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**Excluded from Within:
Nuancing Integration and Inclusion through the Lived
Experiences of Filipino Children and Youth with Disability in
Two Inclusive Education Schools**

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List of Acronyms

CYWD	Children and Youth with Disability
IE	Inclusive Education
DepEd	Department of Education
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities

Abstract

This innovative, virtual reflective participatory research nuances the multifaceted exclusions Filipino children and youth with disability (CYWD) experience *from within* the school and classroom, as the country frames and implements its inclusive education (IE) policy merely as the physical integration of students with disability into an inherently exclusionary schooling system. By drawing from Children and Youth Studies and Critical Disability Studies, this study specifically argues that the policy of integration reinforces ableist and disablist attitudes and practices— forcing CYWD to live up to standards of normality (perform or be like a “normal” student), on one hand, and contend with lowered expectations (be underestimated or segregated because of their impairment), on the other. Such tension restricts CYWD’s participation, stunts their academic growth and devalues their difference and dignity as learners, overall straining their school life.

To move towards true inclusion, scholars and political actors should be more critical not just of social policies, but also of the environment and system these policies tend to “include” the CYWD into. One way to do so is to account for CYWD’s lived experiences and grounded perspectives in the progressive uncovering (and potential overcoming) of taken-for-granted exclusionary practices within, and even beyond the confines of the school and classroom.

Relevance to Development Studies

Academics and policymakers often invoke inclusion in education and development discourses, but they have yet to further scrutinize inclusion’s deep linkages to social justice (Sayed and Soudien 2003). To make more significant strides in increasing the full participation of children and youth with disability (CYWD) in society, scholars and political actors should revisit and reconceptualize how inclusion in education is interpreted and translated into practice.

In the Philippines, educators are cognizant of the need for inclusion to be framed beyond just the physical presence of CYWD in the school or classroom (Muega 2016). However, academic and policy discussions have not yet systematically examined the exclusionary attitudes and practices (Kearney 2011, Ruairc 2013, Sayed and Soudien 2003) that impede the implementation of a truly inclusive schooling system for CYWD. This study therefore aims to contribute to this conversation to advance a more critical discourse on IE. Exposing exclusions to deconstruct inclusion and education would be beneficial and emancipatory not just for CYWD, but also possibly for other marginalized groups, as they all strive to acquire formal education and contribute to broader societal development later on.

Keywords

Children and Youth with Disability, Inclusive Education, Integration, Inclusion, Virtual Participatory Research

Chapter 1

“Making Room” for Children and Youth with Disability through IE/Educational Policy

“I am always praying to the Lord that a day will come that they will allow me to try out the activities, to experience why they are so happy with Physical Education. Because in high school, whenever I hear PE, all I can remember is... I was not included. During their practical exams... I can hear the instruction of the teacher on how to do it. But they say, I should not do it, I will just be exempted. I can just stay in the SPED room. They tell me not to attend the class. Of course, I feel sad. Because in my mind, I want to try. I want to show them that even though I am slow at studying, even though I won't be able to get it on the first try, at least I can show them my abilities, that what they do, I can also do, with their help. But if they themselves do not want to help me, then I can do nothing about it. Sometimes I want to belittle myself, I am tempted to say that, 'Maybe I just really cannot do it.' But I also think that, if I think that way about myself, and if I don't trust in the abilities that the Lord has given me, how can I prove to them that I am able?”

In a three-minute audio diary entry channelling her 13-year old freshman self, Marjorie¹, now a 23-year old grade school Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) teacher (and part-time theatre performer), vividly captures how children and youth with disability (CYWD) often feel when they are excluded despite being “integrated” in Filipino “Inclusive Education” (IE) schools.

CYWD across the globe remain on the margins of formal educational systems despite the implementation of IE policies that purport to include them (Kearney 2011). In the Philippines, however, lawmakers and academics are yet to ascertain the impact of such a policy on CYWD because the small number of studies tackling IE focused more on logistical considerations and adult or nondisabled students' perspectives². I therefore set out to contribute to this emerging critical conversation by drawing from Children and Youth Studies and Critical Disability Studies, to focus on Filipino CYWD's lived experiences and grounded perspectives on being excluded *from within* the school and classroom.

I unpack the ramifications of contradictory framings of IE by nuancing integration and inclusion through Marjorie's personal accounts and those of four other blind alumni, seven deaf/mute high school students and three grade school students with intellectual disability. I argue that framing and implementing IE as mere physical integration of CYWD into classes inherently designed for the non-disabled only leads to exclusion and a strained school life, as CYWD struggle to navigate the tension between living up to standards of normality, on one hand, and contending with lowered expectations and paternalistic attitudes and practices, on the other.

¹ Not her real name. Pseudonyms are used to protect participants' identities.

² See: Aranas and Cabahug 2017, Dayagbil and Joaquin 2008, Galleto and Bureros 2017, Inciong and Quijano 2004, Labrague 2018, Marzo and Pascua 2012, Muega 2016, Nanwani 2018, Ortega 2017, Laguna and Villegas 2019, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019, Yap and Adorio 2008.

This virtual reflective participatory research therefore empirically foregrounds IE scholarship's assertion that it is counterproductive to frame integration as authentic IE (Kearney 2011, Rieser 2012, Ruairc 2013, Slee 2008). IE is a process of overcoming structural and attitudinal obstacles to enhance CYWD's (and other marginalized students') participation and learning (Kearney 2011). As Marjorie's comment indicate, however, integration as a policy and practice, only serves as a barrier to fostering conditions for inclusive learning, because it reinforces vestiges of segregated education which essentialize normality and fixate on CYWD's deficiencies (Ballard 1990, Booth and Ainscow 1998, Rieser 2012).

1.1 The clamour for inclusion

Special Education (SPED) scholars in the 1960s posed segregated education and the stigma of labeling as human rights issues which eventually brought forth the global outcry for IE (Eleweke and Rodda 2002, Osgood, 2005). However, it was not until the World Declaration on Education for All (1990) (Florian 2014) and the United Nations Education, Science, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) was affirmed by 92 countries that IE was cemented as the "global norm", with the regular school/class deemed as the "appropriate" and ideal setting for CYWD (Eleweke and Rodda 2002, Muega, 2016: 6-7, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019). IE was viewed as the means to meet the goal of providing everyone with access to education, and of "celebrating differences" in schools (Eleweke and Rodda 2002: 114).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' call for national governments to guarantee "inclusive education" and uphold "lifelong learning" (United Nations 2016) has also further strengthened international political resolve to enable vulnerable populations (including, but not limited to persons with disabilities) to access and experience schooling in general education settings (Kusimo and Chidozie 2019, Rambla and Langthaler 2016).

In broader terms, IE is therefore concerned about engaging with and effectively supporting a diverse range of learners and not just CYWD, but IE studies and initiatives have traditionally focused on CYWD because of their apparent and rampant marginalization in many countries (Kearney 2011, Rieser 2012, Ruairc 2013). However, due to its theoretical/conceptual ambiguity, the operationalization of IE remains elusive (Florian 2014, Göransson and Nilholm 2014). The "form" IE takes in policy, and implementation in classroom (Muega 2016: 6) and school settings varies in different contexts.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) continues to define IE as the "integration", or "placement" of CYWD in regular schools or classes (Department of Education 2009: 1-2)³. In practice, however, (as explained by Marjorie and the other participants), schools still label CYWD as "SPED" even when they are officially enrolled in "regular" classes attended by "regular" or nondisabled students. "SPED" students also access the "SPED resource room" and undergo separate sessions with "SPED teachers" (usually after "regular" classes) to keep up with the majority. The

³ "Self-contained mono-grade or multi-grade classes" and "resource room program" are also provided as options, but the difference between the two is unclear. In this paper, however, I focus on the second option indicated in the directive: (1) "inclusion" or "placement" of CYWD alongside peers who are taught by a "regular teacher", with (2) SPED teachers "addressing" these students' "needs" (Department of Education 2009:1-2).

country's version of IE therefore employs the language of inclusion, but still ironically embodies elements of segregated education which scholars vehemently criticize (Kearney 2011).

Furthermore, the prospective official IE policy, Senate Bill No. 69 (SBN 69), is yet to be enacted and still frames inclusion as the mere placement of CYWD in regular schools/classrooms. The DepEd has also initially framed IE only as an alternative to the persistent lack of SPED facilities and teachers (Inciong and Quijano 2004). IE was therefore not deemed as an urgent and major development concern in its own right.

1.2 Slow unfolding: Framing of IE/inclusion in policies⁴

IE was non-existent in Filipino educational policies, until 1997 when DepEd No. 26 (“Institutionalization of SPED Programs in All Schools”) guaranteed CYWD’s entry into “regular schools” through the creation of district-level SPED resource centers (Department of Education 1997). From the late 1990s to early 2000s, CYWD attended “regular” schools but were still under a “special” program detached from the majority (Yap and Adorio 2008).⁵

In 2009, IE was explicitly indicated in DepEd Order No. 72 (“Inclusive Education as Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children”) which officially integrated CYWD into regular classes (Department of Education 2009). It also mandated SPED teachers to hunt for CYWD and convince their parents to enrol them in SPED centers situated in formal schools. Teachers were also required to assess CYWD for “regular” grade level placement.

However, despite the existing national mandate to accept and enrol CYWD in regular schools and classes (Lacson 2017), their participation remains low (Agbon and Mina 2017). The 2010 Filipino census counted over 1.44 million school-aged PWDs (5-19 years old) (Philippine Statistics Authority 2013), yet only five years ago, only 250,000 elementary and 100,000 secondary students with disability were enrolled in schools (Lacson 2017). There are also only 471 elementary and 177 secondary schools out of more than 30,000 public schools which can accommodate CYWD (Geronimo 2014, Santisteban and Serafica 2017).

Almost two decades after IE gained traction in international and Filipino development and education discourses, the confusion about IE (or its usual conflation with SPED) and the resulting issues (i.e. CYWD struggling to catch up; CYWD being bullied or discriminated by peers; teachers’ lack of confidence in practicing IE) persist (Muega 2016, Nanwani, 2018, Ortega 2017, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019).

1.3 IE rhetoric in the Philippines

I argue that existing policies and practices are yet to move beyond rhetoric on IE/inclusion, because they merely absorb CYWD into a deficient “one size fits all” system (De Haan 2000: 10). Integration

⁴ This and the next subsection were parts of a final essay I submitted to Prof Auma Okwany for the 4311 Children, Youth and Development course (Term 3, 2020 April to June).

⁵ See Appendix 1 for a detailed timeline of educational policies.

into classes essentially tailored for those devoid of disability connote being forced to learn and be like the nondisabled, setting CYWD up for either successful adaptation or failure, and ultimately deviating from the crux of IE/inclusion in the process (Kearney 2011, Rieser 2012).

This glaring tension is partly due to the undertheorization of IE in Filipino academia (Inciong and Quijano 2004, Muega 2016, Ortega, 2017). Although it is often invoked in academic and policy discourses, IE is often conflated with SPED (Yap and Adorio 2008), and there is still no concrete and consistent operationalization of IE beyond CYWD's mere presence in a regular school or classroom (Muega 2016, Ortega 2017).

IE is also sometimes referred to as a strategy or technique under SPED (Ortega 2017, Rabara 2017, Yap and Adorio 2008). In other cases, IE is treated as a separate practice, policy or program or an alternative to SPED (Inciong and Quijano 2004, Marzo and Pascua 2012, Muega 2016, Labrague 2018). Specifically, IE is deemed as a viable alternative to the lack of “specialized” schools for CYWD (Labrague 2018) and a cost-cutting measure (Inciong and Quijano 2004). It is also viewed as a way to normalize children's lives (Muega 2016) or to enable them to socialize with others (Marzo and Pascua 2012). However, these studies (except for Muega 2016) have not fully questioned the place of an IE for CYWD in a deficient schooling system that obviously devalues CYWD's difference. IE is generally perceived as a means to accommodate diversity, but teachers—even in higher education—cannot confidently explicate how this would look in a classroom (Galleto and Bureros 2017, Muega 2016). Despite the acknowledgement that it should be more than just the physical presence of CYWD in the classroom (Muega 2016), progressive discussions on reimagining inclusion remain lacking.

1.4 Unaddressed gaps within the schooling system

What further hinders the implementation of authentic IE are persistent structural problems such as the insufficient number of teachers who could attend to the needs of both CYWD and the nondisabled (Labrague, 2018), large class sizes, and inadequate or worn-out facilities and instructional materials for both those with or without impairment (Briones et al. 2016, Labrague, 2018, Muega 2016).

Furthermore, although teachers generally welcome the idea of inclusion, they have doubts about their capabilities because of inadequate practical skills in teaching CYWD (i.e. Braille or sign language) (Muega 2016) and in managing a class where CYWD and non-disabled learn together (Aranas and Cabahug 2017, Dayagbil and Joaquin 2008, Muega 2016). Teacher training also barely scratches the surface because the focus is only on integration or what DepEd officials also call as “mainstreaming” (Nanwani 2018: 25).

One more crucial gap which stagnates inclusion discourses and efforts is children and youth's exclusion from academic and policy discussions. Adults (i.e. teachers, parents, policymakers) assume that they can best determine what could work for CYWD (Muega 2016) but CYWD's perspectives should be taken into account to stay true to inclusion and empower them in the process (Myers and Bourdillon 2012). Despite (and more so because of) their disabilities, CYWD can generate legitimate knowledge that could serve their best interests (Liebel 2012) in education. Ultimately, children and youth are not merely objects of development intervention but are active decision-makers (Cheney

2010) and social agents (Cook et al. 2012) who could critically evaluate the impact of social policies in their lives.

1.5 Demystifying inclusion through CYWD’s grounded perspectives

I therefore attempt to address the abovementioned gap and contribute to critical discussions on IE by drawing from Children and Youth Studies and Critical Disability Studies to amplify children and youth’s voices and embodied experiences in the IE discourse. My main research question is, “How do CYWD experience inclusive education in the school and classroom setting in the Philippines?”, and my sub-questions are:

- a. How do they perceive/how do they feel about being “included”/ “integrated” into “regular” classes?
- b. How do they perceive their interactions with their nondisabled classmates?
- c. How do they perceive their interactions with their teachers?
- d. What could their experiences imply for IE policy and implementation for CYWD?

In Chapter 3, I discuss the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that help me tease out the exclusionary impacts of integration on CYWD, specifically how it reinforces their segregation through essentialization of normality and magnification of their impairment. Chapter 4 demonstrates how integration deprives CYWD of opportunities for meaningful participation and fair recognition of their academic abilities. Chapter 5 considers how integration fosters a hostile learning environment, strains CYWD’s interactions with other learners, and ultimately devalues CYWD. Lastly, I present policy and research implications, along with participants’ practical suggestions for creating a more inclusive schooling system for CYWD.

But first, I explain in the succeeding section how I employed an innovative research approach to take CYWD’s perspectives into account.

Chapter 2

Problematizing IE through CYWD Perspectives: Online Participatory Research in a Pandemic

The Covid 19 crisis challenged me to make the most of virtual platforms and task-based methods in enabling participants to creatively and critically reflect on their lived experiences (Punch 2002, Cook et al. 2012), which is crucial for generating counter-hegemonic perspectives (Kindon et al. 2007) on IE. Facebook (FB) Messenger and Google Meet were vital online communication tools in the time of a pandemic and also served as accessible and easily retrievable data archives.⁶

2.1 Virtual reflective PAR

This participatory approach is more “reflective” than “action-oriented”, because the activities (done offline, but jointly made sense of online), triggered meaningful conversations that could serve as a precursor to future implementation of more concrete projects commonly expected in PAR done face-to-face (McTaggart 1989).

I employed snowball sampling, (King et al. 2019) with personal contacts referring me to/connecting me with 15 participants: three grade school students with intellectual disability (one 10-year old male; one 11-year old female and one 18-year old female); seven deaf/mute high school students (three 18-year old males; one 17-year old female; two 18-year old females, one 21-year old female) and five blind alumni (one 20-year old male; three 23-year old females; and one 27-year old female).⁷

The participants are all from the “north” or parts of Luzon region which have relatively stable internet and cellular networks. They are also from relatively stable socioeconomic backgrounds, with only one of the three grade school participants and two of the seven high school participants coming from poorer contexts. However, I did not meet any student with physical disability, which already speaks volumes about inclusivity in terms of access to school. The sampling coverage of my study is largely shaped by the logistical need to do things virtually in light of the pandemic, so further research should therefore incorporate CYWD’s perspectives from remote and underserved areas of Luzon (and the other two regions, Visayas and Mindanao), and those who face more difficult circumstances in accessing education and other social services.

