, P6, P7) Balancing the time spent with a small group while also meeting the needs of the rest of the class can be a challenge.(P3) It can also be difficult to manage time effectively, as I have to balance small-group instruction with whole-class activities. (P4) With limited classroom time, it can be difficult to fit in enough small group sessions to meet all students' needs while also covering the full curriculum.(P1) Even small groups often include students with different learning profiles, IEP goals, and attention spans. (P3) One challenge is making sure every student gets the attention they need, especially if the group has varying skill levels. (P4, P6) Even within small groups, students may have different learning paces and needs, making it challenging to differentiate instruction effectively.(P4, P7) Providing individualized materials, assistive technology, and hands-on resources for multiple small groups can be demanding in terms of planning and availability.(P1, P7) Students with LD may have co-occurring needs like ADHD or emotional regulation issues, which can make small groups hard to manage. (P8) As it is beneficial to communicate with peers come challenges in communication barriers resulting in fights.  |

Table 2. Thematic analysis of teachers’ responses on small group strategies challenges. Theme Subtheme Class management 1. Behaviors 2. Attention and emotional regulation, Time management, Diverse learning needs 1. Learning profile 2. IEP goals, Resources Emotional challenges. As can be seen from the data, class management was one of the key issues, particularly the teachers’ ability to manage the class and students’ behavioral diversity. Time management was another aspect that surfaced: few teachers were able to address this issue, describing the struggle with balancing small-scale interaction and addressing the rest of the class without spending all their time on it.

Another repeating factor was the diversity of learning objectives in small groups and the overall wolf pack; learners with SLD have different abilities, learning profiles, and IEP goals, making it impossible to ensure homogeneous composition of groups. Resources were another often-mentioned factor. Most participants described a deficiency of various materials and instructional support, which might prevent them from realizing the ability to divide a larger classroom into small groups:

Finally, emotional and social struggles added difficulty, often mentioned by participants. SLD students tend to be more emotionally sensitive. As a result, the lack of interest or misunderstanding between students might devolve into conflicts or isolation. Without additional support, teachers could not always address such misunderstandings before they grow into large conflicts.

**4.3 Proposed Output to Help Students with Learning Disabilities Improve Their Academic Performance**

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**Figure 1: ESP-SLD Conceptual Model**

The Enhanced Support Program for Students with Learning Disabilities (ESP-SLD) model illustrates how targeted instructional and systemic strategies can promote academic performance and inclusion for learners with special needs.

At the model's core is the desired outcome: Improved Academic Performance and Inclusion of Students with Learning Disabilities. Surrounding this are seven interrelated pillars that serve as key interventions:

1. Structured Small Group Scheduling: Ensures consistent instructional time and allows for classroom management optimization.

2. Flexible Group Composition: Encourages adaptive grouping based on updated assessment data and student needs.

3. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) & Behavioral Support: Helps students regulate emotions, stay motivated, and develop positive behaviors.

4. Resource Enrichment: Integrates assistive tools, differentiated materials, and technologies to enhance learning.

5. Collaborative Communication: Promotes teamwork between teachers, specialists, and families to ensure holistic support.

6. Teacher Capacity & Well-being: Highlights the importance of ongoing training and emotional wellness for teachers to effectively implement inclusive practices.

7. Peer Communication & Conflict Resolution: Builds healthy interaction skills among students, reducing classroom conflict and promoting empathy.

These pillars collectively contribute to a dynamic and inclusive learning environment where students with learning disabilities can thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

**Table 3: Output Proposal Table: Enhanced Support Program for Students with Learning Disabilities (ESP-SLD**)

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| **Focus Area** |  **Action Plan** | **Purpose** | **Expected Outcome** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
| Structured Small Group Scheduling | Develop a school-wide small group schedule balancing instruction and independent work. | Ensure dedicated time for focused instruction. | Improved learning time management and academic support for LD students. |
| Flexible Group Composition | Use ongoing assessments to form and adjust groups based on student needs and IEP goals. | Address diversity in abilities and behaviors. | More personalized and effective group instruction. |
| SEL and Behavioral Support | Integrate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and positive reinforcement in group activities. | Support students with ADHD, emotional, and social difficulties. | Increased motivation, focus, and emotional regulation. |
| Resource Enrichment | Provide access to differentiated materials, assistive tech, and multisensory tools. | Equip teachers and students with appropriate learning tools. | Better engagement and accessibility in instruction. |
| Collaborative Communication | Facilitate regular meetings between teachers, specialists, and parents. | Strengthen consistency and alignment of support strategies. | Enhanced student monitoring and collaborative planning. |
| Teacher Capacity & Well-being | Offer training on inclusive practices, time management, and wellness strategies. | Empower and support teachers in handling diverse needs. | Improved instructional quality and reduced burnout. |
| Peer Communication & Conflict Resolution | Implement peer communication activities and staff training in mediation. | Minimize disruptions caused by communication barriers. | Safer, more inclusive, and respectful classroom environment. |

**Rationale**

The introduction of the Enhanced Support Program to Students with Learning Disabilities (ESP-SLD) is based on the idea of providing students with different needs with a flexible, caring, and fair education. The students with learning disabilities, however, are likely to require systematic, direct, explicit, and differentiated instructions than are normally provided in the normal teaching method. According to the Programme, it is designed to target the issues encountered in education, emotional growth and social interaction by offering a broad-based community supporting network.

