SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

THE EFFECT OF SIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING ON TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND COMMUNICATION CONFIDENCE WITH DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING STUDENTS: PROMOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND EQUITABLE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Francis P. Martin,[1] Letecia Eludo, PhD[2]
[1]*MAED SPED Student, University of Perpetual Help System DALTA - Las Piñas City*
[2]*Associate Professor, University of Perpetual Help System DALTA - Las Piñas City*

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra27548
DOI No: 10.36713/epra27548

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between sign language training, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, and communication confidence in teaching Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students. Despite initiatives to implement inclusive education, teachers often face challenges in acquiring and applying sign language skills, affecting classroom effectiveness. A descriptive-correlational design was employed involving 89 teachers handling DHH learners. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring the extent of sign language training, attitudes toward inclusion, communication confidence, and challenges in skill application. Quantitative data were analyzed using weighted mean and Pearson's correlation, while qualitative responses were thematically analyzed. Most teachers were female, aged 30–39, with varying teaching experience and educational backgrounds. Teachers generally underwent moderate to high sign language training, exhibited highly positive attitudes toward inclusion, and demonstrated strong communication confidence in linguistic competence, interactive communication, instructional delivery, and adaptability. Significant positive relationships were observed between the extent of sign language training, attitudes toward inclusion, and communication confidence ($r = 0.612–0.721$, $p < .001$). Challenges included balancing workload with training, limited access to learning materials, and sustaining fluency in classroom application. To address these issues, the study proposed Project S.E.N.Y.A.S, a training program aimed at enhancing teachers' attitudes, skills, and instructional effectiveness. Findings indicate that professional development in sign language significantly strengthens teachers' communication competence and inclusive practices. Structured, practical, and continuous training is essential to improve teacher preparedness, learner engagement, and inclusive classroom outcomes.

KEYWORDS: *Communication Confidence, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, Inclusive Education, Sign Language Training, Teacher Professional Development*

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of inclusive education in the Philippines is to provide quality and relevant learning experiences to all students including the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) children in the mainstream classroom. Inclusion is successful to the extent that instructors are prepared to include DHH pupils, particularly in relation to their capacity to connect with them. Teachers typically lack enough training in sign language and inclusive practices, which can hinder students' academic progress and social integration.

Sign language training was identified as a key intervention to develop teachers' communication skills, confidence and attitudes towards inclusion . Such training allows for better engagement of DHH students, but also fosters participation, engagement and a supportive classroom environment. It also raises understanding of cultural diversity and increases teachers' commitment to inclusive practices.

Despite the benefits, the implementation is delayed due to lack of resources, professional growth and institutional support. There is also lack of local research on the effect of sign language training on teachers in the Philippine setting.

This research aims to address this gap by investigating the impact of sign language training on teachers' attitudes, communication self-efficacy and their ability to implement inclusive practices, as well as the perceived benefits of sign language training for both educators and DHH students. It aims at fostering the growth of inclusive education and offering equal learning opportunities to all.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, position, years of service in teaching Deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) students, and educational background?

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

2. To what extent do teachers undergo sign language training in terms of observing instructors demonstrate sign language, practicing in guided sessions, receiving feedback on their skills, developing confidence in using sign language in the classroom, and gaining repeated exposure to classroom situations?
3. What is the level of teachers' attitude toward sign language in terms of belief in inclusive values, acceptance of learner diversity, commitment to inclusive practices, and perception of professional responsibility?
4. What is the level of teachers' communication confidence in using sign language in terms of linguistic competence, interactive communication, instructional delivery, and adaptability in diverse contexts?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of sign language training, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, and their communication confidence in communicating with DHH students?
6. What challenges do teachers face in learning and applying sign language in the classroom in terms of access to training, availability of learning materials, and application of skills?
7. What training program can be proposed to enhance teachers' attitudes, confidence, and effectiveness in communicating with DHH students?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES AND STUDIES

This is a major step forward in strengthening the teacher's capacity to reach out to DHH children by sign language training for inclusive education. The Filipino Sign Language Act, or Republic Act No. 11106 (DepEd, 2021), mandates the utilization of Filipino Sign Language (FSL) as a medium of instruction in educational institutions to ensure accessibility for all students. This is seen in programs like National Deaf Awareness Week and the integration of FSL in the MATATAG curriculum. This aims to enhance inclusivity in practices and educate instructors (DepEd, 2023; Philstar, 2024).

