

A Phenomenological Study on the Lived Experiences of SPED English Teachers in BARMM Region

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ABSTRACT: This research was conducted in the parameters of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Philippines. In order to determine the lived experiences of the special education teachers in the region, the study used a qualitative research design and a phenomenological approach. The participants of this study were five special education teachers, and the researcher used a semi-structured in-depth-interview in this study. Findings revealed that the special education teachers' experiences during distance learning were extremely challenging, five themes emerge on the challenges encountered in teaching special education learners; these were mixed disabilities in one classroom, lack of comprehension, poor parental educational attainment, tantrum-inducing behavior, and inadequate funding and government support. Four themes that emerge on the coping strategies in addressing the challenges encountered in teaching English language to the special education learners. These were home visitation, K to 12 curriculum integration, educational mainstreaming, and individualized educational plan. The researchers concluded that teaching English to special education students is difficult, especially in this time of pandemic; it necessitates a significant amount of effort especially since the teacher is dealing with different disabilities in one classroom.

Keywords: New normal education, phenomenological approach, Special Education, Learners with Disability, English Language.

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INTRODUCTION

Special Education Teachers

Students with different talents and personalities are grouped together in every classroom. Some students learn more quickly than others since each has a unique set of skills. Teachers need to come up with effective teaching strategies and implement solutions, in order to meet every student's individual needs in the class (Mahanta, 2019). Wherein, English Language Learners is often a challenge for many schools, and accurately identifying and supporting ELLs with special needs, can be an even greater challenge (Ferlazo, 2016).

According to Education Trust (2020), parents are dealing with a variety of issues, insurmountable problems with their experiences assisting their children with learning at a distance. Also, distance learning poses threat to students because they may feel isolated and dejected (Zaheer & Munir, 2020). Other problems occur such as children with genuine LDs in reading have intrinsic learning difficulties or differences, often related to problems in phonological processing that impact their word identification skills. Moreover, English Language Learners with LDs need instruction that simultaneously responsive to their disability, English language status, and culture, since the majority of students with LDs have reading disabilities. ESL and classroom teachers must be familiar with the instructional strategies that will support language and literacy development in the context areas (Garcia & Tyler, 2010)

In the Philippines, the government has been seeking and developing ways to address the different needs of its citizens. Education being one of the target areas for improvement has been a serious subject of challenge to the administration most especially in Special Education; however, the aspect of education for all is not effectively implemented despite of having policies and legal framework that advocate education for all specially in the implementation of SPED classes (Allam & Martin, 2021). However, the growth of special education has been given a good support all these years both by the government and non-government organization. Despite the attempts to achieve and maintain progressive changes for the educational system for learners with disability, teachers seem that the current state of Special Education reflects the other way around (Ebol, 2000).

A transcendental phenomenological research of special education teachers in Misamis Oriental, Northern Mindanao, Philippines, found that the COVID-19 Pandemic had a profoundly negative impact on their utilization of online learning modalities. During this period, it was able to depict the frustration of SPED teachers with inconsistent and unreasonable demands for teaching students with disabilities in the midst of pandemic (Abrazado, et al., 2021). However, the present research study found out that in Bangsamoro Autonomous

Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Philippines, special education teachers were still able to manage teaching learners with disability through house-to-house visitation and limited face-to-face classes for hearing impaired learners in the parameters of the region, despite the inadequate funding and government support, poor parental educational attainment that affects learners with special needs, and lacking of appropriate instructional materials of SPED teachers methods and strategies during this crisis, makes the region behind from other regions in handling special education in Mindanao.

According to Coram International a situation analysis on children in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (2017), the growth of special education in the region is extremely limited data on the number of children with disabilities, SPED center and SPED teachers in the region's education system. All of these were the lowest figures across all regions in the Philippines. However, more up to date data would likely show an increase given the introduction of five SPED centers in SY 2015-2016 through the Basic Education Assistance for Muslim Mindanao (BEAM-ARMM) project. Unfortunately, it is not clear at which school levels these are operating in Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, with the 2016 (Hamilton, et al., 2017).

