

Challenges of Parents with Children with Special Needs in the New Normal

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Abstract:- This research would tackle the challenges that the new normal in education has brought to parents or guardians who have children with special needs. Since face-to-face classes have been canceled which affect the parents and guardians emotionally and physically as well as spiritually in attending their children's need. The hindrances or challenges that affects the parents would be included in this particular research where data were presented and evaluated. Parenting children with special needs should be knowledgeable and has lots of information whether its educational or for their developmental skills. In addition, it requires resources to handle them in their studies during this time of the Covid-19 pandemic. The respondents of this study were the parents of children with special needs at Roxas West Central School, Roxas, Isabela. Using the questionnaire and floating it through the google survey form, the researchers were able to get a result in which 7 participants answered honestly. In this study, the challenges that parents have encountered were time management and the difficulty of teaching their children. Aside from these, parents were challenge on how they should give the activities and on engaging their children in the given tasks. Thus, aggressive information dissemination campaign on educating parents on how to effectively and efficiently teach their children could be done through one-on-one mentoring between teachers and parents or even among parents, face to face or online seminars and workshops on how to deliver engaging activities, and evaluation forms to assess needs of parents. Parents or significant others are in fact the most important bridge during this time of pandemic, establishing a good communication and contact to both teachers and parents are necessary. The collaboration between the two would highlight a better result in achieving their goals concerning the children's developmental status.

Keywords:- Parents/guardians, Challenges, Children with Special Needs, New Normal Education

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's so called "new normal" due to COVID-19 pandemic, parents of children with special needs are experiencing difficulty during this time that leaves an impact on the adjustments of the parents in terms of educating their children with special needs. There are 46,484 non-graded learners with disabilities who enrolled for SY 2020-2021 which DepEd (Department of Education) included in the

enrollment process to identify their needs (Malipot,2020). Data from Learner Enrollment and Survey Form showed that 8.8 million parents preferred modular while 3.9 million voted for blended learning, which combines the different modalities (Dado,2020). Parenting a child with special needs should have knowledge on what are the things to do in order to meet their educational needs. According to Kagan (2020) special needs is a youth who has been determined to require special attention and specific necessities that other children do not. And so, the needs of these children should be given much attention wherein parents or guardians play a big role in the implementation of the modular distance learning; however, they encounter variety of problems as they become the teacher of their children. Accordingly, activities should be planned and unplanned which students participate. The modular distance learning lets the parents or guardians to be a model or more knowledgeable other (MKO). MKO as defined by Psychologist Lev Vgostsky is someone who has a better understanding or higher ability level than the learner, concerning a particular task, process, or concept. Thus, parents or guardians are expected to teach their children in any means of delivering the lessons or tasks using the modular distance learning. Parents should coordinate to the teachers regarding the curriculum that is being followed and implemented during this pandemic adapting the new normal of education. Quinones (2020) cited that Distance learning refers to learning delivery modality, where learning takes places between the teacher and the learners who are geographically remote from each other during instruction which has three types: Modular distance learning, Online Distance Learning and TV/Radio-Based Instruction. It is also known as correspondence education or home study, is a form of education where there is little or no face-to-face interaction between students and teachers (Mean-Chin, 2020). To address the needs of children with special needs, DepEd has developed a basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) to be implemented in the school year 2020-2021. It assures that Special Education (SPED) is included in the various learning modalities especially for learners with exceptionalities (Malipot,2020). And so, this study will help us learn more on the struggles of parents specially the families who enrolled their children during this pandemic. The researchers want to know the challenges parents with special needs faces and the possible solution on the problems they encounter.

This study aims to know the challenges that parents of special needs encounter in the new normal of education.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This research would use thematic Analysis which was a method of analyzing qualitative data. It was usually applied to a set of texts, such as interview transcripts. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes-topics, Ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly (Caulfield, Jack., September 6,2019).Under thematic analysis, phenomenological research was done to further elaborate the opinion of parents involve in this study. A descriptive phenomenological approach was used to describe and explain the phenomena that were being studied. The aim of the study was to collect, explore and understand the essential meanings that cannot be conveyed quantitatively such as issues or experiences from the perspective of a person directly involved.

