

# Opportunities Amid Challenges: A Multiple Case Study of Differently Abled Teachers

Rebecca L. Canonigo<sup>1</sup>; Linagyn G. Cubio, Meal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Student, Bachelor of Secondary Education, Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology, Kapalong, Davao Del Norte, Philippines

<sup>2</sup>Instructor, Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology, Kapalong, Davao Del Norte, Philippines

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this undertaking was to elucidate the experiences and challenges encountered by Differently-able teachers who have been selected in schools of division of Davao Del Norte. It aimed to find out what are the opportunities and challenges they had experienced. How they coped with these challenges and their insights regarding their situations. This research employed qualitative research method using the multiple case study approach. The participants of the study where 3 differently-able teachers who are qualified to the study. Through the in-dept interviews. It was gathered that the participants have unforgettable experienced and challenges such as students nowadays is less respectful, experiencing great privileges, students' success is teachers' achievement, the findings also revealed that Differently-able teachers cope up with the challenges they encounter through family support, God's guidance, dealing with the challenges. Finally, the different insights od differently-able teachers were revealed that Differently-able teachers need to be respected like everyone else it needs further understanding on how they face the challenges they are battling.

**Keywords:** Differently-Abled Teachers, Challenges, Multiple Case Study, Davao Del Norte, Philippines.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

A lot of differently-able teachers face various challenges, including physical accessibility issues in school, limited resources for specialized support, and societal misconception about their capabilities. Additionally, technology gaps and the need for inclusive teaching practices can pose obstacles to ensuring an accessible and supportive work environment. Lead them to quit the education profession, particularly the total lack of understanding and the failure to provide necessary adjustments that have typified their time working in schools (Wood & Happe, 2023).

In global setting, differently-able teachers face multiple challenges. To provide an example, in Ghana, the physical challenges encountered by differently-able teacher include inaccessible classroom and a general lack of reasonable accommodation within the classroom, specially a staircase and non-adjustable seats. The behaviors of their colleagues and students towards them are also challenging for the teachers who are differently-able, according to the study, as mobility on the school compound and writing on the board

they believe that due to their limited mobility, it is difficult for them to enforce class rules (Danso et al., 2019).

In the Philippines, this phenomenon was evident in a study in Metro Manila showed that differently-able teacher face various challenges, including structural barriers in schools for visually impaired teachers. Some of the concerns are the lack of materials or support for learning and the inaccessibility of teaching materials or paperwork. Stereotypes and a prevalent negative attitude towards them also result in teacher constant struggle to prove themselves to other people. Transportation was also common concern for some of the teachers, specifically for those who live some distance from where they teach (Almeda, 2022).

The urgency of the study would establish prior knowledge for the Department of Education that needs to be addressed urgently because differently-able teachers face various challenges that where hinder their full capability, including difficulties and discrimination by people around them. Wherein it would identify the views and opinions, taking this case nowadays and exist the phenomenon throughout the country. In this study, we literally relate to the

teachers who are differently-able and experiencing challenges in their teaching careers. Because of this, it is quite relevant to our culture, given that the majority of differently-able teachers face challenges due to this existing problem, such as physical accessibility, limited resources for specialized support, and societal misconceptions about their capabilities. For the most part, they decide to find another school that could provide for their needs and to provide specialized support.

In my literature review, I discovered related studies such as *"Ethical Dilemmas Among Teachers with Disabilities: A Multifaceted Approach"* by Tal-Alon (2019), *"No Left Behind: The Influence of Teachers with Disabilities in K-8 Classroom A Meta- Synthesis"* by Hauk (2017), and Almeda (2022) titled *" A Narrative Analysis of the Experiences of the teachers with Disabilities in the Philippines"* this qualitative study's goal, particularly the case study investigation, was a document the actual experiences of differently abled teachers. What are the challenges they are facing and what motivates them to stick with the chosen profession, their insights with their journey will be shared, and how these challenges become opportunities in spite of their circumstances.

#### Research Objectives

This study aimed to investigate the differently abled teachers on how they face their challenges and difficulties and makes them as opportunity.

Additionally, the following questions are addressed in this study:

- What are the unique characteristics of the cases of differently abled teachers?
- What are the experiences of differently abled teachers with regards to their profession?
- How do differently abled teachers cope with the challenges face in the profession?
- What insights can differently abled teacher share with others in general?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Literature Review

#### ➤ Differently Able Teacher

Teachers with physical disabilities expressed a multifaceted structure of ethical dilemmas that stem from having disabilities. Most of the challenges a disabled person experiences arise from a lack of adjustment, prejudice, and societal ignorance, as opposed to the physical aspects of disability itself. Challenges faced by all people with disabilities, not just those employed as teachers, include balancing medical needs with work, ensuring equal access to opportunities, and complex relationship between a teacher, students and the classroom settings (Makris, 2018).

