



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS FROM TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The primary goal of this study is to better understand the challenges that special education (SPED) teachers in the City Division of Ilagan Isabela, Philippines experience when trying to help students who have difficulty learning new content. Purposive sampling was used to identify the 15 special education teachers who agreed to take part in the study as respondents. Educator challenges were identified by use of the Qualitative Research Method (QRM). The data was analysed using a thematic approach. Five distinct themes emerged from the analyses of the key informants' collective descriptions of the difficulties they face in their roles as SPED teachers: selecting an appropriate strategy and motivation; identifying individual needs; finding the job challenging but fulfilling; accepting and having patience with students; and respecting students' rights. The majority of teachers who assist students with learning disabilities have never taken a course on special needs education. Since this is the case, they feel unprepared to teach students with learning impairments. Furthermore, teachers who are given the task of instructing children in SPED classrooms often lack the strategies essential for working with kids who have impairments. The study concluded that the Division of Ilagan's special education classes as a whole lack the resources necessary to implement Specialized Programs for the Education of Disabled Children (SPED), including adequate funding, a standardised curriculum, instructional materials, and physical space. It's reasonable to conclude that it's not enough to just integrate students with special needs into a regular classroom without also providing them with specialised support. Disabled children did not receive adequate support in accessing classroom resources, and stakeholders' efforts to satisfy the needs of those enrolled in Special Education and Related Services (SPED) classes fell far short of expectations. However, issues were resolved on a technical level to keep school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders happy. This objective was realised. Students with disabilities should have access to ongoing training and education on inclusion strategies. The Training and Development branch of the Department of Education should work with in-service officials in each region to organise such events. The people in charge of implementing the Special Education and Related Services (SPED) programmes must adhere rigorously to the policies, and an active organisation lead by the school's principle must be fostered to foster a strong support system among the stakeholders.

Keywords: special education, issues, challenges, learning disabilities, inclusive

Introduction

The branch of education known as special education is one that focuses on meeting the one-of-a-kind requirements of pupils who have exceptionalities or impairments. The program's objective is to provide specialised assistance and training to these kids in the hopes of assisting them in realising their full academic, social, and emotional potential. Even while special education has made considerable strides forward in recent years, it continues to struggle with a number of obstacles and problems that have a negative effect on the level of education and assistance that is given to kids. This qualitative study focuses on the experiences and viewpoints of special education instructors about the difficulties and problems they face on a daily basis in the course of their work. Via gaining a better knowledge of the



complexities and subtleties of special education through the exploration of the thoughts and reflections of these experts, we are able to bring to light the areas that call for attention and change. The objective of the challenges that special education instructors must encounter and the possible influence those challenges have on the results for their students. Through the examination of these problems, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders may design strategies and interventions to improve the efficacy of special education programmes and guarantee that every student has the assistance they need to be successful in their academic endeavours.

the following issues commonly reported by special education teachers:

- **Inclusive Education and Classroom Differentiation:** When it comes to accommodating the various requirements of students with disabilities who are enrolled in regular classes, it might be difficult for teachers to apply inclusive practises and differentiate their lessons. This problem is caused by a scarcity of resources, insufficient instruction, and excessive student enrollment in classes.
- **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Documentation:** It is essential to develop and put into operation effective Individualized Education Plans in order to cater to the specific requirements of each individual student. However, instructors sometimes find it challenging to create detailed individualised education programmes (IEPs) and to keep up with the appropriate documentation, which may result in possible support gaps for students.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** It is very necessary for there to be productive cooperation and communication between special education instructors, general education teachers, support personnel, and parents in order for inclusion and support to be effective. However, limited time, different objectives, and a lack of clear communication channels all work against efficient teamwork, which in turn may have a detrimental influence on the overall advancement of students.
- **Behavioral Challenges:** Students with impairments may show difficult behaviours, which need for unique treatments and measures to be put into place. When it comes to handling these behaviours, teachers often run into challenges since they frequently lack the proper training and encounter inadequate resources and assistance.
- **Professional Development and Training:** Due to a lack of chances for professional development and insufficient training programmes, it may be difficult for instructors of special education to keep up with the most recent findings in the fields of research, therapeutic treatments, and instructional strategies.

This qualitative study intends to give insights into the reality of special education and encourage a debate on how to approach these difficulties in an effective manner. It is written from the viewpoint of a teacher. We are able to improve the educational experiences of students with disabilities and the results of their education if we improve the support and resources available to special education instructors. This will help us promote educational inclusion and equal opportunity.

Inclusive Education Implementation: Barriers and Difficulties

- **Lack of Resources and Support** Educators often face difficulties as a result of insufficient resources, which may include materials for the classroom, assistive technology, and specialised support staff. These challenges are made even more onerous by a lack of adequate finance as well as restricted access to chances for training and professional development.



