



Study of Issues and Challenges in Special Education

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Abstract

The overarching goal of this research is to ascertain the problems and obstacles that special education (SPED) instructors in India face when it comes to instructing students who have some kind of learning disability. The majority of instructors who work with children who have learning impairments have not received any training in special needs education from the school. As a result, they believe that they do not have the qualifications necessary to educate children who have learning disabilities. In addition, instructors who are assigned to educate students in SPED classrooms lack the methods necessary to work with students who have impairments. This study found that classrooms for children with learning disabilities in the Division of Ilagan as a whole have a poor learning environment to support Specialized Programs for the Education of Disabled Children (SPED), such as a lack of budget, curriculum guide, Instructional Materials (IMs), and even school facilities. It is possible to draw the conclusion that just putting students who have special needs in the same classroom as other students without providing them with the appropriate assistance is not adequate. Learners with disabilities did not obtain all of the essential assistance and services for accessing the curricular facilities, and the help that stakeholders provide to meet the requirements of students enrolled in SPED courses is extremely limited.

Key words: special education, issues, challenges, learning disabilities, inclusive

Introduction

The education of students who have special needs has gone a very long and very far way; it may be seen of as a method moving from special education (SPED) to integrated education, and it can also be thought of as a process moving from integrated education to inclusive education. Regular schools that have an inclusive orientation still face many obstacles, roadblocks, impediments, and challenges despite the support of a number of guidelines, policies, and programmes that are implemented from time to time in order to hasten the progress of all of the efforts made in this direction. However, special education is today a hot issue that is being debated and discussed extensively in the area of education all over the world, including in the Philippines. It has generally been referred to as both a new education paradigm and as an educational reform objective with the ultimate aim of making our society more inclusive. This is because it is considered to be a component of the global education for all agenda. Despite the existence of policies and a legal framework that support education for all, namely in the implementation of SPED courses, the component of education for all is not properly implemented. This is the case despite the fact that there are such laws and frameworks. The Declaration of the Rights of the Child was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1959. Within this document, it was stated that humanity owes the child the very best that it has to offer. When it comes to the education of children who have unique requirements, one of the guiding principles is as follows: "The kid who is physically, intellectually, or visually impaired should be provided the specific treatment, education, that is necessary of his particular condition." In order for students to have a seamless and effective transition to postsecondary settings, it has been a significant component of policy, research, curricular standards, and instructional methods to enhance the self-determined behaviour traits of students with disabilities. The education system needs to provide support for educators who work with students who have learning disabilities and also raise public awareness about the necessity of accepting



students who have specific educational requirements. As a result, it is necessary to include thorough instruction about special needs in all programmes that are geared toward the professional development of teachers. It is widely held that educators and administrators play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of inclusive education. They are seen as linchpins in the process of incorporating students with disabilities into normal courses, and as such, they played a significant part in the effective implementation of inclusive education. This is because of the crucial role they played in the process. If knowledge and attitudes for inclusive education have not been practised and cultivated, then it will not be possible to accomplish this goal.

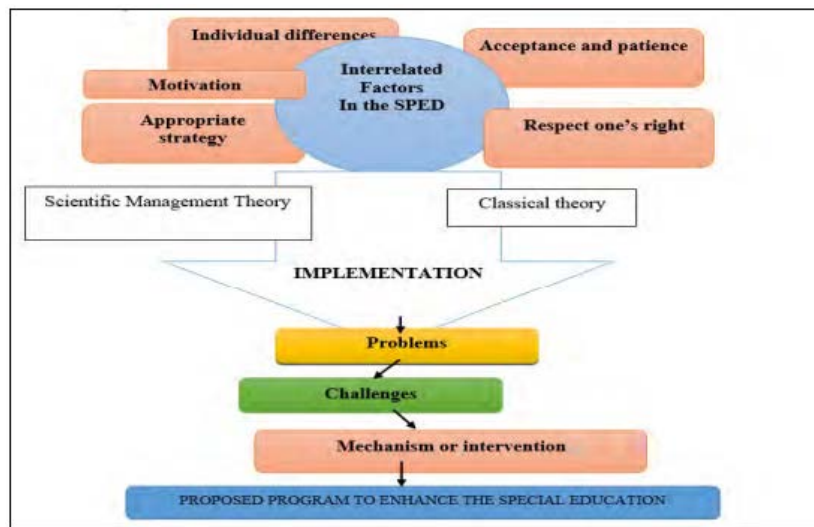


Figure 1. Paradigm showing the relationship between the variables considered in this study

Challenges in Special Education

1. Feeling unappreciated even with knowledge from special education courses

The course you have gone through often doesn't matter even if it is exactly what has made you capable for this job. People tend to overlook or ignore how **special education teachers** have a tougher job than regular teachers. The learners in the class often refuse to learn what is being taught and thus the job takes double time.