I individually communicated with the students with intellectual disability after our initial contact in the group chat created by grade school SPED Teachers Karina and Lorna⁸. However, only one of the participants had her own tablet and was consistently active online, while the other two were dependent on their older sisters/guardians to be able to communicate with me. It was also through the group chat created by high school SPED Teacher Maricel that I was able to chat with the deaf/mute

⁶ I created a password-protected FB messenger account solely for this study.

⁷ See Appendix 2 for participant vignettes and selected photos of their artworks, along with their schools’ profiles.

⁸ Pseudonyms are used to protect teachers’ identities.

participants. However, I was not able to chat with them individually, because they were more responsive to their sign language-proficient teacher. Meanwhile, the SPED teachers for the blind (from the same high school), Teacher Linda, sent me the names of their alumni. I searched for the alumni's profiles and messaged them directly. I created a group chat with them and was able to chat with or call them individually thereafter. They all voluntarily participated, and gave me verbal permission to record our individual/collective discussions and include their personal stories and insights (along with photos and content of their artworks/journal entries), in my research paper (Ebrahim 2008, Graham et al. 2013).

I specifically asked them to choose from a set of activities⁹ they could do in the comfort of their homes to customize their engagement with the study to their liking (Punch 2002). They also chose from a set of prompts which served as triggers to rich, meaningful conversations about their schooling experiences. This flexibility reduced the risk of homogenizing the participants as it took into consideration their multiple communication styles (Gutiérrez 2020) and varying stories and insights. Their participation lasted for approximately three to four weeks. Before each activity, I also asked for their verbal assent, since informed consent/assent is not a one-time but an ongoing process necessary at each stage to fully ensure voluntary participation (Ebrahim 2008).

They answered one/two prompts via their selected task each week. During weekdays, they worked on the task offline, and sent photos of their artworks/recordings to me before Friday or Saturday. During weekends, the participants shared the meanings of or stories behind their outputs through our individual storytelling sessions (Caxaj 2015). The lag between their output creation and the storytelling sessions gave them time to really delve into their memories and recall important details. While they did so, I worked on transcribing the audio recordings, translating the transcripts and their journal entries/pertinent chat responses into English, and reflecting on the previous week's discussion and outputs.

2.2 Task-based activities

The creative and fun activities helped participants express themselves on their own terms (Kindon et al. 2007) and with sufficient time for deep reflection (Mayaba and Wood 2015), which traditional qualitative methods would not be able to offer (Gudyanga and Matamba 2015). The emotional and affective data (Kindon et al. 2007) from their artworks and journals also help counter the often logistical narratives on IE (Slee 2001, Whitburn 2016).

Drawing and collaging enabled the grade school and high school participants to not feel conscious or intimidated (Chikoko and Khanare 2012, Leitch 2008, Williams 2002), since these are very familiar materials used in their classes (Swain 2010). Both activities also boosted their confidence in expressing their thoughts and feelings especially during post-activity storytelling (Caxaj 2015), since attention is focused on their IE-related artwork interpretations (Alexander et al. 2007) and not "themselves."

Keeping a journal (Ebrahim 2008), photovoice (Kaplan et al. 2011) vlogs or participatory videos (Cardus-Font 2009) were also performed by the deaf/mute students. In their final week, the

⁹ See Appendix 3 for a tabulation of participants' chosen activities and prompts.

deaf/mute participants also submitted a diagram of “what works, what did not work and what could work” in many aspects of their schooling (Alexander et al. 2007). Both the grade school and high school participants also performed participatory mapping (Literat 2013), which helped them reflect on how physical space/facilities and transportation/long commutes affected their schooling.

Storytelling (Caxaj 2015) and audio journal (Ebrahim 2008) were the blind participants’ most preferred activities, as recording audio on FB Messenger was very convenient because of built-in screen readers on their laptops or cellphones. I was also able to conduct collective discussions with them through Google Meet¹⁰ because they have more stable internet connections compared to the younger participants. This discussion is different from focus group discussions (FGDs) which tend to generate individual narratives even though the topic is discussed collectively (King et al. 2019). Our collective discussions instead created a coherent narrative, with the participants coming up with practical suggestions towards a more inclusive education for present and future students with disability.

2.3 Supplementary activities and data analysis

I also conducted online in-depth interviews with three regular teachers, three SPED teachers, two parents and chatted with one of the participants’ non-disabled classmates. Their insights added more depth to the participants’ contexts and experiences. Throughout the project, I also kept an online reflective diary (Nieuwenhuis 2010) using Google Docs, to keep track of my observations, reflections and emerging themes from discussions, which all greatly informed my analyses.

I only manually coded the translated transcripts and created “open codes”, “axial codes” and “in-vivo codes” (DeCuir-Gunby et al. 2011: 138-139, 146) to make sense of participants’ introductory stories and insights during the first week. I eventually conducted “emotion coding”, “values coding”, and “evaluation coding” (Miles et al. 2014: 81-82) during the next three weeks because the participants at this point were already sharing how they felt during classes, how they perceived being a student with disability in a formal school, and how they think school and classroom practices have failed them and what could work better. I synthesized these codes/themes and came up with “analytic memos” (Miles et al. 2014: 97-98), which I used for higher level of data analysis and for writing the narratives that constituted my findings.

The strength of this virtual reflective PAR is that I had a longer period of contact with participants without being too invasive.¹¹ The online-offline time lag or emotional/mental breather or space we provided each other each week also enabled me to deeply reflect, ask better questions and engage in deeper conversations. I was also able to ask participants for clarifications on their artwork interpretations/journal entries or ask follow-up questions about their particular insights or experiences that I failed to grasp during our preceding discussions via chat/video messages/video calls.

¹⁰ Google Meet’s audio during group calls is more stable compared to FB Messenger.

¹¹ During the first two weeks, I was worried that some participants might just suddenly stop responding because it is easy to cut off communication online. But their genuine interest in the study is I think what kept them engaged.

2.4 Methodological reflections: Exercising reflexivity and situated ethics¹²

My mother’s experiences as a physically disabled student— how she felt out-of-place in school because of her polio, sparked a curiosity in me. She was also not actively involved in my and my twin sister’s schooling, and would often miss significant events (i.e. recognition day, parent-teacher meetings, competitions) due to mobility difficulties. This painful phase made me ponder how much more difficult it is for PWDs themselves to make the most of their academic life. Although I did not get to meet a student with physical impairment, my participants still helped me understand how institutions constrained my mother as a younger person, and how the same institutions (albeit in a different generation) negatively impacted her life and the next generations of CYWD students.

Figure 2.1
Reacting to Dina Jane’s video through Messenger’s stickers



As a 26-year old, “able-bodied,” “hearing,” “sighted” and “non-intellectually disabled” researcher, I exercised sensitivity, reflexivity and flexibility (Graham et al. 2013, Kindon et al. 2007, Punch 2002) to subdue the potential unequal power dynamic that may arise due to my “able gaze” (Gannicott 2018: 214). By drawing from my “insider” identity as a fellow Filipino and by establishing my “credibility”

¹² Identifiers in screenshots are blurred to protect participants’ identities.

through (but also becoming cautious) of my positionality as a student and researcher from a European university (Adu-Ampong and Adams 2019: 583, 585), I was able to establish good initial rapport with the participants. Meanwhile, by highlighting my positionality as an “acceptable incompetent” (Hammersley and Atkinson, cited in Ebrahim 2008: 294) and “approachable”, “eager learner” (Adu-Ampong and Adams 2019: 585, 588), I was able to subdue my “able gaze” (Gannicott 2018: 214) and even meaningfully engage with and deeply understand the participants despite being an “outsider” (Adu-Ampong and Adams 2019: 583) in their “differently abled” world (Leshota and Sefotho 2020: 1), and despite the fact that we only interacted from our laptop or cellphone screens.

However, although I have established good rapport with the participants, kept them from harm, guaranteed their anonymity and gained support from their teachers and parents/guardians (Graham et al. 2013, Punch 2002), I still faced unforeseen circumstances which required me to practice “situated ethics” (Ebrahim 2008: 289):

1. Children’s mood swings

The younger participants had an unpredictable mood. At some point, I felt they were beginning to get bored, and I regained their interest after sending follow-up questions that helped them further reminisce about their other thought-provoking experiences. I also requested the guardians to encourage the participants to just have fun. FB Messenger’s emoji and reaction stickers and personalized avatars were also very helpful in making children feel appreciated (see Figure 2.1). I would also occasionally send them videos of myself asking how they are doing and thanking them for their drawings and messages.

I thought that doing PAR face-to-face would have made everything easier, but in hindsight, being physically distant was beneficial because it made the children feel less pressured and conscious in doing their drawings and collages. I also would not know how to calm them down if they had thrown a tantrum or suddenly withdrawn from the activities, so having their guardians (who know them better) assist me in keeping them engaged was an advantage.

When their internet connection became unstable, I came up with alternative ways to still keep contact with them. I asked their guardians to help the children make videos of themselves explaining their drawings/collages because video calls were simply unintelligible. After receiving and watching these videos, I sent follow-up questions which they also responded to with videos (see Figure 2.2).

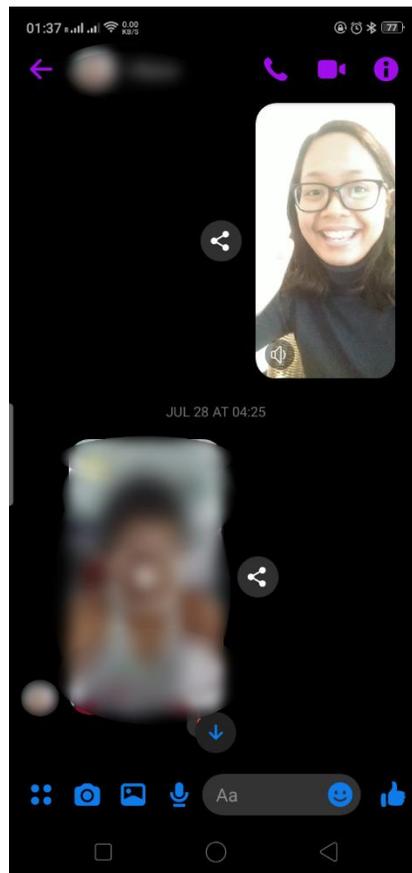
Meanwhile, during the times we were able to communicate via video call, I had to be patient because they easily got distracted. I had to follow their train of thought and creatively find a way to bring the conversation back to what we intended to discuss at the beginning. Sometimes, I fail at bringing the topic back again, so I let it go and try to talk about it the next time or send the question through chat instead.

2. Sign language barrier

Teacher Maricel explained the instructions to the deaf/mute participants each week, and they were very prompt with their outputs, partly because they felt like they were submitting homework assigned to them by their former teacher. Although I did not like the idea of the participants being “pressured”, Teacher Maricel’s presence and sign language skills were indispensable. I replied or

reacted to their artworks using FB Messenger's emoji and reaction stickers, but Teacher Maricel had to individually contact them to explain in sign my longer and more complex questions. She therefore had already "filtered" my instructions and questions. Being conversant with sign language would have made it easier for me to directly communicate with the students, but I also figured that Teacher Maricel's presence was a source of comfort for the students because I was still practically a complete stranger to them, especially since we only interact online. Looking back, it was because of her mediation that the students trusted me and felt more comfortable in sharing their thoughts and feelings.

Figure 2.2
Communicating with Martin through video messages



Both the students with intellectual disability and deaf/mute participants therefore needed guidance from their guardians/teachers and I was initially afraid that these adults' presence will hold them back from fully expressing themselves. However, I was able to mitigate the adult and child power dynamics (Burke 2008) by reminding these adults to relinquish their authority and encourage the students instead to not feel compelled to provide correct/acceptable responses (Ebrahim 2008, Punch 2002).

3. Poking emotional wounds

The blind alumni participants were very honest in answering my questions and generous in sharing their critical reflections on their schooling experiences. Individual storytelling sessions each week

enabled us to get to know each other really well, and during the collective discussions, we were already very comfortable with each other. However, the emotional intimacy I developed with them also made me feel afraid that I might be unknowingly poking emotional wounds inflicted by their past unpleasant experiences (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). I expressed these to the participants but they assured me that the sessions actually gave them an opportunity to reconcile with their past and to heal and draw lessons and inspirations from them. I am a sensitive person and their stories deeply affected me, so I decided to send them links to comforting and peaceful songs to see to it that each individual storytelling session would end on a positive note (see Figure 2.3).

I also did not delve into their personal biographies nor elaborate the severity of their disabilities, since the focus is not on their individual impairments per se, but more on external factors- social practices, environment and attitudes that shaped their school life.

Figure 2.3
Cassandra thanking me for sharing a sweet song via audio message



2.5 An innovative approach

Overall, virtual reflective PAR effectively enabled me to co-produce knowledge with the participants (Kindon et al. 2007, McTaggart 1989) despite the limitations posed by the pandemic. Their stories are rich with insights on how structural and attitudinal barriers contributed to their exclusion from within

the school and classroom. Specific conceptual and analytical tools, however, are needed to further make sense of what their lived realities imply for IE policy and practice, and these are elaborated in the succeeding chapter.

Chapter 3

Beyond Physical Presence: IE in Theory and Practice

In this chapter, I link concepts, theories or approaches on childhood and youth, disability, education and inclusion, and from this create an analytical framework for evidencing inclusivity within schools and classrooms. Such a tool can help ascertain the impact of current policies, and expose exclusions and deconstruct schooling systems— all necessary to implement a more authentic IE for CYWD and other marginalized learners (Kearney 2011).

3.1 Linking childhood and youth, disability, inclusion and education

Social scientists have long problematized the place of children and youth in an adult-dominated society which imposes ambiguous and often contradicting notions of childhood and youth (Cheney 2007). However, what is clear is that childhood and youth are not simply determined by age nor are homogeneous categories, but are socially and culturally constructed (James and James 2004, Comaroff and Comaroff 2005). CYWD uncover untapped facets of these concepts, since their experiences destabilize and trouble essentialized and Western-centric academic or media discourses that frame childhood and youth simply as carefree life phases (Cheney 2007, Slater 2013).

However, children and youth studies still have a long way to go in providing a deeper understanding of the multiplicity of childhoods and youth with disability (Curran and Runswick-Cole 2014, Slater 2013). Furthermore, childhood studies often employ deficit language, positioning children with disability merely as having tragic lives or deviating from social or cultural expectations on childhood development (Moore, Beazley and Maelzer, cited in Curran and Runswick-Cole 2014). Meanwhile, research on youth employ intersectional approaches, but other social categories usually eclipse disability in critical discussions (Slater 2013). Youth with disability are also often depicted as either passive members of society or as less capable of meeting normative adulthood standards, in contrast to their nondisabled counterparts who are usually framed as active social agents (but also often portrayed as overconsumers, rebels or troublemakers) (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005, Slater, 2013).