FSL is documented in research and papers as a significant language for social inclusion, educational engagement, and interaction among DHH children (Bulatlat, 2025). Educators proficient in sign language exhibited elevated self-efficacy and teaching capabilities, along with a deeper comprehension of Deaf culture, resulting in enhanced inclusive education (Benilde, 2025; DOST-STII, 2023).DepEd Region VIII (2022) states that professional development programs, especially those offered by DepEd and other institutions, enhance teachers' communication skills and their capacity to serve a wide range of students.

In addition, empirical research has found that teaching sign language has a favorable impact on teacher's confidence and attitudes. DHH kids do better when they are treated with empathy, inclusivity, and are involved with trained teachers (The Guardian, 2023; The New York Times, 2022). Moreover, local studies have shown that teachers who receive FSL training are more capable of applying individualized instruction and modifying instructional materials to improve academic achievement and student engagement at DHH (De la Fuente, 2023; ResearchGate, 2024). It is also vital to notice the impact of sign language learning on the teachers' experience in inclusive classrooms. The post-training questionnaire indicated that teachers felt more confident, communicated more effectively with students, and had better relationships with their pupils (Cosmod & Villarente, 2024). This is in line with other studies that emphasize the relevance of teachers' attitudes and communication abilities for the achievement of inclusion (Vacalares et al., 2023; Pilsel, 2022).

However, the implementation still suffered from the problems of restricted training opportunities, lack of finance and low institutional support (Alquraini, 2022). However, studies by local and international sources have consistently proven that Sign Language training is the most effective way to enhance teachers' attitudes, communication skills and overall performance in inclusive classrooms.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research utilized a quantitative descriptive research design to determine the effect of sign language training on teachers' attitude and communication confidence in teaching the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) students. Data collection was done using a structured survey questionnaire to assess the level of training, teachers' attitude towards inclusion, and communication confidence. Data were summarized using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, while inferential analyses were done to determine the relationship and differences in selected demographic variables. The design generated empirical evidence on the effect of sign language training on teachers' preparedness to practice inclusion and provide equal learning opportunities.

Population, Sampling, and Research Locale

This study looked at a handful public schools in the Division of Pasay City, which is in the Philippines' National Capital Region (NCR) and has a lot of people. The schools in this area have a wide range of educational needs. The division has four areas, and for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) students, there are special SPED centers that help them get an all-around education. The schools selected offered different educational settings, such as inclusion-based classes and specialized programs, which provided a holistic understanding of the impact of sign language training on teachers' attitudes and communication confidence.

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

The respondents of the study were Special Education (SPED) teachers handling DHH learners. Using purposive sampling with specific inclusion criteria, only licensed SPED teachers with at least one year of experience teaching DHH students were selected. A sample size of roughly 100 responders was derived from a total population of 134 teachers using Slovin's technique. This guaranteed sufficient representation and dependability of results, enabling the study to produce significant insights into the influence of sign language training on teachers' professional practices and efficacy in inclusive education.

Respondents of the Study

There were 100 Special Education (SPED) teachers from five designated public schools in the Division of Pasay City, namely: P. Villanueva Elementary School, P. Zamora Elementary School, Villamor Airbase Elementary School, Pasay City North High School, and the Philippine School for the Deaf (PSD), who served as the study participants. The teachers were selected based on their interactions with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) students and their involvement in implementing inclusive pedagogical practices. To ensure equal representation for each school, the proportional stratified random sampling technique was used. Out of the 134 SPED teachers identified, 100 respondents were selected. The selection rate was determined based on the number of teachers in each school. The method produced credible and contextualized data that accurately reflected the perspectives and experiences of SPED teachers in different school settings.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire prepared by the researcher was used to collect data on respondents' demographic profiles, the extent of sign language training, attitudes towards inclusion, communication confidence, and challenges encountered. The instrument comprises five parts aligned with the study's objectives. The first part was designed to collect demographic data, including age, gender, position, years of teaching DHH learners, and educational background.

