Inclusive Education in School Leadership: An Appreciative Inquiry

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Abstract. This study employed an appreciative inquiry approach, a qualitative methodology that focuses on identifying and amplifying existing strengths to foster positive change. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with school administrators, teachers, and students, as well as focus group discussions to explore shared experiences and perspectives. Document analysis of school policies and program materials provided contextual understanding. The appreciative inquiry framework guided the research through four phases: Discovery, Dreaming, Designing, and Destiny. Discovery involved identifying and appreciating current inclusive practices. Dreaming explored stakeholders' visions for an ideal inclusive environment. Designing focused on collaboratively developing actionable strategies. Finally, Destiny is involved in proposing implementation and sustainability plans. Thematic analysis was employed to synthesize qualitative data, revealing key leadership strategies and support systems that contribute to inclusive education at the University of the Visayas, Dalaguete Campus.

Keywords: Appreciative inquiry; CDIO framework; Diverse learners; Inclusive education; Professional development.

1.0 Introduction

Inclusive education, a cornerstone of equitable and quality education, aims to ensure that all learners, regardless of their diverse needs and backgrounds, have access to meaningful learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2020). Globally, there is a growing recognition of the importance of fostering inclusive educational environments driven by principles of social justice and the belief that diversity enriches the learning experience (Florian, 2014). In the Philippines, this commitment is reflected in the Department of Education's mandate to provide quality education for all Filipino citizens (Llego, 2022) and the issuance of DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2013, which promotes inclusive education within the basic education system. Despite these policy initiatives, the practical implementation of inclusive education faces significant challenges.

Research consistently highlights a gap between policy and practice, particularly in higher education settings (Sales, 2019). Studies indicate that while educators recognize the importance of inclusivity, they often lack the necessary training, resources, and leadership support to implement inclusive practices (Muega, 2016) effectively. Furthermore, much of the existing research focuses on individual teacher preparedness rather than the systemic and collaborative efforts required for successful inclusive education (Florian & Linklater, 2010). This emphasis overlooks the crucial role of school leadership in fostering a culture of inclusivity, where policies, practices, and resources are aligned to support diverse learners. Moreover, while theoretical frameworks such as the CDIO (Conceive, Design, Implement, Operate) framework (Crawley, Ostlund, & Brodeur, 2014) and Universal Design

for Learning (UDL) (CAST, 2018) offer valuable guidance for developing inclusive practices, their effective adaptation and implementation require robust leadership and collaborative effort.

However, there is a lack of empirical evidence on how these frameworks are applied in the context of school leadership to enhance inclusive education, particularly in the Philippine higher education landscape. This research, conducted at the University of the Visayas-Dalaguete Campus, addresses this critical research gap by examining the integrated perspectives of educators and school administrators in implementing inclusive education. The primary problem addressed in this study is the gap between the policy mandate for inclusive education and its practical implementation at the University of the Visayas-Dalaguete Campus, characterized by a lack of integrated leadership strategies, insufficient preparedness among educators and administrators, and limited understanding of the challenges and strengths associated with adopting inclusive practices.

This study is significant for several reasons: it provides practical insights and actionable recommendations, contributes to existing literature, informs policy development, and offers a contextual understanding of inclusive education in a Philippine higher education setting, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Saini, 2023). Specifically, the objectives of this research are to identify and evaluate existing leadership strategies, assess perceived preparedness, explore challenges and strengths, and propose actionable recommendations, ultimately providing a comprehensive understanding of the current state and potential improvements in inclusive education at the University of the Visayas-Dalaguete Campus.

2.0 Methodology
2.1 Research Design
This study employed a qualitative research design, drawing upon Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) to understand how administrators and teachers develop their beliefs and practices regarding inclusive education. Appreciative Inquiry's (4D) model guided the research, focusing on discovering strengths and envisioning improvements (Creswell, 2014).

2.2 Research Participants
A purposive sample of 20 participants was selected, comprising 8 non-teaching and 12 teaching personnel. The criteria for inclusion as co-researchers were: (1) current employment at the University of the Visayas-Dalaguete Campus, (2) direct involvement in educational practices or administrative roles, and (3) willingness to share their experiences and perspectives on inclusive education. The sample size was determined by data saturation. Social factors, such as gender, age, and ethnicity, were not considered as study variables, focusing instead on professional roles and experiences.

