



**TEACHING IN AN EXTRA MILE: “TINGUHA”
- A LOOK AT THE EXPERIENCES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
TEACHERS IN THE NEW NORMAL**

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Abstract:

The disruption caused by COVID-19 presented challenges in face-to-face educational settings for learners with special needs and disabilities. Besides, teachers needed support in making their lessons adaptive and responsive to the learning of students with special educational needs. Based on a descriptive approach, this paper discussed special education teachers' experiences as they change over to distance learning in this new normal. This research attempts to structure an accurate framework of special education teachers' explicit attitudes and experiences. The approach that followed for this study was a descriptive approach that provided a cautious framework of special education teachers' explicit attitudes and experiences. Results showed that special education teachers had varying experiences while implementing their teaching in the new settings of education that were influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. They require more support, work tools, innovation, flexibility, and unlimited efforts they offer the learners. Moreover, teachers assisted parents in controlling children with disabilities through online facilitation of communication, homeschooling, parent engagement, psychological safety, and empathetic language strategies. The general essence is that teachers of students with special needs needed to connect with and establish relationships to tailor their teaching to fit the needs of the learners, and in the end, it was durability.

Keywords: special education, SPED teacher, tinguha, new normal

1. Introduction

COVID-19 has brought a test to schools, teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders. Numerous school districts are adopting online activities to continue learning even when schools are closed (Organization for Economic Co-operation and

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Development, 2020). Teachers in special education feel various emotions and experiences throughout the pandemic (Zhang *et al.*, 2020). As special education teachers teach in the new normal, 'there is bewildering and misunderstanding of how they will teach in a new setup, what things to teach to students that the teachers have workload, the environment that learners have, and the connotation for fair education. Due to the sudden changes in the new education system, teachers face many challenges. To continue the learners' learning in modular instruction is an alternative approach, but it results in different challenges. Despite that, teachers must keep a check on their students' progress in their learning. The teacher should do home visits to help their learners (Llego, 2021). Teachers experience difficulties finding virtual strategies compatible with an online curriculum to deal with students with disabilities. Appropriately, students with disabilities experience hardship in educational aspects, apart from losing their health needs during the pandemic (Jalali & Safta, 2020).

It was stated by Dietrich *et al.* (2020) that even though some teachers and classes are already prepared to carry out distance instruction, the teaching and learning process must be adapted quickly, even in the absence of training, and the ability to plan in a short period. Therefore, along with the catastrophe in health, the sudden pandemic has resulted in an educational crisis, uncertainty, and innovation force. It must act immediately on the new education system in perspective in learning (Dayagbil *et al.*, 2021). The special education conditions and the needs of many of the support exacerbate it. Continuing the improvement of students with additional needs is necessary because the rate of development they make in their classes in face-to-face has stopped in the middle of their learning (Long, 2021).

In the Philippines, to continue the same quality of education, the Department of Education (DepEd) established learning modalities where students with disabilities can access their learning without being present in school (Abrazado, J., Namoco, S., & Dalonos, S., 2021). They have alternative learning modes implemented throughout the country. One is blended learning, giving modules to students, watching television, listening to the radio, and mostly online classes (Malandog, R. P., 2022). Furthermore, special education teachers in the country give first-hand approaches to students with disabilities regarding their learning. Nevertheless, Toquero (2021) appeared in his research study that teaching students with disabilities is more challenging because of the designing modules and making lessons about their needs that need to be addressed. Due to the lack of specialized training for emergency remote teaching, they have increased the burden of delivering the quality of learning and the accessibility of education. In addition, related situations in education have emerged locally despite the challenges faced by teachers in Davao del Sur. Nelson C. Lopez, a Schools Division Superintendent, said that education can withstand the risks of COVID-19. The Davao del Sur division assured all stakeholders that it would continue regardless of the health crisis arising.

In Nel Noddings' (2005) theoretical conception of care, an international education researcher framed education aims to build mutual connections between teachers and learners. She believed that the framework of care is that the teacher must be accountable

for creating a caring relationship with the learner and teaching them to care for others. Everyone wants to be cared for, and truly understanding the heart of the cared-for teachers will provide some tools for their likes, dislikes, needs, and care needs. As a teacher, you need to immerse yourself in being cared for; you need a model for caring, and students must develop their ability to care (Buchanan *et al.*, 2022). Many issues question schools' potential to establish and provide nurturing relationships. In particular, the current educational framework, a high-pressure test, with its standardization and amount of public responsibility, is the outcome of how teachers plan, execute, and evaluate student learning decisions.

It is also a high priority to recognize the contrasting issues or experiences the teachers face in handling SPED classes during the pandemic. This study tackles teachers' experiences in special education, the challenges in their teaching, how they try to cope with the situation, and the remediation and efforts they give to their learners in the new normal. The researchers may read the study to understand further how particular teachers overcome challenges and the new methods or approaches they use. Also, the study may help them cover critical areas of special education teachers that some researchers do not seek for it.

