

## **A Phenomenological Studies of Special Education Teachers and Parents Lived Experiences In Upholding Learners With Disability (Lwd) In Transition Program During Pandemic**

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### **Abstract**

The implementation of a transition program for special education students is hardcore during face-to-face and it became more difficult to implement during distance education. The research aimed to explore the essence of the experiences of Special Education (SPED) teachers and parents under the transition curriculum. This study utilized qualitative design. Particularly, this study employed a phenomenological research design. The participants of this study were eight (8) parents having LWD at home enrolled in the school SY 2021-2022 under Special Education Program and five (5) SPED teachers. The information and replies of the participants were gathered using a semi-structured interview guide. Coding and triangulation were done to analyze and identify the emerging theme. The emerging themes for the teachers lived experiences revealed flexibility and adaptability in times of pandemic, the power of communication, and effective problem-solving strategies. For the parents, the main themes that emerged from their testimonies were the needs for assistance and parent as a manager. The findings also revealed that all problems related to the transition curriculum were addressed and solved by teachers and parents by working with each other. Knowing how parents struggles due to their work and parental roles helped the teachers to understand them and help them build a strong relationship based on trust and understanding. The researcher recommended that the school may intensify the relationship between the teachers and parents by improving communication, collaboration, and cooperation between them. To help the parents more in assisting their kids, parenting techniques, mentoring, and coaching programs may be provided.

**Keywords:** *special education; transition curriculum; distance education; distance learning; parents collaboration*



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### **INTRODUCTION**

The "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013," or RA No. 10533, mandates that the curriculum be learner-centered and inclusive. The curriculum should be inclusive, catering to all the different learning types, including the special education students. The school should cater to them and prepare them with lifelong learning and skills and competencies that they can use throughout their life. In addition, Section 3 of RA 10533, states that inclusiveness of enhanced basic education necessitates implementing programs designed to address the physical, intellectual, psychological, and cultural needs of learners, including, but not limited to, programs for learners with disability (LWDs). According to Pawilen et al. (2018), the

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Transition Program attempts to assist special learners in becoming functional citizens despite their limitations. Its goal is to make them enjoy their daily lives while empowering them to become more valuable and productive members of society. This program is more than a collection of activities; it is a comprehensive educational equality package that incorporates curriculum and policies to assist the education of exceptional students.

Calamba Integrated School is the only high school in the Division of Calamba City with Special Education (SPED) centers catering to learners with disability (LWDs). Every year, the Special Education (SPED) Coordinator has its program to train regular teachers in handling learners with disability (LWDs). The Special Education (SPED) Department is doing its part in implementing inclusive education in which some students are in full inclusion and some are in partial inclusion. Agencies should be established and strengthened. Working experiences, transition services, and family support and expectations were all critical factors in the success of the transition from school to job development (Miesch, Lindstrom, and Doren, 2011).

According to the study by Averett (2021), most families struggled during remote learning. For some, this is because distance learning differs from face-to-face learning, for example, due to difficulty navigating applications, lack of real-time feedback and interaction, increased distraction, or lack of structure at home. Garbe et al. (2020) cited the Department of Education (2020), the learner's special needs were the most significant factor affecting accessibility. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), co-created by district personnel and parents, are legally enforceable, and districts are accountable for implementing the plans, regardless of learning style.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The Philippine government is working hard to implement Inclusive Education in the Philippines. Part of it is the transition program for every LWDs. The DepEd Order No. 21 series of 2020 explained that the first transition program that the Department of Education established was for adult LWDs. Considering Section 2 of RA No. 10533 or the Enhance Basic Education Act of 2013, which mandates the state to provide every student with an opportunity to receive an excellent education that is globally competitive based on a pedagogically sound curriculum that meets international standards, DepEd has expanded the transition program to include all basic education LWDs through this policy.

