



LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN SAN FERNANDO CITY SPED INTEGRATED SCHOOL

The Schools Division Office-City of San Fernando (LU)
SAN FERNANDO CITY SPED INTEGRATED SCHOOL

by

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ABSTRACT

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Being a special education teacher entails lots of responsibility. It takes special skills and knowledge to handle learners who are differently abled. Extra love and affection is a pre-requisite for such teachers. This study was concerned with the lived experiences of special education teachers in San Fernando City SPED Integrated School. Specifically, the research question focused on special education teacher's experiences on their success stories, benefits and incentives, and challenges they encountered. To address the questions about the lived experiences of these special education teachers, data were collected via face to face interview guided with structured questions. After which, analysis of data was conducted using cool and warm analysis clustering meaning to themes.

Results indicated that the special education teachers view academic achievement of their learners as their success. It was also found that they are satisfied with their job since they receive higher salary compared to regular teachers. It was also revealed that the most challenging part of being a special education teacher was to let parents involved in their education of their children. Furthermore, the research paper constructed a school policy recommendation on home to school partnership.

Keywords: *home to school partnership, lived experiences, special education*

Rationale and Context

“ If a child can't learn the way we teach, may be we should teach the way they learn.”--*Ignacio Estrada*

Estrada's quote reminds special education teachers of their responsibility to teach children with special learning needs. Being a special education teacher entails roles and responsibilities. It is considered one of the toughest jobs among others. According to research, the attrition rate for special education teachers is extremely high compared to other professions. Seventy-five percent burnout rate every 10 years (Dage, 2006). As such, being a special education teacher is a very challenging task (Ferry, 2012).

Since the provision of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, children with disabilities were given appropriate education and services needed to maximize their potentials. The provisions ensure that children with special needs should have access to free appropriate public education that emphasized special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare for employment and independent living. Furthermore, this legal mandate emphasized the need of special education teachers in implementing special education. IDEA requires schools to provide specially trained teachers with skills and knowledge in helping improve learners with special needs their academic achievement and functional performance (IDEA, 2004). With these provisions, special education teachers are expected to provide quality education and deliver these services with the best of their abilities and skills.

Since the provision of policies and guidelines, special education rose to educational system in the Philippines. Schools started to offer special education to open doors for learners with special needs. One of the

pioneering special education center in Region I is the San Fernando City SPED Integrated School, formerly known as La Union SPED Center. The school started their operation on July 1997. Since then, the school catered to different types of exceptionality from hearing impairment, visual impairment, intellectual disability, and autism spectrum disorder. Currently, the school now offers a complete academic program from kinder to grade 12. The school is the only special education in the Schools Division Office-City of San Fernando. The school has thirty-five rouse of special education teachers who handles different types of exceptionality.

The special education teachers at San Fernando City SPED Integrated School caters to more than 400 learners with unique learning needs. Being a special education teacher gives a lot of responsibilities. These responsibilities varies from the learner's academic needs, social needs, communication needs. Thus, a special education teacher should provide academic intervention and support to help learners with special needs succeed in any future challenges they face.

According to Meier (2018), one of the duties of being a special education teacher is to work with a team of professionals such as psychologists, developmental pediaticians, classroom teachers, therapists and family members to write an individual education plan for children with special needs. Furthermore, special education teachers have specialized training to work with students who have learning, behavioral, emotional, and physical disabilities (Spiver and Colon, 2008).

Kaur (2013) stated that being a special education teacher is very important. It takes special skills and knowledge to handle learners who are differently abled. Extra love and affection is a pre-requisite for such teachers.

Special education teachers are flexible because they can handle all situations where kids can be very unpredictable. Furthermore, special education teachers are a very special component of the education system which has to be specially constructed to meet the needs of the child with special needs (SETI, 2018).

Special educators work in a variety of demands and needs depending on the exceptionality of the learner. Special education teachers are always confronted with what teaching strategies are to be used (Spiver and Colon, 2008). Teaching strategies should be structured to meet the unique needs of the individuals with special needs. Teaching children with special needs demand developmentally appropriate strategies that fits their current strengths. According to Ali (2017), unique aids and tools should be developed because oftentimes, materials used to teach students without special needs, does not work for those with special needs.

Aside from the development of proactive strategies, special educators also deal with the challenges of different behaviors of learners with special needs. Promoting effective teaching and learning requires special educators to be equipped with effective skills and responses for those where difficult behavior occurs (Park, 2012). In the classroom, special education teachers consistently report dealing with student behavior to be the most challenging issue they face (Westling, 2010). Common misbehaviors in the classroom often consume more than 80% of instructional time of teachers (Simonsen, 2010). According to Shah (2010), special education is an area that is very challenging. Special education teachers are very much needed to practice teacher management and leadership for successful classroom management.

Special education teachers also deal with the demands of parents and guardians of learners with special needs. In the field of special education, collaboration is generally a key part of creating and implementing an effective individualized program for each child (Cook et al., 2012). Parents, teachers, and school administrators must work together to ensure the education and well-being of the student (Wellner, 2012). Parental involvement in special education includes activities such as volunteering at the school, communicating with teachers, assisting with homework, and attending parent conferences (Epstein et al., 2009). According to American Federation of Teachers (2007), collaboration between parents can free special education teachers to focus more on the task of teaching children. By having more contact with parents, teachers learn more about students' needs and home environment as well.

One of the roles of being a special education teacher is to have community linkages. Schools, parents, and community should work together to promote better learning of the students (Judson, 2012). Children with educational needs and their families require the services of many stakeholders which deals with their various needs. Stakeholders include parents, board members, local government officials, and socio-civic groups. Stakeholders play significant role in development of projects, media and materials, and trainings to provide opportunities for children and youth with special needs (Council of Exceptional Children, 1997). To fulfill goals of developing successful students, special education teachers must work together with school stakeholders in planning and building a school community where children can enhance their learning capabilities (Macapulay, 2018).