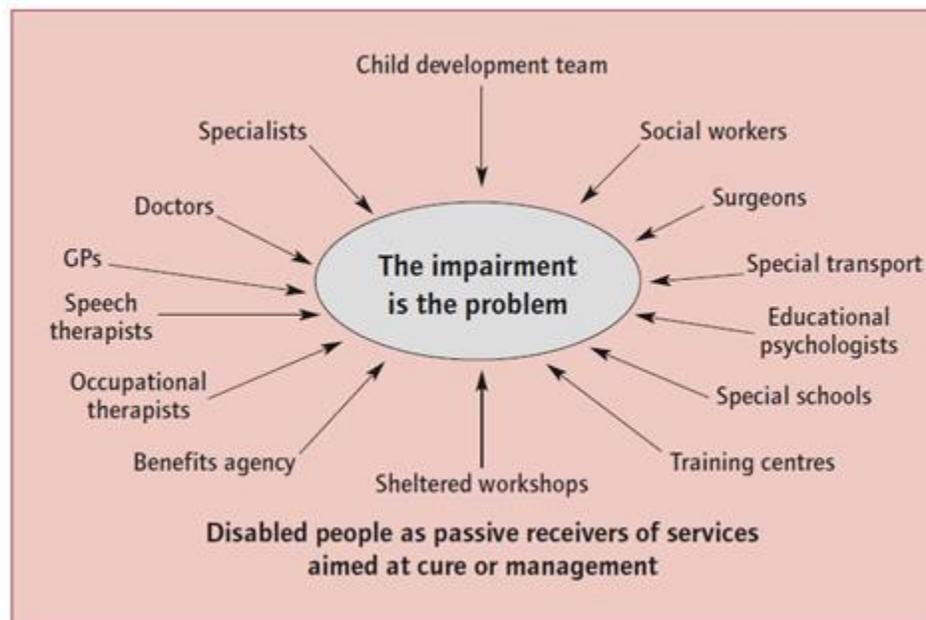
I seek to respond to Disabled Children and Childhood Studies' call to locate CYWD in the broader discourse on hegemonic or normative assumptions about childhood and youth (Curran and Runswick-Cole 2014, Slater 2013), by highlighting and scrutinizing my participants' multifaceted embodied experiences in the context of inclusion (or exclusion) in education.

In the next subsections, I first explain the fundamental models on disability and how it links to inclusion and education. I then draw from Critical Disability Studies to extend the discussion of exclusions through the concepts of ableism and disablism. I argue that integration reinforces ableism, leads to exclusions/disablism, and ultimately hinders the deconstruction of schooling systems crucial for implementing a more authentic IE for CYWD. In the process, I demonstrate that normative conceptualizations on childhood and youth with disability apparent in ableist schooling systems impede the development of inclusive practices and cultures.

3.2 Foundational perspectives on disability and educational inclusion

The three basic lenses on disability have implications for the framing of CYWD and the kind of education offered for them (Rieser 2012). Charity thinking frames CYWD as “objects of pity”, “support and rehabilitation”, and in so doing encourages patronising attitudes and paternalism (Rieser 2012: 36). This perspective brings forth segregated education, isolating CYWD from other learners deemed more capable and autonomous (Rieser 2012).

Figure 3.1
The medical model of disability



Source: Rieser (2012: 41).

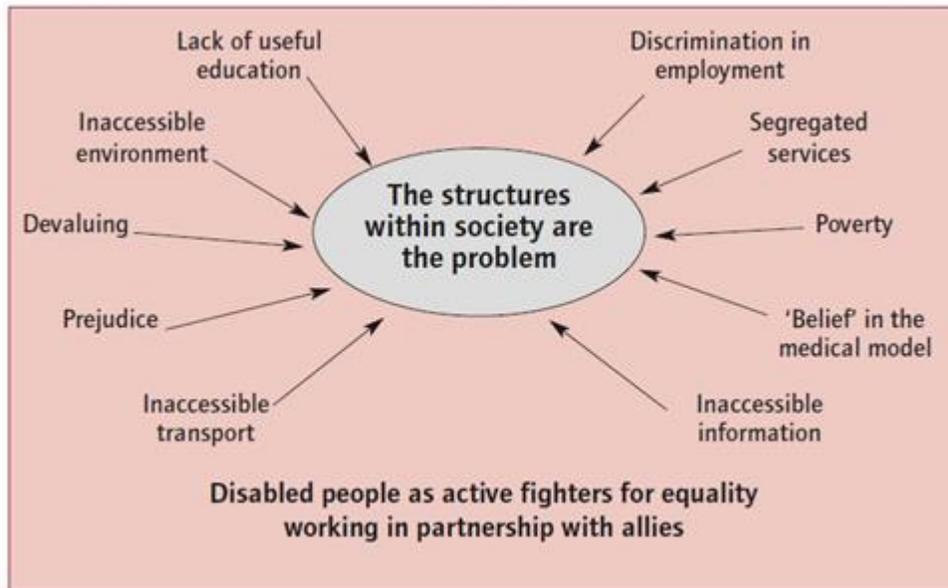
The medical model (see Figure 3.1), meanwhile, frames CYWD as defective “patients”, or “cases” to be “cured”, “normalized” or “managed” (Rieser 2012: 36-37). It upholds an integrated education, wherein special education (SPED) support is provided for the CYWD to keep up with the non-disabled— pathologizing and stigmatizing the former in the process (Rieser 2012).

Lastly, the social model (see Figure 3.2) frames CYWD as being constrained by the interaction between their impairments and the environmental, social or organizational barriers in society. It claims to foster IE, since it requires the removal of such barriers (Slee 2008, Snoddon and Underwood 2018), to enhance CYWD’s rights to, within and through education (Okwany 2020)¹³. IE would therefore not only entail access to education (rights to), but also a systemic revamping of pedagogies, curricula, and assessment strategies and improvement of facilities to provide the best learning experience for

¹³ Prof. Okwany tackled these in her online lecture, “Critical Exclusions” for the 4311 Children, Youth and Development class (12 May 2020).

CYWD (rights within). IE would also enable them to fully participate in other sectors even after graduating (rights through) (Okwany 2020).

Figure 3.2
The social model of disability



Source: Rieser (2012: 41).

In sum, while the charity and medical model puts the blame and responsibility for change on the individual, the social model shifts focus away from individual impairment and demands systemic and attitudinal changes to radically overcome obstacles to CYWD's social participation. However, I argue that although the social model rightly frames disability as a structural problem, it fails to fully explain *why* and *how* it continues to be so.¹⁴

3.3 Critical disability studies

I draw from Critical Disability Studies (CDS) to address the abovementioned gap, because CDS employs more dynamic approaches which intersect bodily impairment and disability with culture, power and other pertinent social stratification categories (Goodley 2013). Specifically, CDS scrutinizes how the abovementioned elements overlap and play out in the exacerbation of PWD's social oppression (Goodley et al. 2019).¹⁵

To elaborate, the social model tackles the politics of disability but does not explicitly and elaborately flesh out the discursive underpinnings of biological impairment and disability (Goodley et al, 2019). CDS fills this theoretical void by drawing from postmodernism and poststructuralism, arguing

¹⁴ See Appendix 5 for an overview of the lenses tackled in this chapter.

¹⁵ CDS has other strands but I only draw from the basic discussion on ableism and disablism to streamline my analysis to disability and age. Further studies could therefore intersect other categories (e.g. ethnicity, race, gender and economic status).

that the persistence of PWD's oppression is due to unequal power relations and cultural constructions of impairment and disability that reproduce and legitimize PWD's lower social status. To illustrate, a neoliberal, capitalist society would uphold particular social standards, privileging someone who is heterosexual, white, and devoid of physical, sensory or cognitive impairment (Campbell 2009, Gannicott 2018) Those who do not match these qualities are therefore considered as the "Other" (Gannicott 2018: 213, Goodley 2013: 637).

This "othering" results to exclusions (Gannicott 2018) which CDS terms as "disablism" (Thomas 2007: 73), defined as the enforcement of social constraints on PWDs that often lead to the straining of their emotional and mental well-being. Disablism, in turn, is predicated on the reinforcement of "ableism" (Campbell 2009: 5), which refers to cultural or institutional values or practices that uphold an idealized version of an individual, based on physical and cognitive standards (i.e. independence, rationality, and sensory, cognitive or physical robustness) (Goodley et al. 2019, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015).

Ableism is therefore inextricably tied to the concept of "norms", which are impositions of ideal ways of being and behaving (Rutland et al. 2005: 451). Linking the two concepts together, what is considered "normal" therefore, is not natural, because "normality" is brought to life only by marking particular bodies as "abnormal" (Goggin et al. 2017: 337). "Ableist normativity" or "normality" (Campbell 2009: 4) serves to privilege one group (those devoid of impairment or considered as "normal") and marginalize another (those with impairment or considered as "abnormal") (Campbell 2009, Goggin et al. 2017). It also becomes grounds to justify the latter's exclusion as the "Other" (Gannicott 2018: 213), mainly to suppress their supposed tendency to interrupt the dominant group's enjoyment of rights or privileges (Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Graham and Slee 2013, Kearney 2011).

The ableist society reproduces ableist norms through cultural representations and deficit language (Campbell 2009, Gannicott 2018, Goodley et al. 2019) that mark those with impairment as different or deficient (Campbell 2009, Runswick-Cole 2011, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015) or label or stigmatize them as "problematic", "outsiders", or "deviant" (Gannicott 2018: 214). Society reproduces disability as it constantly subjects those with impairment under its "able gaze", which positions them as less desirable, less normal, and less capable (Gannicott 2018: 214). Such an imposition forces them to either: (1) diminish their difference and live up to standards of "ableist normativity" or "normality" (Campbell 2009: 4), or (2) to perform or embody the "Otherness" that society imputes on them (Gannicott 2018: 213-214). Ableism also allows for standards of normality to remain implicit and uncontested, since once questioned, inequalities could be exposed that could disrupt the status quo (Campbell 2009, Ferguson 1992).

3.5 Integration guising as IE excludes by reinforcing ableism

I argue that the deep entrenchment of ableism in our society is mirrored by schooling systems' persistent exclusion or disablement of CYWD (Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Kearney 2011, Slee and Allan 2005). Attempts to implement IE or include CYWD are predominantly nominal and unproductive because in many contexts, it is practiced merely as physical integration in a system mainly tailored for the nondisabled, which therefore reinforces ableism and devalues CYWD's difference from within (Kearney 2011, Ruairc, 2013).

Integration is deceitful and tricky because it simultaneously employs the language of “sameness” and “difference” (Coleman-Fountain 2017: 766)— framing CYWD as essentially similar to other children (by placing them in the same educational setting), but also as still fundamentally different (because CYWD’s “deficiencies” render them in dire need of extra/different kind of assistance) (Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Rieser 2012, Ruairc 2013).

Integration problematically asserts CYWD’s “sameness” with the majority by “assimilating” (Slee 2001: 388) them into a neoliberal schooling system which implicitly deems those without impairment as easier to educate, or more “educable” (Holland 2015: 45). At the same time, integration’s labelling of CYWD as different or deficient (Campbell 2009, Goodley 2011, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015) reproduces the medical and charity thinking on disability, encouraging the “normalization” of CYWD and paternalistic or patronising attitudes towards them (Rieser 2012). More importantly, it reinforces ableist normativity (the ideal student is one without defects) (Campbell, 2009, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Rieser 2012), by categorizing students as either “SPED” (with impairment) or “regular” (without impairment), and by employing deficit language that stigmatizes CYWD in the process. Integration therefore magnifies CYWD’s deficiencies (Campbell 2009, Goodley 2011, Slee 2001) and dehumanizes them (Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015)— framing them as incomplete beings due to their impairment from the outset (Campbell 2009; Kearney, 2011, Ruairc 2013).

I also argue that integration’s conflicting assertion of CYWD’s likeness and difference from the nondisabled reproduces ableism because it forces CYWD to either: (1) suppress or control their embodied difference to conform to “normality” being upheld in school, or (2) to internalize and claim their “Otherness” by submitting to disabling practices (Gannicott 2018: 213-214). “Ableist integration” therefore implies that CYWD must adapt ways of doing that are often incompatible to their corporeal being, but also implies that their supposed deficiency or incompleteness could disqualify them from particular activities or tasks. Such a tension leads to disablism- limiting CYWD’s participation and straining their mental and emotional well-being (Thomas 2007), ultimately hindering genuine inclusion within the school or classroom (Kearney 2011, Ruairc 2013).

As a policy, integration guising as IE therefore becomes merely “absorption” or “assimilation” (Slee 2001: 394, 388) of CYWD into regular schools or classes which are inherently selective or exclusionary (Slee 2008). In practice, integration masquerading as IE inevitably becomes a form of “reluctant schooling” (Slee 2001: 385) and a homogenizing experience for CYWD (Slater and Chapman 2015), since they are juxtaposed with those without impairment (Slee 2001, Rieser 2012), who are implicitly imposed as the ultimate standard they should strive to become (Runswick-Cole 2011, Snoddon and Underwood 2018). Exclusion or devaluation of CYWD’s embodied difference happens when they simply could not adapt or keep up with ableist standards (Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015).

3.6 Deconstructing educational inclusion by exposing exclusions

IE evokes and clamours for social justice— CYWD should be able to enjoy the benefits of formal education the way nondisabled students do (Kearney 2011, Ruairc 2013, Okwany 2020). However, CYWD’s rights will remain less prioritized in a society and a schooling system that regards impairment as an anomaly (Campbell 2009, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Slee 2008) mainly because of the need to uphold neoliberal, market-based interests in education (Freire 1996, Holland 2015, Runswick-

Cole 2011). Addressing this tension would therefore require deconstructing the core structure of the schooling system itself (Illich 1971, Levinson and Holland 1996, Slee 2001, Slee 2008).

However, this is an insurmountable task, and IE scholars admit that it is more feasible to do the deconstruction from the ground up by uncovering inherent exclusionary school practices and cultures (i.e. language, pedagogies, curricula, attitudes) (Kearney 2011), which are often rife in integrated setups (Ruairc 2013). Doing so could ultimately contribute to the gradual restructuring of schooling systems that would be genuinely inclusive not just for CYWD, but even for other marginalized groups (Corbett and Slee 2000, Kearney 2011, Slee and Allan 2005).

3.7 Evidencing IE in the classroom/school setting

The “Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (IPAA) Framework” (Florian 2014, Florian and Spratt 2013) and “Index for Inclusion” (Booth and Ainscow 2002)¹⁶— both generated from empirical evaluations of the inclusivity of teachers and schools’ practices, provide a starting point for exposing the inclusive or exclusionary characteristics of schooling systems at the classroom/school level.

I linked the critical discussion on CYWD and education in the previous subsections with the three aspects of inclusion identified by Anderson et al. (2014: 25): “participation, achievement and value”. I then grouped the Index for Inclusion and IPAA’s indicators of inclusion or inclusivity (Booth and Ainscow 2002: 39-41; Florian 2014: 290-292) according to the said aspects. Next, I revised and merged them to fit into the perspective of CYWD, and for brevity and coherence. The end product is what I would call “Inclusive Education for CYWD in Action” (IECA) framework¹⁷, which I used in analysing the lived experiences of my participants, employing CYS and CDS concepts and theoretical lenses in the process.

3.8 Treading on the path forward

Overall, tensions in IE implementation persist in international contexts because inclusion is often framed and practiced as integration which fragments education into “regular” and “special”, reinforcing exclusionary practices and attitudes in the process (Slee 2001, Slee 2008, Norwich, 2013). There is evidence that mere partial or full integration actually derails learning and development of deaf/mute students (Holland 2015), socially segregates students with intellectual disability and leads to their experience of bullying (Campbell 2009); reinforces the dependency of physically disabled students (Walker 2015); and keeps CYWD from gaining formal qualifications that could enable them to maximize opportunities outside the school and classroom (Whitburn 2016).

In the Philippines, the few studies that tackle IE also indirectly point to integration’s negative impact on the interactions between CYWD and their nondisabled classmates (Labrague 2018, Ortega, 2017) and to bullying and discrimination of CYWD in schools (Laguna and Villegas 2019, Nanwani 2018, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019). Teachers, parents, nondisabled students, local officials and policy implementers’ insufficient knowledge on inclusion or negative attitudes towards disability (Muega

¹⁶ See Appendix 4 for both.

¹⁷ See Appendix 6.

2016; Nanwani 2018, Ortega 2017, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019) also further foster ableist normativity within schools that make the move towards authentic IE all the more challenging.

However, it is these global and local realities that motivated me to focus on CYWD's lived experiences. Their voices, informed by the conceptual and analytical tools discussed above, strongly counter the dehumanization (Cheney 2007, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Ruairc 2013) inherent in ableist, deficit-oriented narratives in CYS (Curran and Runswick-Cole 2014, Slater 2013). My attempt to evidence IE in my own country is also a contribution to the decolonization of CDS which traditionally draws from Global Northern contexts (Goodley et al. 2019). I also respond to CDS' call to open avenues for praxis because insights from this study could possibly contribute to the alleviation of disablism (Goodley et al. 2019, Thomas 2007), since my participants not only point out what is ineffective in the current system (see chapters 4 and 5) but also express what constitutes effective learning and a truly inclusive schooling for them (see last chapter).