Expanding the transition program for LWDs or SPED students in the Philippines is one of the big leaps made by the Department of Education to provide quality education for all learners. The transition program will open the students to their spiritual path and the careers they may use after finishing the transition curriculum.

In the Philippines, the transition curriculum aims to help the LWDs choose the path they want to take based on their teachers' assessment and advice. As explained in DepEd Order No.21 series of 2020, the content of the curriculum is divided into seven areas that are important to the development of learners such as care package, life package, pre-vocational package, livelihood package, functional academics package, career package, and enrichment package

According to Pawilen et al. (2018), the Transition Program attempts to assist special learners in becoming functional citizens despite their limitations. Its goal is to make them enjoy their daily lives while also empowering them to become more valuable and productive members of society

Carter, Rowe, and Gajjar (2020) conferred that transition education is a distinctive feature of special education that encompasses well beyond the borders of the school building, engrosses partners

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from all angles of the local community, and discourses so many diverse life domains. Gaytos, Lavilla and Cablao conversed that lack of coordination among Government Agencies in the Provision of Programs and Services. While there have previously been no consolidated efforts in developing a systematic program from identification to transition for children with special needs, many successful national inclusive education policies offer stakeholders and implementers even more explicit advice. Those mentioned above prove that the transition program is beneficial among learners with disabilities since its goal is to assist special learners in becoming functional citizens (Pawilen et al.,2018), and it explores discourses with so many diverse life domains (Rowe, Carter, Gajjar,2020) which can help them discover new life skills, especially with the aid of their parents.

It is clear that the institution must be well-prepared to inclusive education implementation in which they should establish school personnel orientation on their duties as a support arm of the program implementation, provide systematic planning to come up with an authentic and responsive curriculum design highly needed to achieve success for inclusive education (Dela Fuente, 2021). There should be a curriculum available where teachers can address the learning demands of kids with special needs (Roxas, Agustin, and Vallejo,2019).

When students lack motivation, especially the LWDs, a successful learning experience is very difficult. It has been some of the problems faced during distance learning experienced by all the teachers. Studies confirmed that learning could be pursued amidst a health emergency crisis. Special education teachers have paved the way to reach their learners by spending time making instructional videos and other instructional materials suitable for them (Genc and Kocdar,2020) and maintaining learning settings in which students with disabilities may access the curriculum and achieve their transition goals by making required accommodations and changes. (Johnson,2014). In addition, special education instructors sought connections and relationships, developed routines, and sought direction and support from administration, peers, and families (Glessner and Johnson,2020) to elevate their resiliency during these trying times, which is an essential element to cater the needs of the learners with disabilities.

Since face-to-face class is absent, many problems arise from the readiness of special education teachers to the mode of teaching and learning in distance education. First, most teachers who work with students with learning difficulties did not receive any special needs education training from their schools (Allam and Martin,2020). Second, the majority of classroom and special education teachers stated that they were not equipped to construct online inclusive activities and that they would have been required to take specialist courses to do so (Benigno et al.,2020). Third, despite their efforts, teachers reported having difficulty offering help to children and their families (Nelen et al.,2021). also, how the curriculum is developed poses a challenge to the teachers in how to best handle it (Yuwono and Okech,2021). Because of this, it is theorized that teachers will need time to adjust to the situation to fulfill their duties better responsibly.

Parents' involvement in their child's studies has been found to have positive and minimal effects. When parents and children cooperate in learning activities, bonding between them rises since they may spend more time together (Bhamani,2020) also, students' academic performance improves when parents are actively involved in their children's educational activities, show affection for their children, participate in school events, are democratic and responsive in nature, and have a positive educational expectation (Jaiswal and Choudhuri,2017). On the contrary, Tus (2021) found out that the parents were still working on increasing their involvement in school, particularly during this difficult period, parents' participation in remote learning has little bearing on the student's performance (Marañon et al.,2021)

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and parental expectations influenced academic attainment the most, while parental control had a negative and minor impact (Erdem and Kaya,2020). It can be concluded that parental guidance plays an important role in children's learning success and achievement.