This paper aims to describe the lived experiences and challenges experienced by special education teachers in the new normal education. Especially, this study addressed the following questions:

- 1) What are the challenges faced by special education teachers in the new normal?
- 2) What are the coping strategies used by the special education teachers in handling these challenges?
- 3) As a reflection, what extent can special education teacher takes in handling differently able students in the new normal?

2. Material and Methods

2.1 Participants

This study was conducted in Digos City, Davao del Sur, using purposive sampling; five (5) Special Education Teachers teaching students with special needs were interviewed. According to (Creswell, 2018), a study's analysis unit is independent of the number of participants. As Nielsen and Landauer (2021) noted, a statistical model shows that, by having 5 participants in conducting a qualitative test, you will distinguish 85% of the problem being interface. In the selection of the participants, the following criteria were observed: (1) the participants of this study must engage in teaching during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic; (2) these educators must have taught differently-abled students for about three years, and more; (3) is preferably at the current field of teaching in special education program; (4) all participant are licensed teachers as special education teachers for about three years and above; (5) willing to participate in this study. To guarantee the data of this study, the research participants came from public schools in Digos City. There

are five (5) SPED teachers conducted in-depth virtual interviews from Digos City National High School in the SPED center.

2.2 Instruments

The interview guide questions were validated followed through the Research and Publication Office of UM Digos College. Before conducting the interview, the researcher had to ensure they had all the necessary documents before implementing the interview in the selected school where they would be interviewed in Digos City. It contains the letter to the Dean's office and permission from their respective advisers, research coordinator, and school head.

After the corrections and revisions, the researcher developed strong and valid questions and interview guides. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) state that the level of a research instrument gives consistent outcomes or data after constant testing is reliable. In addition, all participants had to be informed in advance and given informed consent by stating that they were aware of any psychological or emotional risks involved in participation. Detailed information was excluded to protect each participant's right to confidentiality. Creswell (2012) asserts that the research instrument is a way of monitoring, assessing, and recording the data. The other materials used in conducting the study are recorded conversations, pens, notebooks, and other forms in a safe place.

This study used phenomenological methods as a component of qualitative research to study the phenomena that have impacted an individual. Indeed, it promotes the thorough knowledge of an event that came to life as described by the participants (Giorgi, 2012; Creswell, 2014). This incident concentrates on responding to the life experiences of sped teachers teaching remotely amid the global health crisis. The primary purpose of this study is to explore teachers' lived experiences in special education for practical teaching and the techniques they use in the new normal to obtain information from special education teachers.

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with each respondent as part of data collection. An in-depth interview is used in a qualitative research method to operate detailed interviews with a small number of participants (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). This design immensely helped to increase the knowledge about the experiences faced by special education teachers in this new normal.

Furthermore, this study strictly follows the key processes before, during, and after conducting the study. During the implementation period, the heads of the selected schools were informed and contacted by the researcher for the scheduled interview with their faculty members who are qualified from the inclusion criteria. It is done after approving the necessary documents, including the approval form from the corresponding offices. In-depth interviews were conducted virtually. Due to some restrictions and health protocols set by the government, the researcher conducted interviews online for the safety of everyone; during the interview, all qualified respondents were given an invitation and invited to join the virtual meeting room of (Google Meet). An in-depth interview was conducted with open-ended questions to

obtain concrete information and responses from the participants to ensure that respondents were comfortable during data collection; after collecting the data from each participant, the researcher. After the interview, the researcher transcribed the data recorded through their conversation and delivered it to the research participants for consent as part of the Post-Implementation Phase.

2.3 Design and Procedures

This study used Colaizzi's phenomenological method to examine the experience of school classroom managers qualitatively. Wirihana, Welch, & Williamson *et al.* (2018) stated that the experiences and feelings of the participants are consistent with the phenomenological method of Colaizzi and found their collaborative design instead of the diverse distinctive of the research participants. This scientific strategy will ensure the reliability of the data gathered by the participants by following the scientific standards.

The following process would strictly follow Colaizzi's method according to Wirihana *et al.* (2018); the researchers efficiently familiarized themselves with the data from transcripts by reading all participant's interpretations and responses several times, accepting the agony is the critical statement, and this is being eliminated, definitions are formulated for key statements, compose answers are categorized into clusters of themes, the findings are integrated into the comprehensive definition of understanding pain acceptance, in-depth descriptions were verified by achieving responses from the participants, and the responses of the participants was categorized into final descriptions given accepting the pain. In creating the form of coding, the transcripts are coded by the data analyst one by one and differentiate the firmness of the classification. The emergent themes were being categorized.

