

Learning Delivery Readiness of Special Education Teachers in Secondary Schools in Camarines Norte, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the learning delivery readiness of special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte.

The study tested the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the profile of the special education teachers and receiving teachers, and the level of readiness in the learning delivery of special education teachers in secondary school in Camarines Norte.

The study covered 324 respondents composed of special education teachers and receiving teachers. Descriptive research method was used in the gathering and treatment of data. Frequency count and percentage were employed to determine the number of respondents characterized by each of the items in the profile. Weighted mean and adjectival ratings were utilized in marking the level of readiness of special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte and the challenges faced by the teachers in the implementation of the special education curriculum program for students with special educational needs. Somer's Delta using the SPSS software was used in determining the significant relationship between two variables which is the respondent's profile and the level of readiness in the learning delivery of special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte.

The findings of the study are summarized as follows: 1) Majority of the teachers are female with a total of 244 or 75 percent, and 195 or 60 percent are married. Among the 324 respondents 310 or 95 percent of them are receiving teachers, and most of them are 5 years and below in their position with the frequency of 60 or 49 percent, 213 or 65 percent of the respondents have attended 1-3 relevant trainings and most of them with units in Master's Program with a frequency of 169 or 52 percent. 2) Level of readiness of special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte in terms of learning delivery got an overall weighted mean of 3.23 and interpreted as moderately ready, while in terms of learning resources the overall weighted mean of 2.82 and interpreted as moderately ready, and in terms of facilities and equipment a overall weighted mean score of 2.89 or interpreted as moderately ready. 3) The p-values of .003 and .002 respectively indicate that the relationships are statistically significant. The null hypothesis is not rejected. 4) The research revealed that challenges faced by the teachers in the implementation of the special education curriculum program for students with special educational needs in terms of facilities and equipment are considered significant challenge with a total weighted mean score of 3.71, while in terms of training a total weighted mean score of 3.81 or interpreted as significant challenge.

Furthermore, in terms of the learning resources a total weighted mean score of 3.83 or interpreted as significant challenge and in terms of the learning strategies a total weighted mean of 3.64 or interpreted also as significant challenge. 5) The research also revealed that the common problems encountered by the learners with special educational needs in terms of the facilities and equipment got a total weighted mean of 3.64 interpreted as major problem, while in terms of the mode of instruction a total weighted mean of 3.71 or

interpreted as major problem, while in terms of the learning materials a total weighted mean of 3.91 or interpreted as major problem.

Keywords: Special Education teachers, learners with Special Educational needs, learning delivery readiness, special education

INTRODUCTION

For certain reasons, both in rich and developing nations, special needs education has traditionally been given less priority. It is a stereotype that kids with impairments don't care about learning and can't perform as well as normal kids. This false belief resulted in the removal of disabled children from the educational system, which distracted them from their studies and from nearly every aspect of social life. As a result, this field has always required unique, rigorous, and compassionate attention throughout history because disability can have both mental and physical components, which call for in-depth thought and a qualified approach everywhere. Many nations nowadays provide inclusive education and are making every effort to facilitate inclusion in the educational system. However, as experience indicates that this is not a simple task.

Generally, this study aimed to answer the following questions: 1) What is the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, civil status, position, number of years in the position number of relevant trainings attended, and highest educational attainment?; 2) What is the level of readiness of Special Education teachers and receiving teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte along learning delivery, learning resources, and facilities and equipment? 3) What are the challenges faced by the teachers in the implementation of the special education curriculum program for students with Special Educational needs in terms of facilities and equipment, training, learning resources, and learning strategies?; 4) What are the common problems, encountered by the learners with special educational needs in terms of facilities and equipment, mode of instruction, and learning strategies?; 5) Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the special education teachers and receiving teachers and the level of readiness in the learning delivery of special education teachers and receiving teachers in secondary school in Camarines Norte?; and 6) What learning and development plan may be proposed to improve the learning delivery readiness of special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte?

The study tested the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the profile of the special education teachers and receiving teachers, and the level of readiness in the learning delivery of special education teachers in secondary school in Camarines Norte. It focused on assessing the learning delivery readiness of special education teachers in SPED Secondary Schools in Camarines Norte in terms of their sex, civil status, position, number of years in the position, highest educational attainment; the level of readiness of special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte; the challenges faced by the teachers in the implementation of the special education curriculum program for students with special educational needs; the common problems faced by the learners with special educational needs and the learning and development plan to be formulated to improve the learning delivery readiness of secondary special education teachers in Camarines Norte. Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive survey method to gather information. Correlation method was likewise used in this research to assess the learning delivery readiness of special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte. Purposive sampling of 324 special education coordinators, special education teachers, and receiving teachers from secondary schools of Division of Camarines Norte that offer special education program are the respondents. Data were gathered through a survey questionnaire based on the policy guidelines on the provision of educational programs and services for learners with disabilities in the K to 12 basic education program (DepEd Order No. 044, s. 2021), which was pre-tested for validity, showing a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.981. Content validity of the instrument was confirmed via consultation with Educational Program Supervisor in SPED program and four Special Education Teachers in Elementary

schools in Camarines Norte offering SPED program. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Out of 324 respondents, a total of 244 or 75 percent while eighty 80 or 25 percent of the respondents are male. This indicates that population being dominated by females, simply because women were considered the most ideal people to fill the role since, they are perceived as more nurturing than men, and they have historically dominated professions like education.

