

# Public Special Education Center: Developmental Inculcation of Love for Creating Knowledge among Learners with Special Needs

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**Abstract:** *A growing number of learners with special education needs (LSEs) seek admission to regular schools. SPED centers are the public schools offering SPED program and accepting learners with special needs are testimonies that learners with special needs can learn and develop love for learning. The study examined and described how public SPED centers can make LSEs significant members in the school and productive citizens in the future. Data gathered through the interview and observations were presented using the narrative research design. In the conducted interview, the informants agreed to mainstreaming but there should be dialogue between receiving teachers and SPED teachers to work together for the improvement of the LSEs. The researcher recommends that the delivery of quality education be facilitated for learners with special education needs. SPED centers as resource center for inclusion must combat discriminatory attitudes and instead create a sympathetic and compassionate environment. Inclusive education must be intensified to enhance academic development of learners with special education needs.*

**Keywords—**SPED centers, developmental inculcation, knowledge creation, learners, special needs

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The State recognizes the right of all citizens to quality education. Just as every child has the inherent right to life, he has the right to quality basic education, and learners with special education needs are entitled to this right. This is the commitment of the Philippines in realizing the noble goal of Education for All. This is the reason why appropriate planning is the utmost importance to ensure that learners will benefit from accessible quality education. Professional contexts among educators are necessary for the best possible service among students especially in teaching special education. Different studies that shows professional aspects of an educator [1][2][3] indicates varying perspectives among students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The initiative of the Department of Education to launch various programs to implement an inclusive education is a powerful way to reach out all the learners of school age to be in school.

This study sought to enlighten both parents and regular teachers on the importance of their roles and functions for the development of learners with special education needs. Fidelity to their roles can result to a better acceptance of the community and eventually, productive lives for learners with disability. Driven by sympathy and compassion, public SPED centers, embrace the obligation to start the enlightenment process. This study will help parents and teachers realize how SPED teachers inculcate in learners with special needs love for learning. In addition, this study also attempted to increase understanding of how students with disability develop a love

for learning and offers recommendation how inclusion can assuredly meet the needs.

The main problem of this study is: how do the public SPED centers in selected city in Central Luzon, Philippines serve as avenue for the developmental inculcation of love for creating knowledge among learners with special education their needs? Specifically, what are the perceptions of teachers and learners with special education needs on the capacity of SPED centers to train learner for non-dependency?

## 1.1 Literature Review

### *Pedagogy for Children with Special Education Needs*

There are essential factors involved in properly fulfilling the needs of special students and helping them obtain the benefits of education. The knowledge and skills of teachers, appropriate behavioral interventions, and appropriate curriculum are all fundamental to help special students succeed in schools. Gibb & Dyches [4] mentioned that an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a step in this direction. Following standard steps, the individualized education plan ensures that instruction and curriculum meet the needs of learners with special education needs and appropriate practices and an enabling educational environment for learners are provided. This plan focuses on structuring needed learning activities both on instruction and assessment. Thus, one of the key constructs of Individual with Disability Education Act (IDEA) is the individualized education plan, developing and implementing this for each learner with disabilities. The IEP is defined in IDEA as a written formal document for each child diagnosed with a disability and having special learning needs as Francisco et al

[5] defined. The individualized educational plans prepared by SPED teachers in the Schools Division of Meycauayan focus on the teaching of basic literacy as well as life, care, livelihood and functional skills. During the transition program, they teach basic skills in dressing, personal hygiene, safety, doing simple household chores, moving from one place to another, using money correctly, and day-to-day decision making with enough self-sufficiency.

As teachers are trained to in helping the learners with special education needs, individualized educational plans must be carefully crafted to yield maximum benefits for learners. The teaching-learning process can strengthen to fully develop the learners' capacity to learn, acquire the needed knowledge and skills, and care for themselves and the people around them.

In similar light, Kellough and Cajuzza [6] asserted that teaching and learning are interdependent processes. One is a part of the other. This citation supports the importance of assessment in the process which deals with how well pupils learn and how well the teacher teaches. With accurate assessment and quality instruction, pupils with special needs have the potential to improve. The commitment and dedication of teachers help achieve better academic performance and acquire life skills.

#### ***Time Utilization***

There are many factors identified as contributing to the performance of learners with special education needs one of which is the amount of time allocated for learning and how well it is utilized.