Chapter 4

Integrated, but Barely Included: Strained Participation and Restrained Potential

In this chapter, I describe through my participants' lived experiences how integration guising as IE policy restricts CYWD's school participation and stunts their academic growth in practice. I first demonstrate how integration's reinforcement of ableism frames CYWD as deficient and hinders them from becoming independent learners. Then I discuss how such a stigmatization leads to their segregation and exclusion in the classroom. I end with how these impact CYWD's learning attitudes, emotional and mental well-being and academic potential.

4.1 "I am SPED": Ableism from within

The participants' mere presence in a classroom full of students devoid of physical, cognitive and sensory impairment challenges the bodily norms implicitly reinforced in an ableist schooling system (Campbell 2009, Goodley 2013). However, the policy of integration already positions the CYWD as "deficient" or "less normal" compared to their peers from the outset (Gannicott 2018, Runswick-Cole 2011), as it explicitly labels and dichotomizes the student body into the "regulars" and the "SPED". CYWD's constant subjection to the "able gaze" (Gannicott 2018: 213) of their teachers and classmates, therefore compels them to conceal their embodied difference by attempting to perform like a "normal" student (Gannicott 2018, Goggin et al. 2017). The deficit language and attempts of CYWD to live up to ableist normativity (Campbell 2009) within the school and classroom is apparent and preserved in daily interactions. However, it is not only the teachers or nondisabled students who adopt such a language or uphold such standards, but even the CYWD themselves, affirming that an ableist society does force those with disability to embody their "otherness" in some contexts (Gannicott 2018: 213-214).

For instance, in their journal entries/messages, the deaf/mute primarily referred to themselves as "SPED" or "hearing impaired". Anabelle writes, "When I graduated from elementary, my mother wondered where I could attend high school because I am a 'special child' or a 'SPED'. I need to attend a school that also accommodates the 'deaf' or the 'hearing impaired'..." The blind alumni and participants with intellectual disability also referred to themselves primarily in terms of their impairment ("SPED", "blind", VI or "visually impaired"). Anabelle implies that not all schools "accept" students like her, because her impairment makes her "different" from the ones schools "normally" accept.¹⁸

Integration's medicalized labels also serve to reify CYWD's marginal position in the ableist school or classroom (Florian 2014, Kearney 2011). This is demonstrated by Victor, who even hinted at the homogenization (Slater and Chapman 2015) CYWD experience within the classroom, "Even though we are like this, they don't treat us differently; instead, we also become like normal children. They are doing everything so that we can learn and keep up with the regular class. They make sure that we really

¹⁸ Which also implies that the country in practice fails to guarantee even mere access to/CYWD's right to education (Okwany 2020).

understand each topic that they are teaching us. Our SPED teacher is very supportive in making us understand lessons through sign language.” Victor’s subtle depreciation of himself in juxtaposition with “normal” children shows that even the deaf/mute students have internalized integration’s positioning of their being as “problematic” or “deviant” (Gannicott 2018: 214) especially because their impairment requires teachers to “do everything” just to help them “keep up”.

This, however, is reminiscent of the medical thinking on disability that reduces CYWD to their diagnosis (Kearney 2011, Rieser 2012, Ruairc 2013). Nevertheless, their physical integration into the classes attended by the “normal” students is supposed to serve as a testament to their “sameness” with their nondisabled peers, and even Victor implied that they are expected to “become like” or perform the way their nondisabled counterparts do (Campbell 2009, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015). “Becoming like normal children”, however, creates tensions because CYWD therefore have to contend with a system which disfavours them from the very beginning. Formative assessments and pedagogies remain tailored solely for those without impairment, making it challenging for CYWD to meet ableist standards (Campbell 2009). But this is where SPED support comes into the picture, as also hinted by Victor above.

One-on-one sessions with SPED teachers are the lifeline of the CYWD within an ableist schooling system, as Sandy implied, “SPED teachers help us go over the lessons or assignments that need to be submitted. They either record the assignments or unit tests or summative tests on a cassette tape or make a Braille version of it. The content of the workbooks is recorded in a cassette tape too, and each of us would get a chance to listen to the cassette and would then give it to the next student. No one at home could read or dictate the cassette tape to me, so it is during vacant periods that we do our assignments most of the time.”

However, this arrangement only reinforces CYWD’s dependency and puts them at the mercy of their SPED teachers. Without the latter’s support, it would nearly be impossible for them to meet school requirements. This finding therefore challenges the unquestioned valuing of SPED support (Inciong and Quijano 2004, Muega 2016, Yap and Adorio 2008) in our country, since participants show that it could actually (albeit unintentionally) hinder independent learning among CYWD. Furthermore, despite the SPED teachers’ assistance, some participants admitted that they still find it difficult to accomplish tasks and absorb what is being taught in class. At some point, Andrew (also deaf/mute), almost gave up: “... it crossed my mind that I do not want to go to school anymore, because I had a difficult time in lessons— especially in taking note of my lessons in my notebook. Second is doing my homework and doing outputs.” Such an “intervention” (Rieser 2012) retains CYWD’s presence in school, but is clearly not enough to make learning optimal for them (Okwany 2020).

Furthermore, SPED support will never enable CYWD to be on an equal footing with other learners, because classes at their core make learning convenient only for some (Kearney 2011, Rieser 2012). The “hearing” students, for instance, already have an edge over the deaf/mute because they do not struggle to understand instructions from their “regular” teachers. Andrew and his friends, meanwhile, are sometimes left clueless, since SPED teachers are also not always around to translate lessons for them in real time due to their regular teaching loads. Andrew shared, “SPED students like us cannot easily understand the lessons... Teachers should explain well and should not rush... Sometimes,

regular teachers forget that we are SPED students. Sometimes, they do not fully help us understand what needs to be done.”

Disregarding CYWD’s embodied difference is an indication that through the policy of integration, schools reinforce an ideal image of an “educable” student (Holland 2015: 45)— one who can easily grasp instructions or who simply “get it”. Integration also provides regular teachers a leeway to not feel strongly compelled to respond to CYWD’s needs in classes, since they can always depend on the SPED teachers to “follow-up” on them. The provision of SPED remedial sessions also makes it appear as though CYWD have no choice but to perform as well as the regulars do, because SPED teachers are assigned to assist them. However, the lack of SPED teachers who can consistently support them, as demonstrated by Andrew’s experience, already render the CYWD at a far disadvantage compared to their peers.

Figure 4.1 Andrew and his deaf/mute friends

Andrew writes that he is thankful for them for helping him finish Grade 10 and reach Grade 11, “They help me do my homework...They are the ones I am always with.”



The learning needs of the CYWD are also clearly less prioritized in an ableist schooling system, and even seating arrangements can be indicative of this reality. Marian recalled, “Often, us SPED sit at the back and our SPED teacher would sit beside us so that the teacher would not get distracted and so that we won’t disturb the hearing.” Victor added, “If the SPED teacher stands in front, the hearing will be distracted and won’t see what is written on the blackboard”. Andrew commented, however, that the current set-up is not conducive to learning (Booth and Ainscow 2002, Florian 2014), “I hope they could arrange it in such a way that we could focus well on our lessons.” CYWD in integrated classes therefore have to adjust so that they would not disrupt the learning of the majority (Campbell

2009, Graham and Slee 2013, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015), compromising their own learning in the process.

Although the participants remain thankful for the support of both their SPED and regular teachers and even their peers (see Figure 4.1), their experiences show that practicing IE as mere integration (which does not affirm and respond to difference) (Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Slee 2001, Slee 2008) makes it difficult for teachers to effectively engage students with a diverse range of abilities (Rieser 2012). School life inevitably becomes an ordeal for CYWD, since they cannot fully participate as they are, but are implicitly forced to perform like someone else.

Overall, integration merely assimilates CYWD into the ableist way of schooling and does not really include them (Slee 2001, Slee 2008, Slater and Chapman 2015). Integration forces them to be like the “normal” student through specific “interventions” such as separate SPED sessions, implicitly framing them as bodies whose deficiencies need to be “managed” or “normalized” (Rieser 2012: 36-37). This is antithetical to the essence of authentic IE (Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Kearney 2011, Rieser 2012). This, however, is not to say that individual support should not be provided, but that these sessions should not serve to isolate or be the highlight of CYWD’s schooling, which actually becomes the case for majority of the participants.

However, my participants’ experiences also confront Slee’s (2001: 386) assertion on the tendency of educators to frame IE as merely a “resource allocation” matter. Although I affirm that IE discussions should not solely be technical or logistical, the participants’ experiences showed that resources (both human and material) still largely impact the extent of their inclusion in education (i.e. the lack of skilled teachers who could consistently support them; lack of schools who accept those with impairment), especially in a developing country that struggles in providing quality education even for those without impairment (Briones et al. 2016, Eleweke and Rodda 2002).

Furthermore, accountability for learning is carried for the most part by the CYWD in a system that impinges on their independence as learners. Schools will inevitably blame their failure to adapt or “keep up” on their perceived inferior skills owing to their disability, and not on unfavourable learning conditions established and preserved through ableist integration (Campbell 2009, Rieser 2012, Ruairc 2013). In separate interviews, both SPED and regular teachers also confirmed that most CYWD’s grades are usually not on par with their nondisabled peers, but it is unclear whether this is a result of the students’ “inferior” capabilities, challenging schooling circumstances, or teachers’ mere presumptions about their abilities.

4.2 “I am exempted”: Disablism from within

The participants faced the paradoxical expectation to perform like a “normal” student but also be prematurely judged as simply incapable of performing tasks usually assigned to those without impairment. Some teachers predetermined their level of engagement in classes (Florian 2014) because they either perceived some activities as too impossible for CYWD to perform, or because they wanted to save the CYWD from the stress of performing a task considered too incompatible with their skillset.

This is reflective, however, of the patronising or paternalistic attitude stemming from charity thinking (Kearney 2011, Rieser 2012), which ultimately leads to CYWD's exclusion from within the classroom.

For instance, some teachers would group CYWD together in collective tasks/projects, oblivious to how this segregates them from the rest of the class. Teachers deemed this as convenient, since misunderstandings between CYWD would rarely occur due to the common language and skills they share with each other. However, evading inconvenience becomes a missed opportunity for CYWD to work collaboratively with other learners (Booth and Ainscow 2002, Florian 2014) and even to establish new connections, as what Victor remarked, "SPED students should be distributed, so that we can become good friends with others, and so that SPED students won't feel hesitant to make friends."

Furthermore, although CYWD feel the semblance of belongingness from being inside the same classroom, teachers occasionally give them "special", "different" or "alternative" projects or activities (Florian 2014) that serve as inescapable markers of their difference with the "regular" students. This segregation usually occurs in subjects that require demonstration of practical skills, such as in MAPEH, Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) and Home Economics (HE). The "alternative" tasks are not usually the most optimal for CYWD but are the most convenient to employ, since the ableist, standardized curriculum cannot provide a definitive yet flexible pedagogical guide in teaching and assessing CYWD alongside their nondisabled peers.

Therefore, CYWD are physically present, but nonetheless feel excluded from within, as what Cassandra implied, "For instance, in our school, when you say MAPEH, especially in Physical Education (PE), the blind are, nothing! No, we are not included. Then they will say, 'O okay, let's do it this way, just work on a project. Then we will just give you a passing grade. So, whenever it's PE time, you will just end up sitting on one corner. Then they are the only ones having PE. And you, you are just there...'"¹⁹

Teachers opt for alternatives because there is no other way to assess CYWD numerically. Conflict therefore arises when teachers assess both students with and without impairment with the same criteria, even when they have done starkly different projects. A parent of another student complained because Marjorie got a good grade in HE, while her "sighted" daughter only got 78. "How did she get 87 eh she's not even sewing because she's blind?!" So, my teacher explained everything and showed all her records..." The challenge, yet again, is engaging all students without being partial to any learner, and also implementing a curriculum that is not solely anchored on numerical evaluation of skills (Florian 2014).

Teachers, however, are sometimes just unable to come up with alternatives and therefore choose to "exempt" their CYWD students from particular activities. This "exemption," however, is merely a euphemism for disqualification and exclusion, as what Marjorie implied, "During their practical exams, in dancing, I can hear the instruction of the teacher, on how to do it. But they say, I should not do it, I will just be exempted. I can just stay in the SPED room. They tell me not to attend the class. Of

¹⁹ In their second year, some of the blind alumni participated in a choir, and this served as the "long-term" "alternative" to MAPEH.

course, I feel sad... I will just feel better once I hear the words, “Goodbye and thank you”, because at least, I will feel again that I belong. Because the subject is not MAPEH anymore.”

Disablism in this context— the imposition of restrictions on what CYWD can or cannot do within the classroom, therefore impacts not only the extent of their participation, but also their emotional and well-being (Thomas 2007). Cassandra argued that such limitations made them constantly question their capabilities, the same way their teachers doubted them, “There will eventually come a point that they will see it with their own eyes, ‘Ay, it can be done.’ Then they will realize, ‘Why have I judged her? Why have I deprived her of the chance?’”

These findings therefore nuance the discrimination CYWD face in schools that local studies have touched upon but not delved into (Laguna and Villegas 2019, Muega 2016, Nanwani 2018, Ortega 2017, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019) and even hint at the far-reaching consequences of such exclusions on CYWD’s well-being that others have alluded to but have not fully captured (Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Watson 2018, Whitburn 2016). This is because their stories underscore that CYWD are not just deprived of the opportunities for maximum participation, but also the chance to realize their full potential. The ableist school, in particular, can also make CYWD feel that sometimes there is no point in getting back up and motivating one’s self to try again.

4.3 “I am mediocre”: Stunted from within

The policy and practice of integration makes participants feel underestimated, or stigmatized as incapable, helpless or mediocre. However, this is not because they are truly impotent, but because learning and assessment strategies in a “one size fits all” system (De Haan 2000: 10) are designed to nurture the learning of those without disability more than CYWDs. At this point, I have therefore already established that ableist integration is preoccupied with CYWD’s deficiencies (Campbell 2009, Runswick-Cole 2011), which in turn causes teachers to have lowered expectations for them (Booth and Ainscow 2002, Florian 2014).

Carmela’s story, in particular, extends local and international IE scholarship’s direct or indirect assertion on integration’s fixation on CYWD’s deficiency (Campbell 2009, Kearney 2011, Muega 2016, Nanwani 2018, Runswick-Cole 2011, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019, Slee 2001, Slee 2008), because her account shows how such a fixation can rob CYWD of their full potential, undermine their well-being, and deplete their self-confidence.

Carmela vividly recalled being expected to underperform or exhibit mediocrity because of her disability, “... because there was stigma in Grade 5 or Grade 6, there was a teacher who told us that, you will fall off the honor roll, because that was the history of previous blind students... but I thought, ‘Why did you have to say that, when people are different? That happening to them does not mean that it could happen to everyone.’” Predicting students’ academic future based solely on their impairment is indicative of ableism (Campbell 2009, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015). I argue, however, that the “downfall” of previous students is not a reflection of CYWD’s inferior skills, but of the schooling system’s inability to foster learning conditions that will sustain their enthusiasm and see them through both their academic setbacks and accomplishments.

This was apparent when Carmela expressed her interest in taking the exam that would have admitted her into the highest section during her freshman year. However, her SPED teacher discouraged her from doing so, partly because the school could not guarantee support for the blind in a section which requires students to take more advanced subjects. Her experience of being outrightly rejected even when she has yet to demonstrate her capabilities is the system's way of saving her from potential academic difficulties, but robbed her of the chance to reach her full potential.

The school retained Carmela in a lower section even when she topped her class during her first year. The teachers said they cannot transfer her to a higher section because they cannot afford to separate her from her blind peers. This is because it would be easier to “manage” or “monitor” them (Rieser 2012) if they are all in the same section rather than if they attend different classes or have different regular teachers. This crushed Carmela's academic aspirations and motivations, and at present still affects her feelings of self-efficacy. “I had a feeling that no matter how I persevere or how diligent I become, we would still end up in the mediocre level and in a place that is convenient for the SPED to consider. So, I could say that I just had an attitude of “hayahay” (easy-going, nonchalant) in school, I am just exerting the minimum effort. When I was in second year, I ranked 8th, until I completely fell off the ranking in 3rd and 4th year. It seems disappointing when you recall it but I had a feeling that my efforts won't really have an effect or will just go to waste, that is why I just chose to be that way.”

