

Teachers 2 Teach: Exploring the Experiences of Receiving Teachers of Cluster 1 in the Division of Gen. Trias City

Lynette P. Rue^{*}, Mylyn R. Joya², and Mary Hope A. Mallorca³

^{*}Department of Education, Division of General Trias City, Cavite, Philippines

²Angel L Bawalan Elementary School, Department of Education, Division of General Trias, Cavite

³Javalera Elementary School, Department of Education, Division of General Trias, Cavite

^{*}Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

Receiving teachers plays a vital role in guaranteeing inclusive education, specifically as the major instrument in fostering equitable learning environment, and ensuring students with special needs are provided with better learning experiences. Provided this, this study aims to explore the lived experiences of receiving teachers in Cluster 1 in the Division of General Trias City. A total of seven (7) respondents participated in the face-to-face interview, selected through purposive sampling. The study utilized phenomenological research approach, data were gathered by the use of validated interview guide questions, and were organized through coding method. Subsequently, the results were analyzed through thematic analysis which provided three (3) generated themes for each research questions. Specifically, the findings revealed that receiving teachers view their experience as a transformative journey amidst range of complex challenges, including insufficient training, lack of instructional resourced, and inadequate funding and support. The result also highlighted the advantages they obtain such as sense of fulfillment and professional growth. Recommendations were made in order to strengthen inclusive practices and support structures to teachers, eventually resulting to equitable learning opportunities for all learners.

Keywords: Challenges, inclusive education, learners with special needs, lived experiences, receiving teachers

INTRODUCTION

The 1987 Philippine constitution guarantees the right to education of every Filipino, and mandates the government to provide accessible and quality education at all levels (Chan Robles Virtual Law Library, 2024). Specifically, the law states that “The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make education accessible to all”. With this, different programs are being offered in the country’s system such as the introduction of “Inclusive Education for All” (Llego, 2024), which reinforces the implementation of the “Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support for Inclusive Education Act,” which aims to ensure that the mentioned group of learners also have access to quality education and can receive necessary support services (DepEd, 2022). Align with DepEd MATATAG Agenda, TA-Take good care of learners by promoting learner well-being, inclusive education and positive learning environment and G-give support to teachers to teacher better. In line with this, it also fosters the establishing inclusive learning resource centers of learners with disabilities in all school districts, municipalities and cities, providing for standards and appropriating funds. Furthermore, the mentioned program also ensures that all learners with disabilities, whether enrolled in public or private schools, shall be accorded services and reasonable accommodation based on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and shall have the right to avail of the appropriate support and related services.

Considering this, it is important that receiving teachers undergo trainings in order to be an effective teacher to the learners with special needs, specifically in terms of creating learning environment and providing

appropriate support (London College of Teacher and Trainers, 2024). In specific, Derasin (2023) stressed that Filipino special education (SPED) teachers have multifaceted responsibilities or the academic and social success of learners with special needs. Because of this, various research concluded that the attrition rate for the mentioned educators is extremely high compared to other profession. As per the statistics, the burnout rate among special education teachers can reach 75% over a ten-year period, indicating the need of improvement in their working conditions, receiving of essential support, and professional development opportunities (Sampaga, 2022).

Moreover, in a study of Mandabon (2023), it was emphasized that Filipino receiving teachers need to collaborate with various professionals in handling learners with special needs, and provide supportive and inclusive educational environment. In particular, one of the duties of SPED teachers is to work closely with various specialists in order to accurately assess the needs and strengths of learners, essential in creating a comprehensive and tailored individual education plan for them (Gega & Petro, 2023). Also, the author stressed that role of medical professionals such as psychologists and developmental pediatricians in providing insights into the child's cognitive and emotional needs, as well as in addressing their medical and developmental concerns. Given this, Anggreriyanti (2020) cited that the said educators are essential components of a comprehensive education system, specifically their specialized knowledge and skills, since are the main facilitator of an inclusive education for all students regardless of their background or abilities.

