

Perspective & Practices of the 21st Century Skills in Inclusive Education

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Abstract - This study described the perspectives and practices of Inclusive Education (IE) among State Universities and Colleges. The descriptive method of research was used in the study. The validated questionnaire was the instrument used to gather data from the members of the faculty from the College of Teacher Education (CTE).

The Inclusive Education (IE) are usually early adult female faculty; one to ten years in service, instructors, with Doctor of Education or Philosophy of Education units/degree; have attended seminars and are members of at least one to three professional organizations related to Inclusive Education. The inclusive educators' teacher preparation and competence; facilities and learning materials; teaching-learning strategies, and academic policies on inclusive education were moderately practiced. Young instructors had significantly higher extent of practiced of Inclusive Education than older teachers. The 21st Century Skills in IE is fairly practiced along learning and innovative skills; information, media and technology; effective communication and life/career skills. Furthermore, faculty members have high perspectives of inclusive education along the 21st century skills. The teachers in the SUCs encountered serious problems in the practice of Inclusive Education.

This study recommends that inclusive educators attend seminars to prepare them to be competent in designing facilities and learning materials to support varied teaching-learning strategies to accommodate Students with Special Needs. The 21st century skills should be highly practiced in the classrooms. And SUCs allocate more funds to solve serious problems in implementing inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Skills, Practices, Perspectives, Student with Special Needs

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1990s the movement to have education for all was launched at the World Conference that involved various international organizations such as UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank. The main agenda for this conference was Education for All in the entire world.

However, inclusive education is currently a topical subject that is widely discussed and debated upon in the field of education, the Philippines included. It has invariably been referred to as part of the global education for all agenda as a new education paradigm and as educational reform goal to make our societies inclusive. The same is accepted in the Philippines; however the aspect of education for all is not effectively implemented despite having policies and legal framework that advocate education for all.

Inclusion according to UNESCO is associated with commitment to the term "Education for all" by identifying the requirement and urgency of providing education for all children, youth and adults with Special Needs Education [1]. The Salamanca in 1994, stresses in her statement that every child has an ultimate right to have education, and need to be given the chance to attain and maintain satisfactory level of learning[2]. Every child has unique features, interests, learning needs and abilities. Education systems should be designed and programs need to be implemented in consideration of a wide diversity of these characteristics and needs. Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within child centered pedagogy capable of meeting their needs. Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of fighting against discriminatory attitudes, creating good welcoming communities, building an inclusive culture and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-

effectiveness of the entire education system. Furthermore, UNESCO (2009) defines inclusion as, a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education [3]. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children". Therefore, inclusive education has the foundation in education for all for an intention that all the children must attend school regardless of their disabilities.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 1990), in particular allowed millions of special education students across the country access into regular classrooms for either a part of the day or the entire school day. The IDEA mandated that, to the maximum degree appropriate, children with disabilities are to be educated alongside their typically developing peers, unless education in the general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The Act also stipulated that children with disabilities, to the maximum extent possible, participate with children without disabilities in non-academic and extracurricular activities [4].

More recently, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 established provisions for all students including subgroups of students identified in terms of their disability, socio-economic status, language, race, and ethnicity [5]. Specifically, all students are required to take high-stakes assessment aligned with state wide learning strategies [6]. In such a manner, districts will demonstrate that they are making adequate yearly progress for all students. No longer are districts allowed to exempt special education from taking standardized assessments.

Philosophies involving inclusive education have changed dramatically over the past two decades [7]. Special education needs is described to include the view that learning and behavior problems are the reciprocal product of individual and environmental interaction [8]. Inclusive education should not just be about addressing a marginal part of the education system, it should rather constitute a framework that all educational change and development systems should follow [9].

The implementation of inclusion into classrooms today requires a lot of skills, time, energy, and

commitment on the part of the teachers, administration, and parents. Teachers are faced with the everyday challenges of having to teach to several different learning styles. The lack of additional support staff and resources in the classroom make it difficult to ensure that each child's individual needs are being met. Administration plays a critical role when it comes to implementing inclusion into their schools. For parents, inclusion can be a cause for concern because it has an effect on their child's education. Parents of children with disabilities want to ensure that their child's needs are being met by the general education teacher, and parents of children without disabilities are concerned with the fact that their child's education may be suffering because they are being educated in an inclusive setting [10].

