

Preparing the Study Guides and Extensions Menu for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs): Towards Tools for Independent Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examined parent assessments of teachers' practices in preparing study guides and extension menus for learners with special educational needs (LSENs), with the objective of informing tools for independent study. A descriptive survey combining correlational and comparative analyses involved 45 parent-respondents of learners at Manggahan Elementary School, General Trias, Cavite. A researcher-developed and expert-reviewed questionnaire used a four-point response scale. Frequencies, percentages, weighted means, the reported Kendall and chi-square statistics, and Kruskal–Wallis tests were used. Most respondents were female (80%) and identified as parents rather than grandparents or guardians (93%); ages 35–39 and 40–44 each comprised 27%. Parents rated teachers' preparation of study guides ($M = 3.37$) and extension

menus ($M = 3.28$) favorably, with an overall mean of 3.34 ($SD = 0.47$). The reported Kendall statistic was 0.0150 ($\chi^2 = 0.6757$, $p = .4111$), indicating no statistically significant association or concordance between the two practice assessments under the stated test. Comparisons by age, sex, and family role were likewise nonsignificant (all $p > .05$). These findings describe favorable parent perceptions but do not establish improvements in learners' independent-study outcomes. The study supports coordinated planning of accessible study guides and differentiated extension-menu choices, professional development in inclusive instructional design, and stronger family–school communication.

Keywords: *differentiated instruction; extension menus; independent study; inclusive education; learners with special educational needs; study guides*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive teaching requires instructional materials that address differences in readiness, communication, sensory access, attention, and capacity for independent work. Learners with special educational needs (LSENs) may benefit from structured prompts that make expectations clear while still allowing them meaningful choices in how to learn and demonstrate understanding. Two tools considered in the present study were study guides and extension menus. The first organizes essential concepts and activities for review; the second offers differentiated opportunities to practice, extend, or apply learning through tasks suited to individual needs and interests.

An effective study guide can break complex information into smaller segments, foreground key ideas, present visual organizers, and embed questions for self-checking. Research on study techniques emphasizes retrieval practice and distributed learning as more effective approaches to retention than passive rereading alone (Dunlosky et al., 2013; Karpicke & Roediger, 2008). Teachers' structured guidance is especially relevant when

learners require explicit assistance with organizing tasks, regulating attention, or identifying their own progress. Yet the objective is not merely to simplify content; it is to encourage gradually increasing learner responsibility for studying.

Extension menus can complement these supports by permitting a selection among task formats, activities, and levels of scaffolding. Opportunities for choice and meaningful participation can be especially salient for learners with disabilities, whose access to recreational and educational activities may otherwise be restricted (Bult et al., 2011). Inclusive teaching also requires that materials be adapted to specific learners rather than assuming that a single resource will suit all needs (Torres et al., 2014). For this reason, the coherence of study guides and extension menus is an important practical question for teachers and families.

The present inquiry was situated in Manggahan Elementary School, General Trias, Cavite. It addressed the limited school-specific evidence about how parents perceive LSEN teachers' preparation of these two types of materials and whether assessments differ according to parent characteristics. Using parent responses, the study sought to describe respondent demographics, rate study-guide and extension-menu practices, examine their reported statistical relationship, and test group differences by age, sex, and role in the family. Its intended contribution was an evidence-informed basis for tools supporting independent study; it did not directly measure learner achievement or test the causal effects of those tools.

Literature Review

Structured study guides and independent learning

Study guides are more than compressed lecture notes: they can organize learning objectives, content sequences, review schedules, and assessment expectations so that learners know both what to study and how to study it. In the literature assembled in the source thesis, approaches to learning and study practices are discussed in relation to students' capacity to select useful strategies (Biggs, 1993; Credé & Kuncel, 2008). When the guide contains short sections, examples, and questions, it may reduce the burden of deciding which information matters while providing an entry point for learners who need additional instructional structure. The source's discussion of pedagogical aids and concept mapping also supports using organizers to help learners structure ideas, while recognizing that such aids should support rather than displace active study (Gurung, 2003; Novak, 1990).