2.3 Research Instrument
The primary instrument was a semi-structured interview guide developed to explore participants' beliefs, attitudes, and practices related to inclusive education. The interview guide was expert-validated by three educational researchers with experience in inclusive education, ensuring content validity and clarity.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure
Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the University of the Visayas-Dalaguete Campus administration. Formal letters outlining the study's objectives and ethical considerations were submitted. Interviews were conducted in private settings on campus at a time convenient for participants. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent, and the recordings were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach: familiarization, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Thematic analysis was chosen to identify patterns and themes related to inclusive education practices rather than categorizing errors.

2.5 Ethical Considerations
Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, and potential risks and benefits.

Participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any time and were provided with contact information for the researchers. Confidentiality was maintained by using pseudonyms in all transcripts and reports. The researcher maintained objectivity, transparency, and respect for participants, creating a safe and trustworthy environment. Participants were informed of available support services in case discussions about inclusive education evoked emotional responses.

3.0 Results and Discussion
3.1 School Leadership Practices for Inclusive Education
The findings of this study illuminate the practices employed by UV Dalaguete in fostering inclusive education within the framework of school leadership. These practices have been categorized into four key themes: Policy and Structural Support, Instructional Design Strategies, Student-Centered Approaches, and Operational Adjustments. Each theme reflects a significant aspect of how school leadership can promote inclusivity.

Table 1. *School Leadership Practices for Inclusive Education*

Themes	Categories	CDIO Perspective
Policy and Structural Support	Inclusive policies and funding for accessibility Leadership training on inclusivity in decision-making	Conceive: Ensure foundational policies and funding structures that support inclusivity across resources, technology, and teacher training.
Instructional Design Strategies	Differentiated instruction Multimodal presentation (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) Flexible assessment options (e.g., projects, oral exams)	Design: Structure inclusive teaching plans tailored to student need, with specific adaptations for diverse styles.
Student-Centered Approaches	Cooperative learning and peer tutoring Personalized feedback and flexible deadlines Real-life examples and hands-on learning	Implement: Engage students in collaborative activities emphasizing community and peer support.
Operational Adjustments	Regular evaluation and feedback for policy effectiveness Professional development focused on inclusive pedagogy and reflective practices	Operate: Optimize classroom processes to address real-time challenges in large or diverse classes, ensuring that all students remain engaged.

Policy and Structural Support
Creating inclusive policies and securing adequate funding for accessibility are essential for promoting inclusivity in schools. One administrator highlighted this commitment, stating, "*Our leadership team is dedicated to making sure every student, regardless of their background or ability, has access to the resources they need*" (Transcript 1). This aligns with the principles outlined in UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report 2020, which emphasizes the crucial role of policy frameworks and resource allocation in creating accessible learning environments (UNESCO, 2020). To reinforce this commitment, the University of the Visayas-Main Campus offers specialized leadership training that focuses on inclusivity. These sessions equip selected administrators and teachers with the necessary skills to effectively implement inclusive policies, a practice supported by research emphasizing the importance of targeted professional development for inclusive education (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Not all teachers are required to attend; instead, selected educators are chosen based on specific criteria to participate in these training programs. To facilitate their attendance, the satellite campus provides transportation allowances and accommodation for these teachers. This support addresses the need to reduce barriers to participation in professional development, a crucial aspect of promoting equity and access (Ryan, 2010). This support ensures that they can focus on their training without financial constraints, allowing them to engage fully in the learning process. One teacher expressed, "*The training serves as an eye-opener for us participating teachers about the importance of inclusivity in the classroom*" (Transcript 2). Furthermore, this training demonstrates the University's commitment to developing leaders for inclusion, a practice highlighted as essential for creating inclusive school environments (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014)."

Instructional Design Strategies
Differentiated instruction and multimodal presentations allow teachers to cater to various learning styles, which is essential for an inclusive classroom. However, these strategies are often challenging in classrooms with large student numbers, where tailoring lessons for each individual becomes difficult and time-consuming. To address

this, the institution is currently employing two methods of instruction: face-to-face learning and the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS). The Blackboard LMS, a platform provided by the main university, supports its satellite campuses by enabling teachers to enhance their instructional practices and offer additional resources to students, especially teachers supporting large class sizes.

One teacher shared, "*I always try to use different methods in my lessons. Some students learn better by seeing things, while others prefer listening or doing hands-on activities*" (Transcript 8). This reflects a commitment to accommodating diverse learning styles, ensuring that every student has an opportunity to succeed. Another teacher highlighted the benefits of the Blackboard LMS, stating, "*With the Blackboard LMS, I can post videos, quizzes, and assignments, which helps meet different learning needs*" (Transcript 3).

