

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN SPED SCHOOLS IN LEYTE DIVISION

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is one of the programs that cater to the principles and goals of “Education for All” providing free and compulsory primary education for all, and promoting learning and life skills for young people and adults as it addresses the basic rights to basic education among children, especially the children with special needs. The conduct of the study is in compliance to an earnest desire and honest intent to find out the status of implementation of the comprehensive inclusive education program for children with special needs, along the components of Child Find, Assessment, Program Options, Curriculum Modifications, and Parental Involvement. Included as objectives of the study were to determine the attendant problems encountered by the three groups of implementers and to investigate the differences in perceptions of respondents in the implementation of the program. Taken as samples of this research were the twenty-eight (28) special education teachers, fifty-three (53) receiving teachers and ten (10) school heads with the profile characteristics considered, all taken from the fourteen (14) elementary schools offering inclusive education classes in the Division of Leyte. Based on the findings of the study, there is a need to enhance the implementation of the comprehensive inclusive education for children with special needs in Leyte Division. An orientation and in-service training on comprehensive inclusive education for untrained implementers is recommended to enhance the implementation of the program among SpEd schools in Leyte Division.

Field of Research: *Inclusive education, special education, children with special needs, sped teachers, receiving teachers, school heads*

1. Introduction

In a democracy like the Philippines, schools are expected to provide all the citizens with much of the knowledge and the skills they need to confront the inevitable challenge of life and to profit from the opportunity to succeed in school, regardless of their ethnic and socioeconomic background, the geographic area in which they live and study, their gender or their disabilities. True to what the country claims rightful for every citizen to enjoy, special education schools have to be put up to cater to the educational needs of children with disabilities. Spawned by the reports of success from special education schools operating in the country, the policy on inclusive education was adapted after the World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Salamanca, Spain in June 1994. Bido (2008) expounded that inclusive education is based on the principle that children with different disabilities and backgrounds can benefit both academically and socially in a learning environment that is programmed along with normally achieving students. There is now substantial evidence that most if not all, children with disability can be educated appropriately without isolating them from their peers who do not have disabilities.

2. Sped Inclusive Program

Peel (2004) and UNESCO (2002) cited that inclusive education is about reducing all types of barriers to learning and developing ordinary schools capable of meeting the needs of learners. Inclusive education is about reducing all types of barriers to learning and developing ordinary schools which are capable of meeting the needs of all learners. It is a part of a wider movement towards a more just society for all citizens. Gomez (2011) pointed out that inclusive education forms an integral component of the overall education system and it is provided in regular school committed to an appropriate education for all. Inclusive education preferably takes place in a regular class, in a student's nearest regular school.

3. Child Find

An International Convention (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) stated that no child should suffer from discrimination, and that mentally or physically disabled children should enjoy a full, comfortable life in conditions that ensure dignity, promote self-reliance, and facilitate the child's active participation in the community. All children have the right to engage in play and recreational activities. Winter and O'Raw (2010) stated that all children should learn together, regardless of any difficulties or differences. The school accommodates the needs of all students and welcomes diversity as a way to enrich learning for everyone. All children and young people, with and without disabilities or other special needs, are learning effectively together in ordinary mainstream schools, with appropriate networks of support.

4. Assessment

Sutaria, Guerero, and Pascual (1992a) stated that identification, screening, and evaluation of children with special needs shall be conducted by the school and the community utilizing appropriate assessment instruments to identify handicapping conditions as early as possible. Inciong et al. (2007) stressed that initial assessment is done by the classroom teacher in order to identify who among the regular students are in need of special education. Teacher are important source of information about their learning and behavior attributes. Final assessment will follow to half or more than half of the characteristics in the checklist manifests.

5. Program Options

Anderson, Chitwood, and Hayden (1997) pointed out that Individual Disability Education Act (IDEA) requires school system to provide a continuum of alternative placement to meet the special education and related services needs in which a child with disabilities may be placed. Sutaria et al. (1992a) cited that children with special needs shall be provided with a variety of educational patterns and services. The assessed needs of each child shall be the primary consideration in determining his particular program and services. Inciong et al (2007) stated that curricular offerings of special education modify and adapt to teaching strategies and evaluation of learning suit the needs and condition of children with physical disabilities, health impairments and severe disabilities.

6. Curriculum Modifications

Peel (2004) stated that curriculum is concerned with what institutions teach, and with what, how and under what conditions learners learn. An inclusive education setting, the educational focus is on how best to accommodate the needs of individual learners within a classroom setting rather than forcing the individual to conform to the educational environment, which may be highly unsuitable to their particular needs. UNESCO (2009) stated that an inclusive curriculum addresses the child's cognitive, emotional, social and creative development based on the four pillars of education for the twenty-first century – learning to know, to do, to be and to live together. It has an instrumental role to play in fostering tolerance and promoting human rights, and is a powerful tool for transcending cultural, religious, gender, and other differences.