As Lezotte [7] claimed in "What Effective Schools Do?", effective schools go beyond purely academic matters when it comes to bridging home and school. In the most effective relationship between home and school, parents and other community agencies work together to address problems that are not uniquely school based. An effective school must first be a place where students can feel safe, physically and emotionally. Thus, the learners with special education needs are no exemption in experiencing what should be given in an effective school and they too have the equal opportunities to learn in a friendly environment and be given a productive time. They need to be given enough time to absorb the teachers' instruction. Since special children need more attention than their regular peers, teachers must be especially committed and dedicated in coaching them to develop and enhance their abilities and skills. Necessarily, the amount of time that teachers spend in performing their responsibilities specifically in preparing individualized education plans directly affects instruction. This implies that if the teacher painstakingly crafts individualized educational plan and behavioral development plan, then the results can only be favorable. Teachers' commitment and dedication in teaching pupils with special needs necessarily demands quality time. Therefore, optimal time teaching learners with special needs, with no time wasted, is very important because they need so much of it to truly learn.

#### ***Special Educational Needs***

The child has a special educational need if they have a learning problem or disability that make it more difficult for them to learn than most children their age at times they are being assessed by a developmental pediatrician. Thus, they are prone to pre-judgment because of these difficulties. The term special educational needs have been controversial as it denotes prejudice among learners who considered to be having learning difficulty. In the debate, Gross [8] claimed that the term is inappropriate because it encourages discriminatory practices, a claim corroborated by Solity [9] that any child can experience learning difficulties at any given time.

Relatedly, special education is described as the science that deals with the categories of exceptional children in terms of measurement, diagnosis and preparation of the educational program and teaching methods appropriate to them [10].

In other words, special education refers to suitable education for children with special needs, and the special intervention applied during the learning process. Special needs include the need for additional support, an adaptive curriculum, modified teaching and organization of materials and activities to achieve efficient and effective learning for these pupils.

It is also envisioned that children with special needs will get full parental and community support for their education without discrimination of any kind. They need teachers who are committed and dedicated with extra special attitude toward work needed to address the different behaviors of learners with special needs. As stated earlier, the learning outcomes of learners depend on individualized education plans and behavioral development plans prepared by SPED teachers suited to the learners' needs and implemented with utmost commitment and dedication. These are manifested by the degree to which teachers serve special children regardless of issues that may be involved such as academic difficulties, work related risks, and economic benefits they receive. With issues on responsibility exerting great pressure on schools, having teachers with high levels of commitment and dedication appears to be most crucial for school principals. But on the other hand, teachers need support from their school head to sustain and enhance their commitment to SPED program.

An author defined commitment and dedication to teaching as the teacher's psychological attachment to the teaching profession. Some SPED teachers experience the so-called "burn out" in conducting different activities needed by special learners of different behaviors [11]. So, when teachers are not that committed and dedicated to the teaching profession, they may quit in no time. Teachers' commitment is extremely important to support the LSENs.

In relation to the researcher's studies, the preparation and implementation of intervention plans for different learners require dedication and commitment of teachers and

these individual plans play a vital role in improving learners' academic performance, social belongingness and emotional self-regulation.

Meanwhile, classroom autonomy is positively correlated with teachers' levels of professional commitment, and teachers empowered with classroom autonomy are more likely to persevere [12]. This citation shows that experienced teachers are greatly influenced by conditions such as discretion and autonomy in school. It is therefore important that SPED teachers must be given the freedom to plan because planning is essential to ensure the success of a modified curriculum characterized by multi-modality, child-centeredness, interactive mode and participatory activities which make inclusion easier.

### ***Different Types of "Special Educational Needs"***

There are many types of special need and the most common are as follow: *Learning Disability* or L/D refers to a learning disorder or difficulty in which the person experiences difficulties in learning through conventional methods of education [13].

It is further defined as a disorder in one or more of basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an impaired ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations [14]. Furthermore, the identification of appropriate services for the diverse disability requires training and in-depth understanding of the condition of the child.

*Developmental Disability.* Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas.

*Intellectual Disabilities* or I/D. According to Emerson and Heslop [15], the term "intellectual disability" should be considered interchangeable with the term "learning disability." Whereas, the disorder cannot be easily recognized and it encompasses a wide range of difficulties [16]. The definition of I/D is associated with "mental retardation" and "mental deficiency" which refers to sub-average general intellectual functioning which originates during the developmental period and causes impairment in adaptive behavior [17].

*Visual impairment* is a reduction in vision – usually associated with age – that cannot be corrected by prescription glasses, contact lenses, medicine or even surgery. It can range from low to severe. A person with visual impairment has difficulty fulfilling his/her regular daily functions. Visual impairment typically calls for a change in lifestyle and a solid support system. Visually impaired learners think normally, but they need special care and understanding because of the inherent difficulties in having impaired vision. In schools, visually impaired children are referred to as either blind or with low vision.