Her story demonstrates the undermining of CYWD's confidence and learning attitudes in an arrangement that never allows for them to maximize education the way other students are able to (Kearney 2011, Ruairc, 2013). Her experience therefore evokes social justice that authentic IE promises but which ableist integration fails to deliver. Carmela just wanted the school to fairly acknowledge her abilities and perseverance, but ableist attitudes and practices kept them from doing so. She remarked, “Eh, we exerted some efforts too, we should be placed in a section we deserved. Why do we need to be lumped together? But the bottom line is, they said it would be difficult. But why is the adjusting, why is it that it is us who had to adjust?”

4.4 A strained school life

My participants' experiences demonstrated that integration's reinforcement of ableism leads to CYWD's disablism- the restriction of their participation and the stunting of their academic growth (Booth and Ainscow 2002, Kearney 2011, Ruairc 2013). Integration's contradictory assertion of CYWD's likeness with the nondisabled and magnification of their difference (Gannicott 2018, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015) strains their school life as they strive to keep up with standards of normality (as implied by Victor, Andrew and the other deaf/mute participants' experiences) and simultaneously contend with lowered expectations and disabling attitudes and practices (as Carmela poignantly recounted). Ableist and disablism integration therefore makes schooling an everyday struggle to gain acceptance and recognition. Such a tension could have implications on CYWD's articulation and assertion of their worth within the school and classroom, and this is elaborated in the succeeding chapter.

Chapter 5

Integrated, but Disregarded: Isolation and Devalued Difference

In this chapter, I discuss through my participants' stories how the ableist and disablist integration policy tramples on CYWD's value as learners and strains their relationships with their classmates and teachers in practice. I first demonstrate how integration's labelling and stigmatization of CYWD lead to bullying within the classroom. Next, I tackle how integration's reinforcement of ableist and paternalistic attitudes and practices fuels hostility among students. Lastly, I explain how integration inculcates exclusionary attitudes among students and teachers, and how this ultimately makes CYWD feel devalued within the school and classroom.

5.1 "I am normal, but not quite": Dehumanization from within

Building friendships or meaningful connections with peers is challenging for CYWD in a schooling system that insists on their "sameness" with the majority, but at the same time "others" them (Gannicott 2018, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015). Being labelled a "SPED", undergoing separate "SPED" sessions, being seen as a responsibility of a staff other than the "regular" teacher— being stigmatized as "different" in general, has served to make nondisabled peers hesitate to interact with CYWD (MacArthur et al. 2007, Thomas et al. 1998) or even bully them in some circumstances.

Figure 5.1 Andrea's map of her grade school

In a video call, she explained that there is a separate classroom for students with intellectual disability, and another for the deaf/mute, which could be found once you pass the hallway to the right. "Regular" classrooms, meanwhile are mostly on the second floor or on the other side of the school near the stage.



Andrea, a student with intellectual disability, says that she only had the deaf/mute as her friends during her grade school, and the rare occasions she was with “regular” students were rather unpleasant (see Figure 5.1). In sixth grade, her SPED teacher deemed she was ready for “mainstreaming”, and therefore transferred her from self-contained SPED class to the “regular” class. In a video chat, she recounted, however, that she did not last there for more than three days, “I was bullied, because it was my first time to socialize with the regular... They become different when they see a SPED... Then in Grade 10, I was transferred to the regular, I was bullied again.” This “different” behaviour triggered by Andrea’s “deviant” presence is a repercussion of society’s “able gaze” (Gannicott 2018), making children who are socialized into the ableist culture thoughtlessly dismiss the presence of the “other” who is “not like them”. Othering occurs also because schools magnify CYWD’s difference through both discursive and spatial means (Gannicott 2018, Walker 2015) (see Figure 5.2) and due to the lack of sensitization to disability among nondisabled students (Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019).

“But lately, I was able to learn how to socialize. It is also because my classmates right now are more intellectually mature,” Andrea continues, implying that her desire to have friends compelled her to personally adjust by “learning” how to socialize. She is currently in her final year in senior high school, where she finally felt more at home, “My happiest experience with the regular is at present... I am lucky to have Michelle, she always supports me...” Being a “SPED” had therefore always been a lonely experience for Andrea, until her newfound friends made her feel what it is like to connect with others who is not deemed “different” like her, “They are the ones who tell me, ‘Even when you have a disability, you know, we accept you...’” However, such a statement also manifests society’s framing of disability as a characteristic of an “outsider” who needs to gain the acceptance and approval of the “insiders”, or the group privileged by the ableist culture (Campbell 2009, Gannicott 2018).

In sum, Andrea’s experience shows that the ableist and deficit-oriented language and attitudes reproduced through integration’s dichotomization of students makes it difficult to establish difference as a “normal” part of life at the earliest stages of schooling (Florian 2014, Kearney 2011, Ruairc 2013). This could therefore make interactions within the school and classroom more difficult for CYWD to navigate in later years, especially if their peers are not as considerate or “mature” as Andrea describes her new “regular” friends to be.

In integration, CYWD are therefore partially framed as “normal”, only in terms of being physically present in a class deemed as the “normal” setting for “normal” students, but are simultaneously dehumanized because integration accentuates their impairment as the primary determinant of their identity (Goodsley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Rieser 2012, Ruairc 2013). This pathologization which shifts interactions away from CYWD’s abilities (Booth and Ainscow 2002, Florian 2014) not only renders them vulnerable to bullying, but more so to experiencing intense isolation and loneliness in situations that further highlight their supposed incompleteness, and reify their personhood as perpetually “normal, but not quite”.

5.2 “I am an inconvenience”: Isolation from within

In Western contexts, smaller class sizes are the norm and teaching aides are also constantly present to assist CYWD in “regular” classes (Kearney 2011, Ruairc, 2013). This is not true for my participants, who are often lumped together with 40 to 60 more students in one room, and with only one regular

teacher facilitating.²⁰ This problematic teacher-student ratio and the teacher's lack of knowledge force CYWD to receive help from their peers to "keep up".

However, my participants show that within ableist schools that have inadequate facilities and human resources, their "need" for assistance often leads to their framing as an "inconvenience", and not just as "disruption" to the majority (Campbell 2009, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015). Asking for and receiving help from the nondisabled inevitably diminishes their dignity and makes them question their worthiness to receive kindness and consideration (Booth and Ainscow 2002, Florian 2014).

To illustrate, teachers would often assign the blinds' seatmates to dictate or clarify some lessons for them during classes, and although some proved themselves reliable and considerate, there were others who perceived this as partiality to or "special treatment" of the blind. This triggered feelings of jealousy and hostility and eventually led to bullying, causing the blind to experience fear and discomfort within the classroom. In some instances, it also caused them to self-segregate, which further obstructed potential reconciliation and interaction that could have helped both groups develop empathy and consideration for each other (Dorczak 2013). Their experience confronts the finding on youth with disability's appeal for inclusion through a "language of sameness" (Coleman-Fountain 2017), because, as what Cassandra's story would show, there are instances that could render those with disability too "different" or simply powerless to even appeal for inclusion or acceptance.

There was one particular "sighted" female, MJ, who ended up sitting beside Cassandra in the first few weeks of class. She was friendly in the beginning, but when it sank in that she needed to be Cassandra's "extra pair of eyes", her attitude drastically changed. Cassandra recalled, "She was telling me a lot of hurtful words, like, 'Why are you even mainstreamed here in the regular class?' I always end up being her seatmate, and she now had to assist me." MJ perceived her as an interruption, since, after all, a literacy, numeracy and market-based schooling system would require students to attain good grades and therefore prioritize their own learning (Freire 1996, Illich 1971, Slee 2001, Slee 2008).

Cassandra and her blind friends accepted this reality, and she restrained herself from retaliating because she felt she needed to somehow still be in good terms with others (in Filipino, "makisama"), or else she would lose potential friends who would still be willing to help despite the dog-eat-dog nature of schooling, "I was really having a difficult time, sometimes I cry over what she is saying and doing... Despite that, I just let them be, because if I fight them, then they might never help me again..."

Her silence is also her way to resist the culture of paternalism and charity thinking (Rieser 2012), since she explained that she did not want to be pitied nor become a burden to anyone. However, her attempt to sweep everything under the rug only made her suffer even more, "I just worsened the situation and taught them to further harm me."

But one day, Cassandra's mom noticed her dirty uniform, which MJ deliberately stained. She finally disclosed what was going on and her parents asked help from the guidance office. The "bully"

²⁰ Regular teachers are often unskilled in sign language/Braille/not fully equipped to engage students with intellectual disability.

and the rest of the class were reprimanded. However, the next few months became even more challenging for Cassandra because MJ persuaded the others to avoid her, telling them Cassandra might cause them to be sent to the guidance office too. Cassandra felt even more excluded and isolated mentally and emotionally (Thomas 2007), “She stopped bullying me... but the sad part is that she inflicted a lot of scars on me already.”

Cassandra’s self-worth plummeted, and she felt discouraged to socialize and make friends. She knew there is a possibility she would have to adjust or be docile again just to avoid potential harsh treatment, “I am okay with being in the regular class, but I felt afraid that the incident would happen again... So even if I wanted to reach out to others during that time, I felt, “Maybe I should not?” Because... I was hoping socializing would be enjoyable. Not like, ‘Ay I won’t complain even if they’re bullying me, because they might not help me anymore.’ That kind of thinking.”

In their final year, MJ apologized and disclosed that aside from being too irritated with having to assist her all the time, she was also going through a family problem and felt envious of Cassandra and her blind friends’ constant joy despite their “visible” impairment. Such a view is indicative of an ableist assumption (Campbell 2009, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015) that only those who are devoid of impairment are capable of being emotionally healthy. But in reality, Cassandra felt her experience of being bullied and isolated made her become more emotionally resilient. However, she also felt worried about those who might experience the same ordeal, “What if a student is very fragile and she did not have anyone she can share it with, so she might just decide to commit suicide, right? We can also blame the student who bullied, but what if during that time she was just really immature and needed guidance?”

Integration’s othering of the CYWD through reinforcement of ableist attitudes and practices (Campbell 2009, Gannicott 2018, Kearney 2011), could therefore fuel long-term discord between CYWD and their nondisabled peers. Cassandra’s story furthers discussions on bullying within schools and classroom (Laguna and Villegas 2019, Nanwani 2018, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019) by showing that such hostility endangers the emotional and mental well-being of both CYWD and the nondisabled, ultimately keeping them from making the most of their school life.

5.3 “I am on my own”: Exclusion from within

Kurt’s experience of isolation is as poignant as Cassandra’s, even though they were from different batches and had a different set of peers. Kurt’s story, however, presents another facet of bullying and discrimination (Laguna and Villegas 2019, Nanwani 2018, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019) because his is about feeling deliberately excluded by his classmates due to also being perceived as an inconvenience. Kurt felt his classmates intentionally made him feel undeserving of their time, efforts and consideration. He felt his classmates did not “see” him or care for him at all, because he was deemed too helpless or demanding of extra support they cannot always afford to give or want to wholeheartedly provide.

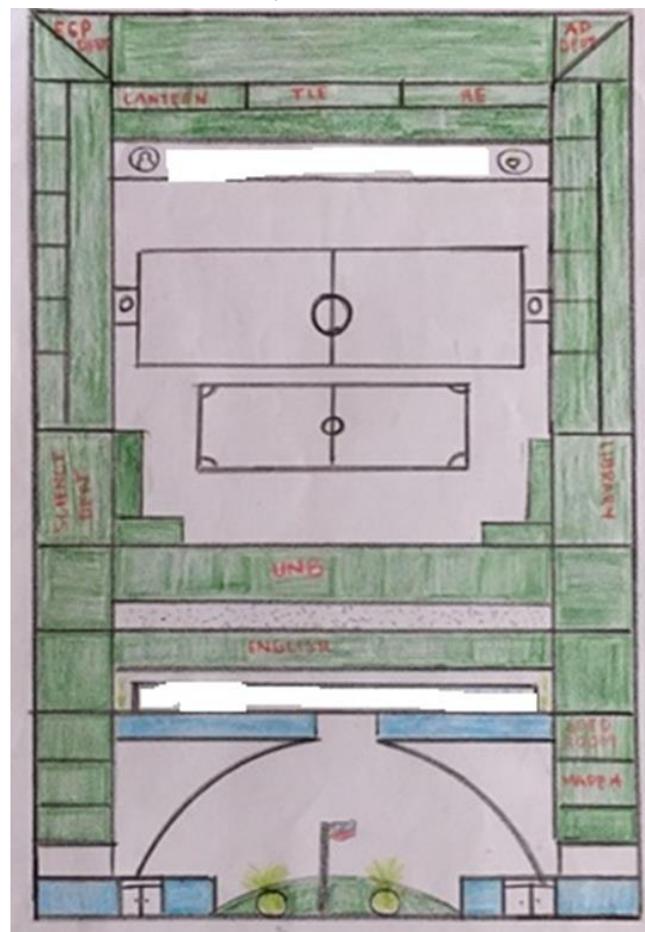
Transferring from one class to another, for instance, is a struggle, and SPED teachers would assign students to fetch or guide them (see Figure 5.2), especially because some classes are in the upper floors where there are no handrails and the stairs are steep. Kurt’s classmates, however, would

intentionally leave him behind, and only one of his classmates would often express concern for him, “Because during that time...our next subject was near the stage... I had to go downstairs alone... So, when we had to go upstairs again, Melissa saw me and told the others, ‘Hey you’re too much, you left Kurt behind!’”

He still could not pinpoint how or why it became “normal” for his classmates to forget about him, “When I arrive in the room, all of them are already there... Before, they would still apologize to me...Then the next time it happened, they did not mention anything about it anymore. It’s like it became normal already for them not to fetch me.”

Figure 5.2 Sandra’s map of her high school²¹

This shows the spatial complexity that Sandra and her friends, and the blind alumni had to navigate for four years.



Kurt also recounted a time no one in class included him in their group for an activity. He had no choice but to work on the project alone because his teacher did not even attempt to ask one of the groups to accommodate him, “And during that time, I did not have my own internet or laptop yet, so

²¹ Identifiers are concealed to protect participants’ identities.

it's really difficult... That was the last option I had, because if I did not do that, I won't be able to submit anything, so I just told my teacher, 'Sir it's okay with me if I have to do it alone.'"

Kurt, however, did not want to hold these instances against his classmates, because he also wanted to maintain a sense of pride and dignity (Florian 2014), "But we cannot force them eh... they did not go to school just so they can assist me. They went to school to study. So for me, although it's difficult for me, I have to accept the reality, that they did not come here just so they can assist me. So if they want to assist me, go, but if they don't like, it's also okay." This bitter resignation is reflective of the failure of ableist integration (Campbell 2009, Ruairc 2013) to create an open-minded, considerate and helpful community of learners for CYWD. Instead, it fosters an individualistic outlook to learning, which often forces CYWD to also put their defenses up and look only after themselves.

Kurt, however, maintained that "charity" (Rieser 2012) is not what they are asking for. They would rather be treated like any other person but they also would appreciate kindness or consideration, which the nondisabled similarly seek from the people around them. Kurt chose to keep these sentiments to himself though, and made the necessary adjustments to not disrupt the status quo which favors his peers (Campbell 2009, Ferguson 1992). "When you don't need anything from me, where are you?' But I can't tell them that 'I don't want to teach you! Because whenever I am the one needing your help, you are not there!' Because if I say that, they will think that I have a bad attitude. But they act oblivious to the fact that they are the ones being unfair to you, but you just chose not to open up about it. Because if you do, they will also say something, to the effect of, 'Why? Did we go to school just so we can assist you?! That is not so!' Which is difficult. Very difficult."

5.4 "I am not worth it": Disregarded from within

Teachers also sometimes make CYWD feel that they are not worth the effort or consideration. Ableist assumptions underpin this kind of attitude, as Carmela implied, "They will realize, 'Why did I judge her and not give her a chance, just because she could not see?!... But often, they are just simply reluctant.'" And this reluctance possibly roots from teachers' lack of knowledge on how to include CYWD as cited in international (Kearney 2011) and local literature (Muega 2016). However, Marjorie's experiences both as a blind student and now as a grade school teacher show that even with the availability of seminars and workshops, some are simply unwilling to change their attitudes and invest time for CYWD.