The researchers moved towards the reading on the literature regarding special education teacher's experiences teaching English language to the learners with special needs in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines, yet found nothing. Therefore, this study is relevant and timely and must be pursued to do more regarding this issue.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Theoretical Lens

The present study was anchored from the theoretical support of three learning theories: The Behaviorist Learning theory of Ivan Pavlov and B.F Skinner, Constructivist Learning theory of John Dewey and Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning of Richard Mayer.

Accordingly, the three learning theories: The Behaviorist Learning theory of Ivan Pavlov and B.F Skinner in which teachers in a classroom can utilize positive reinforcement to help students better learn a concept. Students who receive positive reinforcement are more likely to retain information moving forward, a direct result of the behaviorism theory. Second theory is Constructivist Learning Theory of John Dewey, the basic premise of constructivist theory is that people are said to learn when they have gained experience from what they learn. Therefore, to introduce new concepts, teachers need to discuss first some related ideas that are already familiar to the students

and lastly, the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning of Richard Mayer centers on the idea that learners attempt to build meaningful connections between words and pictures and that they learn more deeply than they could have with words or pictures alone which is referred to as the multimedia principle, are the foundation of the current study for the laid the pattern of SPED English strategies in handling learners with special needs.

Therefore, teachers are encouraging to use multimedia wherever possible to enhance the accessibility of the traditional learning environment specifically in teaching learners with special needs in the new normal setting, hearing impaired students and child with autism in a distance learning. But at the same time, teachers need to invest the best efforts to ensure the multimedia resource of the SPED teacher that will aid special education needs of the learners. Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning of Richard Mayer can offer the potential to significantly improve the accessibility of the learning environment and, indeed, extending the learning environment to otherwise inaccessible places for disabled students.

These theories will guide the SPED English teachers to create a learning environment which would supply learners with disabilities the alternative means of communication and development. SPED English Teachers can provide enough assistance to the students learn to complete the tasks independently and provide an environment that enables students to do harder tasks than would otherwise be possible.

METHODOLOGY

This research study used a qualitative approach utilizing phenomenological approach to describe the lived experiences of special education teachers teaching English to the learners with special needs. The participants of this study were five (5) special education teachers, who were chosen using convenience sampling technique, where data gathering comes from people which easiest to reach and the availability to participate in the research study. According to Cresswell, W. J & Cresswell, D.J (2018) stated that phenomenology is typically ranging from three (3) to ten (10) participants.

Furthermore, the researchers used a semi-structured in-depth-interview guide questions in data collection which is consider best fitted instrument to gather the needed data required in this study. The questions in the interview guide were divided into three main questions. The participants' background information was the subject of the first question. The goal is to build a connection with the research participants so that the researcher can gather more detailed information later. Second was on the part of special education teachers' experiences in teaching the learners with special needs. This revealed the experiences of special education teachers in handling learners with special needs.

Third is on the reasons why special education teachers are struggling and in which part of teaching the learners with special needs they found challenging. Lastly, the coping strategies of special education teachers in addressing those challenges encountered.

According to Kumar (2019), a request letter produced by the researcher relieves pressure on the receiver and protects the sender from shame. The recipient has adequate time to think over his response, and the sender may readily accept a written no. The researcher collaborated with the school president, participating school, and participants when the request was authorized. After that, for the qualitative components of the study, the researchers requested the special educators to do an interview at their leisure during school visits. The interview was conducted in a quiet room with the aid of an audio recorder to precisely transcribe each response. The researchers conducted the interview in a quiet room and utilized a phone recorder to correctly transcribe each response. The researcher copied the facts verbatim and in order after the interview.

Instead of utilizing the participants' information throughout the transcription and analysis of the interview and observation, the researchers used codes to maintain the anonymity and privacy of the participants in this study. Also, thematic analysis was used to uncover comparable topics and achieve data saturation; the table contains all of the research questions and responses.