Table 1 Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	80	25
Female	244	75
Total	324	100
<i>Civil Status</i>		
Single	129	40
Married	195	60
Total	324	100
<i>Position</i>		
SPED Coordinator	14	4.3
Teacher/Receiving Teacher	310	95.7
Total	324	100
<i>Number of Years in the Position</i>		
5 years and below	160	49.4
6 – 10 years	103	31.8
11 – 15 years	35	10.8
16 and above	26	8.0
Total	324	100
<i>Number of Relevant Trainings Attended</i>		
1 – 3	213	65.7
4 – 6	61	18.8
7 – 9	20	6.2
10 and above	30	9.3
Total	324	100
<i>Highest Educational Attainment</i>		
College Graduate	109	33.6
With Units in Master's Program	169	52.2
Master's Degree Holder	41	12.7
With Units in Doctorate Program	1	.3
Doctorate Degree Holder	4	1.2
Total	324	100

It shows that higher percentage of special education teachers in secondary schools are women, reflecting the gender dominance in this field. The National Women's History Museum (2017) supports this, noting that women are often seen as more nurturing and have historically been prevalent in education.

Regarding the civil status of the special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte, 195 or 60% of special education teachers are married, while 129 or 40% are single. This suggests that most have families, and interviews indicate that marital status can impact teachers' self-efficacy. Single teachers often dedicate more time to their jobs. Additionally, Brower (2019) notes that women excel in various leadership aspects, enhancing their effectiveness in the classroom.

In this study, 310 or 96% of secondary school special education teachers are receiving teachers, indicating they work with both regular and special needs students. Only 14 or 4% are SPED coordinators, who are highly qualified educators focused on supporting special education processes to enhance student growth. This aligns with Teachersvision.com (2024), which notes that cooperative teaching, defined in the late 1980s, involves collaboration between special and general educators to teach diverse student groups in integrated settings.

Special education teachers often face challenges due to their experience levels. A significant number of 160 or 49% have been in their positions for five years or less, suggesting that many new teachers struggle with the job's demands, leading to burnout and early exits. In contrast, only 26 or 8% have been in their roles for 16 years or more, highlighting the high turnover associated with the workload. Research by Hayford et al. (2022) emphasizes the importance of teacher well-being in retention, underscoring the need for positive work environments to mitigate psychosocial risks and mental health issues.

Along number of relevant trainings attended, most teachers 213 or 66%, or 213 have attended one to three relevant trainings, suggesting that many are newly promoted or hired and are still acquiring essential skills for managing students with special educational needs. Conversely, only 20 or 6% have attended seven to nine trainings, indicating that ongoing training is a crucial need for all educators.

This is supported by Hafeez (2021) stating that it showed that students' interests and academic performance increased prior to and following the instructors' training, the methods of instruction used were debate, inquiry, lecture, and demonstration. Thus, it might be essential that selecting the most effective teaching strategy depends in large part on the training that teachers receive enhances pupils' interests and academic performance.

Level of Readiness of Special Education Teachers in Secondary Schools in Camarines Norte

Tables 2 to 4 present the data on the level of readiness of special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte. The variables are limited to the learning delivery, learning resources and facilities and equipment.

Learning Delivery. Table 2 shows the level of readiness of special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte in terms of learning delivery. The table shows the indicators used in the survey, the weighted mean, and the corresponding interpretation for each indicator.

Table 2 Level of Readiness of Special Education Teachers in Secondary Schools in Camarines Norte in terms of Learning Delivery

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Exposure training programs cover inclusive teaching strategies, differentiated instruction, behavior management, and the use of assistive technologies	3.19	MR
2. Access to a variety of teaching aids, manipulatives, and tools suitable for addressing individualized learning plans	2.99	MR
3. Integrate technology into their instructional practices to enhance learning outcomes	3.27	MR

4. Collaborate with other stakeholders, such as parents and support staff, in the development and implementation of IEPs	3.16	MR
5. Use differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of students within an inclusive classroom	3.31	MR
6. Involve parents in the learning process and support the needs of students at home.	3.31	MR
7. Actively work to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students	3.46	VR
8. Stay updated on best practices, research, and innovations in the field of special education	3.19	MR
Overall Weighted Mean	3.23	MR

Rating Scale:

- 4.20-5.00-Extremely Ready (ER)
- 3.40-4.19-Very Ready (VR)
- 2.60-3.39-Moderately Ready (MR)
- 1.80-2.59-Slightly Ready (SR)
- 1.00-1.79-Not Ready at All (NRA)

Data indicates that special education teachers in Camarines Norte are very ready to create inclusive and supportive learning environments, with a weighted mean of 3.46. This reflects their commitment to actively fostering collaboration, interactive learning, and individualized understanding for all students.

