



LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RECEIVING TEACHERS IN HANDLING BEHAVIORAL ISSUES OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study provides a comprehensive exploration of the challenges, strategies; coping mechanisms, and insights experienced by receiving teachers in addressing behavioral issues among students with special needs in inclusive education settings. Through in-depth focus group discussions with five receiving teachers from Island Garden City of Samal, Davao Del Norte, the study exposes the real struggle and complexities of managing diverse behavioral concerns. The thematic analysis uncovers the intricate web of both academic obstacles and behavioral manifestations, prompting the development and implementation of tailored strategies, including individualized behavior plans and collaborative problem-solving approaches. Moreover, the study highlights the vital role of coping mechanisms, such as seeking support from colleagues and prioritizing self-care practices amidst the demanding educational landscape. The insights gleaned from teachers' lived experiences underscore the transformative potential of empathy, adaptability, and inclusive teaching methodologies. Ultimately, the research advocates for targeted professional development initiatives and collaborative support networks to empower receiving teachers to effectively navigate the unique challenges presented by students with special needs, especially students with behavioral issues. By promoting inclusive and supportive learning environments, this study contributes significantly to the enhancement of special education practices and resources.

KEYWORDS: *Special Education, Behavioral Issues, Receiving teachers, research, teaching, Inclusive Education, and special education practices.*

INTRODUCTION

At the height of the goal to achieve inclusive education (IE) based on Deped Order 44 s. 2021, and in adherence to the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No.10533) Section 8, Inclusiveness of Enhanced Basic Education, the regular teachers were pushed to become receiving teachers to ensure the inclusivity of learning of students with special needs worldwide. From having regular learners and learning set-up, most teachers transitioned to becoming receiving teachers with the absence of a shared approach to handle learners with behavioral issues of students with special needs.

Inclusive education believes that every student is unique and should be appreciated regardless of their impairments or disorders. Students with impairments need the same opportunities for progress and self-realization as regular students. Like all other children and learners, they have the fundamental and inalienable right to a primary, high-quality education. For students with severe impairments, this strategy requires more vigorous attention to the paradigm. Inclusive education allows students with disabilities to socialize while avoiding discrimination or

constraints due to their particular requirements. (Roger & Johnson, 2018).

This lack of grounding for a sound practice has affected not only the teachers who need to adjust the way they teach but also the students who need to know the special education needs of other students with behavioral issues. Moreover, behavioral issues arise for these students who are not used to sudden changes are significantly affected. Additionally, behavior problems are a common occurrence for students with special needs, and dealing with them is a significant task for receiving teachers. Regrettably, the way receiving teachers have handled behavioral problems is sometimes forgotten. This study aims to look into how receiving teachers have handled the behavioral problems of students with disabilities.

Several technical papers have focused on inclusion, which requires educational systems to integrate the framework into their curricula, instruction, programs, and other capacity-building mechanisms (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2005). States conduct inclusive education (IE) as a reaction to increased heterogeneity in school



communities. It is rooted in offering similar classroom experiences for various learners while eliminating attitudes and values that aim to exclude and discriminate (UNESCO, 1994). In the Philippines, the study by Jennylyn A. Amado and Precy I. Guerra (2018) revealed that the most challenging problems of special needs students are those with behavioral problems. Many public school teachers also identify student attitudes, such as indifference and disrespect for teachers, as a critical problem facing schools today. The prohibition of corporal punishment in schools challenges teachers as children become aware of the law and refuse to be punished. This increased the frequency and severity of behavioral issues in the classroom, negatively impacting teaching efficiency and learning outcomes for students and their peers. The receiving teachers in public schools have difficulty trying to rectify the situation at one time or another. Some receiving teachers are exposed to their students' behavioral difficulties and are among the many teachers who can tell what, when, why, and how these students behave. Behavioral problems among secondary learners are rampant and difficult to restrain.

