

PROFICIENCY AND APPROACHES IN TEACHING CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AMONG FILIPINO TEACHERS

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Abstract. The main purpose of the study is to determine the approaches and proficiency of teachers in teaching children with learning disabilities in public elementary schools in San Mateo North and South District, Division of Isabela for the School Year 2019-2020. Descriptive survey was employed. The school heads and SpEd teachers served as respondents. Mean, t-test and Spearman rank were used to analyze data. The results showed that the teachers teaching students with learning disabilities are proficient and often used different approaches. The teachers are knowledgeable about the applicable teaching approaches to be employed in teaching students with learning disabilities. Likewise, as to the extent of employing of approaches, these were evident as practiced by the teachers and as confirmed and observed by the school heads. School Heads and teachers have the same level of assessment in terms of the extent of approaches in teaching students with disabilities. The teachers are proficient in handling students with learning difficulties. In terms of teachers' proficiency, both teachers and school heads assessed the teachers as proficient. Therefore, they have the same level of assessment. Teachers frequently used the approaches as manifested by their level of proficiency except for content knowledge. Thus, proficiency of teacher in content knowledge do not depend on approaches being used. The teachers and school administrators shall attend trainings, workshops and conferences related to the varied teaching approaches applicable to the students with learning disabilities. The administrators and focal person of SPED in the district shall engage more related activities and trainings about the nature of content knowledge to be included in the curriculum of the special education to update the content and competencies.

Keywords: *approaches, proficiency, inclusive education, learning disabilities, special education*

Introduction

Education aims to provide learnings and knowledge, also to enhance the skills and abilities of every student, to bring competence, and guide them with positive attitude and values despite of the disabilities. The Department of Education stresses on the principle "Education for All." Indeed, regardless of the status of an individual, there are rights and privilege to attend schooling. Special education refers to the arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, accessible settings, and other interventions designed to address the needs of students with learning differences, mental health issues, physical and developmental disabilities, and giftedness. Chapter II of Title II of the Magna Carta for Disable Persons, RA 7277, introduced some rules on special education in the Philippines. Sec. 12 mandates that the "State shall take into consideration the special requirements of disabled persons in the formulation of educational policies and programs." On the other hand, learning institutions are encouraged "to take into account the special needs of disabled persons with respect to the use of school facilities, class schedules, physical education requirements, and other

pertinent consideration." Specifically, learning institutions are encouraged to provide "auxiliary services that will facilitate the learning process for disabled persons."

Sec. 14 of RA 7277 provides that the State "shall establish, maintain and support complete, adequate and integrated system of special education for the visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally retarded persons and other types of exceptional children in all regions of the country." Relative to this, quality education considered as an important factor to produce competent professionals in order to build a strong nation and to bring out the best way to get along with global competition. Special education classes provide a unique service to physically or mentally challenge students. The ideal education classroom provides quality instruction to students with disabilities. While the push in education these days seems to be toward online education and the inclusion of special education students within mainstream classroom, special education classes are still needed for more severely disabled students. The purpose of the special education classroom setting is to provide more intensive, individualized attention to the students who most need it. However, even in special education classroom settings there can be a wide a range of skills levels and abilities.

There are different ways and strategies of learnings that can be applied with different type of individual in different circumstances. In the Philippines most students are engaged in traditional method of teaching while others are up to home schooling, tutoring, and online education. However, there's a question on how to implement different strategies in teaching with disabilities. Educators are aware that good instruction actively involves students in the learning process. In the past, having knowledge of large numbers of facts was valued by society; however, with information increasing today at exponential rates, students will be more likely to need the ability to access information and then apply that information to real-life situations. Throughout their lives, today's students will be faced with problems and situations that have no clear-cut correct answers. They will need to analyze those situations and then apply their knowledge and skills to find acceptable solutions. The difficulty is that what students need to know and to be able to do can sometimes be very different from what is being taught in schools. As in the past, students still need to know facts, but the educational emphasis is now shifting because of the special education in the country.

Likewise, Hyunjeong et al. (2014) described the United States and South Korea try to determine the best procedures for supporting students with disabilities, it is imperative to look at how inclusion is implemented across different cultures and countries as well as find out how teachers actually feel about inclusion classrooms. There were three main reasons why this study was conducted. First, it was to consider and evaluate the thoughts of teachers concerning inclusive education in the United States and in South Korea. Second, it was to assess teachers' knowledge and ability to use teaching strategies having to do with inclusion. Third, it was to look at different practices that might help teachers, in both countries, have effective inclusive classrooms and understand what barriers might be stopping this from happening. Compared with Hyunjeong et al. (2014), which emphasized the importance of teacher education for classroom inclusion, this new study by Patterson et al. (2009) specifically observed a pair of teachers who changed their classroom structure to better accommodate students with special needs. In their study, Patterson et al. (2009) examined two teachers, in a middle school mathematics classroom, restructure their shared classroom to better facilitate differentiation. One of the teachers was a mathematics teacher while the other teacher was an inclusion teacher. The mathematics teacher would teach in a lecture

format. Then, without much review of the new concepts, this teacher would give the students a math packet. The inclusion teacher would go around the classroom and make sure the students were on task and taking notes. The inclusion teacher modeled is the “one teacher, one assists” model.