She actively promotes trainings on teaching the blind, but argued that open-mindedness, compassion, and commitment—in short attitudinal change (Dorcak 2013), and not just technical know-how, are what would enable a teacher to effectively nurture CYWD's learning. "Because it is not only materials that you need to prepare, it's your heart, time... if your heart is not there... the problem with others is that they outrightly reject eh, and this was especially true when we were in grade school. Today, teachers do not have a choice, but because they don't have a choice, they will just accept the students, but in reality, they don't know what to do... But when we invite them, they don't want to attend, and we cannot do anything about that..."

Some teachers therefore simply give up on CYWD from the outset and choose to hand them over to others more willing to accept them. Encountering teachers who are truly concerned about

their whole welfare and not just in their ability to perform (Florian 2014) is very rare; this is why Marjorie and her friends are very grateful for having Teacher Yarra, their Home Economics teacher, who was their flicker of hope during the times their morales were suffering due to the reluctance, indifference or hostility of some teachers and classmates.

The scarcity of full acceptance, support and inclusivity, however, will constantly make CYWD feel compelled to prove their value, as Cassandra implied, "... It was like an everyday battle in high school. You don't really want to always prove yourself, but the situation calls for it..." In an inherently ableist and exclusionary schooling system, CYWD are therefore compelled to earn their worth, because ableism keeps schools from treating all their learners based on principles of social justice and respect for dignity that value (instead of diminish) student difference.

5.5 A silver lining

The school is ideally an environment wherein students learn to respect and meaningfully engage with each other despite their differences (Dorczak 2013) and where teachers would encourage and nurture the aspirations and confidence of their students (Kearney 2011). However, ableist integration's preservation of pathologizing and paternalistic attitudes and practices only serves to fuel divisions, bullying and hostility among the students, and inculcates exclusionary attitudes among the teachers. These all impinge on CYWD's self-efficacy and sense of dignity as learners (Florian 2014). For many CYWD, schooling becomes *disablist*- a straitjacketing, emotionally and mentally draining ordeal (Thomas 2007).

Despite its negative impacts on their lives, the participants draw from these experiences of dehumanization, isolation, and rejection to visualize a truly inclusive and effective learning system for present and future students with disability. The lessons they gleaned from these exclusions could pave the way towards authentic IE, and these are elaborated in the last chapter.

Chapter 6

Deconstructing Inclusion: Towards a More Authentic IE for CYWD

I set out to determine how Filipino CYWD experience IE, and through my participants' lived experiences and grounded perspectives, provided evidence and analyses of the multifaceted exclusions that CYWD experience *from within* the school and classroom. These exclusions are mainly due to the framing and implementation of IE policy as merely CYWD's physical integration into an inherently exclusionary schooling system. Integration guising as IE specifically reinforces ableist and disablist attitudes and practices, compelling CYWD to perform like a "normal" student, but also paradoxically be underestimated and devalued because of their impairment— overall resulting to a strained school life.

To conclude, I reflect on the implications of my findings for IE theory, policy and practice. I argue that to achieve true inclusion, it is crucial to be critical not just of social policies but also of the kind of learning environment or system these policies tend to "include" CYWD into. We must therefore further unpack how schooling systems frame and practice IE through grounded perspectives that uncover taken-for-granted exclusionary practices. Such scrutiny could point us to more effective strategies that could truly increase and enhance the presence, participation and learning of CYWD and other marginalized learners.

6.1 Navigating ableist and disablist integration

By applying the Inclusive Education for CYWD in Action Framework (IECA) (Anderson et al. 2014, Booth and Ainscow 2002, Florian 2014, Florian and Spratt 2013), I unpacked the tensions integration inflicted on CYWD's academic lives. Victor and Andrew's struggles as deaf/mute students, and Carmela's repressed potential as a blind student (as narrated in Chapter 4), are evidence of CYWD's restricted participation and stunted growth in a set-up that imposes their "sameness" with the majority and assimilates them into an environment not fully responsive to their abilities. On the flipside, integration's marking and stigmatization of them as "SPED", "different" or "deficient" led to the internalization of their "otherness" and dependence on remedial sessions to "correct" or "fill in" what the system perceives to be lacking in them (Kearney 2011).

Ableist language and standardized curricula also cause teachers to have lowered expectations for CYWD, hindering their full participation and even realization of their academic aspirations. The system specifically compels teachers to pre-determine or limit CYWD's level of engagement by: segregating them from peers during group work; assigning them "alternative" tasks; "exempting" them from activities; and by "saving" them from potential academic stress/difficulties. These, however, hinder CYWD's abilities to flourish and be fairly recognized. I argue that if learning conditions are more favourable and responsive to diversity, CYWD could become more independent and confident learners, and they need not be compelled to perform the way the nondisabled do or be apologetic about their embodied difference.

Meanwhile, in Chapter 5, Andrea and Cassandra's experiences of being bullied as a student with intellectual disability and as a blind learner, and Kurt and Marjorie's experiences of being isolated and excluded, prove that integration's paternalistic and pathologizing practices magnify their impairment and position them as problematic human-beings, an inconvenience or a disruption. Such framings encourage students or teachers to harbor negative attitudes towards them. This consequently impinges on CYWD's well-being, self-confidence and dignity. Through their experiences, I also showed that vestiges of charity and medical outlooks on disability remain even in schools that claim to uphold IE, because the policy of integration perpetuates language and attitudes that dehumanize and depreciate CYWD in daily interactions.

Overall, I explicitly argued and provided evidence that integration as a policy and practice is both ableist and disablist. By doing so, I was able to further and systematically link the distinct but interrelated conversations on ableism and disablism in social institutions (Campbell 2009, Gannicott, 2018, Goodley 2011, Goodley 2013, Goodley et al. 2019, Goodsley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Thomas 2007) and the emerging conversation on the counterproductiveness of framing integration as inclusion or IE (Graham and Slee 2013, Kearney 2011, Slee 2001, Slee 2008, Slee and Allan 2005, Rieser 2012, Ruairc 2013, Runswick-Cole 2011). I also further the conversation on the constraints experienced by children and youth or their exercise of agency (Cheney 2007, Cheney 2010, Comaroff and Comaroff 2005, Liebel 2012, Myers and Bourdillon 2012, Slater, 2013, Coleman-Fountain 2017) and the call to highlight disability in critical discussions (Slater 2013, Curran and Runswick-Cole, 2014) through my participants' critique of the exclusionary attitudes and practices within their schools.²²

However, my study departs from the indirect critique of integration hinging on evaluation of macro-policies or discourses on inclusion (Slee 2001, Slee 2008, Slee and Allan 2005, Rieser 2012, Runswick-Cole 2011) or meso-policies involving educators (Kearney 2011, Ruairc 2013), because I put forward an explicit critique of integration policy as it is practiced at the micro level. Furthermore, what sets my study apart from those that directly or indirectly highlight CYWD's perspectives or tackle ableism (Coleman-Fountain 2017, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Holland 2015, Snoddon and Underwood 2018, Watson, 2018, Whitburn, 2016) or from local literatures that focus on IE for CYWD (Muega 2016, Nanwani 2018, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019) is that my participatory approach enabled me to provide a more grounded and multidimensional, yet nuanced account of exclusions CYWD experience.

Their stories also ultimately show that adult perspectives alone (i.e. teachers, administrators, parents, policymakers and implementers) (Inciong and Quijano 2004, Muega 2016, Nanwani 2018, Ortega 2017) cannot fully account for and alleviate CYWD's struggles, especially because these very same people likely participate (albeit unintentionally and often obliviously) in the reinforcement of attitudes and practices that exclude them and strain their school life. But this is also why CYWD perspectives are crucial— their voices could make adults more reflexive about how they “include” CYWD.

In sum, ableist and disablist integration does not provide the optimal learning and schooling for CYWD, and defeats efforts to implement social justice in education. However, though my participants' experiences are rather dismal, their insights on how the schooling system could be made more inclusive furthers the emerging conversation on the productive and enabling potentials of the

²² Enumerations are not exhaustive. See references for literatures on said topics.

experience of disability (Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015), and prove that even such experiences could be turned into something positive and transformative.

6.2 Visualizing a more inclusive schooling system

In a truly inclusive education system, schools need not sort their students according to their abilities, since pedagogies could respond to difference and teachers would be fully equipped to creatively adapt to each student's learning styles (Rieser 2012). Separate remedial sessions would also no longer be necessary because schools would be able to effectively and simultaneously engage a diversity of learners (Booth and Ainscow 2002, Florian 2014, Kearney, 2011).

These principles are mirrored by my participants' suggestions which could also counter the ableism and disablism in present integrated set-ups. Deaf/mute and blind alumni participants argued that training all teachers and students in sign language and Braille could lead to more effective communication and substantial learning, and could even inculcate a deeper understanding of difference that could diminish ableist attitudes among both teachers and students. Doing so could also give CYWD the chance to set the parameters of interaction on their own terms, since they have always been framed as an interruption (Campbell 2009, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015) and are therefore unfairly compelled to make adjustments just so they can gain entry and acceptance into the "other's" world (Campbell 2009, Gannicott 2018, Graham and Slee 2013, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015).

In terms of pedagogical strategies, participants urge educators to tailor formative assessments according to students' optimal learning styles and in such a way that nurtures their independence (Booth and Ainscow 2002, Florian 2014, Florian and Spratt 2013). For instance, deaf/mute and students with intellectual disability learn best when questions are simplified or explained clearly with illustrations. Meanwhile, the blind alumni suggest creating comprehensible, audio-described videos for each lesson which they could listen to without having to ask clarifications from sighted classmates. They also suggest making the most of digital technologies in administering exams or assignments (i.e. use of screen readers and soft copies of questionnaires so that no one would need to dictate to them). Both the deaf/mute and blind participants also think that making seating arrangements more flexible would enable students to move and interact freely with other learners. CYWD should also be given more opportunities to work collaboratively with other students during group projects or assignment, because this could stimulate the discovery and learning of new skills (Anderson et al. 2014, Dorczak 2013) and enable nondisabled students to treat CYWD as they would any other classmates.

Meanwhile, responding to participants' more structural demands requires a stronger political will and commitment. This includes: more schools with inclusive and safe facilities and learning environments (i.e. with PWD-friendly handrails, stairs, comfort rooms); provision of instructional materials (e.g. books in Braille) and equipment (e.g. wheelchair and hearing aid); reduction of class sizes; increased support for teachers (i.e. improved compensation and provision of opportunities for skills enhancement); and improved transportation to ease CYWD's mobility difficulties.

These are all significant because their stories have also shown that overlooking such pragmatic considerations further entrenches pathologizing and paternalistic attitudes towards CYWD.

Furthermore, filling these pedagogical and structural gaps would benefit not only the CYWD but also other learners in the long run.

At the policy level, there is a need to critically depart from framing inclusion as mere integration or mainstreaming of CYWD, because the theoretical and pragmatic inadequacy of integration as demonstrated by this study resulted only in more tensions within an already largely deficient schooling system, putting CYWD at further disadvantage. Lawmakers should also revisit previous and current policies which seek to merely establish resource rooms for CYWD in all schools. Although resource rooms are important in facilitating the entry and retention of CYWD in schools, resources alone could not sustain inclusivity and help students thrive; a change in outlook on disability coupled with adequate provisions, however, potentially could (Rieser 2012, Okwany, 2020). Attitudinal changes through sensitization programs for both learners and educators could therefore also be implemented to eliminate discriminatory attitudes against CYWD (Nanwani 2018, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2019).

6.3 Uncovering exclusions, deconstructing inclusion

Exclusionary schools are a microcosm of our unequal society; the particular group usually favored by the educational system are able to get ahead at the expense of others' welfare (Slee 2001, Kearney 2011). Exclusion in wider society is preserved because exclusionary discourses and cultures are practiced and legitimized within schools, and exclusion in schools is reproduced because society rarely challenges the legitimacy of such practices (Kearney 2011, Slee 2001, Slee 2008). Striving for inclusion in education is therefore only necessary because exclusion is a persistent reality permeating all areas of social life (Kearney 2011, Ruairc 2013).

In the context of education, meanwhile, more participatory and critical studies that highlight children and youth's lived experiences in rethinking schooling and underscoring unquestioned exclusionary practices, are therefore necessary to move towards authentic IE and enhance the presence, participation and capacity for learning of CYWD and other vulnerable groups in formal educational systems (Kearney 2011). However, I argue that researching best practices from different settings (i.e. "success" stories involving CYWD) could also be beneficial to trigger progressive academic and policy reflections. In the meantime, the Philippines' academic and policy confusion about IE could be a crucial impetus to further engage in more grounded studies that can contribute to theoretical and pragmatic clarifications on the concept.

For instance, studies that examine the experiences of those with physical impairment are needed, along with studies that focus on those with intellectual disability across grade levels, since this is something that my own study was unable to capture. Although I have rich data on the blind and deaf/mute's experiences, conducting studies with more students with intellectual disability and younger blind and deaf/mute participants would also be beneficial. Focusing on one school or even a college/university and comparing experiences of different CYWD with different types and severity of impairments, would also provide an even more multidimensional perspective on schooling/education. Studies that focus on the experiences of CYWD living in underserved communities could also further highlight the intersection between disability, geography, and economic inequality. In terms of methodology, studies that employ participatory and virtual tools should be further explored, especially since some CYWD are also very reliant on information and communication technology (ICT). How ICT plays a role in their schooling could also be examined.

In light of the Covid crisis, studies that investigate the impact of online or blended learning and how it (possibly) magnifies various inequalities or levels the playing field for CYWD, should also be undertaken. I personally also want to build on this thesis and someday implement a participatory project with CYWD and their teachers, specifically dealing with the “intentional entry” of the “hearing”, and “sighted” into the worlds of the deaf/mute and blind through sign language and Braille. I want to see how equipping the non-disabled with these skills could affect the dynamics within the school and classroom and also impact CYWD’s own learning and academic performance.

6.4 “Make us feel that we belong”: Moving towards inclusion through CYWD’s eyes

Overall, highlighting lived experiences through participatory approaches can be an empowering experience for children and youth (Cheney 2007). Their struggles give them a unique and profound understanding of external factors impacting their lives to which adults are not privy (Myers and Bourdillon 2012), and their insights could prove more effective in addressing persistent problems within social institutions. This is echoed by Cassandra, who argued, “Policymakers... do not have actual classroom experiences, so they don’t know the feeling. Yes, they do create laws and policies, but sometimes, they lack or do not have knowledge at all about an issue... Sometimes, they perceive those who speak out as dissidents. They don’t know that the reason that person is speaking out is because they have actual experiences in relation to that situation.”

Amplifying CYWD’s perspectives (Cheney 2007, Cook et al. 2012, Myers and Bourdillon 2012) could therefore not only confront the exclusions within schooling systems (Kearny 2011) but also those occurring outside of it, such as discrimination in employment that Marjorie and her blind peers experienced after graduating from college. In the meantime, however, providing CYWD with avenues for speaking their minds could be the most feasible response to Marjorie’s appeal as a former struggling blind student and now a teacher and United Nations young advocate striving to genuinely include her own students with impairment: “I was there physically... but what is next? I feel nervous. What’s next? What is waiting for us?... Sometimes you really need to prove yourself, and the need to prove yourself seems to have no end. This is why sometimes, you would really just end up praying to the Lord... That is why I would often tell the UN eh, this is their favourite tagline of mine: ‘Give us a chance, and make us feel that we belong.’”

The two-pronged strategy of exposing exclusions and deconstructing inclusion through CYWD’s eyes, will surely be invaluable in galvanizing efforts to make them feel that they belong, and in reshaping social policies that could truly alleviate disabling social, cultural and environmental tensions, not just *within*, but even *beyond* the confines of the school and classroom.