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

SPED teachers' experiences in teaching learners with special needs in the context of COVID 19 pandemic

The emergent themes were generated from the SPED teachers' responses on their new normal teaching experiences as follow: (1) Limited to Access to Child's Progress, (2) Difficulty to Teach Finger Spelling, (3) Limited face- to -face classes for hearing impaired learners, (4) Lack of Strategy to Assess Students Works Properly, (5) Inadequate Time to Plan Strategies and Assessment.

Table 1 : Themes on the Experiences of the SPED teachers in Teaching Learners with Special Needs in the Context of COVID 19 Pandemic

SPED Teachers' Experiences in Teaching Learners with Special Needs in the Context of COVID 19 Pandemic	Brief Description of the Sped Teachers' Experiences
Limited to Access to Child's Progress	The SPED teachers' experiences in teaching in the new normal cannot assure if their special needs learners are learning properly in the new normal setting.
Difficulty to Teach Fingerspelling	Teaching the learners with hearing impairment the fingerspelling in the pandemic makes teaching more challenging.
Limited face- to -face classes for hearing impaired learners	SPED teacher concerned is teaching the learners with hearing impairment in the new normal setting.
Lack of Strategy to Assess Students Works Properly	Most of the times the parents of the learners are the one who answer their child's worksheet, by that, SPED teacher cannot assure if their learners are learning at all.
Inadequate Time to Plan Strategies and Assessment	SPED teacher difficulties on sorting differentiated learning materials, differentiated strategies and assessment to the learners during the new normal classes.

Limited to Access to Child's Progress

During the new normal teaching of SPED teachers, it was found out that they are facing challenges on the progress monitoring of their learners, due to the limited access of the child to their teachers. The SPED teacher cannot assure if their learners are learning properly in distance learning, even in a video recorded lesson teachers cannot assure if how many times it was taken till perfectly done, and some parents are answering their learners' worksheets and that raised the concern of the SPED teacher in teaching today. The transcription is shown below:

*"...It is a challenge for me, because as a teacher you have a **limited access in the child's assessment, you don't see it right away.** For example, you are in a classroom, you can*

instantly say the instruction on how to put rice cake in the molder, however when the learners at home you cannot assess if how many times it takes to perfectly done, even if it is recorded. Such cases, I'm struggling in the new normal set up..."(Participant 1, lines 147 to 158)

The response above showed that when teachers are thrown into distance learning without any training or preparation, the results can be explosive. Glessner and Johnson, (2020) stated that despite the fact that there has been a lot of research done on how to prepare, there is limited research on teaching and learning in online environments, making it difficult for teachers to be effective.

Difficulty to Teach Finger Spelling

Teaching finger spelling is one of the challenges experienced by the SPED teachers, teaching learners with hearing impairment is a double struggle in their part in teaching in the new normal. The transcription is shown below:

"...when the pandemic came, I am struggling when it comes to teaching finger spelling such as A and B, because you cannot hold their hands to demonstrate the spelling, they really in need of assistance to the finger spelling because their motor skills is not fully developed..." (Participant 2, lines 345 to 353)

The response above clearly shows that teaching learners the fingerspelling in the new normal teaching is difficult. Alawajee (2021) stated that learning sign language online has major disadvantages, such as limiting the capacity to practice sign language with others and preventing complete and direct contact between learners and teacher.

Limited Face-To-Face Classes for Hearing Impaired Learners

SPED teachers concerned in teaching hearing impaired students arose during the normal setting, SPED teachers suggested that hearing impaired learners need a face-to-face contact with their teacher. The transcription is shown below.

"...I am really struggling at this time Nan, more likely to those hearing-impaired students they really need a face-to-face class, I am struggling because it not on my field of specialization..." (Participant 3, lines 126 to 129)

The response above urges that special education learners with hearing impairments should have a face-to-face teaching. According to Webster, R., and Blatchford, P. (2019), in a pandemic situation, a lack of communication with a

teacher results in levels of learning especially to the learners with hearing impairment.