*Hearing impairment.* Studies on hearing impairment occurs when there is a problem with hearing or damage to the parts of the ear.

In the public SPED centers involved in this study, most of the hearing-impaired children are the one who is deaf or experiencing hard of hearing. A person is deaf if he cannot hear while a hard-of-hearing individual has a sense of hearing which, although defective, is functional with or without a hearing aid.

### ***Special Education's Focus on Intensive Interventions***

Intensive interventions are delivered to learners afflicted with autism spectrum disorder and students with significant learning and behavioral disabilities over a long period of time [18]. A review of research studies investigating the effects of intensive reading treatments in students with learning disabilities reveals not only progress in this area, but it also points to the urgent need for further research on effects of such treatment in academic areas. Though the merits of intensive intervention have been confirmed, still additional research is needed to determine the detailed effects of intensive interventions targeted to specific needs.

For all this, the best intervention is still a superior teacher. A special education teacher who works with children and youths who have a variety of disabilities. Children with special needs require unique instruction by specially trained professionals to help them achieve their highest potential and strive to progress beyond their limitations. Whatever the teacher shared inside the classroom are imitated by pupils and from there learners with special education needs learned the basic literacy, life, care, livelihood and functional skills. Moreover, teaching them with love, understanding and passion will help develop their character and skills.

Because of teacher's great influence on pupils, their self-confidence can be boosted. Learning to trust their own abilities and participate in group tasks confidently to do simple tasks. As the researcher observed, quality learning and friendly conversations between SPED teachers and LSENs are important because it is all about extending help and trusting rather than supervising and entering the child's world. Opening lines of communication and not seeing the curriculum as intended only for normal pupils. Open communication will fosters trusting relationship between LSENs and their teachers which in turn can be of help in developing LSENs' enthusiasm in studying and learning.

In relation to the researcher's study, this statement shows that if SPED teachers feel deeply for their learners and if they perceive that their efforts to teach them will amount to much, development of love for learning, then improvement will be possible. Once the public SPED centers develop a deep commitment to help special learners and SPED teachers accordingly, the latter will be motivated to double, or triple, their efforts at helping learners foster desirable behavior and develop love in studying and learning, which can make them improve themselves to become productive and independent citizens.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a case study type method of research which aimed to determine the efficacy of SPED centers in the implementation of their programs to help learners with disability to become knowledgeable and equipped with basic literacy and life skills. Since the study intends to describe the activities prepared by the SPED teachers and the reception of LSEs to their teachers' preparations together with the extent of support system of the selected SPED centers, thus, the case study is suitable.

### 2.2 Participants

The researcher purposively selected 11 participants which includes five teachers and six learners with special education needs. The participants were coded using letters, ST for the teachers and LS for learners with special education needs. The study was conducted in the first and second quarter of the School Year 2018-2019.

### 2.3 Instrument

The researcher used guided questions during the interview with primary focus on the intervention process as to the activities provided by teachers to Learner with Special Education Needs (LSEs). The responses were recorded and transcribed fully. Through this process, the researcher was able to define the situation clearly.

### 2.4 Data Gathering Procedure and Processing

The researcher requested permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Meycauayan City to conduct this study and to administer the research instrument to the respondents. The researcher personally engaged herself in the collection of data to insure their reliability and accuracy. In addition to this, the researcher thoroughly noted interviews responses and observed intervention processes aimed to prepare special learners for inclusion into regular classes and non-dependency. The informants were given the option to have their interview either audio or video recorded. The researcher did not insist on recording responses if informants were not comfortable with it. The researcher also took notes to record some of the information. The researcher assured the SPED teacher-informants that their identities would be kept confidential, however, the researcher asked the first names of the learners as a measure of rapport building. All the documents acquired and retrieved together with the recordings of the transcripts were secured to keep their confidentiality and privacy. The interviews and observations were categorized according to the purposes of the SPED teachers and the SPED Centers in implementing the special education program.

## 3. FINDINGS

This study tapped five selected SPED teachers handling disabilities such as hearing impairment, visual impairment

and behavioral disability. Whereas, the hearing-impaired secondary learners were tapped as learner informants they were chosen because they can answer the questions during the interview and can easily adapt themselves to the situation. The researcher used guide questions including a few follow up questions when deemed necessary in conducting the interviews. Results of the interview were arranged according to the questions asked and analyses of transcripts were presented.

### 3.1 What activities does your school prepare for learners with special education needs?

ST 1: "As of now, Mam, we have the transition program in our school and we enhance learners' skills in playing musical instruments like guitar, drums, and organs."