The researchers always sought and obtained informed consent from key teachers and administrators to complete this study. The researchers confirmed the competence of the selected schools and special education teachers in recognized schools in Digos City and considered the necessary considerations. The participants are given additional satisfactory approval and consent, where they are guaranteed that their privileges will be guaranteed, especially in the management of information. The contribution of research participants is always wholly and entirely voluntary and anonymous to protect their anonymity. To guarantee the protection and confidentiality of each participant, the information gathered from them is protected by the researchers and is kept and classified. The researcher ensured that informed consent was given and sent to the participants, indicating their privileges and what they expected in the direction of the study. The researcher guarantees that the complete reference of ideas from various authors and specialists is completed according to the school's requirements. This paper is under review for grammatical errors and encroachment using Grammarly and Turnitin apparatuses to achieve expertise. This study follows the APA format citation guidelines; therefore, there is no exploration mutilation or modification of any information obtained in the review. The information and measurements gathered are written in the most accurate way imaginable. The information and measurements gathered are written in the

most accurate way possible. With the insight and advice of the research advisor, researchers are committed to the primary responsibilities of ideas and thoughts, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of results. The paper was written in a joint effort with the researcher and with the help of a research adviser, and it was fully developed to have basic scholarly substance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Challenges Faced by the Teachers in Special Education in the New Normal

Figure 1 shows the qualitative findings of the special education teachers' lived experiences when giving lessons in the new normal. The study comes up with two (2) major themes: Lack of Resources and Work Pressure. The following theme was composed of corresponding sub-themes: Problems with gadgets used in an online class, Struggle with internet connections, Quality learning, Distribution and retrieval of modules.

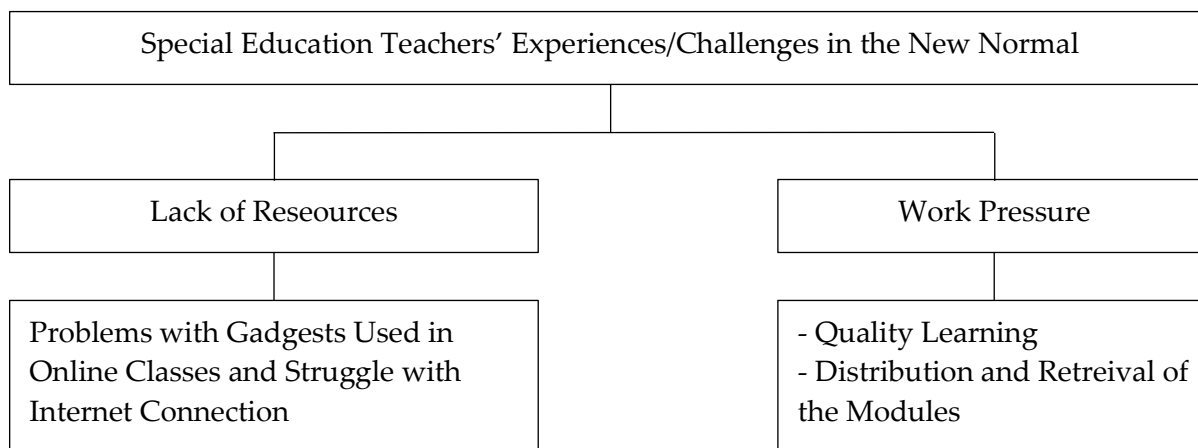


Figure 1: Special Education Teacher's Experiences/Challenges in New Normal

A. Lack of Resources

As Special Education teachers talked about the failures and resolutions of distance learning, they identified specific supports that improved their effective teaching ability. The teachers in special education discussed the failures and were determined to solve the problem of distance learning; they recognized particular supports that upgraded their ability to teach.

Therefore, it is not surprising that when teachers in special education described their teaching experiences during the pandemic, they uttered demands for additional resources, even though for highly skilled teachers who have abundant resources, different teaching methods and decision-making are hindered by high levels of stress and burnout because of high demands and insufficiency of resources (Bottiani *et al.*, 2019). Brelsford *et al.* (2020) also suggested that heads foresee and supply resources and give training, especially in the use of technology, to teachers and students if necessary if they

are absent from school. Although schools provide resources and support, most special education teachers seek more resources.

The problem with gadgets used in an online class and needing help with internet connections- Our country is internet-challenged. According to Natividad (2021) and Salac and Kim (2016), the Philippines has a lagging connection due to the old law of the Philippines for the quick installation of the cell tower was interfered with by the red tape. This problem has caused delays in the implementation of remote learning in general.

According to Tosun *et al.* (2021), lack of internet access and infrastructural deficiencies hamper rural areas' learning mode delivery. Even internet plans are not, however, created equal. Teachers and students need help with gadgets with an unstable internet connection. Teachers lamented the hardships brought about by distance learning, which forced some students to drop out of school, noting that some suddenly stopped attending classes or never showed up in online lectures. The main reason, explained a teacher, is the unstable internet connection.

"The challenge is the gadgets they may use in our online class; they have many reasons, including no internet connections, laptops or android phones, and the lack of budgets to make a load for their phones. Students need help with their internet connections because they live in remote areas."