Lack of Strategy to Assess Students Works Properly

SPED teachers' assessment on learning is also a challenging experience, assessing the learners progress in distance learning is hard to see. The transcription is shown below.

"..It became difficult to assess students learning, because most of the time their parents are the one whose answering their worksheet, every student has different modules and approach, maybe their parents lack of patience leads them to answer their child's worksheets..." (Participant 4, lines 127 to 164)

The response above showed that SPED teachers have a low viewpoint on their learner's worksheet during this mode of teaching, resulting to the lack of strategy to assess their students work properly. Luana, (2021) carried out that the malpractice of parents answering their children's modules is an outgrowth of the challenges faced by the parents, such as poor reading and writing skills of their children and time constraints due to work and household chores. If these issues are not address, the modular learning will fail and no learning will occur.

Inadequate Time to Plan Strategies and Assessment

SPED teacher is having a hard time in preparing variety of approaches and different kinds of assessment to their learners in the new normal setting. The transcription is shown below.

"...Okay, especially we are in the new normal and we are making those alternative and different modes, so. It is difficult to teach, because you are not preparing one strategy but different kinds of assessments and approaches, so that is the problem..." (Participant 5, lines 304 to 316)

The response above showed that teachers must be knowledgeable and has a broader grasp of essential concepts in order to utilize them with planning delivering and assessing inclusive teaching and learning. Allam & Martin, (2021) stated that SPED teachers are lacking of strategies in dealing learners with disabilities especially in the new normal set up.

The transition from pre-pandemic to new normal education has been a twice-challenging experience for SPED teachers and special education students in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) region. In fact, teaching during the pre-pandemic period was already a difficult task for the teacher; imagine how difficult it is now. Teachers were already dealing with

disruptive student behavior, tantrums, and other behavioral issues before COVID-19. However, different strategies in distance learning teaching occur during the pandemic, with most SPED teachers in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) region maximizing the use of modular and worksheets, and parents serving as a way of knowing in assessing their child's learning materials.

The Challenges Encountered of the SPED English Teachers to the Learners with Special Needs

The participants stated similar difficulties in teaching English language to the SPED learners from the in-depth-interview. According to participant, they find difficulties in teaching the students because they handled mixed disabilities in one classroom, (1) poor comprehension of the students, (2) poor parental educational attainment, (3) tantrum challenging behavior, (4) and inadequate funding and government support.

Table 3: SPED teachers' responses of the challenges in teaching English to the learners with special needs

The Challenges Encountered of the SPED English Teachers to the Learners with Special Needs	Brief Description of the SPED Teachers' Experiences
Various teaching methods for students with special needs	Teachers' adjustment to the academic and general environment in handling different disabilities in one classroom.
Poor comprehension	Most pupils with special needs have poor comprehension level during class discussion, as a result, teachers used creative teaching methodology to cope up the lesson.
Parents low educational attainment affects learners with special needs	Parents have poor educational attainment, affects the learning of students with special needs on the new normal set-up.
Tantrum-Inducing Behavior	Disruptive behavior and emotional outburst of students with special needs are difficult to handle by the SPED teachers.

Various Teaching Methods for Students with Special Needs

Four participants stated that managing multiple disabilities in one classroom is really difficult. As a teacher, you must level yourself to them and use a variety of teaching methods that are suited for their requirements. The transcriptions are shown below:

*"...the particular **teaching strategies that I am using is differentiation**, I have seven (7) pupils, two with hearing impairment, two intellectual disability, one speech, and two autisms. Their learning style is different from each other; therefore, learning strategies must be distinct to one another..." (Participant 2, lines 452 to 464)*

*"...Especially when you **encountered different disabilities** of the students, yes..." (Participant 3, lines 21 to 22)*

*"...we are dealing with **different disabilities, different children, different upbringing, and different cultures of a student** that's why it is really challenging..." (Participant 4, lines 32 to 51)*

*"...because they are different, and they have **different difficulties, in those differences of their disabilities it has different level**, so you need to focus in that level..." (Participant 5, lines 389-390)*

Every student's ability to accept and process information is different. It is fair to say that there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching methodologies. This is especially true for children who have special learning challenges (Bharmal, 2019).

