Research Article

Overcoming Communication Barriers and Building Facilitative Patterns for Learners with Disabilities in Self-Contained Classes

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

This study explored facilitative patterns in overcoming communication barriers among learners with disabilities in self-contained classes in public elementary schools in the Division of Rizal during the School Year 2023-2024. The researcher used a descriptive research design, using a questionnaire as the primary research instrument, distributed to 100 special education teachers from a population of 134 special education teachers handling self-contained classes as respondents. The study revealed that the distribution of respondents in terms of sex is fair enough, with most of them in the age range of 30-39, with 1-10 years in service as special education teachers, not yet pursuing a higher level in the field of special Education and mainly attended 1-5 seminars in special Education. The teachers in special education "Sometimes Observed" that speech and language difficulties, sensory impairments, behavioral barriers, emotional barriers, and cognitive barriers are the communication barriers faced by learners with disabilities in self-contained classes. The findings also showed that the teachers in special Education "Sometimes Observed" that utilization of AAC tools, differentiated instruction, structured teaching strategy, modeling and role-playing, and group or peer-assisted learning strategy are the facilitative patterns implemented by the teachers in overcoming communication barriers faced by learners with disabilities in self-contained classes. There is no significant difference in the communication barriers faced by the learners with disabilities in self-contained classes and the facilitative patterns implemented by the teachers with a computed p-value of 0.348 greater than 0.05 confidence level as a basis for accepting the null hypothesis. There are significant differences in the facilitative patterns implemented by the teachers in overcoming communication barriers faced by the learners with disabilities in self-contained classes according to sex, years in service as a special education teacher, highest educational attainment, and the number of seminars attended in Special Education but not with age.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education for All is a global movement advocating for quality education for all individuals, regardless of their background. Inclusive Education is the core principle, promoting a supportive, flexible learning environment that celebrates diverse abilities and styles. It aims to eliminate barriers to learning, foster equal participation, and achieve developmental potential.

DepEd Order No. 44 s. 2021 sets the policies on inclusive Education for learners with disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program. The "Child Find" policy increases participation and ensures quality education. Schools can monitor the Child Find process and promote cooperative advocacy. All-inclusive programs for children with special needs include self-contained classes handled by trained SPED teachers and access to educational services from SPED Centers or teachers.

Faragher *et al.* (2021) highlight the importance of regional collaboration in promoting inclusive Education, highlighting the challenges of teacher training, professional development, and specialized support. They emphasize the need for consistent school leadership and best practices to enhance educational opportunities for learners with intellectual and developmental disabilities, highlighting the need for comprehensive solutions. Inclusive educational systems improve efficiency and effectiveness for all students by eliminating discrimination and fostering socialization. They enhance respect and empathy by involving students with varying skills and experiences (Salcedo & Chua, 2022).

This revolution of Special Education in the Philippines is hindered by scarcity of resources, poorly trained teachers, and inaccessible infrastructure. However, increased government commitment through increased funding and policies focused on specific programs will strengthen this revolution. This will guarantee equal opportunities for all learners and create a level playing field.

Parents are often critical of placing children with special needs in self-contained classes or transition programs. Despite this, challenges such as speech, language, sensory, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral disabilities could affect a child's capability for academic, social, and emotional development. Support strategies and interventions help overcome communication barriers and improve interaction. This paper presents the argument from special education teachers in public elementary schools.

Robinson-Madden's Ecological System Theory (2020) suggests that children's experiences and interactions within their natural context shape their growth. This theory suggests that various environmental situations, including family, teachers, and peers, contribute to the child's development, indirectly facilitating their learning outcomes.

Robinson-Madden's Social Constructivism Theory (2020) supports the study by highlighting the importance of collaborative work in classrooms, reducing peer rejection, and promoting positivity towards learning. This approach encourages students with disabilities to be more involved in teaching, focusing on individual strengths and addressing learning deficiencies. The theory emphasizes the role of social interaction and collaboration in overcoming communication barriers and fostering facilitative teaching patterns in self-contained classes.