In consonance with this, Ali et al. [11] advocated this kind of education allows the inclusion with regular children and children with special needs by placing them together in mainstream classes, to be taught and instructed by mainstream teachers [11]. Students with disabilities are able to fit into an inclusive programmed because they usually receive some individual support from class teachers to help them complete the required tasks [12]. Academic success depends on how much a student learns from teachers, whether they have disabilities or not [13]. Teachers play a vital role in the learning process of students because they are the ones imparting the knowledge. Successful and effective implementation of inclusive education depends upon teachers having adequate knowledge of it through training as well as positive attitudes towards it [14].

Inclusive education is a developmental approach seeking to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. An increasing number of publications, policy papers, workshops etc. have supported the ideology of inclusion. Some organizations and people, however, doubt whether the ordinary classroom can provide quality education for disabled children. This debate has been on, ever since people began to voice their reservation against old segregated institutions and in turn raised their concern for equality of disabled children. These concerns must be taken seriously and dispelled by showing examples of positive experiences, of some schools which clearly demonstrate that inclusive education most definitely addresses quality issues in education.

It is in this premise that this study would like to investigate the status of the present concepts, feelings,

ideas of teachers experiencing inclusive education in the University level in Region 1 at the same time present the probability of advancement for the future.

This study determined the profile of the faculty members and the perspective of the faculty members on inclusive education along the 21st century skills.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers of the study will utilize the descriptive research approach to address the problem. The descriptive research also known as statistical research describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. Descriptive research answer the questions who, what, when, where, and how. It also describes and interprets what is and reveals conditions and relationships that exist and do not exist. It is a fact finding study that allows the researchers to examine the characteristics behaviours of experiences of participants [15].

The respondents of the study were faculty members in the State Universities and Colleges (SUC) of Region I in the College of Teacher Education such as PSU- CTE, DMMMSU SLUC-CTE, UNP Vigan CTE, and MMSU Laoag CTE for the school year 2014-2016.

The numbers of respondents determine using using Purposive sampling. Subjects were viewed as “typical cases” as inclusive education that provided enough data to answer the research question [16]. Respondents only included Region 1 SUCs, TEI, Professional Education and General Education, Teachers and Administrators.

The sample size of the study is 181 faculty members out of 329 who were included in the study and this was equivalent to 55% of the total population. The number of respondents to be considered in each SUCs was determined through proportional allocation to the number of administrators and faculty members to each SUC compared to the whole population in the four SUCs of Region I, Philippines

The inclusive education instrument was a researcher made with reference to Evangeline Kern of Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine [17]. It was used to determine the perspective of inclusive education among SUCs in Region 1, Philippines.

The questionnaire for teachers and administrators consisted of two parts. Part I elicited responses on personal attributes, (sex and age) and professional attributes (academic rank, educational attainment, seminars attended, years in service and membership in professional organization). Part II elicited responses

on the 21st Century Skills in SUCs of Region I along inclusive education.

The questionnaire was subjected to content validity. Five faculty members competent in test construction and SWSN were tapped for the content validation of the questionnaire. The result of the content validity revealed that the questionnaire was highly valid with a rating of 4.16. Similarly, the questionnaire was subjected to reliability test using Cronbach’s alpha test. Questionnaire on determining 21st century skills along inclusive education was (.945). This implies that the questionnaire form a scale that has reasonable internal consistency on reliability.

To attend the objectives of this study, the data was tallied and classified to facilitate analysis and interpretation. The profile of the respondents examined using frequency count and percentage distribution. The perspective of the faculty members on the 21st century skills along inclusive education were analyzed using Average Weighted Mean.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Profile of the Administrators and Faculty Members

Profile Variables		f	%
Sex	Male	72	39.8
	Female	109	60.2
Age	21 – 30 years old	55	30.4
	31 – 40	41	22.7
	41 – 50	19	10.5
	51 – 60	45	24.9
	61 and above	21	11.6
Years in Service	1 month – 5 years	70	38.7
	6 – 10	74	40.9
	11 – 15	37	20.4
Academic Rank	Instructor	72	39.8
	Assistant Professor	42	23.2
	Associate Professor	43	23.8
	Professor	24	13.3
Highest Educational Attainment	BS/AB	17	9.4
	MS/MA Units	29	16.0
	MS/MA Holder	33	18.2
	Ed.D/Ph.D Units	40	22.1
	Ed.D/Ph.D Holder	62	34.3

The profile of the faculty members was shown in Table 1. The table shows that 109 (60%) of the respondents are female and 72 (39.8%) are male. Fifty five or 30 percent of the respondents are along the age bracket of 21 to 30 years old the early adult with 41 or 22.7 percent are between the age range of 31 to 40 years old, the young adult and 45 (25%) of the

respondents and are between the age group of 51 to 60 years old the Middle adult.