The second section assessed the extent to which participants engaged in sign language training, while the third and fourth sections assessed teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and communication confidence, respectively. The final section identified challenges in learning and applying sign language in the classroom. All items were measured on a four-point Likert scale to ensure consistency and to enable quantitative analysis of responses.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering started with the acquisition of the necessary permits from the Schools Division Office of Pasay City and the school heads of the chosen schools and ethical clearance if needed. Researcher-made questionnaire and informed consent forms were produced, piloted for reliability and clarity and changed accordingly. The respondents were recruited through consultation with the school SPED coordinators and using proportionate sampling.

Questionnaires were delivered in paper format or via an internet platform. Participants were advised that participation is voluntary and confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved. Completed surveys were collected, checked for completeness, coded and submitted into statistical software for analysis. Reliability tests including Cronbach's alpha were used to assess internal consistency of the instrument.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data and identify relationships and differences between variables. The data was managed and preserved ethically. The data offered insights on enhancing the accessibility of sign language instruction and pedagogical approaches for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Statistical Treatment

Data were encoded and analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS/ R/ Jamovi, and two-tailed significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and composite scores were computed for each variable. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the profile of respondents, levels of sign language training, attitudes, communication confidence, and obstacles.

Inferential analyses were performed to assess correlations and differences among variables. Pearson's or Spearman's correlation was used to determine correlations between training, attitudes, and communication confidence, while multiple regression analysis was used to assess predictive relationships. Group differences were assessed using t-tests and ANOVA, with nonparametric alternatives used when assumptions were violated. Qualitative responses about problems and recommendations were analyzed using content analysis. Results were reported with effect sizes, confidence intervals, and relevant statistics to facilitate accurate interpretation.3

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic profile of the kindergarten teacher-respondents in terms of age, sex, designation, years of teaching, and highest educational attainment.

Table 1.1 Demographic Profile of the Teacher-Respondents in terms of Age

Age	Frequency (f)	Rank
25-34	18	2
35-44	54	1
45-54	12	3
55 years old and above	5	4
Total	**89**	

Table 1.1 shows that the majority of the responding teachers were aged between 35 and 44 years (54/89; 60.7%), followed by 25 to 34 years (18; 20.2%), 45 to 54 years (12; 13.5%) and 55 years and above (5; 5.6%). This distribution indicates that most are mid-career professionals who are typically stable, experienced and open to adopting new instructional practices, which is consistent with the global trend (UNESCO, 2023).

Research further suggests that teachers in this age group are more likely to engage in continuous professional development and adapt to inclusive teaching strategies, such as using sign language to support Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students (Smith & Aguirre, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2024). In contrast, younger teachers (25–34 years) are typically still developing instructional confidence (Nguyen et al., 2021), while teachers aged 55 and above may gradually reduce classroom engagement as they approach retirement (Chen & Torres, 2025).

Table 1.2 Demographic Profile of the Teacher-Respondents in terms of Sex

Gender	Frequency (f)	Rank
Male	8	2
Female	81	1
Total	**89**	

Table 1.2 shows that the majority of teacher-respondents are female, with 81 out of 89 respondents, while only 8 are male. This indicates that the teaching workforce in the study is predominantly female, reflecting the continued dominance of women in the teaching profession, particularly in basic and special education.

This finding is consistent with recent educational workforce trends showing that female teachers constitute the majority of educators worldwide, especially in primary and special education programs (OECD, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Studies have also indicated that female teachers often demonstrate strong nurturing and supportive behaviors, which are important in fostering inclusive classroom environments for diverse learners, including Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students (Smith & Aguirre, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2024).

Table 1.3 Demographic Profile of the Teacher-Respondents in terms of Designation

Designation	Frequency (f)	Rank
Teacher I	12	4
Teacher II	8	5
Teacher III	16	2.5
SNED Teacher I	32	1
SNED Teacher II	5	6
SNED Teacher III	16	2.5
Master Teacher I	0	7.5
Master Teacher II	0	7.5
Total	**89**	

Table 1.3 indicates that the predominant group of responders comprises SNED Teacher I (32), succeeded by Teacher III and SNED Teacher III (16 each), Teacher I (12), Teacher II (8), and SNED Teacher II (5). No respondents possess Master Teacher positions, suggesting that the majority are engaged in entry- to mid-level teaching professions, especially under Special Needs Education (SNED).