According to Patterson et al. (2009), differentiated instruction allows the teacher to meet the needs of every learner by providing students with multiple options for learning. The purpose of this study was to further understand these teachers’ restructuring process as well as offer suggestions to teachers who may want to try their newly-created teaching strategy in their own classrooms. Furthermore, Mackey (2014) explored how different middle school teachers use inclusion strategies in their classroom every day. Mackey (2014) studied three different experienced middle school teachers to understand how they included students with disabilities in their general education classrooms. One of the teachers was a sixth-grade science teacher, another was a seventh-grade social science teacher, and the third was an eighth-grade math teacher. All three of these teachers displayed positive practices when it came to working in an inclusive classroom. Inclusion refers to the practice of students with disabilities (SWD) learning alongside their peers in general education classrooms (Gilhool, 1989). Thus, classrooms that engage in this practice can be referred to as being inclusive.

On one hand, federal data and the current research literature provide evidence that students with disabilities in early childhood settings are consistently suspended, secluded, and restrained at much higher rates than their peers without disabilities. There are several plausible reasons for these disproportionalities, which are described in relation to the current evidence available within the following review of the literature. Studies included in this review include researchers’ descriptions of the increased challenging behaviors that are exhibited by students with diagnosed developmental delays or disabilities and the relation these challenging behaviors have on instructional practices. Moreover, previous research examining the attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge of inclusive practices reported by teachers and teacher candidates is also apparent (Gilliam et al., 2016; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). In this study, the social model of disability was anchored and patterned in terms of the teachers’ proficiency and extent of employing different approaches in teaching students with learning disability. The social model of disability is defined as a theory that sees disability as a product of specific social and economic structures and aims to address issues of oppression and discrimination of disabled people that are caused by institutional forms of exclusion and by cultural attitudes embedded in social practices (Terzi, 2004). The social model believes that attitudinal and environmental barriers are the predominant obstacles existing in society: able-bodied people tend to fix their gaze on the disability of people rather than noticing their abilities (Mulvany, 2000).

The paradigm illustrates the interplay of the two components to arrive at desired goals which includes the teachers’ proficiency and extent of employing approaches among the students with learning disabilities (*Figure 1*). The paradigm underscores the extent of the approaches with learning disabled students employed by the respondents; and level of proficiency of the respondents in teaching students with learning disabilities in terms of content knowledge, good planning, classroom management, classroom behavior; and assessment and evaluation. The process focuses on determining the approaches in teaching students with disabilities through administering the survey questionnaire, conducting unstructured interview and statistical analysis. Additionally,

the output redounds to improve the approaches in teaching disabled students and proposed action plans in teaching disabled students.

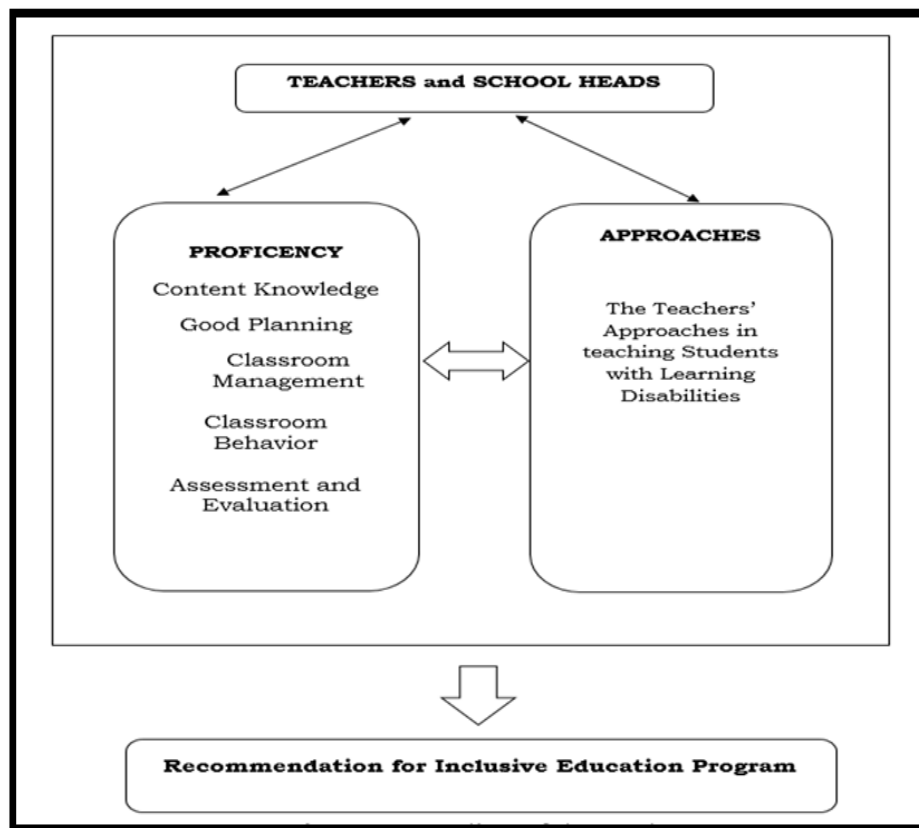


Figure 1. Paradigm of the study.

The ultimate goal of special education in the public schools, according to the Special Education Division of DepEd, is the integration or mainstreaming of learners with special needs into the regular school system and eventually in the community, following the principles of The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Education. But, the great challenge of it is on how to apply the approaches on how to teach students with learning disabilities. The researchers are trying to venture on the different approaches applicable in teaching students with disabilities. It is high time to determine the suited teaching strategies, methods and approaches in teaching among students with disabilities. Given all the foregoing statements, these prompted the researchers to conduct the study.

