PAG-AAKAY SA KINABUKASAN: RECEIVING TEACHERS HANDLING LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

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Abstract:

This study aimed to describe the lived experiences of the receiving teachers who are currently handling learners with disabilities in a self-contained classroom. A qualitative phenomenological research was utilized wherein the goal of this research was to describe a "lived experience" of a phenomenon wherein ten (10) research participants were selected using a purposive sampling procedure. Thematic content was used to analyze transcripts from the interview before inductively derived codes were formulated. This study revealed that these receiving teachers have had significant challenges in handling their learners with disabilities. These teachers learned to perceive challenging situations as opportunities to look for a silver lining. They may have experienced hurdles along the way, but through this study, it was revealed that through seeking assistance from colleagues and not being afraid of asking questions, they were able to cope with the situations. Despite the hurdles that they went through, they have gained beautiful insights, especially in terms of making sure the children's unrealized potential will soon be realized. The findings of this study have opened doors for various directions and future studies in exploring the experiences in other aspects. It is interesting to explore the level of effectiveness in terms of the instruction that the learners with disabilities receive from a teacher who is not a graduate of BEED-SpEd in comparison to a student directly receiving instruction from a BEED-SpEd graduate.

Keywords: lived experiences, coping mechanisms, lessons and insights, receiving teachers, special education

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1. Introduction

Education plays an important role in our lives since it enables us to improve our living standards. To accomplish this, we require the support of others; our teachers. It has been one of the teacher's primary responsibilities to impart information, provide optimum learning and inspire students to learn more via experience. Teaching is such a laborious job. As a result, their efforts are highly valued in order to provide learners with different educational needs with high-quality education. *"Pag-aakay sa Kinabukasan,"* this phrase might sound too ideal or like trying to prove an old adage to be true, but for learners with disabilities to make ends meet, receiving teachers and special needs educators would need to thrive. Along with their behaviors, instructors' educational backgrounds are critical components of effective teaching. It is believed that teachers are required to demonstrate knowledge of the subjects they teach.

Highlighted through the work of Rinat *et al.* (2020), teachers who work in special education must meet a range of requirements. Their capacity to achieve these demands may be strongly influenced by their levels of self-efficacy, which eventually develop during their academic studies and, quite specifically, while gaining practical experience.

With around 93 million to 150 million children living with special needs, according to Global Statistics on Children with Disabilities worldwide, this presented a distinctive educational challenge and need for assistance to achieve their academic needs. In order to overcome these challenges, we need someone to guide these children. Someone to guide them, which is essentially embodied by our very own teachers. According to Bugwak (2020), education is essential in our lives because it opens opportunities for us to make progress in our lives, and it is the teacher's fundamental responsibility to impart learning and encourage people to experience more of their own in going over and beyond the given situation/s.

However, according to Fisher (2013), teaching has been considered one of the most interesting and challenging professions in human endeavor. Maybe because teaching primarily must deal with human beings. According to Bagley (1938), people have this need to teach others for them to strengthen what they have learned and be educated. Aside from the learnings these teachers will transfer to their students, their educational background is also sought after to deliver quality education.

Teacher who handles learners with disabilities has a higher rate of burnout than is found in most other professions. It was estimated that around 75 percent of those who teach learners with disabilities would leave after 10 years. With this punctured in our minds, we can conclude that a special educator must start their career with the purest of intention in delivering quality instructions for learners with disabilities that would enable them to become productive members of society (Special Education Degrees, 2021).

As mentioned by Chatman (2017), a shortage of fully qualified teachers has plagued special education for the past few decades, and it was known that shortage in this field is known to worsen as the teaching workforce ages. Recent news articles highlighted societal pleas for this problem to be addressed, stating SPED teachers were one of the hardest positions to fill (Perez, 2017).

In California, a rough estimation of 800,000 special education students are being taught by educators who are still completing or have not yet completed their education programs or have received only a partial training. With this, 60 percent of SPED teachers were working with substandard credentials and are currently working without full special education teacher credentials (Lambert, 2020).

In the Philippines, the Department of Education, estimated that there are 32, 299 non-graded learners with disabilities that registered for the coming school year (SY) 2020-2021 (Malipot, 2020). The implementation of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons has strongly supported the possible improvement of the country in terms of delivery instructions and special education services. Although special education in the country started around 94 years ago, in many aspects and forms, the demands and needs of this program have remained unchanged since the advent of the 21st-century learners required new perspectives and directions in special education to meet the needs of the disadvantaged children against the persistent challenges and demands of the new millennium.

With this growing population of students who have learning disabilities, employment demands for sped teachers continue to increase as well. According to Spivey and Colon (2008), as cited by Mar *et al.* (2017), receiving teachers are not only attending to classes of students with special needs, but there are also times that they would sit and assist teachers in a mainstream class to observe and attend to the needs of some children. There are times, too, they would have to pull out identified children with complex behavioral, emotional, learning, or physical needs and give them more relevant and effective instructions. Thus, the success of these children's inclusion is largely dependent on teacher's attitudes towards the practice.

Thus, this study seeks to unravel the challenges and experiences of receiving teachers who is/are now currently handling students with special needs in a self-contained classroom, for we know that we ought to provide them with differentiated instruction as part of their individualized educational plan (IEP) or depending on their educational placement.

This study deepens the understanding of how difficult the process has been in their holistic development as teachers and as individuals from their lived experiences in teaching these students is being valued in this study.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the lived experiences of receiving teachers who are currently handling learners with disabilities. At this stage in research, the receiving teachers identified in this study were those educators whose baccalaureate degree does not concentrate on special education or someone who is not a holder of a Bachelor of Elementary Education major in Special Education but is currently handling learners with disabilities in a self-contained classroom in selected schools offering SPED program in Davao City. Moreover, it will analyze and mirror the answers

and reactions of the participants in the In-Depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted.

The researcher hoped that this study was beneficial to the Department of Education Officials, School Administrators, Teachers, Learners with Disabilities and to the Future Researchers.

A. Department of Education Officials

The officials of the department and policymakers may use this study to develop or adopt programs, strengthen old policies, or implement new ones that can help enhance the teaching qualifications in handling students with special needs.

B. School Administrators

May the principal and the school staff find this study beneficial for them to evaluate how sped teachers teach students with special needs in the classroom. This can contribute to good practice in teaching sped to arouse students' learning motivation and interest and shall prepare students to be lifetime learners rather than classroom-only learners.

C. Teachers

They may also find this study helpful since they enter the profession with varying levels of prior learning, work experiences and professional preparation. They must learn proper modifications, adjustments, and remediations that can eventually help learners with disabilities inside or outside of the classroom.

D. Learners with Disabilities

The focal recipient of the teachings to be imparted by these professionals. The learners with disabilities will then benefit from this inquiry as we will explore the other means of providing them with utmost love and care as they are learning with their peers.

E. Future Researchers

Finally, for future researchers, further research on the challenges experienced by teachers who do not have a degree holder of a bachelor of elementary education that specialized in handling learners with disabilities is necessary to better decode their situations. Lastly, researchers may also explore the specific concepts presented in this study in greater depth.

3. Research Objectives

This study aimed to describe the lived experiences of the receiving teachers who are currently handling learners with disabilities in a self-contained classroom. Specifically, this study attempts to answer the following objectives:

- To describe the experiences of receiving teachers in handling learners with disabilities

- To explore the coping mechanisms of receiving teachers in handling learners with disabilities; and
- To discover the lessons and insights of receiving teachers in handling learners with disabilities that they can share with their peers and the community.

4. Literature Review

In this stage of research, this presented literature is in relation to the experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with disabilities in a self-contained class. Additionally, this section comprised of different cited authors and articles collected from research articles, journals and online publications that were in relation to the study. Moreover, this section provides the readers with ample knowledge of the studied phenomena, all of which have a significant bearing on this study's objectives.

4.1 Learners with Disabilities

A continuum of services for students with special needs is mandated by IDEA (Williams, 2020). School districts also stress the need to use research-based instructional programs to enhance the achievement of students with special needs (Vaughn & Swanson, 2015).

"*School districts are required to educate students with disabilities in receiving classrooms with their nondisabled peers, to the maximum extent appropriate*" (Wright & Wright, 2018). One of the primary responsibilities of special education teachers is to implement Individualized Education Plans (IEP) goals and objectives into daily lesson plans, assist general education teachers in achieving IEP goals, and consider strategies to implement to increase the success of the student (Williams, 2020).

Based on the IDEA in 1997 and 2004, there is a push for research-based interventions that meet the needs of the individual (Vaughn & Swanson, 2015). Programs such as Response to Intervention (RTI) support teachers in meeting the individual's needs. It was also added that research-based instruction ensures that, regardless of disability, every child has access to the best instruction possible. Classroom teachers need to focus more on implementing specific interventions for students with special needs since SPED students tend to require more direct instruction that is intended to meet the student's individual needs (Sternberg, 2017).

Additionally, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was designed to enable every child to be on grade level by 2014 through its regulation of government funding for schools and its external linkages to excellent academic standards. NCLB included the learning gains for students with disabilities, more so in the inclusion settings where students receive education services and are placed in general education classes, which are basically the norms for most public schools. As cited by Woodward (2017), a study showed that general education teachers do not take into consideration the unique needs of the population of students with additional needs.

On the other hand, in a study conducted by Logan and Wimer (2013), roughly an estimated 10, 500 general education teachers showed that they do not view themselves

as prepared to teach or even handle modifications for students with special educational needs in the classroom. Lack of training made these educators feel unprepared.

IDEA, also known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, provided definitions of the 13 disability categories listed below. Federal definitions guide how states define who is eligible for a free appropriate public education under IDEA. The definitions are as follows: autism, which was defined and most popularized as a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction of a child, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance, deaf-blindness means concomitant hearing and visual interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Furthermore, deaf-blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness; deafness is defined as hearing impairment so severe that a child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance, emotional disturbance means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

In addition, disability categories are as follows: hearing impairment which means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but is not included under then definition of deafness, intellectual disability means significantly sub-average behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive a child's educational performance multiple disabilities is defined as concomitant (simultaneous) impairments, the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments, orthopedic Impairment which means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's Other Health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment.

The above-mentioned definition of IDEA of the 13 disability categories was considered in this study for it will provide the readers with a thorough understanding of the disability categories like Autism, Deaf-Blindness, Deafness, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairments.

Additionally, learners with special educational needs often have special needs that are largely beyond their control. Unfortunately, these special needs often result in the same interruptions and distractions that are caused by disruptive students. These learners often require one-on-one attention that monopolizes the trainer's time, holding back the other students in the class.

Moreover, different types of special needs learners in the regular classrooms, with their characteristics, were classified. The first is slow learners, who are very capable of learning, but they need more repetition than other learners. They require patience and do better in shorter training sessions that focus on only one or two new tasks. The second is language learner who falls at a significant disadvantage as they are unfamiliar with the language. This would be more frustrating than most of us can imagine. Demonstrations may prove very beneficial with this learner because the leader does not need to understand the language but can simply mimic what you have just done. The third is an unsure newbie often feels worried about appearing incapable. As such, they often become their own worst nightmares. They profess that they are "stupid" and "just don't get it," both as an insecure admission and a way to deflect possible judgment from other students. Sadly, these doubts usually become a self-fulfilling prophecy as they sabotage their learning experiences.

4.2 Strategies in Handling Learners with Disabilities

Rinat *et al.* (2020) suggested strategies that will work with all types of special needs learners in a classroom environment. Some strategies included using handouts and exercises that use diagrams and offer a wide range of skill levels, allowing slower learners to focus on the initial exercises while faster learners advance to more challenging exercises, having extra exercises available for students who would like to move on to more challenging exercises, ensuring teachers do not try and cram too many topics into the lesson plan; placing the slower learners in the first two classes until they are comfortable enough to move on to the higher levels. Others included finding a volunteer to spend one-on-one time with the slower students, applauding even the smallest successes, offering one-on-one sessions for the special-needs students, bypassing all the group stuff, seeing if the local library has a tutoring program or if there is a resource center nearby for students with special needs, and passing valuable information to the learner. The suggestions of Higgins provided the teachers with good direction in handling students with special needs and talented students.

On the other hand, a research study conducted by Griful-Freixenet *et al.* (2017) mentioned the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, which offers a promising strategy to address the needs of students with disabilities. UDL aims to support access, participation and progress for 'all' learners, resulting in more accessible learning environments. The findings of the study suggested that students' perceptions align well with UDL's principles, especially with the principle of multiple means of engagement.

Additionally, it was found that meeting the learning needs of some students may create barriers for others. To overcome these weaknesses, UDL needs to address the individual learning needs of students, not only through setting and curricular changes but also in a direct way. In other words, helping these students to articulate their learning needs by asking them the right questions will be crucial (Griful-Freixenet *et al.*, 2017).

Moreover, students with special education needs have difficulties in developing cognitive abilities and acquiring new knowledge. According to Fernández-López *et al.* in

their study conducted in 2013 that, children with special needs also need to improve their behavior, communication and relationships with their environment or their community. The development of customizable and adaptable applications tailored to them provides many benefits as it helps mold the learning process to different cognitive, sensorial or mobility impairments.

The study conducted devised a mobile platform (based on iPad and iPod touch devices) called Picaa designed to cover the main phases of the learning process: preparation, use and evaluation. It includes four kinds of educational activities (Exploration, Association, Puzzle and Sorting), which can be personalized by educators at content and user interface levels through a design mainly centered on student requirements, whose user profiles can also be adapted. Fernández-López, together with the other researchers, was able to perform a pre-experimental study about the use of the mobile platform, Picaa, by 39 students with special education needs from Spain, including an evaluation based on pre/post testing. It was later revealed that the use of the learning platform Picaa is associated with positive effects in the development of learning skills for children who have special educational needs, observing that the basic skills (language, math, environmental awareness, autonomy and social) have been improved.

In general, in many cases, they can perform activities that previously were not accessible to them because of the interface and contents of the activities have been adapted specifically to them. The study also suggests that the repertoire of types of activities provided is suitable for learning purposes with students with impairments. Finally, the use of electronic devices and multimedia content increases their interest in learning and attention.