The topic about the transition curriculum implementation in the Philippines was less explored by the academe. How the transition curriculum was implemented by the teachers as well as by the parents in distance education are not yet studied; therefore this research will fill information on how the Sped teachers and the parents are assisting and helping one another in the implementation of the transition curriculum.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study utilized qualitative design. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2011) as quoted by Tomaszewski, Zarestky and Gonzales (2020), Qualitative research draws from interpretivist and constructivist paradigms, seeking to deeply understand a research subject rather than predict outcomes, as in the positivist paradigm. Interpretivism seeks to build knowledge from understanding individuals' unique viewpoints and the meaning attached to those viewpoints (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Particularly, this study employed a phenomenological research design. According to Donalek, (2014), phenomenological studies look into people's experiences based on the descriptions they provide. These are referred to as "lived experiences." Phenomenological research aims to characterize the meaning that each subject derives from their experiences. This form of research is utilized to investigate subjects about which little is known. In addition, Umanilo (2019) enumerated the features of phenomenological research as, first, the goal of phenomenology is to describe the phenomena rather than to explain them. Including any new phenomena, such as human emotions, thoughts, and acts, and as such. Its goal is to explore as it happens. Speculation is no longer necessary. Second is reduction, a procedure in which assumptions and prejudices about phenomena are postponed to ensure that biases do not corrupt the description of the observations and that the description's form is the same as the items themselves. Lastly, in particular phenomena, the essence is the core meaning of individual experiences. With a "delay" in the biases or prejudices against the phenomenology researcher examining the event under study, the core themes or relationships between researchers and participants show as they are. According to Patton (1990), a phenomenological study aims to "find the essence of the shared experience that underlies all the variances in this particular learning experience," which is focused on "descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience." Likewise, Lester (1999) concluded that the study of experience from the standpoint of the individual is the focus of phenomenology, which "brackets" for taken-for-granted presumptions and conventional ways of experiencing.

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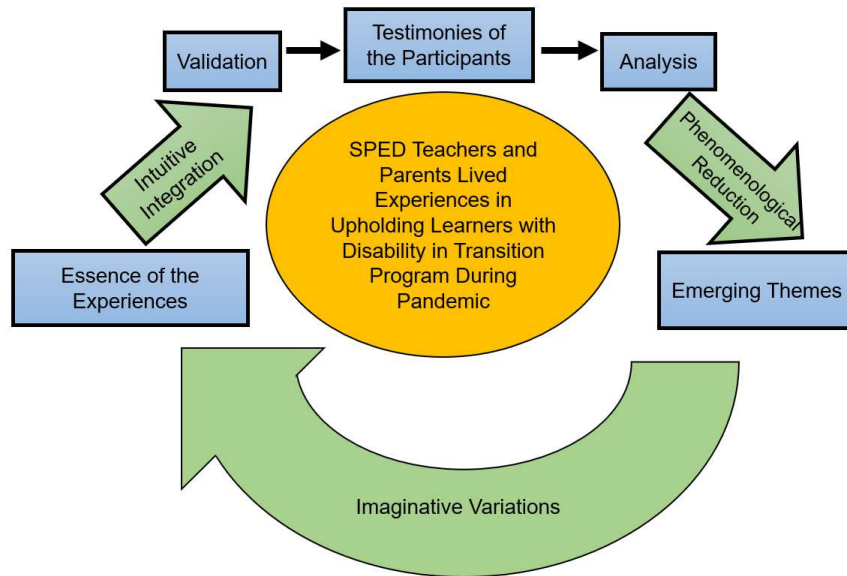


Figure 1. Research Framework

The process illustrated and guide the procedures on gathering, analyzing the data as well as the treatment of data shown in the epoch. The research paradigm was from the concept of Moustakas (1994). The researcher coded and categorized the data into emerging themes from the testimonies of the participants gathered through interviews. The essence and meaning of the participants' experiences were captured based on their shared testimonies. These testimonies of the participants included semi-structured open-ended questions with follow-up questions.