"Ang hagit mao ang mga gadyet nga ilang magamit sa atong online nga klase; sila adunay daghan nga mga rason, lakip na ang walay koneksyon sa internet, mga laptop o Android phones, ug ang kakulang sa mga budget sa paghimo sa usa ka load alang sa ilang mga telepono. Ang mga estudyante nanginahanglan tabang sa ilang mga koneksyon sa internet tungod kay sila nagpuyo sa mga hilit nga lugar." (Q1,P1)

"Unsa nga mga gadgets ilahang gamiton naa ba silay mga adroid nga cellphone or laptop also the connectivity sa internet."

"What gadgets do they use, do they have Android cellphones or laptops, and also the connectivity to the internet." (Q1,P2)

"We conduct online classes so dinha daghan dili mo avail ilaha pong reasons kay wala sila pang load dili sad ka insist kay it's between finding money to provide foods for the family or buying a load for the online class."

"We conduct online classes, so many parents don't avail themselves of it for the reasons that they don't have a load yet, we cannot insist because it's between finding money to provide food for the family or buying a load for the online class." (Q1,P4)

Teachers in special education show disappointment in using technology, which is more of an obstacle than a supporter. The main secret to successful distance learning is good technology for ensuring online classes and remotely delivering lessons using different learning methods (Bukhkalov *et al.*, 2018). As we can see, all of our participants need help in terms of their students' resources. Many students do not do their lessons

remotely due to financial problems such as needing a computer or internet access. (Andrew *et al.*, 2020; Fishbane & Tomer, 2020; Onyema *et al.*, 2020). In the world, there are no equal opportunities for access to the internet and some technological devices. (Fry-Bowers, 2020). With the emergence of teaching technology and learning it, as well as unprecedented challenges (Pentang, 2021b), educators are motivated to administer new strategies to assist the continuous learning process and also give the quality of education to the learners with the help of school administrators.

B. Work Pressure

As teachers in special education enter the new field of remote learning due to the pandemic, they are all stressed because of no first-hand experience, planlessness, guidance, or directions. According to Cancio *et al.* (2018), working with students with special needs is stressful. Stress is inevitable among teachers of students with special needs (Kokkinos & Davazoglou, 2009; Kuvaeva, 2018), especially when the teaching management task is poor and teachers are not well motivated.

a. Quality Learning

Due to the pandemic, teachers are having various problems, such as transferring the quality of education to students. The critical concern nowadays is the participation and evaluation of the learners. (Khalifa *et al.*, 2021). The challenge of the teaching method is the validity of the student's work and performance. Teachers revealed challenges to validate student performance. From the story,

"Unsaon namu pag deliver ang amoang mga lessons sa among mga studyante kay atoang mga student's baya dinhe we cater different kind of disability. Kung deaf ang studyante unsa nga modalities ang para sa ilaha ug sa blind lahi na sad nga modalities."

"How can we deliver our lessons to our students if our students have different kinds of disabilities? If the student is deaf, what modalities are suited for them and the blind also?"
(Q1,P2)

With the current teaching method, it is challenging to rationalize the work and performance of the students. In addition, Anzaldo (2021) disclosed that not all students are honest in doing their modules, and students also get distracted and forget the deadline if they do not have someone to remind them, like their teacher and classmates. Pentang *et al.* (2021) state that students are self-reliant in their modules and need help to ensure the quality of learning. Additionally, the study found that the parents answered the modules. Handwritten by the parents, the teachers recognize it as participants telling their narratives.

"Kung same ing ani virtual kung sya ba jud ang nagpilit biskan nakit-an naku ingan sila nagbuhat but can they really assist their outputs. Basin naa dinha sa kilid ang naghimo pero pag abot sa ako,a perfect man kaayu."

"If it's the same as virtual, if he was the one who forced it, I've seen how they did it, but can they really assist their outputs. Maybe the maker was on the other side, because when it came to me, it was perfect." (Q1,P5)

As the participants perceive the work of the parent/guardian. Parents make answers to the modules instead of their children to please them Anzaldo (2021). In the modular learning of students, the main role of the parents is to assist their children and establish a relationship with them (Manlangit *et al.*, 2020). However, they exceed their responsibility as parents.

b. Distribution and Retrieval of Modules

Regarding module distribution and retrieval, teachers show their suffering, which results in their workload. Also, teachers spend their money to give their students the modules. Tagupa (2018) cited that teacher shoulder necessities and are often forced to use their salary even though they should not be. Participants expressed their experiences.

"Experiences daghan kanang retrieval and distribution of modules mag text ka nga distribution or mag uli na karong adlaw and then maabot nalang pila ka modules wala gihapon nakuha.

"Experiences a lot that retrieval and distribution of modules you will text today distribution or return but then some modules still not obtained." (Q1,P2)

"So among experiences tawagan ang parents kung wala na silay time mu pick up kay naglisod financially, ihatod namo bisag naa pay time, gabii na kaayo. Ang akong kaugalingong kwarta gigasto sa pamasahe."