4.3 In-Field Teaching Qualifications

Fisher (2013) stated that teaching qualifications and competence should not be understated for teachers to become more professionals rather than just a lecturers, which would also enable the teacher to know how to handle and relate to the students. It has long been noted that teachers are the greatest influencers of student learning in the classroom and account for the greatest controllable variance in student achievement (Harris, 2020). The study by Bugwak (2020) argued that every educator is expected to demonstrate mastery of the subject/area he/she has been assigned.

To describe a teacher, according to Musai (2014), it refers to the individuals who have a significant, functional, and professional role in helping others in acquiring knowledge and skills as well as good moral behavior. Elementary school includes a wide range of grade levels. In some places, it encompasses from kindergarten through sixth to eighth grade. Elementary teachers are usually assigned to one class teaching two or more different subjects. The most basic function of a teacher in the classroom setting is to teach knowledge to children (Barcena, 2018). In the data given by the Department of Education and Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) survey, there were 37,697 public elementary schools in the Philippines (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2013). Despite the higher number of elementary teachers in the country, the most significant function of the teacher is to give effort and provide understandable teaching experience, which enables the pupils to

apply the knowledge to real-life problems and establish that they have acquired substantial ideas, gain skills and filled the acts of the mind and the heart while relating with standards of education (Lanier, 2012).

As classroom teachers, it is part of the fundamental roles of an educator to rear the students to become well-educated and value-oriented citizens in the future. As it was stipulated through Republic Act 9155, otherwise known as the *"Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001"*. Section 2 of the law states that a teacher is a key learning support person who is very much responsible for supervising or facilitating the learning process and activities of the learners. It is one of the teacher's duties to produce well-rounded citizens in the community. Teachers are the second parents of the students at school.

Moreover, since IDEA was implemented in 1975, general education teachers have been held accountable for the achievement of all students but have been provided little training in special education (Williams, 2020). Teachers tend to shy away from adopting inclusive teaching practices, and many have admitted to having a lack of knowledge and experience teaching special education students. When teaching students with special needs, teachers play several roles within the classroom. Not only do the teachers have to write lesson plans that meet the state's curriculum requirements, but they also must implement interventions that meet the needs of all the students, both academically and functionally (Vaughn & Swanson, 2015). Previous research has shown effective instructional strategies that teachers can use to increase both student engagement and academic achievement (Sternberg, 2017).

Moreover, research-based instructional strategies have been shown to be beneficial to SPED students. Students with special needs require individualized instruction and academic interventions to stay on task and remain engaged (Sternberg, 2017). The use of interventions and different instructional strategies may decrease off-task behaviors and increase achievement in SPED students.

Special education is facing the daunting challenge of increasing the supply of teachers while simultaneously upgrading its quality. As mentioned by Chatman (2017), the shortage of fully qualified teachers has plagued special education for the past few decades, and it was known the shortage in this field is known to worsen as the teaching workforce ages. Recent news articles highlighted societal pleas for this problem to be addressed, stating SPED teachers were one of the hardest positions to fill (Perez, 2017).

The unfamiliar becomes familiar through an extensive series of training. It has been reported through the study of Obiakor *et al.* (2012) that the burden of teaching students with disability to progress does not solely rely on the teacher but also on the community, administration, parents, and those who have a direct and indirect impact to the child and foster their success.

Additionally, non-sped teacher wonders how to find the time between teaching the class and addressing the needs of the special education students without proper training. Liggins (2016) revealed in his study that the increase of students with disabilities is growing at a rapid pace, but the amount of support and training needed for educators is not increasing.

In California, a rough estimation of 800,000 special education students are being taught by educators who are still completing or have not yet completed their education programs or have received only a partial training. With this, 60 percent of SPED teachers were working with substandard credentials and are currently working without full special education teacher credentials (Lambert, 2020).

Learners with disabilities, in some instances, need teachers with deeper knowledge of their medical or psychological issues, as cited by Lambert's (2020) article. Underprepared educators are most likely to provide these children with special educational needs a torturous experience throughout the school year. School districts confront an ongoing competition in terms of hiring qualified teachers. According to the California Department for Education, the increase of special education students rose to nearly 800,000 last year. This makes it especially hard for the state to find teachers who have the proper credentials to teach students with emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, autism, visual or hearing impairment, blindness, or physical disabilities.

We know for a fact that the idea that teachers should be competent at what they do is difficult to disagree with. Biesta (2015) partly explains the popular appeal of competence-based approaches to teaching and teacher education, which, in recent decades, have spread rapidly across many countries around the world. With regard to the practical implementation of the idea of competence, particularly within the field of teacher education, there are a few problems that have been out on the surface. Even Aristotle provides a compelling and useful set of concepts for understanding the role of judgment in teaching. This study tried to make it clear why we need judgment in education, where we need judgment, and what kinds of judgment we need in teaching education, especially since we are to teach students with special educational needs.

In the study conducted by Feng and Sass (2013), both researchers analyzed the impact of both pre-service and in-service training on the ability of teachers to promote academic achievement among students with disabilities. It was later found out that students with disabilities whose teacher is certified in special education have greater achievement in both math and reading than similar students whose teacher is not special education certified. However, students without disabilities experience slightly lower achievement when taught by a special education-certified teacher. In-service professional development has no effect on the value-added of teachers in special education courses, but non-disabled students whose general education teachers received special education training exhibit modestly higher achievement. Similarly, the gain in effectiveness associated with teacher experience is greater for teachers of general education courses than for teachers of special education courses. Teachers with advanced degrees are more effective in boosting the math achievement of students with disabilities than those with only a baccalaureate degree.

On the contrary, it was revealed in a study conducted by Harris and Sass (2011) that elementary and middle school teacher productivity eventually increases with experience or pre-service teaching training. The largest gains from experience occur in the first few years. In contrast, they were not able to observe a consistent relationship between formal professional development training and teacher productivity.

Nevertheless, this may be partly driven by estimation issues as they have found more significant positive effects of formal training in the subject-grade combination where middle school math would be most appropriate. There is no evidence that teachers' baccalaureate (undergraduate) training or college entrance exam scores are related to their teaching productivity.

4.4 Receiving Teachers

Inclusive Education has been the trend in our education system since the implementation of the Enhanced Basic Education Program (K to 12). According to Leah Surot (n.d.) on her action research entitled *Capacity-Building of Receiving Teachers in Handling Learners with Special Educational Needs Through SPED-LAC,* including school-aged children with disabilities in regular classrooms has been a challenge since general education teachers are not trained to handle such. Regular teachers are apprehensive about receiving pupils with disabilities coming from Special Education (SPED) self-contained classes in their regular classes mainly because they have no or little knowledge or background to teach these types of learners. This has been a perennial problem since the implementation of Inclusive Education in the Philippines.

In recent decades, looking through a wider perspective, the use of inclusive education practices, which include learners with disabilities in classes with normally developing classmates, has emerged. According to the US National Center for Education Statistics, more than 60 percent of children with disabilities spend at least 80 percent of their school day in general education classrooms. Given this data, those who accept and include learners with disabilities in their regular classes are termed as receiving teachers. Studies have shown that inclusive learning benefits all students in the classroom by providing thoughtful, personalized instruction and promoting individuality and equity. A student with autism might feel calmer when surrounded by a diverse peer group, while a nondisabled student might learn how to form positive relationships with a greater variety of children.

Consequently, in terms of establishing a successful integrated learning environment, is evidently a complex task that involves teachers, administrators, and families. With this thought in mind, the special education and receiving teachers work together to develop a curriculum and create a positive student culture. In an inclusive classroom, receiving teachers have the essential role of ensuring that students with disabilities or special needs receive a quality education.

The existence of children with specific learning difficulties or children with learning disabilities is common in developed countries, and occupies the highest percentage compared to children with other special needs. Forty percent of the total school-age students with all kinds of disability identified as students with Learning Disabilities (LD). The number of students with LD was around 2.3 million, or approximately 5 percent of total students in the U.S. Study conducted in Indonesia with an effort to portray current situations and provide the initial information in the form of how receiving teachers are dealing with children with learning disabilities in order to investigate the gap between the real intervention with the suitable education services.

Then, the researchers need develop manual handling packed for an in-service training program to support teacher competencies to provide learning accommodation and modification for children with learning disabilities. Through in-service training programs, it is expected that teachers will accept the existence of children with learning disabilities and be able to handle them in accordance with their conditions and needs (Rudiyati *et al.*, 2017).

Researches revealed that, indeed, teaching was challenging in the process of diagnosis if the teachers did not have enough support from other experts. The situation in other countries like Indonesia, where counselors and psychologists are rarely found in the school district, caused challenging situations in recognizing and providing adequate educational services. The conditions mentioned in terms of children with learning disabilities occur in conditions of perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and aphasia development are not widely known by some of the teachers. For this reason, teachers in the study conducted recognized the students who were suspected of experiencing learning difficulties through their daily academic performance, which are below the regular students and have specific error patterns in their assignments. In this situation, teacher competencies would be the only alternative way to recognize and provide educational services for learners with disabilities.

Challenges to dealing with students with learning disabilities as part of diverse learners require high competencies in teaching. When the teachers do not have adequate competencies, they might have more stress. Two major issues that cause teachers' stress and burnout: behavior problems and inadequate teaching competence to provide an appropriate education program for all students. In addition to this, the competence of teachers is very influential in the teaching-learning process. Added to this, teachers with a variety of professional competence are required, one of them is to provide learning accommodation and modification to meet a variety of learning needs of these learners.

Rudiyati *et al.* (2017) revealed that teachers' knowledge of students with learning disabilities, attitudes of teachers towards students with learning disabilities, and actions taken by the teacher based on the knowledge that has been held as the basic same perception of the phenomenon of students with specific learning difficulties or learning disabilities in inclusive primary schools. Teachers' knowledge and experience about children's knowledge learning disabilities include: knowledge and experience of the characteristics of children with learning disabilities, the perception of learning materials that can be given, and the perception of learning appropriate ways teachers against children's specific learning difficulties were found.

In addition to the challenges experienced by receiving teachers in handling learners with disabilities is the administration of material presented. If they still need to simplify the contents, differentiated instruction will then be employed to cater for the needs of these learners. Reduced material standards of each competency are also held in to practice repetition. As stated by almost all teachers in elementary school the repetition of material is often carried out to be able to master the material for children with learning disabilities.

In relation to the receiving teachers' knowledge and experience in handling learners with disabilities, according to the results of the study, their perceptions of learners with disabilities were full of love and compassion, but they do not have adequate sources of special education knowledge and inadequate training working in-field with the learners with disabilities.

4.5 Synthesis

The review of related literature started with a discussion and presentation of the core topics in relation to the objectives of the study. Started off by providing us with a clear ground on how learners with disabilities are classified. Additionally, suggested strategies for handling them and giving them proper instructions were also elucidated in this review. Learners with a disability may require special equipment or special colored paper. They may need handouts designed in a particular way. They will undoubtedly require more one-on-one time with the trainer. But they are often the most eager learners, trying their best to overcome their disabilities. It will probably be in the best interest to offer one-on-one training to a learner with a disability, depending on the severity of the learning disability. Some learners with a disability may be quite capable of learning in a group. Others may find it too intimidating. They will probably provide the special materials they need.

This study focuses mainly on the experiences of teachers who are to be considered as out-of-field teachers. As special education teachers, they brought to the classroom their knowledge of basic skills in the content areas with a lower level of effectiveness compared to general education teachers. The teacher preparation programs for special education teachers prepared candidates to teach students of various disability types and were comparable to general education programs. However, they were lacking in adequate preparation in subject- matter pedagogy because of the need to provide students with disabilities with special education teachers who can provide high-quality instruction.

4.6 Theoretical Lens

The theoretical framework of this study is provided by Ingersoll's (2001) work. This phenomenological investigation is primarily based on the idea that one of the key causes of poor performance is schools' inability to adequately staff classrooms with effective teachers. According to this theory, these occurrences are primarily caused by the compatibility and incompatibility that may exist between individuals and the environment, with a variety of factors influencing it.

Ingersoll's analysis delved into the possibility that there are other factors, aside from organizational characteristics and school conditions, that cause teachers to carry out-of-field experiences. His investigation then revealed that school staffing issues were not the primary cause of the situation. The analysis also confirmed that measures of teacher preparation and certification are by far the strongest correlates of student achievement in the classroom. In addition, the framework of this study is in congruence with the Person-Environment Fit Theory by Edwards *et al.* (1998), which believes that the

environment and the person are connected in that how a person feels depends on the kind of environment they belong.

On the other hand, a significant number of teachers are assigned to teach subjects that do not correspond to their training or education, which can have negative consequences that stand in congruence with the proposition of Kheruniah (2013) that teacher competence contributes to student motivation and discipline during the lessons. In addition to this, this study is also within the discretion of Ericksen (1978), that operative student's learning outcomes were based on how the teacher's capabilities maintained the student's engagement in classroom discussion.

Hence, the quality of teachers and teaching as a holistic approach is unwaveringly one of the most significant factors in shaping the knowledge acquisition and growth of students. This is one premise of this phenomenological inquiry that I am trying to confirm.

5. Method

Presented in this chapter are the research design, participants and sampling, research instrument, role of the researcher, ethical consideration, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness of the study.

5.1 Research Design
A qualitative phenomenological research was utilized, wherein the goal of this research was to describe a "lived experience" of a phenomenon. As this is a qualitative analysis of narrative data, methods to analyze its data must be quite different from more traditional or quantitative methods of research. According to Creswell (2013), phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon. The researcher would then collect data from those who experienced the same phenomenon and later on would develop a common description of the essence of each individual's experiences. The contents of these will consist of "what" they have experienced and "how" they experienced it.

The provisions of the phenomenological research approaches presented above made a clearer understanding of where the method of the present study was anchored, involving the data collection techniques, data processing. and analysis of students with special needs based on the narrative response from the non-SPED teachers of public elementary schools.

5.2 Participants and Sampling
According to Creswell (2013), purposive sampling gives the researcher an opportunity to choose the participants of the study who are believed to be the best source of information. Moreover, the participants involved in this study were chosen according to the research question's pre-determined requirements.

For the In-Depth Interview (IDI), this study employed purposive sampling to identify five (5) teachers who were not a bachelor of elementary education major in

special education graduate but were handling learners with disabilities and shall have at least two (2) years of teaching experience in teaching.