The study was conducted in the City Division of Calamba, in Calamba City, Laguna.

Table 1 Participants of the Study

| Parents-Participants | LWD Category of Child                                                                   | Teacher Participants |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Marsha               | 49 yrs old, not employed, high school graduate. Her kid has autism spectrum disorder.   | Teacher 1            | 30, one year and four months in service, and teacher I in position                                                                                                      |
| Denise               | 41, an elementary graduate, unemployed. Her kid has multiple disabilities.              | Teacher 2            | 29 yrs old, graduate of bachelor in elementary education major in special education, four years in service and teacher I in position                                    |
| Monaliza             | 53 years old, college level, employed, and has an LWD with an autism spectrum disorder. | Teacher 3            | 36 years old, with a Master of Education in Special education complete academic requirement, and currently SPET I in position and already in her third year in service. |

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| <b>Parents-Participants</b> | <b>LWD Category of Child</b>                                                                               | <b>Teacher Participants</b> |                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rosario                     | 53 years old, vocational graduate, and employed. Her kid has multiple disabilities with visual impairment. | Teacher 4                   | 28 years old, graduate of B.S. Psychology and less than one year in service and Teacher I in position.                             |
| Daisy                       | 51, a high school graduate, not employed, and has LWD with intellectual disability and seizure.            | Teacher 5                   | 34 years old graduate of Master of Education in Special Education, promoted to SPET III, and already twelve (12) years in service. |
| Diana                       | 47, high school graduate, employed and has a kid with an intellectual disability                           |                             |                                                                                                                                    |
| Rosa                        | 59 years old, unemployed, and a college-level kid with intellectual disability.                            |                             |                                                                                                                                    |
| Lorna                       | 54 years old, a high school graduate, employed, and has a kid with an intellectual disability.             |                             |                                                                                                                                    |

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Coding is the process of labeling and organizing qualitative data to identify different themes and the relationships between them (Medalyan, 2019). The researcher assigned labels to words or phrases that represent important (and recurring) themes in each response.

Labeling words or phrases made it easier to remember, skim, and organize data. Discovering normal subjects and ideas was essential for thematic analysis, which was part of qualitative data analysis. Descriptive coding was used for the initial identification of themes.

Interpretative coding was the second stage. It focused on grouping together descriptive codes that seemed to share some ordinary meaning and creating an interpretative code that captured the shared meaning for each set.

The final coding stage defined overarching themes based on the interpretative codes. Throughout the coding process, the researcher compared the codes for similarities and differences and kept going back to the data to clarify the codes at all stages. The coding process was done first within each case and then across cases. It ended with a saturation level when no new insights and interpretations seemed to emerge from further coding, indicating that a satisfactory conceptualization in the study had been achieved (Salapate, 2020).

In organizing and determining the themes that emerged in this study, MAXQDA trial version was used. According to Marjae, Yazdi and Chandrashekara (2019), thematic analysis and content analysis can be analyzed using MAXQDA.

A detailed procedure was done in the gathering of qualitative data. The researcher secured a letter of permission from the School Division Office of Calamba City and the Office of the Principal to conduct the study. Upon authorization, the researcher conducted the study at the City Division of Calamba. Interview and focus group discussion immediately followed. Informed consent was handed out to participants' guardians before one-on-one interviews, and the instruments were administered. It was done to consider ethical guidelines for the study. The nature and objectives of the study were verbally

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explained to build rapport between the researcher and the participants. Afterward, the participants were assured that the data gathered would serve only academic purposes.