Access to diverse teaching aids and tools for individualized learning plans has the lowest weighted mean of 2.99 among special education teachers in Camarines Norte. Interviews reveal that the lack of instructional resources in public schools hinders effective teaching and student learning. This shortage particularly affects rural schools, leading to delayed learning, poor reading skills, and families struggling to afford necessary supplies.

This was supported by Finch (2024) stating that in the high school classroom, it is essential to make sure every student feels like they belong, recognizes them for who they are, and values them as unique individuals.

Learning Resources. Table 3 shows the level of readiness of special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte in terms of the learning resources. The table shows the indicators used in the survey, the weighted mean, and the corresponding interpretation for each indicator.

Table 3 Level of Readiness of Special Education Teachers in Secondary Schools in Camarines Norte in terms of Learning Resources

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Availability of materials in various formats, such as large print, Braille, or tactile resources for students with visual impairments	2.56	SR
2. Equipped with the necessary tools, devices, and software to support students with diverse needs, including those with communication or mobility challenges	2.59	SR
3. Access to modified learning resources that support the specific learning	2.80	MR

objectives and accommodations identified in each student's individualized education program (IEP)		
4. Tools can be easily modified to accommodate different learning needs and provide hands-on, interactive learning experiences	2.89	MR
5. Use of educational apps, online platforms, and other digital resources to enhance learning opportunities for students with special educational needs	2.73	MR
6. Consider the representation of diverse cultures and languages in materials to ensure that all students feel seen and valued	3.09	MR
7. Consider materials that provide sensory input and help create a comfortable learning environment	2.99	MR
8. Evaluate ongoing training to ensure that teachers stay informed about the latest resources and best practices in special education	2.94	MR
Overall Weighted Mean	2.82	MR

Rating Scale:

4.20-5.00-Extremely Ready (ER)

3.40-4.19-Very Ready (VR)

2.60-3.39-Moderately Ready (MR)

1.80-2.59-Slightly Ready (SR)

1.00-1.79-Not Ready at All (NRA)

The table indicates that special education teachers prioritize the representation of diverse cultures and languages in materials, achieving the highest weighted mean score of 3.09. This suggests that teachers recognize the importance of cultural factors in classroom behavior management and are aware of how their own beliefs can influence school policies and practices. Conversely, the availability of materials in formats like large print, Braille, or tactile resources for visually impaired students has the lowest weighted mean of 2.56. Limited resources for both teachers and students hinder effective instruction for those with visual impairments. This was supported by Will et al. (2022) when they stated that culturally sensitive teaching and related teaching strategies raised students' motivation, interest in the material, and self-perception as capable learners.

Facilities and Equipment. Table 4 indicates that special education teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte are moderately ready to utilize professional development opportunities to foster an inclusive environment. Teachers believe that attending seminars and trainings will help them create a supportive setting for students with special needs. Engaging in these opportunities allows educators to gain the knowledge needed to provide high-quality instruction tailored to their students' unique requirements.

Table 4 Level of Readiness of Special Education Teachers in Secondary Schools in Camarines Norte in terms of Facilities and Equipment

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Physical accessibility of classrooms, corridors, restrooms, and other facilities for students with mobility challenges	2.95	MR
2. Classrooms are designed to accommodate diverse learning needs, including space for mobility aids, sensory corners, and specialized seating arrangements	2.85	MR

3. Access to the tools necessary to support the unique requirements of their students	2.77	MR
4. Equipped with the necessary devices and software to support students with communication, learning, or mobility challenges	2.72	MR
5. Evaluate the existence and adequacy of learning centers or resource rooms equipped with materials to support various learning styles	2.85	MR
6. Consider whether professional development opportunities address the creation of an inclusive and supportive environment	3.07	MR
7. Consider whether communication tools and materials are accessible to parents of students with SEN	2.98	MR
8. Ensure that facilities are regularly inspected and maintained to provide a safe and conducive learning environment	2.94	MR
Overall Weighted Mean	2.89	MR

Rating Scale:

4.20-5.00-Extremely Ready (ER)

3.40-4.19-Very Ready (VR)

2.60-3.39-Moderately Ready (MR)

1.80-2.59-Slightly Ready (SR)

1.00-1.79-Not Ready at All (NRA)

Donath et al. (2023) emphasize that teachers play a crucial role in implementing inclusive education by creating learning opportunities and driving innovations in educational systems. To effectively execute reforms, teachers must possess professional knowledge, implementation skills, and a positive mindset.