In addition, the teachers involved in the in-depth interview (IDI) are as follows: *Participant 1* is a 40-year-old public school teacher with 11 years in the service and a two-year-stint as a Special Education Teacher (SPET) I. She is currently handling learners with autism in a self-contained class. *Participant 2* is a 35-year-old public school teacher with eight years of service in the Department of Education. She is currently handling children with learning disabilities in a self-contained class. *Participant 3* is a 43-year-old who has rendered 11 years of teaching experience. She is currently handling learners with autism in a self-contained class for two (2) years; she is a mother of two (2) children with disabilities. *Participant 4* is a 42 -year-old Special Education Teacher (SPET) I, having rendered 16 years in the service. A mother of a child diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Lastly, *Participant 5* is a twenty-five-year-old Teacher 1, with two years' worth of experience in handling learners with disabilities in a classroom.

For the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), purposive sampling was also employed to produce five individuals who are also public school teachers and shall be a graduate of bachelor of elementary education who majors in special education. The participants must also have a minimum of two years' worth of teaching experience.

Participant A, has been in the service for 12 years handling learners with intellectual disabilities. *Participant B,* has been in the service for nine years, handling learners with visual impairment. *Participant C*, has been in the service for seven years, handling learners with hearing impairment. *Participant D*, has been in the service for 14 years handling learners with autism. Lastly, *Participant E* has been handling learners with autism for 10 years.

5.3 Research Instrument

To gather data for this study, I, as the researcher, prepared a semi-structured interview guide which was validated by research-experts prior to the conduct of the semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview guide was simply a list of the questions that I planned to ask during the conduct of the interview. I tried to limit my guide to one page so that it is easy to refer to. The process of creating such a guide was able to help me to focus and organize my line of thinking and, therefore, questioning.

In a variety of ways, creating an interview guide aided the interview study. This guide has only directed me as an interviewer; however, it is not set in stone. The interview guide allowed for unanticipated responses and issues to emerge using open-ended questioning and probes where the participants could tell their own stories (DeJonckheree & Vaughn, 2019). Also, the guide questions are aligned with the research objectives to attain the study's purpose and are attached in the appendices. The various outlines and instruments used during the discussion provided the participants with knowledge and discernment about their research role. Thus, everything that transpired during the conversations and discussions was duly recorded through an audio recording accompanied by field notes, which verified the data's precision being collected.

Furthermore, the recorded audios were copied out word for word, confirming the discussions' reliability and integrity.

5.4 Role of the Researcher

Throughout this study, I, as a researcher, played multiple roles in unraveling the lived experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with disabilities. The role of the researcher in this study imposes the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study. I served as a listener and a learner of the behavior, stories and experiences of this study's participants. According to Creswell (2013), a qualitative researcher's role should be a naive, active listener and co-researcher with research participants rather than an expert who passes judgement and unilaterally interprets the research participants' phenomenon. With this role, the analysis of the study is adjoining to the participant's real perspective and how they want the perspective to be understood.

As an interviewer, I conducted an online interview through the Google Meet platform. This means the data is mediated through this human instrument rather than through inventories, questionnaires or machines. The qualitative researcher needs to describe relevant aspects of self, including any biases and assumptions, expectations and experiences to qualify his or her ability to conduct research (Greenbank, 2003).

As a transcriber and translator, I collected, translated, and transcribed the participants' responses into written code. Those who signed the consent forms and participated in the study were treated with utmost regard. Thus, all the participants' responses were transcribed verbatim to increase the data's accuracy; all that transpired during the process was made available and accessible for participants' review. Moreover, participants were given copies of the transcribed statements to double-check the accuracy of their statements.

As a data analyst, I interpreted results, compiled, categorized and analyzed the data collected. I have sought guidance and support in drawing interpretations with my adviser, an expert in this field, to create factual information on the phenomenon they experienced. Any revelation, opinions, and views expressed negatively and positively were taken constructively. Lastly, I ensured and upheld those ethical standards that are held paramount in this study's conduct.

In addition to this, it was also the researcher's role to be vital in the credibility of the research findings. Moreover, the researcher's role in this study was to establish the phenomenon under study, the objectives and the appropriate questions asked, the collection and analysis tools, ethical considerations and how the results were reported or disseminated.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

Qualitative researchers must consider certain ethics in conducting qualitative research. There are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms in research. Norms promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error (Resnik, 2020). The researcher followed certain ethical guidelines while conducting this study. Hence, in compliance with the Research Ethics Committee requirements of HCDC,

I ensured that the nine elements of ethical consideration were complied. The following considerations were observed carefully by the researcher in gathering the data.

A. Social Value

Researches should be done with consideration of its benefit to the education and community. In observance of educational and social value, I believe that this study is relevant to both sectors, for it is a crucial issue that needs attention. With this study, cases regarding receiving teachers handling learners with disabilities in a classroom were taken care of. This study was helpful to people such as the teacher, parents and other people not just in the field of education, but also in the community. In order to make this study available to everyone, I will present this study in public research forums.

B. Informed Consent

They provided informed consent for the participants who were receiving teachers and allowed them to understand that they were involved in a data-gathering process in which they were free to decide if they would join or not. It also included the purpose of the research, methods used, the possible outcomes of the research, associated demands, discomforts, inconveniences and risks that the participants may face. Prior to the distribution of questionnaires, I thoroughly explained to the participants the purpose of the study and how their information will be used in this paper. I also asked the participants to sign a consent to reasonably present that the data were not gathered under other influences and coercion.

C. Risks, Benefits and Safety

As for Risks, Benefits and Safety, I made sure that the respondents were free from any kind of threat and were really safe when participating in the data collection. Since we are currently under a public health emergency with threats of a sudden surge of cases, I conducted my interview virtually using the Google Meet platform. I also found this study beneficial to the participants because the results of this study were of great help in strengthening their relationship together and in order for the child to be able to experience living with other people around.

D. Privacy and Confidentiality of Information

Moreover, the Privacy and Confidentiality of Information were ensured by keeping all information private and confidential. Naming names, designations or any characteristic of particular respondents were avoided in the conduct of this study. Research information was kept in locked files at all times. Only research personnel have access to the files and questionnaire, audio recording, transcripts, summaries, and all other data gathered and only those with an essential need to see names or other identifying information have access to that particular file. A year after the completion of the research, the data will be destroyed for safekeeping.

E. Justice

To ensure that justice was served during the conduct of this study, I made sure that I was not, in any way, emotionally involved with any of the participants. Instead, I was on the neutral side when dealing with the participants. To ensure that the Republic Act 7610: Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination, I made sure that there was no child who was put in danger during the whole course of this study. Thus, I assured that there was no force or coercion involved in dealing with the participants, especially during the request to become part of the study as well as during the interview. Participants were selected through a criterion set in this study. Through the provisions of informed consent, care, compensation and reimbursement are ensured. I also ensured that any benefits arising from the study would be made available to the participants by giving them tokens after the data-gathering process.

F. Transparency

I ensured the participants that every procedure in the data-gathering process was done fairly and truthfully. I only disclosed truthful and factual information from the participants of this study. I also ensured that only accurate, just and honest information was included. Before the interview, the participants were informed about the flow of the interview as well as the presence of an audio recording. I also informed the participants about the nature of the study, data gathering procedure and the importance of the result of this study. I also encouraged honesty in the sharing of information by encouraging the participants to give truthful answers. After the interview, I allowed the participants to cross-examine the transcribed data in order for them to validate that whatever was shared during the interview was stated in the manuscript correctly and without bias. Upon reviewing the data from the participants, the participants were informed that all the findings would be filed as a research paper and would be disseminated in public forums and assured that their personal information would never be included.

G. Qualification of Researcher

I, as the researcher, am qualified to conduct this research for she is a graduate of Bachelor of Elementary Education with a concentration in Special Education and is a graduate school student of Holy Cross of Davao College who is currently finishing her thesis in Masters of Arts in Education Teaching Children with Developmental and Behavior Problems. In addition, the researcher is handling professional education subjects in one of the higher education institutions here in Davao City and has already gone through some researches in the past. The researcher also embodies appropriate education, training and experience in terms of research.

H. Adequacy of Facilities

Data gathering was conducted using Google Meet Platform in compliance with the COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases. The researcher will provide prepaid data connection for the participants to

make sure they will be able to participate in the conduct of the study. The entire duration of the interview will also be recorded to ensure the accuracy of the data.

I. Community Involvement

Since this study involves teachers handling learners with disabilities and the locale of the study was an educational institution, I made sure that the attainment of the objectives, especially the realizations from the teachers, were emphasized and recognized. Knowing that this aspect is very confidential and sensitive, I really made sure that their feelings and beliefs would be respected. Finally, in doing this study, I made sure that the participants' cultures and traditions were respected.

5.6 Data Collection

As a researcher, I have taken rigorous steps in the data collection procedure. To enable such, several steps were followed in the data collection procedure of this study. The first step was to establish linkages and seek permission. Before that, I wrote an endorsement letter addressed and asked for permission from the dean of HCDC Graduate School, Dr. Edroslyn J. Fernandez. She signed my endorsement letter and that is the starting point of my data collection process. Second, a letter was sent to the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent in Davao City. Then, upon approval, another letter was handed to the School Principals for this study's pre-selected participants. The communication letters concisely stipulated the purpose of conducting this research.

After that, the participants were identified with the use of the purposive sampling method. Assured that the participants have experienced the phenomenon being studied by knowing them individually through direct observation, referrals, informal dialogues, and verbal agreements, and the participants have met the pre-inclusion criteria set in this study. Accordingly, the participants were given a letter of consent affixing their signatures or just their initials. The consent pertained to their willingness to share their experiences as receiving teachers handling learners with disabilities and their voluntary participation in this study.

Meanwhile, the individual in-depth interview (IDI) was conducted in a 30-minute individual interview per participant via a Google meeting link sent to them before the agreed schedule. The session was recorded to ensure the utmost validity and accuracy of the data being gathered. The focus group discussion (FGD) was carried out through a recorded virtual conference, together with five (5) teachers involved in this study. The discussion was two hours long as they excitedly shared their experiences.

Promptly, recorded interviews were stored in the researcher's personal computer and hard drive, ready for transcription. The recorded data was carefully kept in private, and no personal information will ever be disclosed. More so, interviews and group discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim to enhance the accuracy of the data (Krippendorf, 2013).

Later after that, an inductive analysis was carried out. This analysis involved arranging data into increasingly abstract units of knowledge and constructing patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up, working back and forth between the themes

and the database until I had identified a comprehensive collection of themes depicted in this inductive procedure. I then used deductive reasoning to examine the data from the themes to see whether more evidence could support each theme or collect more details. Consequently, although the method starts inductively, deductive reasoning becomes increasingly necessary as the research progresses.

Lastly, the thematic analysis was made. As a researcher, I used the coding process to generate a description of the setting, people, and themes for analysis. Description involves a detailed rendering of information about people, places, or events in a setting. Significant findings were sought from this study to draw out the themes of this research. Further, this was made possible through the assistance of my research adviser, ensuring that the participants' responses were carefully analyzed based on the core ideas.

5.7 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data of this research study followed Braun and Clarke's (2014) six-phase framework for doing a thematic analysis. The data point processing is initiated after the data has been collected and recorded. In order to keep careful and accurate notes, the recorded data were analyzed, synthesized, and transcribed.

After the formal data collection period is completed, the analysis begun. More so, this study used thematic analysis in analyzing the collected and gathered data. It is a technique for finding. evaluating, arranging, explaining, and reporting patterns in collecting data (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Additionally, specified six phases of thematic analysis that were carefully followed in this study: familiarization with data obtained by extensive reading, coding, searching for themes and subthemes, evaluating and developing themes, defining and naming themes uncovered, and generating analytical output.

The initial step for a researcher is to become familiar with the derived data. Prior to commencing the formal analysis, I listened and watched the meeting recordings, read and reread the data, and jotted down notes and summaries. In my experience, I made my recordings and written transcription at the same time. I read and listened to the materials multiple times to familiarize myself with the concepts that looked relevant to my research. Following that, data coding was used. The act of transforming obtained data or observations into a set of useful, coherent categories is referred to as data coding. I was able to label codes by highlighting pertinent and comparable material in a digital or printed copy. I colored in the comparable remarks that emerged from the participants' replies. In this way, I was able to organize pertinent data codes into meaningful topics and categories

The next stage is to come up with some early themes. This phase comprises going over the codes and compiled data to see if there are any wider patterns of significance that can be discovered as potential themes. It comprises gathering data relevant to each possible subject, working with the data, and assessing the viability of each candidate theme. I was able to construct broader themes based on the codes I discovered. Some of the labeled codes were grouped into themes. However, certain codes did not correspond to my possible topics and did not meet the requirements of the study. Those codes were

thrown away. I compiled the topics based on the goals of my research. As a result, I created a thematic table to categorize the early topics discovered. After that, go through the various topics you've come up with. I looked at each of the first pieces I got to see whether they could assist me in achieving the study's aim. In this step, I read the themes and asked myself whether I was producing good themes or if the coded dates were consistent with the general themes I've produced.

The refinement of the defining and naming of themes comes after examining the concepts. Choosing data extracts to include in the final report that highlight fundamental qualities of themes and writing narratives to accompany them that explain their value in connection to the larger story each theme tells is the time to rename and redefine themes. I have now organized the themes and subthemes that are subjected to meet the research questions of my study in this phase. In addition, I ensured that the names of my categories and subthemes were clear and acceptable for adhering to. I presented snippets that properly describe each theme's essence.

Finally, the analysis must be completed. Using both narrative descriptions and representative data extracts such as participant quotations, the analysis should describe the data and give an argument for why the researcher's explanation fully and comprehensively addresses the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2014). In this case, I came up with themes and subthemes for each study question, along with some participant replies. I gathered them and linked them to my theoretical perspective as well as previous research. As a result, I was able to compare my current work to theories and literatures for the construction of knowledge. The themes developed from the comments of the participants aided my body of linked literatures and validated hypotheses.

5.8 Trustworthiness of the Study

I personally affirm that every research study must be trustworthy and credible in the sense that rigor and relevance are demonstrated. According to Conelly (2016), to achieve trustworthiness and credibility, this study has undergone a series of developments in order to ensure the trustworthiness, reliability and validity of the study. In a qualitative study, criticism like biased, small scale, anecdotal and, most importantly the trustworthiness of the study will always be present. These methods should be utilized to ensure the quality of a study.

