

# Knowledge and Skills of Receiving Teachers in Handling Learners with Special Educational Needs

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**Abstract:** *The study aimed to determine the knowledge and skills of the receiving teachers in handling learners with special educational needs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> congressional district of Sorsogon. It used the descriptive-survey method and a questionnaire was devised in gathering the primary data. The respondents were the 31 receiving teachers of selected elementary schools. The statistical tools utilized were frequency count, weighted mean and ranking. The study revealed that physical infrastructure and instructional resources are inadequate to support learners with special needs. There was lack of specialized training for the receiving teachers and therefore, they do not have satisfactory pedagogical knowledge-based in handling students with special needs. Even though receiving teachers and administrators hold regular meetings, collaboration among them falls below expectation and needs to be improved. It was recommended for receiving teachers to work effectively in inclusive settings, they need to develop a broad-based knowledge and understanding of concepts of inclusive education that must meet the learning needs of the individual students. They must be made to undergo periodic refresher courses and training, that should not only be geared towards developing personalized learning approaches for all learners, but also the appropriate values and attitudes, skills and competences to effectively handle the heterogeneous nature of the inclusive classes. Also, they should be encouraged to work collaboratively, engage the services of different professionals whose skills and experiences are relevant to the individual needs of the learners. Finally, the receiving teachers must ensure that all learners, irrespective of their physical or mental or social disposition, are given equal opportunity, not only to access quality education, but also attain their respective goals in life.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge and Skills, Receiving Teachers, Handling Learners

## 1. Introduction

*Essential to the existence, economic prowess, and progress of any country are the human resources that make all aspect of society going and moving. Such scenario, the development of full potentials of every person is the major concern of the society, especially the government that leads the people.* Establishing the support for human development and considering that education itself is the key to any progress, the United Nations Organization (UNO) formulated a framework known as Education for All (EFA) that gives people access to quality education.

Along this framework, inclusive education is promoted as an approach or a process which children with or without disabilities, and children of diverse backgrounds and abilities learn together in the same classroom, interact socially with each other within the regular classroom setting. Regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Salamanca (1994).

Education Act of 1982 recognizes the right of a learner to receive competent and relevant instruction in line with national goals and conducive to his full development as person with high dignity. This act further strengthens the right of all people to quality education regardless of gender, age, breed, socio-economic status, mental conditions, social and ethnic origin, and other affiliations.

With the concept of inclusive education, the Bureau of Elementary Education, through the Special Education Division (SPED) aims to provide Filipino children, most importantly, the special children with adequate basic education which would help them fully realize their own potentials, and development and productivity. The SPED's vision is to enable a special child to express his rights in the

society and to be a God-loving individual and proud of being a Filipino.

Tracing its beginnings as an institution in Philippine education, the Special Education Program (SPED) under the Department of Education Culture and Sports (DECS) order number 26, series of 1997 became a program in all schools. With the directives, all divisions were asked to organize at least one SPED center. All districts have to form SPED programs in schools where there are enrollees on this program. Likewise, trainings on implementation of special education have to be conducted. The institutionalization aims to provide access to basic education among children with special needs namely: the gifted and talented, mentally retarded, visually impaired, hearing impaired, orthopedically handicapped, learning disabled, speech defectives, and those children with behavioral problems through the formal system and other alternative delivery services in education.

The Magna Carta for disabled persons makes more explicit provision on the education for learners with specific disabilities. The act covers the rights and aspect of persons with disabilities and formulation and educational policies and programs having special needs (DEPED, 2019).

As years passes by, fast growing numbers of school children with disabilities are enrolled to school, the Deped came out with Policies and Guidelines for Special Educational. The ultimate policy of the Deped for special education is the mainstreaming of learners with special needs into regular school system and eventually in the community. Focus of the policies and guidelines is on learners who are gifted and talented, with physical problems, intellectual, social and sensory impairments and cultural differences.

The Inclusive Education as Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children program gives emphasis on the targeted 2.2 million children with disabilities in the Philippines; although, only two percent(2%) of its number

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has been served (DepEd Order 72, s.2009). These children live without access to the basic human right, the right to education. Most of these children live in a rural and far flung areas and parents are not aware of the many opportunities awaits their children.