However, the availability of devices and software to support students with communication, learning, or mobility challenges has the lowest weighted mean among special education teachers in Camarines Norte, indicating they are only partly prepared to address these issues. Interviews reveal that teachers struggle to communicate with students and introduce them to new technologies due to a lack of necessary tools and software.

The Team at ALSO (2023) highlights that assistive technology is a game-changer for students with intellectual or developmental challenges. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, these devices enhance a child's functional skills. While assistive technology is often associated with expensive software or systems, many affordable and accessible options are also available.

Significant Relationship between the Profile of the Special Education Teachers, and the Level of Readiness in the Learning Delivery of Special Education Teachers in Secondary Schools

Table 5 shows that the level of readiness in the learning delivery of special education teachers along learning delivery, learning resources and facilities and equipment has no significant relationship to the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, civil status, position and highest educational attainment.

Table 5 Test for Significant Relationship between the Profile of the Respondents and their Level of Readiness in the Learning Delivery of Special Education Teachers

Profile	Level of Readiness					
	Learning Delivery		Learning Resources		Facilities and Equipment	
	<i>Test Statistics</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Test Statistics</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Test Statistics</i>	<i>p-value</i>
1. Sex	.052	.926	.105	.459	.068	.826
2. Civil Status	.124	.283	.102	.493	.113	.378
3. Position	.104	.469	.085	.667	.139	.169
4. Number of Years in the Position	-.025	.645	-.117*	.031	-.075	.157
5. Number of Relevant Trainings	.261**	.000	.174**	.003	.178**	.002
6. Highest Educational Attainment	-.025	.623	-.059	.279	-.034	.533

*Correlation is Significant @ 0.05 level

**Correlation is Significant @ 0.01 level

All special education teachers demonstrate a similar level of readiness in learning delivery, regardless of their position or highest educational attainment. There is no significant relationship between years in position and readiness, except for learning resources, which showed a negative correlation (coefficient = -0.117, p-value = 0.031). This indicates that longer tenure may correlate with lower readiness to access learning resources.

In contrast, the number of relevant trainings attended correlates significantly with readiness in learning delivery ($d = 0.261$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$), learning resources ($d = 0.174$, $p\text{-value} = 0.003$), and facilities and equipment ($d = 0.178$, $p\text{-value} = 0.002$), all at the 0.01 level. The positive moderate relationship in learning delivery suggests that teachers with more relevant training are better prepared to deliver instruction effectively. Similarly, the positive weak relationships in learning resources and facilities indicate that additional training enhances readiness in these areas.

Overall, the null hypothesis that no significant relationships exist among the variables will not be rejected, except for the profile regarding the number of relevant trainings and the years in position concerning learning resources.

Challenges Faced by the Teachers in the Implementation of the Special Education Curriculum Program for Students with Special Educational Needs

Tables 6 to 7 present the data on the challenges faced by the teachers in the implementation of the Special Education Curriculum Program for Students with Special Needs in secondary schools in Camarines Norte. The variables are limited to the facilities and equipment, trainings, learning resources and learning strategies.

Facilities and Equipment. Table 6 shows the challenges faced by the teachers in the implementation of the special education curriculum program for Students with Special Needs in terms of facilities and equipment. The figures revealed that among the challenges faced by teachers in terms of facilities and equipment, lack of assistive technology to support with diverse needs got the highest weighted mean score of 3.87 or interpreted as significantly challenging while inadequate accessibility in terms of ramps and appropriate restrooms got the lowest weighted mean score of 3.57, interpreted as significantly challenging. The overall weighted mean of 3.87 means that teachers are facing significant challenges in terms of the facilities and equipment in the implementation of the special education curriculum program for learners with special needs

Table 6 shows that the highest result is lack of assistive technology to accommodate learners with varying needs. This implies that special education teachers are evidently facing challenges when it comes to the availability of assistive technologies to accommodate learners with varying needs with special educational needs. Lack of assistive technologies hinders the students to reach their potential and to allow them to capitalize on their strengths and bypass areas of difficulty.