In connection, Izak (2024) reiterated the significance of continuous professional development of SPED teachers as they need to be equipped with relevant knowledge and skills necessary to address the diverse needs of students with special needs. The author stressed that these educators are expected to understand the various disability classifications of learners and implement appropriate strategies and modification in learning process. Also, they need to implement differentiated instruction and teaching approaches that can offer different content, process, and learning outcomes, which can effectively accommodate the diverse learning preferences of learners. As per Perkins (2024), SPED educators who are well-equipped can effectively embrace the diversity and implement inclusive teaching practices, which can lead their students to reach their full potential and foster lifelong learning.

On the other hand, Filipino SPED teachers encounter various challenges that significantly impact their abilities to provide effective education to their specific group of learners. As per the study of Kilag et al. (2024), these teachers lack sufficient training and professional development opportunities that hampers their abilities to effectively fulfill their duties. Also, there is an insufficient financial and administrative support for the said education program, resulting to lack of enough teaching materials and other resources (Mirador & Lluz, 2021). Further, they also struggle due to behavioral and communication issues in their class, which includes the mood swings and restlessness of students, leading them to a more complicated teaching process.

Taking this into account, in order to spur on the needs of teachers in implementing inclusive education among Filipino learners with special needs under the MATATAG curriculum, this study primarily aims to investigate the living experiences of these receiving teachers. Along with this, the advantages and challenges they encounter will also be determined. Provided the findings of these study, recommendations and effective strategies can be offered to SPED teachers and educational institutions to help them ensure quality education.

Statement of the Problem

The main objective of this study is to describe the lived experiences of the receiving teachers in terms of the advantages and the challenges their encountered. Specifically, this will answer the following questions:

1. How will the co-participants describe their lived experiences as receiving teachers?
2. What are the advantages of being a receiving teacher?
3. What are the challenges encountered as a receiving teacher?

Significance of the Study

The results of the study were beneficial to the following:

Receiving Teachers. Through the representation of their lived experiences in this study, this can provide them practical recommendations and appropriate strategies in order to improve classroom management, teaching techniques, and ensure effective implementation of inclusive education.

Learners with Special Needs. Despite not being the direct subject of the study, they can indirectly benefit from the potential improvement of learning environment that its findings aim to promote. This can lead to enhancement of teacher training and support, educational pedagogies, and other significant inclusive practices.

Educational Institutions. This study provides significant information regarding the current needs and conditions of the receiving teachers, which can help them create better planning on professional development opportunities for teachers, allocation of resources, and inclusive learning environment.

Policy Makers. This study can provide them empirical data that are necessary to develop or revise relevant policies and support regarding the implementation of inclusive education, particularly to guarantee its effectiveness and address teachers' challenges.

Future researchers. This study can serve as a guide for parallel or in-depth research on current topics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is numerous literature that concerns on the receiving teachers' experiences at the workplace. This research believed that looking at the experiences of receiving teachers will make us understand their ways of dealing with special needs learners.

This study centered on social constructivism, as it affords individuals with disabilities greater autonomy and authority in defining and directing their own learning. Also, using social constructivism ideas, teachers can connect the students to the material. Special Education teachers are able to connect the material to the students in an attempt to bridge the gap created by the student's ability. Social constructivism is recognized by the researchers as the most appropriate framework for this study specifically in structured face-to-face interviews.

The key issues which underlie the research area teachers deal with issues in handling the learners with special needs such as stress and burnout factors burdensome paper works and difficulties relating to working with colleagues and administrators.

Receiving teachers dealt various issues in handling the learners with special needs. In a study of Jeon et al. (2022), it was noted that SPED teachers face unique job demands that significantly contribute to their burnout and stress level. Specifically, they are expected to manage challenging behaviors and emotional situation of learners, which cause them emotional exhaustion that diminish their teaching quality and negatively affect learner outcomes.

Consequently, this claim was supported by a survey of Teaching Channel (2023), which revealed that approximately 25% of SPED teachers leave their position each year, which is significantly higher compared to general education teachers. The study emphasized that this attrition is primarily due to emotional exhaustion, feeling of inadequacy, and high level of burnout. Provided this, the author suggested the provision of adequate support and resources, as well as the implementation of comprehensive training for SPED teachers, specifically in terms of effective classroom management to help them focus on their teaching duties without the added burden and stress.