In each study, researchers should establish the protocols and procedures necessary for a study to be considered worthy of consideration by readers. Since qualitative researchers do not use instruments with established metrics about validity and reliability, it is pertinent to address how qualitative researchers establish that the research study's findings are credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable.

A. Credibility

Krostjens and Moser (2018) defined credibility as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. It established whether the research findings represented plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and a correct interpretation of the participants' original views. To achieve this in my study, Since this

was a phenomenon exploring the lived experiences of receiving teachers in handling learners with disabilities, I allowed the participants to do the member check and was given a chance to review their responses among themselves if the information was really true amongst them.

B. Transferability

According to Solano (2020), transferability is the degree to which study findings can be transferred or applied to other situations and contexts. In this study, transferability already started when I cited other studies related to this research. I already applied the study findings about special education to a setting which involves seclusion. In the latter, transferability has also taken place as other researchers used the findings of this study in other areas or fields.

C. Dependability

Dependability is the extent to which other researchers could repeat the study and that the findings would be consistent. In other words, if a person wanted to replicate your study, they should have enough information from your research report to do so and obtain similar findings as your study did. In this study's case, having other people look at it and asking an adviser to check if this study could obtain the same finding when replicated will show its dependability.

D. Confirmability

This criterion has to do with the level of confidence that the research study's findings were based on the participants' narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases. Confirmability is there to verify that the findings are shaped by participants more so than they are shaped by a qualitative researcher (Statistics Solution, 2021). In line with this, the researcher will surely record the entire duration of the in-depth interview with the participants and present it to the thesis adviser to make sure that the result of the study was not from the researcher's point of view instead, it was solely from the data gathered from the participants.

6. Results and Discussions

This chapter describes the results of the study based on the information analysis of the qualitative data. The presentation of the results of the qualitative data includes the thematic analysis of the lived experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with disabilities. The findings with their lived experiences show the participant's challenges, coping mechanisms, lessons and insights in handling learners with disabilities inside the classroom. It also describes the analysis of the transcriptions from the conducted In-Depth Interviews (IDI) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD).

Codes were used to discretely identify the verbatim transcripts of the participants from the interview. Additionally, research questions and probing question numbers were provided for convenience in locating data from the transcription matrix.

6.1 Experiences of Receiving Teachers in Handling Learners with Disabilities

In the recently conducted interviews, it has been found out that the participant's experiences and challenges are very distinct. But eventually, common grounds from their experiences flourished from the conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Additionally, it has been revealed that they have encountered challenges throughout their teaching journey, which was interpreted into four (4) significant themes. To wit: *Unfamiliarity of tasks, Pedagogical problems, and Insufficient support.*

Figure 1: Experiences of Receiving Teachers in Handling Learners with Disabilities
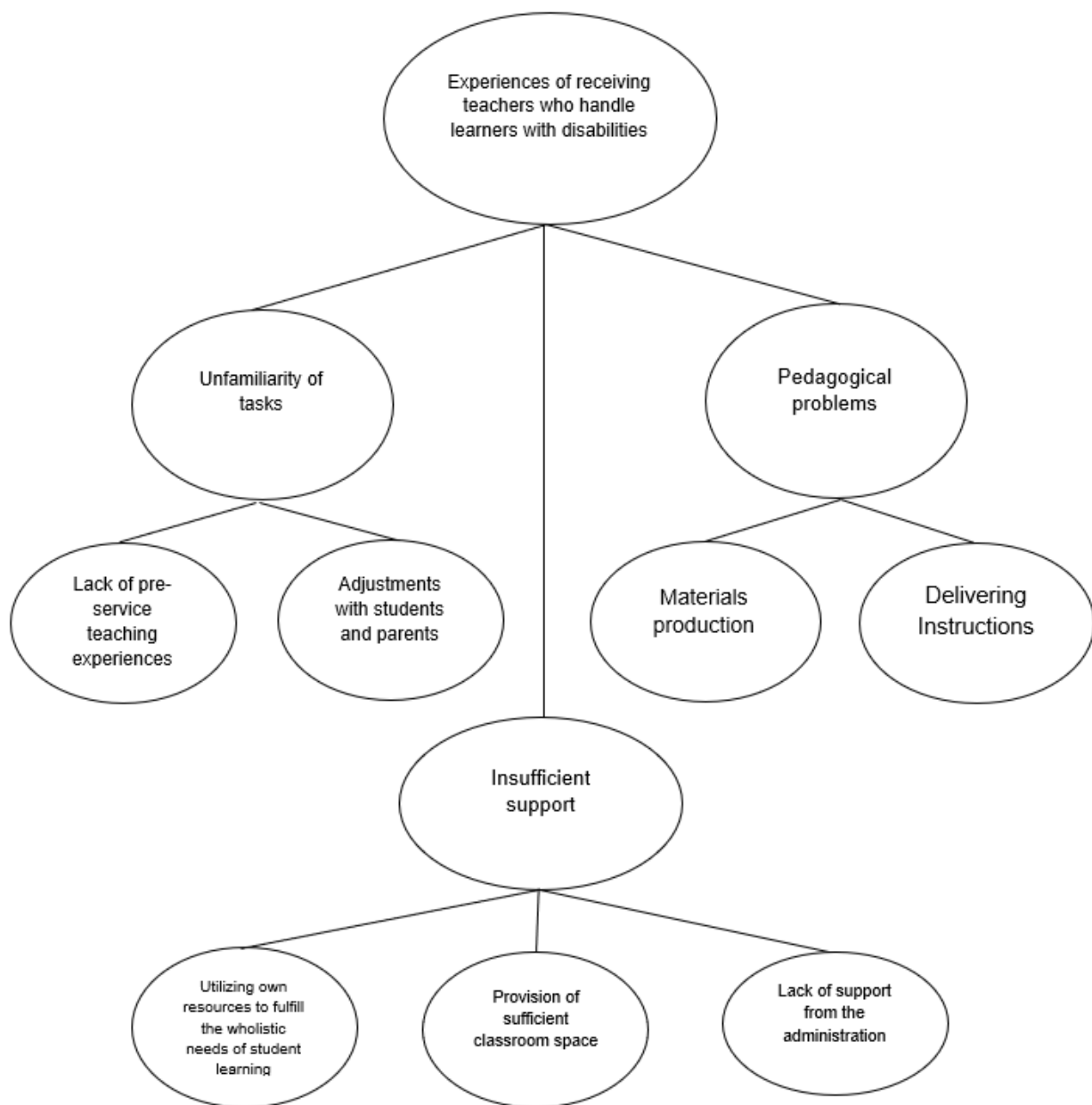
Under the first central theme are two subthemes generated, to wit: *lack of pre-service teaching experiences* and *adjustments with students and parents.* On the other hand, the second major theme flourished with two subthemes, to wit: *materials production* and *delivering instruction.* It's notable to mention that the participants in this study were teachers who were not graduates of Bachelor of Elementary Education major in Special Education but are currently handling learners with disabilities, so it is challenging for them to accommodate the unique needs of the students.

Additionally, in this study, more challenges that the participants were able to overcome have been disclosed. Under the third central theme were three themes that were collected from the given responses of the participants to wit: *utilizing their own resources to fulfill the wholistic needs of student learning, provision of sufficient classroom space,* and *lack of support from the administration.*

Moreover, the following excerpts are statements collected from the participants as they try to describe their experiences, challenges, and how they managed to cope with the adversities, lessons and insights that they have encountered throughout their teaching experiences. The following major themes and subthemes are visually presented in Figure 1.

6.1.1 Unfamiliarity of Tasks

Results extracted during the interview focused more on the struggles they encountered during the early stage of handling learners with disabilities. Figure 1 revealed two (2) subthemes that sprung out from the major themes, which are the following: *Lack of pre-service teaching experiences and Adjustments with students and parents.* Recalling their first times during the interview brought back mixed emotions of happiness, excitement, frustration, and sadness. Of course, they were compelled to make sure they would continue delivering instructions to their learners.

A. Lack of Pre-service Teaching Experiences

Learners with disabilities require extra attention, resources and time compared to regular students (Kebbi and Al-Hroub, 2018). In other words, special education teachers need more time to deal with their students and the class. In the case of the research participants, since the five in-depth interview participants were not holders of Bachelor of Elementary Education majors in Special Education, this became a challenge since their experience with practice teaching was limited only to regular students. It was very evident through the responses as two of the IDI teacher-participants shared:

> *"Kumbaga maglisod ko at first gayud jud kay wala jud ko naka experience og practicum pa or mag gunit jud totally ug mga in ana gud.."* [In other words, It was really difficult at first because I was not able to experience practicum or handle them totally inside the classroom..] - RQ$_1$ PQ$_1$ IDI$_1$

> *"Uhm. To be honest, it is not easy. Dili Lalim. I've been teaching learners with disabilities for 2 years now. So far, you need sufficient knowledge and training jud. Luckily, I adjusted*

to the system pero Dili jud siya agad-agad, lisud gyud sa sugud kay DKA kaau familiar." [To be honest, it was never easy. It really is not. I've been teaching learners with disabilities for 2 years now. So far, you need sufficient knowledge and training for this field. Luckily, I adjusted to the system, but it did not happen in an instant. It was hard at first because I was not familiar with it.] - RQ$_1$ PQ$_1$ IDI$_2$

Results presented can also be connected to the study of Harris and Sass (2011) that elementary and middle school teacher productivity eventually increases with experience or pre-service teaching training. This is consistent with the statement of Rudiyati *et al.* (2017) that the most common challenge mentioned by the teacher-participants in the study was the process of dealing with learners especially if the teachers do not have enough support from other experts in the field, they lack knowledge given the situation. Similarly, one response from the focus group discussion participants conforms to their study and states:

"Okay for me…. Mahirap siya, nakakapagod at first but….para sa akin…in my own opinion lang ha, Nahihirapan ka talaga at first, kay maglisod ka tyansa ano…" [Okay for me.. it was hard. It was tiring at first. But.. For me, in my own opinion, you'll find it hard at first because it is an unfamiliar set-up..] - RQ$_1$ FGD$_1$

Describing their first-hand experiences in detail made them realize how far they have come to this moment which gave them room to improve as the years went by. After all, experiences from the first few years of teaching usually get the largest gains in terms of the experiences, Harris and Sass added. Another study in relation to the impact of pre-service teaching experience on the ability of teachers to promote academic achievement among learners with disabilities conducted by Feng and Sass (2013) later found out that the gains ineffectiveness associated with teacher experiences was perceived to be greater for teachers of learners with disabilities than for teachers of regular students who also stands in congruence with the study.

B. Adjustments with Students and Parents
Parents and teachers are arguably the most important adults throughout the child's life (Van Der Wal, 2020). As it goes, parents rear the children as soon as they reach the age of becoming independent. Nevertheless, for learners with disabilities they require extended rearing until their time of independence. Having been given the responsibility to teach these learners confronted them that to make ends meet with the child, especially with the given online set-up, establishing good communication points to students would be through their parents. And as diverse as their children, parents do have differences in terms of perceptions, beliefs, and so on. Differences that might be a primary cause of creating a rift between you the parents, which was why two of the IDI participants distinctively expressed this as a challenge. To reiterate:

"Pareha anang first, naga adjust paka sa bata, mag adjust pud ka sa parents.." [Just like for example, you will not just adjust with the child but also with the parents..] - RQ1 PQ1 IDI3

"Diba ug muingon tag maestra ka, dli lang man students nimo imong maka interact? Ana gyud na siya, maam ay. Kinahanglanon pud gyud nimo makicooperate sa parents kay sila man ang muatiman saimong student ug naa sila sa balay, silay muassist sa bata. Syempre kay lahi lahi baya tag personality, naa jud times na challenging siya kay magbugno labi na ug about opinion, mao ng isa jud na sa imo iconsider pud.." [If you say you are a teacher, it is not just your students with whom you will come to interact, right? That's how it is, maam. We also need to cooperate with parents because they are the ones who will manage your students if they're at home, they'll be the ones to assist the child. Of course, since we all differ in terms of personality, there are challenging times where you will be against each other specifically with regards to your opinion, that is why we also consider that one..] - RQ1 PQ1 IDI5

Moreover, the result of the in-depth interview and focus group discussions generally agrees with the works of Obiakor *et al.* (2012) that the burden of learners with disabilities to progress does not fall solely on the educator but also on the community, administration, parents, and those who have a direct or indirect impact on the child's success. This notion is backed up by the theory of ecological systems by Urie Bronfenbrenner. Presented in this theory were complex layers of environment, each having an effect on the child's development in which the closer proximity you belong to the child, the more likely it is to fuel the child's development which was proven to be true by one of our focus group discussion participants. To wit:

"If you are to teach children, you do not just limit your interaction with them. You also do not just ignore the fact na kailangan mo din makipagkasundo sa magulang ng student mo. Why? Kasi whether you agree or disagree, your relationship with their parents could have an indirect effect on the child's learning or performance." [If you are to teach children, you do not just limit your interaction with them. You also do not just ignore the fact that you have to develop a good relationship with your student's parents. Why? Because whether you agree or disagree, your relationship with their parents could have an indirect effect on the child's learning or performance...] - RQ1 PQ1 FGD3

With this, it is important to establish a good relationship with the parents who provide first-hand care for learners with disabilities. Section 2 of Republic, Act 9155 mandates that it is part of the teacher's duty to produce well-rounded individuals as teachers are the second parents of the learners at school. Recalling their first few instances that they've handled the self-contained class, was a mixture of bliss and melancholy.

Indeed, there will be adjustments to take place since becoming a special education teacher requires you to handle a handful of children who have diverse situations. Some

of them might be children with intellectual disabilities and sensory and physical disabilities. Others might have excessively severe behavioral problems that usually result in severe tantrums to the point wherein you, as a teacher, might be scared by their level of aggression.

6.1.2 Pedagogical Problems
It was not a surprise that everyone, regardless of their status in society, has been greatly affected by the sudden transition since the start of this public health emergency. However, few researchers have focused more on research-based instructional strategies which showed to be beneficial for students who receive special education instructions. Figure 1 shows that out of the major theme two (2) subthemes have sprung. Such as: *Materials production and Delivering instructions.* Sharing their experiences made some of the participants teary-eyed. These actions depict they were anxious in terms of what level of quality education they would be giving their learners, given that they will not be able to meet and conduct face-to-face classes so they can be facilitated immediately.