Table 6 Challenges Faced by Teachers in the Implementation of Special Education Curriculum Program along Facilities and Equipment

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Lack of designated spaces or classrooms for special education programs	3.57	SC
2. Inadequate accessibility in terms of ramps and appropriate restroom facilities	3.64	SC
3. Lack of resources, including educational materials, books, and teaching aids suitable for students with various disabilities	3.69	SC
4. Lack of Personalized Learning Environments	3.80	SC
5. Lack of assistive technology to support students with diverse needs	3.87	SC
Overall Weighted Mean	3.71	SC

Rating Scale:

4.20-5.00-Major Challenge (MC)

3.40-4.19-Significant Challenge (SC)

2.60-3.39-Moderate Challenge (MoC)

1.80-2.59-Minor Challenge (MiC)

1.00-1.79-Not at All a Challenge (NAC)

Batanero (2022) highlights that students with impairments face various obstacles in the educational system that hinder their learning and performance. Assistive technology can help by teaching learners how to complete tasks and navigate challenging environments. Ensuring equal access to social interaction with peers is essential. However, inadequate accessibility in terms of ramps and appropriate restroom facilities got the lowest result. This implies that lack of school facilities can lead to a less conducive learning environment, which in turn affects students' attention and engagement in lessons. Additionally, academic performance is negatively impacted by inadequate school amenities.

Trainings. Table 7 indicates that the lack of specialized training programs tailored to the unique needs of special education received the highest weighted mean. This suggests that educators need access to relevant training to effectively support students with special educational needs, enabling them to work more reliably and competently with these students.

Table 7 Challenges Faced by Teachers in the Implementation of Special Education Curriculum Program along Trainings

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Limited opportunities for specialized training in special education	3.76	SC
2. Lack of specialized training programs specifically tailored to the unique requirements of special education	3.83	SC

3. Lack of resources for effective curriculum implementation	3.82	SC
4. Lack of hands-on training and guidance on how to adapt curriculum materials, use assistive technologies, and differentiate instruction to meet the specific needs of their students	3.81	SC
5. Time constraints, and attending extensive training sessions may be challenging, especially when they have other responsibilities such as lesson planning, grading, and attending meetings	3.82	SC
Overall Weighted Mean	3.81	SC

Rating Scale:

4.20-5.00-Major Challenge (MC)

3.40-4.19-Significant Challenge (SC)

2.60-3.39-Moderate Challenge (MoC)

1.80-2.59-Minor Challenge (MiC)

1.00-1.79-Not at All a Challenge (NAC)

Crispel et al. (2019) highlight the inherent conflict between high standards and special needs as a key issue in educational inclusion. Many general education teachers seek training programs to develop the necessary special education skills. In their Israeli study, interviews with ten educators who had recently completed such training revealed dissatisfaction with their lack of preparation to effectively support children with learning disabilities in regular classes. On the other hand, limited opportunities for specialized training received the lowest weighted mean, indicating that teachers struggle to access such training, hindering their professional development and ability to effect change.

Learning Resources. Table 8 highlights the challenges teachers encounter in implementing the special education curriculum for students with special needs concerning learning resources. The data shows that limited budgets, which hinder access to essential materials, assistive technologies, and educational tools for effective curriculum delivery, received the highest weighted mean score of 3.98, indicating a significant challenge. In contrast, the difficulty in providing a diverse range of resources that accommodate various learning styles, preferences, and developmental levels scored the lowest mean of 3.68, also seen as significantly challenging. The overall weighted mean of 3.83 indicates that teachers face considerable challenges related to learning resources in implementing the special education curriculum.

Table 8 Challenges Faced by Teachers in the Implementation of Special Education Curriculum Program along Learning Resources

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Struggle to find learning materials that are appropriately adapted for students with diverse needs. This includes textbooks, worksheets, and other instructional resources that may need modifications for accessibility	3.77	SC
2. Challenge in locating a diverse array of resources that cater to the varied learning styles, preferences, and developmental levels of their students	3.68	SC
3. Lack of access to, or training on, appropriate technological tools and resources that can enhance the learning experience for students with special needs	3.78	SC
4. Limited budgets, affecting the availability of resources and struggle to	3.98	SC

acquire the necessary materials, assistive technologies, and educational tools required for effective curriculum implementation		
5. Limited resources and necessary support to effectively implement differentiated teaching strategies tailored to individual learning profile	3.93	SC
Overall Weighted Mean	3.83	SC

Rating Scale:

4.20-5.00-Major Challenge (MC)

3.40-4.19-Significant Challenge (SC)

2.60-3.39-Moderate Challenge (MoC)

1.80-2.59-Minor Challenge (MiC)

1.00-1.79-Not at All a Challenge (NAC)

The table shows that limited budgets, impacting access to essential resources and assistive technologies for effective curriculum implementation, received the highest weighted mean. This indicates that insufficient funding hinders teachers from obtaining necessary materials, affecting their ability to support students with special education needs. Conversely, the challenge of providing diverse resources for various learning styles and developmental levels received the lowest weighted mean, suggesting that teachers find it difficult to implement differentiated instruction to meet their students' diverse academic needs.

The American University, Washington, DC (2020) found that students in schools with higher budgets showed significant improvements in reading and mathematics. Additional resources linked to achievement, such as smaller class sizes, extra support, early childhood programs, and teacher salaries, also require increased funding.