ST 2: "We have transition, transition program in our school for those 18 years-old and above and for the non-graded, a transition program for their daily life activities."

ST 3: "Actually marami po kaming activities. Especially ang target po namin for the children with special needs is to modify their behavior so may mga activities po kami like socialization, kung paano po sila makipag-communicate with other children and other persons around them, we also have fine motor activities using manipulative toys and different instructional materials that enhance their fine motor to become more effective in writing". (*Actually, we have many activities. Our target for the children with special needs is to modify their behavior. We have activities like socialization for them to communicate with other children and other persons around them and we do have many activities regarding fine motor activities using manipulative toys and different instructional materials that enhance their fine motor skills to become more effective in writing*).

ST 4: "Mga activities po na pini prepare ng school lalo na sa school namin pinaka-importante yung mainstreaming kung saan ang mga bata ay isinasama sa mga hearing students at doon natututo sila ng interaction, kahit magkaiba sila. Yung isa ay hearing at yung isa ay non hearing, nagkaron sila ng communication. Sa pamamagitan noon nabibigyan sila ng pagkakataon na ang self-esteem ay tumaas at medyo nawawala sa kanila ang discrimination. Sa mga activities na yun, di na nila nararamdaman ang pagkaka isolate sa kanila". (*Of all the activities we prepare in school, the most important is mainstreaming where the learners can join hearing students. There they learn to interact even if they are different, it is interesting to see how they communicate one is hearing and the other one is non-hearing. There is communication between them and through that, they were given the chance to raise their self-esteem. The feeling of being discriminated disappears through the activities they cease feeling isolated*).



ST 5: “Aside from curricular subjects, we have integration program where the students are mixed with hearing students so that they can adjust with the environment. Together with their daily subjects there are livelihood activities like cooking and small business activities so that they will be ready for some employment in the future.”

Gibb and Dyches [4] mentioned that in terms of preparation and application, the individual education plan ensures an effective learning environment. The teacher-informants proved that the preparation of IEP and differentiated activities help ensure development of LSENs learning and behavior.

As Parada elucidated [19], the SPED teacher as mentor, which means a trusted counselor, guide, tutor or coach prepares the needed intervention suited to the child’s ability and behavior. The researcher understands, the difficulties the SPED teachers experience just to refine the LSENs behavior and the way they mingle with others. One of the teacher-informants mentioned about the situation she faced in dealing with a learner with behavioral difficulty. She explained how hard it was for her when she was attacked and hit by the child.

Applying the concept, the teacher should ensure that there are classroom activities in which children would work and play together. This way, students will discover the needs and potentials of one another and will learn how to provide assistance. A child with special needs has to be taught how to seek help while other children have to learn how to respond to request for help. This notion supplement the teacher-informants’ answer on the activities they prepare for LSENs.

### 3.2 Can you give a situation where you really saw learners’ improvement in the transition program?

ST 1: “Nung una po, syempre, pag sinabing SPED very dependent yan. Nung first week, sinusupportahan pa po namin sila pero nung sumunod na week nakita na namin yung pagiging independent na nila sa pagtitinda, pagbibilang ng pera at preparation ng pagkain. Nakita namin na may improvement.” *(If one mention SPED very dependent children come to mind. During the first week, we supported them but the following week we saw that they slowly becoming independent in selling, counting money, and preparation of food. We saw an improvement.)*

ST 2: “Yung ginawa namin last year, nagbigay kami ng computer lessons sa kanila. Nakagagawa na sila ng sarili nilang gawa. Yung iba naman natututo mag- painting o mag-luto”. *(What we did last year, we gave them computer lessons. They were also doing things by themselves, others have learned to how to paint and cook.)*

ST 3: “Meron po kasi kaming bata na ang case ay autism pero napunta sa regular school. Nung nag-enroll sila sa amin ang common problem nila ay behavior, yung socialization

especially having eye contact with other people. Hirap po sila doon so marami po kaming ginawang intervention para magkaroon sila ng eye contact. Especially yung fine motor na rin nila at speech, para po sa speech nagbibigay kami ng therapy, yung kayang-kaya nilang gawin like using mirror, at blowing candle, nakatulong po sa speech para eventually maging fluent sa communication yung mga bata.” *(We have a student whose case is autism but those who enrolled at the beginning of school all of them were sectioned in the regular classroom. The first observed problem with them was behavior, socialization specially having the eye contact with other people and it was difficult for them to socialize. That is why we made many interventions for them to have an eye contact and able to improve their fine motor and speech. In speech we have given them simple and easy therapy things that they can easily do like using mirror, blowing candle. These activities able to help them to eventually learn to speak).*