A. Materials Production
Describing the challenges in terms of preparing the materials and maximizing the available resources, the participants were very detailed in sharing the need for such materials to cater to the needs of their students, which was greatly in congruence with what Vaughn and Swanson (2015) mentioned in their study, wherein the need to use research-based instructional programs to enhance the achievement of students with special needs was highlighted in which was similarly depicted by one of the participants from the focus group discussion as she shared:

> *"Di man pud pwede nga ipansak gani sa studyante ang mga modules karon nga dli face to face, na dli na mafilter out ang appropriateness sa content ana nga subject. Kana for me ang greatest challenge."* [It is not possible to just assign and give the students their modules. Not that it is not face-to-face, but we cannot filter out the appropriateness of the contents of the subject. That, for me, is the greatest challenge..] - RQ$_1$ PQ$_3$ FGD$_3$

A recent study in Japan conducted by Hayato, Kim, and Tatsuro in 2016 revealed that since there is a marginal increase in learners with disabilities, we must opt to cope with the trend as these learners are also eligible to receive the same amount of educational access as to the regular students. Special education must be devised with teaching materials and learning content that would distinctively suit the students. As stated by two of our IDI teacher-participants:

> *"Although modules are provided by the admin, necessary gihapon of us to make sure that ang materials na gamiton kay tailored-fit bitaw sailaha? Kana bitawng you will make sure na magmanifest gyud ang progress sa students dli kay for the sake nan aa kay marelease na asnweranan saimong students. Lugi kaayo sila ana, maam. Ubanan pa nga dli kami*

mismo ang mag assist nila? Struggle gyud kaayo.." [Although modules are provided by the admin, it is still necessary for us to make sure that the materials we will use are tailored-fit for them. The type that you'll make sure that their progression will manifest not just for the sake of them being able to receive something to answer. They become shorthanded. Added to that is the fact that only the parents are assisting the students. It is really a struggle.] - RQ₁ PQ₃ IDI₁

"To be honest lang gyud, ang materials sa SPED kay dapat modified gyud na. Human magprovide ang uban, murag for the sake nlng man nga naa ang quality. I mean, dli sa gina-bash nako sila no, pero I think wala kaau nila naconsider ang varied needs aning mga bataa to a point nga for compliance nlg pud ang pag submit sa mga bata sa ilahang modules or outputs. Maka-sad lang.." [To be honest, materials in SPED need to be modified. Others will provide materials just for the sake of having something without minding the quality. I mean, it's not like I am bashing them, but I think they were not able to consider the varied needs of these learners to the point of for compliance submissions of students in their outputs. It is so saddening..] - RQ₁ PQ₃ IDI₄

Raising their concerns about the limited resources for their students hinders the provision of high-quality learning through modular or online learning brought by the COVID-19 situation.

B. Delivering Instructions

Regardless of disability, every child is required to have access to the best instruction possible, which also agrees with the work of Sternberg (2017), wherein classroom teachers need to focus more on implementing specific interventions to meet their individual needs. Due to the pandemic, it has been more difficult for them to deliver instructions to some students. They have to bear the great challenge of utilizing numerous ways to deliver specific information through their student's modular learning. Such thoughts were realized as they shared with conviction that:

"Kuan maam kanang in terms of delivering instructions is ang resources, syempre kulang man jud, tas kabalo ka if magrequest dli man jud na agad agad gud unya pandemic pa gyud." [In terms of delivering instructions and the resources, of course, we know that it is not enough, and we also know that if we try to send a request, it would not be given in an instant since we are also in the midst of a pandemic.] - RQ₁ PQ₃ FGD₄

"The hardest part for me jud was the production and delivery of instruction sa pagsugod ug online class kay tungod pandemic." [The hardest part for me really was the production and delivery of instruction at the beginning of online class due to the pandemic situation.] - RQ₁ PQ₃ FGD₅

Similarly, this agreed with the statement of Rudiyati *et al.* (2017) that one of the challenges revealed through the study was the repetition of instruction and content reduction. The teachers' pedagogies in dealing with learners with disabilities need improvement because it is still problematic. In one way, teachers need to overcome these problems and provide adequate educational services.

"…labi na karon pandemic gud… lisod kayo mucater og manhandle og bata… daghan kaayo questions parents labi na sa pag assist unsaon pag answer sa mga activities and… like lisod jud kaayo maam nga di jud nimo manhandle imong mga students like face to face jud ba… grabe among pag guide sa mga parents" [Especially now that we are under a pandemic.. It is hard to cater and handle children.. there are a lot of questions from parents, especially in terms of assisting and how to answer the activities and like it is very hard because you cannot deal with the students like face-to-face.. guidance to parents were extensive.] - RQ$_1$ PQ$_1$ IDI$_1$

"delivery of instruction sa pagsugod ug online class kay tungod pandemic. Lisod kaayo siya imodify mam.. imodify ang mga lessons gani, syempre siguraduhon pud nimo nga ma apply sa bata in context ang learnings." [delivery of instructions at the beginning of online class due to the pandemic situation. It was very hard to modify maam.. modify the lessons, Of course, you have to make sure that the children would be able to apply their learnings in context.] - RQ$_1$ PQ$_3$ IDI$_5$

Learners who receive instructions under special education tend to require more direct instructions that are basically intended to meet their needs. After carefully analyzing the recently transcribed interview data, it was then realized that this was indeed seen as a challenge for the teacher participants. They also have difficulties in addressing the concerns raised by parents with regard to the module and the kind of assistance they receive in completing the modules, given the type of learning students are receiving in the new normal.

True enough, the participants also emphasized that since it is the first time that this kind of setup was implemented, there will be hurdles along the way, which will give them additional learning as they will be welcoming another academic year with the learners. They will be able to look forward to employing ways to handle if the same situation happens again.

6.1.3 Insufficient Support

Insufficient monetary and logistical support from the administration is another theme that emerged from the responses of the participants, which later flourished three subthemes, to wit: *utilizing own resources to fulfill the wholistic needs of student learning, provision of sufficient classroom space,* and *lack of support from the administration.* This was the part wherein the participants' responses sounded so frustrated but, at the same time, trying to cling to the small hope that soon they'll be prioritized.

A. Utilizing Own Resources to Fulfill the Wholistic Needs of Student Learning

In order to cope with the imperatives brought about by the new form of teaching and learning, the participants disclosed that their resourcefulness has helped them to provide some of the needs of their students that bridge those gaps. As one of the participants narrated that:

> *"Usahay kami ra gyud muprint sa amoang ipanghatag sa among bata. Mupalit ug mga gamit, kadalasan kami jud kay luoy lagi kaayo.. ummm, usahay di mi mapagbigyan.. hehe "* [Sometimes we are the ones who print the materials that we distribute to our students, the ones who purchase the materials, most of the times we provide because these kids do not have the means and sometimes we are not prioritized.. hehe] - RQ$_1$ MQ$_1$ IDI$_1$

> *"Kay wala man kay choice, positive na lang gyud. Kaysa maghulat ka na maprovidan ka, mag source-out na lang gyud ka ug funds, kuot na lang gyud ka sa imong sariling bulsa."* [Since we do not have a choice, we need to be positive. Instead of just waiting for the time we will be given, we could just source-out funds, use our own money to provide.] - RQ$_1$ MQ$_1$ IDI$_4$

As mentioned by Bayani and Guhao in their study conducted in 2017, a teacher who adapts the value of being resourceful means challenging one's own ideas and the ideas of others, embracing obstacles to provide for their learners. The participants might have divulged their frustrations from these certain hurdles, but at the end of the day, they would never fail to mention the fulfillment they feel whenever their students show even the least amount of improvement. This was also agreed by one of our focus group discussion participants as she stated:

> *"Parental instinct gud. Mafeel mo talaga ang kakulangan when you are in need. Alangan naman magtanga ka dha to wait for uncertain decisions, luoy ang bata mag expect sila. Kuot nlng gyud. If may extra, I can give more. If tight din sa budget, igo ra gyud makahelp sa finances."* [It's parental instincts. You can really feel the deficiencies when you are in need. It is not possible to just be idle and wait for uncertain decisions, the kids will be at a disadvantage. Spend your own money. If I have extra, I can give more. If my budget's too tight, I can just give at the most.] - RQ$_1$ MQ$_1$ FGD$_4$

The responses collected from the participants are not an isolated case. In fact, when asked about why they give all out for their learners in the class, 3 out of 5 participants in the in-depth interview revealed that they have family members diagnosed with a disability. Providing for these children might somehow mean extending their help to the students with lesser means.

B. Provision of Sufficient Classroom Space

Being able to provide instruction inside a classroom where students are learning comfortably and where teachers get a chance to provide a conducive learning environment to the class, another participant voiced out her thoughts and narrated:

"Kanya-kanya gyud kami diskarte sa salitan pagklase. Where as kung meron jud kaming sarili naming space, willing man gyud ko mugasto. If ako, wala jud nay problema sa koa maam. Kung ano ang mga kailangan na gamit, kung kaya sa budget, why not?" [We often find ways to assign time about who can conduct classes at this point, and so on. Where as if they gave us enough space for us to settle in, we are very much willing to use our own funds for that, that's not a problem for me. If we need something to purchase, and it i within the budget, why not?] - RQ1 MQ1 IDI1

"Isa pa gyud sa nagpalisod namo ug adjust no was the provision of classroom. Diba supposed to be naa mi sa area nga dali lang iaccess sa mga bata especially if wheelchair bound sila? Pero asa man mi gibutang? Naa mi diri sa likod. Lapukon, malubong ang wheelchair, kahilakon gyud ko mag huna huna maam unsa amo kahimtang diri." [Another thing that challenged us most was the provision of the classroom. Supposed to be, we should be given an area that is easy to access, right? Especially if the students are wheelchair-bound. But where were we placed? Here at the back. Muddy, the wheelchair sinks to the ground. I almost shed tears just by thinking about our situation.] - RQ1 MQ1 FGD1

"Wala mi tarong nga space or classroom. Mao ng problema gyud. If naa ra gyud mi amoang kaplastaran, maski pag guba guba nan ga room, amoa gyud na paggastuhan. Dili gyud na siya problema…" [We don't have proper space or classroom. That's really the problem. If we just have a place we can call our own. It will no longer be a problwm…] - RQ1 MQ1 IDI4

We already have the impression that providing these learners with disabilities an environment that enables them to do more, others might need special accommodations or modifications in the classroom. Making accommodations and changes to your classroom environment can assist children in becoming successful learners and active participants in classroom activities. This will eventually lead us to our third subtheme.

C. Lack of Support from the Administration

This subtheme conforms to what Bugwak (2020) has studied, that educational administrators have been shown to have more indirect effects on student achievement via the various sources over which they have complete control. To wit: curriculum implementation, instructional pedagogical support, and teacher support. In addition to this, another indirect effect that administrators can bring about for teachers and students is through the relationships of the administration head and the teacher.

Sherley added that school principals would then constantly seek ways to make sure the learners attain their academic achievement. However, the responses where somehow contrary to the recent statement as backed up by one of the IDI participants. To reiterate:

"Kinsa man pud daw ganahan mangayo if wala pa gani mi nahuman ug proposal, daghan dayon pakapin storya. "Mangayo na sad mo? Di ba nangayo naman mo last time?" ug naa pay "Sige na lang man mo ug pangayo, ang regular na sad." [Who would want to ask for help if even we still were not able to finish our proposal, lots of comments will then be thrown to us as a response. "Weren't you able to ask for last time?" and some comments would be like "You're going to ask again? Give chance to the regular students."] - RQ₁ PQ₂ IDI₃

"Much saddening for me is hindi ko feel na okay ang program sa aming principal. Kasi if you are open, maaccept mo man and you will be willing to support, right? Pero given our situation, parang wala man.." [Much saddening for me is that I do not feel that our program is okay with our principal. Because if you are open, you can accept the situation and you will be willing to help, right/. But given our situation, it seems like it is nothing..] - RQ₁ PQ₂ IDI₄

The way the participants shared this experience, it was very evident that they just wanted what was best for the students. It can also be connected to the work of DiPaola, Tschannen-Moran and Walther-Thomas (2004), as cited by Mott (2013), that almost 50 percent of special education teachers leave the teaching profession within three years mainly due to a lack of principal support. Another report claims that 40 percent of special education teachers who leave the teaching profession declared that they left because they were dissatisfied with administrative support. Another statement from one of our focus group discussion teacher-participants mentioned during the interview that administration support is detrimental to the environment for teachers in the school. To wit:

"..administration support is detrimental to the environment in which out teachers belong inside the school. That is why we really need to receive help from them because in a workplace, they are leaders, they are our boss. It should be an initiative for them to extend help, not the other way around.. " - RQ₁ PQ₂ FGD₂

Halvorson (2020) emphasized in her study that teachers must have the time, support and training to provide a high-quality education based on a student's needs. But in their case, they have committed themselves long enough to special education that even after all the hurdles that came their way, they are firm in their belief that they belong in the field. Not minding that they are also thriving in terms of delivering instructions in the field of teaching.

6.2 Coping Mechanisms of Receiving Teachers in Handling Learners with Disabilities
Recent studies that related to coping mechanisms and coping strategies amongst teachers were successfully conducted throughout the years, teaching as a profession has become one of the works that produced a huge amount of stress.