This suggests that in the College of Teacher Education female teachers dominate the faculty who are mostly in their early adult stage. It could also be noted that the ages of the faculty members are in their early adult (21 to 30 years old) or middle adult (51 to 60 years old).

There are 74 teachers (40.9%) who are in their six to ten years in service and 70 of them (39.8%) are in their one month to five years. According to Pambid [18] there are six stages of teaching career. The teachers who are in their six to ten years in service are classified in *Stabilization Phase* while teacher in their one month to five years in service are classified as novice teachers or in *Career Entry Phase* [18], [19], [20].

The inclusive education teachers can be categorized in Stabilization and Career Entry Phases. The teachers in the career entry phase are in a period of discovery and sensitivity to the classroom situation particularly on the diversity of students' culture. It is marked with difficulty of combining instruction, classroom management and confusion. The stabilization phase is characterized by inclusive education teachers' varied researches, readings and studies. The long phase of stabilization signifies teachers' amplified knowledge teaching and confidence in handling classes [18].

Table 2 also shows that 72 (39.8%) are still instructors, 24 (13.3%) are professors, 42 (23.2%) are assistant professors and 43 (23.4%). The data entails that the teachers have slow promotion to higher ranks.

It also suggests that since they are still in the early adult and are still in their career entry phase and stabilization phase of teaching their academic rank is usually an instructor 72 (40%), very few are professors compared to the number of instructors. In the CTEs findings suggest there are few mellowed professors who handle inclusive education.

The results in table 2 show that 62 (34.3%) respondents are Ed.D/Ph.D degree holder and 40 (22.1%) respondents have earned units in Doctorate degree. Previous data results showed that the CTE faculty members are young, early adult, and with a rank equal to instructor. However, their highest educational attainment is in the Doctorate level. It is noted that the young teachers focused and enhanced their preparation and competence for diversity and inclusive education by studying and attending to regular graduate school to learn pedagogy for inclusive education, rather than attend to seminars/trainings. In addition to this, according to the International Seminar on Teacher Education for Diversity (2010), professional advancement in inclusive education and diversity is dependent on published researches. It was also found out that Teacher educators are not prepared to teach teachers how to cope with the challenges characterized by modern inclusive education classroom instead research and data collection are necessary.

The perspectives of Inclusive Education along 21st century skills can be described into extent of practices. Table 2 presents extent of practice of the 21st century skills in Inclusive Education along learning and innovative skills.

Table 2. Extent of Practice of the 21st Century Skills in Inclusive Education along Learning and Innovative Skills

A. Learning and Innovative Skills	WM	VI
1. Generate students' own ideas about how to confront a problem or question.	3.75	Practiced
2. Use idea creation techniques such as brainstorming and inquiry approach	3.74	Practiced
3. Ask students to compare information from different sources before completing a task or assignment.	3.65	Practiced
4. Ask students to draw their own conclusions based on analysis of numbers, facts, or relevant information.	3.60	Practiced
5. Test out different ideas to improve a task.	3.57	Practiced
6. Develop students' self-direction skills.	3.51	Practiced
7. Teach creativity and innovation skills through project-based activities.	3.46	Moderately Practiced
8. Assess students' critical thinking, creativity and innovative skills.	3.42	Moderately Practiced
9. Ask students to invent/ formulate solutions to a complex, open-ended question or problem.	3.15	Moderately Practiced
10. Create an original product or performance to express the student's ideas.	3.08	Moderately Practiced
Composite Mean	3.49	Moderately Practiced

The respondents' extent of practice of the 21st century skills in Inclusive Education along learning and innovative policies skills states that out of ten 21st century skills, five are "practiced" and five are "moderately practiced".