Special education teachers are also required to work with regular teachers, colleagues, school heads, and other professionals that consists of the multidisciplinary team. Special educators deal not only to the demands of creating a least restrictive environment for the learners with special needs, but also deals with colleagues in the workplace. Building positive relationship with colleagues can make a difference when it comes to improving teacher practice through mentoring and at the same time, make a school better and effective environment for students (Catapano, 2018). Special educators also need administrator support to be motivated to implement the curriculum for learners with special needs. Otto & Arnold (2005) deemed that administrative support plays a vital role in the efficacy of special education teachers. Administrators should demonstrate an understanding of the special education teachers' role. With such awareness and support given by the school head, there will be success in the implementation of special education program that benefits learners with special needs.

Dealing with the demands of teaching learners with special needs makes special education teacher's job difficult. With many roles and responsibilities of special education teacher that needs to be accomplished, meeting the daily learning and behavioral needs of students makes teaching a challenging job (Ghani et al., 2013). With high demands of being a special education comes a lot of challenges. In the study of Jonesboro (2016), teachers in special education revealed that aside from teaching at their resource classroom, teachers face multiples of job's difficulty in dealing with conducting conferences and loads of paperwork. Special education teachers revealed large number of class sizes as well as lack of special needs education training in dealing with multiple exceptionalities (Alexander, 2014). Teachers in special education schools also revealed about the non-

availability of the teaching-learning materials to used and parents have lack of support (Katoch & Sharma, 2016). Dealing with multiple disabilities of student caused also a lot of stress for teachers. At the same time, special education teachers face stress and challenges on receiving lack of colleague cooperation and lack of recognition from school administrators (Ghani et al., 2013).

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of special education teachers. It seeks to identify the success stories, challenges they encounter, and benefits and incentives they receive. Furthermore, the endpoint of this paper is to create a school policy recommendation on home to school partnership.

Review of Literature

This research believed that looking at the perceptions, and experiences of individuals in a particular setting best develops understanding. This study centered on social constructivism, as it draws from the views of special education teachers specifically their lived experiences. Social constructivism is recognized by the researcher as the most appropriate framework for this study specifically in structured face-to-face interviews. Through gathering multiple descriptions of lived experience of an individual, a better picture may be developed.

The social constructivist was undertaken by this phenomenological study approach. Foundational to a phenomenological approach is the assumption that human experience is mediated through personal interpretation. The phenomenological approach provided a strong component where the basic purpose of this study is to understand the

individual experiences with a phenomenon to the description of the universal essence (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the aim of this study primarily speaks of the experiences of special education teachers specifically in providing a comprehensive description of the phenomenon described.

Meanwhile, there are numerous literature that concerns on the lived experiences of special education at the workplace. By examining the workplace variables on special education, teachers, parents, administrators and policy makers would have a better understanding. Here are some of the studies that serves as a root for this study:

Stress and Burnout

Zabel and Zabel (2001) asserted the impact of stress and burnout on special education primarily because of commonalities with other human service professionals such as nurses, physicians, police officers, and social workers whose work require increase involvement with persons who have psychological, social, and physical problems. Fore, Martin, and Bender (2002) supported this claim by stating that a large scale of survey of general and special education teacher revealed that special education teachers leave their job which is related to stress and burnout factors.

While stress and burnout were causal factors on attrition of teachers. Several studies had also discovered the effects of workplace stress on special education teachers and demonstrated how specific environmental variables are more powerful predictions of career decision. Billingsley and Cross (1991) found that excessive paperwork, disagreement with special education practices, stress on dealing with students with extreme disabilities, lack of teaching of teaching resources were some of the experiences that caused stress and burnout to teachers. In the study of Wasburn-Moses

(2005) explained that special education teachers frequently cited reasons such as large caseloads, burdensome paper works, problems with behavior management, and difficulties relating to work colleagues, administrators, and parents.

Role Problems

Role problems are one of the consistently workplace variable that contribute to the lived experience of special education teachers. Billingsley (2004) noted that special educators are often required to address the challenges of their changing roles and increasing responsibilities. She emphasized how conflicting or excessive responsibilities can decrease effectiveness of special educator. There are three categories in role problems for special educators. Here as follows:

Role ambiguity. According to Farber (1991), role ambiguity develops when teachers do not have a definite understanding about their roles, responsibilities, rights, accountability, or status as a teacher. Special education teachers often disagreed with the implemented policies and procedures their school developed. Enrich (2001) reported that approximately 65% of the special education teachers experience reduction of sense of personal achievement and increase of feelings of emotional exhaustion due to role ambiguity.

Role conflict. According to Farber (1991), role conflict develops when inappropriate, inconsistent, or incompatible demands are placed on special education teachers. Reported conflicts with administrators as one of

the leading cause of special education role problems.

Role overload. Special education teachers spend more time on paper works, collaborate with special and general education teachers in inclusion, and perform administrative duties which directly affect the time to spend with teaching learners with disabilities (Weber, 2010). Paperwork associated with special education is one of the significant causes of insufficient time and increased level of stress.

Classroom Management

One of the most evident variables that impact the experiences for special education teachers is the diversity and severity of the disability of the learners. Lashley (2007) emphasized that educators expressed their happiness when they are not dealing with behavioral problem learners. Ashton and Web (2009) research examined the efficacy of special education teachers. They explained that efficacious teachers were less likely to appear threatened by behavior problems.

Lack of Professional Development for Special Education teachers

Special education teachers' problem on classroom management and teaching strategies can be traced back to the lack of professional development for teachers. Gernsten et al., (2001) concluded that it is more important that special education teachers should continue to learn on the job. Nicholas and Sosnowsky (2002) found that dissatisfaction with professional development opportunities statistically increased levels of exhaustion. Special education teachers should be given opportunities to have more trainings and involved in graduate studies program.

Research Questions

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of special education teachers at San Fernando City SPED Integrated School. Specifically, it answers the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of special education teachers?
2. What school policy recommendation can be constructed?

Scope and Limitation

Due to the broad topic of understanding the experience of special education teaching, the researcher decided to cover the special education teachers of San Fernando City SPED Integrated School. The study was further narrowed to include the outstanding special education teachers of the school who were awarded in Division and Provincial level. This limitation is critical due to the desire of the researchers to create a well-grounded school policy recommendation on home to school partnership.

