

Into the wood: Struggles of teachers

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Abstract

In the Philippines, there has been a push to develop inclusive education policies that cater for learners with special needs in mainstreamed classes. However, we need to consider the regular teacher who educates this type of learner. The purpose of the study was to understand the difficulties encountered by regular teachers who have LSENs. A qualitative research design was used to collect data from 15 regular elementary teachers through interviews.

According to the findings, the struggles of regular teachers who have LSENs were behavioral management, lack of teachers training, difficulties in class routine, and issues with parental denial. The regular teachers displayed a negative attitude towards the inclusion of all LSENs and accommodating them with restrictions.

It is recommended that the administrator provide varied activities, seminars, continuous trainings, and workshops that enhance teachers attitudes towards inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive Education; Regular Teacher; Learners with Special Educational Needs

1. Introduction

A. Background of the Study

In the Philippines, there has been a push to develop inclusive education policies that cater for students with special needs. The aim was to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge to offer inclusive education to students with disabilities.

The focus of this research is on the obstacles that general teachers, particularly those working in elementary schools, encounter when dealing with students who have special needs. Many schools around the world are not meeting their potential performance levels, as indicated by research like (Rosenberg & Foshay, 2002).

In the Philippines, a report from 2010 stated that there is recurrent scarcity of teachers and an increase in number of students. To be considered for an apprenticeship, one must meet specific prerequisites.

In a typical mainstream context, teachers must involve children with special needs as much as feasible in a typical class setup to offer inclusive education. The ability of teachers to transfer knowledge, develop positive values, and improve the capacity of gifted students to overcome obstacles in life is what helps to encourage inclusivity in the educational system. Thus, there is a lack of understanding in providing excellent service in inclusive classes, which

makes it difficult for teachers to be prepared and to demonstrate their competence in various approaches to inclusive education (Allam, Martin 2021).

A teacher's qualifications, such as their education level, years of teaching experience, and training/skills, can help assess their suitability for regular teaching. Baguio City and Benguet province are the only locations where he has two SPED special education schools.

Despite their training and education, non-SPED teachers encounter significant obstacles when it comes to accommodating students with diverse learning needs.

Insufficient or inadequate resources are a major concern for non-SPED teachers when it comes to teaching students with special needs. Such instructors commonly cannot provide the necessary instructional materials, tools and technologies to effectively engage and support their students.

Additionally, teaching students with disabilities in special education classrooms that have access to adaptive technology, sensory aids, and aides is a challenging task for teachers who do not hold SPED certificates.

A lack of resources, inadequate support, and limited knowledge pose challenges for students with disabilities. Nevertheless, non-SPED teachers often face the same issue by not having adequate access to these resources.

The implementation of inclusive education has led to significant changes in educational institutions around the world. The focus is on the integration of students with special needs (LSEN) into mainstream schools. Although the concept of inclusive education aims to provide equal learning opportunities for all students, it has brought many challenges for teachers. In this research, we will figure out some of the problems educators face in inclusive education, including lack of parental cooperation in LSEs, inadequate training, limited catch-up time, and inadequate teaching strategies for LSEs.

One of the biggest challenges for teachers in inclusive education is the lack of cooperation from parents regarding LSEN. Some parents may not fully understand or recognize their child's special needs, which may result in a lack of support and collaboration with the teacher. This lack of collaboration can hinder LSEN progress in the classroom because teachers' efforts alone may not be enough to meet individual learning needs. This is why it is so important for parents to be actively involved in their child's education, working closely with the teacher and providing the necessary support at home to ensure optimal learning outcomes for LSEs.

Another problem that inclusive education teachers face is the lack of adequate training. Teachers are generally trained to teach diverse students but may not have specific training to meet the needs of LSEs. Without appropriate training and knowledge of specific learning difficulties or special needs, it can be difficult for teachers to create an appropriate learning environment and provide instruction tailored to the needs of LSEs. Educational institutions must provide ongoing professional development opportunities to equip teachers with the

skills and strategies needed to effectively support LSENs.