The literature also warns against equating recognition of highlighted content with durable understanding. Reviewing definitions is less cognitively demanding than retrieving, explaining, or applying them. Dunlosky et al. (2013) synthesized evidence favoring practice testing and distributed practice; Roediger and Karpicke (2006) and Karpicke and Roediger (2008) further demonstrated the value of retrieval for retention. Guided practice questions and varied response formats can therefore be used as prompts for active recall and explanation, rather than as a list of topics to memorize.

Independent learning remains a developmental objective, not a prerequisite that all children bring to school. Boekaerts (1997) and Zimmerman (2008) describe self-regulated learning in terms of cognitive and motivational processes, including planning and monitoring one's own performance. In classrooms with diverse learning needs, study guides may scaffold these processes through checklists, predictable sequences, accessible text, and explicit feedback. These design principles motivate the examination of teacher practices reported by families in the present study.

Extension menus, accessible choices, and differentiated engagement

Extension menus arrange optional activities so that learners can pursue a learning objective through different modes of participation. Rather than using a single task for every student, a menu can offer alternatives such as drawing, verbal explanation, guided practice, manipulatives, or digital responses. The source manuscript links these practices with readiness-based differentiation, multisensory design, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These approaches are presented as instructional design principles, not as proof that the participants experienced improved independent-study outcomes.

Choice-making is relevant because access and engagement can depend upon opportunities that match learners' abilities and preferences. Bult et al. (2011) identified multiple factors associated with participation in leisure activities among children and youth with physical disabilities. In the classroom, the more general lesson is that participation is shaped by contextual supports and barriers. The United Nations (2006) established an inclusive-education rights framework recognizing learners' entitlement to individualized supports; accessible task choices are consistent with that educational commitment.

The quality of an extension menu also depends on whether choices remain academically meaningful and are supported by clear instructions. Chi and Wylie (2014) distinguish more passive forms of engagement from constructive and interactive engagement, suggesting a conceptual basis for tasks that ask learners to explain, create, or compare ideas. Torres et al. (2014) emphasize thoughtful implementation of evidence-based practices in special education. Accordingly, menus should combine flexibility with observable learning goals, feasible resources, and supports that allow learners to participate rather than become overwhelmed by choice.

Self-regulation, motivation, and constructive processing

A central concern in both tools is how much control learners assume over the learning process. Zimmerman (1986) characterized self-regulated learning as the learner's active management of learning-related processes; later work emphasized the value of measuring those processes in authentic study contexts (Zimmerman, 2008). A study guide might support goal setting and checking progress, while an extension menu might give learners a role in choosing how to apply a skill. Such functions are complementary in design, even if their preparation practices are not correlated in a particular survey.

Learning tasks that invite active knowledge construction can promote more substantive engagement than simply rereading information. Chi, de Leeuw, Chiu, and LaVancher (1994) examined how self-explanations support understanding, and Chi and Wylie (2014) offered the ICAP framework for differentiating modes of engagement. Retrieval and explanation activities can be incorporated into both study-guide review questions and extension-menu alternatives. Nevertheless, the presence of these elements in parent-rated materials should not be treated as direct evidence that such learning mechanisms operated in this study.

Self-Determination Theory identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as needs associated with quality motivation and engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Structured guidance may contribute to competence, and appropriate choices may contribute to autonomy. For LSENs, these possibilities support designing tools that do not confuse independent learning with absence of teacher or family assistance. Rather, independence can be fostered through scaffolded opportunities for decision-making, practice, feedback, and gradual withdrawal of support.

Family-school perspectives and implications for material design

Families can report how educational materials are communicated, accessed, and used beyond the classroom. This perspective is useful for identifying whether parents recognize teachers' use of visual supports, clear instructions, assessment preparation, and varied activity options. At the same time, such reports are perceptions of instructional practice, not direct observations of fidelity or independent assessment of learning outcomes. The present study therefore uses parent responses to characterize reported practices while acknowledging the limits of this evidence.