Learning Strategies. Table 9 highlights the challenges teachers face in implementing the special education curriculum for students with special needs regarding learning strategies. The highest weighted mean score of 3.75 indicates that a lack of training or access to appropriate technologies significantly hampers the learning experience. Conversely, the challenge of implementing personalized learning strategies for a diverse class received the lowest mean score of 3.62, also interpreted as significantly challenging. Overall, the average score of 3.64 suggests that teachers encounter substantial difficulties with learning strategies in this context.

Table 9 Challenges Faced by Teachers in the Implementation of Special Education Curriculum Program along Learning Strategies

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Implement personalized learning strategies for each student in a class with diverse needs can be challenging and time-consuming	3.62	SC
2. Limited training on differentiated instruction	3.67	SC
3. Address the needs of the entire class while ensuring that students with disabilities receive the necessary one-on-one attention	3.59	SC
4. Lack of training or access to appropriate technologies that can enhance the learning experience for students with special needs	3.75	SC

5. Employ creative and interactive strategies to maintain student interest	3.56	SC
Overall Weighted Mean	3.64	SC

Rating Scale:

4.20-5.00-Major Challenge (MC)

3.40-4.19-Significant Challenge (SC)

2.60-3.39-Moderate Challenge (MoC)

1.80-2.59-Minor Challenge (MiC)

1.00-1.79-Not at All a Challenge (NAC)

The table indicates that the lack of training or access to appropriate technologies for enhancing the learning experience for students with special needs received the highest weighted mean. Interviews with special education teachers revealed that this lack of training and technology makes it particularly challenging to address the diverse needs of their students. Conversely, the lowest weighted mean reflects the difficulty and time required to implement personalized learning strategies for each student in a diverse classroom. This indicates that adapting lessons to meet individual educational needs is a significant challenge, testing teachers' expertise and commitment.

Dikusar (2018) notes the gradual removal of borders in the modern world, which extends beyond economic and political processes. Today, individuals can access medical and educational services globally, regardless of citizenship. Specialist commissions are developing regulations to manage these international connections.

Moreover, students with disabilities should have equal opportunities to reach their full potential, receiving the same educational training as their peers without disabilities, free from discrimination. Advances in the IT industry have made digital technologies widely accessible, offering new options for both educators and students.

Common Problems Encountered by the Learners with Special Educational Needs

Facilities and Equipment. Table 10 shows the common problems encountered by the learners with special educational needs in terms of facilities and equipment. The figures reveal that among the challenges faced by teachers in terms of facilities and equipment lack of assistive technology got the highest weighted mean score of 3.82 or interpreted as moderate problem while inaccessible physical environment got the lowest weighted mean score of 3.44 interpreted as moderate problem. The overall weighted mean of 3.64 means that there are moderate problems encountered by the learners with special educational needs.

Table 10 Common Problem Faced by Learners with Special Educational Needs along Facilities and Equipment

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Inaccessible Physical Environment	3.44	MP
2. Inadequate Classroom Space	3.50	MP
3. Lack of Assistive Technology	3.82	MP
4. Insufficient Learning Resources	3.80	MP

5. Limited Communication Support	3.62	MP
6. Limited Physical Education Opportunities	3.65	MP
Overall Weighted Mean	3.64	MP

Rating Scale:

4.20-5.00-Major Challenge (MC)

3.40-4.19-Significant Challenge (SC)

2.60-3.39-Moderate Challenge (MoC)

1.80-2.59-Minor Challenge (MiC)

1.00-1.79-Not at All a Challenge (NAC)

The table reveals that the lack of assistive technology is the most significant issue for learners with special educational needs regarding facilities and equipment. This highlights the necessity for appropriate resources to ensure these children feel supported. Insufficient access to technology can negatively affect their academic performance. Conversely, the lowest concern is the inaccessible physical environment, indicating that children with disabilities thrive when provided with appropriate resources and support in well-designed classrooms.

Ahmed's (2018) findings align with this study, noting that special education professionals collaborate with families and individuals needing support. Assistive technology is a key resource they provide. Understanding educators' perceptions of assistive technology is crucial, as there is a strong correlation between their beliefs and its usage. Teachers must recognize this relationship and its potential impact on students with disabilities throughout their education.

Mode of Instruction. Table 11 highlights the common challenges faced by learners with special educational needs regarding the mode of instruction. The data shows that the limited use of multisensory techniques received the highest weighted mean score of 3.78, indicating a major problem, while insufficient differentiation had the lowest score of 3.60, also seen as a major issue. The overall weighted mean of 3.71 indicates significant problems encountered by these learners.