#### ➤ Teachers

Teachers are employees who have a direct impact on the development level of society in the country, crucial for them to make the best of their profession that they can

develop every sense of the country, their position in the society and relationship with other people inside or outside the school directly-affect their psychological and social health. Failure of a teacher to adapt their environment may prevent them from succeeding they are also accountable to the failure to the students or the failure of school in general, if conflict may occur and there may be intimidating and bullying arises. The lack of healthy communication skills in the classroom (Ozdemir & Revelle, 2018)

#### ➤ Social Discrimination

Disability is unique within the discrimination, every individual has the possibility of becoming disabled at any point in their lives, and being differently-able covers such a range of characteristics. With so many disabilities, it is extremely difficult to address the inequalities that exist among the differently-able, combating discrimination against physically and mentally impaired people, which has a long-term effect on normal day-to-day activities. Impairments that have been extended to include non-physical, sensory, and intellectual forms of impairment in the past have been associated with negative stereotypes, which inevitably indicate that differently-able individuals are pitiable and pathetic. The autonomy of differently-able persons is limited due to their impairment (Bunbury, 2019).

#### ➤ Factors of Differently-Able Person

Around 650 million people are living with disabilities, and a significant number of these people have neurological disabilities due to a range of developmental conditions or disorders acquired as the result of illness or injury. According to the data, people in Australia and the US have some form of cognitive impairment due to developmental or neurological disability and are likely to require support to live and fully participate in the community and to realize the full spectrum of human rights. Yet the support needs have generated relatively little public interest. Who experience a range of cognitive, communication, and physical impairments are require support to live an ordinary life. Support are primarily provided by a disability support worker (Topping et al., 2023).

#### ➤ Social Engagement of Differently-Able People

Disability has been accepted to be a global phenomenon and a condition that requires effort and attention from different parts of society. A community in which a person with different abilities lives can play an effective role through a participant attitude as well as by being aware of the significant role, essentially known that the built environment can strongly influence the participation and engagement of the people with diverse needs. Influenced by factors within the inferior environment. Responses to the environment more complex when especially differently-able people perceive a space and interact in a given situation. As it is essential to provide proper and safe access to roads, transport, buildings and public places of differently-able persons, it is equally imperative to provide a safe interior environment so that they can enjoy a meaningful life and contribute to the progress of the nation (Pathak & Sahasraddhe, 2022).

### B. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored to the concept of Social Model Disability Theory of Oliver (1983). According to this theory, people are not disabled by their impairment or differences but by social barriers and disabling factors. Understanding that disability is something that is created by society. This is because disabled people face barriers that stop them from taking part in society in the same way as non-disabled people. There are physical barriers that differently-able people face, the problem is that the barriers of differently-able people face are the result of social oppression and exclusion not in their individual deficits. Furthermore the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with social barriers,

## III. METHODOLOGY

### A. Research Design

The study applied a qualitative research methodology based on several case studies to better understand the in-depth examination of the informants' experiences Cresswell (2009) defines qualitative research as an investigation and comprehension of the significance that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human issue. Human live experiences will be examined and explored using the multiple case analysis design (Coll & Champman, (2002).

### B. Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were the differently-able teacher from different schools in Davao del Norte. There were three (3) participants from different school in Davao del Norte who were selected based on the criteria of the study. All three (3) participants underwent in-depth interviews, with each of them being individually interviewed by the researcher.

The number was determined in accordance with Cresswell (2013). who determined that the optional number of participants in a qualitative study ranged from three (3) to fifteen (15). By including this group of participants, a non-probability sampling technique known as purposeful sampling was utilized. Purposive sampling, also known as judgemental, selective, or subjective sampling, was founded on researcher's discrimination in selecting the units to be studied (e.g..., individuals, cases/organization, or data points). In comparison to probability sampling techniques, the investigated sample size was typically quite small. It was a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher decided which individuals to include in the sample based on a variety of criteria, such as expert knowledge of the research topic or capacity and inclination to participate in the study (Rai, 2016).

The criteria for selecting the participants were as follows: the participants must be a teacher in elementary or high school within Davao del Norte. They had many experiences as differently-able teacher. The following were the specified criteria for participants and informants in each case.

- Case 1 of the study includes a teacher with poor eyesight. This case will be supported by two (2) informants in which that informant is coming from the same school.
- Case 2 of this study includes a teacher with poor eyesight. This case will be supported by two (2) informants in which that informant is coming from the same school.
- Case 3 of the study includes a teacher with walking difficulties. In this case will be supported by two (2) informants from the same office will be ask.