A few words of appreciation, a single expression of love towards the teacher, a simple reminder of how amazing a job they are doing- that'll surely go a long way!

2. Pile of paper works

Online teacher training courses do tell you what you are going to expect but it is not until you actually step into the world of reality that you can gauge what is there in store for you. Starting from IEP to progress reports- it really not too much when one says "pile of paper". Be it a lesson plan or forms for medical bills- there are enough paper works to make a teacher tired and frustrated.

A little helping hand from colleagues can be a saviour. But then again, they have to complete their paper works also. Best we can suggest is, do not procrastinate.



3. Lack of support from parents of children

In any teaching set up, a relationship between the teacher and the parent is important. But often the parents do not invest as much time and energy and even refuse to go through the teacher's notes, emails or sometimes do not even receive the calls. This way, communication between them hinders and the child's teacher feel outcast.

Parents should know that teachers want to communicate not for some loose talks but the concern is the child. So, when the teacher reaches out, parents should too.

4. Lack of support from public in general

"Teaching? Oh, come on, how hard can that be!", "You a teacher? You have summer vacation! What could you want more?"- these are some common opinions that come almost every teacher's way. But when it is SEN teachers, the lack of support is higher.

Doesn't matter if you are a pass out of a renowned **teacher training institute**, all you are likely to receive is sneers and judgments. People should know that teaching special needs children are a lot tougher because every student has different learning needs and different pace of learning.

We as common people should motivate the teachers more.

5. Working with paraprofessionals

Having a pair of extra hands to help you with work is always desirable. But that also means preparing their schedules, attending to their opinions (in case the paraprofessional has a different opinion than yours), take care of the job aspect that they might find challenging and so on. These training and supervising sessions actually drains a teacher off.

As a SEN teacher you need to be in charge of the position and be strict if necessary. Make the colleagues understand that if something goes wrong, nobody would hold the paraprofessionals responsible. So, work accordingly.

6. Diverse student needs

With special needs children, the most challenging thing is their learning ability or readiness to adapt to whatever is being taught. With a class full of children with a wide range of varying learning needs, a SEN teacher needs to follow individualized teaching process or develop a lesson plan so that they can attend to each of the learners.

This is where the learning from **teacher training courses** come in handy. Apply what you learnt in your training days and you will definitely come out with a positive result.

7. Collaboration with other teachers

The job of a SEN teacher is all the more challenging because they need to know what the general stream of education includes. This is because they need to develop a lesson plan so that these children are not left behind. For that they need to communicate with general education teachers and plan curriculums accordingly.

8. Scheduling and rescheduling

As SEN teachers work in collaboration with others, the schedule planning takes a lot of time, edits and changes throughout the week. The schedules not only include classes but recess, speech therapy classes, making time for physical and occupational therapists and what not!



It will be considerate of the other teachers and the school administration if sudden changes are not made in the existing schedule like adding more students to the SEN teacher's class or removing a few from it, asking the teacher to adjust the class with another teacher etc.

9. Collecting and analyzing data

No SEN teacher can claim anything without certain proof. If a certain child in a class is lagging behind and the teacher decides to bring it up to the administrators, they must collect proof, exhibit the lack of growth in terms of data, analyze them to interpret well and adjust the existing instructions. Otherwise, nothing will be validated.

10. Monitoring student growth

Monitoring and observing a student minutely is mandatory for teachers as that would ensure that the children are on the right path of growth and development. When special needs children are concerned, even the slightest changes or accomplishments are worth appreciation for a million times. But mainstream people refuse to recognize these oftentimes and continue comparing them with other students of regular classes.

Conclusion

First, most teachers teaching children with learning disabilities did not receive any special needs education training from the school, they feel that they are not qualified to teach the children with learning disability. Moreover, teachers assigned in SPED classes lack of strategies in dealing with learners with disabilities. Second, this study revealed that the classrooms for children with learning disabilities in Division of Ilagan at large have poor learning environment to support the SPED such as lack of budget, curriculum guide, Instructional Materials (IMs) and even school facilities. Third, it could be concluded that placement of learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom with ordinary learners is not enough with no proper support. Fourth, learners with disability did not receive all the necessary support and services for accessing the curriculum facilities. Fifth, stakeholders support is very minimal to support the needs of the students enrolled in SPED classes. On the other hand, issues and problems were solved technically to sustain the positive working environment among school heads, teachers and stakeholders.

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