Objective of the study

Generally, the study aimed to determine the extent of practicing inclusive teaching strategies as perceived by teachers and school heads in public elementary schools in San Mateo North and South District, Division of Isabela for the School Year 2019-2020. Specifically, this study aimed: (1) to determine the extent of using the teaching approaches to learners with special needs as perceived teachers and school heads; (2) to identify the significant difference in the perception of the school heads and teachers in the extent of using the teaching approaches to learners with special needs; (3) to distinguish the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning

disabilities in terms of Content Knowledge, Good Planning, Classroom Management, Classroom Behavior and Assessment and Evaluation; (4) to distinguish the significant difference between the perception of the teachers and school heads about the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities; and (5) to determine the a significant relationship of the extent of teachers' approaches to the level of proficiency in teaching.

Materials and Methods

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational design to arrive at the answers to the research problems. Descriptive-correlational using survey attempts to determine the extent of a relationship between two or more variables using statistical data. In this type of design, relationships between and among a number of facts are sought and interpreted. This type of research will recognize trends and patterns in data. Survey was utilized to identify the extent of the utilization of the approaches and the level of proficiency of the teachers handling students with disabilities. Moreover, the survey was conducted in the local context of San Mateo North and South District among the teachers and the school heads. In this study, the approaches in teaching children with learning disabilities and proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with special need in public elementary schools in San Mateo North and South Districts, Legislative District III of Division of Isabela, Philippines were analyzed using survey. The study was conducted to the public elementary schools of San Mateo, Isabela. There are two districts of San Mateo. San Mateo South District and San Mateo North District are included in the Congressional District III of Isabela.

The public teachers handling learners with special needs of San Mateo North and South Districts served as respondents of the study. Also, all the school heads served as the respondents of the study using total enumeration technique. The researchers asked permission from the office of the Schools District Supervisors to conduct the study. Upon approval, the researchers asked permission from the district supervisors to allow their teachers and school heads as respondents of the study. Then, the school heads and teachers were informed about the study. Prior to administration of the questionnaire, validity test was established through ensuring expert and face validity of the questionnaire. Further, the reliability of the test was established through the test-retest method. The administration among selected respondents was followed after thorough and careful revisions of the questionnaire. The survey was carried out in three months with the close supervision of the researchers. For the data gathering, the researchers administered the survey questionnaire. Moreover, the researchers requested informed consent to all the respondents prior to the administration of this study. The researchers conducted an informal interview to the respondents of the study to further gather information and to check and counter check the validity and reliability of the data gathered through the questionnaire. The interview was done during the retrieval of the questionnaire and in other instances as the case maybe. It was randomly conducted.

After the gathering data, the researchers summarized, tallied and computed the result as basis for analysis and discussion. In gathering the needed data, the researchers used a structured survey questionnaire and unstructured interview to validate the respondents of the respondents which is modified based from the previous researches related to the study and individual questions was conducted by the researcher. The researchers consulted his immediate supervisor in the preparation of the questionnaire. The

questionnaire was prepared after an intensive review of the literature and studies that have bearing with the present study. It consisted two (2) parts. Part 1 includes the extent of the approaches with learning disabled students employed by the respondents while part 2 dovetails on level of proficiency of the respondents in teaching students with learning disabilities in terms of content knowledge, good planning, classroom management, classroom behavior; and assessment and evaluation. The questionnaire was given a try-out to some school heads in other districts in the Legislative III Division of Isabela. They were requested to answer the questionnaire without mental reservation and to give suggestions for the improvement. These were incorporated in the revision of the questionnaire.

Moreover, the draft was presented to the experts for improvement of the questionnaire and its final acceptance, the questionnaire was validated by the supervisor through content validation and underwent through test-retest analysis and obtained high reliability score. The results of the test-retest were subjected to the reliability testing and the coefficient of 0.762 was obtained using Cronbach alpha which denotes that the instrument is reliable. Finally, the reproduction and distribution were followed. The data were gathered, classified, tallied, and tabulated and subjected to the following statistical tools. Descriptive and Inferential statistics will be calculated and summarized. On the other hand, mean was used to determine the perception of the respondents of the extent of the common indicators of learning-disabled students and the extent of the approaches with learning disabled students employed by the respondents and level of proficiency of the respondents in teaching students with learning disabilities in terms of content knowledge, good planning, classroom management, classroom behavior; and assessment and evaluation. Additionally, t-test was utilized to determine the significant difference of the approaches and proficiency in teaching learning disabled students as perceived by the school heads and teachers.

Spearman rank was utilized to determine the significant relationship of the teaching approaches and level of proficiency in teaching students with special needs. For the purpose of data analysis and qualitative interpretation, Five- Likert scale was used with corresponding values from 1 to 5 scales, one being the lowest and five being the highest. The computed mean ratings were evaluated according to the interval scale shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1. *The rating point, mean range and qualitative description.*

Point	Mean range	Qualitative descriptions	
		Extent of using approaches with learning disabled students	Level of proficiency of in teaching students with learning disabilities
5	4.51-5.00	Always	Very proficient
4	3.51-4.50	Often	Proficient
3	2.51-3.50	Sometimes	Moderately proficient
2	1.51-2.50	Seldom	Slightly proficient
1	1.00-1.50	Never	Least proficient

On the other hand, in order to determine the meaning of the qualitative descriptions per indicators, the points, qualitative descriptions and meaning are shown in *Table 2* and *Table 3*.