### C. Instrumentation and Data Gathering Process

First, the researcher submitted her manuscript to be reviewed by by the research technical panel. There are numerous edits and adjustments to the manuscripts but the panel members eventually gave their consent for her to collect the required data. The researcher will then send a permission letter to the institution where here study will be conducted.

After writing the permission letter, the researcher personally went to the school where she will conduct her study. She secured first the signature of her research adviser as well as the signature of the research director before going to the DepEd Division of Davao del Norte for the approval. Afterwards she identified her research participants using the purposive sampling technique.

The participants will be informed about the study. The orientation covers the objective of the interview, the confidentiality of the data they provided, and the benefits they obtain by working with the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher will ensure that both the subjects and the researcher profit from this study. During the interview, the researcher will record their conversation with the participants. Because we are free to go outside and communicate with others without fear, the interview is performed in person.

The researcher will transcribe the acquired data before translating the data, the researcher discovered the themes and principles of thematic analysis. Finally, the researcher seeks the assistance of a data analyst by distributing the topics that have been identified for analysis which is quite handy during interviews.

### D. Data Analysis

All in-depth interviews would be collected and turned into written form for a more thorough examination prior to the data analysis. Our comprehension of the collected data, which includes the information that will be included in the transcript, has improved as a result of the transcription process.

Classifying the data would be the next step after that. Finding any patterns that reflect the participants' concepts throughout the data gathering stage is the goal. According to Goodyear & Hativa (2002), data analysis is the phase of a qualitative research that receives the least careful attention in the literature and is also the most odd and complex.

Thematic analysis was used in this study to examine the data that was acquired and collected. Finding any patterns that reflect the participants' concepts throughout the data gathering stage is the goal. We were able to discover emergent themes and classify the replies into the aforementioned construct by developing specific codes.

#### E. Research Ethics

I would adhere to the ethical guidelines provided by King and Horrocks (1998), which include respect for others, beneficence, fairness, consent, and confidentiality, in order to formulate ethical concerns. Nowadays, carrying out efficient

and significant research requires adhering to ethical principles (Drew, 2007). Since the subjects of my research are private individuals, trust has grown between us. As emphasized by Neuman (2006), when writing a research paper, the examiner needs to acknowledge the various ethical questions, worries, conundrums, and conflicts that arise. Ethics establishes what constitutes real behavior and what constitutes a suitable study methodology. It frequently involves striking a steady equilibrium between two ideals: the advancement of scientific knowledge and the rights of the subjects of the study.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. What are the Unique Characteristics of the Cases of Differently Abled Teachers.

The researcher interviewed the participants and she ended-up to the three important themes: *Demonstrating Self-Motivation, Being Creative in Lesson Delivery, Being Role Model to Students*

Table 1 Unique Characteristics of Differently Abled Teacher

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
<b>Demonstrating Self -Motivation</b>	<p>"As an educator, I possessed a persistent nature, and based on my observations this attitude is crucial for teaching, especially for me as a teacher with abilities." (IDI-R1)</p> <p>"Yes, it is very important to be persistent, knowing that the teaching field is not easy." (Inf-C1)</p>
<b>Being Creative in Lesson Delivery</b>	<p>"The character that I have is that my self-motivation when I feel tired because of work and meeting deadlines in paper works I remind myself that I can accomplish those things not only in my own but by God's help." (IDI-R2)</p> <p>"For me creativity is one of my traits in which being creative to learning, like using games and giving challenges for them to find a solution on their own to make the class interactive." (IDI-01)</p> <p>"...attitude that I have, that makes me effective in teaching is that you have to master your lesson and be creative because preparedness is not enough before facing your students you have to move forward if possible, you are ten pages ahead of them including this new technology, the new way of teaching we called for because students nowadays are skilled also in technology." (IDI-03)</p> <p>"It is very important to master the lesson and well prepared so that teacher had wide understanding about the lesson." (Inf-C3)</p>
<b>Being a Role Model to Students</b>	<p>"As teacher, you must recognize that your students are observing you. You must be conscious of your words and action to ensure that your students remained motivated to achieve their goals." (IDI-R1)</p> <p>"The best character that I have since the students or learners are always looking towards their teacher as a teacher we need to be careful in words and action because the character that we are portraying to the students not only to them but the parents also as if you are perfect to them because as teacher we are just taking control that no one can copy what is negative in us." (IDI-R3).</p> <p>"the very crucial part of the teacher is to be observant to the learner and what possible behavior should be shown to students as a teacher words and action matters, how you present yourself to them." (Inf-C3)</p>

### B. Live Experiences of Differently Abled Teachers

The major themes and core ideas for Research Question Number 2 are presented in Table 2. Based on the participants' responses, three key themes emerged: transforming students behavior and lives, experiencing manageable workload, fulfillment through students success . These themes highlight the experiences of differently abled teachers on their field of teaching .