Figure 2: The Coping Mechanism of Receiving Teachers in Handling Learners with Disabilities
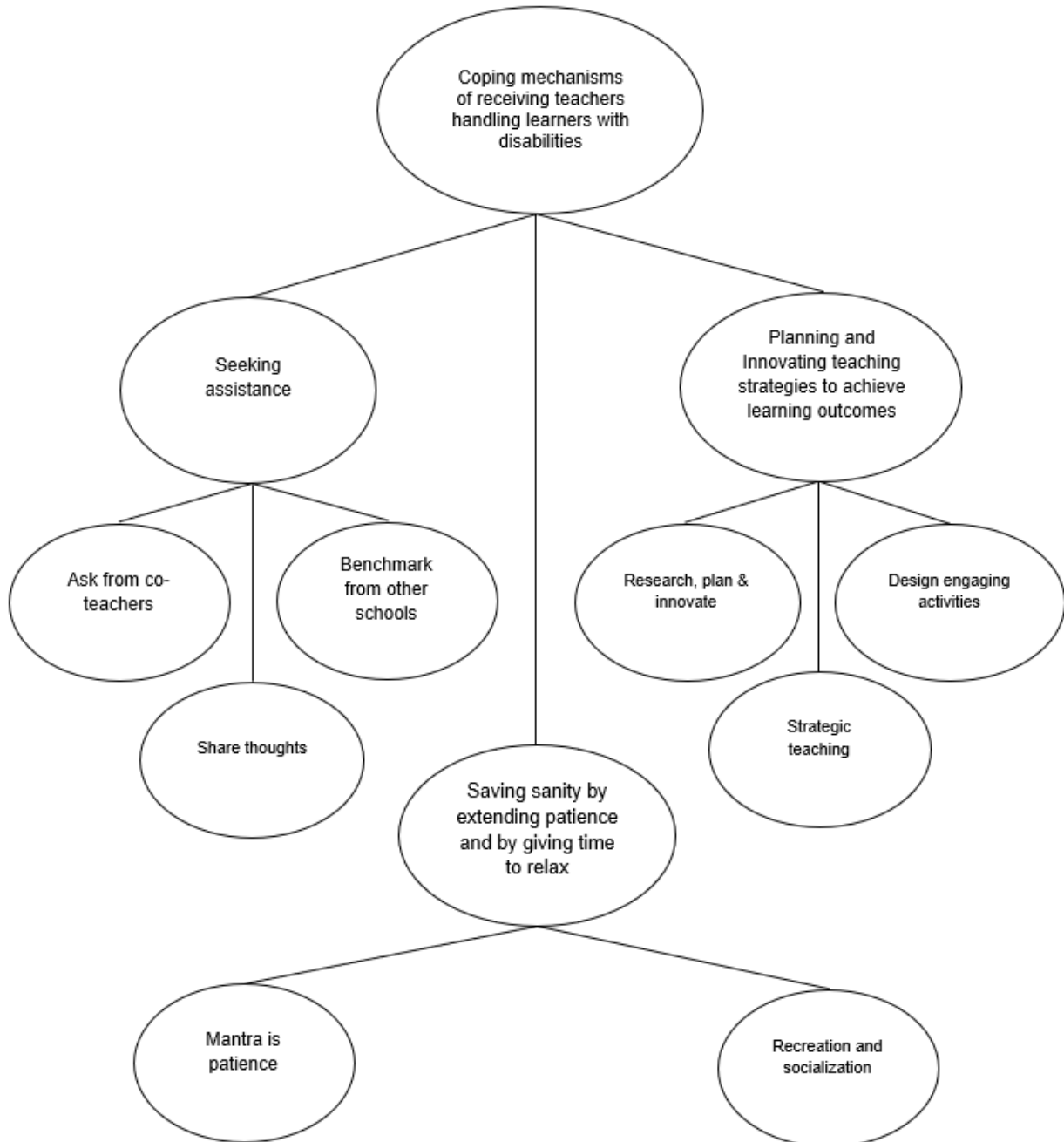
As mentioned in Kebbi and Al-Hroub's study conducted in 2015, teachers of learners with special needs and even learners in the general education classroom use several coping strategies to offset the stress in school. Additionally, Waltz (2016) backed up this by explaining that stress cannot be removed from the teaching environment, which is why teachers need to learn about different strategies and techniques to manage

the classroom. Out of the conducted interview, the three major themes were extracted. To wit: *seeking assistance, planning and innovating teaching strategies to achieve learning outcomes, and saving sanity by extending patience and by giving time to relax.*

The first major theme was then analyzed and was able to collect three subthemes which are the following: *ask from co-teachers, share thoughts,* and *benchmark from other schools.* Whereas under the second major theme, three subthemes were generated. To wit: *research, plan and innovate, strategic teaching,* and *design engaging activities.* The last major theme was able to generate two subthemes as well, which are the following: *mantra is patience and recreation,* and *socialization.*

At this point of the study, since the challenges faced by the receiving teachers in handling learners with disabilities have been identified and discussed, we will then move along to explore the coping mechanisms of these individuals in terms of their teaching experiences. Visual representation of the major and subthemes is shown in Figure 2.

6.2.1 Seeking Assistance

Mentoring or peer mentoring strives to provide newly hired teachers with enough opportunities for professional development (Perez-Gonzales, 2011). It has always been like that, one common phrase from the participants was asking for help from their colleagues, which then flourished with much-specified subthemes like *ask from co-teacher, share thoughts, and benchmark from other schools.*

A. Ask from Co-teacher

You can never go wrong with asking. Practically speaking, it is better to ask from more knowledgeable other rather than act as if you know everything. Asking questions has helped the teacher-participants cope with their challenging situation as they journey into teaching which is evident in their statements. To wit:

> *"Dili gyud dapat ka mahadlok mangutana sa lain nimos kauban.. knowing nga gamay pa jud ka ug years kumpara sa ilaha sa paghandle sa mga bata.."* [You don't need to be afraid in asking other colleagues since you know you have little years of experience compared to them in handling learners.] - RQ2 MQ1 IDI2

> *"… if aware man ko na dli ko kabalo, mangutana man ko sa uban nako kauban. Mas mayo na nuon na kesa magpaka as if ka na kabalo ka. Humility is everything man gud for me. Naa man gyud nay something na sila ang mas nakabalo compared saimoha,"* [… if I am aware that I do not know, I see to it that I ask questions from my workmates. It is better that way compared to acting as if you know. Humility is everything for me. There are always something that they know more compared to you.] - RQ2 MQ1 IDI5

> *"… mangayog help gyud sa kauban. Willing kaayo na sila muhelp although at first, awkward gyud siya, but know that they appreciate it more when you ask from them. It would look like willing gyud kaayo ka maglearn."* [… ask help from others. They're so

much willing to help although at first, it will really be awkward, but know that they appreciate it more when you ask for help from others. It would look like you are very much willing to learn." - RQ2 MQ1 FGD2

The last statement from one of our focus group discussion participants revealed how important being able to seek help from more tenured colleagues or co-teachers. The participants were very keen in explaining how draining their lessons would be, but when asked about how they cope with it, common answers emerged. Asking questions is an easy and effective way to build relationships with your colleagues, especially if you work in a dynamic environment like an educational institution. If you don't understand something or you need help, as the participants have reiterated, be afraid to ask questions.

B. Share Thoughts

Consequently, this is another subtheme that emerged from the first theme under the second research objective. Teaching in today's classroom poses significant issues and challenges that affect the psychosocial phenomena of how teachers use coping strategies as they interact with their students in the learning environment. It was disclosed by the in-depth interview and focus group discussion participants that since they share the same sentiments about the struggles they face together as co-teachers, they can relate to each other. Thus, making it true about sharing their thoughts among themselves. To reiterate:

"… dli nako ginadibdib. Kami nga mga co-teachers nako kay open kaau mi sa isa't isa. Magkatawa-katawa nalang kami paminsan kasi kami kami lang rin naman ang makarelate. We share our experiences until sa magkinataw-anay na lang gyud mi." [I don't take it seriously and against me. Me and my co-teachers, we are very open with each other. We often laugh about the problems because we share the same thoughts and some struggles too.] - RQ2 PQ1 IDI3

"… buti na lang very nice ang kasama ko. I mean, pwede kami maka sitdown, mag chika chika labas sama ng loob kung meron man. Ganon, parang in that way, we let off steam.." [… good thing my colleagues are very nice. I mean, we can sit down, chitchat, share our sentiments. Just like that. That it sometimes look like that's how we let off steam..] - RQ2 PQ1 IDI1

"Hmm.. during lunch time, or free time naming we gather around or paminsan sabay kami kain, during those moments talaga kami makapagshare ng bagay bagay.." [Hmm.. during lunchtime, or our free time. We gather around pr sometimes we eat together, during those moments are the times we get to share about random things..] - RQ2 PQ1 FGD3

By sharing thoughts, receiving teachers in an inclusive classroom face challenges that require understanding and balance of effective psychosocial coping strategies as they

interact with their students in order to better serve those students across the educational and developmental spectrum.

C. Benchmark from Other Schools

Out of different perspectives elicited through the sharing of thoughts comes a time when we will collaborate with other teachers outside the school premises and benchmark certain programs or procedures with regard to the best practices in their respective schools. It was also emphasized by the teacher-participants as they narrated:

> *"Usahay ga-ask ko sa akong mga kaila sa other schools na gahandle pud ug SPED class. Usahay pud sa school heads na akong kaila, mag-ask ko ug help para next time kabalo nako unsaon.."* [Sometimes, I ask from my friends assigned to other schools who also handle SPED classes. Sometimes, I ask my friends who are school heads for help so that I will know how to handle things next time.] - RQ2 PQ3 IDI4

> *"Connections, gamiton gyud na siya. Naa man koy classmates or batchmates na sa lain school sila na assign, so if dli ko kabalo unsaon paghandle, mangutana ko ginaunsa nila to.."* [Connections, you have to take advantage of those. I have classmates or batchmates that were assigned in other schools, so if I do not know the process or how to handle stuff, I ask how do they do it..] - RQ2 PQ3 IDI1

As the responses from the interview revealed, the participants were eager to provide for their learners, they often consult with their colleagues and acquaintances from other schools or districts and share best practices that they have employed and to also apply within their school. Some students do not have the means to secure money for assessments. They would usually source out funds or find ways to make sure the child gets assessed, but for a cheap assessment fee.

6.2.2 Planning and Innovating Teaching Strategies to Achieve Learning Outcomes

This is the second significant theme that emerged after exploring the coping mechanisms of the teachers. Out of the responses, we were able to source out three subthemes, which includes: *research, plan & innovate, strategic planning and design engaging activities.* As these teacher-participant's length of service falls within the average of 4 years and above, out of the challenges and struggles in creating the lesson and materials to cater to different needs.

A. Research, Plan and Innovate

Learning never stops, even if you become a teacher. This concept was almost mentioned every time by the participants to make sure they get to deliver instructions to their learners. Together with the fact that we always ask a seemingly endless number of questions each day of our lives, specifically in the areas of how and why. As the participants from both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions have shared:

"Nagabasa gyud.. nagatanong kami sa ubang schools din para malaman ano ang best practices nila." [We read.. We also ask from our friends from different schools to know about their best practices that we can apply in our school.] - RQ₂ PQ₂ IDI₄

"… you can never go wrong with reading, planning and researching, I can definitely attest to that.." - RQ₂ PQ₂ IDI₂

As years went on, these teachers were able to adjust to the system through the help of their colleagues and through asking questions, reading and researching. Hence, it is a must that teachers should have the ability to facilitate learning among diverse types of learners in diverse types of learning environments by the use of a wide range of teaching knowledge and skills (Bayani & Guhao, Jr., 2017).

Moreover, despite not having formal training in terms of teaching or handling learners with disabilities, the responses were congruent with the responses of those in focus group discussions. Wherein this also was their refuge when confronted with difficult situations before. To wit:

"If dili ka confident saimong knowledge saon paghandle ana nga situation, you can never go wrong when you read books, researches or any references you can rely on 24/7". [If you are not confident enough with your knowledge on how to handle the situation, you can never go wrong when you read books, researched or any references you can rely on 24/7.] - RQ₂ PQ₂ FGD₃

B. Strategic Planning

As policies change and districts adapt, educators' practices adjust to the latest philosophy and methods (DuBois, 2017). The teacher participants have already taught students at the elementary level in a variety of circumstances. For as many decades as they have been in public education, They have had an interest in and a profound concern for students who are not academically or socially successful in school. These were also mentioned by the teacher-participants as they shared other ways of coping with their life's challenging situations. As the interview went on and the participants tried to recall a few significant things in their experience worth noting, most of the participants in the focus group discussion mentioned phrases like "strategic planning". To wit:

"So what I did was strategic teaching. You need to look for ways kung unsa ang learning preference sa mga bata because learners are diverse." [So what I did was strategic teaching. You need to look for ways to find our what are your student's learning preferences since learners are diverse.] - RQ₂ PQ₁ FGD₂

"I believe naman na isa sa skill of a teacher is to be able to plan strategically, no? of course, you will be handling diverse learners, so you have to be resourceful enough to come up with alternatives.." [I believe that it is a skill of a teacher is to be able to plan

strategically; of course, you will be handling diverse learners, so you have to be resourceful enough to come up with alternatives..] - RQ2 PQ1 IDI4

C. Design Engaging Activities

Learners with disabilities learn differently, and just as learners' learning preferences are varied, teachers must be effective informants, too. It was mentioned in Bugwak (2020) that effective communication skills of the teachers would support the child's learning. This subtheme flourished from the major theme when the participants were asked about what things they do in order for them to cope with the challenges. Common answers were revealed, and it is notable to share that these teachers, although we know the situation in today's teaching, is far less about delivering content; it is more about facilitating and guiding the discovery of information. Two of them narrated:

"Since aware man ta diba maam na the more iengage nato ang bata sa possible learnings, mas better ang retention sa knowledge. Conducting activities, since the internet gives us a lot of options sa materials." [Since we are aware that the more we engage the child in possible learnings, retention of knowledge is better. Conducting activities, since internet gives us a lot of options in terms of the materials.] - RQ2 PQ2 FGD5

"children, kay known gyud na sila to have varied wants and interests. Kailangan gyud nimo pangitaon ang ilang kiliti for you to be able to deliver such wonderful activities na maganahan sad sila in return.." [children, they are know to have varied wants and interests. You really need to find their tickle spots for you to be able to deliver such wonderful activities that they can enjoy in return..] - RQ2 PQ2 IDI1

Designing different activities to engage the learners' subtheme falls in congruence with the previous subtheme, which was strategic planning. As a teacher, I developed an appreciation for the frustrations and needs of slow-learning students. Some of their teaching strategies were "differentiated" and responded to the needs of all learners long before it became fashionable to do so (Mann, 2018). Some observations stated that not all learn at the same pace or in the same manner and that teachers needed to develop lessons that addressed a variety of learning modalities. Content and process had to be based on student readiness and interest.

Needless to say, these teachers play a crucial role in assuring that their learners receive the right amount of instruction. As mentioned above, we can associate the results with how Carpenter and Gann (2015) highlighted in their study that mastery learning techniques do not just encourage students but also emphasize the need to be able to truly understand before proceeding to another activity or task.