This platform enables teachers to offer a range of learning materials, making it easier for students to engage with the content in a manner that suits them best. A third teacher added, "*Incorporating online resources alongside in-person classes enables the administration to reach a broader range of students and provide diverse learning opportunities. This approach ensures that all students can engage with the material in ways that best suit their individual learning preferences, ultimately enhancing their educational experience*" (Transcript 1). This combination of online and face-to-face instruction enhances the learning experience, making it more flexible and accessible for all students.

Student-Centered Approaches
Student-centered methods, such as cooperative learning, personalized feedback, and hands-on activities, are powerful tools for promoting inclusivity and diversity. These approaches enable students to engage in collaborative activities that support peer learning and foster a sense of belonging. As one teacher explains, "*When we work in groups, students can share their strengths and support one another." For example, one student may excel at writing, while another is more skilled at drawing. They collaborate to complete a project*" (Transcript 10)

Another teacher emphasizes the value of personalized feedback, stating, "*I always try to give tailored feedback to my students. It makes them feel supported and shows that I care about their progress*" (Transcript 14)

Hands-on activities also play a crucial role in engaging students. One teacher noted, "*Working on projects that involve building or creating something makes learning more exciting. It allows students to connect what they learn in class to real-life situations, which keeps them engaged*" (Transcript 14)

However, managing such approaches in a large class can be challenging, as providing individualized attention and supporting peer interactions requires strong classroom management skills. Education leadership that encourages teacher collaboration and reflective practice can help mitigate these challenges, as seen in studies that emphasize appreciative inquiry as a tool for fostering a supportive classroom culture (Johnson & Lee, 2021). To address the challenges of implementing student-centered approaches in large classes, the university employs several strategies, primarily through effective systems such as Blackboard LMS and robust student management systems. This platform helps educators manage student profiles, providing information about individual learning needs, which is crucial for teachers to offer personalized support to their students in a systematic manner, regardless of class sizes.

Blackboard LMS is an effective tool for teachers in UV-Dalaguete to learn about their students, regardless of the class size. It creates detailed student profiles that include important information, such as grades and participation. The real-time analytics feature helps teachers monitor student progress by tracking key metrics, such as attendance and assignment submissions, making it easier to identify those who may require additional support.

Teachers can also observe how students engage with course materials, which helps them adjust their teaching methods accordingly. They can provide personalized feedback using grading rubrics and comments, which encourages student growth. Blackboard also fosters communication between students and teachers, ensuring that everyone remains connected. Even in large classes, the organized structure of Blackboard ensures that all students have access to the same resources while allowing teachers to focus on individual needs. This adaptability is particularly significant within the context of the CDIO framework, which emphasizes the importance of designing inclusive teaching plans that accommodate diverse learning styles.

The "Design" phase of the CDIO framework is crucial for developing inclusive policies and practices that extend beyond the classroom. It encourages teamwork among teachers, students, and faculty, which helps spark new ideas (Crawley, Ostlund & Brodeur, 2014). Effective leadership is crucial in enabling teachers to share their best practices and reflect on their teaching methods, thereby fostering a culture of ongoing improvement (Fullan, 2016). Adding Appreciative Inquiry to this framework improves the classroom atmosphere by focusing on what works well and celebrating successes. This creates a supportive environment that promotes effective learning and teaching strategies (Johnson & Lee, 2021).

Operational Adjustments
To maintain inclusive practices, it is important to regularly evaluate policies and provide professional development on inclusive teaching methods. The university has a policy to assess and evaluate its programs and curriculum every three years, ensuring that they remain relevant and practical. An administrator explained, *"We regularly review our programs to identify what is working and what needs improvement, particularly in how we support our teachers"* (Transcript 1). Supporting this, one teacher shared, "*Every semester, at the end of classes or before they start, we are all sent for a retooling session at the main university." Also, our senior leaders will evaluate our policy and curriculum every 3 years or 4 years.)*" (Transcript 5). This ongoing evaluation aligns with the "Operate" phase of the CDIO framework, ensuring that classroom processes are adjusted to meet current challenges. This commitment to regular assessment and comprehensive training fosters a supportive environment where both teachers and students can thrive.

In summary, this study highlights the University of the Visayas-Dalaguete's efforts in advancing inclusive education through effective school leadership. We identified four key themes: Policy and Structural Support, Instructional Design Strategies, Student-Centered Approaches, and Operational Adjustments. Starting with Policy and Structural Support, it is clear that having inclusive policies and sufficient funding is crucial. Both administrators and teachers have emphasized that a genuine commitment to inclusivity fosters a welcoming culture where every student can access high-quality education.