Methodology

This section focused on the methods and procedures the researcher employed in answering the questions raised in the study.

“Lived Experienced of Special Education Teachers in San Fernando City SPED Integrated School” used the qualitative research design which sought to describe the experiences of special education teachers as regards to their success stories, benefits and incentives, and classroom challenges.

Research Design

Through a research design grounded in interpretative phenomenological analysis, this study explored the lived experiences of special education teachers at San Fernando City SPED Integrated School. A phenomenological approach supported the exploratory nature of the present study and allowed for a rich, in-depth understanding of the research topic. Phenomenology is a qualitative research method that place more emphasis on first person experience on psychological research (Wertz, 2005). The main instrument of this paper is the researcher who conducted in-depth interview with the participants to generate data about the participants' personal experiences in special education.

Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information

This study was conducted in San Fernando City SPED Integrated School and involved a total of five (5) Outstanding Special Education (SpEd) Teachers who served as participants. To ensure equal opportunity for SPED teachers, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling as described by Daniel (2012), is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study. This sampling method allows researcher to properly choose participants based on a particular profile being targeted in the study. Participants of the study were the five (5) Outstanding Teachers in Special Education.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Participants

Participant	Age	Educational Attainment	Years in Service	Number of Trainings in SPED
1	51	BEED	21	29
2	39	BEED	11	23
3	44	MA SPED	23	35

4	46	MED SPED	20	30
5	42	MED SPED	23	32

Instrumentation/Data Gathering Methods/Procedure

This study used structured interviews to gather the data needed. Most interpretative phenomenological studies have been conducted through the use of structured interviews (Smith, 2004). All interviews took place in a quiet and private space of the participant's choice. The interviews were personally administered by the researcher. The researcher used recording apparatus for the very purpose of analyzing the responses and at the same time, the videos recorded will be stored in a CD. Once the interview began, the recorder will also start.

Tools and Procedures

This study made use of structured interview as a tool to gather data about the experiences of special education teachers in school. The interview was guided by three questions formulated using Dendogram.

After being approved in the Division, the researcher requested for the permission to conduct the study from the Office of the Superintendent of the Schools Division Office- City of San Fernando, La Union. After the approval, the researcher went to the selected participants to give the guide questions and informed the participants on what is the study all about.

The researcher set the schedule for interviews on each participant. Before the interview, the researcher gave the participants the consent form of participation in the said research.

After the interview, transcribing was done. The researcher manually transcribed the responses of the responses. Participants in the interview were given code names to avoid subjective analysis. After which, cool and warm analysis was done to determine the main themes revealed on the interview. Sub-themes were also included.

Ethical Issues

This study ensured safety and confidentiality on the experiences of special education teachers that will be shared. Rest assured that the conduct of this study had the consent of the school principal and the SPED teachers themselves. The informed consent form was reviewed by each participant. Participants was informed that they would be interviewed with a recording apparatus for portfolio purposes.

Data Analysis

The interviews recorded were manually transcribed. These transcripts served as the raw data for this study. For confidentiality, the participant's names replaced with pseudonyms and the transcripts were stored in a password protected document on a USB drive. Upon obtaining interview transcriptions, document summaries, phenomenological methods and procedures were used to organize and analyze. Using verbatim expressions from the transcripts, the researcher 'horizontalized' the data gathered. The researchers have to reduce the data by eliminating all expressions that appeared to be irrelevant or repetitive, leaving only the horizons of the experience. As the process of coding, classifying, and looking for themes developed in the data, the researcher began to interpret the codes and themes to the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2007).

Result and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of themes on the experiences of Special Education teachers in San Fernando City SPED Integrated School as a basis for proposed handbook for teachers and parents.

The lived experiences of the special education teachers were highlighted and condensed in the following themes:

1. Academic achievement of LSENs
2. Work contentment
3. Lack of family engagement

Theme 1: Academic achievement of LSENs

Academic achievement of learners with special needs pertains to their individual academic skills in the classroom. When participants were asked about their success stories as a special education teacher, academic achievement of exceptional learners as a theme was revealed. Special education teachers considered a part of their success when learners were able to achieve progress in the different learning areas taught in school. Academic achievement refers to the successful performance in schooling. Schooling, in its term, includes academic skills such as writing, reading, problem solving, and performance tasks (Suleymanov, 2014). Academic achievement of learners with special needs include satisfactory rating, perform practical functional skills such as brushing, cooking, and the like, and achieve new learning milestones just like learning from letter reading to reading phonic words after a month. According to Schwatz et al., (2019), an indicator of success of special education teacher performance lies on the

improved academic achievement of their exceptional learners. In addition, teacher factor plays an integral part in the academic achievement of learners. This was also supported by Feng and Sass (2012) in which they stated that teacher's knowledge and skills has a positive effect on student achievement.

From the academic achievement theme, the following sub-themes were culled out:

Inclusion of learners with special needs. When the participants were asked about their success stories as a special education teacher, Participant B said, *“Special education teacher is one of the challenging roles when you are in the system but one of the success stories that I can share to you is when I see my pupils with autism be mainstreamed in the regular class and if I see them that they can already adapt to the environment where they are in.”*

Along this line, Participant E also shared, *“As a special education teacher, I am happy to see my learners being included in the regular setting.”* This means that special education teachers see inclusion as their fulfilment of their commitment towards helping them be included in the mainstreamed classroom. Special education teachers are overly joyed when they were able to send their learners for inclusion which is an indication of satisfactory scholastic performance in school. Being able to send learners with special needs in the inclusive classroom is the ultimate goal of special education (Boyd, 2017). Teacher's main goal is to help learners deal with their academic struggle. It is considered part of their success when they were able to refer exceptional learners for inclusion (Nelson, 2008).