"So our experiences are to call the parents if they don't have time to pick up because they are struggling financially, we would be delivered even if there is time, it is already late at night. My own money is spent on the fare." (Q1,P3)

Although modular distance education is the most preferred and convenient way of teaching during the crisis, as cited in (Yayen & Labaria, 2021), some problems seem uncontrollable due to reasons beyond the limitations of teachers, parents, and schools. Furthermore, special education teachers accept the reality of their students' late acquisition of modules. Students give more Struggle and workload to the teachers in submitting and retrieving their output in a late manner.

3.2 Coping Strategies Used by Special Education Teachers

Despite the challenges faced by special education teachers, they remain positively able to cope with the new settings of instructions. As shown by De Villa and Manalo (2020) in teachers' flexibility, innovation, and adaptability. Despite any circumstances they face, special education teacher remain focused on the learning process of their learner. Baloran

and Hernan (2020) stated that despite many changes, teachers remain focused on teaching.

Figure 2 shows the qualitative findings of the coping strategies of teachers in special education in the new normal. The study has two (2) major themes: Teachers' Innovation and Teachers' Flexibility. Each theme is composed of corresponding sub-themes obtained from in-depth interviews with special education teachers that show their coping strategies in the new normal, namely: Constant communication and Collaboration with parents, improvised initial steps, not being strict with the time, lessons not being extended, address the problem immediately.

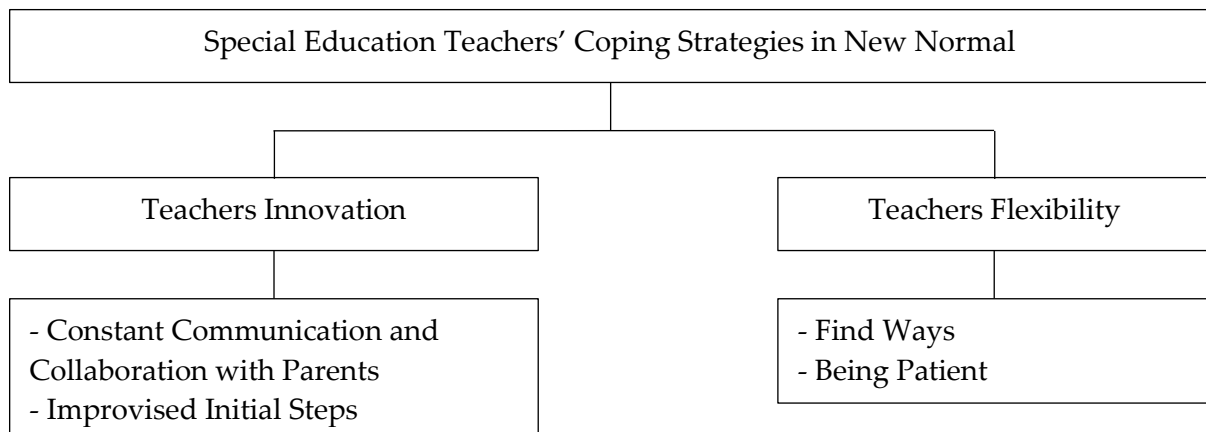


Figure 2: Special Education Teacher's Coping Strategies in New Normal

A. Teacher's innovation

Innovation in education comes from identifying problems, watching and learning from others, developing new methods to answer these problems, and repeating them if these experiments do not give the desired results. The hearts of the teachers we work with, along with professional development sessions worldwide, are broken by hybrid schedules, concurrent teaching, and asynchronous classes (Pollock & Tolone, 2020). They experimented with mixed learning, hoping the models that suggest individualization using digital means would increase student engagement, creativity, and higher-order thinking; they and their team members invent and create new learning and assistive technology, create new teaching strategies and research classroom solutions for their students.

a. Constant Communication and Collaboration with Parents

During the pandemic, special education teachers developed communication and collaboration skills. Boholano Jamon (2021) highlights that teachers' collaboration. Collaboration is the ultimate indicator of school performance. Additionally, in this new normal, parental support is an essential factor to consider. Communication is an efficient tool for teachers and parents to guarantee the learner's progress. Pascual (2021) cited that

to support the parents, teachers will make suggestions for adjusting the child's daily routine at home to promote the child's literacy development.

Participants 1,2, and 4 show how their expertise plays an important role in allowing teachers to balance the challenges in the era of the new normal.

"Maningkamot si teacher mo communicate sa parents to submit their modules through online, like taking the photo or picture and submit to my g-mail account or through my messenger."

"The teacher will try to communicate with the parents to submit their modules through online like taking the photo or picture and submitting to my g-mail account or through my messenger." (Q2,P1)

"Handle them with care kung naay problema specially sa mga studyante about sa communication so naa dayon ang partnership ni teacher with the parents."

"Handle them with care if there is a problem, especially with the students about communication, so there is an immediate partnership of the teacher through the parents." (Q2,P2)

"Constant communication ni teachers to the parents of their students kay si parents as serve as facilitator sa ilahang balay and still nag continue gihapon among online class despite sa mga disruption sa among klase but still naga cope up me."