When it comes to Instructional Design Strategies, the university is actively working to meet different learning styles. They employ various teaching methods and incorporate technology, such as the Blackboard Learning Management System, which broadens learning opportunities for everyone. The focus on Student-Centered Approaches highlights the power of cooperative learning, personalized feedback, and hands-on activities. These strategies foster collaboration among students and help create an environment where everyone feels valued and engaged in their learning. Lastly, Operational Adjustments remind us of the importance of regular check-ins and ongoing professional development. Through conducting structured assessments and providing training, the university ensures that educators are equipped to tackle the diverse challenges of their classrooms. In general, these findings illustrate the pivotal role that effective school leadership plays in shaping inclusive educational practices at UV Dalaguete. Their commitment to inclusivity not only aligns with the CDIO framework but also meets the evolving needs of education.

3.2 Ways to Improve School Leadership Practices for Inclusive Education
The findings of this study emphasize the strategies employed by UV Dalaguete to improve inclusive education through effective school leadership. These strategies are categorized into three primary themes: Resource Allocation and Support, Professional Development and Training, and Institutional Policies and Collaboration. Each theme shows the essential aspect of how school leadership can actively promote an inclusive educational environment for all students.

Need for More Resources and Support
The findings from this study highlight critical challenges in promoting inclusive education at the University of the Visayas-Dalaguete, particularly concerning the need for more resources and support. Both leaders and teachers identified a significant gap in adaptive teaching materials, which are essential for meeting the diverse needs of students, even though there are currently no special education students enrolled. Planning for future inclusivity is important, as proactive measures can create a more accommodating environment when the situation arises. Materials such as visual schedules, tactile resources, sensory tools, assistive technologies, and specialized software

are essential in creating an inclusive learning environment. Research supports this need, indicating that having such resources significantly enhances engagement and participation among students with disabilities (Schwartz & Drager, 2018). One teacher shared, "*Without proper materials, it is tough to meet the needs of all my students. We need those basic tools*" (Transcript 5). This sentiment was echoed by an administrator who noted the challenges posed by budget constraints, stating, "*While we want to support our teachers, budget constraints make it challenging to provide these resources consistently*" (Transcript 1). The disconnect between leadership aspirations and the realities of resource availability reveals systemic issues that must be addressed now to prepare for future inclusivity.

Table 2. *Ways to Improve School Leadership Practices for Inclusive Education*

Themes	Categories	CDIO Perspective
Need for More Resources and Support	Specialized Resources	Conceive: Distribute basic adaptive teaching materials (e.g., visual schedules, simple tactile resources)
	Training and Professional Development	Design: Implement a single-day workshop on IEP development and differentiated instruction at the start of every school year.
		Design: Provide a two-hour training session on using commonly available assistive technologies (e.g., text-to-speech apps) for all teachers by the end of the first term.
Institutional Support	Leadership and Policy Support	Implement: Develop and communicate clear guidelines supporting inclusive practices by the end of the first semester, ensuring all staff have access to these policies.
	Resource Allocation	Operate: Allocate specific budget lines for essential special education resources (e.g., sensory materials) in the upcoming school year,
	Mentoring and Collaboration	Implement: Establish regular collaboration meetings for general and special education teachers to share strategies

In addition to material needs, a significant gap exists in professional development for educators. Both leadership and teaching participants emphasized the lack of specialized training, particularly in areas critical for effective inclusion. Specific training needs identified include SPED training, cultural competence, differentiated instruction techniques, and behavior management strategies. The literature emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional development in special education strategies, noting that teachers equipped with appropriate training are better able to meet the needs of all students (Baker et al., 2021). One administrator remarked, "*Our teachers need more targeted training in SPED. They want to do well, but they often lack the specific skills*" (Transcript 1). Similarly, a teacher commented, "*It would be great to have training that addresses the real challenges we face in the classroom*" (Transcript 9). The disparity between leadership's understanding of training needs and the realities faced by teachers shows a problem that must be bridged to promote a more inclusive educational environment.

Moreover, leadership challenges, such as budget constraints and policy limitations, further complicate the implementation of inclusive practices. Administrators often find themselves grappling with tight budgets that restrict their ability to allocate necessary funds for resources and training. As the leader noted, "*We have great ideas, but financial limitations often hold us back from fully implementing them*" (Transcript 1). This reflects the broader systemic issues in education funding that can inhibit effective leadership in inclusive education. Fullan (2016) suggests that flexible policies and adaptable budgeting strategies are crucial for addressing the diverse needs of learners. Therefore, advocating for policy changes that enable greater flexibility in funding and resource allocation is a crucial step to take. Through this, educational institutions can better support both educators and students, creating a more equitable and inclusive learning environment.