School progress. When participants were asked about their success stories on special education, Participant D said, *“The success story of being a special education teacher is that most of the students that cannot read even a syllable but after a year under my class, they can now read basic sight words and they already for inclusion in the regular class.”* In addition, Participant D said, *“Aside from that, I am proud whenever my learners joined contest, be it school-based or division, it makes our profession noble whenever I witness (them) reaching milestones in their academic career.”* Along this line, Participant B also added that, *“One of the success also is when there behavior were already modified.”* This means that aside from being able to send learners for inclusion, special education teachers also consider school progress of learners with special needs in their success in their teaching career. School progress in this context may refer to joining contest, improved skills in reading and writing, and when learners aggressive behavior were modified. According to Vaughn and Thompson (2003), special education teachers view progress of learners as an indication of their success as a special education practitioner. When learners with special needs were able to join different activities in school and at the same time, gain skills from lessons helps teachers realize their important role in the education of these learners (Ford, 2013).

Theme 2: Work contentment

Work contentment refers to how individual is comfortable and satisfied with his or her own job. Work contentment is considered a key factor in building healthy learning environment which directly increases motivation and productivity (Rahman et al., 2012). In this study context, work contentment means how teachers are pleased with their current job as a special education practitioner. Based from the participants responses,

special education teachers were contented with their work. This was revealed as the most common theme when asked about the benefits and incentives of being a special education teacher. The findings were supported by the study of Strydom et al., (2011) and Abushaira (2012) in which they revealed that special education teachers in schools are job contented mainly because of job income, work atmosphere, and professional environment.

From the main theme, sub-themes were culled out from the responses:

Higher salary. When asked about the benefits and incentives of being a special education teacher, Participant A said, *“Special education teachers is a very challenging and rewarding career. The pay rate of a SPED teacher is higher than the regular classroom teacher compensation.”* Participant B also added, *“First thing that comes to our mind when we say benefits is the salary grade that we are receiving. It is but par higher than the regular item.”* Participant E also said, *“I think the incentive of being a special education teacher is salary higher than the regular teacher. We tend to have high salary grade compared to others.”*

Along this line, this means that the special education teachers are work contented because of the fact that they received higher salary compared to the regular teachers. Based on DepEd Order No. 12, series of 2011, it shows that special education teachers have a salary grade of 14 which is three steps higher than the entry salary of a regular Teacher I item. This goes to show that special education teachers received higher salary compared to other teachers in the basic education. According to Yavuz (2018), special education teachers are satisfied with their work because of higher salary. Similarly, Ketheeswarani (2018) and Shourbagi (2015) revealed that special education teachers who get higher salaries tend to

have a higher level of work satisfaction. In addition, teachers who were involved in the study stated that they were satisfied with work because of the salary they receive.

Travel opportunities. Travel opportunities given to special education teachers revealed also to be a benefit based from the interview conducted. When participants were asked about the benefits and incentives of being a special education teacher, Participant C said, *“Among the many benefits and incentives of being a SPED teacher, attending seminars nationally and internationally became a benefit in my career as a teacher.”* Also, Participant D said, *“I became also the coach of special children during the R1AA and the Palarong Pambansa which serves as an opportunity to travel different places.”* In addition, Participant E said, *“I was able to attend national and international seminars because of being a special education teacher, Aside from that, I can travel to different countries especially when our learners with special needs are invited to join Special Olympics.”*

This means that special education teachers are contented with work not just because of the salary income that they get but also the benefit of being able to travel to different places. It was revealed from the interview that special education teachers have the privilege to join contest and seminars national and international which serves as an opportunity for them to travel. Participants shared that these seminars and contest were only their means to travel and reach places that they want to visit. If it not because of their special learners, they will never get the chance to travel.

Theme 3: Lack of family engagement

Special education involves a collaboration between the teachers, parents, therapists, developmental pediatrician, and so forth. When collaboration between the persons involved in the education of a child with

special needs, functional development exists (personal communication, 2019). When the participants were asked about the challenges they encountered being a special education teacher, lack of family engagement emerged as the most challenging task.

When asked about the challenges they encounter, Participant A said, *“Parents of learners with special needs lack support in the education of their children. Some parents are not interested in the welfare of their children and ~~to~~ lacks assistance in providing them with adequate care. No involvement of parent with their child’s education.”* Participant B also shared, *“Another challenge is the way they need to follow up their children at home. There is a continuity plan at home and school but the sad thing is, most of the parents does not follow up their children.”* This means that the special education teachers struggle on letting parents engage in the education of their learners. According to the study of Ferrel (2012), one of the most effective means of ensuring academic success is strengthen the family engagement into their child’s education. However, special education teachers face challenges on establishing family engagement with parents of learners with special needs (Josilowski, 2017). This statement was supported by the study of Ozturk (2017) in which he stated that special education teachers struggle to pursue development of learners because of lack of family engagement. Oftentimes, parents refuse to collaborate and others find it difficult to find time in their busy schedules to get involved in the special education process.

From the main theme, the following sub-themes were culled out:

Reinforce behavior. Participant B said, “Mainly in my case since I am handling children with autism, one of the main challenges that I encountered is modifying their behavior which is really difficult for me since

they have their own characteristics and behavior to be modified. There are also conflicts when it comes classroom and home routines.” Participant E also said, “The most challenging part of being a special education teacher is to handle their behaviors especially when they throw tantrums.” This means that aside from lack of family engagement, reinforcing positive behavior is also a challenge being faced by special education teachers. Reinforcing positive behavior of learners with special needs require a harmonious home-school connection. Through strengthening family engagement, it gives parents to help reinforce skills taught in the classroom (Josilowski, 2012). Participants shared that it is hard to modify behaviors especially when there is a conflict between home and school rules. As such, there should be a better coordination and involvement of parents to properly reinforce positive behavior to learners with special needs.