Teachers must be aware of effective teaching approaches for students with learning difficulties as the number of students with learning disabilities rises. To utilize techniques in your classroom, however, you do not need to be a licensed doctor. Understanding any learning difficulties in your classroom is essential to your students' performance, whether you are dealing with a disruptive student or a quiet reserved learner (Lynch, 2016).

This is the reason, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) SPED teachers are developing alternative teaching approaches to accommodate their various disabilities, offering lessons based on their level of understanding and responding to their needs in order to maintain a sense of balance in the classroom.

Poor Comprehension

Four participants indicated that most students with special needs have poor comprehension levels, and that some cannot comprehend things to the level

that is appropriate for their biological age. As a result, teachers had to come up with new ways to teach the lesson. The following are the transcriptions:

*"...the first is comprehension, because **not all of them know how to comprehend things at the degree that is appropriate for their biological age...**" (Participant 1, lines 292- 295)*

*"...to comprehend, **how they comprehend our lesson**, so if I will teach letter "A", I need to use an object like apple..." (Participant 2, lines 241-243)*

*"...that's what I said a while ago, that the **reading and the comprehension! It is so difficult**, because even teaching them letter "A" alone, it seems that it takes a day for them to learn it..." (Participant 3, lines 303-306)*

*"...in reading comprehension, it usually asks **who, how, when?** And it is hard for them to answer these types of questions **because they don't have comprehension...**" (Participant 5; 327-328)*

Students with learning disabilities often experience poor comprehension due to their failure to read strategically and to spontaneously monitor their understanding while reading. (Graham & Bellert, 2009).

Four out of five participants in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) region believe that pupils with special needs have poor comprehension. Not all of them know how to comprehend things at the degree that is appropriate for their biological age.

There are a variety of things that can lead to a reading comprehension issue. There are also several illnesses that increase a person's chances of developing this type of reading difficulty (Logsdon, 2021).

Parents' Low Educational Attainment Affects Learners with Special Needs

Three participants stated that poor educational attainment among parents has an impact on the learning of students with special needs in the new normal setting. Some parents are unable to read and understand Tagalog or English lessons, and others are unable to read text at all. As a result, some teachers will translate the lecture into another dialect in order for parents to comprehend it. The following are the transcriptions:

*"...because we have Muslim parents **who don't speak Tagalog**, I'll have to ask one of my colleagues to translate the lesson into Maguindanaon dialect..." (Participant 1, lines 307-310)*

“...by allowing them to contact and ask me if they had any problems with my module, particularly with the English lesson, because **not all parents are fluent in English** and find the module quite difficult because it is in English format...” (Participant 2, lines 231-234)

“...when the **student's mother is unable to read text**, what can you expect when they are at home? Even if the student attends remedial sessions, it is really tough if the parents do not support their child at home...” (Participant 4, lines 443-447)

Child behavior is shaped by observation and direct learning experiences (Dubow, Boxer, & Huesmann, 2009). When parents model achievement-oriented behavior such as., obtaining advanced degrees, reading, continuing education and provide opportunities for their children to engage in achievement-oriented experiences (e.g., library trips, museums, after-school programs), those children develop the belief that achievement-oriented behavior is valued and expected (Dubow et al., 2009).

In Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) region, SPED teachers stated that many parents are unable to speak, read and comprehend Tagalog and English language due to parents' poor educational background, teachers need to translate their modules into the parents' preferred dialect so that they can comprehend and assist their children with their modules.

