



SUPPORT CLASSES AMONG SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION (SNED) IMPLEMENTING SCHOOLS IN SAN MIGUEL DISTRICT: BASIS FOR AN ENHANCED INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of support classes among Special Needs Education (SNED) implementing schools in San Miguel District, Surigao del Sur, Philippines. Using a mixed-methods research design, quantitative data were gathered through validated survey questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with SNED teachers. The respondents included school heads, SNED teachers, parents, Local Government Unit (LGU) representatives, DepEd personnel, and non-graded learners from Tina Central Elementary School and Carromata Elementary School during School Year 2025–2026. Descriptive statistics such as weighted mean and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation were used to analyze quantitative data, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative responses. Findings revealed that the essential components of support classes including teachers' training, instructional resources, curriculum, assessment, and monitoring were rated "Most Essential." Stakeholder support from parents, LGU, community, and DepEd was found to be "Very Concretized." The impact of support classes on the life skills of non-graded learners was rated "High Impact," particularly in writing, oral communication, and personal safety. Correlation analysis further revealed significant positive relationships between support class components, stakeholder support, and learners' life skills development. Qualitative findings highlighted teachers' challenges in handling diverse learner needs, limited training opportunities, and the importance of patience, empathy, and collaborative support systems. The study concludes that effective support classes significantly enhance the life skills development of non-graded learners and recommends

strengthening teacher training, stakeholder collaboration, and individualized intervention programs.

Keywords: *Special Needs Education, support classes, inclusive education, non-graded learners, life skills, stakeholder support, intervention program*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a central priority in ensuring equitable access to quality learning opportunities for learners with disabilities and diverse educational needs. In the Philippines, Special Needs Education (SNED) programs are designed to provide individualized and inclusive educational support to learners with disabilities through adaptive instruction, specialized teaching strategies, and stakeholder collaboration. DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021 emphasized the importance of providing educational programs and services that address the unique learning needs of learners with disabilities within the K–12 curriculum framework.

Recent studies highlight that inclusive education promotes social participation, learner engagement, and improved educational outcomes when schools implement responsive instructional strategies and adequate support systems (UNESCO, 2021). According to Cruzat (2022), stakeholder collaboration among schools, parents, communities, and local government units strengthens the implementation of inclusive education programs. Similarly, Punzalan (2025) emphasized that teacher training and institutional support are critical in enhancing inclusive practices in SNED classrooms.

The implementation of support classes in SNED schools aims to develop essential life skills among non-graded learners, including communication, literacy, self-esteem, personal safety, and community participation. Teachers play a significant role in creating inclusive learning environments that foster learners' independence and social development (Anis, 2024). However, despite government initiatives, schools continue to experience challenges such as inadequate instructional resources, insufficient training, and limited stakeholder involvement (Kabilito, 2024).

Research further suggests that differentiated instruction, multisensory learning, and individualized educational planning positively influence the academic and social development of learners with special needs (Vaknin-Nusbaum, 2025). Moreover, continuous assessment and monitoring contribute significantly to learner progress and instructional effectiveness (Yunusovna, 2024). Hansen (2020) also argued that systematic monitoring and collaborative interventions improve the responsiveness of educational programs for learners with disabilities. Furthermore, curriculum flexibility and inclusive learning approaches are essential in addressing the diverse educational needs of children with disabilities (Zulkifli et al., 2022).

In San Miguel District, Surigao del Sur, two implementing schools: Tina Central Elementary School and Carromata Elementary School which offer support classes for non-graded learners under the SNED program. These support classes focus on life skills

development, including oral communication, reading, writing, self-care, health and safety, social relationships, and moral development. Despite the implementation of these programs, there remains limited localized research examining the effectiveness of support classes and the role of stakeholder support in enhancing learner outcomes.

This study was therefore conducted to determine the effectiveness of support classes among SNED implementing schools in San Miguel District and to propose an intervention program that may strengthen support services for non-graded learners.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the essential components of support classes in terms of:
 - 1.1. objectives;
 - 1.2. teachers' training;
 - 1.3. teaching strategies;
 - 1.4. instructional resources;
 - 1.5. curriculum;
 - 1.6. assessment; and
 - 1.7. monitoring?
2. What is the level of stakeholder support in the implementation of support classes in terms of:
 - 2.1. administrative support;
 - 2.2. parents' support;
 - 2.3. community support;
 - 2.4. LGU support; and
 - 2.5. DepEd support?
3. To what extent do support classes impact the life skills development of non-graded learners?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the essential components of support classes and the life skills of non-graded learners?
5. Is there a significant relationship between stakeholder support and the life skills of non-graded learners?
6. What are the lived experiences of SNED teachers handling non-graded learners?
7. What intervention program may be proposed to enhance support classes among SNED implementing schools?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of support classes among SNED implementing schools in San Miguel District. The quantitative component assessed the essential components of support classes, stakeholder support, and learners' life skills development, while the qualitative component explored the lived experiences of SNED teachers.