Table 2. *The rating point, qualitative description and meaning on the extent of using approaches with learning disabled students.*

Point	Extent of using approaches with learning disabled students	Meaning
5	Always	The extent of using approaches with disabled children are continuously evident and constantly observable.
4	Often	The extent of using approaches with disabled children are habitually observed and employed.
3	Sometimes	The extent of using approaches with disabled children are occasionally introduced and employed.
2	Seldom	The extent of using approaches with disabled children are infrequently and rarely observed and employed.
1	Never	The extent of using approaches with disabled children are never and completely not observed and employed.

Table 3. The rating point, qualitative description and meaning on level of proficiency of in teaching students with learning disabilities.

Point	Extent of using approaches with learning disabled students	Meaning
5	Very proficient	The abilities and skills of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities shows a thorough and expert understanding of the approaches.
4	Proficient	The abilities and skills of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities shows a comprehensive understanding of the approaches.
3	Moderately proficient	The abilities and skills of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities shows a basic and minimal understanding of the approaches.
2	Slightly proficient	The abilities and skills of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities shows a limited understanding of the approaches.
1	Least proficient	The abilities and skills of teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities shows a very low understanding of the approaches.

Results and Discussion

The extent of using the teaching approaches to learners with special needs as perceived by teachers and school heads

Teachers

Table 4 shows the mean of the extent of using the teaching approaches to learners with special needs as perceived by the teachers. It reveals that all the teachers “often” introduced the teaching approaches in handling students with special needs. It shows that the over-all mean is 4.29. This indicates that the teachers perceived themselves as proficient employing teaching approaches to learners with special needs. Moreover, “Be sure the problems assigned are not those for which you have already established appropriate answers but rather those that will allow gifted students to arrive at their own conclusions” obtained the highest mean of 4.38 while “Provide learning disabled students with frequent progress checks” obtained the lowest mean of 4.18 which both

were interpreted as “often.” This means that the teachers should establish appropriate strategy for student with disabilities and those who are gifted. Need to see quickly the relationship between what was taught and what was learned, encouraging gifted students to take on leadership roles that enhance portions of the classroom program and initiating differentiated instruction obtained the means of 4.37, 4.35 and 4.34, respectively. On the other hand, giving immediate feedback to learning disabled students and making activities concise and short, whenever possible were both obtained the mean of 4.32. Additionally, providing oral instruction for students with reading disabilities obtained the mean of 4.31 while keeping emphasis on divergent thinking-helping gifted students focus on many possibilities rather than any set of predetermined answers obtained the mean of 4.30. Besides, employing lots of specific praise gained a mean of 4.29 while providing students with concrete objects and events-items they can touch, hear, smell, and other gained a mean of 4.27.

Table 4. *The extent of using the teaching approaches to learners with special needs as perceived by teacher.*

Approaches in teaching students with diasbilities	Mean	QD
1. Initiate differentiated instruction.	4.34	Often
2. Provide oral instruction for students with reading disabilities.	4.31	Often
3. Provide learning disabled students with frequent progress checks.	4.18	Often
4. Give immediate feedback to learning diabled students.	4.32	Often
5. Make activites concise and short, whenever possible.	4.32	Often
6. Present tests and reading materials in an oral format so the assessment is not unduly influenced by lack of reading ability.	4.19	Often
7. Let them know how well they are progressing toward an individual or class goal.	4.25	Often
8. need to see quickly the relationship between what was tought and what was learned.	4.37	Often
9. Make activities concise and short, whenever possible. Long, drawn-out projects are particularly frustating for a learning-disabled child.	4.24	Often
10. Provide them with concrete oobjects and events-items they can touch, hear, smell, etc.	4.27	Often
11. Employ lots of specific praise.	4.29	Often
12. Plan to repeat instruction of offer information in both written and verbal formats.	4.23	Often
13. Encourage cooperative learning when possible. Invite students of varying abilities to work together on a specific project or toward a common goal.	4.27	Often
14. Create an atmosphere in which a true 'community of learners' is facilitated and enhanced.	4.23	Often
15. Keep the emphasis on divergent thinking-helping gifted students focus on many possibilities rather than any set of predetermined answers.	4.30	Often
16. Encourage gifted students to take on leadership roles that enhance portions of the classroom program.	4.38	Often
17. Be sure the program assigned are not those for which you have already established appopriate answers but rather those that will allow gifted students to arrive at their own conclusions.	4.38	Often
Overall mean	4.29	Often

Furthermore, letting students to know how well they are progressing toward an individual or class goal and encouraging cooperative learning when possible, inviting students of varying abilities to work together on a specific project or toward a common goal were obtained the mean of 4.27. Letting students to know how well they are progressing toward an individual or class goal obtained the mean of 4.25 while making activities concise and short, whenever possible, long, drawn-out projects are particularly frustrating for a learning-disabled child obtained the mean of 4.24. Likewise, plan to repeat instructions or offer information in both written and verbal formats and create an atmosphere in which a true "community of learners" is facilitated and enhanced were both gained a mean of 4.23. Presenting tests and reading materials in an oral format so the assessment is not unduly influenced by lack of reading ability obtained a mean of 4.19. The results imply that the teachers teaching students with disabilities often introduced the different teaching approaches. This implicates that the approaches were not continually utilized and employed. The findings supported the study of Alquraini (2010) that the special competencies of special educators are more than a collection of techniques and skills. They comprise a body of knowledge, methods, and philosophical tenets that are the hallmark of the profession. As professionals, special educators are dedicated to the optimal education of children with exceptionalities and they reject the misconception of schooling that is nothing but custodial care.