Since children learn, in part, by observation, one of the key components to a child's success is parental time investment (Kalil, Ryan, & Corey, 2012). Parents' educational levels strongly influence educational and economic opportunities for their children (Benner, Boyle, & Sadler, 2016). College-educated parents spend more time with their children, model achievement-oriented behavior, provide opportunities for their children to engage in achievement-oriented experiences, engage in age-appropriate activities, and cultivate their children's talents. These behaviors, generally, lead to a child's educational success. Additionally, high-income and highly educated parents are more likely to be involved in their child's education (Cheadle & Amato, 2011), which is a key factor in adolescents' educational successes (Cabrera, Peralta, & Kurban, 2018).

Tantrum-inducing Behavior

According to four participants, dealing with disruptive behavior and emotional outbursts of children with special needs was difficult for SPED teachers. One of the reasons behind this is that, these children are unable to obtain their desires. The transcriptions are as follows:

*"...the child became hysterical, and it seemed that I was affected by it. Then my **clothing was ripped off due to his tantrums**, and I understood how different these kids are..." (Participant1, lines 70-73)*

*"...the most **difficult behavior is tantrums**, just like autism they get hysterical if they don't receive what they want..." (Participant2, 261-263)*

*"...the most difficult when the **kids are throwing tantrums**. How would handle it, and how are you going to impart your lesson if they're throwing a tantrum..." (Participant3, lines 284-285)*

*"...when my **student throws tantrums and throws his belongings**, I show him that I don't like it when he behave that way, and I also have to be serious so that he will listen to what I say..." (Participant4, lines 815-817)*

In a classroom environment, one of the biggest obstacles you may face is dealing with children with challenging behavior. Not only does the child affect you trying to teach a lesson and maintain control, but they also disrupt the productivity of the class as a whole. Children who display challenging behavior do not usually do so just because they want to. There is often a reason behind their behavior or it might be their only way of telling you something's wrong. All behavior is a form of communication. Therefore, it is essential that you understand the causes of challenging behavior and know what strategies will help you deal with it (Collier, 2018).

One of the respondents in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) experienced, that when children became hysterical, she was deeply affected. There was an instance that her clothing was ripped off due to her students' tantrums. According to teacher, tantrums are the most challenging behavior to manage, especially in children with autism who get frantic when they do not get what they want or like.

Inadequate Funding and Government Support

Three participants stated that the Government did not provide any financial assistance to help with classroom needs, project implementation, and mobility impairments equipment for kids with special needs. The following are the transcriptions:

*"...what we have now is only seminar, but when it comes to our classroom needs, it is truly our initiative as a SPED teacher to seek aid from politicians, as we have **never received any help from the DepEd**..." (Participant 3, lines 344-347)*

*"...the government has simply provided us with webinars. They sent us to Cebu and Ilo-Ilo for seminars, but how are we going to use what we've learned if we don't have any financial support. We still don't have Item until now. All the things in my classroom were either **donated or purchased with our own money...**" (Participant4, lines652-659)*

*"...actually, **they did not provide, they did not help**, and it is quite different in Cotabato City. In terms of the local government unit, actually our problems here are; problems in collaboration, problems in linkages, and problems in networking, **I'm not sure if they simply don't recognize this special education program or if they simply refuse to support it...**" (Participant 5, lines 396-398)*

Special needs students require varied educational and support services. In this coronavirus pandemic, many families face tough decisions as the responsibilities for health care, therapies and education are falling on their shoulders. Meanwhile, many parents are also facing their own financial challenges (Epperson, 2020).

SPED teachers in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) experienced difficulties in providing for the needs of their students. Teachers' personal money are often used to support educational materials and other classroom necessities. When they ask for assistance from their local government unit, they are frustrated by the delays and, in some cases, no response at all.

The Coping Strategies of the SPED English Teachers in Addressing the Challenges to the Learners with Special Needs

Participants used the following coping strategies in teaching learners with special during the context of COVID-19 pandemic; (1) home visitation, (2) K to 12 curriculum integration, (3) educational mainstreaming, and (4) individualized educational plan.