Moreover, the education of students with behavioral and developmental issues is supported by national laws and regulations in the Philippines. These regulations seek to advance inclusive education while giving instructors the assistance and tools they need to successfully instruct students with special needs. The special education teachers and the receiving teachers in Mindanao regularly deal with aggressive, disobedient, and impulsive behavior from learners with exceptional needs. To control these behaviors, the teachers employ techniques such as token economy, prompting, and positive reinforcement. The lack of resources, inadequate training, and a lack of support from parents and school administration were among the difficulties the teachers mentioned while trying to control the actions of children with special needs. According to the study of Tuvida, V.L (2023), exceptional education instructors and the receiving teachers in Mindanao should receive ongoing training and assistance to help them become more adept at handling behavioral issues that arise for learners with special needs. The study also emphasizes how crucial it is to include parents and school officials in controlling the conduct of students with special needs.

Handling students with behavioral problems is a challenging task. According to the receiving teachers with experience, learning environments that promote general and individualized learning experiences need a methodical design, implementation, and monitoring process that addresses potential learning challenges and behavioral concerns. These issues necessitate the professional competence of the teachers in order to assist them in putting into practice strategies that promote students' good behavior, encourage the use of problem-solving techniques, lessen aggressive behavior, and increase rule compliance—all of which contribute to the development of a safe learning environment in the classroom. In the field of special education, understanding student behavior and how to handle it is crucial. It is imperative that educators recognize that every behavior shown by students

stems from particular factors that impact their environment. Nonetheless, according to the study of Mitchell (2019) a lot of educators don't have sufficient training in classroom management when they first start their careers, and they will likely encounter difficulties.

As inclusion has become an ideal for school most teachers must handle a diverse group of students within their classroom, including with behavioral issue. The difficulties in handling these students in mainstream classrooms are reported by several researchers. In study conducted by Woodcock and Hardy (2017) revealed that teachers found it excessively demanding to plan and cater the needs of these students.

Moreover, inclusive education values all students' presence, acceptance, engagement, and achievement despite its perceived idealistic and unattainable nature. Due to varying interpretations and implementations, governments and nations need help achieving just and inclusive practices. In Southeast Asia, there needs to be more research on integrating children with special needs (CSN) into general education settings (Hosshan et al., 2019). Similarly, the setting in which Filipino children with special needs. The government should allocate a seminar on how to handle students with special needs and raise awareness among all schools about inclusive education.

This is the reason why the researchers were inspired to do this research to know how to handle the behavioral issues of children with special needs and to understand how the teachers of Special Education handle them so well. The researchers also want to know the relationship between handling behavioral issues in students with special needs and understanding special education teachers' experiences.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Receiving teachers in inclusive education plays an important role in addressing the unique behavioral issues that students with special needs exhibit. Despite the crucial relevance of managing behavioral issues, there is a lack of awareness of special education instructors' lived experiences and perspectives on dealing with such obstacles. This qualitative study aims to investigate and clarify the following objectives;

1. To describe the experiences of the receiving teachers in handling behavioral issues of students with special needs.
2. To discover the strategies typically employed by the receiving teachers when faced with behavioral issues in students with special needs.
3. To uncover the insights gained by receiving teachers through their lived experiences in handling behavioral issues of students with special needs.



REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This section discusses the review-related literature and studies. It is presented here to give a strong foundation for the study and also to give readers sufficient information regarding the variables being studied. It focuses on the topic being studied.

Handling Behavioral Issues in Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs frequently experience behavioral problems, which can have a detrimental effect on their capacity to operate and achieve success in various spheres of life. Thus, it's critical to comprehend the nature of these problems and create workable solutions.

According to previous research, behavioral treatments can help children with special needs reduce problem behaviors and enhance their adaptive functioning. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Positive Behavior Support (PBS), and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) are some of the interventions that are most frequently employed.

PBS is another often applied intervention that emphasizes positive reinforcement and preventative measures to stop undesirable behaviors before they start. In PBS, a team-based approach is often used, with caretakers, educators, and other professionals collaborating to create and carry out unique programs for every child. According to research, PBS can help children with a range of special needs, including ASD, intellectual disabilities, and emotional/behavioral problems, by lowering problem behaviors and enhancing adaptive skills.

CBT is a psychotherapy strategy that focuses on recognizing and changing unfavorable thoughts and actions that underlie problem behaviors. Among children with special needs, particularly those who suffer from anxiety and mood disorders, CBT has been demonstrated to be useful in lowering problem behaviors and enhancing emotional regulation and social skills.