Additionally, Auer (2023) also specificized that SPED teacher reach high level of burnout due to excessive workloads that exceed their capabilities to manage effectively. She stressed that this includes not only teaching responsibilities but also administrative tasks such as tons of paper works, evaluation and managing data collection for each learner, as well as creating, implementing and monitoring individualized education plans.

Because of this, Ripley (2024) emphasized the importance of collaboration between the SPED teachers, parents, and various professionals to ensure quality education, as well as alleviate the challenges in delivering instruction among learners with special needs. She stressed that sharing responsibilities can effectively help in

aligning educational goals and expectations, ensuring the creation of supportive environment tailored to learner's needs. Also, they can pool resources and knowledge that can help in adapting appropriate teaching methods and tools, thereby improving learners understanding and engagement.

Moreover, as per the study of Tutt (2021), it was concluded establishing strong parent-teacher relationships significantly contribute to improve learner outcomes, specifically higher grades, better attendance, and decreases behavioral issues. It was emphasized that when parents or guardians are informed and involved, they have better

opportunities to support their child's learning process. Also, Azad et al. (2022) stated that regular, open, and honest communication between the mentioned key stakeholders enables better understanding of the learner's needs and challenges, leading to a more tailored and effective educational strategies.

Meanwhile, SPED teachers also report lack of sufficient training and professional development opportunities, creating a gap and difficulties in selecting appropriate teaching strategies and addressing individual student needs effectively (Allam & Martin, 2021). Also, Quizana and Espiritu (2023) cited the shortage of teaching materials and resources, which limit the effectiveness of teaching and learning process in the mentioned education program. Further, behavioral issues and communication difficulties among learners with disabilities is one of the most challenging factors as it also demands SPED teacher to acquire specialized education and resources to address effectively (Kilag et al., 2024).

On the other hand, Arbor Associates (2022) noted how the mentioned profession serves a crucial role in the educational system, granting them a unique opportunity to make significant difference in the lives of learners with special needs. The fulfillment of helping them develop essential academic, social, and behavioral skills can be a profound aspect of their teaching careers. Also, the author noted that SPED teachers can also take various career path beyond traditional classroom teaching, such as management and advocacy within non-profit organization, given the specialized trainings they attained. Further, one of the advantages of their profession is the building of deep, meaningful relationship with their students and their families (Psychology School Guide, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative research design, specifically phenomenological approach, to investigate the lived experiences of receiving teachers. Through this method, this study aims to attain in-depth insights into how receiving teacher view their roles and interactions in the classroom. It will also facilitate the determination of both positive and negative aspects they experience in their profession. Along with this, a total of seven (7) receiving teachers in Cluster 1, specifically in Javalera Elementary School participated in the current study. These participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that they directly fit the specific characteristics of a receiving teacher, and can provide relevant insight into their experiences. Meanwhile, the study also presented limitations as it only focused only a single school and a relatively small sample size, which restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader context.

Moreover, the data gathered through the use of self-made interview guide was compiled, collated, and summarized separately according to research questions. The responses for each item were categorized based on the specific problems raised. Also, the collected data were analyzed through the use of coding method and thematic analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question No. 1: How will the co-participants describe their lived experiences as receiving teachers?

Based on the responses of the participants, it was revealed that the lived experiences of receiving teachers is a dynamic combination of personal and professional growth, fulfillment, and various challenges. In specific, the following generated themes emerged:

Theme 1: Teaching Learners with Special Needs (LSNs) is Both Challenging and a Transformative Experience

Receiving teachers view their lived experiences as a journey of acquiring both significant transformation, while also facing various difficulties. In relation to its positive influence, it was emphasized that the special demand of the mentioned profession allowed them to develop more patience, compassion, and creativity that is vital to their practice. Likewise, Janet (2022) concluded that being SPED teachers profoundly cultivates essential qualities in educators, equipping them invaluable skills that can be useful in implementing inclusive education. Also, it was mentioned that their positive traits being enhanced through their profession provides them rewarding satisfaction, while also various challenges. In relation, the participants noted that they often encounter disruptions and shortcomings related to managing time and motivating students. In support, Allam and Martin (2021) mentioned how Filipino SPED teachers systematic issues such as inadequate training, limited resources, and emotional strains that negatively impact their performance in educating LSNs.