Table 11 Common Problem Faced by Learners with Special Educational Needs along Mode of Instruction

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Insufficient Differentiation	3.60	MP
2. Limited Use of Multisensory Techniques	3.78	MP
3. Barriers to Communication	3.72	MP
4. Ineffective Use of Assistive Technology	3.65	MP
5. Limited Time for Individualized Attention	3.75	MP
6. Challenges in Assessment and Evaluation	3.76	MP
Overall Weighted Mean	3.71	MP

Rating Scale:

4.20-5.00-Major Challenge (MC)

3.40-4.19-Significant Challenge (SC)

2.60-3.39-Moderate Challenge (MoC)

1.80-2.59-Minor Challenge (MiC)

1.00-1.79-Not at All a Challenge (NAC)

The table indicates that the limited use of multisensory techniques received the highest weighted mean among the common problems faced by learners with special educational needs. This suggests that teachers lack training in multimodal teaching methods, hindering effective learning for these students, particularly those with learning difficulties. Conversely, insufficient differentiation received the lowest weighted mean, indicating that teachers struggle to tailor assignments to individual skill levels. Effective differentiation aims to provide appropriate content that meets each student's needs and fosters engagement, especially for those with learning challenges.

This was supported by Williams (2023), stating that noting that multisensory teaching methods engage various senses sight, sound, touch, and movement to help students form deeper connections with the material, enhancing accessibility and retention. These approaches effectively engage students with learning difficulties and address their diverse needs.

Learning Materials. Table 12 highlights common issues faced by learners with special educational needs regarding learning materials. The data indicates that the limited availability of audio books received the highest weighted mean score of 4.04, marking it as a major problem. In contrast, the lack of adapted materials often customized to fit specific learning styles and abilities scored lower at 3.83, also classified as a major problem. The overall weighted mean of 3.91 suggests that significant challenges exist for these learners in accessing appropriate learning materials.

Table 12 Common Problem Faced by Learners with Special Educational Needs along Learning Materials

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Lack of adapted materials for learners often require materials that are modified or customized to accommodate their specific learning styles, abilities, or disabilities	3.83	MP
2. Inadequate multisensory resources or materials that engage multiple senses can make it challenging for these learners to comprehend and retain information effectively	3.89	MP
3. Insufficient braille or large print materials	3.89	MP
4. Limited Availability of Audiobooks	4.04	MP
5. Mismatched Learning Levels	3.93	MP
6. Inaccessibility of Learning Materials	3.88	MP
Overall Weighted Mean	3.91	MP

Rating Scale:

4.20-5.00-Major Challenge (MC)

3.40-4.19-Significant Challenge (SC)

2.60-3.39-Moderate Challenge (MoC)

1.80-2.59-Minor Challenge (MiC)

1.00-1.79-Not at All a Challenge (NAC)

The table shows that the limited availability of audiobooks poses the greatest challenge for learners with special educational needs. This lack hinders their reading skills, as audio books aid in recognizing letter sounds and word structures, enhancing vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking. Conversely, the lack of adapted materials, which should be modified for diverse learning styles and abilities, received the lowest mean score. This deficiency can impede educational progress, limit participation, exacerbate inequities, and harm students' mental health. Therefore, it is crucial for educators and policymakers to prioritize the development of adapted materials to ensure all students have equal opportunities for academic success.

Coustillac (2020) emphasizes that audiobooks are vital for academics, benefiting not only struggling readers but also advanced learners eager to read above grade level. For English language learners, audiobooks provide crucial practice and support, enhancing their language proficiency.

Proposed Learning and Development Plan to Improve the Learning Delivery Readiness of Secondary Special Education Teachers in Camarines Norte

Special education teachers face challenges in delivering and implementing special education programs. To address these issues, a learning and development plan aims to enhance their ability to meet the educational needs of students with special educational needs.

Table 13 presents this proposed plan, which identifies six key areas of concern, along with corresponding objectives, strategies, recommended programs, projects, activities (PPAs), success indicators, time frames, and budget estimates to improve the readiness of special education teachers in learning delivery.

Table 13 Proposed Learning and Development Plan to Improve the Learning Delivery Readiness of Special Education Teachers in Secondary Schools in Camarines Norte

Program Objectives	Areas of concerns	Strategies	Recommended Programs, Projects, and Activities (PPAs)	Success Indicator	Time Frame	Indicative Budget (Php)
To ensure that general education classroom are inclusive and support co-teaching models where special education and general education teachers collaborate	Lack of personalized learning environments	Training sessions and collaboration with other educators and parents.	Collaborative Teaching Projects: Partnering with general education teachers to integrate special education strategies, like peer coaching. Teachers observing and providing feedback to each other to improve teaching practices.	Improve personalized learning environments	Quarterly	5,000 - 10,000