"Constant communication by teachers to the parents of their students. After all, parents serve as facilitators in their homes, but still, our online class continues despite the disruptions in our class but still we coping up." (Q2,P4)

Many educators in special education have discovered that through distance learning, collaboration becomes essential, and that purpose is for the benefit of their students. According to Gorica and Popovski (2021), the mode of communication is focused on disseminating information to the parents and allowing active parental involvement, using various skills, knowledge, and experience concerning necessary resources that bestow the openness of school and partnership-building. Teachers, students, and schools can effectively benefit from the collaboration. In detail, Boholano and Jamon (2021) state that to improve teachers' ideas, they need to interact with others to achieve their work and have effective partnerships and group collaboration results. Even though reducing a teacher's stress due to less confusion is created through collaboration and effective communication, Gammon (2021) also reduces conflict due to teachers' shared understanding. The teachers expand their abilities and confidence through communicative collaboration and establish a positive school culture.

b. Improvised Initial Steps

Special education teachers improvised their way of teaching by using technology. Despite the unprepared situations, teachers said they strive to help their learners in their

distance learning. For example, Crouse *et al.* (2018) queried virtual teachers handling students with disabilities and wrote down the strategies utilized by teachers. Teachers describe their adjustments to instructional delivery, technological supports, and parent communication routines. Frazier (2020) also stated how teachers keep an eye on improving their learners in terms of using technologies, providing emotional support to the family, and recruiting parental assistance in teaching the task given. In this context, participants 1 and 4 immediately responded to the problems that arose in the new normal.

"Taman sa makaya ni teacher para sa bata buhaton dyud ni teacher for the good of our students to learn. Although lisod dyud siya pero paningkamutan nga ma address ang ilahang mga problems."

"Whatever the teacher can do for the benefit of child, the teacher will do for the good of our students to learn. Although it is difficult we will try to address their problems." (Q2,P1)

"Improvised ug mga initials steps nga himuon nimu ba for them to make sure nga ma comply sila. For example when we use the zoom before kailangan dyud sila mag atubang mi magsabay ming tanan mag extract."

"Improvised and initials steps that we will do for them to make sure that they can comply. For example, when we use the zoom before they have to face us all together to extract." (Q2,P4)

Special education teachers describe their efforts in supporting students with disabilities using technologies. Most of the current research on helping students with diverse teaching methods has occurred entirely in online settings in school (Rice & Dykman, 2018). According to Saziso, Chimhenga, and Mpofu (2021), the teaching method adopted by the teachers allows them to cope with the needs of the students in terms of their abilities, strengths and needs instead of classifying them. Teachers need more support in continuing to use digital technologies and online resources.

B. Teacher's Flexibility

Special education teachers allow flexibility in the planning of their lessons and classroom activities as needed. Furthermore, special education teachers show how flexible they are in terms of the learning of their learners to be able to learn. According to Dr. Greg Pawilen (2020), flexible learning is a learning-centered approach that emphasizes students' choice of pace, place, and mode to deliver their lessons. In addition, it is a part of flexible learning and is the only one of many shipping methods that teachers can choose, depending on the needs and context of students and the courses they teach. Dr. Edmund Centeno (2020) highlighted that the readiness of students, teachers, and learning content must be considered in order to use flexible learning. Flexibility is the expertise of the teacher to adapt to uncertain situations. For teachers in special education, the word flexibility is an

essential skill that needs to be developed due to the frequent work with students with unique learning.

a. Find Ways

Teachers in special education modify some instructional materials to suit their students' needs. According to Howe and Cope Watson (2020), teachers conduct a self-study of teaching and practice to create and find new teaching methods to deliver lessons. They do activities that align with the most important learning skills when no module is available. Participants 5, and 3 expressed their experience in this context.

"We don't even have any modules for us before. We are the ones unpacking, unlocking sa tanan."

"We don't have any modules even to us before. We are the ones unpacking, unlocking everything." (Q1,P5)

"Gipaminusan nako ang mga kalihokan sa pagkat-on pinaagi sa paghatag sa mga kalihokan nga makatubag lamang sa ilang mga panginahanglanon ug nahiuyon sa mga katakus."

"I lessen the learning activities by giving the activities that only meet their needs and align with the competencies." (Q2,P3)

It describes Filipino teachers as flexible and creative. Guiamalon *et al.* (2021) Teachers must keep on improving their strategies and provide adequate measures to satisfy the learner's needs in this distance learning, including creativity in making modules or activities. Hodges *et al.* (2020) also stated that many educators are forced to develop affordable online learning solutions due to current health issues. The teachers are looking for all the solutions or ways; however, they set themselves what is required and expected from them.

b. Being Patient

One of the characteristics that is needed of a special education teacher to be successful during this new normal is to be patient. UWA Online (2018) said in their infographics that patience is the quality of being a special education teacher. Working with people of all ages and abilities takes patience, and being a special education teacher is no exception. In this context, participants 2, 3, 4 and 5 express their patience through their students.

"Coping strategies dapat taas kaayo ka ug pasensya kay mao ra dyud na ang key para mabuhay nimu ang tanan para sa ilaha."