Theme 2: Teaching Learners with Special Needs (LSNs) Requires Emotional and Instructional Adaptability

In this theme, it was highlighted how receiving teachers acknowledged the demand of their profession of flexibility in terms of dealing with the emotional aspect of learners, and their unique learning needs and preferences. They emphasized how they are expected to employ diverse teaching approaches that is appropriate to LSNs' unique capabilities and learning pace. Also, they noted that adaptability also involves their capacity to manage emotional responses, and ensure that learners are effectively engaged in the learning process. In line with, Tabilin and Tombali (2024) confirmed that Filipino SPED teachers employ differentiated instruction and individualized education programs tailored to their students' specific requirements, guaranteeing adequate support. Also, Abantas (2022) stressed that these teachers strongly agree the importance of being patient and energetic in creating comfortable classroom atmosphere.

Theme 3: Teaching Learners with Special Needs (LSNs) Builds Relationship Between Teachers and Students

The participants emphasized their lived experiences as a platform for them to establish a deeper and meaningful relationship with learners. Through this, they obtain personal and professional development, while students receive the inclusive education they need. Similarly, Consiglio (2022) stressed that strong teacher-student relationship helps the latter to develop higher learning engagement and better academic performance. Also, the author noted that the mentioned relationship would not only benefit students but also improves teaching capacities of educators, considering that their responsibilities require them to develop a more effective instructional competencies and strategies.

Research Question No. 2: What are the advantages of being a receiving teacher?

While their roles entail numerous difficulties, receiving teachers stressed that their lived experiences offered profound opportunities and advantages, leading them to achieve personal and professional growth. In particular, the following themes were generated:

Theme 1: Receiving Teachers Acquire Professional Development and Growth

Respondents emphasized that handling students with special needs is an effective mechanism that challenged them and gradually improved their teaching competencies. It was noted that the occurring difficulties receiving teachers encounter urge them to explore different teaching strategies and techniques that can cater the unique needs of their students. This implies that acquiring significant experiences in teaching LSNs can lead them to gain better understanding about inclusive education, resulting to continuous teaching innovation and professional development. As per Poht (2023), LSNs are the one who encourages teachers to take significant actions toward their own professional growth— evolving along with the increasing educational demands, adapting to diverse learning needs, and utilizing innovative pedagogies and technology advancements.

Theme 2: Receiving Teachers Develops Empathy and Inclusivity

In terms of this theme, receiving teachers emphasize how teaching LSNs provide them the opportunity to attain emotional and social growth while also effectively implementing inclusive education. Specifically, they described how their roles helped them cultivate their sense of love, empathy, and understanding among both their colleagues and students, which mirrors acceptance and inclusivity in their learning environment. Also, this enable them to develop a deeper sense of compassion and patience that is essential in creating a safe space for learners. Since they become aware of the unique challenges and perspective of LSNs, the said educators are fueled to develop emotional and intellectual empathy to cater such (Ockerman et al., 2020). Also, Friedman (2019) cited that empathy often extends to greater cultural inclusivity and responsiveness, promoting social justice and equitability in education.

Theme 2: Receiving Teachers Feels Reward and Fulfillment

Because of the joy of seeing their students with special needs receive adequate and better quality of education,

receiving teachers acknowledged the emotional satisfaction and a strong sense of fulfillment as one of the advantages of their profession. They find a strong sense of purpose in witnessing the learning progress and milestones of their learners, leading them to better understand the true essence of teaching. In study of Tayco and Motus (2024) it was stated that teaching learners with special needs is not only a career but a calling that offers intrinsic rewards, a true sense of purpose, and a lasting impact on both students and teachers' lives.

Research Question No. 3: What are the challenges encountered as a receiving teacher?