The information was gathered through interviews with participants and conducted using Zoom, Facebook Messenger, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings, depending on the participants' preferences. Semi-structured interviews were used in this investigation. Shared testimonies were compared thoroughly through textual or contextual examination for the researcher to develop their derivations of findings for this study. Data were recorded, organized, transcribed, and presented in a chart with emerging themes and corresponding codes. Data triangulation was established to harness the data fully.

To examine experiences and identify meaningful structures, interview questions were used. The following questions were part of the interview guide of the study.

**For Parents**

1. How do you assist your children during their studies and the strategies you use for the learners to comprehend the questions from the module?
2. How do you cope with your children's tantrums at home in times of answering transition modules?
3. How do you manage your time in dealing with your children and work?
4. What are the situations when your children would not want to answer the module?
5. Transition program is more on life skills that your children will use once they graduate, how do the lessons for your children help them develop their life skills, and what are the life skills integrated with their lessons?
6. How will you know that your kids have developed life skills?
7. How do the Sped teachers assist you and your children in their studies?
8. What are the challenges that you have encountered so far?
9. How were you able to overcome those challenges?

**For Teachers**

1. What teaching strategies, especially for comprehension, do you provide to different types of learners with disabilities under the transition curriculum most?
2. How do you assess the skills and progress of distance learners under a transition curriculum?
3. What contextualization did you do for the learners to comprehend the (Most Essential Learning Competencies) MELCs of the transition curriculum?
4. How do the parents help you teach their children under the transition program?
5. How do you feel about the support from the education department, supervisors, and school head in implementing the transition program?
6. What are the challenges that you have encountered so far?
7. How were you able to overcome those challenges?

The interviews were voice-recorded with the participants' written agreement form on consent and confidentiality. After that, the voice recordings were transcribed using the MAXQDA software. The researcher guaranteed the privacy and security of all the participants. The participants were assured of the concealment of their identity and the information they did not want to divulge. This manner was completed to promote trust between the researcher and the interviewees. Other research papers used as a reference in this study were carefully cited to give due recognition and prevent plagiarism.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Based on the results, the emerging themes of teachers' lived experiences, challenges and problems were the following:**

**Theme 1:** The SPED teachers experienced flexibility and adaptability in implementing transition curriculum in times of pandemic.

The testimonies of the SPED teachers indicate flexibility and adaptability as the theme that emerged with the sub-themed such as modifying lessons and instructions appropriate to the parents and learners and outside the box assessment.

**Sub-theme 1. Modifying lessons and instructions appropriate to the parents and learners.**

Teaching modalities like modular distance learning and online distance learning require the help of the parents most, especially for transition learners. Therefore, the SPED teacher modified the instructions and lesson so that it can easily understand by the parents and that it is also more accessible for the transition students to accomplish and learn without sacrificing the lesson's objectives. They did not only focus on the written self-learning module but also the visual strategies they needed with the inclusion of video lessons. According to Saziso, Chimhenga and Mpofo (2021), adapting instructional techniques allows educators to address the needs of all learners based on their strengths, ability levels, and needs, rather than categorizing them. According to the study, educators must be able to diversify instructions in order to make the curriculum more accessible to students with disabilities through adaptations and accommodations. Likewise, according to Fitriani et al. (2017), modified instructional strategies linked with PCK favorably affect students' development, aptitude for certain thematic content, and comprehension skills.

**Sub-themed 2. Outside the Box Assessment.** During distance education, the SPED teachers devised other ways of assessing their LWDs since they could not see them face to face, and they focused more on the life skills that require performance tasks. In line with this, they used a checklist and observation while letting them do an activity, they asked for the help of the parents, who are the ones who assess the performance of the LWDs at home, or they let them video their selves while doing the activity to check whether they are doing the hands-on activity correctly and appropriately. Similar to Meccawy, Meccawy, and Alsobhi (2021), moving evaluation from a physical classroom environment to an online one is difficult because "often the temptation or commonly used way is to imitate face-to-face strategies and practices" (Bailey et al. 2015, p.112). Similarly, Putra et al. (2020) found that online assessments, portfolio assessments, and self-assessments are a few evaluation types that can be used in the remote learning process. It is what the SPED teachers are doing in their learners since distance learning needs a more creative way of assessing the students.