Comorbidity of disability. Participants shared that oftentimes, they struggle to teach learners with comorbid of disability. Participant C said, *“Sometimes my students who are deaf have also another kind of disability. Some are having autism, some are having intellectual disability, and some are slow learners.”* Participant D also added, *“Challenges of a SPED teacher include dealing children with different exceptionality most especially the autistic.”* In addition, Participant E said, *“In addition, the most frustrating part that we have to face is how can we teach the concepts in its simplest form and be able to help them retain the concepts we have taught. Our learners tend to forget easily the concepts we have taught that is why as a special education teacher, we have to be very creative in order to help them learn the concepts.”* This means that special education teachers consider the comorbidity of disability in their learners as a challenging task. According to Valderas et al., (2009), comorbidity describes two or more disorders or

illnesses occurring in the same person. They can occur at the same time or one after the other. Teaching learners with comorbid disability can be a difficult and demanding job for special education teachers. According to Hendren (2018), teachers often struggle to implement teaching strategies to learners with comorbid and co-existing disabilities. Oftentimes, they tend to forget concepts taught in just seconds. Others, learners with comorbidity find hard to learn the concepts because of the complexity of their disability such as having learning disability comorbid with intellectual disability.



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SCHOOL POLICY RECOMMENDATION ON HOME TO SCHOOL (HTS) PARTNERSHIP

Rationale

Special education works between collaboration of school, family, and community. To strengthen the home-school framework of the school, there is a need to develop a policy in which teachers and parents are guided with for better implementation of special education services. Along this line, home-school partnerships are collaborative relationships and activities involving school staff, parents and other family members of students at a school. Effective partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect, and shared responsibility for the education of the children and young people at the school. Effective schools have high levels of parental and community involvement. This involvement is strongly related to improved student learning, attendance and behavior. Family

involvement can have a major impact on student learning, regardless of the social or cultural background of the family.

I. Preliminary Provision

Article 1. Legal Bases

Legal anchors or mandates are necessary in order to uphold certain policies and programs to be implemented. In the case of special education, particularly the teachers and parents, there are several legal anchors and mandates being considered before its implementation. These policy recommendations were guided by Sec. 1 of Republic Act 7277 known as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons. This provides a guiding framework on how to provide equal opportunities for learners with special needs as well as helping them reach their maximum potential. In addition, DepEd Order No. 26, series of 1997 provided guidelines on special education programs in the Philippines which involves the teachers, administrators, parents, and other professions involved in the team.

Article 2. Scope and Coverage

This Home to School (HTS) Partnership Proposed School Policy Recommendations are only intended for the use of teachers and parents in San Fernando City SPED Integrated School.

II. Home to School (HTS) Partnership School Policy

Article 3. Statement of Policy

These policy recommendations are solely intended for San Fernando City SPED Integrated School. These will serve as a guide to strengthen the home and school partnership of the school. These are solely based from the different aspects of school. Moreover, these policy recommendations are not imperative or directive.

Article 4. General Information

I. Admission Procedures

Sec. 1 A pupil/student for admission to any exceptionality must first go to the Office of the Principal for initial interview. Copy of Form 138 and NSO is to be shown.

Sec. 2 The principal shall then refer to the student to the guidance teacher designate. The parent is asked to accomplish Entrance Data Form and Assessment Form.

Sec. 3 The guidance teacher designate shall schedule the student for assessment.

Sec. 4 After the assessment, result is forwarded to the designated department based from the educational placement of the student.

Sec. 5 The student shall receive a text from his/her official adviser.

Sec. 6 The students or parent must submit the following:

- a. Form 138
- b. Photocopy of Form 137 if there is
- c. Copy of Birth Certificate from the National Statistics Office

II. Individual Education Plan

Sec.1 All students enrolled shall undergo individualized educational planning.

Sec. 2 Parents must come to the IEP Development Meeting joined by the special education teacher and therapists. Parents are asked details of the child including medical history, interests, and current level of performance. This is also the opportunity for targeting goals for learners.

Sec. 3 The IEP development team composed by the special education teacher, together with therapists shall craft an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) Draft.

Sec. 4 The parent is called for another meeting for IEP confirmation. He/she shall sign on the plan confirming his/her approval of educational program for his/her child.

Sec. 5 The parents are required to attend the mid-year review of the IEP.

Sec. 6 The parents are required to attend the Final IEP Review at the end of the school year. This shall determine the next program of their child so they must attend.

III. Orientation

Sec. 1. Parents are required to attend the School Opening Orientation as scheduled.

Sec. 2 Parents must sign in the attendance sheet for record purposes.

Sec. 3 Parents must bring a conference notebook and pen for taking down notes during the orientation.

Sec. 4 After the orientation, the parents shall sign in the attendance sheet.

Sec. 5 Parents or guardians who were not able to attend the orientation shall pay fees subject for approval during the GPTA Meeting.

IV. Assignment

Sec. 1 Teachers monitor the assignment of their learners. The teacher will take note of the parents who are not doing the assignments given by them.

Sec. 2 Every assignment given by teachers, parents shall sign on the Parent's Signature part.

Sec. 3 Assignment and homework take part in the overall rating of their learners.

V. Parent Conferences

Sec. 1 Parents are required to attend the quarterly parent conference. The teacher reports the current level of performance of their child with respect to the subject areas being taken by the child.

Sec. 2 Parents who were not able to attend shall make an appointment with the teacher for parent conference.

Sec. 3 Parents shall sign in and out in the attendance sheet during the parent conferences.

VI. GPTA Meeting

Sec. 1 Parents are required to attend General Parent and Teacher Association (GPTA) Meeting. Attendance is a must.

Sec. 2 Parents are asked to contribute fees for the GPTA Project for every year.

Sec. 3 Parents or guardians who were not able to attend GPTA meetings shall explain in writing address to the Office of the Principal and shall pay penalty fees for not coming as approved by the GPTA officers and members.

VII. Inclusive Education

Sec. 1 For a child to qualify for inclusion in the regular classroom, there should be a recommendation letter coming from the special education teacher, signed and noted by the principal of the school.

Sec. 2 The teacher shall make a request letter to allow the pupil/student with special needs to be included in the regular setting. The letter shall be signed and approved by the principal of the regular school.

Sec. 3 The principal in the regular school shall refer the pupil/student with special needs to the receiving teachers of inclusion. The pupil/student with special needs is accompanied by the parent or guardian and the special education teacher.