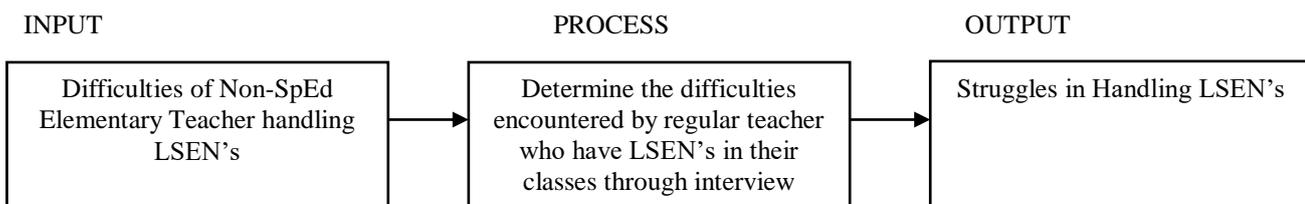
Furthermore, teachers in inclusive classes are often confronted with time constraints when it comes to offering remedial lessons for LSEN. Due to the diversity of abilities and learning needs in the classroom, teachers may not have enough time to devote individual attention and support to LSEN. The pressure to deliver a set curriculum within a set timeframe can result in LSENs having little chance of reintegration, thereby hindering their progress. To address this issue, schools should consider devoting additional staff or resources specifically to LSENs to provide them with the necessary support and intervention.

Finally, many teachers have difficulty finding teaching strategies suitable for LSEN. Traditional teaching methods may not be effective in engaging and meeting the diverse learning needs of LSEN students. Educators should adopt alternative teaching approaches such as differentiated instruction, multisensory techniques, and assistive technologies to enable inclusive learning environments. However, implementing these strategies requires significant planning, preparation, and creativity on the part of the teacher, which can be difficult with an already heavy workload.

In brief inclusive education has brought both opportunities and challenges for teachers.

To provide equal learning opportunities for all students, educators face problems such as lack of parental cooperation, inadequate training, limited catch-up time, and the need to adapt teaching strategies to LSEN. To address these challenges, it is crucial that all stakeholders, including parents, educational institutions, and policymakers, work together and provide the necessary support to teachers in inclusive educational environments. In this way, we can create an inclusive learning environment that benefits all students, including those with special needs.

B. Conceptual Framework



C. Statement of the Problem

The study aims to describe the struggles of Non-Sped Teachers in handling learners with special need. Specifically, it answered the question:

1. What are the difficulties that the non-sped elementary teacher encountered in handling LSEN's?

II. Design and Methodology

A. Research Design

This research used qualitative research, specifically a case study design. It focused on the difficulties that the non-spiced elementary teacher encountered in handling LSEs. The interview method was used in conducting the research.

B. Population and Locale

Purposively, this research was conducted at Kias Elementary School. The respondents to this study will focus on the fifteen non-spiced elementary teachers.

C. Sampling Techniques

The researchers applied the Maximum variation technique in describe the different struggles of the teachers in handling LSEs.

D. Data Gathering Instrument

To gather the needed data, researchers used interview guides as the main tool.

E. Treatment/Analysis of Data

The data that were gathered were interpreted through narrative analysis. Narrative analysis is a qualitative research method that involves studying and analysing the stories people tell about their lives and experiences. This method focuses on the way individuals construct their stories, the language they use, and the contexts in which they are shared. The goal of narrative analysis is to understand the meaning that individuals attach to their experiences, and how their stories relate to broader social and cultural phenomena (Rashid 2023).

Using the Interpretive approach to narrative analysis, on the other hand, focuses on the subjective aspects of the narrative, such as the meanings and interpretations that individuals give to their experiences. According to this approach, narratives are shaped by the social and cultural context in which they are situated, and therefore, cannot be analysed objectively.

F. Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers sought first the permission from Gloria A. Catiyan the school head of Kias Elementary School, to conduct the study. Then, the researchers personally administer interview to their respondents. The respondents requested to answer the interview guide according to their perceptions. In here, it is mentioned that the respondents were anonymous all throughout the study and they were assured that their answers remained confidential. After retrieval, the responses were tabulated, and then the decoding was used to analyse the data.

III. Result and Discussion

Among the 15 regular elementary teachers interviewed the following results are derived: Behavioural Management, Lack of Teachers Training, Issues with Parental Denial and Difficulties in Class Routines.

Table 1. The Difficulties of Regular Elementary Teachers Handling LSEs

The Difficulties of Regular Elementary Teacher Handling LSEs	Frequency
Behavioural Management	7

Lack of Teachers Training	2
Difficulties in Class Routine	2
Issues with Parental Denial	4

A. Behavioural Management

The Research shows that most of the respondents answered that the difficulty that they encountered having LSEN's in their class is the learner's behaviour.

As stated by the following respondents:

No focus in learning they have difficulty focusing on the lesson There are times that he disturbs the class and very short attention span. (Respondent 1/ November 23, 2023)

When student started the tantrums since I'm not a Sped Teacher it is hard for me to approach that student. What I do is to talk with the parent and asked them what to do with the child. (Respondent 3/ November 23, 2023)

When the student starts to have tantrums all my attention is given to him that I almost forgot that I have other students besides him. (Respondent 4/ November 24, 2023)

Since I have a student with ADHD some of the routine set in a day is not being followed because there are times that the student will just run without any reason, and I need to follow him not encountered accident because the classroom is near the road. (Respondent 5/ November 24, 2023)

Child's behaviour when he has tantrums, he tends to harm not only the teacher but also their classmates. (Respondent 9/ November 25, 2023)

LSENS are difficult to sit still and hard to catch their attention. (Respondent 13/ November 25, 2023)

Lack of attention span (Respondent 14/ November 25,2023)

Learners with Special Needs are very challenging to handle most especially their behaviour. Behavioural management is a critical aspect of supporting learners. These learners frequently present a range of behavioural issues that can pose significant challenges in the classroom. From attention span to disruptive actions which affects the performance of the whole class.

B. Difficulties in Class Routine

Class Routine is an instruction given by the teacher. Classroom routines and procedures are introduced to ensure that children know what is expected of them and allow them to do certain things on their own.

Out of the fifteen respondents there are four who answered that they are having difficulties in Class Routine because there are times that they need to accommodate LSEN's in their class and they don't follow the routines that they set in a day.

This is being stated by the following respondents:

The difficulties encountered is how to manage the class especially I have some student who are diagnosed with ADHD. I cannot finish my lesson. (Respondent 2/ November 23,2023)

The pupil cannot relate in your lesson even you do one on one tutoring, he cannot still follow especially when you are teaching to write big and small letters. (Respondent 10/ November 24,2023)

I don't know how to communicate with the child. (Respondent 11/ November 25,2023)

Difficulties in choosing the teaching method suitable for all needs especially learners with special education needs lack of support and lack of approach in handling the learners. (Respondent 15/ November 25,2023)

C. Lack of Teachers Training

The lack of training of teachers in supporting LSEN learners is a pervasive issue that directly impacts the quality of education. This lack of training manifested limited knowledge of specific literacy disabilities, ineffective educational strategies, and challenges in secreting instruction to meet individual requirements.

I am not Sped Teacher even if I try to accommodate the pupil, *I don't have enough training to handle LSEN's.* (Respondent 6/ November 24,2023)

LSENs are not given priority as to their needs due to teachers lack of training in handling such learners and considering the number of learners inside the classroom LSENs are not given much priority. Learning Materials that suits them are not available. (Respondent 12/ November 25,2023)

This proved the finding of Allam and Martin (2021) that the lack of understanding in providing excellent service in inclusive classes, makes it difficult for teachers to be prepared and to demonstrate their competence in various approaches to inclusive education.