ST 4: “Napapasama na sila sa activities like sa poster making. Sumasali na kami sa mga contests like sa United Nations, sa cos play sumasabay na sila sa hearing students sa drawing, sa Damath sumasali na rin tayo”. *(They have been participating in activities like poster making. We joined in the programs in school such as United Nations program, and in cos play. They join together with the hearing participants in drawing and even in Damath, we also participate.)*

ST 5: “We have adult learners who can now use in their daily life the skills learned in school. For example, he got employed in construction work and experience working at it. With the application of life skills and being independent especially in going to work. We even taught them to ride in jeepneys and prepared them for interviews and making their own resume”.

Teacher-informants mentioned the transition program for the LSENs and the importance of having a well-equipped laboratory for the transition program. They proudly cited the achievements of LSENs in developing life skills like cooking, marketing, selling, baking, commuting, measuring and basic entrepreneurship slowly but surely. LSENs develop the skills needed in order to survive and be independent. This affirms Kellough et al. [6], who emphasized that teaching and learning are interdependent processes that depended on and affect one another. If teachers continue to focus on intensive interventions through the transition program, then LSENs can be capacitated to be productive members of society.

### 3.3 Do you assess them after the transition program? How often do you assess them and make narrative reports?

ST 1: “Yes Maam. After every quarter.”

ST 2: “Opo Maam. Para malaman namin kung hanggang saan ang nakayanan nila at malaman din nila. Yun ang aim natin, makapagbigay tayo sa kanila ma- educate para paglabas nila

sa school, kaya na nila sa sarili nila.” (Yes Ma’am, for us to know how much they have learned. Our aim is to educate so that when they leave the school they can do things on their own.)

ST 3: “Yes, Maam. Ina-assess sila. Gumagamit kami ng informal assessment sa learners with autism. Especially po napaka-importante ang interview with the parents and yung mga reaction, yung common behavior nila sa bahay at sa school pinag-aaralan naming mabuti at gumagawa kami ng ibat-ibang checklist kung ano po ung attainable at nagagawa ng bata. Yung hindi p nagagawa nalalaman namin kung saan tutulungan ung bata.” (Yes, we assess learners with autism using informal assessment. Interviewing parents is so important. We observe the reaction of their children, their behavior at home and at school. We study that carefully and we do different checklists- one for attainable skills that can be done by the child and that for skills which cannot be acquired yet. Through this, we realize what aspect we can help them in).

ST 4: “Narrative reports after every activity. May rubrics na ginagamit para ma- assess ung natapos nilang mga activities”. (Narrative reports after every activity rubrics are used to assess the activities they have completed).

ST 5: Yes Maam, we have rubrics. We also have narrative report, grading system and accomplishment report. We also ask other teacher to evaluate the projects and output of learners.

The teacher-informants also mentioned the assessment for LSENs, which is more of an informal assessment. Assessment is among the vital factors identified as contributing to academic performance concerned with how well the pupils learn and how well the teacher teaches. This implies that with accurate assessment—and personalized quality instruction LSENs have the potential to improve in many ways. The teacher- informants also shared their accomplishment report in every activities they have provided to the learners with special education needs wherein it has been clearly shown the productivity of the learners with special education needs. However, this can be a tedious task to accomplish, thus, impacts the mental health and the stress levels [20] and the sleep pattern of teachers [21]

### 3.4 How do the SPED centers assess the reports you submitted?

ST 1: “Ina-assess po nila kami through unang-una sa isina-submit naming paper works. Tinitingnan po ni Madam, nag DLL (daily lesson log) kami kahit na SPED yang mga iyan. Yung sa transition program po namin gumagawa din kami ng reports. Tinitingnan po nya kung na-aachieve namin ung goals at objectives namin sa mga bata at sa mga activities.” ( We are assessed through the accomplishment reports we submitted.

Madam referring to the principal sees to it that we do our DLL even though we teach SPED. We also do our reports on the transition program; she constantly made follow up to find out if we are achieving our objectives for the SPED learners and to the activities.)

ST 2: “Ang aim po natin, makapagbigay tayo sa kanila at ma-educate sila para kaya nilang mag-stand sa sarili nila”. (Our aim is to give them learnings and educate them so that they can stand on their own.)

ST 3: “Yes, Ma’am. Meron naman po. Marami naman po silang ginagawa pag may mai me mainstream. Isang napakalaking aksyon na po yun pag na-promote sa regular class ang mga special children, malaking achievement po yun sa kanila.” (Yes Ma’am, they are doing much. Mainstreaming is a big action which promotes special learners to the regular class. That is a big achievement for them.)