Sec. 4 After class hours in the regular school, parents are informed that there shall be allotted thirty (30) minutes follow up session by the special education teacher in the center.

Sec. 5 There is a meeting to be conducted by the parents, special education teacher, and receiving teachers to fully explain details of the pupil/student as well as other matters such as behavior, skills, talents, and weaknesses.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This section presents the conclusions drawn and recommendations proposed by the researcher of this study.

Conclusions

In light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The special education teachers view academic achievement of learners as a strong indication of being a successful educator for children with special needs.
2. The special education teachers are contended in their job due to higher salary and travel opportunities to different countries.
3. The special education teachers believed that lack of family engagement in the education of their children is the most challenging task of being an educator for children with special needs.
4. The School Policy Recommendations on Home to School Partnership is an instrument to solve the parental involvement being faced by special education teachers.
- 5.

Recommendations

In the light of the conclusion of the study, the following are recommended.

1. The school shall create an assessment team consisting of teachers trained to check the proper educational placement of the learners enrolled.
2. The school should approve and institutionalize the School Policy Recommendation on Home to School Partnership to improve parent engagement in the school.
3. The school should conduct training on Individualized Education Plan writing for teachers.
4. The school should have a better institutionalized Inclusive Education Protocol to give opportunity for learners with special needs to be included in the regular class.

5. The teacher should allot time for Preparation to Inclusion class and Remedial Class added to his/her other teaching functions in the Classroom Program.
6. The special education teacher development of Individualized Educational Plan should involve strictly the parents.
7. The principal of the school should conduct family culmination activities to improve stakeholder relations.

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APPENDIX A
LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

December 5, 2019

ROWENA C. BANZON, CESO V
Schools Division Superintendent
San Fernando City, La Union

Madam:

I am currently conducting a division research study entitled **Lived Experience of Special Education Teachers at San Fernando City SPED Integrated School**

In this regard, may I ask permission from your office to allow me to administer face to face interview with selected SPED teachers of the school regarding their experiences of becoming a full-pledge SPED teacher. The researcher will use a video recorder to gather the data needed for this study. Rest-assured that all information gathered from the teachers will be kept confidential.

Your favorable action on this matter will be highly appreciated.

Thank you very much and more power.

Very respectfully yours,

ROSART JAN O. SAMPAGA
Researcher

Noted:

ARLYN B. BAMBICO, MAED
Principal

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Lived Experiences of Special Education Teachers in San Fernando City SPED Integrated School

You are invited to be in a research study that will examine the to explore the lived experiences of special education teachers along teaching strategies, classroom management, parent relations, community relations, working relationship, and administration support. You were selected as a participant because of your exemplary performance as a Special Education Teacher. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in this study. Rosart Jan O. Sampaga, a Special Education Teacher III, is conducting this study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of special education teachers along teaching strategies, classroom management, parent relations, community relations, working relationship, and administration support. Furthermore, this aims to explore the lived experiences of special education teachers as a basis in the formulation of an intervention program and policy. The endpoint of this paper is to create an intervention program proposal for special education teachers and parents of learners with special needs.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, each participant will receive a demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire will consist of

data with reference to the teacher's gender, age, religion, civil status, emotional intelligence, educational attainment, number of years in service, number of trainings attended, and type of disability currently teaching. The information collected from the questionnaire will not be analyzed during the data collection process; however, it will be used to identify the demographics of the teachers in the study.

Each participant is asked to participate in one face-to-face interview. The interview will include questions about their experiences on being a special education teacher. The interview will take a minimum of thirty minutes to complete. This interview will be video recorded. This study is minimal risk, which is no greater than one might participate when going about everyday activities. Benefits of this study outweigh the minimal risk to you as the participant. As a participant, you will be adding to the existing body of research on the lived experiences of special education teachers.

Confidentiality:

All information for this study will be kept confidential at all times. The video record of the participants will be kept private. Collected data will be stored on the researcher's personal, password-protected computer. The researcher will use pseudonyms for the participants and their locations to preserve anonymity and confidentiality.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the school. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study. By signing below, I consent to data collection methods and attest to my experience with the phenomenon as a special education teacher.

I consent to having the interview digitally recorded for video purposes only.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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DENDOGRAM

Title : Lived Experiences of SPED Teachers in San Fernando City SPED Integrated School

Concept Layer of Human Experience	Definition	Reference	A Priori Codes	Interview Questions
Special Education	Special education is instruction that is specifically designed to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability . The hallmark of special education is that it is individualized for student needs.	U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973 enshrined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	specifically designed to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.	1. What are the challenges encountered being a SPED teacher of learners with unique needs?
Success	Special education shall aim to develop the maximum potential of the child with special needs to enable him to become self-reliant and shall be geared towards providing opportunities for a full and happy life .	Policies and Guidelines of Special Education	maximum potential of the child with special needs to enable him to become self-reliant and shall be geared towards providing opportunities for a full and happy life.	2. What are your successful stories in of being a SPED teacher particularly on helping them attain maximum potential?
Incentives and Benefits	Incentives shall be given to special education personnel through master teacher positions when they meet the requirements; attendance to conferences or observations of special education programs in countries with more advanced programs in	Policies and Guidelines of Special Education	Incentives shall be given to special education personnel	3. What are the benefits and incentives of teaching children with special needs?

	special education.			
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APPENDIX D INTERVIEW TOOL

Profile

Name (optional): _____

Sex: _____ Male _____ Female

Age: _____

Religion: _____

Civil Status: ___ Single ___ Married ___ Separated

Educational Attainment:

____ Bachelor's Degree Major in _____ SPED Others: _____ (please specify)

____ Master's Degree ___ MA SPED _____ others (please specify)

____ MA ED

____ Doctorate Degree _____ Ph.D SPED _____ others (please specify)

____ Ed.D

Number of years in service:

_____ 1-5

_____ 6-10

_____ 11-15

_____ 16-20

_____ 21 and above

Number of Trainings Attended on SPED

____ Division _____ Region _____ National _____ International

Interview Guide

Sample Questions

1. What are the success stories of being a special education teacher?
2. What are the benefits and incentives of teaching children with special needs?
3. What are the challenges encountered being a special education teacher?

