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**PEDAGOGY FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED LEARNERS OF NAGA CENTRAL  
SCHOOL II SPED CENTER TEACHERS: CHALLENGES AND  
APPROACHES IN THE NEW NORMAL**

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## ABSTRACT

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers in the field found special education to be a difficult but a rewarding endeavor. The goal of this research was to identify the challenges that this pandemic posed to special education pedagogy as experienced by SPED teachers of visually impaired students, as well as to share the approaches used to address the challenges in delivering instruction to visually impaired students. The researchers used a descriptive qualitative study easier. The study focuses on special education teachers' personal experiences with visually impaired students. The question demonstrated that changing the new normal for a special schooling is difficult. Various issues developed such as inadequate internet connectivity, poor student-teacher contact, lack of educational resources for visually impaired learners, and varied levels of student motivation. When developing modules, individualization is taken into account. Modular learning has become the primary mode of remote learning for the learners. Teachers' efforts, parents' support and students' willingness produced positive results in overcoming barriers to pedagogy for visually impaired learners in the approach.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Visually Impaired Learners, Challenges, Approaches, New Normal, Phenomenology, Naga Central II, Region V*

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## INTRODUCTION

Indeed, some time recently the COVID- 19 widespread, extraordinary instruction was a troublesome but fulfilling assignment for teachers. Instructors confront challenges and challenges when conveying instruction to children, worsening the pandemic's impacts. Extraordinary instruction is characterized by Pullen and Hallahan (2015) as "uncommonly planned instruction to meet the one of a kind needs of a child with an inability." Specialized instruction implies adjusting the substance, strategy, or conveyance of instruction, as suitable to the requirements of a qualified child beneath this portion, to address the child's interesting needs as a result of the child's incapacity (Fanfelle, 2004).

Besides, the United Nations Human Rights on COVID-19 Response (2020) expressly states that students with disabilities confront boundaries to interest in online school programs due to a need of equipment, access to internet, instructional materials, and backing. As a result, numerous students with disabilities are falling behind, especially those with mental disabilities. Other angles of school closures have a negative effect on them, such as get to school meals and freedom to employ in play and sports with their peers.

Lockdowns, physical division, and changes in learning designs, as well as other financial and relevant components related to the widespread pandemic, have excessively influenced defenceless groups, which includes impaired children and their families (Duraku and Nagavci, 2020). The COVID-19 outbreak-related school closures have had a noteworthy effect on the lives of at slightest 1.5 billion students and [2] their families around the world. Governments have reacted by holding classes remotely, fundamentally online; to guarantee that students proceed to study (UNESCO, 2020).

Crisis lockdowns and distance learning, in specific, have a coordinate effect on outwardly disabled students. People with defective vision are individuals who have visual organ inability, restricting their capacity to perform different activities that require the utilization of sense of sight. This group's capacity to utilize sighted guides for portability is totally hampered due to social distancing and other health obligations (Abodunrin and Abodunrin, 2020). Get to is most likely the foremost noteworthy obstruction to inaccessible learning (Illinois State Board State of Instruction, 2020). Internet access is most likely the foremost critical obstruction to distance learning (Illinois State Board State of Instruction, 2020). The across the nation crisis lockdown forced in India to moderate the virus's phenomenal spread has had a significance on individuals

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with visual incapacities and may endanger their lives within the long run. Numerous government-recommended prohibitive and control measures, such as the selection of modern behavioral changes (for illustration, social distance amid outdoor activities, restricting touch or material contact), will show massive challenges to people with visual defect (Senjam, 2020).

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines guarantees that different initiatives are in put to assist guarantee that children with special needs can proceed their education. The Commission created a Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan (LCP), which is able to be completely actualized within the 2020-2021 school year. DepEd guaranteed within the BE-LCP that Special Education (SPED) is included within the different learning modalities being arranged to guarantee the learning progression of learners with exceptionalities (Hernando-Malipot, 2020).

Adaptations for learners with disabilities, such as (close) captioning, transcribing to braille, sign-language interpretation, or providing different format options, must be considered, according to the DepEd's BE-LCP (Morales, 2020). SLMs and other print materials, as well as TV clips/videos and online materials, can be designed to be accessible to learners who have hearing, visual, and/or other impairments. In addition to the textbooks distributed to the schools, self-learning modules (SLMs) will be made available in print and digital format (PDF Flat and Interactive) for use in the upcoming school year. To satisfy the wants of children with disabilities, they will be changed over into participative ebooks with installed recordings, sound, and sign language translation (Morales, 2020).

The Naga Central School II SPED Center, in Penafancia Avenue in Naga City, Camarines Sur, is one of the public schools that provides children with special needs, such as students with visual defect, intellectually challenged children with autism, children with hearing defect, children with emotional and behavioral issues, and those with physical inabilities. It is an exclusive public school that provides special education to children with disabilities in Naga city and neighboring municipalities. The center creates educating staff to be competent, committed, and devoted teachers, gives educational programs for children with special needs based on their surveyed needs, and keeps up a concordant relationship with parents for unmeasurable backing. Considering the COVID19 widespread, the center, like all other schools, was incidentally closed. It also moves to the new normal education, the same with other schools in the Philippines. Distance learning poses a challenge for special education teachers in giving quality instruction. This study concentrates on teachers in the center, teaching children with defective vision.