6.2.3 Saving Sanity by Extending Patience and by Giving Time to Relax

Teaching is considered a demanding and challenging profession, given that teachers have a range of responsibilities aside from teaching. To note: classroom management, lesson planning, class preparations, student evaluations and resource management. Since

teachers bear the focal attention together with the child or learner during the teaching-learning process and are then ganged up by these overwhelming tasks at hand, the teacher would eventually feel drained. The results revealed that out of the major theme, *saving sanity by extending patience and giving time to relax*, another three subthemes were generated. To wit: *mantra is patience, recreation and socialization.*

A. Mantra is Patience
Losing your patience as a teacher is inevitable. Like all adults, you likely have certain pet peeves and moments of spontaneous irritation and annoyance. As these three themes were collected from the responses, we can infer that these teacher-participants, both in the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, have tried their best to become more and more patient with their students. This is clearly evident in their responses:

> *"Strengthen your patience. Magrelax gud is may time, if you feel stressed out, and you feel like sleeping, sleep. Bond with your friends and family."* [strengthen your patience. Relax if you have time. If you feel stressed out and feel like sleeping, sleep. Bond with your friends and family.] – RQ2 PQ2 IDI3

> *".. no matter what happens, hold your grounds.. hehehe be patient, be calm, compose yourself. haha"* – RQ2 PQ2 FGD3

Teaching is such a stressful career (Kebbi & Al-Hroub, 2018) that the effects would then affect the decision-making and general job satisfaction of the teachers. Responses from the interview reflect how the job made them become a better person by developing their patience in general. This mantra was also strengthened by the teacher-participants as they narrated:

> *"Kabalo ka maam, akoang mantra karong panahona gyud kay kuan lang.. patience."* [You know maam, my mantra these days was just… patience.] – RQ2 PQ1 IDI1

> *"Extend your patience, make time and effort gyud to succeed in this set-up."* [Extend your patience, make time and effort in order to succeed in this set-up.] – RQ2 MQ1 IDI2

B. Recreation and Socialization
In this new mode of teaching and learning brought about the public health emergency, which is COVID-19 turns out that several changes can be noted, which are connected to the sudden shift of the delivery mode in teaching and learning. It is vital that a positive working environment for the teachers is observed as well. As emphasized by both our in-depth interview and focus group discussion participants:

> *"Magpahinga. Magtanong. Makipag-halubilo sa mga makarelate saimoha. Nothing is wrong when you do that, promise!"* [Rest. Ask question. Interact wuth people whom you can relate to. Nothing is wrong when you do that, promise!] – RQ2 PQ2 IDI5

"Hmm.. during lunch time, or free time naming we gather around or paminsan sabay kami kain, during those moments talaga kami makapagshare ng bagay bagay.." [Hmm.. during lunchtime, or our free time. We gather around pr sometimes we eat together, during those moments are the times we get to share about random things..] - RQ2 PQ1 FGD3

Furthermore, the student population becomes more diverse, and the challenges students face are more complex, which makes the preparation and planning time for the teacher longer since they will still need to read about it and research how to conduct it. So, it is indeed important that, given the situation we are currently in, time for relaxation and time for socialization will still be observed in order to cope with complex situations. After all, how teachers get involved with the whole process of teaching-learning would later be one of the prerequisites for the success of not just the student but also you.

6.3 Lessons and Insights of Receiving Teachers Handling Learners with Disabilities That They Can Share to Their Peers and the Community

As the interview drew nearer to the end, the participants who had undergone the interview were able to disclose varied and significant insights that even the challenges voiced out during the interview were then turned into something very rewarding as they processed each of them piece by piece. Given the unprecedented hurdles that confronted them, they have gained an understanding of the real essence of educating these learners with disabilities.

Furthermore, it has been revealed through the in-depth interview and focus group discussion the lessons and insights that this study's participants were able to realize. To wit, the following are the themes that were collected out from the responses of the teacher-participants: flexibility as a teacher is vital as student *learning varies, teachers serve as a source of knowledge, guidance and inspiration* and *extend love and care for learners with disabilities boosts their potential.*

Moreover, these lessons and insights revealed by the teacher-participants manifested their resilience in making sure these learners get adequate access to their education as it is their right to accomplish so. It is indeed necessary for us to know about these lessons and insights, for they can be used as a guide in formulating future directives and even policies in the field of special education.

Figure 3: The Lessons and Insights of Receiving Teachers Handling Learners
with Disabilities That They Can Share with Their Peers and the Community
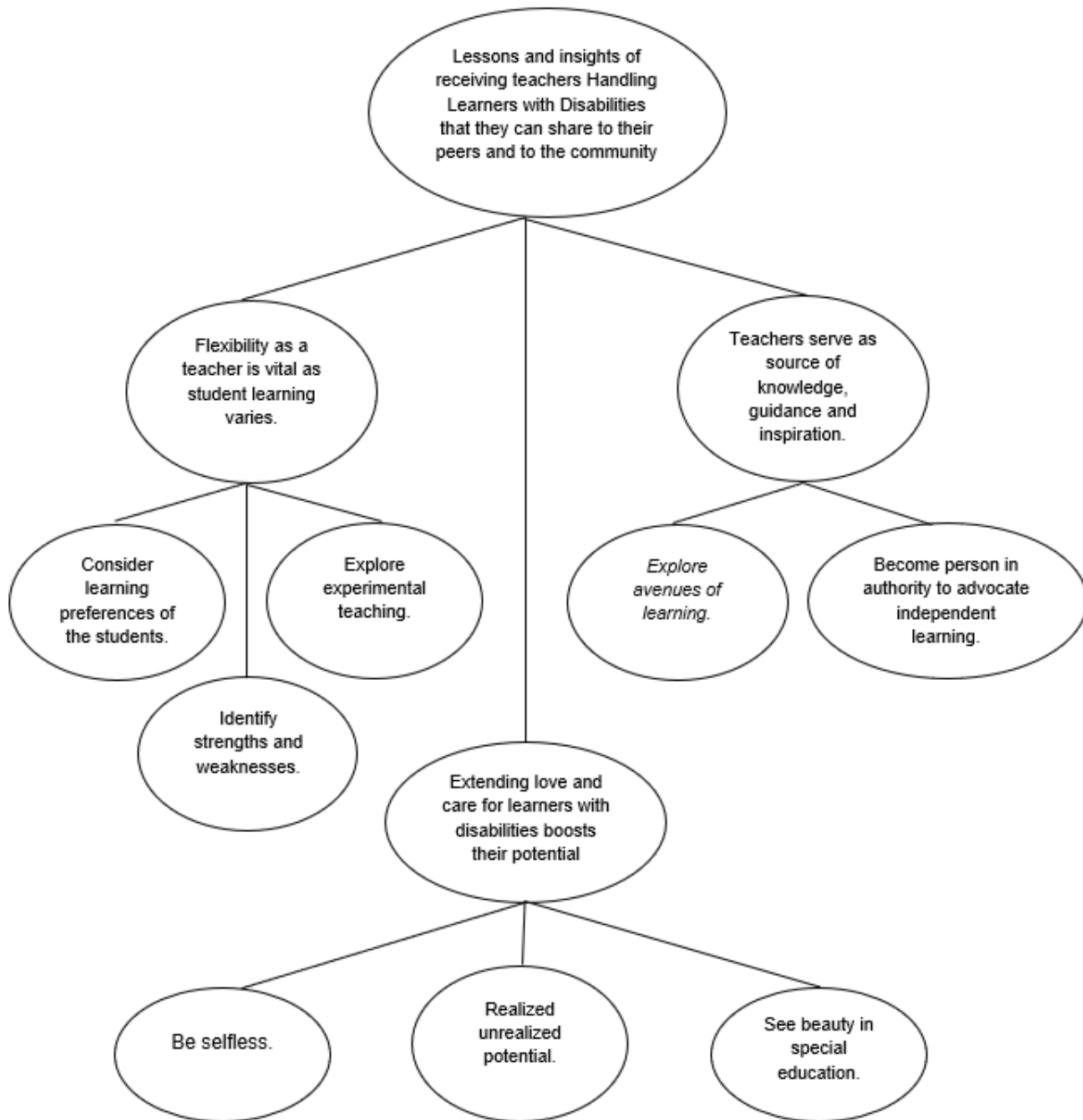
The recently conducted interview shed light on different themes which later on flourished into subthemes. The first major theme generated three subthemes, namely: *consider the learning preferences of the students, explore experimental teaching and identify strengths and weaknesses.* The second major theme, on the other hand, gave us two subthemes. To wit: explore *avenues of learning, become a person in authority to advocate independent learning.* The last major theme also gave us three subthemes in the form of: *be selfless, realize unrealized potential and see beauty in special education.* Up to this point, teaching can be viewed as an honorable job that requires a person to be thinking and do things outside the box. Hence, the emerging themes from the results can be referred to the previous page for it was visually presented in Figure 3.

6.3.1 Flexibility as a Teacher Is Vital as Student Learning Varies

As Musai (2014) gave his description of a teacher, it was then referred to as an individual who embodies a significant, functional, and professional role to be able to help others in grasping new knowledge and skills as well as to acquire good and desirable behaviors. As this study progressed, subthemes were then later collected to *consider learning preferences, explore experimental teaching,* and *identify strengths and weaknesses.*

A. Consider the Learning Preferences of the Students

As mentioned earlier during this study, learners with disabilities often have needs that are largely beyond their control. There are few disruptions and distractions that can occur during classes, which will then result in monopolizing the teacher's time in dealing with the whole class. Three responses from our teacher-participants were highlighted in this subtheme. To wit:

> *"You need to look for ways Kung unsa and learning preferences sa bata because the learners are diverse. Lahi lahi sila kumbaga.. Mahulog siya na experimental gyud if makakita tag strategy kung asa mag-shine or mag-improve and bata ug ganahan sad siya, mag-stick ta ana nga pamaagi."* [You need to look for ways to determine what are the learning preferences of the child because our learners are diverse. They are unique. It would fall as experimental since if we can find a strategy in which the child would shine and improve at the same time. The child liked the way. We would stick to that method of instruction...] - RQ$_3$ PQ$_1$ IDI$_2$

> *"Every child is unique. You should never assume that maski na they look the same, they also learn the same. We have to always make sure, counter check and assess so we can provide more for them,"* [Every child is unique. You should never assume that even though they look the same, they also learn the same. We have to always make sure, countercheck or assess so we can provide more for them] - RQ$_3$ PQ$_1$ IDI$_5$

> *"… kung teacher ka, alam mo na may students talaga nag anito ang needs, diba? Syempre ako, mother na po ako, alam ko na ang mga anak ko, iba iba sila ng needs. Iba iba sila ng way in dealing with things.. ganon gani?,"* [… if you are a teacher, you know that there are really students who has certain needs. Of course, I am also a mother, I know my kids, and that they have different way in dealing with things, things like that?] - RQ$_3$ PQ$_1$ FGD$_3$

B. Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses

One of the most basic a teacher can easily identify is the learner's learning styles and preferences. In connection to the research conducted by Jacobs and Struyfs (2013) Teachers can often quickly identify children who are having difficulty adjusting socially to school by observing their behavior and interactions with their peers at school and such problems in children's behavior in school may even be a byproduct of troubled family

lives, which can then be noticed by the teachers. Responses from the participants have highlighted this phrase in a series of questions, to wit:

"Uhh.. carefully knowing the students, I mean what were their strengths and weaknesses dapat aralin mo muna." [Uhh.. carefully knowing the students, I mean what their strengths and weaknesses you should learn about it first.] - RQ3 PQ1 IDI3

"diba there is thing thing in education na we term as diagnostic assessment? Wherein the goal is to make sure we get to identify in what area ang bata nahirapan or saan sya naga excel" [there is this thing in education right that we term as diagnostic assessment? Wherein the goal is to make sure we get to identify in what area the child is having difficulty or what area does the child excels.] - RQ3 PQ1 IDI1

"all people have their strengths and weaknesses, right? Students are not an exemption, that is why we need to include this in our pre-qualifications" – RQ3 PQ1 FGD5

By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the learners, teachers can provide different options for the learners to either improve or work on.

C. Explore Experimental Teaching

Teachers in inclusive classrooms must, therefore, vary their teaching styles to enhance learning for all students. In the case of the in-depth interview, participants at the start of the interview revealed how they were challenged in the beginning as they handled the learners with disability. Like the findings about attitudes toward delivering effective instructions to learners with disabilities, researchers have investigated both teacher characteristics and environmental characteristics associated with efficacy for teaching. In a study conducted in Egypt, Emam and Mohamed (2019) found no relationship between teachers' level of training and their efficacy for inclusive teaching.

"experimental teaching gyud ta diri na side, maam no kay wla baya kaayo mi naexpose ana tung college mi. dala nlng gyud nas pagpaningkamot namo nga makalahutay gyud kay ug di pud ka magkugi, luoy ang bata." [experimental teaching is what we do here, maam since we were not exposed back in back in college. We just strive hard to go through it because if we don't, the child will be at a disadvantage.] - RQ3 PQ2 IDI3

They were just so lucky since even though they were not sped majors in their undergraduate degrees, what helped them stay in the field was because of their family members who have disabilities. 2 out of 3 IDI participants have a child with disabilities, and according to them, learning about this also benefitted themselves how to handle their child at home properly. As they shared:

"We learn the beauty of trial and error, man. We exhaust our resources in order for us to give them education because as a mom of a child with autism, ramdam ko yung kirot

whenever magsabi yung iba kong students na "ay diri nlng ko kutob mam. Mag masahe nlg ko sa gilid." We do this because we want them to be fulfilled and accomplished." [We learn the beauty of trial and error. We exhaust our resources in order for us to give them education because as a mom of a child with autism, I feel a slight pain in my chest when students say "Teacher, I can just be a massage therapist in parks." We do this because we want them to be fulfilled and accomplished] - RQ₃ PQ₂ IDI₅

With this optimism, Malinen *et al.* (2013) conducted a study with teachers in China, Finland, and South Africa and found that, like positive attitudes, high efficacy for extensive teaching was predicted by experiences teaching children with special learning needs. They suggested that mastery experiences foster efficacy. Which in these cases were observed? The teachers make sure to be updated with the current trends for them to be able to deliver good education to students. Furthermore, the study posited that exposure to inclusive practices does not automatically produce high efficacy in teachers. Rather, these teachers must have had positive experiences in inclusive settings where they learned to overcome obstacles.