In summary, addressing the challenges identified in the study requires a concerted effort to enhance resource availability, provide targeted professional development, and advocate for more flexible policies that support inclusive education. Although no special education students are currently enrolled, preparing now with the right tools and training will ensure that the institution is ready to welcome and support all learners in the future.

Institutional Support
A key action to take is to ensure strong leadership and clear policy support, which involves developing and communicating comprehensive guidelines that facilitate inclusive practices. All educational institutions are required to align their policies with the standards set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). However,

even if the inclusive education policy is not well explained to teachers, these policies must be explicitly communicated rather than assumed to be understood simply because they exist. Kozleski et al. (2015) state that clear and accessible policies are foundational for promoting an inclusive environment, as they help unify the approaches of all staff members. One teacher emphasized this need, stating, "*Having clear guidelines would help us understand what is expected and how we can support all students*" (Transcript 7). This feedback shows the importance of transparency in policy communication, allowing educators to implement inclusive practices effectively.

Another significant area for improvement is resource allocation. The recommendation to allocate specific budget lines for essential special education resources, such as sensory materials like fidget tools, weighted blankets, and visual schedules, aligns with literature emphasizing the necessity of adequate resources in promoting inclusivity. These materials can support students with diverse learning needs by helping them engage more effectively in the classroom. For instance, fidget tools can help students with attention challenges by providing a physical outlet that enhances focus. At the same time, weighted blankets can help reduce anxiety for students who require a calming influence. Visual schedules offer clear, structured guidance for daily activities, aiding students who benefit from routine and predictability.

The materials discussed above—fidget tools, weighted blankets, and visual schedules—represent some of the most common and fundamental resources that classrooms should have to promote inclusivity effectively. Fidget tools are particularly beneficial for students who struggle with attention and focus. These tools allow students to channel excess energy into physical activity, which can enhance their concentration. Research indicates that sensory-based strategies, such as fidgeting, can enhance focus and academic performance, particularly for students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (Kirk & Gallagher, 2018).

Weighted blankets are also beneficial, as they provide comfort and security, which can be particularly helpful for students experiencing anxiety or sensory processing challenges. A study found that the use of weighted blankets can reduce anxiety levels in children, contributing to a calmer learning environment (Hancocks et al., 2020). The pressure from these blankets simulates the feeling of being held, making them practical tools for students with sensory needs. Visual schedules are another crucial resource for promoting understanding and predictability in daily routines. These tools are handy for students on the autism spectrum or those with cognitive impairments. Research demonstrates that visual schedules enhance task completion and promote independence among students with special needs by clearly outlining expectations and reducing anxiety associated with transitions (O'Neill et al., 2020).

According to Baker et al. (2021), having the right materials can significantly enhance engagement among students with diverse learning needs. An administrator pointed out, "*Without a dedicated budget, we struggle to provide even the basic materials our teachers need here in UV-Dalaguete.*" (Transcript 1). This lack of funding can severely impede the creation of an inclusive environment, making it imperative for the university to prioritize financial support for these essential resources.

Establishing regular collaboration meetings for general and special education teachers is crucial for fostering a culture of shared learning and ongoing improvement. Such collaboration is known to enhance teacher effectiveness and support the integration of inclusive strategies (Goddard et al., 2015). However, as one teacher highlighted, "*We do not have even one SPED major here on campus, so we could not ask for someone who can guide us on how to navigate special education, or even a focal person for this. We are also not saying that there are no learners with special needs in Dalaguete, but there is no official list or diagnosis for them, so we do not know if they truly require special services. We only rely on our observation and assessment of the child.*" This absence of a SPED-trained educator leaves teachers without essential support or expertise, limiting their ability to address special needs in the classroom confidently.

The lack of a specialized focal person for SPED not only restricts teachers from having meaningful exchanges about effective practices but also challenges their ability to identify and address special needs effectively. This gap highlights the need to provide teachers with access to SPED expertise, whether through hiring qualified professionals or establishing networks with trained mentors. Such support would enable teachers to share strategies, seek guidance, and develop practices that truly foster an inclusive environment where every student can thrive.