**Themed 2.** The SPED teachers discussed the power of communication, which is one of the most vital parts of teaching learning in distance education. It has three sub-themes: building teacher-parent relationships, teaching learning process delivery, and student behavior.

**Sub-theme 1. Building Teacher-Parent Relationship.** The SPED teachers' testimonies point out that they were able to build the teacher-parent relationship through communication. When they asked questions and inquiries about their learners with disabilities, the SPED teachers were ready to answer them. Through communication, they could tell them the schedule, time, and announcement to their learners. Through constant communication, trust and rapport were developed among the teachers and parents. According to Gorica, Popovski, and Popovski (2021), methods of communication are primarily aimed at transmitting information to parents, and less common are those that allow for active



engagement of parents, utilizing their knowledge, skills, and experiences as a valuable resource that can contribute to school openness and partnership building.

**Sub-theme 2. The power of communication supports the delivery of the learning process.**

Based on the participants' testimonies, they believed that proper communication helped effectively deliver the learning process. Teacher 5 said, "The parent must also be taught the instruction", which showed that they communicate with the parent to help them with the instruction so that they can teach their learners properly. Likewise, Khan et al. (2017) found that teacher communication abilities affect students' academic progress.

**Sub-theme 3. The power of communication helped the parents in handling students' behavior.** Because of the pandemic, learners were not allowed to go outside. Therefore, the learners were confined inside the house, which caused them to change their behavior. They were already modified before the pandemic, and now parents have to deal with it. To help them, SPED teachers constantly communicate with the parents to help them deal with their learners. Similar to Cashin (2018), parents in the experimental group were contacted weekly through e-mail and phone to review current classroom assignments, student development, and academic/behavioral accomplishment. In this study, parents of special needs children said that increased communication between home and school allowed them to better monitor and inspire their children in their schoolwork.

**Theme 3.** The SPED teachers dealt with different problems during the implementation of the transition curriculum. That's why they described their experiences using effective problem-solving strategies. It has five (5) sub-theme. They used effective strategies in solving problem that focused on students' skills and confidence, attitudes, mental health, assisting the parents, and lapses in the implementation of the curriculum.

**Sub-theme 1. Effective strategies focused on students' skills and confidence.** The SPED teachers used strategies to solve the problem of the students' skills such as regressing skills and losing self-confidence. Teacher 5 solved it by:

*"We focused and gave intervention to return their confidence and skills" They usually give intervention, one on one sessions, and home visitation to regain and improve the student's skills and confidence."*

Like the study of Ribeiro et al. (2020), the "Strengthening Self-Esteem" intervention raised pupils' self-efficacy and self-worth levels. These interventions aid in information dissemination and the development of mentally healthier people.

**Sub-theme 2. Effective strategies focused on students' attitudes.** The students' attitude also changes due to the pandemic and distance education. T4 explained that:

*"Student needs personalized attention and individual support, especially those with attitude problem in Transition class."*

They use personalized attention and home visitation strategies to train them and improve their attitudes. It follows the studies of Abuzaid (2015) that point out that the SPED teachers' role is vital in changing the negative behaviors of attitude through different strategies to help the learners to be motivated in their studies.

**Sub-theme 3. Effective strategies focused on students' mental health.** The mental health of the LWDs was also affected by the pandemic. The identified mental health problems that the LWDs experienced include behavior problems, depression, and anxiety. Teacher 3 explained that:

*"apart from talking to the child for their behavioral management session."*

The SPED teachers were doing behavioral management together with the parents to help the LWDs. However, they also pointed out that they could not solve all behavioral problems; some need the help of an expert like a doctor. Likewise, the study of Grotan, Sund and Bjerkeset (2019) found a significant correlation between academic self-efficacy, study progress, and signs of mental anguish. Therefore the help of professionals is also crucial in dealing with the LWDs to help them.