Table 4: SPED Teachers’ responses to coping strategies in teaching English to learners with special needs

The Coping Strategies of the SPED English Teachers in Addressing the Challenges to the Learners with Special Needs	Brief Description of the SPED Teachers’ Experiences
Home visitation	The teacher evaluates the student at home in order to keep track of the students' requirements.
K to 12 curriculum Integration	Teachers integrate the K to 12 curriculum guides in order to assess SPED students in their learning.
Educational Main Streaming	Learners with disabilities may be able to be promoted to regular classrooms if their developing learning process keeps up with those of a regular student.
Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)	SPED teachers in BARMM were using individualized education plans to assess appropriate assessment of learning to the disability of the child.

Home Visitation

Three of the participants stated that teachers visit students at their homes for students’ progress monitoring. The transcriptions are as follows:

*“...my co-teachers ask for permission to **home visit their students**, such that in an alternate way, in order for us to see our learners and to monitor their progress...” (Participant1, lines 163-165)*

*“...yes, **I go for home visitation**, but only for those few students who really needs to be monitored...” (Participant3, lines368-370)*

*“...**I visited some of my students at their home to see if they were okay**, but it was only for twenty minutes...” (Participant 3, lines 453-465)*

Kilgore (2014) stated that, a home visit is a way for students, families, and teachers to connect at school and at home. It is not surprising that many teachers are struggling to adjust to this new normal, given these new modes of teaching, and the fact that not all SPED learners in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region

in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) region have access to the internet or mobile phones, modules and worksheets are the primary bridge between teachers and students in the pandemic.

Therefore, visiting a student's situation, teachers gain a better understanding of the factors influencing their behavior during the modular class. With a better understanding of a student's background and influences on behavior, a teacher can adjust her approach to working with students, resulting in a more meaningful relationship between the teacher and the students. Flannery (2014) stated that home visits also provide a unique perspective for a classroom teacher.

As a result, through limited home visits, teachers can keep track of their students' progress while relieving the burden of worrying about the child's situation.

K to 12 Curriculum Integration

Three of the participants use the K-12 curriculum guide to assess student with special needs in terms of their particular learning needs. The following are the transcriptions:

"...yes, but for the first three weeks, I'm using a module that's the same as the one for kinder; in fact, all of us in SPED Teachers are using the same module. After three weeks, we as SPED Teachers begin to create some SPED activities that are suited to each disability..." (Participant3, lines 109-113)

*"...yes, we do; we use functional curriculum for multi-disability, self-care, and numeracy, but no English. So I'm utilizing the **same curriculum guide that they use in kindergarten**. There is no curriculum guide for disabilities provided by division, but we follow the SPED pattern for every impairment..." (Participant4, lines249-261)*

"...yes, it is still SPED, although sometimes we are using curriculum guide from K to 12, we cannot integrate beyond the K to 12..." (Participant5, lines548-551)

SPED teachers frequently integrate lessons and topics from kindergarten to elementary to meet the needs of their students. Brown (2016) stated that curriculum integration engages students as active learners who maximize their study options. Teachers may be able to integrate various sources of knowledge that is appropriate to the child disability, curriculum integration involves student as active learners who make the most of their study choices (Brown, 2016).

In this result, SPED teachers in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) region integrate the concept of K to 12 curriculums to establish different kinds of strategy that suits the learners need.

Educational Mainstreaming

Three of the participants stated that the teachers mainstream students with special needs who are ready to attend regular classes. The transcripts are as follows:

*"...the child can stay for at least two (2) years, before you can **promote them to the regular class, which what we called mainstreaming**, so I decided to let that child stay with me for two years and then I saw her progress..."* (Participant2, lines 61-6)

*"...I have a student with autism **she is in the regular class**, her named is Mabby, she is very hyper and loves to play "clay" so much..."* (Participant4, lines 736-739)

*"...yes, before I had two kinder, ahh... in previews year, we called it **mainstreaming to an inclusive education**. However, I do not have the previous years because their parents asked them to stop. Yes, and I have those students during their IEP I told their parents that their child was ready based on my assessment and observation..."* (Participant5, lines 491-503)

Students who are mainstreamed in special education have the right to spend at least one class in a regular classroom to see if they are ready for the challenge. Kargin (2006) emphasized the factors influencing mainstreaming success include the collaborative efforts of special needs parents, school staff, general education classrooms, and teachers, all of whom must work together to prepare for mainstreaming and activities.