In addition to these intervention techniques, it's crucial to take each child's particular needs and strengths into account while coming up with issue behavior management plans. In order to do this, it may be necessary to identify the causes of problem behaviors, use visual aids to improve comprehension and communication and create opportunities for satisfying social interactions and sensory experiences.

Moreover, for Sibley and colleagues (2016), they also discovered that behavioral interventions, such as parent education and school-based interventions, were successful in lowering problem behaviors and enhancing social and academic performance. Thus, behavioral therapies, such as PBS and functional communication training, were successful in lowering aggressive behavior and enhancing adaptive skills in children with developmental disabilities.

A controlled atmosphere can make special needs students feel more at ease and less anxious. Establishing clear routines and expectations is crucial, as is offering visual aids like timetables and checklists (David H. Rose and Bridget Dalton, 2009). Positive reinforcement is a potent strategy for managing behavior. Praise for students' efforts and accomplishments can boost their motivation and self-esteem and enhance the likelihood that they will repeat positive behaviors. Creating efficient management techniques for a student's conduct depends on understanding the causes of that behavior. Anxiety, inability to pay attention, and learning difficulties are a few major causes of behavioral issues. The creation of a behavior plan might aid the establishment of clear expectations and consequences for the student's behavior. The program ought to be tailored to the needs and objectives of the individual student. A setting that is regulated and predictable is beneficial for many students who have behavioral issues. Having well-defined routines and timetables can lessen anxiety and boost feelings of security (Joan E. Sieber, 2019).

Understanding Receiving Teachers' Experiences

A thorough analysis of the literature that has been published on the retention and attrition of receiving teachers. Given their crucial role in addressing the needs of students with disabilities, the authors begin by talking about how crucial it is to keep hold of qualified special education teachers. They then offer a thorough analysis of the elements—such as workload, a dearth of administrative support, and inadequate professional development opportunities—that contribute to the high rate of attrition among special education teachers (Downey and Ambrose, 2019).

Receiving teachers experience a higher level of stress and burnout than their general education counterparts, according to one of the article's key findings. Teachers must grasp the specifics of the behavioral issues their students are having. To pinpoint the precise causes and effects that are influencing the student's behavior, may entail conducting a functional behavior evaluation. With this knowledge, educators can create a suitable strategy for dealing with the behavior, such as introducing positive behavior supports or employing tailored behavior plans.

Effective communication and teamwork between teachers, other school employees, and parents are also crucial. Working with school psychologists, counselors, or behavior experts to plan and execute successful behavior interventions is one way to do this. Another is by keeping parents updated on their child's development and any issues that may come up.

The usefulness of positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS) in enhancing student conduct, lowering referrals for disciplinary action and suspensions, and enhancing academic results is reviewed in this paper. Although there is significant variation in the efficacy of various positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS) interventions and tactics, the authors highlight that the evidence base for positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS) is usually favorable.



In addition to Smith and Daunic (2018), some of the difficulties and restrictions associated with implementing positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS), including the necessity of ongoing support and professional development for teachers and staff, the significance of addressing contextual and cultural factors that might affect PBIS' efficacy, and the necessity of ensuring that PBIS is carried out faithfully and honestly.

Furthermore, Vakil and Lee (2018) list a number of significant difficulties that special education teachers face, such as high levels of work-related stress and burnout, a lack of resources and support, and difficulty dealing with unpleasant behaviors among kids with disabilities. A lack of opportunities for continued professional development and problems with teacher preparation and training, such as insufficient instruction in evidence-based approaches, are among the other difficulties mentioned in the review. For instance, they point out that helping kids with disabilities reach their full potential can lead to high levels of professional satisfaction and contentment for special education teachers. The authors also emphasize the advantages of team-based collaboration in special education, which can assist in overcoming some of the difficulties that teachers may experience.

Also, according to Maureen A. Conroy, et al. (2014), classroom-based interventions including social skills training and behavioral interventions can help kids with emotional and behavioral issues behave more appropriately while also reducing problem behavior. Moreover, a good environment for learners with behavioral issues will probably work on building their attitude also the study indicates the effectiveness of self-monitoring treatments to enhance classroom management and foster student self-regulation, as well as the significance of social-cognitive theory in comprehending and managing behavior issues in the classroom.