**Sub-theme 4. Assisting the parents. The parents were one of the important parts of the curriculum in times of pandemic because the SPED teachers need their help.** Problems were solved regarding assisting the parents. T3 explained that:

*"apart from talking to the child for their behavioral management session, we still need to talk to the parent on how to handle the child"*

They were extending their hand to assist the parents not only in teaching and accomplishing learning tasks but also to help them in handling their kids. Same with the study by Nuñez et al. (2019), emphasizes that the students feel their parents are there to help them with their homework. They become more interested because they feel more competent and independent.

**Sub-theme 5. The SPED teachers also used effective ways of solving problems in terms of lapses in the curriculum implementation.** The implementation of the transition curriculum is challenging in terms of materials to be used and the proper placement of the students. T3 stated that:

*"Elementary have transition, but the placement is not correct, so what happens is we provide them the transition program based on their capabilities and skills. Because of these, we have no choice but to have the transition curriculum."*

SPED teachers made curriculum contextualization involving the life skills that the LWDs needed. Though there was a problem with the proper placement, they still used a strategic way of implementing the transition curriculum.

According to Ross-Hain (2020), The data show that teachers changed course content during distant learning periods due to time constraints, delivery mode, and a desire not to overwhelm pupils. These changes impacted academic rigor and consistency, as well as the evaluation of student learning. Furthermore, teachers' priorities shifted from academic achievement to student well-being.

The emerging themes on parents' lived experiences, challenges and problems encountered were the following:

**Theme 1.** The parents of LWDs had the needs for assistance in the implementation of the curriculum in times of pandemic. It has two (2) sub-theme: teachers' and family members' assistance.

**Sub-theme 1. Teachers' assistance.** Parents have many roles in their house, and the role of a teacher becomes more in demand in times of pandemic mostly in teaching their kids to answer the module, doing their performance tasks, and everything about the learning process. Due to insufficient knowledge of the lessons, they really need assistance coming from the SPED teachers, just like Rosario's testimonies:

*"I read whenever she asked math questions, then I will call the teacher"*.

According to researchers, according to Van Der Wal (2020), teachers identified children with more favorably involved parents as having better levels of prosocial behaviors and academic success. It shows that teachers and parents care. Collaboration to empower students may aid in improving student performance.

**Sub-theme 2. Family Member's Assistance.** Since learners were answering and accomplishing their learning tasks at home, the parents sought the help of the family members with it

due to their various duties that they needed to tend to sometimes their health, like poor eyesight, might be the reason, just like Denise's testimonies:

*"His sister helped her because my eyes are blurry."*

According to Muhammad's (2020) results, the parents highlighted the matter of their qualifications. Parents with lower levels of education thought they could not help their children with specific topics or technology.

**Theme 2.** Parents were doing various duties and responsibilities at home. Due to the pandemic additional loads were added to their work. That is why parents as managers emerged as a main theme with three sub-theme: managing the teaching-learning process, managing the house, and managing behavior.

**Sub-theme 1. Managing the teaching-learning process.** The parents were doing the teachers' role during this time of the pandemic, for they were the ones who assisted and taught their kids. They were managing their own learning so as the learners. Rosario's testimonies explained:

*"You used to be just a mother. Now you do, google it. Before, you would just buy it and then send it to the school, now, you do it all in our houses."*

Similar findings by Budhrani et al. (2021) inform that parents exhibited a good attitude while juggling five academic responsibilities, including organizing, facilitating, monitoring, encouraging, nurturing, and a sixth role in supporting learning are all important aspects of the job.