In this result, the transition program is intended to help special students become functional despite their disabilities; its goal is to make them enjoy their daily lives while also empowering them to become more independent. The role of the SPED teacher in the transition program has a significant impact on the development of the learners.

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)

The five participants stated that the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) SPED teachers used customized educational plan to evaluate appropriate learning assessments based on the child's disability. The following are the transcriptions:

*"...because here we are using **IEP, not generalized but individualized**, it means different disability, different needs..."* (Participant1, lines 145-147)

"...basically, in regular class they have their lesson plan, a lesson plan that is intended for all, so in SPED, IEP is intended for each children, so each children is different, different IEP's will be used..."(Participant2, lines345-347)

"...we have different uhm... how do you call this ah... lesson plan for children with autism, we also have lesson plan for learning disability, and lastly, we have lesson plan for intellectual disability such like that..."(Participant3, lines115-116)

"...we are using individualized educational plan, it includes what to use, your objectives to a child, and every child has IEP, everything about the child plan..."(Participant4, lines265-269)

"...yes because we have different IEP's, we are making it, individualized educational plan, so each learners have different IEP, it is because we have the basis for recommendation and suggestion of their assessment..." (Participant5, lines250-253)

According to Morin (2020) an individualized educational plan (IEP) is a strategy for assisting students with learning disabilities and other difficulties in school.

In results, SPED teachers in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) region are using (IEP) as the results revealed, SPED teachers' coping strategies to address their challenges include integrating an individualized educational plan (IEP) and K to 12 curriculums, an individualized teaching plan that aims to differentiate the appropriateness of lessons to students' disabilities.

CONCLUSIONS

The study's findings revealed that distant learning is not suited for special education pupils in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) region who have learning difficulties. Teachers' experiences were unclothed; dealing with learners with special needs was difficult even before the pandemic, and it became twice as difficult in the new normal education; it necessitates a great deal of effort from special education teachers when dealing with various disabilities, creating individualized modules and worksheets, and preparing various strategies that suit the learner's disability

Furthermore, special education teachers cannot guarantee that their students are learning, for example, when parents are the ones who answer the child's worksheets, and when teachers use video recorded output, they cannot guarantee how many times it was taken until it was done perfectly, and concerns arise from poor parental educational attainment, which affects the child's progress. Despite the special education teachers' complaints to the government

support system, and their feelings of being ignored or undervalued by many government sectors in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), the instructors continue to seek assistance from various non-governmental organizations (NGO) and well-known institutions. During their years of teaching, special education centers faced a variety of challenges, including insufficient funding, a shortage of learning materials, and inadequate facilities.

Moreover, this study focused on the lived experiences SPED English teachers to the learners with special needs. The participants of this study were (5) SPED teachers. This study was conducted in the selected places located in the parameters of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Philippines. Special education teacher is a lifetime commitment; their work includes not just teaching the child, but also sharing empathy with all of the students under her supervision, functioning as a mother, caretaker, and teacher. Special education instructors' coping mechanisms to handle their issues, according to the findings, include combining an individualized educational plan (IEP) and K to 12 curriculums, which is an individualized teaching plan that seeks to differentiate the appropriateness of lessons to students' disabilities. As well as, home visits aid teachers in evaluating students' progress during the new regular sessions, and SPED teachers identify the most susceptible youngsters who struggle during the online form of instruction. Finally, the government, parents, school administrators, and the community all assist teachers in their efforts to teach special needs students.

FURTHER STUDY

This study may aid future special education researchers, particularly in the BARMM region; this study may serve as a roadmap for future research endeavors, particularly in fulfilling the gap of this research in different aspect of special education teaching that focuses on online learning experiences, challenges of distant learning and coping mechanism of online learning mode of teaching.

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