In connection with this, the teacher in special education or the receiving teachers of students with special needs plays a big role in their development which is why they need to study their experiences and teach them well how to understand students with special needs. The study emphasizes the significance of using evidence-based therapies for students with emotional and behavioral disorders with fidelity and consistency to control behavior issues. The study's conclusions can be useful to educators and other professionals who interact with these adolescents in determining the most efficient interventions and approaches to enhancing behavior and academic results.

THEORETICAL LENS

This study centered on the two learning theories: the Behaviorist Learning Theory of Ivan Pavlov and B.F Skinner, Constructivist Theory Learning Theory of John Dewey.

The Behaviorist Learning Theory of Ivan Pavlov and B.F Skinner focuses on how teachers give positive reinforcement to help students learn better. These students who receive positive reinforcement become more confident and move forward, which is a direct result of the behaviorism theory. On the other hand, the Constructivist Learning Theory of John Dewey, with the basic approach of this theory is that people as said to learn when they have gained experience from what they learn.

These theories will guide and help the receiving teachers of students with behavioral issues. Teachers with their experience can utilize their coping strategies to address challenges in teaching this kind of student. They can provide enough assistance to the students learn to complete the task independently.

METHODS

Presented in this chapter is the methodology used to answer the research questions posed. This chapter presents the research design, research participants and sampling, the role, ethical considerations, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness of the study.

Research Design

The research design employed in this study was qualitative phenomenological in nature. Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach utilized to explore the meanings and implications of an individual's lived experience. In addition, qualitative research frequently employs the technique of purposive sampling to identify and select instances containing a broad range of information while maximizing the use of limited resources as stated by Patton (2002). This involves locating and selecting individuals or groups with specialized knowledge or experience regarding the phenomenon under investigation of Creswell & Plano Clark (2011).

Research Participants

In this study, there are 5 participants receiving teachers from the Island Garden City of Samal. The researchers used a set of questionnaires as a guide for their interview with the respondents. The participants that the researchers chose are receiving teachers handling behavioral issues of students with special needs. The researchers chose the participants and requested their free involvement. The teachers' participants are teaching at secondary schools in Island Garden City of Samal, Davao Del Norte. The researchers conducted focus group discussions with the receiving teachers.

Research Instrument

To answer the objective of the study, an interview guide through the conduct of focus group discussion was employed to facilitate an efficient and productive gathering of responses. In-depth interview was used to gain access to individual's life worlds. Interview guides consisted of either questions, topics, or a combination that ran from unstructured to highly structured. The



guide questions were prepared by the researcher. The questions provided were consistently connected and related to stress and experiences in this time of pandemic and distance learning.

To establish the face or content validity of the interview guide, it was validated by one expert in the field of research. The suggestions and comments of the expert were integrated into the research instrument. Then, an audio/video recording device was used to gather or collect responses from the participants, may it be in oral and non-verbal cues and also if necessary, the researcher will take notes in case the participants refuse to record or video their responses. The data was transcribed for textual analysis, validity, and reliability of the instrument used.

Data Analysis

This study uses thematic analysis, where the information obtained is evaluated by looking through a data set to find, evaluate, and report recurring trends according to Braun and Clarke (2006). Although it is a technique for describing data, it also incorporates interpretation while choosing codes and developing topics. The versatility of theme analysis may be applied within a wide range of theoretic and epistemological frameworks, and to a variety of study questions, designs, and sample sizes, too. While some academics have claimed that topic analysis belongs in the category of ethnography.

Trustworthiness of the Study

A phenomenological approach adapted from Creswell was used to analyze the data gathered from the participants about their experiences of mental stress and coping mechanisms in this time of pandemic. The following steps to elaborate phenomenological analysis are the following. First, the researcher will describe his or her own experience with the object of study to identify personal judgments and prejudices so that they don't affect the process of analysis. Second, the researcher will proceed with the "horizontalization" of data wherein the researcher will list each

of the relevant quotes of the studied topic and give them equal value about the expressions of the group. Third, the researcher will group the relevant topics into units of meaning. Fourth, the researcher will write the textual description and include "ad verbatim" quotations. Fifth, the researcher will write the structural description. Finally, according to the textual and structural analysis, the researcher will proceed to identify the essence of the phenomenon as stated by Creswell (2013).