The source thesis also situated its concern within discussions of participation and evidence-based special education. The importance of accessibility follows from disability inclusion principles (United Nations, 2006); the importance of implementation rather than a mere list of techniques is underscored by Torres et al. (2014). More broadly, evidence on effective studying (Credé & Kuncel, 2008; Dunlosky et al., 2013) and self-regulation (Boekaerts, 1997) suggests that the design of resources should consider learners' opportunities to practice, monitor, and sustain engagement.

Synthesizing these strands, the central issue is alignment: a guide can introduce a skill and provide structured practice, while a menu can offer differentiated ways to extend or demonstrate that skill. This linkage is

a pedagogical recommendation derived from the literature, not a relationship established by the study's statistical tests. The local investigation assessed whether parents perceived each practice favorably and whether the ratings varied together or across respondent characteristics. Figure 1 retains the source manuscript's conceptual paradigm connecting parent profile and the two instructional tools with independent study.

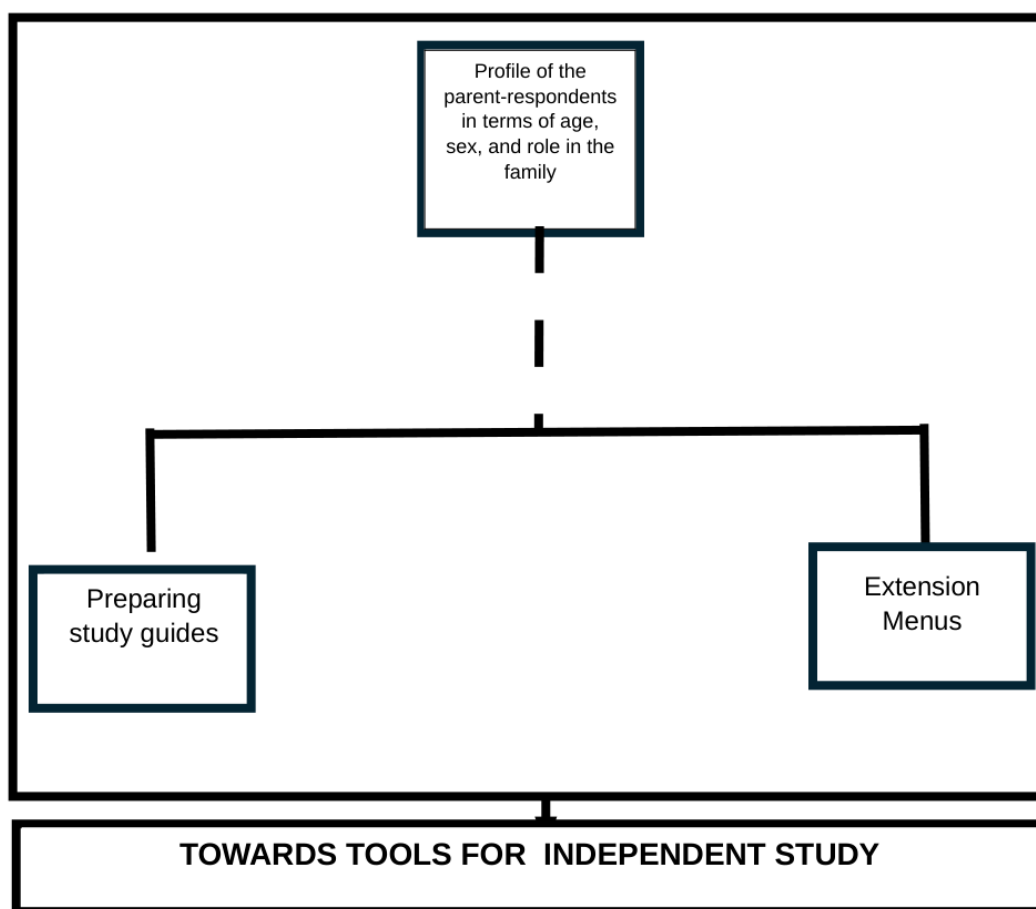


Figure 1. *Original conceptual framework of the study*

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey with comparative and correlational components. The descriptive component characterized respondents and their assessments of LSEN teachers' practices; the correlational component evaluated the reported statistical relationship between ratings of study-guide preparation and extension-menu preparation. The comparative component examined whether respondent assessments differed when grouped by age, sex, and role in the family. The design was observational and did not involve experimental assignment or measurement of changes in learner outcomes. The use of these methodological categories follows the source manuscript's research-design framing (Calmorin & Calmorin, 2013).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Manggahan Elementary School, General Trias, Cavite, Philippines, where the researcher sought information relevant to special education instructional supports. The source manuscript did not specify a calendar period for the survey, and no date has been inferred.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The respondents were 45 parents or other family caregivers of learners with special educational needs associated with the school. They were described by age, sex, and family role; the frequency distribution comprised 42 parents, three grandparents, and no guardians. The source manuscript did not identify a probability sampling procedure, recruitment frame, participation rate, or eligibility rules beyond the respondent description. Accordingly, no unsupported sampling method or representativeness claim is assigned to this sample.

Research Instrument