In conclusion, the actions proposed in the study — strengthening leadership and policy support, ensuring adequate resource allocation, and fostering collaboration among educators — are critical for creating an inclusive educational environment at UV Dalaguete. By focusing on these areas, the university can build a foundation that not only prepares for future needs but also empowers teachers and enhances the learning experiences of all students. Such initiatives are essential for responding to the diverse needs of learners and ensuring that the university is well-equipped to provide quality education for all.
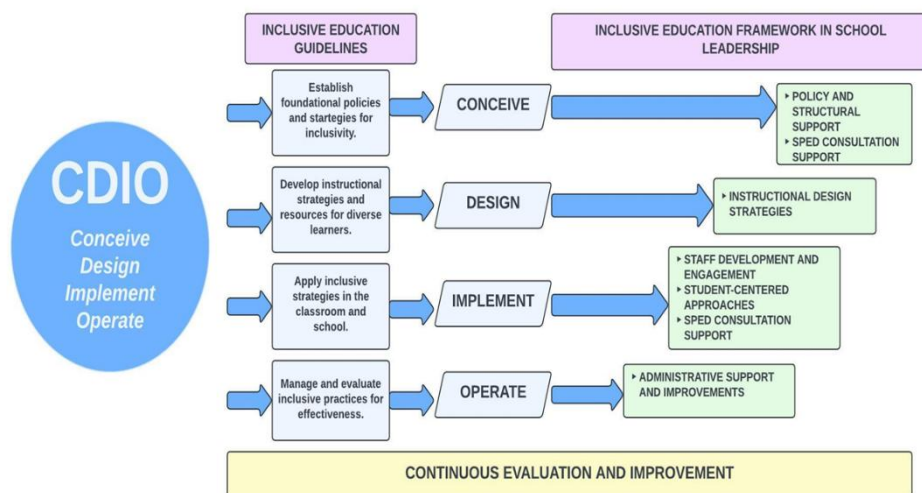
Figure 1. *Inclusive Education Framework in School Leadership Context*

The Inclusive Education Framework in School Leadership Context aims to address inclusivity by encompassing aspects of support required in educational settings, including policy, instructional strategies, administrative practices, staff engagement, student-focused approaches, specialized consultation, and continuous improvement. It emphasizes a collaborative and systemic approach that incorporates faculty, staff, and administrative support, offering a balanced focus on both instructional and administrative improvements.

The inclusive education guidelines, aligned with the CDIO framework, provide guidelines to further promote inclusive practices in UV-Dalaguete. Initially developed for engineering education, CDIO is adaptable for various educational initiatives and helps guide schools through the cycle of building and improving practices. The Conceive phase establishes foundational policies for accessibility and equality. The design focuses on creating diverse instructional strategies, while implementation ensures these strategies are applied in classrooms to support all learners. In the operation phase, continuous assessment and adjustments are made to improve inclusivity efforts.

This framework, supported by school leadership, promotes a collaborative and responsive approach to inclusion, integrating faculty, staff, and administrative support to create a supportive and sustainable school environment. Policy and Structural Support align with the "Conceive" stage of the CDIO framework, focusing on establishing a strong foundation for inclusive education through clear policies, funding allocations, and administrative training. Literature supports the importance of inclusive policies that involve multiple stakeholders (Schimmel, 2020) and highlights the need for adequate funding to ensure that resources and services are available to all students (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Administrative training, as discussed by Theoharis (2007), is crucial for developing leaders who can promote inclusivity within school cultures, aligning with CDIO's emphasis on conceptualizing comprehensive policy frameworks that prioritize accessibility and equality. School leaders would collaborate with teachers, administrators, and possibly parents to develop an inclusive framework tailored to their school's unique needs.

Instructional Design Strategies closely align with the "Design" phase of CDIO, focusing on the planning and creation of learning experiences tailored to diverse student needs. Drawing from Tomlinson's (2001) differentiated

instruction model, the framework advocates for multimodal presentations (Mayer, 2009) and flexible assessments (Black & Wiliam, 1998), which allow students to demonstrate their learning in ways that suit their unique abilities. These design strategies align with CDIO's approach by encouraging educators to actively construct inclusive lessons and assessments that respect individual learning styles and preferences. Here, leaders design specific policies and practices for inclusive teaching methods, resource allocation, and professional development. For example, they might design flexible assessment formats to cater to diverse learning styles or create specialized training sessions for teachers on inclusive practices.