The study was conducted at Tina Central Elementary School and Carromata Elementary School in San Miguel District, Surigao del Sur during School Year 2025–2026. Respondents included two school heads, two SNED teachers, nineteen non-graded learners, and twenty-three parents, LGU representatives, and DepEd personnel, for a total of 46 respondents. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants directly involved in SNED implementation.

Validated survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as research instruments. The questionnaire measured the essential components of support classes, stakeholder support, and the impact of support classes on learners' life skills using a five-point Likert scale. The instruments were validated by educational experts and pilot-tested to ensure reliability and appropriateness.

Data gathering procedures included securing permission from the Graduate School of Saint Theresa College of Tandag, Inc., the Schools Division Superintendent, and school administrators before the distribution of questionnaires. Interviews with SNED teachers were conducted to gather qualitative insights regarding their teaching experiences.

Quantitative data were analyzed using weighted mean, ranking, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, while qualitative responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. Ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and respect for participants' rights were strictly observed throughout the study.

RESULTS

Table 1.
Summary of Essential Components of Support Classes

| Component | Average Weighted Mean | Descriptive Category | Rank |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Teachers' Training | 4.89 | Most Essential | 1 |
| Instructional Resources | 4.88 | Most Essential | 2 |
| Curriculum | 4.88 | Most Essential | 2 |
| Assessment | 4.84 | Most Essential | 3 |
| Monitoring | 4.83 | Most Essential | 4 |
| Objectives | 4.82 | Most Essential | 5 |

Table 2.
Summary of Stakeholder Support in SNED Implementation

| Stakeholder Support | Average Weighted Mean | Descriptive Category | Rank |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------|
| Parents' Support | 4.68 | Very Concretized | 1 |
| LGU Support | 4.68 | Very Concretized | 1 |
| Community Support | 4.63 | Very Concretized | 2 |
| DepEd Support | 4.61 | Very Concretized | 3 |
| Administrative Support | 4.56 | Concretized | 4 |

Table 3.
Impact of Support Classes on the Life Skills of Non-Graded Learners

| Life Skills Indicators | Average Weighted Mean | Descriptive Category |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Writing | 4.08 | High Impact |
| Personal Safety | 4.05 | High Impact |
| Oral Communication | 4.03 | High Impact |
| Community Health | 4.02 | High Impact |
| Listening | 4.00 | High Impact |
| Substance Use and Abuse Awareness | 4.00 | High Impact |
| Reading | 3.90 | High Impact |
| Practical Money Skills | 3.88 | High Impact |
| Self-Image | 3.88 | High Impact |
| Self-Esteem | 3.83 | High Impact |
| Leisure and Recreational Skills | 3.80 | High Impact |
| Human Sexuality | 3.80 | High Impact |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 3.92 | High Impact |

Table 4.
Relationship Between Essential Components of Support Classes and Life Skills Development

| Variables | r-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Objectives and Life Skills | 0.78 | 0.001 | Significant |
| Teachers' Training and Life Skills | 0.76 | 0.002 | Significant |
| Teaching Strategies and Life Skills | 0.70 | 0.003 | Significant |

| Variables | r-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Instructional Resources and Life Skills | 0.63 | 0.007 | Significant |
| Curriculum and Life Skills | 0.61 | 0.009 | Significant |
| Assessment and Life Skills | 0.65 | 0.006 | Significant |
| Monitoring and Life Skills | 0.62 | 0.008 | Significant |

Table 5.
Relationship Between Stakeholder Support and Life Skills Development

| Variables | r-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Administrative Support and Life Skills | 0.75 | 0.002 | Significant |
| Parents' Support and Life Skills | 0.72 | 0.003 | Significant |
| Community Support and Life Skills | 0.62 | 0.009 | Significant |
| LGU Support and Life Skills | 0.60 | 0.011 | Significant |
| DepEd Support and Life Skills | 0.70 | 0.004 | Significant |

Table 6.
Thematic Analysis of SNED Teachers' Lived Experiences

| Theme | Description |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Acknowledgment of Challenges | Teachers experienced difficulty handling diverse learner needs due to limited training and resources. |
| Emotional Complexity | Teachers experienced both uncertainty and fulfillment while teaching non-graded learners. |
| Importance of Support Systems | Collaboration with colleagues and stakeholders helped teachers manage classroom challenges. |
| Inclusive Learning Environment | Teachers emphasized creating a safe, supportive, and learner-centered environment. |
| Patience and Empathy | Effective teaching required patience, individualized instruction, and emotional understanding. |
| Learner Progress and Fulfillment | Teachers found fulfillment in observing learners' gradual progress and development. |