"Coping strategies, you must be very patient because patience is the key that can do everything for them." (Q2,P2)

"Coping strategies number one is patience kay kung wala kay pasensya ani karong mga panahona kay murag maunlod dyud ka mabagsak dyud ka."

"Coping strategies number one is patience because if you do not have patience these days because it seems like you are going to sink." (Q2, P3)

3.3 Extent of Special Education Teachers' in Handling Students in the New Normal

Figure 3 shows the qualitative findings of the educators in special education lived experiences of their teaching during distance learning. The study comes up with two (1) major themes: Limitless Efforts. This theme comprises corresponding sub-themes obtained from in-depth interviews with special education teachers that show how they handle their students in the new normal: All the way as far we can do and Eagerness and willingness.

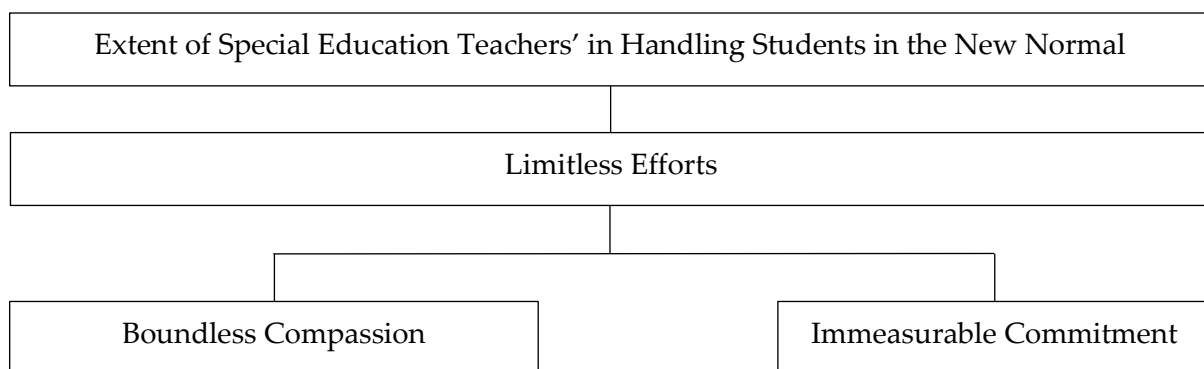


Figure 3: Extent of Special Education Teachers' in Handling Students in the New Normal

A. Limitless Efforts

Special education teachers are going beyond the efforts given to their learners. When engaging in estimations of practice, teachers can move beyond the familiar and often comfortable role of students and that of the teacher (Hamilton & Duinen, 2019). However, even if they limit the expectations of their learner, their efforts are limitless for the learners to learn; despite what is happening around them, they may be able to acquire knowledge in a little way. According to Emily Jordan (2021), take the opportunities to grow and learn. Being a teacher allows to re-evaluate oneself and long for satisfaction. Everyone is brave, and unselfish. Offer the compassion and commitment to help others. Special Education teachers demonstrate limitless dedication in adapting to the new normal, exerting immeasurable effort to support the learners. The commitment extends beyond quantifiable boundaries, as one view its extensive effort as integral to the role in meeting the diverse needs of students with special needs.

a. Boundless Compassion

Teachers in special education present some hurdles for teachers and give them the strength to build accessible elements throughout their environment to support the education of individuals with disabilities, which is necessary to improve distance learning. Nurfaradilla *et al.* (2020) highlight this statement that due to present

circumstances, empathy has been increased among students in the school, which encourages teachers to work to ensure an effective learning process. Jerry Rosiek (2022). *"Teachers are often put in impossible positions, which cause much stress. Everyone is in crisis mode, so teachers do all they must for their students."* They describe several obstacles to overcome in distance or the goodness of their learners to learn that they give their best; even the best is not the best for everyone. Participants 1 and 4 expressed their beliefs and experiences in this context.

*"Kami dili masukod among paghandle sa ilaha as long as makaya namu mahatag ang tanan para sa ilaha amoang himuon for them. All the way dyud among mahimo para sa ilaha."
"We cannot measure everything we handle for them as long as we can give everything to them, we will do it. All the way we do everything for them." (Q3,P1)*

*"If need mi nila ug interpreter willing pod mi kaayu .How far all the way kutob lang pod sa makaya lang namu mahimo dyud."
"If they need an interpreter, we are willing too. How far all the way, as far as we can do as long we can do it." (Q3,P4)*

Derived from the above responses of special education teachers, they are given information on how teachers in special education efforts offered a necessary outline to carry out their relearning, as well as the limits of remote meetings and the boundaries of special education orders. It demonstrates how special education does its tasks as a specialist in its students; it cares for its students in whatever may happen, but it should still accept them with wide-open arms. Although there are limitations, out of empathy for their students, teachers want to extend their hands to help in this current situation so that no child is left behind (Sepulveda-Escobar *et al.*, 2020).

b. Immeasurable Commitment

Due to some circumstances faced by our special education teachers, they put all the effort they express in a way that cannot be measured by how much they give for their students to learn. Kebbi and Al-Hroub (2018) note that at all times, teaching students with special needs requires exceptional efforts from teachers to implement the curriculum, manage behavioral issues that students exhibit in and outside the classroom, use teaching resources and deploy pedagogical techniques appropriate to the specific needs of students. Participants 3 and 5 express in this context the efforts they give that cannot be measured in new standard settings.