School heads

Table 5 reflects the mean and over-all mean of the extent of using the teaching approaches to learners with special needs as perceived by the school heads. It reveals that the over-all mean is 4.35. It indicates that all the teaching approaches to learners with special needs were rated "often" as perceived by the school heads. It shows that the teacher makes it sure that the problems assigned are not those for which you have already established appropriate answers but rather those that will allow gifted students to arrive at their own conclusions obtained the highest mean of 4.63 which means "always." This means that the school heads observed their teachers establishing activities for the gifted students and other remedial activities for the learners with learning disabilities. On the other hand, these making activities concise and short, whenever possible. Long, drawn-out projects are particularly frustrating for a learning-disabled child and creating an atmosphere in which a true "community of learners" is facilitated and enhanced were both obtained the lowest mean of 4.19 which means "often." The remaining particulars as to the extent of the teaching approaches in handling learners with disabilities were rated "often." These indicators were rated based on the perceptions of the school heads. It implicates that as to the extent of the employing of these approaches, these were evident as practice by the teachers.

Table 5. *The extent of using the teaching approaches to learners with special needs as perceived by the school heads.*

Approaches in teaching students with diabilities	Mean	QD
1. Initiate differentiated instruction.	4.30	Often
2. Provide oral instruction for students with reading disabilities.	4.37	Often
3. Provide learning disabled students with frequent progress checks.	4.37	Often
4. Give immediate feedback to learning diabled students.	4.48	Often
5. Make activites concise and short, whenever possible.	4.30	Often
6. Present tests and reading materials in an oral format so the assessment is not unduly influenced by lack of reading ability.	4.26	Often

7. Let them know how well they are progressing toward an individual or class goal.	4.30	Often
8. need to see quickly the relationship between what was taught and what was learned.	4.41	Often
9. Make activities concise and short, whenever possible. Long, drawn-out projects are particularly frustrating for a learning-disabled child.	4.19	Often
10. Provide them with concrete objects and events-items they can touch, hear, smell, etc.	4.44	Often
11. Employ lots of specific praise.	4.44	Often
12. Plan to repeat instruction of offer information in both written and verbal formats.	4.22	Often
13. Encourage cooperative learning when possible. Invite students of varying abilities to work together on a specific project or toward a common goal.	4.33	Often
14. Create an atmosphere in which a true 'community of learners' is facilitated and enhanced.	4.19	Often
15. Keep the emphasis on divergent thinking-helping gifted students focus on many possibilities rather than any set of predetermined answers.	4.26	Often
16. Encourage gifted students to take on leadership roles that enhance portions of the classroom program.	4.41	Often
17. Be sure the program assigned are not those for which you have already established appropriate answers but rather those that will allow gifted students to arrive at their own conclusions.	4.63	Often
Overall mean	4.35	Often

The result is in line to the study of Bender et al. (1995) distributed a survey to “mainstream” teachers to examine the links between the attitudes of teachers and the types of instructional practices used in the classroom. They found positive correlations between the abilities of the learners on methods for teaching students with disabilities and teachers’ attitudes toward educating students with disabilities in general education settings.

Significant difference in the perception of the school heads and teachers in the extent of using the teaching approaches to learners with special needs

The *Table 6* shows the difference of the assessment of teachers and school heads as to the extent of use of teachers of the different approaches. Result shows that both teachers and school heads assess the use of approaches as often. It means they have the same level of assessment. School heads confirm that teachers utilize the different approaches as “often” use as also stated by the teachers. The results contradict the study of Dawson and Scott (2013) about the attitudes and strategies of both teachers and school heads toward students with disabilities and their inclusion in the general education setting. It indicates that teachers have more positive perceptions of disability and inclusion are more likely to use strategies to support the participation of all students, including those with disabilities, within the general education classroom. This implicates that the teachers have more experiences and much aware the real consequences on how to employ teaching approaches applicable among learners with disabilities.

Table 6. Significant difference in the perception of the school heads and teachers in the extent of using the teaching approaches to learners with special needs.

Respondent	Mean	QD	t-value	p-value	Remarks
School heads	4.35	Often	2.07	0.052	No significant difference
Teachers	4.29	Often	-	-	No significant difference

Content knowledge

Table 7 reveals the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities as perceived by the teachers and school heads in terms of content knowledge. It shows that the over-all means for school heads and teachers were 4.30 and 4.32, respectively. This means that the teachers level of proficiency in terms of content knowledge is “proficient.” As to school heads, using a variety of activities during each class period obtained the highest mean of 4.37 while providing drill in a variety of ways obtained the lowest mean of 4.15. Appealing to more than one sense at a time obtained the mean of 4.41 equated as “proficient.” On the other hand, using visual aids such as film, filmstrips and transparencies and conducting experiment with new type of materials were both rated 4.33 equated as “proficient.” Moreover, providing slow learner with numerous opportunities for review gained a mean of 4.19 interpreted as “proficient.” As to teachers, it reveals that using a variety of activities during each class period, using visual aids such as film, filmstrips and transparencies, appealing to more than one sense at a time, providing drill in a variety of ways, conducting experiment with new type of materials, and providing slow learner with numerous opportunities for review were obtained the means of 4.40, 4.38, 4.33, 4.31, 4.28, and 4.24, respectively. It denotes that in terms of content knowledge, teachers rated themselves as “proficient.” The result implies that school heads confirm that teachers were “proficient” in the level of proficiency in teaching students with disabilities as also rated by the teachers.

Table 7. The mean and overall mean of the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities as perceived by the teachers and school heads in terms of content knowledge.