Literally, phenomenological is the study of phenomena: appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the way we experience things thus, the meanings as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view by Smith,2008 as cited by Malla(2013).Also, phenomenology is both a philosophy and a family of research methods concerned with exploring and understanding human experience by Langdridge(2007) Malla(2013).

➤ *Locale and Population of the Study*

The researcher conducted the study in Roxas, West Central School, Roxas, Isabela with 7 participants.

III. DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

The researchers utilized a questionnaire using the google survey form to gather data from the participants of this study.

The questionnaire included the basic information of the respondents. The questionnaire that was prepared by the researcher according to what the researcher wants to know were included in the list of questions.

This instrument would be validated by a research expert and an adviser.

The researcher prepared the survey form on google and, sent to 7 participants of Roxas West Central School. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study; the participants involved confidentiality in which data would be handled privately. Subsequently, participants were given consent form to which they could participate in the study or not.

The parents who participated in the interview share common challenges. The following are the questions with their corresponding answers. Following the table below with the codes of each question where the researcher could come up with themes.

Question and Answers	CODES
1.What are the problems that you encounter during this modular distance learning? Parent1: Limited time to teach. Less knowledge on the teaching technique to handle with my daughter with special needs. Parent 2: Lack of the child in reading his modules Parents 3: Time management Parent 4: Lack of interest of the child in reading his modules. Parent 5:Low internet connectivity, students cannot concentrate due to distracted by household activities. Parent6: Time management Parent 7:Difficulty in facilitating my childs learning according to modules lesson and activity.	Time management
2.What do you you do in order for you to improve your child’s strength and weaknesses? Parent1:Video call with her beautiful teacher while learning and asking guidance on how to properly facilitate the child Parent2:To improve her weakness, I gave her the same activities and repeat it until she master it or at least she familiarize it. To her strength,I used to appreciate her Parent 3: Make the activity fun as possible Parent4:Teach him more Parent5: We play first, then after playing he will answer his assignments, do some exercise. Let him set the table, close the windows, gates. he perform his duties. Parent6: In my child case, she needs my guidance .I always allow him to play , for example, if he is afraid to do something, I always motivate him that he can do it because he is brave. Parent7: I let him do his activities. allow him to play after finishing his lessons,	Guidance, Appreciate, independence, fun activities
3.What activities do you give your child to fill the gaps he/she misses that the teachers do before? Parent 1: Do the same paper activities and sometimes, I searched videos related to the topic and I let her to watch and learn. Parent2: Drawing Parent3: Practice more sign language Parent 4: let the child read,write,count and sometimes sing. Talk to him in a normal way about normal things, equip the child with knowledge and skills with things he can hear, touch, see and	Pen and paper,

<p>discuss. Parent5: Let him do printed activities Parent 6: Miss nya si teacher Shaira Parent7: I give my child downloaded printable activities that attracts him Parents do the same thing is managing to fill the gaps by giving them extra activities and nit just relaying to the given modules</p>	
<p>4.How does this school year 2020-2021 differ from the previous school years? Parent1: it was a tough school year. Teachers knowledge are the best, I guiding my child, I like teacher Shaira. Parent2: More time, effort and patience to teach my daughter Parent3: So much different, we just hope we will be back to during normal days Parent4: The new normal is very challenging because as a parent you need to become a teacher for your child not like the previous school year they have a private time to learn with their teacher. Parent5: No regular class, day to day basis, A challenging school year for teachers, student and also parents Parent6: The difference is we are in blended learning, online class and modular but before they can go to school to have face to face class, new normal is very hard fro me as a parent of a child with special need.it is tough time but lets just stay positive Parent 7: it is difficult, I have to know a lot of things so I could teach my child well</p>	<p>Tough, difficult</p>
<p>5.How do you cope with this new normal of education as a parent of children with special needs? Parent1: t is a struggle for me because I’m an employee, I can only teach my child during night time, giving my child a reward is one Parent2: Be responsible and educated to meet the needs of my daughter on her learning lesson Parent3: We do teamwork, us all together Parent4: More time management Parent5: Teach with great compassion Parent6: As a parent, I I always monitor my child, monitor him and guide him in simple ways. Nothing is impossible to a parent like me that is willing to do everything for the sake of my child Parent7: It is hard, so I still continue to guide my child and ask help from teachers and family members</p>	<p>Monitor ,guide</p>
<p>6.How does this pandemic affect you as you become your childs teacher? Parent1: Stressful Parent2: Stressful in managing time Parent3: Its just sad thing that both of us is a part of the front liners, we could only do so much if we have time for our child and most of the time we just play to fill he time we’ve missed. Parent4: As a parent you need time to study what to teach to your child especially sign language. Parent5: A great challenge Parent6: It very sad sometimes they didn’t listen but I always find time and do my best to teach them. Parent 7: It affects my childs education and I have to make time to teach my child.</p>	<p>Stressful, need time, find time, make time</p>

