

Strategies And Effective Teaching Techniques for Learners: Facing Learning Challenges

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Abstract — This qualitative phenomenological study explored the experiences of teachers in teaching learners facing learning challenges in Buhangin A District, Davao City. Using semi-structured in-depth interviews, ten purposively selected elementary teachers shared comprehensive insights. Findings revealed major themes such as Classroom Strategies and Techniques, Teacher Support and Training, and Student Engagement and Motivation. Another set of results emphasized Differentiated Instruction, Classroom Environment Adaptations, and Collaboration and Peer Support in improving learning outcomes. Themes like Effective Communication, Adaptive Teaching Strategies, and Emotional and Behavioral Support also emerged as crucial for nurturing inclusive classrooms. Teachers highlighted the importance of personalized learning plans, positive reinforcement, accessible resources, and strong collaboration among peers, administrators, and families. Classroom adaptations like flexible seating and the use of visual aids were also found effective in enhancing engagement. The study also identified the need for sustained training on inclusive practices, consistent support from school leadership, and integration of mental health awareness. These findings offered valuable implications for educational planning and teacher development. Overall, the study underscored that a multifaceted, responsive approach was essential for supporting learners with learning challenges.

Keywords — *Educational planning, learning challenges, mental health awareness*

I. Introduction

Teaching students with learning disabilities has always been a hard but important job for many teachers. Every student learns in their own way, and those with learning difficulties often need more time, patience, and special methods to do well. Even when teachers try their best, they often face problems like not having enough resources, training, or time to help these students properly. When usual teaching methods don't work, teachers can feel stressed, frustrated, and unsure of themselves. Because of these challenges, the researcher decided to study the real experiences of teachers working with students who have learning disabilities using a special research method called phenomenology.

This issue is important worldwide because many children face learning difficulties. According to UNICEF (2021), around 240 million children globally have impairments, and these children often faced many challenges compared to those without disabilities. They were less likely to get early care, learn basic reading and math skills, attend school, and were more likely to feel discrimination. This showed a clear need to support these learners better to help them succeed.

In the Philippines, similar problems were seen. Parents and teachers noticed that both students and educators faced stress and mental health issues, especially during the pandemic when teaching and learning methods changed. Many learners struggled with anxiety, and teachers found it harder to teach students with special needs. For example, special education teachers in Mindanao had difficulties teaching students with hearing impairments and adapting lessons for the new normal. Parents often helped students with their work, making it harder for teachers to track progress. These challenges pushed teachers to find new ways to help all students learn better despite the difficulties.

This study focused on understanding the many factors that affect learners with learning difficulties and how these impact their academic progress. It aimed to explore teachers' experiences and find effective teaching strategies to address these challenges. The research hoped to support future studies and contribute to improving education for learners with difficulties. By helping these learners, overall learning and understanding would improve, benefiting society and the economy in the long run.

This study examined the experiences and challenges teachers faced when teaching students with learning disabilities, focusing on identifying effective teaching methods. It aimed to provide useful insights and recommendations for educators dealing with similar issues to improve teaching and learning outcomes, especially for students with learning difficulties. The research specifically looked at teachers working with Grade 6 learners at Lampa Lapidan Elementary School in Davao City.

Teachers' experiences in addressing learning challenges highlight the importance of emotional sensitivity, flexible teaching strategies, and collaborative classroom management. Research shows that understanding students' emotions helps create a supportive environment that prevents disruptions and addresses struggles early. Effective teaching involves individualized, multisensory approaches, adapting lessons based on student feedback, and using technology and well-designed learning spaces to meet diverse needs. Clear communication, teamwork, and community support further enhance classroom management and student motivation.

This study was based on Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which explained that learning happened through the interaction of a person, their environment, and behavior, influenced by social reinforcement. SCT highlighted how people learned by observing others and how past experiences shaped behavior. In this study, the theory related to how teachers used observations to develop coping strategies and teaching methods tailored to students' needs. By modeling positive behaviors and building self-confidence, students with learning challenges improved their skills, managed difficulties, and stayed motivated to succeed academically.

II. Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative phenomenological approach to gather rich data focused on participants' personal experiences and perspectives. Phenomenology, both a research method and philosophical view, aims to understand how individuals perceive their world. Data was collected through In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), which involved gathering detailed accounts of participants' daily lives, challenges, and views in a natural setting. This approach allowed the researcher to explore real-life experiences of public elementary school administrators by identifying and analyzing common themes from the interviews.

The study was grounded in key philosophical foundations: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and rhetoric. Ontologically, it recognized multiple realities, appreciating the diverse and subjective nature of human experience. Epistemologically, the researcher sought to understand how knowledge is formed through participants' unique perspectives, emphasizing the importance of personal and contextual meaning. Axiologically, the study openly acknowledged the researcher's values and biases, reflecting the belief that qualitative research is inherently value-driven. Rhetorically, the research embraced an inductive and emergent approach, using careful, systematic analysis of data to construct meaning while communicating findings in a way that honors participants' voices and lived experiences.

The researcher focused on prioritizing participants' viewpoints, recognizing their interpretations were shaped by social, historical, and cultural contexts. An inductive method was used to condense raw data into summaries linked to the research goals, revealing deeper patterns in experiences. Key principles included acknowledging multiple realities, diverse perspectives, close researcher-participant engagement, the value-driven nature of research, contextual understanding, emergent themes, and verifying accuracy through feedback and data triangulation.