The researcher constructed a parent-assessment survey from literature and studies and reported seeking expert validation and revisions in response to former graduate-school professors and proposal-panel suggestions. The instrument used a four-point response scale to assess teachers' preparation of study guides and extension menus. Eight items addressed study-guide practices and five addressed extension-menu practices. The stated interpretive intervals were 3.25–4.00 ("Very true of the teachers of my child"), 2.50–3.24 ("True"), 1.75–2.49 ("Moderately true"), and 1.00–1.74 ("Not true"). No reliability coefficient or quantified content-validity index was given in the source.

Data Gathering Procedure

The source reported that parent-respondents completed the survey questionnaire and that the responses were organized for statistical treatment. The instrument had undergone expert review before collection. The source did not document administration dates, mode of distribution, procedures for handling incomplete questionnaires, or a follow-up protocol; these procedural details require author confirmation for reproducibility.

Data Analysis

Frequencies and percentages summarized age, sex, and family role. Item and domain weighted means and reported standard deviations described parent assessments. The thesis presented a chi-square statistic and a "Kendall test" statistic for the relationship between ratings of the two instructional practices, along with a p value. Because the precise Kendall coefficient or ranking procedure was not fully specified, the statistic is presented with its original label rather than being reclassified as a Pearson-type correlation. Kruskal–Wallis statistics and reported p values compared assessments across demographic groupings, using the study's .05 significance threshold. No new statistical tests were calculated.

Ethical Consideration

The study concerned caregivers' assessments of teacher practices, rather than direct clinical assessments or interventions with learners. The manuscript described questionnaire validation but did not provide documentation of informed consent, confidentiality safeguards, data-retention practices, or an institutional review determination. Those procedures cannot be assumed; the author should supply the relevant documented information before journal submission.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of parent-respondents

Table 1 describes the 45 participating caregivers. Ages 35–39 and 40–44 accounted for 12 respondents each (27% each), followed by ages 50–54 with nine (20%) and 45–49 with eight (18%). Thirty-six respondents (80%) were female and nine (20%) were male. Forty-two participants (93%) identified as parents and three (7%) as grandparents; none were listed as guardians. The predominantly female and parent-based distribution describes the participating respondents; it cannot establish the caregiving roles of all LSEN families in the division.

Table 1. *Parent-respondents' demographic profile (N = 45).*

Variable	Category	n	%
Age	30–34	1	2
	35–39	12	27
	40–44	12	27
	45–49	8	18
	50–54	9	20
	55 and older	3	7
Sex	Male	9	20
	Female	36	80
Family role	Parent	42	93
	Grandparent	3	7
	Guardian	0	0

The age percentages in the original distribution were rounded, producing a sum slightly above 100%; the reported counts total 45. Since most respondents were parents, the results mainly represent caregiver views obtained through direct parental involvement. This reinforces the practical relevance of communicating clearly about at-home study supports without implying a tested association between these demographics and student outcomes.