Member checking was employed to establish the trustworthiness of the results. As cited by McGrath, Palmgren, and Liljedah (2018), member checking is a method of returning an interview transcript or debriefing the analytical results with participants for agreement (Creswell 2013). As such, this method may act as a sounding board and a way of checking that one has understood the reported responses of the respondents, especially when it comes to picking up subtleties such as irony, emotions, silences, or other gestures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the study about lived experiences of receiving teachers in handling behavioral issues of students with special needs. The researchers analyzed thoroughly the data and extracted the core ideas. The analyses of the empirical data yielded five themes on the notable lived experiences of receiving teachers. The analyses on the sharing of the key informants regarding their collective description of their experiences led to the emergence of 3 distinct themes that include each sub-themes; (i) Experiences of the Receiving Teachers; (ii) Strategies Employed by the

Receiving Teachers and Coping Mechanism; (iii) Insights Gained by Receiving Teachers, as shown in Figure 1.

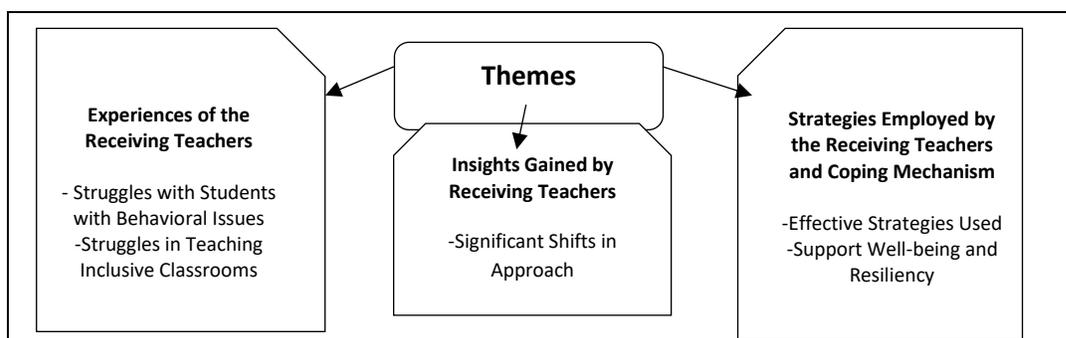


Figure 1. Themes of lived experiences of receiving teachers in handling behavioral issues of students with special needs
Experiences of the Receiving Teachers

The way that teachers educate is greatly influenced by their experiences. These encounters frequently serve as a furnace, honing their methods to successfully meet the particular requirements and difficulties posed by children with behavioral

problems. Educators gain valuable insights from their experiences with diverse behavioral situations, refining their abilities in flexibility, endurance, and compassion.



Based on the conducted focus-group discussion, receiving teachers struggle with students with behavioral issues and it affects as well as their teaching.

“The main challenge for me in addressing behavioral problems of students with special needs is how am I going to extend my patience and how am I going to apply the empathy they need.” -FGD3

“It is hard for me to figure out where or what can I do to address the student’s behavior because I do not have enough knowledge about Special Education. It is a challenge how to make these negative attitudes be positive ones for us teachers and their other classmates.” – FGD4

The experiences shared by receiving teachers highlight the crucial role of empathy, patience, and specialized knowledge in addressing behavioral issues among students with special needs. These challenges underscore the need for ongoing professional development and support to equip teachers with the skills and resources necessary for creating inclusive and supportive learning environment. Moving forward, prioritizing comprehensive training and resources is essential to empower teachers in effectively meeting the diverse needs of their students.

Strategies Employed by the Receiving Teachers and Coping Mechanism

The strategies employed and their coping mechanisms as teachers unveil the resourcefulness and resilience of receiving teachers when faced with behavioral challenges in special education settings. Teachers employ a diverse array of strategies tailored to meet the unique needs of their students, ranging from individualized behavior plans to collaborative problem-solving approaches. These strategies not only aim to address immediate behavioral concerns but also foster long-term skill development and positive behavioral outcomes.