Since 2015, DepEd has provided capability trainings to 345 teachers and 45 administrators and supervisors in delivering quality education to learners with certain exceptionalities. Among the partners of DepEd in enhancing the capabilities of receiving teachers in handling learners with exceptionalities and in promoting SPED advocacy are the Resources for the Blind Inc., Autism Society of the Philippines, Leonard Cheshire for the Disabled Foundation (LCDF), and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder Society (ADHD Society)

Successful inclusive education happens primarily through the acceptance of peers and teachers on the differences and diversity. This may include physical, cognitive, academic, social and emotional. All students must feel being welcomed through having them felt that they are properly supported in their efforts and capabilities. Regular education teacher and the special education teachers should work hand and hand for the success of the program. Regular teachers and other support staff should be effective agents of learning among LSEN's and should meet all the challenges in handling learners with special educational needs.

In Sorsogon province, there are selected schools in elementary offering Special Education Program. This program has been implemented in Bulan South Central School, Irosin Central School, Matnog Central School, Sta. Magdalena Central School, Gubat North Central School, Tagdon Elementary School in Barcelona and Barcelona Central School. The schools have been engaged in advocating and implementing inclusive education in the province. Indeed, the goal of mainstreaming the learners with special needs into regular school system is a manifestation that DepEd programs supports and promotes 'education for all'. Undeniably, programs like this will lead to different challenges both on the part of the teacher and the learners with special needs themselves. Interestingly, the inclusion and mainstreaming program of these type of learners is of greater concern not only of the agency but the teachers themselves. Hence, this study is designed to investigate on this program.

The challenges met by the researcher in the implementation of inclusion and mainstreaming program of the learners with special educational needs to regular classes pushed her to gather and collate reasons on the knowledge and skills of the receiving teachers in handling learners with special educational needs in the regular classroom setting. This further address the problem of the school, the entity, and the government on training and on the competence of the receiving teachers in the elementary schools that implement the program on inclusive education.

### Statement of the Problem

This study sought to determine the knowledge and skills of receiving teachers in handling learners with special

educational needs of the second congressional district of Sorsogon, School Year 2020-2021.

Specifically, it sought answer to the following questions:

- 1) What are the instructional resources and infrastructures available in schools to support the learners?
- 2) What is the level of knowledge and skills possessed by receiving teachers in handling learners with special educational needs?
- 3) What is the level of collaboration among the teachers in supporting the learners with special educational needs?
- 4) What action plan to be proposed based on the results of the study?

## 2. Methodology

### Research Design

This study determined the knowledge and skills of receiving teachers in handling learners with special educational needs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of Sorsogon, school year 2020-2021. Descriptive-survey research design was used. Questionnaire was utilized to gather the primary data from the respondents. The results were analyzed and interpreted with the use of appropriate statistical tools such as frequency rank and weighted mean.

### The Sample

The primary sources of data are all the receiving teachers in the public elementary schools in the second congressional district of Sorsogon that offered SPED Program. They are involved in the said study since they are directly handling the learners with special educational needs in their regular classes.

**Table 1: The Respondents**

Respondents	F	%
Irosin District	4	12.9
Matnog District	8	25.81
Bulusan District	2	6.45
Gubat North District	5	16.13
Casiguran District	3	9.68
Barcelona District	3	9.68
Sta. Magdalena District	1	3.22
Bulan South District	5	16.13
Total	31	100

### The Instrument

The researcher with the assistance of the adviser drafted the questionnaire as the main tool to gather data. A dry run of the initial draft of the survey questionnaire was conducted during the training at Matnog Central School on January 20, 2020. Twenty teacher- participants who attended the training were subjected to be part of the dry run.

The data used in the study were obtained through a questionnaire which was distributed to the receiving teachers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of Sorsogon, but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the researcher sent the questionnaire via email and messenger accounts to the focal persons who have the direct contacts with the receiving teachers in their school. The said activity was done in order to determine the accuracy and validity of the instrument.

After the dry-run, the vague and unclear portions of the questionnaire were revised and improved. The final copy of the questionnaire was presented to the panel members before final copies were distributed for the actual survey.

#### Data Collection Procedures

Before the conduct of this study, the researcher sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Sorsogon Province. Upon approval, the researcher contacted all the SPED teachers that served as focal persons in the distribution of the questionnaires. All the focal persons received the instrument via messenger accounts and email.

The focal person in every school printed the questionnaire and the letter addressed to the respective School Head for approval. Upon approval of the School Head, the focal person distributed the questionnaires to all the receiving teachers in their respective school.

After the receiving teachers answered the instrument, the focal persons collated, scanned, and took pictures of the submitted questionnaires and sent it to the researcher via messenger and email. The retrieval rate of the survey-questionnaire distributed to the respondents was 100%.