The members of the faculty "practiced" use of idea creation techniques (3.74); generation of students' own ideas about how to confront a problem or question (3.75); testing different ideas to improve a task (3.57); comparison of information from different sources before completing a task or assignment (3.65); asking students to draw their own conclusions based on analysis of numbers, facts, or relevant information (3.60). However, the respondents "moderately practiced" the following 21st century skills on: asking students to invent/formulate solutions to complex, open ended question or problem (3.15); creating original products or performance to express the students' ideas (3.08); teaching creativity and innovative skills through project-based activities (3.46); and assessing students' critical thinking, creativity and innovative skills (3.42).

In its totality the members of the faculty extent of practice of 21st century skills along learning and innovative skills is "moderately practiced" with an overall rating of 3.49. It can be noted in Table 15 that

the respondents rated lowest on the creation of original product. This suggests that the respondents seldom require Student with Special Needs creation of original products due to their physical or mental difficulties/incapacity.

The respondents' extent of practice of the 21st century skills in Inclusive Education along information, media and technology skills is shown in Table 3.

The data indicates that the respondents "moderately practiced" all 21st century skills in Inclusive Education along information, media and technology skills.

In particular respondents use of technology for students' self-instruction (3.39); teaching students to understand human, cultural and societal issues (3.50); evaluating the credibility and relevance of online resources (3.08); the use of technology to analyze information (3.18); sharing of information (3.18); supporting students' team work and collaboration (3.15); interacting directly with experts in the community (3.01); giving immersion activities for Student with Special Needs to understand life (2.81); discussing issues related to environment and economy (3.04) and assessing students skills in making global connections (3.33).

Table 3. Extent of Practice of the 21st Century Skills in Inclusive Education along Information, Media and Technology Skills

B. Information, Media and Technology Skills	WM	Descriptive Rating
1. Teach students to understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.	3.50	Moderately Practiced
2. Use technology or the Internet for students' self-instruction	3.39	Moderately Practiced
3. Assess students' skills in making global connections.	3.33	Moderately Practiced
4. Use technology to analyze information (e.g., databases, spreadsheets, graphic programs, etc.).	3.18	Moderately Practiced
5. Use technology to help students share information (e.g. multimedia presentations using sound or video, presentation software, blogs, podcasts, etc.).	3.18	Moderately Practiced
6. Use technology to support students' team work or collaboration (e.g., shared work spaces, email exchanges, giving and receiving feedback, etc.).	3.15	Moderately Practiced
7. Evaluate the credibility and relevance of online resources used by the students with special needs.	3.08	Moderately Practiced
8. Discuss issues related to global interdependency (for example, global environment trends, global market economy).	3.04	Moderately Practiced
9. Ask students to use technology to interact directly with experts or members of local/global communities.	3.01	Moderately Practiced
10. Give immersion activities for students with special needs to understand life experiences of people in cultures besides their own.	2.81	Moderately Practiced
Composite Mean	3.17	Moderately Practiced

As a whole the respondents' extent of practice of the 21st century skills in Inclusive Education along information, media and technology skills is "moderately practiced" with weighted mean of 3.17. This implies that the use of electronic information, media and technology skill is not extensively used in teaching and learning process for Student With Special Needs.

Extent of practice of 21st century skills in IE along effective communication skills in the CTEs was rated by the members of the faculty. Table 17 reveals that the respondents "*practiced*" the following: asking questions in front of an audience and asking students to prepare and deliver an oral presentation (4.06); asking students to present their group work to the class (3.52); allow students to work with other students to set goals and create a plan for their team (3.75) and assess students' communication skills through varied media (3.46). It is also noted that the respondents "*moderately practiced*", asking students to give feedback to peers or assess other students' work to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others (3.38); the use of digital media environment to communicate and work collaboratively (3.19); asking students to convey their ideas using media other than written paper (3.15); and asking students to structure data for use in written products or oral presentations (3.22); and allow Students With Special Needs to decide on how they

will present their work or demonstrate their learning (2.93).

The extent of practice of the respondents along the 21st century skills in Inclusive Education along effective communication skills is fairly practiced and rated 3.47. This suggests that the members of the faculty "moderately practiced" effective communication skills in implementing inclusive education. It means that the communication skills in Inclusive Education could also vary according to the different needs of the student.