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APPENDIX E

MAIN THEMES AND SUB-THEME

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Response	Code
Academic achievement	Inclusion	Special education teacher is one of the challenging roles when you are in the system but one of the success stories that I can share to you is when I see my pupils with autism be mainstreamed in the regular class and if I see them that they can already adapt to the environment where they are in.	P2
		As a special education teacher, I am happy to see my learners being included in the regular setting	P5
	School progress	The success story of being a special education teacher is that most of the students that cannot read even a syllable but after a year under my class, they can now read basic sight words and they already for inclusion in the regular class.	P4
		Aside from that, I am proud whenever my learners joined contest, be it school-based or division, it makes our profession noble whenever I witness (them) reaching milestones in their academic career.	P5
		One of the success also is when there behavior were already modified.	P2
	Work contentment	Higher salary	Special education teachers is a very challenging and rewarding career. The pay rate of a SPED teacher is higher than the regular classroom teacher compensation.
First thing that comes to our mind when we say benefits is the salary grade that we are receiving. It is but par higher than the regular item.			P2
I think the incentive of being a special education teacher is salary higher than the regular teacher. We tend to have high salary grade compared to others.			P5

	Travel opportunities for teachers	Among the many benefits and incentives of being a SPED teacher, attending seminars nationally and internationally became a benefit in my career as a teacher	P3
		I became also the coach of special children during the R1AA and the Palarong Pambansa which serves as an opportunity to travel different places.	P4
		I was able to attend national and international seminars because of being a special education teacher, Aside from that, I can travel to different countries especially when our learners with special needs are invited to join Special Olympics	P5
Family engagement	Lack of parental involvement	Parents of learners with special needs lack support in the education of their children. Some parents are not interested in the welfare of their children and lacks assistance in providing them with adequate care. No involvement of parent with their child's education.	P1
		Another challenge is the way they need to follow up their children at home. There is a continuity plan at home and school but the sad thing is, most of the parents does not follow up their children.	P2
	Reinforce behavior	Mainly in my case since I am handling children with autism, one of the main challenges that I encountered is modifying their behavior which is really difficult for me since they have their own characteristics and behavior to be modified. There are also conflicts when it comes classroom and home routines.	P2
		The most challenging part of being a special education teacher is to handle their behaviors especially when they throw tantrums.	P5
	Comorbid of disability	Sometimes my students who are deaf have also another kind of disability. Some are having autism, some are having intellectual disability, and some are slow learners.	P3
		Challenges of a SPED teacher include dealing children with different exceptionality most especially the autistic.	P4

		<p>In addition, the most frustrating part that we have to face is how can we teach the concepts in its simplest form and be able to help them retain the concepts we have taught. Our learners tend to forget easily the concepts we have taught that is why as a special education teacher, we have to be very creative in order to help them learn the concepts.</p>	P5
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APPENDIX F

TRANSCRIBE RESPONSES

1. What are the success stories of being a special education teacher?

Participant	Responses
Ana Arce	<p>In order to succeed, we have to struggle at first in order to succeed. As a teacher, you will encounter many difficulties in terms of the needs of the students, each one of them have a particular need. It is a challenge of a SPED teacher to seek for an action or strategy that suits best on ahhh.... every student providing them what they need is what makes every day interesting. School heads empower the principal and teachers to find co-teaching strategies that works for special learners.</p>
Evelyn Caja	<p>Special education teacher is one of the challenging roles when you are in (the) an education system but one of the success stories that I can share to you is when I see my pupils (with) or students in autism group be mainstreamed in the regular class because that is the main goal of special education and if I see them (that) they can already adapt to the environment where they are in. so One of the success is that also is (when)if they already there behavior (were)are already modified.</p>
Ma. Cristina Medina	<p>Uhh After over two decades of being a SPED teacher, uhhh... I have been invited to speak in front of new teachers (during division orientation) and also, conducted sign language trainings, seminar, sign language classes to different agencies, (be it) government agencies, or private institutions, uhhmm... parent organizations ,and teacher associations.</p>
Ambeth Ocampo	<p>The success story of being a special education teacher is not just a satisfaction that most of the students that cannot read even a syllable but after a year under my class, they can now read basic sight words and they already for inclusion in the regular class.</p>
Josette Biyo	<p>As a special education teacher, I am happy to see my learners being included in the regular setting. Aside from that, I am proud whenever my learners joined contest, be it school-based or division, it makes our profession noble whenever I witness (them) reaching milestones in</p>

	their academic career.
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2. What are the benefits and incentives of teaching children with special needs?

Participant	Responses
Ana Arce	Since we are special education teacher or special education teachers is a very challenging and rewarding career. The pay rate of a SPED teacher is higher than the regular classroom teacher compensation. A SPED teacher enjoy knowing that they are making quality education possible for all children and they have smaller classes.
Evelyn Caja	Actually, we have certain jokes regarding this one regarding benefits and incentives, they say that when you are in special education, you will stay young, you will die young but that is only a joke. But definitely, sig.. it's the first thing that comes to our mind when we say benefits is the salary grade that we are receiving. It is but par higher than the regular item. in the regular elementary but definitely When you say the benefits is not only the financial matter but also the fact that you touch the lives of more special children especially if you taught them, if you have already given them uhmm skills they needed in the future another siguro... is the benefit is ahnmhhh when I was here in special education, its really easy for me already to solicit things for their needs because they already know that this is the use for special children so one thing also, I will say benefit for me personally is I already had the chance to realize some things insights gain insights in my life especially in appreciating the things that we have right now.
Ma. Cristina Medina	Uhmm Among the many benefits and incentives of being a SPED teacher, uhmm.. one of which is attending seminars nationally and internationally became a benefit in my career as a teacher., uhmm, these are SPED related uhmm Another is uhmm meeting different kinds of people, and meeting government leaders who are also extending their hands to special children.
Ambeth Ocampo	Aside from getting a higher salary in SPED, we have a harmonious relationship in SPED. We have lots of get together, sharing of expertise. and also, In addition, I became am also the coach of special

	children during the R1AA and the Palarong Pambansa which serves as an opportunity to travel different places. so I went also to different places.
Josette Biyo	I was able to attend national and international seminars because of being a special education teacher, Aside from that, I can travel to different countries especially when our learners with special needs are invited to join Special Olympics. I think the incentive of being a special education teacher is salary higher than the regular teacher. We tend to have high salary grade compared to others.