Content knowledge	School heads		Teachers	
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD
1. Use a variety of activities during each class period.	4.37	Proficient	4.40	Proficient
2. Provide drill in a variety of ways.	4.15	Proficient	4.31	Proficient
3. Provide slow learner with numerous opportunities for review.	4.19	Proficient	4.24	Proficient
4. Appeal to more than one sense at a time.	4.41	Proficient	4.33	Proficient
5. Experiment with new type of materials.	4.33	Proficient	4.28	Proficient
6. Use visual aids such as film, filmstrips and transparencies.	4.33	Proficient	4.38	Proficient
Overall mean	4.30	Proficient	4.32	Proficient

The result of the study supported by the findings of Patterson et al. (2009) concluded that the teachers restructured their classroom in a way that facilitated differentiated instruction and resulted in increased learning. The four-part classroom instructional model clearly helped the students learn in a more purposeful way. As teacher handling students with disabilities, excellent performance and level of knowledge must consider

to facilitate learning. Moreover, the teachers set their new classroom up for success not only for them as educators, but for the students as well if the teachers teaching students with learning difficulties are fully knowledgeable about the competencies and skills to be taught among the students (Mackey, 2014).

Good planning

Table 8 reflects the mean and over-all mean of the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities as perceived by the teachers and school heads in terms of good planning. It clearly shows that all the particulars in terms of good planning were rated “proficient” as perceived both by the school heads and teachers. It reveals that the over-all means for school heads and teachers were 4.30 and 4.32, respectively. This indicates that the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with disabilities in terms of good planning is “proficient” as confirms by the school heads. As to school heads, planning for the provisions of modern facilities and equipment in teaching obtained the highest mean of 4.44 while presence of cooperation among the parents in planning obtained the second highest mean of 4.37 which both equated “proficient.” On the other hand, plan in giving consideration to LWDs who are moody sometimes in coming to school and plan to assist the pupils who fall short in their achievement were both obtained the mean of 4.26 which interpreted as “proficient.” Further, plan to conduct home visitation and consultation and plan that LWDs feel that they belong were both gained the lowest mean of 4.22 which is also equated as “proficient.”

Table 8. *The mean and overall mean of the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities as perceived by the teachers and school heads in terms of good planning.*

Good planning	School heads		Teachers	
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD
1. Plan to conduct home visitation and consultation.	4.22	Proficient	4.32	Proficient
2. Plan for the provisions of modern facilities and equipment in teaching LWDs.	4.44	Proficient	4.31	Proficient
3. Presence of cooperation among the parents in planning.	4.37	Proficient	4.29	Proficient
4. Plan that LWDs feel that they belong.	4.22	Proficient	4.25	Proficient
5. Plan to assist the pupils who fall short in their achievement.	4.26	Proficient	4.28	Proficient
6. Plan in giving consideration to LWDs who are moody sometimes in coming to school.	4.26	Proficient	4.26	Proficient
Overall mean	4.20	Proficient	4.28	Proficient

As to teachers, plan to conduct home visitation and consultation, plan for the provisions of modern facilities and equipment in teaching LWDs, presence of cooperation among the parents in planning, plan to assist the pupils who fall short in their achievement, plan in giving consideration to LWDs who are moody sometimes in coming to school and plan that LWDs feel that they belong were obtained the means of 4.32, 4.31, 4.29, 4.28, 4.26, and 4.25, respectively. This implicates that they rated themselves “proficient” in terms of good planning. The result implies that in terms of good planning, the teacher’s level of proficiency is “proficient” which means that

teachers lead colleagues in professional discussions to plan and implement strategies that enrich teaching practice to help the learners with disabilities to cope with their difficulties. The findings of the study stressed out on the planning and transparency give us clarity, direction, and most important a basis for sound decision making in teaching students with learning difficulties (Lee, 2001).

Classroom management and organization

Table 9 reflects the mean and over-all mean of the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities as perceived by the teachers and school heads in terms of classroom management and organization. It clearly shows that all the indicators were rated “proficient” for both school heads and teachers. This raises an issue that the teachers must be very proficient in handling students with disabilities in terms of classroom management and organization. The result implies that the teachers were proficient in creating a well-managed classroom environment, especially in-know how to create variety of communication channel, address conflict quickly and has the ability to partner with the parents of the students with disabilities. In addition, the teachers in the primary schools showed negative attitude in handling pupils with disabilities in the regular classes. This indicates that the students with learning disabilities must be given consideration and special treatment with the help of their parents.

Table 9. *The mean and overall mean of the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities as perceived by the teachers and school heads in term of classroom management and organization.*

Classroom management and organization	School heads		Teachers	
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD
1. Include learners in creating routines, norms and consequences.	4.25	Proficient	4.31	Proficient
2. Design a safe, friendly and well-managed classroom environment.	4.38	Proficient	4.38	Proficient
3. Always be calm, fair and consistent.	4.25	Proficient	4.25	Proficient
4. Create a variety of communication channel.	4.21	Proficient	4.21	Proficient
5. Know the pupils you teach.	4.25	Proficient	4.25	Proficient
6. Address conflict quickly and wisely.	4.25	Proficient	4.28	Proficient
7. Partners with parents.	4.25	Proficient	4.30	Proficient
Overall mean	4.26	Proficient	4.28	Proficient