Appendices

Appendix 1²³

Timeline of the Implementation of Educational Policies for CYWD

YEAR	POLICY	IMPLICATIONS FOR CYWD EDUCATION
1974	Presidential Decree No. 603 (Child and Youth Welfare Code)	PD 603 categorized CYWD into: physically handicapped, emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded and ill". It stipulated the provision of "specialized educational services", "vocational rehabilitation" and "manpower conservation agencies" which shall place CYWD in "specialized types of jobs, services and businesses" (Republic of the Philippines, 1974, pp. 12-14).
1987	1987 Philippine Constitution	It guarantees all Filipinos free access to public elementary and high schools (Article XIV, Sections 1-2). However, the multiplicity of disabled learners and how their diverse needs would be met was not given attention. The "disabled", along with out-of-school youth, was framed as needing "training in civics, vocational efficiency and other skills" (Republic of the Philippines, 1987, pp. 756-758).
1992	Republic Act (RA) 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons) <i>Two years after the Philippines signed the UNCRC and participated in the World Conference on the Education for All</i>	It explicitly requires a specialized education program for CYWD, through special classes, assistive equipment and auxiliary services. Higher education services and financial assistance for youth with disability were also decreed, implying that the state was slowly opening up to CYWD being integrated into formal education, but separate vocational and technical schools remain (Section 15, National Council on Disability Affairs, 1992).
1997	Department of Education Order No. 26 (Institutionalization of SPED Programs in All Schools) <i>Four years after participating in the World Conference on Special Needs Education that produced the Salamanca Statement</i>	CYWD's entry into "regular schools" was now guaranteed by the creation of SPED resource centers and programs in different districts. The "concept of inclusive education" was also already explicitly mentioned (Section 3.1) but the mandatory partial or full integration of CYWD into regular classes was not yet specified (Department of Education, 1997).
2009	Department of Education	It outlined the roles of administrators, SPED and

²³ This is also part of the same essay submitted to Prof. Okwany for the 4311 class.

	<p>Order No. 72 (Inclusive Education as Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children)</p> <p><i>A year after the Philippines ratified the UNCRPD, and participated in the Global Conference on Inclusive Education (Inclusion International, 2010)</i></p>	<p>regular teachers, and even parents in integrating CYWD into regular classes. It also mandated SPED teachers to hunt for CYWD and convince parents to enrol them in regular schools. Teachers were also required to assess CYWD for regular grade level placement (Department of Education, 2009).</p>
<p>2019</p>	<p>Senate Bill No. 69 (An Act Instituting Inclusive Education, Establishing Education Learning Resource Centers for Children and Youth with Special Needs in all Public Schools Divisions)</p> <p><i>Between 2009 and 2019, different versions of IE Bill were filed in the Senate and Congress (The Teacher's Gallery, 2017)</i></p>	<p>This was filed also as a panacea to the low CYWD school enrolment and participation rates (Rita, 2019). It explicitly defines IE as the "integration" of CYWD into the formal public education system, "enabling them to learn alongside their non-disabled peers", mainly through the establishment of "IE hubs" (Senate of the Philippines, 2019).</p>

Appendix 2
School and participant profiles

A. School profiles

1. Grade school A

School A is the only grade school in the whole rural town of over 60,000 people which accepts CYWD. Dina Jane, Martin and Andrea's teachers convinced their parents to have them diagnosed by the district psychologist because of their "difference" from the majority. After being officially diagnosed, they were then enrolled in Teacher Carina and Lorna's self-contained classes before being transferred to the "regular" class. School A only has three SPED teachers, with each one of them "specializing" in a particular disability. In a typical school year, they have over 50 students with intellectual disability distributed in six grade levels. Teacher Carina and Loraine hold self-contained classes for those which they tag as the "ID" while Teacher Lorna teaches both the "ID" and the deaf/mute.

2. High school B

School B, is one of the three schools in the city accommodating deaf/mute students. It has over 6,000 students annually, with 20 to 30 sections for each year level (and 40-60 students per section). The deaf/mute's SPED teacher/adviser, Teacher Maricel, is assigned to handle Section 23. The deaf/mute

participants, Andrew, Allison, Sandra, Victor, John, Anabelle and Marian, were integrated in this class for easier “follow-up”. With a large student population and limited facilities and human resources, it is no wonder that there are now three class shifts in School B. There are also only four SPED teachers who could follow up on the schooling of approximately 40 deaf/mute students (with 10 students per year level). The deaf/mute participants are also now enrolled in a different institution for senior high school, because School B is not equipped to teach Grades 11 and 12 yet.

Compared to the IDs in School A, the deaf/mute participants’ parents were already aware of their children’s impairment early on. Their parents met each other in grade school, and since then have become friends and supported each other. The deaf/mute participants’ grade school SPED teacher referred them to School B. The participants’ “training” in the regular environment in grade school made it easier for them to adapt in School B. The deaf/mute students have a SPED resource room, but they do not have a SPED teacher focused solely on following up on them after class (unlike the IDs who have Teacher Carina or Lorna supposedly focused only on providing one-on-one support). The four SPED teachers proficient in sign language have a full teaching load and teach regular classes too.

The blind alumni participants are also from School B, but they are from different batches. Cassandra is from an older batch while her sister Carmela and their friends Sandy and Marjorie were from younger batches. Kurt is the youngest among them. All of them were also referred to School B by their grade school SPED teachers. The blind alumni had to carry the invisible “SPED” tag everyday because aside from the “visibility” of their impairment, they would also often be found going to and from the “SPED room” located on the second floor of the school’s main building. Their day starts by reporting to their SPED teacher and ends with follow-up sessions with the same teacher. Lunch breaks and vacant periods are also often spent in this room.

The quadrangle every morning would always be filled with students and when the bell rings to signify the start of the next period, everyone would be rushing to go to the next classroom. Students running or pushing against each other in packed corridors is a common sight. Blind students would be guided by their “sighted” classmates as they transfer from one classroom to the next. In between lunch break to another period, another guide would have to fetch them from the SPED room. For the blind alumni, the SPED room is the center of school life. It provides them a sense of familiarity in a place full of “sighted” beings.

The dependence on the SPED room goes beyond it being a refuge especially during busy schooldays. It is a treasury of important (albeit limited) learning materials and resources, the most important of which is the SPED teacher herself. However, there are only two SPED teachers who could follow-up on at least 20 blind students distributed across four year levels in a typical schoolyear.

Going to school is already a challenge on its own for both the deaf/mute and the blind. Their parents at some point always had to accompany them in commuting to school and they also fetch them after classes.

The traffic on the way is always a problem especially for those coming from other cities. But Carmela, Sandy and Cassandra have no choice, since there are no high schools near their places of residence which could accommodate those with visual impairment. Carmela, in a journal entry, writes, “Because our house is far from our school, we would already leave even when the sun has not yet even risen. And we would arrive home from school very late... I was so thin back then because of the exhaustion, and sleep deprivation we experienced, unlike today. Haha! On top of that we would always have to queue in terminals to be able to go home.”

It was even more difficult for Sandy, who in her junior and senior year, had to transfer with her family to the province (around two to three hour bus ride from the city), “But I still have to study here, because it is where there is a good program for the visually impaired, and we are included.”

The alumni's long hours of commute were tiresome for them and their families. But more importantly, their ordeal underscores the scarcity of schools for the visually impaired especially outside urban areas, and highlights that IE as a "placement" policy fails even at the level of upholding CYWD's right to/access to education (Slee 2001, Okwany, 2020).

B. About the participants

1. Participants with intellectual disability

a. Dina Jane

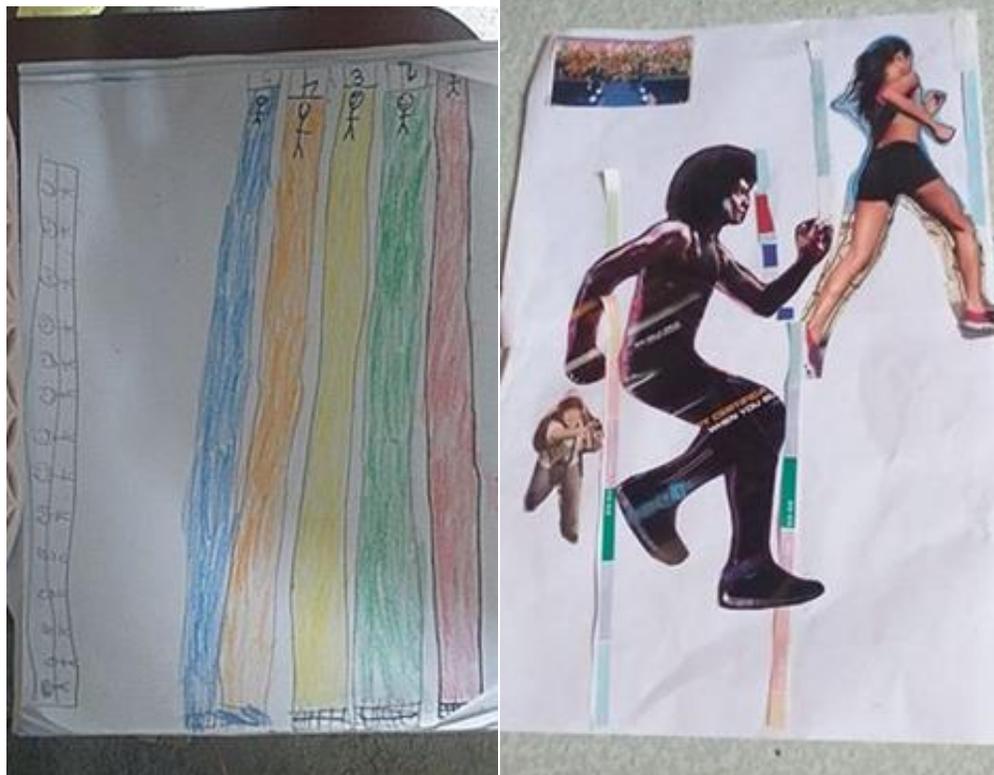


Above is Dina Jane's drawing of what she misses in school. Dina Jane is an 11-year old, Grade 3 student in School A this academic year. In a vlog, she explains, "This is what I am missing in school. We are playing, we are writing." She also often mentions her close friend, Pamela, whom she meets during breaks or when she visits Teacher Carina's SPED room. In a vlog and through her drawings, Dina Jane also described her extracurricular achievements as the highlight of her school life. However, her older sister, Athena, says there is another side to the story, "It's because Ma'am, it's only through her achievements that she felt happy because she felt everyone is pleased with her. Especially us, when she earns a medal. She's really good at dancing Ma'am, she loves doing tiktok, she's always her school representative in the track and field competition."

At some point, Dina Jane was falsely accused of stealing money, and her older sister Alona, could not help but express her frustration with the situation, "Yes Ma'am, that is how they treat her. That is why we could not blame her if she would want to take revenge. It is because she has a disability. It happened only when she was transferred to the regular class." In a separate interview, Teacher Carina said there is a possibility Dina Jane committed it once, remarking that Dina comes from a poor background. However, she also thinks that she was still accused in later incidences even if at that point she was not the one who did it. This could also be one of the reasons Dina Jane now prefers to be in Teacher Carina's class.

b. Martin

Martin is a 10-year old, Grade 2 student in School A. Similar with Dina Jane, Martin also highlighted his extracurricular achievements in his artworks. In two consecutive weeks, Martin drew/made collages about winning the track and field competition (see pictures below). In his diary, he writes, "What I am most proud about my life is when I won the race in school. I am competing with very tall children, they are bigger than me and my classmates. During the next race, I was able to fight with those who are not really my classmates. We were watched by other teachers...Then we won again... The first round we won, but the second time, I lost but it is okay."



Martin's older sister, Alona, disclosed that their mother wanted to bring him back to SPED because she felt that Teacher Carina would be able to give Martin her full attention (in Filipino, "mas natututukan"). Furthermore, Martin does not like being pressured, something that Alona thinks he experiences in the regular class, "I remember when he was transferred to the regular class, I was able to talk to one of her teachers in Grade 1. He was displaying an attitude, he did not want to do anything, even write, he just wanted to sit in one corner alone. But when he was in SPED, he won't be allowed to go out unless he finishes the task Ma'am Carina has assigned for him to do." She adds that Teacher Carina already knows Martin's attitude and Martin has already "warmed up" to her more than anyone else in School A.

c. Andrea

Andrea is an 18-year old alumna of School A and is an incoming Grade 12 student at a high school a few kilometers away from School A. During my video chats with her, she would often talk about her best friend, Michelle, who helps her in assignments, eats with her during recess, jokes with her, and goes with her wherever she wants to go most of the time. She also talked about their classroom adviser, who calls each one of them as son/daughter (they are 36 in class), is very patient and very lenient with deadlines. Angelina is very attached to her classmates at present, whom she calls her family. She felt really down when the quarantine started due to the pandemic. Everyday is a reminder for her too that her high school life will end soon and that she and her friends will soon part ways. In one of the storytelling sessions, she said, "We just

enjoy our high school life because in college we will be separated from each other. When I learned that we will part ways in college, I really cried.”

2. Deaf/mute participants

a. Andrew

Andrew, 18, is a grade 11 student with total hearing and speech impairment. In his drawings and journal entries, he would talk about how the pandemic ended his career as a campus athlete, “Sometimes, they call me to practice for track and field or volleyball. I feel delighted whenever I can play because I get the chance to visit other schools where the competitions are held. Our last game was in March this year. We were the champions. That was before the pandemic. I won’t forget that game. Because our coach just told us that we should just wait for the updates for the next game. Because of the pandemic, my mind would often wonder about our game. And that was the end of my game.” Below is Andrew’s drawing of himself playing volleyball for his school:

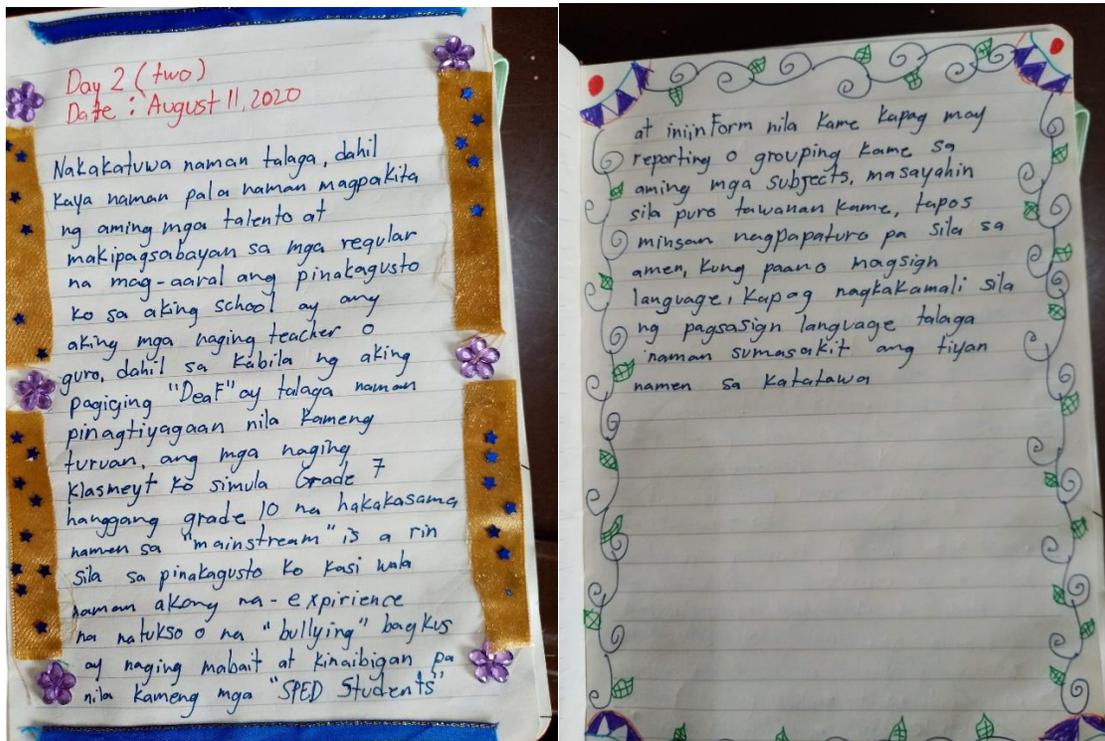


b. Sandra

Sandra, 21, is a grade 11 student who is hard of hearing. In her journal entries, she would often talk about staying strong in the midst of rejection and also express her gratitude to her family, “I am proud of myself because I became strong and brave, because my faith in God also stayed strong despite the insults they are hurling at me because of my disability. I feel happy that I learned that I can become a good daughter, friend and older sister. I feel delighted and happy because they accepted me despite my disability. I feel glad because they love me and accepted me with their whole hearts. I feel happy because in everything they help me and even if it is difficult, they are there to guide me in all the trials that I face. I feel happy because there are many people who love me and accept me with their whole hearts.”