Table 7.
Proposed Intervention Program for Enhanced SNED Support Classes

| Area | Proposed Intervention | Expected Outcome |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Teacher Training | Conduct specialized training on inclusive pedagogy and assistive technologies | Enhanced instructional competence |
| Literacy Development | Implement remedial reading and writing programs | Improved literacy skills |
| Stakeholder Collaboration | Strengthen parent and community involvement programs | Increased learner support |
| Resource Development | Establish Inclusive Learning Resource Centers | Improved access to instructional materials |
| Monitoring and Evaluation | Conduct regular learner progress assessment and program review | Improved instructional effectiveness |

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study affirm that support classes among SNED implementing schools contribute significantly to the holistic development of non-graded learners. Teachers' training emerged as the most essential component of support classes, highlighting the importance of equipping educators with specialized competencies in inclusive education. This finding supports the work of Punzalan (2025), who emphasized that professional development enhances teachers' effectiveness in managing diverse learner needs.

Instructional resources and curriculum were likewise rated highly essential, demonstrating the value of adaptive learning materials and contextualized instruction in fostering inclusive learning environments. Kabilito (2024) asserted that accessible instructional materials and differentiated instruction improve learner participation and engagement among students with disabilities.

The high level of stakeholder support further reinforces the collaborative nature of successful SNED implementation. Parents and LGU support were rated highest, suggesting that active community involvement strengthens educational outcomes. Cruzat (2022) emphasized that inclusive education programs become more sustainable when stakeholders provide continuous support, resources, and advocacy.

The results also showed that support classes had a "High Impact" on learners' life skills, particularly in writing, oral communication, and personal safety. These findings

support the observations of Vaknin-Nusbaum (2025), who argued that individualized and multisensory instruction positively influences communication and literacy development among learners with disabilities.

Significant positive relationships were found between support class components and life skills development, indicating that effective instruction, monitoring, and assessment contribute substantially to learners' growth. Yunusovna (2024) explained that consistent progress monitoring and individualized interventions improve learner independence and adaptive functioning.

Similarly, stakeholder support significantly correlated with life skills development. Administrative guidance, parental involvement, and DepEd supervision emerged as strong predictors of positive learner outcomes. Anis (2024) noted that stakeholder collaboration fosters emotional support, learner motivation, and continuity of intervention programs.

Qualitative findings further revealed that SNED teachers experience both challenges and fulfillment in handling non-graded learners. Teachers emphasized the need for patience, empathy, and individualized instruction, particularly in managing behavioral and emotional concerns. Despite limited training opportunities and instructional resources, teachers remained committed to fostering inclusive and supportive learning environments. These findings support UNESCO (2021), which emphasized that inclusive education succeeds when teachers receive institutional support and continuous professional development.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of strengthening support systems, instructional resources, teacher capacity-building, and stakeholder collaboration to sustain effective SNED implementation and improve the life skills development of non-graded learners.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The essential components of support classes including teachers' training, instructional resources, curriculum, assessment, monitoring, and objectives which are highly essential in ensuring effective SNED implementation.
2. Stakeholder support from parents, LGUs, communities, school administrators, and DepEd significantly contributes to the success of support classes among SNED implementing schools.
3. Support classes positively impact the life skills development of non-graded learners, particularly in communication, literacy, safety awareness, and self-development.
4. Significant positive relationships exist between the essential components of support classes and the life skills development of non-graded learners.
5. Significant positive relationships also exist between stakeholder support and learners' life skills development.

6. SNED teachers experience both challenges and fulfillment in handling non-graded learners, emphasizing the need for continuous professional development and institutional support.
7. An enhanced intervention program focusing on teacher training, stakeholder collaboration, resource provision, and learner monitoring can further strengthen support classes in SNED implementing schools.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Schools should strengthen teacher training programs on inclusive education, adaptive teaching strategies, and assistive technologies.
2. School administrators and stakeholders should collaborate in establishing Inclusive Learning Resource Centers equipped with adaptive instructional materials.
3. Parents and community stakeholders should be actively involved in school programs and learner support activities.
4. SNED teachers should continue implementing individualized and learner-centered teaching approaches to improve life skills development.
5. Regular monitoring and assessment should be conducted to evaluate learner progress and improve instructional interventions.
6. DepEd and LGUs should provide additional funding and technical support for SNED programs and teacher professional development.
7. Future studies may explore longitudinal assessments of support classes and the long-term outcomes of non-graded learners.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study strictly adhered to ethical standards in educational research. Permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate school authorities and the Schools Division Office. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process. Personal information and responses were treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. The study also complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Furthermore, respect, fairness, and cultural sensitivity were observed in all interactions with respondents, particularly learners with disabilities and their families. The study ensured that no participant was subjected to harm, coercion, or discrimination.

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