Administrative Support and Improvements reflect the "Operate" phase in CDIO by emphasizing the role of effective administration in maintaining inclusivity initiatives. This section of the framework, supported by Leithwood and Riehl's (2003) research on collaborative leadership, highlights the importance of teamwork among school leaders in promoting inclusivity. Furthermore, Wayman (2005) demonstrates the value of data-driven decision-making, which enables administrators to adjust their policies and resource allocations based on measurable outcomes, thereby enhancing overall administrative effectiveness and support for inclusivity. The school leadership monitors progress, gathers feedback from staff and students, and makes adjustments as needed. Data collection systems, including surveys and performance assessments, are utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive practices. Leaders periodically update the policies and provide continuous support to teachers, helping to sustain an environment where all students feel valued and supported.

The Staff Development and Engagement component aligns with the "Implement" stage of the CDIO framework, ensuring that faculty and staff are equipped to implement inclusive practices. This aspect is supported by Garet et al. (2001), who emphasize the importance of continuous professional development for teachers, enabling them to grow and effectively implement inclusivity. Studies by Goddard et al. (2007) emphasize the role of collaboration among staff members, fostering a culture of shared strategies and mutual support. Recognition programs (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) motivate staff to consistently contribute to inclusivity efforts, enabling sustained implementation of inclusive practices. During this phase, school leadership initiates teacher training programs, introduces the use of data to monitor inclusivity efforts, and launches instructional practices meant to accommodate diverse learning needs. Regular meetings and check-ins among school leaders, teachers, and the Inclusivity Committee help ensure that implementation aligns with established goals.

Student-centered approaches, encompassing cooperative learning, personalized feedback, and hands-on learning, are also part of the "Implement" stage in CDIO. Supported by research from Johnson and Johnson (1999) and Hattie and Timperley (2007), these approaches foster active, supportive, and engaging classroom environments that value students. They focus on giving students agency in their learning, thereby fostering motivation and personal growth — essential elements of an inclusive educational setting. SPED Consultation Support integrates both the "Conceive" and "Implement" phases of CDIO by establishing structures for ongoing collaboration with SPED professionals. Friend and Cook (2010) emphasize that effective partnerships between general and special education staff are essential for promoting inclusivity in practice. The use of remote consultation systems (Smith & Neumann, 2021) represents an innovative solution to support educators, ensuring that expertise in special education is readily accessible and integrated into daily instructional practices.

Finally, Continuous Evaluation and Improvement exemplify the "Operate" phase of the CDIO model. Consistent with the recommendations of the National Center on Inclusive Education (2015), this section underscores the importance of regular evaluations to adapt and refine inclusive practices. Through the process of implementing feedback mechanisms and assessing outcomes, administrators, faculty, and staff can continuously enhance their approach, ensuring that inclusivity remains responsive to the evolving needs of students. In conclusion, the Inclusive Education Framework is grounded in literature and integrates the CDIO framework across its key components, reinforcing the interconnected roles of faculty, staff, and administrators. This framework advocates for an educational environment where inclusivity is embedded within every level of operation, from policy and design to practical implementation and evaluation. Through this holistic and evidence-based approach, the framework provides a structure that not only fulfills the requirements of inclusive education but also aligns with CDIO's systematic and iterative processes to foster a sustainable, supportive, and responsive school culture. This highlights how leadership serves as the central driver of inclusive practices, influencing every other aspect of the educational system.

Table 3. *Proposed Policy for Sustaining Inclusive Education Framework in School Leadership*