**Sub-theme 2. Managing Behavior.** Parents were not only managing the lesson of the learners but also their behavior while doing the lesson or in doing it, which was not their usual role because of face-to-face learning modalities. Dennise explained that:

*"I let him do what he wanted and do not force him to do it. After finishing what he wanted to do, he will do his module."*

Tomaino et al. (2020) discovered that parents might discover what their child is capable of academically and how to manage tough behaviors better. It resulted in more consistency of care and coordination across the home and school environments.

**Sub-theme 3. Managing the House.** The parents, particularly the mother, are managing the house. That's why they really need time management. According to Diana's statement:

*"I balanced everything, automatic I will clean, cook food, they will do the necessary cupcakes and puto, go to the market, for my children, I will not be tired."*

According to Weaver and Swank (2020), parents acknowledged the need for more structure at home regarding the family routine. This reflected family participation through a routine. Therefore, the parents manage the activities in this distance education.

Theme 3. Parents acting as the breadwinner, housekeepers, teachers, managers of behavior and attitude, and so many roles were a big challenge to them which is why rise to the challenges emerged from the parents' testimonies.

Parents have their own way of overcoming these challenges like Lorna's testimonies:

*"Take a deep breath. We have many children. We are not just the light of the home, and we are also the pillar that makes everything stronger."*

According to Weaver, J. L. and Swank, J.M. (2020), parents who had difficulties with distance learning also reported excellent outcomes. For several of these parents, these positive experiences stemmed from teachers and school staff doing all possible to help their children. It was in line with recent research, which found that providing additional support and encouragement to children with

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impairments improved their involvement with remote learning (Kim & Fienup, 2021), and emphasized the necessity of frequent, clear communication between school staff and parents (Tremmel et al., 2020).

The collaboration between parents and teachers is essential in these times of pandemic. Teachers were strengthening the communication between them and the parents to assist them in knowing the parents are performing multiple roles. Despite the many duties and responsibilities, parents are also doing their part to support their kids in the transition curriculum.

## **CONCLUSION**

Parents and teachers are slowly establishing good relationships for the benefit of the LWDs. A harmonious relationship between the parents and teachers can help the teaching-learning process be more successful, especially in distance learning. Parents act as the teachers and have their full support to them. They are also gradually communicating and helping each other to teach the students to accomplish the LWDs' lesson.

SPED teachers are working hard to design lessons and assessments that parents and students can easily understand during this pandemic. The administrations are extending their hand in supporting the SPED department in terms of financial aspects.

Parents see the significance of life skills and how to prepare their kids to be independent. Therefore, the teachers can use more appropriate strategies such as reading aloud, decoding, grammar translation, and simplified instruction. Structured routine activities and scaffolding can help the LWDs to be functionally literate, which will help them realize the career they want to pursue as they grow older.

The findings of this study can help the teachers and the school administration with the activities and programs they can propose and implement that will benefit the learners and parents.

Most of the problems related to the transition curriculum are addressed and solved by teachers and parents working with each other during the pandemic. SPED teachers know how parents struggle because of their work and parental roles. Their positive outlook in life can help the teachers in return to understand them and help them build a strong relationship based on trust and understanding. It is helpful for the learners because the trust coming from their parents and teachers can help them perform better in their studies.

Most of the parents are not aware or not properly guided on how to treat their children with disabilities, and some of them do not have enough time to assist their children in their most needed intervention. This research was limited to a minimal number of Special Education (SPED) teachers and parents. The data were limited to the lived experiences of Special Education (SPED) teachers and parents in the transition curriculum and how they described their experiences and the problems they encountered.

## **LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study is limited to the LWDs parents, and five (5) SPED of Calamba Integrated School. The research design employed in this study is phenomenological research which explores the essence of the experiences of the parents and teachers in handling LWDs in times of pandemic. Since there is not so much research focusing on the parents and teachers in handling LWDs, some of the related literature used in this research are from studies of learners, parents and teachers connected to LWDs. Exploring other variables related to LWDs is recommended for future researchers. Including the administration and teachers who are handling inclusion can also be a part of the same research.

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