ST 4: “Yes Maam. Yearly, quarterly, nanghihingi ng listahan ang Division ng learners, tapos ang disabilities nila at ano ang ibinibigay na intervention ng school kung na-mainstream ba sila o self-contained.” (Yes Ma’am, yearly, quarterly the Division Office asks for the list of learners with their disabilities, the intervention that we give them, if they can be mainstreamed or be included in a self- contained group)

ST 5: No response. This question was accidentally skipped and was not asked to interviewee ST 5.

About processing the reports to be submitted to the SPED center, the teacher-informants answered that they are properly analyzed. If immediate needs are brought up they are addressed accordingly. The SPED centers are to be commended for embracing the program despite minimal assistance. The initiative of dynamism and special concern of school heads are vital to the success of the program because despite compelling needs in administration they attend to the needs of learners with special needs as a matter of priority.

In terms of achievement of LSENs, the teacher-informants have touching stories to share. Teachers seriously give their best in preparing individualized education plan for learners while the school heads together with the Supervisor in charge of SPED dutifully check the activities lined up. As current practice goes, teachers use rubrics in evaluating every activity conducted in the transition program making sure the performance of each learner is evaluated accurately.

Similarly, vital is the involvement of families in educational programs which can exert a positive impact on learners’ performance. Families are not needed for program follow through; they can provide new information useful to both teachers and learners. Through meaningful involvement, parents and siblings of special children involvement develop a more realistic expectation of what the children could accomplished. And then of course, children with special needs

usually feel more comfortable when there was a close working relationship between their parents and teachers.

**3.5 If you will rate the implementation of the SPED program in our city on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest what rating will you give? And what do you suggest to address its needs if ever there are needs?**

ST 1: “Siguro po Maam 8; Kasi yung dalawa doon, may goals o objectives pa na di pa-naachieve dahil kulang sa support ng community. Siguro mapalakas pa yung program sa community kasi kung baga yung program natin na SPED parang sa school lang po. Mas malakas pa sana kung meron din sa community o LGU para makilala yung pangangailangan at existing program ng SPED natin.” *(Perhaps Ma'am 8; The remaining two are for goals and objectives that are not yet achieved because there is very little support from the community. The SPED program is limited to the school, but there should be a support program in the community or local government unit so that they will know our needs and ways to strengthen our existing program)*

ST 2: “Sa ngayon Maam, 7. Dahil marami pa pong dapat I-improve sa graded and non-graded. There is always room for improvement naman po, di ba? Kayang-kaya natin ito kung tulong-tulong tayo.” *(For now, it is 7 because there are many things to improve in the graded and non-graded groups. There is always room for improvement and we can do it if there will be cooperation.)*

ST 3: “Sa palagay ko nasa 8.5. Kasi yung dami ng enrollees na dumudumog sa amin through referral of parents to other parents. Yung impact ng development ng anak nila ay napakalaking evidence na maganda ang existing SPED program sa Meycauayan. Marami pa pong kailangang gawin tulad ng sa transition kasi marami pong special children na tumatanda na talagang hindi kaya ng cognitive level nila yung mga academic subjects kaya kailangan natin more on functional curriculum para sa kanila.” *(For me it is 8.5 because the number of enrollees coming to us through the referral of parents to other parents shows the impact of the development of their children. That is the biggest evidence about the effectiveness of the existing SPED program in Meycauayan. There are still so many things to do just like in the transition program. There are many special children who are getting older and still they cannot understand academic subjects that's why we need a functional curriculum for them.)*

ST 4: “Sa akin Maam, 8; Kasi naging malaking tulong talaga yung SPED center especially dun sa mga graded na deaf students. Kasi from zero, hindi sila marunong mag-commute dahil takot sila sa mga nakakarinig. Ngayon parang normal na nakikihalubilo na sila kaya na nilang mag-communicate kahit sa hearing individuals. Since we handle graded students, alam namin mas kailangan nila ng materials especially for transition para ma equip sila ng life long skills na tinatawag.