Table 2 Experiences of Differently Abled Teachers

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
<b>Transforming Students Behavior and Lives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Based on my observations to the students, they are less respectful. There are huge changes between previous and current generation.” (IDI-R1)</li> <li>• “this generation are more engage to social media yes it can give positive effect in academic and professional development but in the other hand if a person is not responsible in using social media it can influence negative effect like mental health issues anxiety depression, and more.” (IDI-R2)</li> <li>• “The difficulties that I have encounter is that students who are not discipline at home because discipline start at home and the first teacher are the parents, parents are the one who teach your children good character, in school that is just a follow-up we are here just to follow-up installed character.” (IDI-R3)</li> </ul>
<b>Experiencing Manageable Workload</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “In my experience my teaching career was very great in terms of workload. I have only five loads; its really privilege on my part. Then my principle encourages to do only what I can.” (IDI-R1)</li> <li>• “I experience difficulties in my teaching career, in my case, I have a poor a poor eyesight in my right eye, but in the other side is good, but I can assure that I can do my job because I have my eyeglasses.” (IDI-R2)</li> <li>• “Yes based on my observation is that difficulties towards managing work load is tiring but they manage it carefully.” (Inf-C2)</li> </ul>
<b>Fulfillment through Students Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “In terms of achievements my great experience is that I know that my former students before are now professionals I am so happy for them; that is one of my great experienced in life as teacher.” (IDI-R1)</li> <li>• “I agree our great experience is that knowing our students that are already a successful individuals proves that we really impart to them.” (Inf-C1)</li> <li>• “Success of students is success also of the teacher in which it is beyond teaching it is great pride in the achievements of their students and contributing to the community where they are.” (IDI-R3)</li> </ul>

### C. Coping Mechanism of Differently Abled Teachers

The major themes and core ideas for research question 3 are presented in Table 3. From the answers of the participants, three major themes emerged: *Drawing strength from family encouragement, relying on faith during challenges, staying silent amid Negativity. These themes highlight how differently abled teachers cope with the challenges they encounter they emphasized that faith is very important in dealing challenges and being silent in the midst of negativity surround them.*



Table 3 Coping Mechanism of Differently Abled Teachers

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
<b>Drawing Strength from Family Encouragement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“For me one of my coping mechanism is the support of my family in the battle I have; they are always in my side they will pray for me they encourage me in my weakness when I feel tired. •My family never lives at my side.” (IDI-R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>“when I feel down and discourage in the time of need I will run to my family specially my parents who help me supporting my situation (IDI-R2)</i></li> <li>• <i>my coping mechanism first is my family, their support and unconditional love keeps me going their words of encouragements inspire me and become my cheerleader through victories and setbacks of life.” (IDI-R3).</i></li> </ul>
<b>Relying on Faith During Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“one of the most important strategies is to pray to God, just trust to the most high God who gave strength, and I pray that I am still effective to my students every time I teach them.” (IDI-R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>“in my own experienced I can share that the effective strategy is to pray constantly if we pray to him God gives us the strength to continue.” (IDI-R2)</i></li> <li>• <i>“In dealing with challenges in life, talking to God is the best way to be at ease, knowing the source of your strength is from above he will not let any one fall from his unending love and kindness.” (Inf-C3)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Staying Silent Amid Negativity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“one of my mechanism is that to stay silence about those nonsense things surrounding me that would never help me in my career and things that that would discourage me dragging me to my purpose in life.” (IDI-R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>“For me I will focus my attention to the things that would make me better version of my self ignoring negativity and ignoring those people who no nothing on the job like parents who complain for their students achievement academically and not willing to listen to your side I am just ignoring them.” (IDI-R2)</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“do not entertain the negative and those people who wanted to put you down, to ruin you, just always pray to God to protect to guide you always and just continue what is in your plan do not mind others keep on going ..... ” (IDI-R3)</i></li> </ul>

#### D. Insights of the Differently Abled Teachers.

The major themes and core ideas for research 4 are presented in table 4. from the answers of the participants, 3 major themes emerge: *Facing challenges with confidence and belief, staying grounded during difficult times, turning disabilities into motivation.*