D. Issues with Parental Denial

Parental denial of their child's special educational requirements presents a significant hedge to furnishing comprehensive support and intervention for LSEN learners. When parents are resistant to admitting their child's unique literacy requirements, it can stymie the process of identification, assessment, and access to applicable interventions and support services. This denial may stem from a variety of factors, including smirches associated with special educational requirements, artistic beliefs, or a lack of understanding about the nature of their child's challenges.

As stated by the following respondents:

When we talk parent regarding the child's case some accept the resolution but other don't like to accept there are denials even if there is diagnosis. (Respondent 7/November 24,2023)

Parent is still in denial about the *child's case.* (Respondent 8/November 25,2023)

This proved that parent's denial is one factor that challenges the teacher in dealing LSENs since that they teacher cannot do collaboration with the parent regarding how they handle the child at home and how to deal with the child's academics. The Intervention made by the teacher must be same intervention used at home most especially in the cases of Autism, Intellectual Disability and ADHD

Addressing parent denial requires a sensitive and cooperative approach that emphasizes communication, empathy, and education. Building trust and fellowship with parents, as well as involving them in the development of personalized education plans and decision-making processes, can also contribute to reducing maternal denial and fostering more inclusive and probative home-school cooperation.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Based on the Findings, this is drawn

1. Regular teachers face challenges in behavioral management, lack of training, class routine, and parent denial, displaying a negative attitude towards inclusion of all LSENs and accommodating them with restrictions.

Recommendation

For the administrator to provide varied activities, seminars, continuous trainings and workshops that enhance teachers attitude towards inclusive education.

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Appendix: Results of the Interview and Interview Guide

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question: What the difficulties that you have encountered having LSEN’s in your class? <p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 1</p> <p>No focus in learning they have difficulty focusing in the lesson There are times that he disturb the class and very short attention span</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question: What the difficulties that you have encountered having LSEN’s in your class? <p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 2</p> <p>The difficulties encountered is how to manage the class especially I have some student who are diagnosed with ADHD. I cannot finish my lesson.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question: What the difficulties that you have encountered having LSEN’s in your class? <p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 3</p> <p>When student started the tantrums since I’m not a Sped Teacher it is hard for me to approach that student. What I do is to talk with the parent and asked them what to do with the child.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 4</p> <p>When the student starts to have tantrums all my attention is given to him that I almost forgot that I have other students besides him.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 5</p> <p>Since I have a student with ADHD some of the routine set in a day is not being followed because there are times that the student will just run without any reason, and I need to follow him not encountered accident because the classroom is near the road.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 6</p> <p>I am not Sped Teacher even if I try to accommodate the pupil, I don’t have enough training to handle LSEN’s.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 7</p> <p>When we talk parent regarding the child’s case some accept the resolution but other don’t like to accept there are denials even if there is diagnosis</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 8</p> <p>Parent is still in denial about the child’s case.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 9</p> <p>Child’s behavior when he has tantrums, he tends to harm not only the teacher but also their classmates.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 10</p> <p>The pupil cannot relate in your lesson even you do one on one tutoring, he cannot still follow especially when you are teaching to write big and small letters</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 11</p> <p>I don’t know how to communicate with the child.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Respondent 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question: What the difficulties that you have encountered having LSEN’s in your class?

<p>Lsens are not given priority as to their needs due to teachers lack of training in handling such learners and considering the number of learners inside the classroom LSens are not given much priority. Learning Materials that suits them are not available.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question: What the difficulties that you have encountered having LSEN's in your class? Respondent 13 LSENS are difficult to sit still and hard to to catch their attention.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question: What the difficulties that you have encountered having LSEN's in your class? Respondent 14 Lack on attention span
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question: What the difficulties that you have encountered having LSEN's in your class? Respondent 15 Difficulties in choosing the teaching method suitable for all needs especially learners with special education needs lack of support and lack of approach in handling the learners.