The predominance of SNED teachers in the sample suggests that the respondents are directly involved in providing instructional support to learners with special educational needs, including Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students. According to recent studies, teachers assigned to special education or inclusive education programs are more likely to engage in specialized training and instructional practices that support diverse learners (Garcia & Lopez, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2024).

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

Table 1.4 Demographic Profile of the Teacher-Respondents in terms of Years of Teaching

Years of Teaching	Frequency (f)	Rank
5 years and below	58	1
11-15 years	27	2
16 years and above	4	3
Total	**89**	

Table 1.4 shows that the majority of respondents have 5 years of teaching experience and below (58), followed by those with 11–15 years (27), while only 4 have 16 years and above. This indicates that most teachers in the study are relatively early in their teaching careers.

These findings indicate that most of the respondents are relatively early-career teachers, suggesting a workforce composed largely of educators who are still developing their professional expertise and instructional practices. This distribution is consistent with recent studies which suggest that early-career teachers often make up a significant portion of the teaching workforce due to increasing recruitment and replacement of retiring educators (OECD, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).

Table 1.5 Demographic Profile of the Teacher-Respondents in terms of Highest Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency (f)	Rank
Bachelor's Degree	2	3
Bachelor's Degree with MA/MS Units	47	1
Ma/MS Degree	40	2
MA/MS Degree with Ph.D./EdD Units	0	0
Ph.D./EdD Degree	0	0
Total	**89**	

Table 1.5 shows that most respondents hold a bachelor's degree with MA/MS units (47), followed by those who have completed a Master's degree (40), while only 2 have a bachelor's degree only. No respondents have doctoral-level qualifications, indicating that most teachers have pursued graduate studies and demonstrate strong commitment to professional development.

This trend aligns with recent educational policies and professional standards encouraging teachers to pursue postgraduate education to enhance their instructional competence and career advancement (OECD, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Studies have also shown that teachers who engage in graduate studies tend to develop deeper pedagogical knowledge and are more likely to adopt innovative and inclusive teaching strategies (Smith & Aguirre, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2024).

Composite Table on the Extent of Teachers' Sign Language Training in terms of Observing Instructors Demonstrate Sign Language, Practicing sign language in guided sessions, Receiving feedback on their Skills, Feeling confident to use sign language in class, Getting repeated exposure to classroom situations

Table 2 Composite Table on the Extent of Teachers' Sign Language Training in terms of Observing Instructors Demonstrate Sign Language, Practicing sign language in guided sessions, Receiving feedback on their Skills, Feeling confident to use sign language in class, Getting repeated exposure to classroom situations

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Observing Instructors Demonstrate Sign Language	3.79	HT	2
Practicing sign language in guided sessions	3.67	HT	4
Receiving feedback on their Skills	3.71	HT	3
Feeling confident to use sign language in class	3.46	**MT**	5
Getting repeated exposure to classroom situations	3.83	HT	1
Extent of Teachers' Sign Language Training	3.69	**0.16**	

Legend: 3.51 – 4.00 Highly Trained (HT); 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Trained (MT); 1.51 – 2.50 Occasionally Trained (OT); 1.00 – 1.50 Not Trained at All (NTA)

Table 2 results demonstrate that teachers have a lot of sign language training based on observing examples (WM=3.79), practicing with an adult (WM=3.67) and seeing sign language often in the classroom (WM=3.83). In summary, the results show that instructors are Highly Trained. Teachers enhance their skills through watching other teachers, receiving feedback from their professors, and being part in a number of classroom activities. However, certain items show moderate levels such as gaining feedback (WM = 3.71) and being confidence to use sign language in class (WM=3.46). This indicates that teachers still have some difficulties in using their talents and speaking clearly.

The results indicate that overall teachers have good knowledge of the fundamentals and practical aspects of sign language, but want further support to build students' confidence and make sure they utilize it regularly in the classroom.