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The pandemic's new normal education had an impact on educational needs as well as the lives of students and teachers. This will nearly certainly have an effect on how children with defective vision adjust to distance learning this school year. Due to the interruption of face-to-face lesson sessions, this study would prefer to see into the challenges that teacher confronted in enhancing their instructing techniques. Further, share the leading hones or techniques created by teachers for conveying instruction. This study will enlighten how special education teachers focus on the issues of [1] providing quality instruction for visually impaired students within the setting of "no [0] student should be left behind."

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a phenomenological approach, concentrating on the prevalent experiences of SPED teachers working with visually impaired students. It is a descriptive qualitative study that distinguishes particular experiences and variables related to the challenges that teachers confront amid the widespread in their instructing and learning encounters. A dialogue or conversation embodied of open-ended questions was made to maintain a strategic distance from driving the members and to get as much information from the experiences as conceivable. The participants of the study were Naga Central School II SPED Center's special education teachers. They were selected employing a strategy known as purposive testing. The data was analyzed and deciphered utilizing the Seidel's Data Analysis Process.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study enforced a phenomenological approach to find how special education teachers arranged and conveyed lessons to visually impaired students. . Challenges brought about by the Pandemic to the Pedagogy for Special Education

### THEME 1: Burdens of Distance Learning to Special Education

We are inevitably confronted with problems during times of transition. To keep up with the pace, the researchers realized that they had to always go above and beyond. Due to the pandemic, special education teachers faced numerous challenges in connecting with and communicating with their students. The most common issues are internet connectivity, a lack of

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materials and their unavailability, expensive educational resources, and so on. There is also the lengthy period of preparation and the volume of work required for the beginning of the school year. The lack of physical interaction with the students is the most difficult challenge for the participants. Although texting, video calls, and chats are options, there is no substitute for in-person instruction. The sense of physical interaction, according to the participant, is important in teaching visually impaired students and other students with special needs. The physical presence of the teacher guiding the learner to learn and developing his ability to learn is lacking during this time. The social distancing protocol limits interactions and prohibits group gatherings, especially in the classroom. The teachers' immediate response in the event that a learner requests clarification is not possible in time.

Another difficulty that teachers face is the school environment. Students have remained at home since the school was closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The home where it is regarded as a place for relaxation rather than learning. Motivation has to be considered. Special education teachers are unable to motivate their students, resulting in poor performance and module noncompliance. In these trying times, the teacher's patience is tested. As a result, assistance from the child's family is essential.

Parents collaborate with teachers to educate the minds of their children. Distance learning via a modular approach, on the other hand, is thought to shift the burdens of teachers to parents. Participants made statements indicating that their parents are unsupportive of their child's learning needs. One participant stated that the issue they are having is the inability of the parents to assist the students in answering their modules.

Also, parents' lack of knowledge about teaching strategies for students with disabilities. However, when both parents are working, some parents may have a valid reason. The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us that the family will always be the most important support in instilling knowledge in students, especially children with special needs. The assistance of parents in facilitating learning at home relieves teachers of the burden while also ensuring the learner's ability to absorb the given knowledge while remaining at home. Even during this trying time, the collaboration of the parent/guardian and the teacher will help the student learn.

## THEME 2: SPED Teachers Responding to Barriers

Despite the difficult circumstances that special education teachers are currently facing, they must adapt to changes. Accepting change and making the necessary adjustments

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strengthens one's resilience. Resilience is critical during a pandemic. The participants' tactics include defying adversity and providing a clear solution to problems. The modular approach was created particularly for students with visual disability as one mode of remote learning. To make the lessons more creative and interesting, examples include converting the lesson to braille, creating large print materials, and audio recording. It is valuable to produce modules relevant to the students' needs. Individualization of learning materials empowers the teachers to achieve an improved perception on the students' capability permitting the teachers to plan lessons that are useful and suitable for the students. Due to the pandemic, the teachers were forced to bring the school to their homes. Converting the lesson to braille, creating large print materials, and audio recording are all ways to make the lessons more creative and interesting. Preparing the students' modules independently parallel to their needs is commendable. Individualization of learning material allows the teacher to learn more about the student's disability, allowing the teacher to create lessons that are beneficial and appropriate for the student. Because of the pandemic, the teachers had to bring the school to their homes.

## CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 widespread postured noteworthy challenges to the special education division. Examining the teachers' lived experiences revealed opportunities for improvement. Teachers used trial and error to find the most appropriate teaching strategy for visually impaired students. The difficulties encountered by the teachers served as a catalyst for them to continue and resolve the issue on their own. The government's support through the Department of Education was insufficient, and the education sector's readiness was measured by the pandemic.

The burdens of quality education were about to be borne by the management at the micro-level. In this type of situation, clear direction and the issuance of clear guidelines are required. Furthermore, the study emphasized the importance of family support to a learner's academic success. Failure will undoubtedly result from reliance on the modules prepared by the teacher without the support of the family and the student's unmotivated learning environment. To turn this circumstance around, teachers' endeavors, parental backing, and students' enthusiasm to learn will deliver positive instruction. Most vitally, the teachers' and parent's conversation and supervision contribute to the assistance of student learning.

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