6.3.2 Teachers Serve as Source of Knowledge, Guidance, and Inspiration
According to Perez-Gonzales (2011), effective teacher needs to display optimism, enthusiasm, confidence, and decisiveness. As this major theme was generated it branched out to three subthemes as well. To wit: explore *avenues of learning, advocate independent learning, and become a person in authority.*

A. Explore Avenues of Learning
Teachers ought to provide the educational needs of the children under their jurisdiction. Employ varied ways and styles for them to perform their best in day to day lives. Corpus and Good (2021) elucidated that children need praise, encouragement and, at times, a reward to help their motivation with general day-to-day tasks, especially when they are achieving new goals such as learning to walk, eating vegetables, or sitting exams. As highlighted in these responses:

"Yung parang mafeel nila yung ang impact ko sa life ng bata, na nagsugod kami wla pa siyang ma utter na words, wla silang maggawa kapag sila lang, pero sa ngayon, they can do things by themselves and also they can converse understandably." [To make them feel my impact in their child's life, that we started without having the ability to speak, they cannot do things on their own, but now,] - RQ₃ PQ₁ IDI₃

"… kani mga bataa, they can learn, like really learn. We just need to push them and encourage them, praise them. In that way, they are feeling appreciated." [… these children, they can learn. Like they can really learn. We just need to push them and encourage them, praise them. In that way, they are feeling appreciated.] – RQ₃ PQ₁ IDI₅

"Bale I learned to make myself become one of the avenues sa mga bata to achieve their dreams and breakdown barriers sa platform." [I learned to make myself become one of the avenues of these children to achieve their dreams and breakdown barriers in the platform.] - RQ3 PQ3 FGD3

The provision of learning avenues for students with disabilities throughout elementary is currently of significant concern, as more students with disabilities receive education and services within general education settings. This would also have more impact since the praise and feedback would come from the teacher who is the person in authority in the classroom.

B. Become a Person in Authority to Advocate Independent Learning
According to Mann (2018), every student, regardless of whether they have disability or none, deserves a quality teacher who also should act as a person in authority. Stakeholders agree that a quality teacher is the most valuable resource provided to a student but disagree as to how to define or prepare a teacher to meet this standard. This does not mean that for us to motivate the learner, we need to reward them each time they do something well. Children can become self-motivated when their natural curiosity is encouraged and supported, and they tend to do things simply because they enjoy doing them, which is a form of advocating independent learning. This was very evident as they shared:

"maappreciate gyud nako ang mga bata mam kay they never forget to show courtesy bitaw, maski wla mi sa classroom, or magkita mi gawas sa school, naa gyud ghapon ilang pagpanahod sa akoa." [I really appreciate these children maam because they never forget to show courtesy, even though we do are not inside the classroom, or if we meet outside the school, they still would greet me.] - RQ3 PQ2 IDI3

"Yung parang mafeel nila yung ang impact ko sa life ng bata, na nagsugod kami wla pa siyang ma utter na words, wla silang maggawa kapag sila lang, pero sa ngayon, they can do things by themselves and also they can converse understandably." [To make them feel my impact in their child's life, that we started without having the ability to speak, they cannot do things on their own, but now,] - RQ3 PQ1 IDI3

DuBois (2017) mentioned that teacher advocates help students with disabilities in many different ways, supporting them and looking out for their interests. In addition to being a voice for your students, you serve to inform your students and their families. You help them understand their rights in school and in the community. You also form partnerships with different groups and organizations to make sure students can access the services they need. In general, you're a connection between students and the world outside the classroom, and you close the gap between students' needs and the tools that can help them succeed.

6.3.3 Extending Love and Care for Learners with Disabilities Boosts Their Potential

Teaching has been more difficult than ever because teachers are obliged to adapt to the modifications in learning at the present time while attending to the various roles that they take part in. Despite the challenges that they have gone through, they are more than willing to show their relentless support for children's education. This major theme later then flourished beautifully into three subthemes. These are the following: *be selfless, realize unrealized potentials and see beauty in special education.*

A. Be Selfless

These teacher-participants are also mothers. In which, mothers, generally try their best to nourish the wellbeing of their children. It is also an affirmation that they know best how they can effectively reinforce their students to learn. This is also evident when there comes a time when they would be the ones to allocate funds to their students when there are events, and so on.

> *"I have come to know na given proper support, love and care aning mga bataa ni, regardless sailahang diagnosis maam, naa jud potential. Bale I learned to make myself become one of the avenues sa mga bata to achieve their dreams and breakdown barriers sa platform."* [I have come to know that give proper support, love and care for these learners, regardless of their diagnosis, they do have potential. I learned to make myself become one of the avenues of the children to achieve their dreams and break down barriers.] – RQ$_3$ PQ$_3$ FGD$_3$

> *"Kanang mugamit jud ka og kwarta sa mga materyales na imong gamiton sa pagtudlo lage maam… kadalasan mugasto na jud mi maam, kay kadalasan mao jud gamay ra budget among school sa among program.* [Its just that, we really use our own mone for the materials that we need in teaching maam, usually we spend money, our own money since we are aware that the budget for our school is too little and not enough,] - RQ$_3$ PQ$_3$ IDI$_1$

> *"Whether you like it or not. You need to spend money on the materials that you used maam…. Hehehe. Since kulang talaga ang budget,"* [Whether you like it or not, you need to spend money on the materials that you used. Hehehe. Since the budget is not enough,] - RQ$_3$ PQ$_3$ IDI$_3$

There are enormous burdens placed on some special education teachers. Many feel unprepared to teach academics to students with disabilities, manage behaviors and collaborate with other professionals and parents (Mazin, 2011). But with these individuals who have gone through the scrutiny of everyone from not being able to hold a degree in sped, they still managed to go over and beyond for the sake of these learners with disabilities.

B. Realize Unrealized Potential

The setting wherein these receiving teachers are provided with the kind of teaching environment mostly comes with unique duties that often challenge novice education teachers. The underlying purpose of going above what was expected from them was to gain clarity of the work environment of these general education teachers who happened to be receiving teachers to uncover professional development practices that would work to support them and their students. The statements from the participants highlighted this subtheme, which stated:

> *"Actually maam, meron silang chance to grow. Meron talaga. If only iexhaust natin lahat ng resources natin ba to be able to make them realize na kaya nila, may potential sila.."* [Actually, they do have a chance to grow. They really do. If only they exhaust all of their resources for them to be able to make them realize that they can, that they have potential..] - RQ3 PQ3 IDI2

> *"Tanan jud sila naa mam, ma regular man or special. Unsa lang diay ang kulang? Patience, acceptance, love and care,"* [All of them are there maam, either regular or special. What is missing? Patience, acceptance, love and care.] - RQ3 PQ3 FGD4

> *"kulang lang ni sila ug realization maam, realization that they have the potential. Push lang gyud ng push, motivate them, encourage, praise, mga ganong bagay.. we're getting there,"* [they lack realization, maam. Realization that they have the potential. Push and push, motivate them, encourage, praise, things like that, we're getting there.] - RQ3 PQ3 IDI5

Being able to make them realize these things is such a great thing for them. All of these children needed love, encouragement, and support, and such positive reinforcement can help ensure that they emerge with a strong sense of self-worth, confidence, and the determination to keep going even when things are getting tough.

C. See the Beauty in Special Education

In searching for ways to help learners with disabilities, remember that you are looking for ways to help them help themselves. Your job as an educator is not to "cure" the disability but to give them the social and emotional tools they need to work through challenges. In the long run, facing and overcoming a challenge, such as having been diagnosed with a disability, can help them grow stronger and more resilient.

Consequently, the same actually goes for teachers, we always have to remind ourselves that our students are not defined by their disability. A disability only represents one area of weakness, but there are many more areas of strength. This is evident in the narratives of the teacher-participants in both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, which say:

"Siguro, kung SpEd teacher ka you need to find the beauty in them. Love them…. Care for them…. Mao lang talaga. Love special education… you need to love SpEd…" [Maybe, if you are a SPED teacher you need to find the beauty in them. Love them, care for them, that's just it. Love special education. You need to love sped..] - RQ₃ PQ₃ IDI₁

"…be the advocate of your students and love special education just as how you love your daughters or sons," - RQ₃ PQ₃ IDI₅

"your passion for teaching children will be tested. Your love and dedication to your work will be unraveled, too. Imagine, one student with a disability is equivalent to 10 regular learners gud, so in a broad spectrum of sped, it is indeed beautiful." [your passion for teaching children will be tested. Your love and dedication to your work will be unraveled, too. Imagine, one student with a disability is equivalent to 10 regular learner, so in a broad spectrum of sped, it is indeed beautiful] - RQ₃ PQ₃ FGD₁

Focus on the beauty of special education in context and also on your child's gifts and talents so you have to develop them. The student's life and schedule shouldn't just revolve around their disability. As teachers, we ought to nurture the activities where they excel and make plenty of time for them.

The result of this study ultimately conforms with the analysis of Ingersoll which he divulged into the possibility that there are other factors, aside from organizational characteristics and school conditions, that cause teachers to carry out-of-field experiences. His investigation then revealed that school staffing issues were not the primary cause of the situation. The analysis also confirmed that measures of teacher preparation and certification are by far the strongest correlates of student achievement in the classroom, which the latter part was negated by this study. Even though the teachers received training in handling learners in a general education setting, they were still able to inculcate learning and skills to the learners. As evidently said by the participant through their narratives.

Although success means different things to different people, but your hopes and dreams for your student probably extend beyond good report cards. Maybe you hope that your student's future includes a fulfilling job and satisfying relationships, for example, or a happy family and a sense of contentment. The point is that success in life, rather than just school success, depends not on academics, but on things like a healthy sense of self, the willingness to ask for and accept help, the determination to keep trying in spite of challenges, the ability to form healthy relationships with others, and other qualities that aren't as easy to quantify as grades and exam scores (Heger, 2011).

In addition to this, we were able to reveal that it is not necessarily a lack of teaching personnel that they were tasked to teach in special education, through the responses elicited from the participants, the findings enable us to deep dive and explore the causes.

7. Implications and Future Directions

Presented in this chapter are the implications drawn out from the results of the study. A summary of the study's findings is provided first, followed by the implications which are directed towards the experiences of receiving teachers in handling learners with disabilities. It also summarizes the research objectives and makes recommendations for the study's future direction.

This phenomenological study sought to describe the "lived experiences" of the receiving teachers who are currently handling learners with disabilities. It sought to answer the participant's experiences, coping mechanisms and insights as they handled learners with disabilities inside the classroom. To attain the objectives, this study utilized a qualitative research design employing the phenomenological method.

Purposive sampling was used to identify the ten interview participants of this study, which will be distributed as 5 non-sped graduates who handle learners with disabilities in a self-contained class for in-depth interviews and 5 sped graduates handling learners with disabilities in a self-contained class. Informed permission was obtained to verify that ethical requirements were met. A researched-created interview guide was utilized to collect data. Themes were then generated from the interview transcription using thematic analysis to make sense of the data.

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

The lived experiences of receiving teachers in handling learners with disabilities revealed that they have had significant challenges in handling their learners with disabilities through these themes that emerged: *unfamiliarity at first experience was a challenge* in which these receiving teachers lacked pre-service teaching experiences in handling learners with disabilities and exerted much effort into adjusting to the students and as well as their parents in collaborating for their child's learning.

These challenges were then immediately remediated by the participants through *seeking assistance, planning and innovating strategies to achieve learning outcomes and saving sanity by extending patience and by giving them time to relax.*

Among the insights gained from the challenging experiences are the themes that travails beautifully from the responses of the participants. To wit: *flexibility as a teacher is vital as student learning varies, teachers serve as sources of knowledge, guidance and inspiration, and extending love and care for learners with disabilities boosts their potential.*

7.1 Implications

Based on the result of the analysis, the following implications were provided:

One of the primary goals of a teacher is to provide learning opportunities for all students regardless of their disabilities. Whether or not a teacher holds a certain academic degree, what matters most is how they managed to push through amidst hurdles and trials. After all, running the extra mile for our very own learners is not something we have never seen before in our lives.

The experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with disabilities provided a broader scope in understanding where special education lies in the Philippine

education system. It was revealed that they have had significant challenges in handling their learners with disabilities through unfamiliarity with tasks, pedagogical problems, and insufficient support, which indeed slowed them down at some point. These revealed that these receiving teachers still require formulated and comprehensive knowledge about learners with disabilities and service learning for them to provide optimum learning experiences for their learners.

The challenging situations were perceived by these teachers as an opportunity to look for a silver lining. Additionally, it is indeed normal for teachers to feel overwhelmed and frustrated at some point, especially during this time of the pandemic, but steps to carry out positive handling with learners with disabilities to deliver instruction during this time could benefit both. As they assist over and beyond the students, they never let their success turn sour. Through the conduct of this study, it was able to showcase how endlessly they tried to cope with the emerged challenges and hurdles through seeking assistance from colleagues to planning and innovating strategies achieving learning outcomes and remediating by saving sanity by extending patience and giving time to relax.

The teachers involved in this study insightfully held importance in their profession. Despite the hurdles that they went through, it was revealed that it led them to turn their situations into their life's greatest blessing as they have gained beautiful insights, especially in terms of extending love and care for learners with disabilities, boosting their potential. Becoming selfless in seeing the true beauty of special needs education and making sure to realize the child's unrealized potential.

7.2 Future Directions
Based on the implications, future directions have been identified and are presented in this section:

For Department of Education Officials, that may be able to provide programs for teachers to acquire more best practices in handling learners with disabilities inside the classroom and strengthen the qualities of delivering effective instruction to students with disabilities.

For the school administrators, to evaluate how teachers can provide good quality education to learners with disabilities inside the classroom. Providing support for it can contribute to good practice in increasing student interest towards the subjects.

For the teachers who would enter the profession, one might have varying levels of prior learning, work experience and professional preparation. But always keep in mind that there is no single best solution or accurate manual for handling these kids. But you always have to embrace spontaneity and be able to indulge in multiple trials and errors until you are able to give your all out for the students.

For the learners with disabilities, they may benefit from this study because the experiences of receiving teachers in making both ends meet to provide quality education will make the teaching-learning process smooth sailing.

For future researchers, while this study elucidated contextual information on the teacher's experiences, it is interesting to explore the level of effectiveness in terms of

instruction the learners with disabilities receive from a teacher who is not a graduate of bachelor of elementary education major in special education, in comparison to a student directly receiving instruction from a bachelor of elementary education major in sped graduate. In doing so, we may be able to yield a comparison as to which is more effective in providing quality education to children's learning.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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