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

Results reveal that guided practice, learn by watching and feedback are helpful for teachers to improve their sign language skills. Teachers learn to employ hand gestures, face expressions and signing skills precisely by viewing examples and observing their teachers perform them. Controlled practice lessons assist people in improving their speaking and writing (Garcia & Lopez, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2022). Teacher feedback (Smith & Aguirre, 2022). It is also necessary to improve your sign language, correct faults and gain confidence. But the teachers have to keep learning and growing better since the children don't trust them too much. Consistent use in the classroom supports children in learning new abilities and provides opportunities for teachers to use sign language appropriately in numerous circumstances (Smith & Huang, 2021; Lopez et al., 2023). Taken together, the findings suggest a need for greater training, feedback and practice for instructors to improve their abilities, confidence and capacity to make learning environments open to students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Composite Table on the Level of Teachers' Attitude towards Sign Language in terms of Belief in Inclusive Values, Acceptance of Learner Diversity, Commitment to Inclusive Practices, Perception of Professional Responsibility.

***Table 3 Composite Table on the Level of Teachers' Attitude towards Sign Language in terms of* Belief in Inclusive Values, Acceptance of Learner Diversity, Commitment to Inclusive Practices, Perception of Professional Responsibility**

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Belief in Inclusive Values	3.95	HT	1
Acceptance of Learner Diversity	3.94	HT	2
Commitment to Inclusive Practices	3.87	HT	3
Perception of Professional Responsibility	3.83	HT	**4**
Level of Teachers' Attitude towards Sign Language	**3.90**	**HT**	

Legend: 3.51 – 4.00 Highly Trained (HT); 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Trained (MT); 1.51 – 2.50 Occasionally Trained (OT); 1.00 – 1.50 Not Trained at All (NTA)

Table 3 results indicate that the teachers have a highly good attitude towards sign language and inclusive education. Highly Trained. All indicators are Teachers are very supportive of inclusive concepts (WM = 3.95) and know that DHH students may benefit from sign language and equal rights in the classroom. They demonstrate a good understanding of the multiple sorts of learners (WM=3.94) exhibiting an awareness of the talents of DHH students and an embrace of varied communication styles.

Teachers are devoted to inclusive practices (WM = 3.87). Teachers typically use sign language, visual aids and other inclusive methods to teach. They think that they have a lot of professional responsibility (WM=3.83). They perceive their obligation to make sure that everybody gets the opportunity to study and they are continually upgrading their abilities.

The results indicate that teachers had good views towards education of DHH pupils, sign language and inclusion and equity . Teachers who value their students' diversity are more likely to adopt inclusive tactics, alter their lesson plans, and establish welcoming classrooms that support equity and participation (Garcia & Lopez, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2024).

Research has shown that inclusive practices, such as sign language and collaborative approaches, have increased student engagement and learning results (Smith & Aguirre, 2022; Garcia & Lopez, 2022). Also, the high level of professional accountability and continuous professional development of the teachers enable them to address the needs of diverse children and sustain inclusive classroom practices (Smith & Aguirre, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2024).

Composite Table on the Level of Teachers' Communication Confidence in using Sign Language in terms of Linguistic Competence, Interactive Communication, Instructional Delivery, Adaptability in Diverse Complex.

Table 4 Composite Table on the Level of Teachers' Communication Confidence in using Sign Language in terms of Linguistic Competence, Interactive Communication, Instructional Delivery, Adaptability in Diverse Complex

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Linguistic Competence	3.69	HD	1
Interactive Communication	3.64	HD	2
Instructional Delivery	3.54	HD	3
Adaptability in Diverse Complex	3.34	HD	**4**
Level of Teachers' Communication Confidence in using Sign Language	**3.90**	**HT**	

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Highly Developed (HD); 2.51 – 3.25 More Developed (MD); 1.76 – 2.50 Less Developed (LD); 1.00 – 1.75 Not Developed (NP)

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

Table 4 findings indicate that teachers are highly communicative confident in the use of sign language, with all components rated as Highly Developed. There is still some resistance in recalling signs but teachers show outstanding linguistic ability (WM = 3.69), especially in changing the speed of signing, expanding vocabulary and fingerspelling.