Classroom behavior

Table 10 reflects the mean and over-all mean of the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities as perceived by the teachers and school heads in terms of classroom behavior. It clearly shows that all the particulars in terms of classroom behavior were rated “proficient” as perceived both by the school heads and teachers. School heads and teachers were both obtained the over-all mean of 4.31 denotes that the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities “proficient” in the level of proficiency. As to school heads, instruction should be adapted to individual needs and learners clearly understand what is expected to them were both obtained the highest mean of 4.44. On the other hand, capitalize upon present learner’s interest obtained the lowest mean o 4.15. Recognizing individual differences obtained

the mean of 4.30 which interpreted as “proficient.” Additionally, misbehavior can be minimized by generally skillful teaching and setting limits were both obtained the mean of 4.22 which also equated as “proficient.” With regard to the teachers, setting limits obtained the highest mean of 4.37. Instruction should be adapted to individual needs and learners clearly understand what is expected to them were both obtained the mean of 4.30. On the other hand, misbehavior can be minimized by generally skillful teaching and capitalize upon present learner’s interest were both obtained the lowest mean of 4.24. The results imply that the level of proficiency of the teachers teaching students with learning difficulties in terms of classroom behavior is proficient which confirms by their school heads. The finding of the study supported the statement of Sherman (1981) that the behavioral classroom problems may appear as a result of: inappropriate skills which students learn, choosing inappropriate time for learning, and the restricted learning opportunities offered to students.

Table 10. *The mean and overall mean of the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities as perceived by the teachers and school heads in terms of classroom behavior.*

Classroom behavior	School heads		Teachers	
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD
1. Learners clearly understand what is expected to them.	4.44	Proficient	4.30	Proficient
2. Instruction should be adapted to individual needs.	4.44	Proficient	4.34	Proficient
3. Misbehavior can be minimized by generally skillful teaching.	4.22	Proficient	4.24	Proficient
4. Recognize individual differences.	4.30	Proficient	4.30	Proficient
5. Capitalize upon present learner’s interest.	4.15	Proficient	4.24	Proficient
6. Setting limits.	4.22	Proficient	4.37	Proficient
Overall mean	4.31	Proficient	4.31	Proficient

Assessment and evaluation

Table 11 reflects the mean and over-all mean of the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities as perceived by the teachers and school heads in terms of assessment and evaluation. It noticeably shows that the overall-mean for school heads and teachers were 4.32 and 4.29, respectively. This indicates that the level of proficiency of the teachers teaching students with learning disabilities in terms of assessment and evaluation interpreted as “proficient.” As to the school heads’ perception, assessment and evaluation helps the teachers aware of specific difficulties of individual or entire class as a basis for further teaching obtained the highest mean of 4.44 while monitoring learning progress obtained the lowest mean of 4.22. Evaluation and assessment determines feedback, the level of knowledge or condition of learners in class and providing bases for assigning grades or rating were obtained the means of 4.37 and 4.33, correspondingly. On the other hand, encouraging learners’ learning by measuring their achievement or development by informing their parents and assessing of learning needs were both obtained the mean of 4.26. As to teachers, through evaluation the teachers become aware of specific difficulties of individual or entire class as a basis for further teaching obtained the highest mean of 4.35 while teachers monitors learning progress gained the lowest mean of 4.21. Additionally, the teachers rated the following indicators: encouraging learners’ learning by measuring their achievement or

development by informing their parents, determining through feedback, the level of knowledge or condition of learners in class, assessing of learning needs and providing bases for assigning grades or rating obtained the means of 4.32, 4.30, 4.29 and 4.22, respectively. The result implies that the school head rated the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities “proficient” in terms of assessment and evaluation higher than the rating of the teachers. It indicates that the school heads are observant and particular about the level of proficiency of their teachers in terms of assessment and evaluation. The current result of the study is related to the idea of Alquraini (2010) that school administrators play an essential role in establishing classroom assessment and instructions of a school administration that might push students to challenge instructions which finally increase the level of performance of the students in academic aspect.

Table 11. *The mean and overall mean of the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities as perceived by the teachers and school heads in terms of assessment and evaluation.*

Assessment and evaluation	School heads		Teachers	
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD
1. To determine, through feedback, the level of knowledge or condition of learners in class.	4.37	Proficient	4.30	Proficient
2. To provide bases for assignment grades or rating.	4.33	Proficient	4.22	Proficient
3. To become aware of specific difficulties of individual or entire class as a basis for further teaching.	4.44	Proficient	4.35	Proficient
4. To encourage learners’ learning by measuring their achievement or development by informing their parents.	4.26	Proficient	4.32	Proficient
5. Monitoring learning progress.	4.22	Proficient	4.21	Proficient
6. Assessment of learning needs.	4.26	Proficient	4.29	Proficient
Overall mean	4.32	Proficient	4.29	Proficient

Significant difference between the perception of the teachers and school heads about the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities

The *Table 12* shows the difference of the assessment of teachers and school heads as to the level of proficiency of teachers in content knowledge, good planning, classroom management, classroom behavior and assessment and evaluation. Result shows that both teachers and school heads assess the teachers as proficient. It means they have the same level of assessment. In terms of the p-values, content knowledge, good planning, classroom management, classroom behavior and assessment and evaluation obtained 0.589, 0.803, 0.400, 0.911 and 0.426, respectively. This means that there is no significant difference on the perception of the teachers and school heads about the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities. As reflected in the table, as to content knowledge it obtained the means of 4.30 and 4.32, respectively while good planning was rated both by the teachers and school heads “proficient” with the means of 4.30 and 4.29, correspondingly. Moreover, in terms of classroom management both teachers and school heads perceived themselves as “proficient” with the means of 4.26 and 4.28, respectively. Likewise, both teachers and school heads rated classroom behavior 4.31 which denotes “proficient” while

assessment and evaluation obtained the means of 4.32 and 4.29, respectively. Proficiency of the teachers and its increasing numbers of dedicated educators have become convinced that traditional studies are simply not rich enough to portray the changes that teachers' proficiency through self-assessment but with the validation from the school administrator. This study supported the findings that in terms of level of proficiency, the teachers and school heads were helped to measure the teacher's level of proficiency

Table 12. Result of the significant difference between the perception of the teachers and school heads about the level of proficiency of the teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities.