This procedure was observed due to the pressing situation of COVID 19 Pandemic wherein health protocols was strictly implemented and followed.

#### Data Analysis Procedures

The gathered data were analyzed with the use of appropriate statistical tools and techniques. The statistical tools utilized by the researcher are frequency, rank, and weighted mean to determine the knowledge and skills of receiving teachers and the collaboration among teachers in handling LSEN's.

Frequency rank was used to determine the instructional materials and infrastructure available in the school. Weighted mean was used to determine the level of knowledge and skills of receiving teachers and also the collaboration among teachers in handling LSEN's.

The scale below is used to determine the level of knowledge and skills of receiving teachers.

- 4.5-5.0- Expert (Recognized Authority)
- 3.5-4.49-Advanced (Applied Theory)
- 2.53-3.49-Intermediate (Practical Application)
- 1.5-2.49-Novice (Limited Experience)
- 1.00-1.49-Fundamental Awareness (Basic Knowledge)

The scale below is used to determine the collaboration among teachers in handling learners with special educational needs.

4.5-5.00-collaboration (Their line of communication between SPED teacher and receiving teacher is frequent and characterized by mutual trust. The decision is always consensus)

3.5-4.49-coalition (SPED teacher and receiving teacher share ideas and resources. Their meeting and communication are frequent and prioritized)

2.5-3.49-coordination (SPED teacher and receiving teacher share information. Their roles and responsibilities are well defined. The communication between them is frequent. Some shared in the decision making)

1.5-2.49-cooperation (SPED teacher and receiving teacher provide information to each other. Roles are somewhat defined. All decisions are made independently.)

1.00-1.49-networking (Both are aware of organization. Their roles and responsibilities are loosely define. They communicate little. All decisions are made independently.)

### 3. Results and Discussions

The study used the descriptive-survey method since a questionnaire was devised in gathering the primary data as reflected in the problem. The respondents were the 31 receiving teachers of selected elementary schools in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of Sorsogon. The statistical tools utilized were frequency count, weighted mean and ranking.

### 4. Findings

Based on the data collected, the following are the findings of the study:

- 1) The instructional materials available in the schools are big books as identified by 31 teachers which is ranked first; the manipulative toys emerged in the second rank. Then, the use of tactile material ranks third. However, the sandbox, brailled books, and embosser were the last three materials being utilized by the teachers. As to the infrastructure available in the school, the 31 teachers agreed that the foremost infrastructures are classrooms followed by computer room, then, the buildings with ramp
- 2) The level of knowledge of receiving teachers is intermediate with the overall weighted mean of 3.04 The highest among the indicators is the consideration to the special educational needs of pupils being mainstreamed in the class. It has a weighted mean of 3.36 or intermediate. In relation to the special skills, the receiving teachers are novice because the overall weighted mean is 1.67. The ability to communicate to deaf students using FSL got the highest weighted mean of 1.78 that is described as novice.
- 3) The level of collaboration among the teachers in supporting the learners has an overall weighted mean 3.68 which is interpreted as coalition. The provision of lesson presentation that utilizes all the senses got the highest weighted mean of 3.82 which is interpreted as coalition.
- 4) An action plan to enhance the knowledge and skills of the receiving teachers and strengthen the collaboration among teachers in handling learners with special educational needs is proposed.

### 5. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

- 1) The big books, manipulative toys, and tactile materials are the instructional materials available in the school. Similarly, the classrooms, computer room, and buildings with ramp are the infrastructures available in the schools.
- 2) The receiving teachers possessed an intermediate level of knowledge whereas they are novice in terms of special skills in handling children with special educational needs.
- 3) The level of collaboration among the receiving teachers and school heads is coalition in supporting the learners.
- 4) Strengthening Knowledge and Skills and Sustaining Collaboration (SKnowSSCoI) Plan for the receiving teachers in handling learners with special educational needs could be utilized.

## 6. Recommendations

In the light of foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations were offered:

- 1) Receiving teachers may acquire broad-based knowledge and understanding about inclusive education.
- 2) Receiving teachers may undergo trainings, refresher courses if necessary to develop individualized learning approaches, values and attitudes, skills and approaches to effectively handling of diverse learners in his/ her class.
- 3) The collaboration among co-workers may be encouraged to appropriately provide and address the needs of learners with special educational needs.
- 4) The mechanism of referral to other professionals may be practice to facilitate appropriate assessment and assistance can be served properly
- 5) The implementation of the proposed action plan be may be considered.
- 6) Other studies may be conducted and other variables may be widen its scope.

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