Table 4 Insights of Differently Abled Teachers

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statement
<b>Facing Challenges with Confidence and Belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>For me I can share that we as teacher we should keep going even if you are differently-able or not as we continue we really need to ask for help from above because the only solution in our problems and difficulties is truly in his hand. ' (IDI-R2)</i></li> <li>● <i>Yes facing challenges is a way to solve the problem avoiding it is not the solution running from it is a big mistake accepting the problem is the first move and finding cause of it and solving the effect that is how we need to solve problems in life. ' (Inf-C2)</i></li> <li>● <i>“There are lots of experience that we have been through all the painful experience we face, rise up know your not alone there are people always beside you and most importantly God will never leave you he is fighting your battles just be still and be a witness of God’s marvelous work over your life just continue on facing it.” (IDI-R3)</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>“Challenges and barriers are always there we need to face it with confidence and maintaining resilience, faith and purpose when life becomes difficult. Its about remaining grounded and hopeful even when circumstances are there.” (IDI-R1)</i></li> </ul>

<p><b>Staying Grounded During Difficult Times</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>I agreed on that statement that we need to stay grounded be humble before the Lord asking his provisions in difficult situation because keep on trusting God to used you in the moment of difficulties to be a blessing to others.'(Inf-C2)</i></li> <li>● <i>'.....other might say negative things about me but I am always telling this life is not about fun and joy you will encounter discouragements but still keep on going all I can say is that I did my bestin my job.'(IDI-R3)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Turning Disabilities into Motivation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>I can say to everyone as a differently-able teacher our situations is not the hindrance instead it is our strength to motivate people and inspired our learner to continue.'(IDI-R2)</i></li> <li>● <i>".....God allow it to them because that is their purpose to present their self to students with confidence even if they are differently-able they can achieved their dreams in life and living in it today as an inspiration to everyone not just to students but also to teachers out there.'(Inf-C2)</i></li> <li>● <i>As a teacher and differently-able individual our physical appearance and difficulties are not the reason to stop us in our journey to success be an inspiration and a motivator to everyone watching you.: (IDI-R3)</i></li> </ul>

This study used a multiple case study qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of 3 differently abled teachers

Regarding on their different abilities. In-depth interviews revealed a range of positive and negative experiences, highlighting their unique characteristics. Live experiences, coping mechanism and their insights . three major themes emerge in their unique characteristics: (1) – demonstrating self motivation- teachers are source of inspiration to their students; (2) being creative in the lesson delivery – teachers has a creative and imaginative mind towards lesson delivery; (3) being a role model to students – shaping minds and imparting positive behavior and the power to inspire, motivate and influence in many ways.

Teachers shared their live experiences that they have a range of positive and negative experiences they been through three major themes emerge regarding teachers experiences: (1) transforming students behavior and lives-educators has vast influenced on the learning process of students;(2) experiencing manageable workload -manageable workload depending on various factor in the work place, stress and workload being encountered in their profession can cause physical, mental, and spiritual effect; (3) fulfillment through students success- knowing that teachers contributed to shaping someones future.

Teachers also described coping mechanisms to address the challenges: drawing strength from family encouragement ,relying on faith during challenges, staying silent amid negativity how teachers deal with their difficulties and challenges and reduce anxiety and stress they are encounter. (1) drawing strength from family encouragement-it plays important role of individuals development, (2) relying on faith during challenges -faith to God can play significant role in response to major stressors,(3) staying silent amid negativity-differently abled people surrounded by noise of criticism, judgement,and negativity that can be dangerous to people who are struggling emotionally.

In terms of insights, three key reflections surfaced: (1) facing challenges with confidence and belief-self confidence

makes the brain work better and boost performance; (2) staying grounded during difficult times- differently abled teacher face complexity in which it can affect their mental health but one of the strategies is to be grounded and rooted to manage difficulties in work place; (3)turning disabilities into motivation-teacher with different abilities is not define what a person cannot do it felt like a burden but in classroom it is a greatest source of inspiration.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the participants shared their unique characteristics, experiences, problems, coping mechanism and insights. Even if you have the information, abilities enough knowledge it does not make thing easier to be a differently-able teacher. There are various challenges as person with different abilities that is too tough to handle. The results also highlight the importance of being silent in negativity because being knowledgeable cannot become you successful in teaching.

To add on, my overall academic experience has proven to be quit gratifying. Furthermore, this thorough project has provided me with numerous benefits, including the ability to advance my career. This initiative has widened my research interest even more, allowing me to explore new outlook and get a deeper understanding of many disciplines this experience has not only enriched my academic endeavors, but it has also provided me with significant skills and insights that well help me grow and develop professionally in the future.

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