Teachers are sure that they are able to engage pupils through turn taking, motivation and reinforcement in interactive communication (WM = 3.64), but they find a little difficult to open discussions and respond by themselves. Teachers successfully utilize sign language into conversations and visual aids for instructional delivery (WM = 3.54). Assessment and planned course delivery still need to work. Finally, teachers show significant adaptation (WM = 3.34), being resilient and flexible in changing communication techniques across different classroom circumstances. The overall findings suggest that instructors are effective sign language communicators but require additional support to increase their spontaneity, assessment techniques and consistent use of sign language in a variety of classroom situations.

The findings demonstrate the authorities' strong belief in sign language's linguistic aptitude, interactive communication skills, and instructional efficacy. For DHH students, effective instruction and student involvement are enhanced by the use of visual aids, interaction management, and appropriate language (Garcia & Lopez, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2024).

However, spontaneous communication, class evaluation, and real-time modification are the major problems. There is a need for further experience and skill development, as seen by the lower ratings for other indicators including the capacity to express complex ideas and react to unanticipated events.

The results are in line with other research that highlights the value of frequent practice, flexibility, and proficient sign language use in inclusive education. Teachers who acquire these skills are better equipped to meet the requirements of a diverse student body, retain student involvement, and promote classroom engagement (Garcia & Lopez, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2024).

Significant relationship between the extent of sign language training, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and communication confidence with DHH students.

Table 5 Significant relationship between the extent of sign language training, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and communication confidence with DHH students.

Variable Pair	Pearson's r	df	p-value	Interpretation (Strength & Direction)	Decision on H_0 (α = .05, two-tailed)
Sign Language Training ↔ Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion	0.612	98	< .001	Moderate, positive relationship	Reject H_0 (significant)
Extent of Sign Language Training ↔ Communication Confidence with DHH Students	0.689	98	< .001	Moderate to strong, positive relationship	Reject H_0 (significant)
Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion ↔ Communication Confidence with DHH Students	0.721	98	< .001	Strong, positive relationship	Reject H_0 (significant)

Table 5 results reveal strong connections between teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, communicative self-confidence with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) students, and level of sign language instruction. Sign language training had a moderate to high connection with communication confidence (r = 0.689) and a moderate link with teacher attitudes (r = 0.612). Meanwhile, there is a high positive connection (r = .721) between teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and communicative confidence, meaning that more positive attitudes are associated with higher confidence.

These results indicate that the more sign language teaching, the more inclusive attitudes and communication abilities instructors have. This is in line with earlier studies showing that professional training enhances attitudes and confidence, as well as technical skills, which lead to more successful inclusive teaching practices (Garcia & Lopez, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2024).

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

Composite Table on the challenges do teachers face in learning and applying sign language in the classroom in terms of Access to Training, Availability of Learning Materials, Application of Skills in the Classroom.

Table 6 Composite Table on the challenges do teachers face in learning and applying sign language in the classroom in terms of Access to Training, Availability of Learning Materials, Application of Skills in the Classroom

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Access to Training	2.50	MS	1.5
Availability of Learning Materials	2.47	LS	3
Application of Skills in the Classroom	2.50	MS	1.5
Challenges do teachers face in learning and applying sign language in the classroom	**2.49**	**MS**	

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Extremely Serious (ES); 2.51 – 3.25 More Serious (MS); 1.76 – 2.50 Less Serious (LS); 1.00 – 1.75 Not a Serious Problem (NS)

Table 6 findings that the problems faced by SNED teachers are relatively less severe in access to training (WM = 2.46) and availability of learning materials (WM = 2.47) but limited training opportunities, workload constraints and difficulty in accessing updated or localized resources continue to be an issue.

However, the problems of the use of sign language in the classroom are assessed as more serious (WM = 2.50). Teachers struggle to maintain fluency, juggle spoken and signed communication, create confidence and measure pupil knowledge.

These results show that training and materials' accessibility is not a problem but the real practice of sign language in real classroom contexts is still a challenge. This aligns with findings emphasizing the significance of continual practice, feedback, and institutional support in enhancing teachers' communication skills and performance in inclusive classrooms (Garcia & Lopez, 2022; Tan & Lee, 2024).