- **Inadequate Teacher Preparation:** Many instructors report feeling unprepared to handle the different needs of children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. This is due to inadequate teacher preparation. It is possible for successful education and student involvement to be hampered by insufficient training in inclusive practises, techniques for differentiated instruction, and methods for providing tailored assistance.
- **Large Class Sizes and Time Constraints Managing the Diverse Needs of Students with Disabilities in Large, Heterogeneous Classrooms may be a Challenging Task** Large class sizes and time constraints make this a challenging task. It may be difficult for teachers to provide specialised attention and assistance to each student within the confines of the allotted amount of time in class, which can undermine the success of inclusive education.
- **Negative Attitudes and Stigma:** Negative attitudes and stigma surrounding students with disabilities may create an atmosphere that is unfriendly to inclusive education. Students who have impairments may suffer difficulties in their social and emotional lives as a result of the opposition they encounter from their peers, their parents, and even their teachers.
- **Assessment and evaluation:** It is possible that the conventional assessment methods may not adequately capture the development and accomplishments of pupils who have impairments. It is possible that teachers may have trouble accurately measuring and evaluating the learning results of these kids, which will have an impact on the educational experience these students have and their potential for growth.

Regardless of the obstacles and challenges, stakeholders in the area of education may strive toward the creation of an inclusive education system that honours and supports the different needs of all children. The implementation of inclusive education has the potential to become an endeavour that is more inclusive, egalitarian, and effective provided certain changes in attitudes and views as well as improvements in resource allocation and teacher training are made.

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs): Documentation and Implementation Challenges

challenges faced by teachers regarding the documentation and implementation of IEPs:

- **IEPs That Accurately Address the Needs and Goals of Each Student** It may be challenging for educators to draught IEPs that adequately address the specific requirements and objectives of each individual student. It may be difficult and time consuming to strike a balance between the personalised character of individualised education programmes (IEPs) and the obligations set out by rules governing special education.
- **Working in Partnership with a Number of Stakeholders** Achieving success in the implementation of individualised education programmes (IEPs) calls for working in collaboration with a number of different stakeholders, including educators, parents, experts, and administrators. During the process of creation and execution, problems may present themselves in the form of coordinating schedules, maintaining good communication, and resolving opposing viewpoints.
- **Achieving Consistency in Implementation** It may be difficult for educators to achieve consistency in the implementation of the accommodations, adjustments, and support services that are stated in the individualised education programmes (IEPs). It may be difficult to provide constant tailored help due to a variety of factors, including a lack of resources, the presence of conflicting demands, and shifting dynamics in the classroom.



- Documentation and Monitoring: Although it is vital to provide detailed and accurate documentation of the IEP implementation process, this may be a time-consuming and onerous task for instructors. Time commitment and good organisational skills are required in order to successfully monitor and record progress, document revisions, and retain records that are always up to date.
- Transition Preparation The process of moving children with disabilities from one grade level to the next or from secondary school to post-secondary education involves careful planning and coordination. The development of transition plans within the parameters of an individualised education programme (IEP), ensuring that students get consistent assistance, and preparing students for new contexts may present difficulties for teachers.

Educators are in a better position to provide more effective and tailored assistance to children who have impairments if they address the problems they face and streamline the process of establishing and executing individualised education programmes (IEPs). To make sure that Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) function as useful instruments for encouraging student achievement and inclusion, it is essential to have better training, simplify processes, and promote cooperation among the many stakeholders.

Conclusion

After analysing the data collected, several inferences and findings were drawn. Most teachers who work with kids who have learning disabilities have never had any formal training in special needs education, so they worry that they aren't qualified to work with these students. Teachers are not adequately prepared to work with students with disabilities when they are assigned to teach in Special Education and Related Services (SPED) classrooms. Second, our research confirmed that the Division of Ilagan as a whole teaches students with learning difficulties in classrooms that do not meet the minimum requirements set by the Specialized Programs for the Education of Disabled Children (SPED). This includes not having enough money, not having a set curriculum, not having enough IMs, and not having adequate classroom space. Third, it's clear that an inclusive classroom can't thrive if students with special needs are simply co-located with typically developing peers without enough support. Fourth, the necessary support and services for children with disabilities to make full use of the classroom resources were not made available to them. Fifth, there is not nearly enough help available from various parties to accommodate the needs of children participating in special education programmes. However, issues were solved technically such that administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders could continue to enjoy working in the institution. This goal was reached. Based on the data and conclusions drawn from the study, the Department of Education should implement the following recommendations to further strengthen the implementation of SPED in various schools. First, opportunities for ongoing professional development about inclusion strategies for children with special educational needs should be made available through the Department of Education's Training and Development division in collaboration with the regional in-service officers. Workshops should also train educators in conflict resolution, classroom management, alternative kinds of evaluation, and other useful skills that can be immediately applied in the classroom. The same is true for preservice teacher education programmes; they must incorporate inclusive education pedagogies. Second, the availability of both human and material resources is crucial to the successful implementation of SPED mandates. The Department of Education should expand the availability of appropriate resources, equipment, and instructional material for students with a wide range of needs. Third, the teachers in charge of Special Ed classes have never had any formal training in helping students with special needs. Therefore, these teachers are not providing adequate support in



the classroom for pupils with learning issues. The Department of Education is responsible for hiring suitably qualified individuals to fill teaching posts, and for providing in-service training to those who are not so qualified. The fourth step is to find a good fit for students with learning disabilities. Those in charge of SPED programmes must strictly adhere to all regulations. To get the backing of the many interested parties, it's important to encourage the establishment of an active organisation that will be headed by the school's principal. Sixth, future research in this area should focus on systematically developing solutions that can be applied in a wide range of contexts. This will allow us to examine how innovations affect our abilities and results.

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