Parents' assessment of study-guide and extension-menu preparation

The overall assessment of teachers' practices was favorable ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.47$), meeting the source scale's "Very true" interval. Study-guide preparation received a domain mean of 3.37 ($SD = 0.48$), while extension-menu preparation was 3.28 ($SD = 0.45$). These scores describe parent agreement with statements about teachers' practices; they are not measures of material quality independently verified by observation or of learner progress.

Table 2. *Parent assessments of LSEN teachers' preparation practices.*

Practice or indicator	Mean	SD
Study guides (domain mean)	3.37	0.48
Break complex topics into manageable portions	3.24	0.43
Use visual supports and organizers	3.29	0.46
Highlight essential information	3.33	0.48
Match content to learners' current skill levels	3.42	0.50
Co-create visual timetables	3.42	0.50
Provide accessible guide formats	3.42	0.50
Provide study questions matching assessment formats	3.49	0.51
Offer alternative ways to demonstrate knowledge	3.36	0.48

Extension menus (domain mean)	3.28	0.45
Organize choices by readiness levels	3.24	0.43
Include multisensory UDL-based tasks	3.36	0.48
Offer drawing, audio, or speech-to-text outputs	3.27	0.45
Incorporate learner interests into options	3.24	0.43
Provide scaffolds such as checklists and organizers	3.29	0.46
Overall	3.34	0.47

For study guides, the strongest rating concerned study questions that reflected forthcoming assessment formats ($M = 3.49$). Three practices—matching content to learners’ skill levels, co-creating visual timetables, and producing accessible formats—each had a mean of 3.42. Breaking concepts into manageable segments received the lowest domain rating ($M = 3.24$), although the difference from other items was modest. Such practices correspond to the source thesis’s emphasis on organization and support for learning; retrieval-based questions, in particular, are compatible with evidence on practice testing (Dunlosky et al., 2013; Roediger & Karpicke, 2006).

For extension menus, multisensory design was the most highly rated practice ($M = 3.36$), followed by built-in scaffolding ($M = 3.29$) and multiple output formats ($M = 3.27$). Readiness-based groupings and the use of learner interests each received a mean of 3.24. These findings indicate that parents commonly recognized flexible formats and support structures. The original Table 2 classified some scores of 3.24 as “Very true” even though its declared cutoff placed 3.24 in the “True” interval; Table 2 therefore reports numerical values without copying inconsistent row-level labels. The overall and domain means follow the source tables.

From an instructional standpoint, visual and multimodal supports can be designed so that students engage through varied forms of explanation and application. The ICAP framework provides a way to distinguish active or constructive engagement from more passive exposure to material (Chi & Wylie, 2014), while evidence-based special education guidance emphasizes purposeful implementation in relation to individualized goals (Torres et al., 2014). However, the present parent ratings alone do not show that any particular strategy caused higher comprehension, autonomy, or academic achievement.

Relationship between the two preparation-practice assessments

Table 3 reproduces the reported relationship test. The study listed a chi-square value of 0.6757, a Kendall test statistic of 0.0150, and $p = .4111$ at the .05 significance level. This p value does not support rejecting the null hypothesis of no relationship or concordance under the specified test. The source interpreted the statistic as a very weak positive correlation. Because the exact Kendall test variant is not described, the more defensible conclusion is limited to the reported nonsignificant statistical result, not evidence that the two types of materials were actually developed independently.