Twelve elementary school teachers from Buhangin District, Davao City were purposively selected for this study based on specific criteria to ensure a deep exploration of their experiences teaching learners with learning challenges. Participants were chosen for their experience in elementary grades, involvement in special or inclusive education, willingness to share personal reflections, and at least three years of teaching practice. The selection also considered diverse teaching settings and a commitment to professional development, aiming to capture varied and insightful perspectives relevant to the research questions.

The researcher developed an interview guide with three main questions to explore the experiences of inexperienced elementary school heads, focusing on challenges in the new normal school environment. Ethical procedures were strictly followed, including obtaining written permissions from relevant authorities and ensuring participant confidentiality by conducting interviews in private spaces and using secure digital tools. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and confidentiality measures. Interviews were audio-recorded with permission, transcribed manually and digitally, and summarized for participant verification

to ensure accuracy. This process helped build trust and yielded genuine responses, while participant feedback on summaries enhanced the study’s credibility. The collected data was then organized into themes for analysis.

The researcher used Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase thematic analysis method to analyze the data. First, they familiarized themselves with the data by reading through it and noting initial ideas. Next, they generated basic codes identifying interesting features in the data. Then, these codes were sorted into potential themes, and relevant data extracts were grouped accordingly. The themes were reviewed and refined, with a thematic map created to show relationships between themes and subthemes. Afterward, themes were clearly defined and named to convey their meaning clearly. Finally, the researcher wrote the report, using data extracts within an analytical narrative to support the findings and address the research questions.

III. Results and Discussion

The lived experiences of teachers teaching learners with learning challenges were presented. This section revealed that the teachers’ experiences resulted in four themes: Classroom Strategies and Techniques, Teacher Support and Training, Student Engagement and Motivation, and Resource Availability Management.

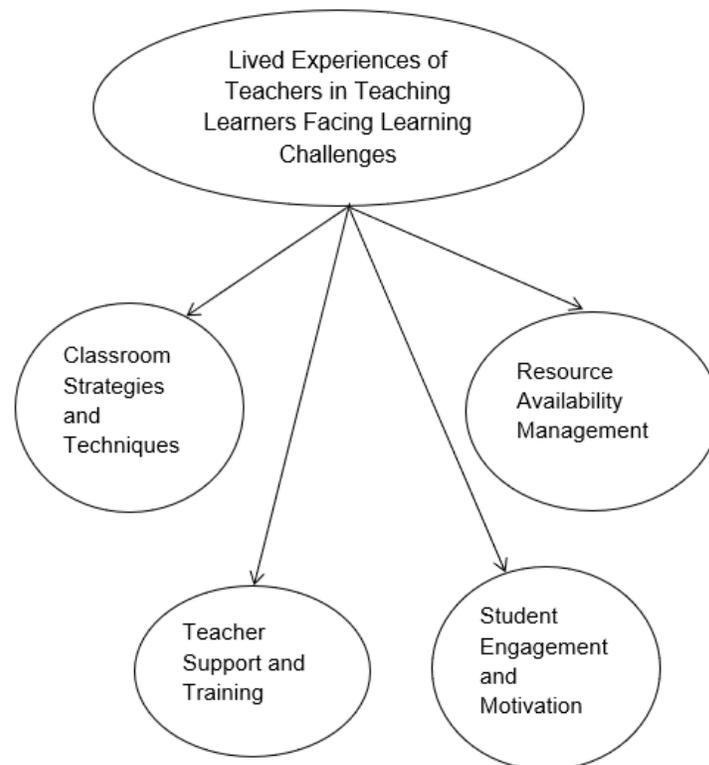


Figure 3. Lived experiences of Teachers in Teaching Learners Facing Learning Challenges

Teachers also used three key strategies to support learners with challenges, which are differentiated instruction, adapting lessons and activities to individual needs; classroom environment adaptations, like flexible seating and visual aids to create a supportive space; and collaboration and peer support, involving teamwork among teachers, mentoring, and community involvement to improve resources and teaching practices.

Teachers also revealed three key strategies for supporting learners with challenges: clear and consistent communication including feedback and parental involvement; adaptive teaching methods such as flexible instruction, individualized plans, and technology use; and emotional and behavioral support focusing on understanding student emotions, positive reinforcement, and building a supportive classroom community.

Teachers in Buhangin A District use specialized methods like differentiated instruction, classroom adaptations, and collaboration to support learners with challenges. They also emphasize professional development and personalized approaches to boost student engagement.

Key management practices include clear communication, adaptive teaching, and emotional support. These involve consistent instructions, feedback, parental involvement, flexible methods, and fostering a positive classroom community to improve learning outcomes.

The findings from Buhangin A District, Davao City, highlight key educational and management practices for supporting learners with challenges. Educational leaders should enhance teacher training on specialized methods, assessment, feedback, and classroom adaptations, while ensuring access to resources and professional support. Emphasizing student engagement through interactive teaching, personalized plans, and positive reinforcement is crucial. Additionally, fostering collaboration among teachers and involving parents strengthens the learning environment. Effective communication, adaptive teaching, and emotional-behavioral support are vital for addressing diverse student needs and improving academic and social outcomes.

The study recommended targeted actions for key stakeholders to improve education for learners with challenges. The Department of Education should enhance specialized training, resource allocation, and regular monitoring of inclusive practices while promoting research and collaboration. School heads need to foster teacher collaboration, provide mentorship, and implement clear emotional and behavioral support policies. Teachers are encouraged to refine flexible, individualized teaching methods, use technology, and maintain strong communication with parents and peers. Learners should actively engage in personalized learning, use available support systems, and develop self-advocacy skills. Future researchers are urged to conduct in-depth studies on inclusive teaching effectiveness, emerging technologies, and social-emotional learning, working collaboratively with stakeholders to inform innovative educational solutions.