"Kani sya kung sukdon lang dili dyud sya masukod pero sa panhandle man gud kung ang bata behavioral sya it really needs patience dyud specially kung ang bata makita nimu nga nag start sa iyahang tantrums."

"If you just measure it, it can't be measured, but in handling child with behavioural struggles, it really needs patience, especially if you see the child starting his tantrums. (Q3,P3)

"Eagerness, willingness mag give ug time para sa follow up sa studyante kung unsa pa man ang ilahang mga kakulangan nga mahatag nimu sa ilaha why not nga dili nato ihatag kay mao man ilahang gikinahanglan.

"Eagerness, willingness to give time for the follow up of the student no matter what their lacking which you can give to them then why not we give it, if that's what they need." (Q3,P5)

Based upon the responses above, special education teachers are given a piece of information on the way teachers in special education efforts offer a necessary outline to carry out their relearning, as well as the limits of remote meetings and the boundaries of special education orders. According to Carter, Rowe, and Gajjar (2020), unique aspects of special education will go beyond the boundaries of the school building, draw partners from all corners of the local community, and discourse on many other domains of life. Special education teachers give their best for the welfare of their students, even if the best is not the best for them.

4. Recommendations

The evidence provides a better interpretation that special education services through distance learning are not accessible (lack of resources and work pressure, change and flexibility of the teacher, and unlimited efforts). As stated by the study, remote learning is the only functional instrument to use to continue the learners' learning. The services provided by special education in distance learning are worthless if students with disabilities do not cooperate and teachers do not have formal training. So, they should provide more training and seminars to manage and reduce stress more effectively; higher management should promote school empowerment.

It is the school administrator's responsibility to help and provide moral support to teachers to lessen work pressure or stress, run an effective school operation, and provide appropriate plans. Students' active participation and attitudes still need to be addressed, and they cannot monitor their progress. DEPED must train more teachers to become special education teachers because of the lack of teachers in that program, which is why most of the teachers in sped feel more stress than others because of the limited teachers assigned to that program. It should increase the budget for special education teaching to obtain equipment and other learning resources that they need in their lessons. Give credits to teachers who perform well in school, most especially for SPED teachers.

The researcher explained that amid COVID-19, students with disabilities should be considered effective learning methods with more attention and care regarding their education. It is a challenging time in education, although the researcher believes that the

continuous creative ways of teaching specific services in special education, making collaborative meetings with teachers can help teachers in special education learn how to adapt and stay connected to the parents for better service to the students perhaps those approaches are worth implementing. Supporting and assisting the learners and creating a program that can meet the needs of the learners, accommodate them, and ensure equal learning in their online classes.

5. Conclusion

This research investigated special education teachers' teaching experiences amidst this pandemic and the key factors in effective distance learning. By emergent themes, it was noted that special education teachers re-evaluated their roles in delivering effective distance learning instruction as the months or years progressed. Through the emerging themes, it was noted that, as months or years progressed, educators in special education re-examined their performance in teaching at distance learning. Consequently, the findings raise several problems.

The teachers in special education in the study had mixed emotions regarding their experiences, such as the lack of resources used by their students for their online classes, the family communication with a lack of control over the situations, and the pressure of work they cannot do the usual things they want to do for their student. The Struggle they face in delivering lessons and the burden of their student's family is also on their shoulders.

Special education teachers guide and build flexibility as teachers in what challenges they face in the new normal, but they make it a positive way for the learner to learn. The teachers have made innovations in teaching, and they are flexible enough to adopt some techniques in the learning process for the learner.

Furthermore, the limitless efforts of special education teachers in the new normal state that they walk the extra mile for their students and fill in the lapses of the students for them to learn in certain lessons; they all do anything to benefit their student's learning. They accept that connections and relationships are essential.

Finally, as the 2020-2022 academic year approaches, many special education teachers look forward to the positive results of distance learning that can provide care to others. They look towards the future, express their ideas concerning their teaching, are flexible, and go the extra mile for the best of their learners and their families, which is convenient for them. The quality of the technology was found, and plans were made to implement the teaching tools in the future after the pandemic. Above all, special education teachers believe that continuing to listen, adapt, and communicate with students and families is very important. Teachers of special education are striving towards connections and relationships in amassing the learners' needs in terms of the process of teaching exemplifying a never-ending dedication towards its profession.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Arlene L. Mier, is a committed student majoring in the field of Special Education but with a major in Elementary Teaching. Her interests are with inclusive pedagogy as well as approaches that respect the diversity of students. She has completed her Bachelor in Special Needs Education, majoring in Generalist studies, therefore giving her a broad background in supporting learners with different capabilities.

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