Enrichment of technical skills among Special education teacher	Lack Specialized training programs specifically tailored to the unique requirement of special education	Trainings and seminars on technical skills that responds to needs of special education	Specialized training programs that focused on tools like Google Classroom, Microsoft teams, and specific assistive technologies.	Enhance technical skills through interactive and multimedia tools	Quarterly	28,000 - 60,000
To secure additional funding through grants, donations, and partnership with community organizations and businesses	Limited budgets, affecting the availability of resources and struggle to acquire the necessary materials, assistive technologies, and educational tools required for effective curriculum implementation	Research low-cost assistive devices, and DIY solutions, and provide training to educators on how to utilize these resources effectively	Professional development workshops, webinars, and training sessions focused on innovative teaching approaches, resource optimization techniques, and creative problem-solving	Promote innovative teaching approaches, resource optimization techniques, and creative problem-solving	Quarterly	28,000 - 60,000
To provide access to set of tools that are essential to teaching and learning process	Lack of training or access to appropriate technologies that can enhance the learning experience for students with special needs	Workshops on utilizing assistive technology	Workshops and webinars: Regularly participate in workshops and webinars that include topics about using technology for differentiation, digital accessibility, and emerging trends in special education.	Boosted and competent procedural skills among Special education teacher	Quarterly	28,000 - 60,000
To provide access to set of tools that are essential to teaching and learning process	Assistive technology to support students with diverse needs	Trainings and workshops on assistive technological and individualized learning platform	Participate in workshops and webinars that include topics about using assistive technology for differentiation, digital accessibility, and emerging trends	Improved skills, knowledge, and productivity of special education teachers.	Quarterly	28,000-60,000

			in special education.			
To increase recruitment and/or steady ratio and proportion staff	Special education Teaching Staff Development	Planning of additional Special education Teaching Staff recruitment	Certification and advanced degree programs for teachers seeking to specialize in special education. Master's or Doctoral scholarship focused on special education.	Proportionate staff and workload	Annually	150,000 - 300,000 per year

Note: The indicative budget is subject for the approval of the Revised Guidelines on the use of the Special Education Fund (SEF).

Learning and development (L&D) is vital in human resource management, enhancing staff competencies to maximize client satisfaction through high-quality results. The main goal of L&D is to create a framework for policy-making, budgeting, and managing the efficiency of learning initiatives, aligning them with the Division's objectives and strategic direction. This framework helps define roles, responsibilities, and processes for planning, monitoring, and evaluating projects and their impact (DepEd SDO Caloocan, 2024).

Essentially, a Learning and Development Plan empowers special education teachers to grow and excel in supporting students with disabilities, leading to improved educational outcomes. LDPs provide structured frameworks for professional development, instructional enhancement, and individualized support, contributing to teacher fulfillment and student success. Ongoing professional development for special education teachers is crucial for achieving excellence and equity in education.

Montezana (2023) emphasizes that a skilled workforce is an invaluable resource for any organization. Even top performers require training to succeed, highlighting the need for effective L&D plans in educational institutions to recruit and develop capable individuals.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. SPED teachers in secondary schools in Camarines Norte are female, mostly married, 310 are receiving teachers, and have been in the position for 5 years and below in their position and attended 1-3 relevant trainings and most of them have units in Master's Program.
2. Secondary schools in Camarines Norte have a certain level of readiness in terms of learning delivery, learning resources, and in terms of facilities and equipment.
3. In the implementation of the special education curriculum program for students with special educational needs the teachers faced significant challenge in terms of facilities and equipment, learning resources, and learning strategies.
4. The major problems encountered by the learners with special educational needs are along of the facilities and equipment, mode of instruction, and learning materials.
5. A Learning and Development Plan was made to address the challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of special education curriculum program and to lessen the common problems faced by learners with special educational needs.

In view of the foregoing conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. The academe may provide specialized training and professional development opportunities for teachers, staff, and administrators on effective strategies for teaching students with diverse learning needs, including special education methodologies and accommodations as well as promoting peer support and inclusion initiatives that foster positive relationships and social integration among students with and without disabilities, such as inclusive extracurricular activities and student organizations.
2. The Local Government Units in Camarines Norte may work closely with local schools to guarantee that they have the tools and assistance need to efficiently assist learners with unique needs, including sharing best practices and coordinating services as well as conducting awareness campaigns and sensitization programs to educate the community about the rights and needs of students with special needs, in addition to encouraging acceptance and inclusion and offering support services and resources for parents of children with special needs, such as information about available services, support groups, and guidance on navigating the educational system.
3. The Department of Education may develop and enforce policies that ensure equitable educational opportunities for students with diverse needs. This includes implementing laws like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and they can allocate funding and resources to schools to support special education programs, such as providing specialized equipment, technology, and personnel like additional special education teachers, aides, and therapists. By taking these actions, the Department of Education can help provide an engaging learning atmosphere where learners with special needs have the support and resources they need to thrive academically and socially.
4. Future researchers may leverage insights from diverse fields such as psychology, neuroscience, education, and technology to develop holistic approaches to supporting students with special needs. Interdisciplinary collaboration can lead to innovative interventions and strategies that address the complex needs of diverse learners.

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