Table 1

IV. FINDINGS

➤ *Analysis and Interpretation*

From the data that we gathered and the tool that was used, the researchers first made a list of questions encompasses the answers that the researchers wanted to have. Basing it to the questionnaires, the researchers identified patterns that was relevant to the study and so, coding was used. With the patterns that was noted, researchers was able to collect the needed information to support the study.

Parents who enrolled their child at Roxas, West Central School, Roxas, Isabela were facing the same challenges during this time of pandemic. The challenges parents face in teaching their children with special needs

comes from different factors and issues. It is important to know where do these parents come from when dealing with their children knowing the hardship that is being experience at the present situation. The researchers found out that the parents were having problems about time, and the difficulty on how they handle the lessons or their children. The other problem like lack of knowledge on handling a child should also be given attention. Due to limited face-to-face interaction, parents are now obliged to focus their attention to their children with special needs which put them in a stressful environment. Handling the child’s behavioral aspects needs patience since it goes with disciplining and improving their life skills. However, teachers should encourage parents to talk or share their problems in becoming a teacher to their child. The emotional impact is enormous and may include: Fear and worry about the child’s

future, the question of whether the parent is doing the right things to help the child. Proper coordination and communication are needed at this time to attain the goal of both the parents, and teachers as well as the school in educating and engaging the children in home schooling.

Base on the interview of one of the SPED teachers, the attention span of students is very different when they don't see or interact with their teachers. Most of my students, whenever their parents teach them, they won't listen. I really don't know if they will be able to achieve the desired learning for them." From this statement of a teacher. she knows that the parents would struggle in teaching their children with special needs which is indeed a challenge for them aside from they don not have enough knowledge and experience in teaching or handling them". This then prove that it is really challenging for parents to teach their children particularly during this pandemic.

V. CONCLUSION

Parents of children with special needs encountered similar experiences in handling their children's educational needs during this new normal of education. However, parents still try their best to teach their children the best way they could. Parents who struggle to teach their children became more active and vigilant in attending the needs of their children. They collaborate to their teachers who keeps an open communication fro them to be assisted when they have difficulty handling the child. The peers or parents sharing their concerns in a group chat which lessen their burden helps them to build their support system during this time wherein the teacher or a counselor could be involved. Through the use of internet, this could also be used for children with special needs to socialize to their classmates and do some activities together. These implications are achievable if there is a good communication, a clear and concise instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions could help the parents in dealing with the challenges of parenting a child with special needs:

- Parents, guardians or significant others should be able to identify nor determine the strength and weaknesses of their child to be able to cope in the new normal of education basing it from the evaluation of his or her past assessments. Knowing their strengths and weaknesses help the parents to manage their tantrums or their mood swings. Parents would be able to manage their children if they know their child's developmental needs which is to be given action.
- Parents should not limit the child if the child wants to try things beyond your expectation as a parent, instead guide and support them for it is for their growth and development.
- Aggressive information dissemination campaign on educating parents on how to effectively and efficiently teach their children. This could be done through one-on-

one mentoring between teachers and parents or even among parents. Face-to-face or one seminars and workshops on how to deliver engaging activities and evaluation forms to assess needs of parents.

- The school should provide psychological support to parents in order for them to gain confidence and believing that they were able to give what their child's educational needs were met.
- Parents could engage their child to activities in the community or in the churches to improve their social skills. This is for the parents to have a community support and might as well have an outlet for releasing their emotions especially in the new normal of education.

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