Receiving teachers encounters complex array of difficulties in teaching students with special needs, and ensuring the effective implementation of inclusive education. These challenges significantly impact their performances and the learning process of LSNs, implying the needs of it to be addressed. Given this, the following generated themes emerged:

Theme 1: Receiving Teachers Encounter Behavioral Management Issues

Teachers handling learners with special needs emphasized that one of their recurring challenges is the unpredictable and disruptive behavior of their students. Specifically, they described that their students often exhibit aggressive behavior and actions that causes disturbances in their learning process and environment. It was also implied that the difficulty in controlling this unprecedented behaviors and gestures challenges not only the teachers but also the entire class, disrupting the appropriate direction and attention of learning. In line with this, Alhwaiti (2022) also mentioned that challenging behaviors of LSNs, including aggression, tantrums, bullying, and attention deficit disorders (ADHD) symptoms are the most demanding issues to deal with since it requires teachers to employ consistent, individualized approaches. Also, the author stressed that these behaviors does not only negative influence the targeted students but can also disrupt the classroom environment and contribute to teacher burnout.

Theme 2: Receiving Teachers Encounter Communication Barriers

Majority of respondents agreed that difficulties in having communication with learners with special needs is one of their major problems as receiving teachers. They explained that most of their learners often struggle to express themselves or comprehend instructions, which significantly hampers the process of effective teaching-learning process and achieving better academic progress. Consequently, miscommunications creates gap between teacher and students, causing the emergence of other existing challenges. As per Nisa and Kusmiati (2019), receiving teachers have limited communication skills with their students due to latter's psychological and physical development barrier. Considering this, the author emphasized that teachers must utilize more personalized communication strategies to effectively connect with their students, instead of only relying on group communication

Theme 3: Receiving Teachers Suffers from Inadequate Support and Resources

In this theme, receiving teachers revealed that they endure the lack of essential teaching resources and appropriate institutional support, which hinders them to maximize their capabilities in delivering a better quality inclusive education for LSNs. They specified that there is an absence of professional development opportunities and limited access to adaptive learning resources and teaching instruments, which makes it harder for them to address and effectively accommodate the unique needs and preferences of LSNs. According to the study of Kilag et al. (2024), special education teachers in the Philippines face significant challenges including insufficient teacher trainings; lack of essential teaching materials, assistive technologies, and accessible infrastructure; shortage of government funding, which all leads them to emotional and physical stress and fatigue (Bañez, 2023). Considering this, Allan and Martin (2021) noted that addressing these issues requires increased allocation of funding, comprehensive professional development opportunities, and more inclusive practices.

Theme 4: Receiving Teachers Suffers from Inadequate Support and Resources

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CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the lived experiences of receiving teachers includes a profound personal and professional growth despite a range of complex challenges. Specifically, this allowed them to gain progressive transformation in terms of their instructional competencies and their emotional capabilities essential in inclusive education implementation. Also, they revealed how their experiences helped them establish strong relationship with LSNs that is beneficial to teaching-learning process. Along with this, the results showed that they acknowledged the advantages of the profession including skills development, enhancement of empathy and sense of inclusivity, and attainment of the feeling of reward and fulfillment. On the other hand, the study also identified the challenges receiving teachers encounter, specifically behavioral management issues, communication barriers and insufficient resources and support. Overall, the study emphasized the transformative journey of receiving teachers amidst various challenges in order to guarantee better quality education for LSNs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the study recommended appropriate measures to improve the experiences of receiving teachers of Cluster 1 in the Division of General Trias City in terms of implementing inclusive education, as well as address the challenges they face. First, they are encouraged to actively pursue professional development opportunities and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to adapt best practices in handling LSNs. Educational institutions should provide model training programs, adaptive instructional resources, accessible facilities, and psychosocial support to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education. Also, national government and policy makers must allocate adequate funding, while also crafting policies and amending existing provisions that would address the existing gaps of the said education. Further, future researchers are encouraged to explore the present topic using quantitative method, or deepen

the discussion with the same research approach in order to develop an appropriate intervention plan to ensure the success of the implementation of inclusive education.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines and principles for research involving human subjects. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant ethics committee prior to data collection. All participants were informed of the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, including parents or guardians of minor participants.

Conflict Of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest in the conduct and publication of this research. No financial or personal relationships influenced the outcomes of this study.

Data Availability

The data collected for this research are not publicly available due to privacy and confidentiality concerns.

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