1.1. Statement of the problem

i. Is there a significant difference between the communication barriers faced by learners with disabilities in self-contained classes and the facilitative patterns implemented by teachers?

ii. Is there a significant difference in the facilitative patterns implemented by the teachers in overcoming communication barriers faced by the learners with disabilities in self-contained classes when the respondents are grouped according to profile?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Communication barriers of learners with disabilities in self-contained classes

Spencer (2021) defines a self-contained classroom as a special education placement where a teacher oversees all academic subjects, with lower student-to-teacher ratios and diverse support requirements. These classrooms differ from standard education settings and require a highly regimented educational and behavioral program.

Salcedo and Chua's 2022 study revealed a significant correlation between school practices, implementation obstacles, and the reality of inclusion in special education programs.

Cahapay (2022) highlights the importance of effectiveness in intervention strategies for children with autism. Despite extensive studies, the effectiveness of these strategies has not been thoroughly examined. Teachers' vicarious experiences can enhance their efficacy in addressing these needs.

2.2. Facilitative patters for learners with disabilities in self-contained classes

Alvarez *et al.* (2024) highlight the importance of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in pediatric healthcare in the Philippines. They emphasize the transformative impact of Text-to-Speech technology, transition services, self-advocacy training, communication boards, and mobile AAC software. The research highlights the need for continuous training and support for educators, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities.

Campado *et al.* (2023) studied the use of assistive technology in special education schools in the Philippines. They found that while technology can be beneficial, it presents challenges such as insufficient resources, student disobedience, technical issues, and inadequate skill development. The study suggests that financial, emotional, administrative, instructional, and spiritual support is crucial for effective teaching and accommodating learners' unique needs.

Robinson-Madden (2020) investigated the self-contained classroom strategies for students with intellectual disabilities in Jamaica. Inadequate performance in primary school was a study finding; thus, a constructivist teaching approach was recommended for improved teacher effectiveness and increased student engagement. The findings will, therefore, lead to education policy formulation for special needs students in the classrooms of self-contained settings in Jamaica. The research insists that interactions with students and parents must be positive for all-rounded development.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

The study applied a descriptive quantitative design focused on "what, where, when, and how" rather than "why" questions. This method analyzes traits, behaviors, or trends, making clear patterns and linkages within data. Quantitative research is a systematic empirical investigation of phenomena through numerical data applied in economics and business. The survey method was applied to collect data, enabling statistical analysis to evaluate research questions and identify trends. This design was utilized to investigate breaking communication barriers and developing facilitative patterns for learners with disabilities in self-contained classrooms.

3.2. Respondents of the study

The research was conducted with 100 special education teachers from different public elementary schools in the Division of Rizal, randomly selected to participate in the self-contained classes.

Table 1. Respondents of the study

Cluster	No. of Respondents
BIBA	25
CATTA	25
TAPJ	25
BCAMT	25
TOTAL	**100**

3.3. Research instrument

This study utilized a questionnaire to gather data from teachers' perspectives regarding facilitative patterns for learners with disabilities in self-contained classes. The questionnaire contained five parts: respondents' profile, communication barriers faced by the learners, facilitative patterns used by the teachers, extent of use of these patterns, and effectiveness.

Content congruency and appropriateness were validated, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was obtained to check reliability and validity. The outcome will be applied to develop an intervention program for inclusive Education.

3.4. Data gathering procedure

The researcher sought permission to conduct a study in Rizal, distributed a validated questionnaire, and obtained consent from selected public elementary schools with Special Education. The questionnaire was given to respondents for one to two weeks, and the collected data was analyzed using SPSS. The researcher developed an intervention program to overcome communication barriers for learners with disabilities through facilitative patterns.

3.5. Statistical treatment of data

The study used statistical treatments to analyze data on special education teachers' profiles, communication barriers faced by learners with disabilities in self-contained classes, and facilitative patterns implemented by teachers. Frequency and percentage distributions were used to determine respondents' age, sex, years in service, and educational attainment. When grouped by profile, a paired t-test was utilized to establish whether significant differences exist between communication barriers and facilitative patterns.