Section	Description
Title	*Proposed Policy for Sustaining Inclusive Education Framework in School Leadership Context*
Executive Summary	This policy aims to support an inclusive education framework within school leadership at the University of the Visayas-Dalaguete (UV-Dalaguete). The objective is to create an environment that values and includes all students, with a focus on enhancing administrative and teaching practices. The primary areas are policy guidelines, instructional design, administrative collaboration, and continuous improvement.
Introduction / Aim of the Policy	This policy proposes making inclusivity a core value in school leadership to create a welcoming school environment for all students. Key focus areas include support for teachers, student-centered learning, and effective school management, ensuring all students have equal opportunities to succeed.
Problem Statement	Many schools practice some level of inclusivity, but a structured, leadership-supported approach is often lacking, resulting in inconsistent experiences and gaps in student support. Teachers and staff often want to contribute to inclusive practices but need structured guidelines and administrative support to do so. This policy aims to fill those gaps by offering a clear, supported framework.
Background Information	Inclusive education is increasingly recognized globally for its positive impact on student outcomes and school culture. Frameworks like the CDIO (Conceive-Design-Implement-Operate) provide helpful structures for schools to develop, implement, and improve inclusive practices. Research highlights the importance of leadership in fostering inclusivity (Schimmel, 2020; Theoharis, 2007), as well as the role of data-driven approaches in supporting these initiatives (Wayman, 2005).
Literature Review	Key literature includes: 1. Policy and Structural Support: Schimmel (2020) and Avramidis and Norwich (2002) emphasize the importance of adequate funding and inclusive policies that involve all stakeholders. 2. Instructional Design Strategies: Tomlinson (2001) emphasizes the use of flexible assessments and strategies that cater to diverse learning needs. 3. Administrative Collaboration: Collaborative leadership is shown to be vital in maintaining inclusive practices (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). 4. Continuous Improvement: Studies by the National Center on Inclusive Education (2015) emphasize the importance of ongoing evaluation to adjust practices as student needs evolve.
Proposed Solution	This policy suggests: 1. Policy & Structural Support: Form a committee to develop inclusivity guidelines and allocate resources for teacher training. 2. Instructional Design: Implement teaching strategies that address diverse needs, including multimodal methods and flexible assessments. 3. Admin Support: Conduct regular meetings with school leaders to review inclusivity data and make decisions based on findings. 4. Continuous Evaluation: Establish a survey and data collection system to monitor inclusivity progress and implement necessary improvements. 5. Review current CMO and DO's: Develop and deploy a student and faculty survey, integrated with a data collection system, to identify barriers to inclusivity and drive targeted improvements in policy and practice.
Implementation Plan.	1. Inclusivity Committee: Establish a committee that represents all departments. 2. Develop Guidelines: Establish clear policies that prioritize accessibility and teacher support. 3. Teacher Training: Organize workshops and a recognition program for inclusive practices. 4. Data and Evaluation Systems: Utilize surveys and data to evaluate inclusivity efforts. 5. Monthly Meetings: Hold regular meetings to review progress and adjust as needed. 6. Budget Implementation: To ensure the ongoing development and refinement of inclusive practices, the University of the Visayas-Main Campus implements a comprehensive yearly plan that includes a dedicated Committee and Policy Development workshop. This initiative, allocated a total budget of 435,000, reflects the institution's commitment to creating a sustainable and responsive framework for inclusivity. By investing in this annual workshop, the university empowers stakeholders to collaboratively review existing policies, identify areas for improvement, and develop new strategies to serve the diverse needs of its students better. This structured approach to policy development underscores the institution's proactive stance in fostering an equitable and accessible learning environment for all.
Conclusion	Inclusive education enhances both student outcomes and school culture. Adopting this policy at UV-Dalaguete can ensure that inclusivity is an integral part of school leadership and daily operations. This structured approach fosters a lasting, positive environment for all students, staff, and the broader school community.

4.0 Conclusion

This study titled Inclusive Education in School Leadership: An Appreciative Inquiry shows how school leaders can help create and maintain inclusive education at UV Dalaguete. Through the use of an appreciative inquiry approach, the study identified successful practices and areas that require improvement, emphasizing that strong leadership is crucial for making inclusive education effective. The suggested framework in this study offers steps for school leaders to follow. It is based on the CDIO model, which encompasses the steps of Conceive, Design, Implement, and Operate. This model enables leaders to bring their vision for inclusive education to life by breaking it down into manageable steps.

The study also gathered important insights from UV Dalaguete, showing that while school leaders are dedicated to inclusivity, they face challenges such as limited resources and a lack of training for teachers. To improve inclusivity, leaders should focus on providing professional development that targets explicitly inclusive education. This could include training teachers on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and assistive technologies. Additionally, encouraging teamwork between general education and special education teachers can help them better meet the needs of all students. The findings from this study are valuable not only for UV Dalaguete but also for other schools. This study demonstrates that continuous support and effective policy implementation are crucial for integrating inclusivity into a lasting part of the school culture.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

This research was a collaborative effort, with each author contributing distinct and essential expertise. Dr. Cutillas, serving as the primary advisor, provided invaluable guidance and mentorship throughout the entire research process. His expertise in educational leadership and inclusive practices was instrumental in shaping the study's design, methodology, and analysis. He offered critical feedback and support, ensuring the research maintained academic rigor and relevance.

Dr. Ramos, acting as co-advisor and editor, played a multifaceted role. In addition to providing advisory support, he played a crucial role in refining the research design, ensuring its alignment with the study's objectives and theoretical framework. His meticulous editing significantly enhanced the manuscript's clarity, coherence, and overall quality. Furthermore, Dr. Ramos made significant contributions to the practical execution of the research by encoding the data and assisting with the logistical aspects of the study. His support extended beyond advisory roles, encompassing practical assistance that facilitated the completion of the research.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

Not indicated.

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9.0 Reference

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