3. What are the challenges encountered being a special education teacher?

Participant	Responses
Ana Arce	My challenges encountered being a special education teacher is that Parents of learners with special needs lack of support in the education of their children from the parents. Some parents are not interested in the welfare of their children and to lacks assistance in providing them with adequate care. No involvement of parent with their child's education.
Evelyn Caja	Mainly in my case since I am handling children with autism, one of the main challenges that I encounter is modifying their behavior is really difficult for me since they have their own every child with special needs is unique and individual and every individual also has his own skills, characteristics and behavior to be modified. Another challenges is uhmmm,.... regarding family background since and the way they need to follow up their children at home. There are also conflicts when it comes inside classroom and home routine. inside the classroom and the routines we have at home so parang minsan is so difficult for them to understand that we need to impose this one inside the classroom so that at home, there is a continuity plan at home and school for them but the sad thing is definitely, most of the parents does not follow up their children that is one of the main problems that we encounter aside from my set up classroom modifying behavior.
Ma. Cristina Medina	Uhmm..... Sometimes my students who are deaf have also another kind of disability. Some are having autism, some are having intellectual disability, and some are slow learners. Those uhmmm

	<p>situations uhmmm sometimes uhmm will make me troubled. How can I teach them well if they have doubling disabling conditions. Another one is....</p>
Ambeth Ocampo	<p>Challenges of a SPED teacher include flood prone school area and dealing children with different exceptionality of course most especially the autistic.</p>
Josette Biyo	<p>The most challenging part of being a special education teacher is to handle their behaviors especially when they throw tantrums. In addition, the most frustrating part that we have to face is how can we teach the concepts in its simplest form and be able to help them retain the concepts we have taught. Our learners tend to forget easily the concepts we have taught that is why as a special education teacher, we have to be very creative in order to help them learn the concepts.</p>



CURRICULUM VITAE

Rosart Jan O. Sampaga



Permanent Address : #54 Dalumpinas Road, Lingsat, City of San Fernando
Date of Birth : April 18,1993
Place of Birth : City of San Fernando, La Union
Parents/Guardian/Spouse : Mr. Arthur C. Sampaga & Mrs. Rosario O. Sampaga
Civil Status : Single
Institutional Affiliation : San Fernando City SPED Integrated School
School Address : Tanqui, City of San Fernando, La Union
Contact Number : 09177790144
E-mail Address : rosartjan.sampaga@deped.gov.ph

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND



<i>Present</i>	Doctor of Education, Major in Educational Management Saint Louis College Carlattan, San Fernando City, La Union
<i>2018</i>	Master of Arts in Special Education DMMMSU- South La Union Campus Agoon, La Union Thesis: Self-Efficacy and Academic Performance of the Students in the Reverse Integration Program
<i>2014</i>	Bachelor in Elementary Education major in Special Education Saint Louis College Carlattan, City of San Fernando, La Union Cum Laude
<i>2010</i>	Secondary Education Degree Felkris Academy Incorporated Lingsat, City of San Fernando, La Union 2 nd Honorable Mention
<i>2006</i>	Elementary Education Degree Felkris Academy Incorporated Lingsat, City of San Fernando, La Union

AWARDS/HONORS RECEIVED

December 22, 2017 Pío Philip Umanos Awards
Certificate of Excellence in Essay Writing & Arts
Professor Velia Valdez-Umanos

ELIGIBILITIES/EXAMINATIONS PASSED

October 2014 Board of Licensure Examination for Teachers
Baguio City
Rating : 83 %
Professional Regulations Commission

March 2014 Civil Service Eligibility (PD 907)
City of San Fernando, La Union
Civil Service Commission

TRAININGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED

September 24-27, 2019 National Workshop on the Development of Lesson Exemplar
Davao City
Central Office, Bureau of Learning Delivery

August 24-26, 2018 Division Seminar-Workshop on Inclusive Education
Schools Division Office- Division Training Center
San Fernando City, La Union

December 3-8, 2017 National Seminar on Essential Adaptive Curriculum

for Learners with Special Needs

DepEd NEAP, Marikina City

BCD-Central Office

October 25-27, 2017

Division Workshop on Identifying and Assessing Learners
with Special Needs in the Regular Classroom

R Buffet Restaurant, City of San Fernando, La Union

Schools Division Office- City of San Fernando (LU)

August 29-31, 2017

Division Training on Sports Coaching and Officiating
Division Learning Training Center

Schools Division Office- City of San Fernando (LU)

August 26-28, 2016

National Seminar on Learner Centered Education

Teachers' Camp, Baguio City

ILEAD

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE/WORK EXPERIENCE

Present

Special Education Teacher III

San Fernando City SPED Integrated School

Tanqui, City of San Fernando, La Union

October 1, 2018

Special Education Teacher I

San Fernando City SPED Integrated School

Tanqui, City of San Fernando, La Union

July 27, 2015

Teacher I

San Fernando City SPED Integrated School

Tanqui, City of San Fernando, La Union
January 2015
Local School Board Teacher
La Union SPED Center
Tanqui, City of San Fernando, La Union

CONSULTANCY AND EXPERT SERVICES

October 25-27, 2017 Division Workshop on Identifying and Assessing Learners
with Special Needs in the Regular Classroom
Resource Speaker
Schools Division Office- City of San Fernando (LU)

October 1-8, 2016 Seminar-Workshop on Special Education
Resource Speaker
PCLU

SPECIAL SKILLS/TALENTS

Writing articles

ROSART JAN O. SAMPAGA
Signature over printed name