Kami po kasi yung exit ng mga bata sa employment. Mainam na ready na sila. Alam na nila; for example, sa cooking, alam na nila kung paano pag-operate equipments. Importante ito. *(For me it is 8, because the SPED center is a big help especially for the graded deaf students. Because from zero, they did not know how to commute; they were afraid of those persons who can hear and they felt not welcome at all. But now, everything seems normal they can already adapt themselves to the situation. And since we handle graded students, we know that we need materials for transition to equip them with life skills. We are the exit stage prior to possible employment. It will be better if they can be ready for what is in store for them in this world for example, in cooking it is not only important that they know how cook it will be necessary if they can operate the different cooking equipment.)*

ST 5: “ So I can say it is in 7 because we already started but we are moving towards improving the intervention or the program as we go into higher levels. We need more support from the local government unit (LGU) specially in acquiring tools and equipment that we can use in our livelihood projects and skills training.”

Regarding the implementation of SPED program of the Division, both the teachers and hearing-impaired informants gave ratings of 8 on average.

They said that while the division is doing its part to help learners with disability, the community and other stakeholders must do their part too in helping LSEs to become more engaged and productive. The community especially the local government, must have an in depth understanding of the special education program to provide assistance for the learners with special education needs. While the hearing-impaired informants gave the program a rating of 8, all of them were positive that they learned so many things in the school, which proves that their love for knowledge creation started when their parents decided to bring them to school despite their evident disabilities. This also assures them the necessary child protection [22] intended for these students in the SPED centers

**3.6 Cite a particular student and his/her story which shows the benefit gained from our SPED Centers?**

ST 1: “Si John Mer ay visually impaired. Nung malaman po ng RBI (Resources for the Blind Incorporated) na talagang consistent naman yung pagpasok ng bata kahit nakatira sa squatter area ay hinanapan po sya ng sponsor para masustain yung pang araw-araw niyang pamasaha. Now Grade 5 na po sya. *( John Mer is a visually impaired learner. When the RBI learned that he goes to school regularly even if he lives in squatter area, it looked for a sponsor to sustain his everyday transportation. Now he is already in Grade 5)*

ST 2: “Opo Maam; Yung students po namin na HI ngayon ay nagtatrabaho sa mall; yung iba, nagtayo ng sarili nilang

carinderia yung ganyan. Yung isa may salon. At least kaya nilang maging productive at hindi hindrance ang disability nila. Ang pangalan noong may salon ay Isabella.” ( *Yes mam our students in HI are now working at the mall. Some have their own small business like “carinderia”. One has a salon. At least they can be productive and their disability is not a hindrance to them. The salon owner is named Isabella.*)

ST 3: “Ang number 1 na lagi ko pong naaalala na estudyante namin ay si Andrea na isang batang autistic. Dumating po sya sa amin na walang ginawa kundi manapak, mangurot, magwala, tumakbo pero ngayon ay maayos na, nasa Grade 6. Nasa regular class na sya ngayon. Talagang ang cooperation ng teachers at parents especially the school ay napakalaking bagay para sa development ng bata. Isa po syang achievement namin kasi ngayon nakikita namin na isa sya sa most behaved at nag e-excel sa different activities sa school. Si Andrea Baldomerra ay Grade 6. Nagsimula po sya sa amin na talagang na experience kong sinikmuraan ako, kinurot ako, nasabunutan ako at di po namin mapauho. Hindi makabasa, di nakakapagsalita pero ngayon grade 6 na po sya at sumasal sa different contests. Nakatulong po talaga yung SPED program.” ( *The first one that I always remember is Andrea an autistic child. When she was starting out with us, she kept on hitting us, pricking our skin, roaming around and running but now she’s okay. She’s in Grade 6 in a regular class. It shows that the cooperation between teachers, parents and the school is very important in the development of a child. She is our greatest achievement today. She is the most behaved and excels in the different activities of the school. Andrea Baldomerra is now in Grade 6. Before I experienced being hit and pricked. We could not make her sit down. She was poor in reading but now she is in Grade 6 and constantly participating in different contest.*)

ST 4: “May isa po kaming Grade 8 student na 33 years old na. Although 33 na sya, ang alam lng nya ay yung simpleng paraan ng paggawa. Nung mapasok na sya sa center, kung saan importante ang communication na-develop ang kanyang communication skills hindi lang sa kapwa deaf kundi pati sa hearing persons. Ngayon nakaka apply na siya ng trabaho. Nagtatrabaho na sya construction at since naturuan na sila sa Math yung measurement alam na nya, na-adopt na nya yung naituro sa kanya kung hindi sa SPED center, hindi matututo. Allan Almendarez ang pangalan nya.” ( *We have a grade 8 student who is already 33 years old. Although he is 33 he only knew the simple way of doing things. When he was accepted in the school where communication is really important he developed his communication skills and can now communicate not only with non-hearing but to hearing individuals as well . He can apply for jobs. Now he is doing construction work and because of his learning in math he was able to follow instruction and do some simple measurement. If not for the SPED Centers he would still be without skills. He is Allan Almendarez*)

ST 5: “We have two students who graduated from Grade 10. They are now in Grade 11 in Philippine School for the Deaf in Pasay. Because of the skills that we taught them during their junior high school days, they survive in senior high school. They are Chris Philip Peret and Maximo Nachor.