“The approach that I used is first, I call the student privately, then we will have an agreement with signature, and send a communication letter to the parents. I always practice documentation of each action taken. When there is mutual agreement and these students also acknowledge their mistakes or negative behavior, and promise to behave in class, then it is a consider as an intervention already” – FGD1

“Before we can imply strategies, the best thing to do for me is to have self-control and acceptance that we have students with behavioral issues. Embrace these students and have constant communication with parents, set conferences with them.” – FGD5

Additionally, teachers rely on various coping mechanisms, such as peer support networks, professional development opportunities, and self-care practices, to navigate the emotional demands associated with managing behavioral issues in the classroom.

“Seek support from your colleagues. Do not make it your own problem in handling this kind of students, as adviser or subject teacher. Collaborate

with others, your school guidance counselor, the SPED Coordinator, and of course with the parents. If we solo it, we will die early. So, let us have an outlet for ourselves also, travel, sleep, watch K-drama and many more activities.” -FGD1

The experiences of receiving teachers revealed the importance of not only specialized knowledge and skills but also effective coping mechanisms in managing behavioral issues in the classroom. Collaboration, self-care, and maintaining a focus on solutions emerge as key strategies for navigating the emotional demands of teaching while fostering inclusive learning environments. Prioritizing both professional development and personal well-being is essential for receiving teachers to effectively support their students and sustain their own resilience in the face of challenges. *Insights Gained by Receiving Teachers*

Receiving teachers have gained invaluable insights from their experiences with the students exhibiting behavioral challenges. These insights, born from real-world encounters, offer profound benefits for both teachers and students alike. These insights have shifted their perspective, seeing behavioral issues as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles.

“...I realized that they always have their reason that I should better understand them as students have special needs to address. It was not easy but my experience made me see in a much broader look, that they need us, we must help us in little thing we can.” -FGD2

“I may also add, that as receiving teachers, we hold a big part in shaping the future of these students. As hard as it is, as their receiving teacher, it is my responsibility to better understand them. Try to listen to your students, and get their trust by showing them that you understand them. But I hope we will be given enough seminar or training so we know what are the best ways to handle this.” -FGD5

The experiences and reflections of receiving teachers underscore the transformative power of empathy, flexibility, and continuous learning in effectively addressing behavioral issues in the classroom. The teachers have come to embrace the diversity among their students and recognize the importance of understanding and supporting their individual needs. By embracing diversity, fostering understanding, and prioritizing individual support, receiving teachers not only enhance the educational experience for their students but also cultivate inclusive and supportive learning environment that nurture personal growth and development.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The study investigates the personal experiences of instructors who work with students with special needs and behavioral concerns. It uncovers a complex range of difficulties, approaches, methods of dealing with stress, and valuable understandings. Teachers have substantial obstacles when dealing with academic and behavioral issues, which are further complicated by a lack of specialized expertise in special education. Nevertheless, their ability to recover and adapt is evident in the wide range of tactics utilized, which include personalized behavior plans, cultivating positive connections with students, and seeking assistance from colleagues. Furthermore, the knowledge acquired emphasizes the significant capacity for change that these experiences have, promoting empathy, flexibility, and a transition towards more comprehensive and inclusive teaching methods. Despite the challenges faced, educators get a more profound comprehension of their students' requirements and a revitalized dedication to their responsibility in molding their future.

Recommendation

To further support teachers in effectively handling behavioral issues among students with special needs, it is crucial to allocate resources towards specialized professional development programs and seminars. These initiatives should prioritize improving teachers' understanding of special education principles, providing them with effective techniques for managing behavior, and encouraging self-care activities to reduce burnout. In addition, schools need to cultivate a cooperative atmosphere that facilitates the exchange of knowledge and effective methods among instructors. Furthermore, schools should ensure that teachers have access to support networks, including guidance counselors and special education coordinators. Through the deliberate emphasis on continuous training and the cultivation of a supportive and collaborative atmosphere, educational institutions can enable teachers to address the varied requirements of their students and establish more inclusive learning environments more effectively.

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