Table 5 shows the extent of the 21st century skills inclusive education along life and career skills. The respondents "practiced" the following life and career skills that dealt with the following: asking students to investigate topics or issues that are relevant to their family needs (3.73); to apply what they are learning (3.79); engage in problem based learning (3.61). Monitoring students' achievement (3.56); talking to the community about a class activity (3.29); analyzing and viewing issues of IE (3.16); responding to questions about concerns of different communities (3.35); ask students to engage in community relations (3.24); and ask students to apply instructional strategies to reflect sensitivity to multi-cultural issues (3.49); are "moderately practiced" by the respondents.

In its overview Life and career skills are "moderately practiced" (3.46) which indicates that the respondents are not fully preparing the CTE students on the applications of the lessons to life and careers.

Table 4. Extent of Practice of the 21st Century Skills in Inclusive Education along Effective Communication Skills

C. Effective Communication Skills	WM	VI
1. Ask students to answer questions in front of an audience.	4.06	Practiced
2. Ask students to prepare and deliver an oral presentation to the teacher or others.	4.06	Practiced
3. Allow students to work with other students to set goals and create a plan for their team.	3.75	Practiced
4. Ask students to present their group work to the class, teacher or others.	3.52	Practiced
5. Assess students' communication skills through varied media.	3.46	Moderately Practiced
6. Ask students to give feedback to peers or assess other students' work to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.	3.38	Moderately Practiced
7. Ask students to structure data for use in written products or oral presentations (e.g., creating charts, tables or graphs).	3.22	Moderately Practiced
8. Allow students to use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance.	3.19	Moderately Practiced
9. Ask students to convey their ideas using media other than a written paper (e.g., posters, video, blogs, etc.).	3.15	Moderately Practiced
10. Allow students with special needs to decide on how they will present their work or demonstrate their learning.	2.93	Moderately Practiced
Composite Mean	3.47	Moderately Practiced

Table 5. Extent of Practice of the 21st Century Skills in Inclusive Education along Life and Career Skills

D. Life and Career Skills	WM	VI
1. Ask students to apply what they are learning to local situations, issues or problems.	3.79	Practiced
2. Ask students to investigate topics or issues that are relevant to their family and community needs.	3.73	Practiced
3. Ask students to engage on problem-based learning and apply this to real life situations.	3.61	Practiced
4. Monitor and evaluate students' achievement based on objectives and expected performance.	3.56	Moderately Practiced
5. Ask students to apply instructional strategies that reflect sensitivity to multicultural issues and students' special needs.	3.49	Moderately Practiced
6. Ask students to respond to a question or task in a way that weighs the concerns of different community members or groups on Inclusive Education	3.35	Moderately Practiced
7. Provide activities for diverse students to adapt easily to changes.	3.34	Moderately Practiced
8. Allow students to talk to one or more members of the community about a class project or activity.	3.29	Moderately Practiced
9. Ask students to engage in effective community relations and school-business partnerships.	3.24	Moderately Practiced
10. Ask students to analyze how different stakeholders view an issue of Inclusive Education.	3.16	Moderately Practiced
Composite Mean	3.46	Moderately Practiced

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Faculty members in the CTEs in Region 1 are usually female who are in their novice or entry phase and stabilization phase of their career. They are least one to ten years in service; instructors; with Doctor of Education units; or Philosophy of Education degree; have attended seminars related to inclusive education and members of at least one to professional organization related to inclusive education. The 21st Century Skills along learning and innovative skills; information, media and technology skill; effective communication skills; and life and career skills are "fairly practiced". Teachers in the CTE-SUCs encountered serious problems in the implementation of Inclusive Education.

To prepare the student teachers for Inclusive education, CTE Teachers should attend more training/seminars about Inclusive Education to increase their knowledge and background at the same time learn about appropriate teaching. Extent of practice of inclusive education along 21st century skills should be highly practiced in the CTEs, such skills deal with learning and innovative skills; information, media and technology skills, effective communication skills and life and career skills. SUCs-CTEs should try to allocate more funds to solve serious problems about inclusive education implementation; other researches should be funded and conducted in relation to the low uptake of inclusive education in all CTEs in SUCs.

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