3.6. Ethical consideration

The researcher ensured information security and safety by adhering to ethical standards. They sought permission to conduct a study in public elementary schools, followed proper citation and referencing, and distributed consent and questionnaires to respondents. The Division Office approved the questionnaire, which indicates that data collection was for academic purposes, and the researcher ensured that the anonymity of the respondents was maintained.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Test of significant differences in the communication barriers faced by the learners with disabilities in self-contained classes and the facilitative patterns implemented by the teachers

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision	Remark
Communication Barriers Faced by the Learners with Disabilities in Self-contained Classes - Facilitative Patterns Implemented by the Teachers in Overcoming Communication Barriers Faced by Learners with Disabilities in Self-contained Classes	-0.942	99	0.348	Accept	Not Significant

The study reveals no significant difference in communication barriers faced by learners with disabilities in self-contained classes and the facilitative patterns implemented by teachers. The results suggest that teachers' strategies do not vary significantly, suggesting that the facilitative patterns may not be suitable for individual learners with disabilities. The study suggests a need for a more specific individual approach to overcome communication barriers. The study also raises questions about the relevance of intervention programs to enhance facilitative patterns for specific learners with disabilities.

Robinson-Madden's (2020) research suggests that self-contained classrooms can improve the success of children with intellectual disabilities. The study gathered successful educators' perspectives, highlighting the importance of constructivist teaching and individualized instruction in enhancing student engagement and fostering positive attitudes toward learning. The findings could inform policies for special needs Education. Coughlan et al. (2024) explore systems for understanding impaired students' perspectives and recommend technologies and resources to overcome learning challenges. They identify five approaches: medical, functional, support, experiential, and administrative. The study suggests using

external tools, university support, and concerns to improve disability knowledge.

Table 3. Test of significant differences in the facilitative patterns implemented by the teachers in overcoming communication barriers faced by the learners with disabilities in self-contained classes when the respondents are grouped according to profile

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision	Remark
AGE - Facilitative Patterns Implemented by the Teachers in Overcoming Communication Barriers	1.292	99	0.199	Accept	Not Significant
SEX - Facilitative Patterns Implemented by the Teachers in Overcoming Communication Barriers	-28.087	99	0.000	Reject	Significant
EMPLOYMENT STATUS - Facilitative Patterns Implemented by the Teachers in Overcoming Communication Barriers	-11.842	99	0.000	Reject	Significant
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT - Facilitative Patterns Implemented by the Teachers in Overcoming Communication Barriers	-39.883	99	0.000	Reject	Significant
FAMILY STRUCTURE - Facilitative Patterns Implemented by the Teachers in Overcoming Communication Barriers	-22.101	99	0.000	Reject	Significant

This study investigates the facilitative patterns of teachers to overcome communication barriers for learners with disabilities in self-contained classes. Significant differences have been found to exist across the different profile factors except for age. Sex, years of experience, educational level, and quality professional development emerged as significant influences on these patterns. Continuous training, experience-based mentoring, and higher education levels are needed to improve quality teaching practice. However, age is not a deciding factor in a teacher's competencies. Such evidence can be used to frame interventions tailored to teachers' profiles, offering equal opportunities for professional development and mentorship programs and emphasizing skills and knowledge over demographic factors. Schools may initiate mentorship programs to support less-experienced peers.

According to Spencer (2021), a self-contained classroom refers to a specific learning environment within a special education setting where the teacher teaches every academic subject or topic, mainly in a neighborhood school. Self-contained classrooms differ from general education classrooms and are utilized by children who need significant support for a well-structured educational or behavioral framework. Cahapay (2022) asserted that teachers should be provided with vicarious experiences that significantly elevate their efficacy, enabling them to use intervention procedures extensively.

5. CONCLUSIONS
The study reveals that young and middle-career special education teachers are not pursuing advanced Education and training. Inconsistencies in implementing facilitative patterns for learners with disabilities are evident. Teachers must upskill and improve their capability, focusing on appropriate teaching strategies. Additionally, the demographic profile of teachers influences the implementation of these strategies. The study recommends encouraging special education teachers to enroll in higher Education, implementing facilitative patterns to address communication barriers, upskilling teachers through school-based training, providing scholarships or special courses for teachers, and considering the demographic profile when designing training or mentoring programs for learners with disabilities. The Department of Education may also provide special courses or scholarships for these strategies.

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