7. Parental Involvement

Wilmshurts (2005) cited that communicating with teachers is an important part of child's education. The child's success is in large part, due to the efforts of his teachers and your efforts to maintain contact with them. Not only do teachers communicate with one another and with school administrators but they also communicate with parents. Parents are an important partner in child's education, which is one reason why good communication between school and home is essential. Pierangelo and Waterman (2009) listed parent participation options, responsibilities, and expectations prior to an assessment for a suspected disability. Indeed, parental involvement in school's activities is necessary for the learning progress of the child especially those who have special needs. The support given by the parents would build confidence and boost their self-esteem.

8. Theoretical Framework

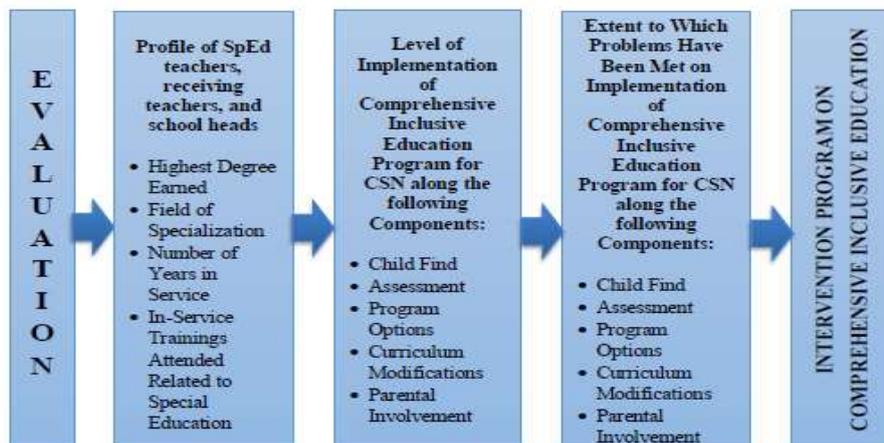


Figure 1. Framework of the Study

Based on the objective of this study that is to evaluate the implementation of the comprehensive inclusive education program for children with special needs in SpEd Schools in Leyte Division, the above framework was developed (Figure 1). The instrument used was developed based on existing instruments and literature reviewed as well as the DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009, Policies and Guidelines

for Special Education, Special Education Handbook and patterned from the studies of Catubao (2013) and Pachoco (2001).

6. Methodology

6.1 Sample and data collection method

The respondents consisted of the SpEd teachers receiving teachers and school heads of the special schools in Leyte Division. A questionnaire using 5-point scale was used in evaluating the level of inclusive education implementation. Representatives from the three group of respondents were grouped and interviewed to respond to some questions on the implementation of inclusive education in support for their answers to the questionnaire.

6.2 Instrumentation

The instrument was composed of three parts. Part I, pertains to the background data of the respondents. Part II, concerns the assessment of the different components of comprehensive inclusive education program for children with special needs utilizing the scoring scale: 5-highly implemented, 4-implemented, 3-moderately implemented, 2-slightly implemented, and 1-not implemented. The instrument used was developed based on existing instruments and literature reviewed as well as the DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009, Policies and Guidelines for Special Education, Special Education Handbook and patterned from the studies of Catubao (2013) and Pachoco (2001).

7. Finding & Discussion

7.1 Reliability analysis

The survey questionnaire was subjected to expert validation and was pilot-tested at Sto. Niño SpEd Center, Tacloban City. The purpose of the validation and critiquing was primarily to determine the comprehensiveness, relevance and appropriateness of the instrument vis-à-vis the standards contained in the DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009 “Inclusive Education as Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children.” At the conduct of the validation of the instrument, the respondents found no difficulties in understanding every statement keeping the original questionnaire unchanged.

7.2 Descriptive statistics & analysis

The findings revealed that 20 of the respondents are BEED graduates with MA units in other field and another 20 respondents are BEED graduates with other field of specialization (22%). Only 24 of the respondents have special education as their specialization (26%). It was also shown in the result that 34 of them can be categorized as the young group with 0-10 years of experience (40%). More than half or 53 of them are in need of trainings and attendance of seminar. The findings of the components showed that child find is moderately implemented (3.27), assessment is moderately implemented (3.34), program options is moderately implemented (2.77), curriculum modifications is implemented (3.97), and parental involvement is implemented (3.69). The finding also revealed the problems met for each component, the absence of family mapping and survey is sometimes met in child find (3.1), conduct of assessment for once a year is sometimes met in assessment (3.5), receiving teachers are not oriented

and trained on inclusive education is frequently met in program options (3.7), absence of adaptations to curriculum and uncondusive teaching-learning situation is sometimes met in curriculum modifications (2.8), parents reject of in attendance to meetings for special education is frequently met in parental involvement (3.7). It was also revealed that SpEd teachers and school heads differ significantly ($z=2.381$; $p=0.017$) on their perceptions. On the other hand, the results revealed that the three groups of respondents did not differ significantly in the five components, as all the p-value are much higher than the 0.05 level of significance.

8. Conclusion and Future Recommendation

The SpEd teachers are the only group of respondents who specialized in special education, the scenario depicts that receiving teachers and school heads are slightly qualified to handle the program. The implementers are dominated with young teachers, and the implementers are longing for related trainings and seminars. There is a need to enhance the implementation of the comprehensive inclusive education. An orientation and in-service training on comprehensive inclusive education for untrained implementers is recommended to enhance the implementation of the program.

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