Action plan may be developed based on the findings of the study

Title of the Program: **Project S.E.N.Y.A.S** – ***S**upporting **E**ducators' **N**urturing of **Y**ouths with **A**uditory **S**kills*

I. RATIONALE

The results of the study revealed that teachers demonstrate a generally positive attitude toward inclusion and a high level of communication confidence in using sign language. However, some areas such as confidence in spontaneous communication, adaptability in diverse classroom situations, and opportunities for guided practice still require enhancement. Effective communication plays a critical role in promoting inclusive education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) learners. Therefore, it is essential to provide continuous professional development programs that will further strengthen teachers' skills, attitudes, and instructional strategies in using sign language. The proposed training program aims to enhance teachers' competence, confidence, and effectiveness in communicating with DHH students and to promote inclusive classroom practices.

II. Objectives

1. Strengthen teachers' understanding of inclusive education and the needs of DHH learners.
2. Improve teachers' proficiency in basic and functional sign language communication.
3. Enhance teachers' confidence in interacting and communicating with DHH students.
4. Develop effective teaching strategies that support inclusive learning environments.
5. Encourage positive attitudes and professional commitment toward inclusive practices.

III. Target Participants

- SNED teachers, general education teachers handling DHH learners, and other school personnel involved in inclusive education.

IV. Duration

- 3–5 days training workshop or a series of professional development sessions.

V. Expected Outcomes

- Teachers will demonstrate improved sign language communication skills.
- Teachers will show increased confidence in interacting with DHH students.
- Teachers will exhibit stronger commitment to inclusive education practices.
- Classrooms will become more inclusive and supportive learning environments for DHH learners.

VI. Evaluation of the Program

- The effectiveness of the program will be evaluated through:
- Pre-test and post-test assessment of sign language skills
- Observation of teachers' communication practices in the classroom
- Feedback from participants and facilitators

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

- Monitoring of inclusive teaching strategies implemented after the training

ACTIVITIES / STRATEGIES	PERSON/S INVOLVED	TIME FRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	SUCCESS INDICATORS
Orientation on Inclusive Education for DHH Learners – Lecture-discussion, case analysis, sharing of experiences	Resource Speaker, SNED Teachers, School Administrators	Day 1	**Materials:** Projector, handouts, whiteboard	**Amount:** 2,000 PHP
Basic and Functional Sign Language Training – Demonstration, guided drills, and practice sessions	Sign Language Instructor, SNED Teachers	Day 2-4	**Materials:** Sign language manuals, flashcards, audiovisual aids	**Amount:** 8,000 PHP
Interactive Communication Workshops – Role-playing, peer conversation practice, simulation activities	Facilitators, SNED Teachers	Day 5	**Materials:** Scenario cards, props, classroom space	**Amount:** 2,000 PHP
Inclusive Teaching Strategies – Workshops on visual aids, differentiated instruction, classroom adaptations	SNED Teachers, Mentor Teachers, Resource Speakers	Day 6	**Materials:** Sample lesson plans, visual aids, projector	**Amount:** 2,000 PHP
Feedback and Reflection Sessions – Peer feedback, instructor evaluation, reflective sharing	SNED Teachers, Resource Speakers	Day 7	**Materials:** Evaluation forms, notebooks	**Amount:** 1,000 PHP

IV. CONCLUSION

The survey demonstrates that teachers have very good views on sign language and inclusion. This shows a strong commitment to inclusive practices, a grasp of the diversity of learners and professional duties and a strong confidence in the values of inclusion. Excellent confidence in communication, particularly instructional delivery, engagement, and language. However, certain limits were observed in ad hoc communication and adaptation. The research found beneficial relationships among educators' attitudes, confidence in communication, and sign language training. The greater the training, the more positive the attitude and communication ability. However, there were moderate challenges in actual usage of sign language, particularly concerning sustaining fluency, managing dual communication, and evaluating pupil knowledge, despite low barriers to obtaining training and learning resources. The study shows that instruction in sign language leads to a considerable improvement in instructors' confidence in communicating with Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) pupils and in their attitude towards inclusion. Most teachers have the basic abilities and positive attitude to support inclusive education. But the consistency in classroom application and flexibility is not there yet. Educators need to be trained systematically and continue their professional development to sustain and improve their competencies. The study highlights the necessity of ongoing training and peer collaboration to enhance instructors' communication abilities. Educational institutions and administrators should ensure that sufficient resources are available and that well-structured training programs are conveniently accessible. Legislators must promote ongoing professional development and support structures for DHH instructors. The implementation of Project S.E.N.Y.A.S. will answer the above difficulties through specific training, seminars, and assessment methods. Moreover, establishing peer support networks, improving access to local teaching resources, and further studying the long-term benefits are recommended to reinforce inclusive education approaches and enable effective communication in classrooms.

