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# PREPARED OR UNPREPARED? EXAMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CONTEXT

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Inclusive education is expanding in Malaysia, increasing the demand for well-prepared Special Educational Needs (SEN) teachers.
2. SEN teachers are expected to manage diverse learner needs, differentiated instruction, behavior challenges, and inclusive classroom practices.
3. Despite ongoing reforms, concerns remain regarding whether current teacher training programs adequately prepare educators for real classroom realities.
4. Understanding teachers' perceptions of training effectiveness is essential for improving professional preparation and educational outcomes.
5. This study examines the effectiveness of SEN teacher training programs in Malaysia through the lens of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, focusing on preparedness for inclusive education.



## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine SEN teachers' perceptions of the adequacy of their training programs in preparing them for inclusive classrooms.
2. To identify the relevance of training content to real classroom challenges, including behavior management, differentiated instruction, and assessment.
3. To explore systemic and contextual factors that hinder or support the effectiveness of SEN teacher training in Malaysia.

## METHODOLOGY

Research Design	Qualitative research design to explore in-depth perceptions and lived experiences of SEN teachers
Data Collection	Semi-structured interviews
Participants	13 SEN teachers from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (teachers are from 3 different schools)
Analysis Methods	Braun & Clarke's 6-step thematic analysis framework for systematic pattern identification.
Theoretical Framework	Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory
Analysis Method	Code group analysis using ATLAS.ti

## FINDINGS

### Three Major Themes Identified

Theme 1 Practical Relevance of Training	Theme 2 Systemic Challenges	Theme 3 Contextual Gaps in Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior management skills</li> <li>• Differentiated instruction</li> <li>• Authentic assessment strategies</li> <li>• Appreciation for hands-on workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent mentorship support</li> <li>• Limited teaching resources</li> <li>• Weak professional collaboration</li> <li>• Institutional support gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misalignment with Malaysian culture</li> <li>• Weak link to national education policies</li> <li>• Teachers feeling insufficiently prepared</li> <li>• Multiple SEN roles with little support</li> </ul>

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This study reveals a significant gap between SEN teacher training programs and the realities of inclusive classroom practice in Malaysia. While some teachers valued hands-on workshops, many felt insufficiently prepared for actual teaching demands.

- ✓ Training programs must be contextually aligned with Malaysian culture, diversity, and national education policy frameworks.
- ✓ Consistent mentorship, collaborative professional networks, and institutional support are essential for SEN teacher effectiveness.
- ✓ Curriculum content should be regularly updated to reflect evolving classroom realities and student needs.
- ✓ Policymakers should address multi-role demands placed on SEN teachers and provide adequate institutional backing.

### Examples of teachers' quotations

Practical Relevance of Training

Systemic Challenges

Contextual Gaps in Training

"I learned how to adjust apps for different ability levels in one class."- Teacher 7A

"The school supports technology in words, not in budget."- Teacher 4A

"The training examples used Western classrooms. Our SEN context is different." – Teacher 10A

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