This matrix represents a plan of action and serves as a bridge that links measurable activities, timelines, and responsible persons to priorities in small group instruction, behavioral supports, resource enrichment, and communication and collaboration. It makes sure that interventions are not only systematically implemented and tracked, but that have measures of success. In the end, this process of inclusivity not only enhances the ability of the school to serve students with learning disabilities but also fosters a culture of inclusivity, empathy, and excellence.

**Program Objectives:**

1. To maintain an organized process for small group instruction for the learning needs of students with LD.

2. To support and encourage flexible and analytical grouping consistent with student IEPS and assessment results.

3. To embed SEL and behavior support within classroom routines to support students' regulation and prosocial behavior.

4. To enhance the delivery of instruction by making assistive technology, multisensory

instructional materials, and differentiated resources available.

5. To ensure that teachers, specialists, and families communicate collaboratively, so that support and accountability for student progress are shared.

6. To build teacher capacity and well-being in professional development and wellness programming.

7. To develop peer communication skills in conflict resolution, fostering a safe and inclusive environment in the classroom where each student is valued and respected.

**TABLE 4. Implementation Matrix: Enhanced Support Program for Students with Learning Disabilities (ESP-SLD)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area** | **Key Activities** | **Persons Involved** | **Time Frame** | **Resources Needed** | **Success Indicators** |
| Structured Small Group Scheduling | Develop and integrate a rotating small group schedule | School Heads, Teachers | Start of each quarter | Class schedules, activity plans | Timely and consistent implementation of small groups |
| Flexible Group Composition | Conduct ongoing assessments; adjust groups based on IEPs | SPED Teachers, Gen. Ed. Teachers, Guidance Staff | Monthly/Quarterly | Assessment tools, student profiles | Students grouped effectively according to learning needs |
| SEL & Behavioral Support | Incorporate SEL lessons; use behavior charts, check-ins | Teachers, Counselors, SPED Coordinators | Weekly | SEL curriculum, monitoring tools | Improved behavior and emotional regulation |
| Resource Enrichment | Provide multisensory tools, assistive tech, and visual aids | School Admin, ICT Coordinator, Teachers | Ongoing | Tech devices, printed materials, and manipulatives | Increased student engagement and accessibility |
| Collaborative Communication | Schedule regular case conferences and parent-teacher dialogues | Teachers, Parents, SPED Teams | Every grading period | Communication templates, feedback forms | Strengthened parent-teacher coordination |
| Teacher Capacity & Well-being | Conduct training on inclusive teaching, time management, and teacher wellness. | School Leaders, Resource Speakers | Every semester | CPD sessions, wellness programs, and handouts | Teacher confidence and reduced stress levels |
| Peer Communication & Conflict Resolution | Conduct peer-led activities and teach conflict resolution strategies | Teachers, Peer Leaders, Guidance Counselor | Monthly | Peer activity modules, classroom agreements | Reduction in peer conflicts and improved peer interactions |

**5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that 1. Small group instruction enhances the academic outcomes of learners with learning disabilities by facilitating individualized instruction, closer monitoring, and increased student participation. Its effectiveness lies in its ability to adapt to the specific needs of students, making learning more accessible and engaging.

2. When instruction is adapted to suit individual learning styles and abilities, student engagement increases significantly. Small group instruction promotes an inclusive learning atmosphere where students with learning disabilities feel valued and supported, resulting in greater academic participation and growth.

3. Despite its pedagogical value, small group instruction is difficult to sustain without adequate time, personnel, and behavioral management strategies. Effective implementation requires both logistical planning and institutional support to avoid teacher burnout and ensure consistent learning opportunities for all students.

4. The diversity of learners in inclusive classrooms requires flexible grouping strategies and highly differentiated instruction. Teachers must be equipped with both the tools and knowledge to create dynamic groupings that can evolve based on ongoing assessment and student progress.

5. For small group instruction to be sustainable and impactful, continuous professional development and institutional backing are essential. Support from administration in the form of training, scheduling flexibility, and resource allocation empowers teachers to implement small group instruction more effectively.

In light of the foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby endorsed:

1. School administrators should recognize small-group instruction as a foundational teaching strategy in inclusive classrooms. This includes formally integrating it into lesson planning and providing structured time within the school schedule for teachers to conduct small group sessions without compromising whole-class instruction.

2. Schools should allocate funding to hire additional aides or co-teachers to help manage the classroom during small-group instruction. These staff members can monitor the rest of the class, allowing the teacher to focus more effectively on students in the small group.

3. Educational leaders should organize regular training sessions focused on differentiated instruction, behavioral management, inclusive education strategies, and dynamic group structuring. Peer mentoring and collaborative lesson planning should also be encouraged.

4. Schools must ensure the availability of differentiated materials, assistive technologies, and visual or hands-on learning tools for use during small group sessions. Resource rooms or learning centers should be considered to support the specific needs of students with learning disabilities.

5. Teachers should be supported in using formative assessment data to regularly review and reorganize small group compositions according to student progress and changing needs.

6. Regular coordination meetings should be held among teachers, special education staff, parents, and school leaders to discuss student needs, progress, and instructional strategies. Clear communication protocols must be established to support a team-based approach to inclusive education.

7. Structured peer interactions and communication skill-building activities should be incorporated into group work to reduce barriers among students with learning difficulties. Classroom norms for respectful dialogue and conflict resolution should also be explicitly taught.

8. The Enhanced Support Program for Students with Learning Disabilities (ESP-SLD) Conceptual Model should be applied.

**CONSENT**

As per international standard or university standard, Participants’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

**ETHICAL APPROVAL**

As per international standard or university standard guidelineparticipant consent and ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the authors.

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

Option 1:

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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