Area	Respondent	Mean	QD	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Content knowledge	School heads	4.30	Proficient	0.557	0.589	No significant difference
	Teachers	4.32	Proficient			
Good planning	School heads	4.30	Proficient	0.256	0.803	No significant difference
	Teachers	4.29	Proficient			
Classroom management	School heads	4.26	Proficient	0.873	0.400	No significant difference
	Teachers	4.28	Proficient			
Classroom behavior	School heads	4.31	Proficient	0.114	0.911	No significant difference
	Teachers	4.31	Proficient			
Assessment and evaluation	School heads	4.32	Proficient	0.824	0.426	No significant difference
	Teachers	4.29	Proficient			

Table 13 reflects the significant relationship of the extent of teachers' approaches to the level of proficiency in teaching. The result signifies that proficiency in good planning, classroom management, classroom behavior and assessment and evaluation have bearing with the extent of teacher's approaches to learners with special needs. This means that if they are using frequently the approaches their level of proficiency is also high in these four areas except for content knowledge. It implies that proficiency of teacher in content knowledge do not depend on approaches of teachers.

Table 13. Result of the significant relationship of the extent of teachers' approaches to the level of proficiency in teaching.

Proficiency areas	Coefficient	p-value	Remarks
Content knowledge	0.066	0.508	Not significant
Good planning	0.839	0.000	Significant
Classroom management	0.854	0.000	Significant
Classroom behavior	0.878	0.000	Significant
Assessment and evaluation	0.872	0.000	Significant

In terms of content knowledge, it obtained the 0.066 coefficient and 0.508 p-value which denotes that the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that the relationship of the extent of teachers' approaches to the level of proficiency affects the performance of the teachers in terms of content knowledge. The result is coinciding to the study of Denman and Al-Mahrooqi (2018) that the usefulness of teaching approaches and level of proficiency in terms of academics, attitude and instruction is directly related to its implementation in terms of practices and environment. Therefore, the higher the implementation of approaches and teaching higher is being useful.

The proposed program to improve the teaching approaches and level of proficiency of the teachers teaching students with learning disabilities

The proposed program to address the major concerns in the level of proficiency and approaches employed by the teachers handling students with disabilities is shown in appendix E. The indicators in every aspect which obtained the least weighted mean are chosen to be the main focus of the program for improvement. The plans and the suggested activities to be done, the persons to be involved and responsible in its employment and the success indicators for each aspect is shown in the table. This program aims to enhance the identified concerns in specific areas for the students' better learning and performance and the level of proficiency of the teachers. Based on the findings of the study, it is in dire need to introduce program to enhance the level of proficiency and approaches of the teachers handling students with learning disabilities. These programs also introduce activities to enhance the level of proficiency of the teachers in terms of content knowledge, good planning, classroom management and organization, classroom behavior, assessment and evaluation.

Thus, the "Inclusive Education Enhancement Program" is designed to help the SPED teachers or teachers handling students with learning disabilities enhance their proficiency in teaching and employ the applicable approaches among the students with learning disabilities. The program shall be used as an innovative work plan to enhance the level of proficiency of the SPED teachers and employ the applicable. Thus, the program may be performed and/or be done by the implementers specifically the school heads and the focal person of the Special Education (SPED) in the district office.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research study, the following conclusions were drawn: (1) the teachers are knowledgeable about the applicable teaching approaches to be employed in teaching students with learning disabilities. Likewise, as to the extent of the employing of approaches, these were evident as practice by the teachers has been observed by the school head; (2) school Heads and teachers have the same level of assessment in terms of the extent of approaches in teaching students with disabilities; (3) the teachers are proficient in handling students with learning difficulties; (4) in terms of teachers' proficiency, both teachers and school heads assess the teachers as proficient. Therefore, they have the same level of assessment; and (5) teachers are using frequently the approaches as manifested by their level of proficiency except for content knowledge. Thus, proficiency of teacher in content knowledge does not depend on approaches of teachers.

In the light of the findings and conclusions drawn from the results of the study, the following recommendations will be considered: (1) the school administrators shall include teaching approaches in teaching students with learning disabilities as one of the research agenda to determine the effectivity of the varied teaching approaches to be employed among students with learning disabilities; (2) the teachers and school administrator shall attend trainings, workshops and conferences related to the varied teaching approaches applicable to the students with learning disabilities; (3) the administrators and focal person of SPED in the district shall engage more related activities and trainings about the nature of content knowledge to be included in the curriculum of the special education to update the content and competencies knowledge of the teachers teaching students with disabilities; (4) in order to help the teachers handling students with disabilities become highly proficient, the school head shall strictly monitor the performance of the teachers using appropriate tool and give

incentives among teachers; and (5) the school head with SPED center shall conduct in-service training, SLAC Session and Learning Action Cell (LAC) session for teachers who are teaching students with disabilities to increase their level of proficiency and be updated to the trends of teaching approaches; as well as (6) further studies related to level of proficiency and approaches in teaching students with learning disabilities may be recommended using other variables and locale.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest with any parties involved with the study.

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