REFERENCES

1. *Alquraini, T. (2022). Middle school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools in Saudi Arabia. International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 69(7), 1850–1864.*
2. *Benilde College of Education and Applied Studies. (2025). Partnership programs on Filipino Sign Language training. Manila, Philippines.*
3. *Bulatlat. (2025, February 10). Teachers push for Filipino Sign Language training to improve inclusion. https://www.bulatlat.com*
4. *Chen, L., & Torres, A. (2025). Teacher engagement across career stages and its impact on classroom practices. Journal of Educational Development.*
5. *Cosmod, J., & Villarente, M. (2024). Lived experiences of secondary teachers with Deaf learners in mainstream classrooms. Philippine Journal of Inclusive Education, 12(1), 34–56.*
6. *De la Fuente, R. (2023). Filipino Sign Language and literacy instruction: Teacher preparedness in inclusive classrooms. Journal of Philippine Education Research, 21(2), 102–118.*
7. *Department of Education. (2021). Republic Act No. 11106: Filipino Sign Language Act.*

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

8. *Department of Education. (2023). DepEd promotes Filipino Sign Language and inclusive communication. https://www.deped.gov.ph*
9. *Department of Education Region VIII. (2022). Regional training program on Filipino Sign Language for teachers.*
10. *Department of Science and Technology – Science and Technology Information Institute. (2023). Training workshop on Filipino Sign Language for educators. https://www.dost.gov.ph*
11. *Garcia, M., & Lopez, R. (2022). Sign language training and inclusive education practices among teachers. Journal of Special Education Studies, 18(2), 45–60.*
12. *Lopez, R., Santos, M., & Cruz, J. (2023). Classroom exposure and skill mastery in sign language education. International Journal of Inclusive Education Practice, 7(1), 77–92.*
13. *Nguyen, H., Tran, P., & Le, T. (2021). Early-career teachers' professional development and instructional confidence. Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 49(5), 512–528.*
14. *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2022). Education at a glance 2022: OECD indicators. https://www.oecd.org*
15. *Philippine Star. (2024, May 18). DepEd considers adding Filipino Sign Language to MATATAG curriculum. https://www.philstar.com*
16. *Pilsel, S. (2022). Qualified teachers of the Deaf and their attitudes toward mainstream inclusion. Deafness & Education International, 24(3), 183–198.*
17. *ResearchGate. (2024). Studies on Filipino Sign Language-Sight Words Intervention (FSL-SWI). https://www.researchgate.net*
18. *Smith, J., & Aguirre, L. (2022). Teacher training, inclusive attitudes, and communication competence in Deaf education. Journal of Inclusive Education Research, 10(3), 120–135.*
19. *Smith, J., & Huang, W. (2021). Practice-based learning strategies in sign language acquisition. Educational Research International, 2021, 1–10.*
20. *Tan, K., & Lee, S. (2024). Inclusive teaching strategies and teacher preparedness in Special Education. International Journal of Special Education, 39(1), 88–102.*
21. *The Guardian. (2023, March 12). Teachers gain empathy and skills through sign language training. https://www.theguardian.com*
22. *The New York Times. (2022, November 22). Sign language helps teachers connect with Deaf learners. https://www.nytimes.com*
23. *UNESCO. (2023). Global education monitoring report 2023: Inclusive education. https://www.unesco.org*
24. *Vacalares, A., Santos, M., & Ramirez, J. (2023). Teachers' attitudes and communication strategies for DHH learners. Journal of Inclusive Education Research, 11(2), 98–112.*