The teacher-informants were asked to cite successful LSEs they had assisted before, who are now in the regular classroom and are continuously striving to be productive citizens. The teacher-informants shared success stories of their former SPED students in the visually impaired class. An example is John Mer a blind boy now in grade 5 who can read his lessons fast in Braille. His teacher acted as his sighted guide, and despite financial difficulties and the disabilities, he continuously attends his class and participates in the school activities.

Isabella, a 20 year old girl with profound hearing loss, uses hearing aid. Even though she has a significant hearing loss. Isabella does not rely primarily on visual cues to receive information but effectively makes use of auditory and visual modalities. Her parents provide review lessons to enhance her academic performance. Right now she works at her salon and lives and acts normally just like hearing persons.

Andrea who has an autism spectrum disorder, used to fight, hit and attack by physical means when irritated. She used to be unmanageable and hard to control in school, causing difficulties to teachers and classmates, but now is in Grade 6, one of the most behaved in her class. She excels in her studies and participates in school activities. She is in the regular class right now through the inclusion process, no longer needing the guidance of the SPED teacher.

Jay Ar, another child with autism spectrum disorder, now works at Carl Balita Review Center. He mentioned the difficult times his SPED teacher experienced with his occasional unnecessary attention-getting behavior. He used to be restless but through the effort of his SPED teacher and the cooperation of his parents, he was able to slowly overcome the unpleasant manifestation of his disorder. He was mainstreamed but constantly visited by his SPED teacher. Through inclusion, he attended regular class and pursued a college degree at Bulacan State University. He now works productively.

Allan, a 33 year old Grade 8 student, can work and study at the same time. He gained confidence when he was taught to communicate not only with non-hearing persons but also with hearing persons as well. He is now a construction worker and can follow instructions from his boss because he has learned to adapt himself to the new environment as well as to compute and make measurements.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher has drawn the conclusions that the special education centers in the City of Meycauayan are effective social agent with boundless potential to affect the total well-being of learners with special



education needs. The capacity of the SPED centers and teachers can influence the learners in many ways. There was a need to work together to better improve the services offered to the LSENs. The strengthening capacity of the SPED centers were to enrich regular classes to mainstream LSENs inside the normal environment for them not to be left behind and to contribute to building the nation.

SPED teachers and receiving teachers must plan and work together to have cooperative and special classes that promote mainstreaming towards full inclusion. With nobility and generosity, the teachers embrace the challenge of accepting special learners and find ways in helping them by providing a flexible and individualized support system.

School heads and SPED teachers at the SPED centers must accommodate the learners with special education needs. Countless were the sacrifices they had made to meet the educational needs of the learners.

The revelation of the learners that they loved to be in the school most of the time and the observations of teachers that LSENs were seldom absent in their classroom posited a realization that truly, SPED Centers were their hope to become productive individuals and be connected to the world.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

A considerable emphasis in special education had been placed on designing and implementing effective practices for enhancing outcomes for learners with special education needs thus, the following were recommended:

- 1) SPED teachers in facilitating the learners with special education needs should manifests in their interactions an engaging and supportive attitude. Through this a more therapeutic process can be incorporated in the implementation of individualized education plan and behavior development plan for learners. Since teachers personally experienced the problems encountered by their learners it is advised that they documented what transpires inside the classroom.
- 2) SPED centers as the resource center for inclusion should have identify and send back more learners to gain access to basic education. The most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes and creating a sympathetic community was through the SPED Centers. Hence, school heads must intensify their roles and collaborate with other individuals knowledgeable on the delivery of the program, to ensure an enabling environment for effective learning to happen among learners with special education needs.
- 3) SPED Centers must also provide ample opportunities to develop learners' skills and inculcation of values for LSENs to become useful and effective members of society. The transition program in every SPED center directs LSENs towards the development of

life skills. If parents will intensify their guidance and support and fully collaborate with teachers in honing their skills, then their disability would turn out to be their strengths in the end.

- 4) The public SPED centers should forge partnership, collaboration and communication with government, private institutions, religious group, non-governmental agencies and the community and mobilize their support for the SPED program towards effective implementation of the program. The citizenry should likewise extend a helping hand, because, to adapt the off-quoted saying on social justice, "those who have less in life should have more in us."

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