Table 3. *Reported relationship statistics for study guides and extension menus.*

Comparison	N	χ^2	Kendall statistic	p
Study-guide and extension-menu preparation assessments	45	0.6757	0.0150	.4111

The two instructional tools have related pedagogical intentions, but this survey did not establish that a respondent’s rating of one varied consistently with the rating of the other. A nonsignificant test does not establish absence of alignment in teaching materials, and the statistic does not permit an inference about how individual teachers planned their materials. Nonetheless, the research question usefully points toward coordinated design: a study guide may support initial understanding and self-review, while extension choices may allow practice or application at differing levels of readiness (Boekaerts, 1997; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Comparisons by respondents' demographic characteristics

The source's Kruskal–Walli's comparisons found no p value below .05 for study-guide assessment by age ($p = .548$), sex ($p = .069$), or family role ($p = .662$). Extension-menu assessment was also nonsignificant by age ($p = .233$), sex ($p = .084$), and family role ($p = .291$). Table 4 presents the original test statistics and degrees of freedom unchanged. The results show no detected group differences in this sample; they do not demonstrate that the groups had identical perspectives or that implementation was uniform across all teachers.

Table 4. Kruskal–Walli's comparisons of parent assessments by demographic group.

Practice	Grouping	df	H	p
Study guides	Age	5	4.01	.548
	Sex	1	3.30	.069
	Family role	2	0.826	.662
Extension menus	Age	5	6.83	.233
	Sex	1	2.99	.084
	Family role	2	2.468	.291

For family role, the original demographic table listed no guardians, yet the source reported two degrees of freedom in its comparative analysis. This discrepancy should be checked against the original statistical output before submission. More generally, the small sample and the imbalance between parents and grandparents limit subgroup interpretation. The findings are therefore best understood as consistent favorable perceptions within the responding group, not as proof of demographic equity, causal educational effectiveness, or district-wide generalizability.

Implications for tools for independent study

Taken together, the ratings suggest that caregivers perceived study guides and extension menus as being prepared with attention to accessible information, varied output methods, and student needs. The lack of a statistically significant reported association leaves open whether materials were systematically coordinated in the teaching sequence. The study's stated outcome—tools for independent study—can therefore be framed as an instructional planning direction informed by these perceptions rather than a validated or experimentally tested intervention.

Practical coordination could begin with one learning objective: a guide presents accessible content, a short model, and self-check items; an extension menu then supplies multiple appropriately scaffolded ways to practice, explain, or extend the same objective. Teachers can jointly review the sequence with caregivers and adjust task formats based on learners' accessibility needs and response. Such an approach is consistent with the broader literature on self-regulation (Zimmerman, 1986, 2008), active knowledge construction (Chi et al., 1994), and inclusive implementation of appropriate supports (United Nations, 2006; Torres et al., 2014). It remains a recommendation rather than an observed effect of the present study.

CONCLUSION

This study established a descriptive picture of how 45 parent-respondents at Manggahan Elementary School assessed LSEN teachers' preparation of study guides and extension menus. Parents rated both domains favorably, with a study-guide mean of 3.37, an extension-menu mean of 3.28, and an overall mean of 3.34. The respondents were predominantly female and were mainly parents aged 35–44. The reported relationship statistic was very small and nonsignificant, and no significant demographic differences were detected at the .05 threshold. These findings indicate favorable perceptions within the surveyed group but do not establish direct effects on learners' independence, the absence of differences in other populations, or the actual coordination of materials.

The main contribution is a context-specific empirical basis for improving the joint design of structured and differentiated learning supports for LSENs.

Recommendation

LSEN teachers and special education coordinators may develop paired resource sets in which each study guide and extension menu are tied to the same learning targets, incorporate accessible presentation formats, and provide clear instructions and self-check opportunities. School leaders may facilitate collaborative planning and short professional-learning sessions on task differentiation, assistive formats, progress monitoring, and family communication. Parents and other caregivers may be invited to review the usability of materials and report barriers encountered at home, while teachers retain responsibility for individualizing instruction in response to learner needs. Future research should use direct review of developed materials, larger and more balanced caregiver samples, clearer documentation of sampling and instrument reliability, and independent measures of learners' study skills or performance. Before submission, the author should also verify the original Kendall procedure, the family-role comparison degrees of freedom, and the missing procedural and ethics documentation.

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