c. Anabelle

Anabelle, 18 is a grade 11 student with total hearing and speech impairment and another illness not disclosed by her and Teacher Maricel. She writes, "It's delightful to know that we can showcase our talents the way regular students do. What I like most about my school is our teacher, who despite our being "deaf", became very patient in teaching us. "Unlike Sandra, she did not experience bullying in school, and wrote in her journal entry, "My classmates in Grade 7 until Grade 10 that we are with in the 'mainstream', I really like them because I did not experience any bullying, instead they became really kind and befriended us 'SPED' students and they inform us when there is a reporting or grouping. They are cheerful and we always laugh, sometimes they would ask us to teach them how to sign, and whenever they make a mistake, our stomachs hurt from laughing too much." Below is a photo of Anabelle's colorful journal entry:



d. Victor

Victor, 18, is a grade 11 student who is also hard of hearing. He drew his favorite classmate and wrote in his journal entry, "My favorite classmate is Mario, he is 'hearing' while I am 'deaf'. I like that he is cheerful and always smiling. He is fun to talk to and whenever he has jokes, we just laugh. Maybe he understands me somehow even though I am deaf and he is hearing. He is kind, smart, likes to read books and he would always go to the library. I could say that he is a good friend. I am grateful that I met him. He is my friend who could cheer me up and comfort me when I am feeling down." Below is Victor's drawing of Mario:



e. John

John, 18, is a grade 11 student with total hearing and speech impairment. In his vlog and journal entries, he writes about his struggles in going to school, "I have to wait at the jeepney terminal early in the morning so that I won't be late for class, because it will take a long while for you to ride a jeepney. You'll be rushing along with other commuters who also need to go to school or at work. That is why sometimes I end up arriving late in school. The same scenario is true when going home. It is difficult, especially when it suddenly rains or floods, because my place of residence gets flooded easily."

f. Allison

Allison, 18, is also a grade 11 student with total hearing and speech impairment. In her journal entries, she writes about missing her deaf/mute friends in light of the pandemic, "When the classes started, I had not even seen them in person. It makes me feel sad but I have to accept it. I miss my friends who make me happy. Because since elementary days we have been together. I miss their embrace which makes me feel better when I am feeling overwhelmed."

g. Marian

Marian is a 17-year old grade 11 student with total hearing and speech impairment. In one of her photovoice outputs, she writes about being the only deaf/mute among four siblings, "I am the only deaf person in the family, that is why since I was little it was already difficult for me to communicate with them, and I feel that I don't belong in the family. Sometimes I feel that I am alone in life. I lock myself up in the room and cry. Some thoughts come into my mind, 'Why am I like this?', 'Why am I different?', 'Why did I become deaf?', 'Why can't they understand me?', 'What did I do wrong, why was I spanked?' 'Why can't I hear what they're saying?', 'Don't they love me?' 'Am I adopted?' And other negative thoughts. Until I fall asleep with my eyes puffy from too much crying." Below is Marian's photo:



3. The blind alumni participants

a. Sandy

Sandy, now 23 years old, is an aspiring teacher currently reviewing for the Licensure Exam for Teachers (LET). She graduated from School B in 2014. In her junior and senior year in high school, Sandy had to commute for four hours daily to go to school because their family moved in a province where there were no schools accepting blind students. This affected her school performance and at some point, she thought that she would not be able to graduate. But she did with the support of her blind peers and SPED teachers. She disclosed that she lost her vision when she was 8 years old and an activity in school reminded her to still be thankful for that period in her life even though it could never come back, "There are things in life that will never come back. The lesson there is, God just loans it to us for a while, but nothing is permanent in this world... It makes me feel sad because I only experienced it when I was younger. But I am still thankful that I experienced it. That the Lord gave me that chance in my life. That is my most unforgettable lesson..."

b. Carmela

Carmela, now 27 years old, is a Computer Science graduate. She graduated from School B in 2010. During the individual discussions, she talked about her closest friends, "It was in my high school years when I met one of my two most genuine guy friends. They are Edu and Melvin. We were together during rough and good times. Edu became my classmate only once while Melvin was entirely in a different section... But I had female classmates in our section who disliked me, or were insecure, or have negative feelings towards me.... There was this feeling that you cannot really know who you should befriend. That is why I became more comfortable talking to or being with my guy friends, because they are often very authentic or honest about how they interact with you."

c. Cassandra

Cassandra, Carmela's younger sister, is now 23 years old and is a review center teacher. She graduated from School B in 2014. The sisters have both recounted their commuting struggles in their audio journals/during individual discussions, "The traffic was still not that heavy during that time compared to today. But, if your class is at 7am, then at 5:30am you should already be on the road, so that you can arrive at

6:30am. Because 6:30am is the flag ceremony... Because it is rush hour, you have to push yourself inside the bus, or try to get ahead of others in the FX or bus. There are buses who would fetch passengers at each bus stop, so you have to give yourself some time allowance. Because, even if you are a PWD, they won't prioritize you since they are also in a hurry."

d. Marjorie

Marjorie, now 23 years old, is a grade school MAPEH teacher and part-time theater performer. She graduated from School B in 2013. Marjorie, along with Sandy and Cassandra, fondly talked about their favourite "regular" teacher in high school, "She became my idol, because aside from being really good at teaching, I have really seen her passion and her heart to teach. It is really pleasing to think that she is not a SPED teacher but she is willing to provide my needs especially when I am in her class. She always includes me in classroom activities and she allows me to explore. She is one of the people who feels delighted every time I am able to achieve or accomplish something, no matter how small or huge that may be. I found a second mom, a mentor, and a friend in her. And she always tells me and makes me feel that I can be more and I can do more in spite of the disability that I have. She had a huge part in the whole of my high school, and actually even until now that I am already a teacher myself. Because she became my inspiration and role model... I learned to understand and recognize the individual difference in each of my students and even the people around me."

e. Kurt

Kurt, now 20 years old, is a junior college student, part-time online software program teacher and a member of an organization advocating for inclusive education in the Philippines. He graduated from School B in 2017. Karl shared that one of his proudest moments in his school was when he was able to complete an electricity project with the help of her Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) teacher, "And because of her support and my dedication to fulfil the requirement, I was able to pass and complete the final output of that course. And when I saw the complete set of the wirings, I was amazed, even I myself was amazed that I was able to do such a task, considering that it was my first time dealing with the electrical tools that we have learned to use during that course. Although I was able to use them previously because before I can still see, that was the first time or that was the moment I was doing it as a blind person already. I was amazed at my own work and that's one of the things I became proud of myself."

Appendix 3
Participant's chosen activities and prompts

A. List of prompts

DIRECT/SPECIFIC QUESTIONS	SITUATIONAL
What do you like most about your school? Why?	Reflect on a time/situation in school when you felt really proud of yourself.
What do you miss most about your school? Why?	Reflect on a time/situation in school when you felt sad or alone.
Who is your favorite classmate?	Reflect on a time/situation in school when you felt appreciated by the people around you.
Who is your favorite teacher/what is the best lesson you learned from your teacher/s? Why?	Reflect on a time/situation in school when you felt discouraged/when you were losing hope.
Can you map your journey from your home to your school? Can you tell me more about it?	Reflect on a time/situation in school when you felt the most empowered to do something for someone or for yourself.

B. A tabulation of activities and prompts selected and performed by each participant

1. Participants with intellectual disability

	First week	Second Week	Third Week	Fourth Week
Dina Jane	Drawing: Favorite classmate	Vlogging: A time I felt sad/alone	Vlogging: A time I felt appreciated	Vlogging: My dream school (and follow-up questions on teachers and classmates)
Martin	Drawing and keeping a diary: What I like most in school	Drawing and keeping a diary: A time I felt appreciated	Drawing and keeping a diary: Favorite classmate	Vlogging: My dream school (and follow-up questions on teachers and classmates)
Andrea	Keeping a diary: What I like most in school	Storytelling via Messenger video call: What I miss most in school	Storytelling via Messenger video call: My favorite classmate	Storytelling via Messenger video call: My dream school (and follow-up questions on

	First week	Second Week	Third Week	Fourth Week
				teachers and classmates)

2. Deaf/mute participants

	First week	Second Week	Third Week	Fourth Week
Andrew	Mapping and vlogging	Drawing: What I like most about my school	Drawing: A time I felt proud of myself	Diagram: What worked, what did not work, what could work
Sandra	Mapping; Keeping a diary: A time I felt sad	Vlogging: A time I felt discouraged	Photovoice: A time I felt proud of myself	Diagram: What worked, what did not work, what could work
Allison	Mapping and vlogging	Photovoice, collaging: Lesson learned from teacher	Keeping a diary: What I like most about my school	Diagram: What worked, what did not work, what could work
Anabelle	Mapping and vlogging	Keeping a diary: What I miss most about my school	Photovoice: A time I felt proud of myself	Diagram: What worked, what did not work, what could work
John	Mapping and vlogging	Vlogging: A time I felt sad/alone	Drawing: Favorite classmate	Diagram: What worked, what did not work, what could work
Victor	Mapping and vlogging	Photovoice and vlogging: What I like most about my school	Drawing: Favorite classmate	Diagram: What worked, what did not work, what could work
Marian	Mapping and vlogging	Photovoice: What I miss most about my school	Vlogging: A time I felt proud of myself; Collaging: A time I felt sad/alone	Diagram: What worked, what did not work, what could work

3. Blind alumni participants

	First week	Second Week	Third Week	Fourth Week
Cassandra	Audio diary: A time	Written diary:	Written journal: A	Collective

	First week	Second Week	Third Week	Fourth Week
	I felt appreciated	Mapping of journey from home to school and vice-versa	time I felt proud of myself	discussion: What worked, did not work, could work
Carmela	Audio diary: Favorite classmate; Written journal: A time I felt discouraged	Written journal: A time I felt sad/lonely	Audio diary: My favorite classmates	Collective discussion: What worked, did not work, could work
Marjorie	Audio diary: A time I felt sad/lonely	Written diary: My favorite teacher	Missed a week due to busy work schedule	Collective discussion: What worked, did not work, could work
Kurt	Audio diary: My favorite classmate	Audio diary: Mapping of journey from home to school and vice-versa	Audio diary: A time I felt sad/lonely/discouraged	Collective discussion: What worked, did not work, could work
Sandy	Storytelling via Messenger video call: Mapping, lesson from teacher	Storytelling via Messenger video call: What I miss most in school	Storytelling via Messenger video call: A time I felt sad/lonely	Collective discussion: What worked, did not work, could work

Appendix 4

IPAA Framework and Index for Inclusion

A. Screenshots of the “IPAA Framework” (Florian 2014: 290-292)

Table 1. The inclusive pedagogical approach in action (IPAA) framework.

Assumptions	Associated concepts/actions	Key challenges	Evidence (What to look for in practice)
1. Difference is accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning	<p>Replacing deterministic views of ability with those that view leaning potential as open-ended</p> <p>Acceptance that differences are part of human condition</p> <p>Rejecting idea that the presence of some will hold back the progress of others</p> <p>Believing that all children can make progress</p>	‘Bell-curve thinking’ and notions of fixed ability still underpin the structure of schooling	<p>Teaching practices which include <i>all</i> children (everybody)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating environments for learning with opportunities that are sufficiently made available for <i>everyone</i>, so that all learners are able to participate in classroom life; • Extending what is ordinarily available for <i>all</i> learners (creating a rich learning community) rather than using teaching and learning strategies that are suitable for <i>most</i> alongside something ‘additional’ or ‘different’ for <i>some</i> who experience difficulties; • differentiation achieved through choice of activity for everyone <p>Rejection of ability grouping as main or sole organisation of working groups Use of language which expresses the value of all children Focusing teaching and learning on what children can do rather than what they cannot Social constructivist approaches, e.g. providing opportunities for children to co-construct knowledge (participation), Use of formative assessment to support learning.</p>

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Assumptions	Associated concepts/actions	Key challenges	Evidence (What to look for in practice)
2. Teachers must believe they are qualified/capable of teaching all children	<p>Demonstrating how the difficulties students experience in learning can be considered dilemmas for teaching rather than problems within students</p> <p>Commitment to the support of all learners. Belief in own capacity to promote learning for all children</p>	<p>The identification of difficulties in learning and the associated focus on what the learner <i>cannot</i> do often puts a ceiling on learning and achievement.</p> <p>Many teachers believe some learners are not their responsibility</p>	<p>Focus on <i>what</i> is to be taught (and <i>how</i>) rather than <i>who</i> is to learn it. Providing opportunities for children to choose (rather than pre-determine) the level at which they engage with lessons Strategic/reflective responses to support difficulties which children encounter in their learning</p> <p>Quality of relationships between teacher and learner Interest in the welfare of the ‘whole child’ not simply the acquisition of knowledge and skills Flexible approach – driven by needs of learners rather than ‘coverage’ of material Seeing difficulties in learning as professional challenges for teachers, rather than deficits in learners. Interplay between personal / professional stance and the stance of the school – creating spaces for inclusion wherever possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking and trying out new ways of working to support the learning of all children; • Working with and through other adults in ways that respect the dignity of learners as full members of the community of the classroom;
3. Teachers continually develop creative new ways of working with others	Willingness to work (creatively) with and through others	Changing thinking about inclusion from ‘most’ and ‘some’ to everybody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking and trying out new ways of working to support the learning of all children; • Working with and through other adults in ways that respect the dignity of learners as full members of the community of the classroom;

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Assumptions	Associated concepts/actions	Key challenges	Evidence (What to look for in practice)
	Modelling (creative new) ways of working		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being committed to continuing professional development as a way of developing more inclusive practices. <p>In partnerships formed with teachers or other adults who work alongside them in the classroom Through discussions with other teachers / other professionals outside the classroom</p>

Source: adapted from Florian 2014 and Florian and Spratt 2013.

B. Screenshots of the Three Dimensions and Indicators of the “Index for Inclusion” (Booth and Ainscow 2002: 39-41)

DIMENSION A Creating inclusive cultures

A.1 Building community

INDICATOR A.1.1 | Everyone is made to feel welcome.

A.1.2 | Students help each other.

A.1.3 | Staff collaborate with each other.

A.1.4 | Staff and students treat one another with respect.

A.1.5 | There is a partnership between staff and parents/carers.

A.1.6 | Staff and governors work well together.

A.1.7 | All local communities are involved in the school.

A.2 Establishing inclusive values

INDICATOR A.2.1 | There are high expectations for all students.

A.2.2 | Staff, governors, students and parents/carers share a philosophy of inclusion.

A.2.3 | Students are equally valued.

A.2.4 | Staff and students treat one another as human beings as well as occupants of a 'role'.

A.2.5 | Staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in all aspects of the school.

A.2.6 | The school strives to minimise all forms of discrimination.

DIMENSION B *Producing inclusive policies*

B.1 | Developing the school for all

- INDICATOR B.1.1** | Staff appointments and promotions are fair.
- B.1.2** | All new staff are helped to settle into the school.
- B.1.3** | The school seeks to admit all students from its locality.
- B.1.4** | The school makes its buildings physically accessible to all people.
- B.1.5** | All new students are helped to settle into the school.
- B.1.6** | The school arranges teaching groups so that all students are valued.

B.2 | Organising support for diversity

- INDICATOR B.2.1** | All forms of support are co-ordinated.
- B.2.2** | Staff development activities help staff to respond to student diversity.
- B.2.3** | 'Special educational needs' policies are inclusion policies.
- B.2.4** | The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* is used to reduce the barriers to learning and participation of all students.
- B.2.5** | Support for those learning English as an additional language is co-ordinated with learning support.
- B.2.6** | Pastoral and behaviour support policies are linked to curriculum development and learning support policies.
- B.2.7** | Pressures for disciplinary exclusion are decreased.
- B.2.8** | Barriers to attendance are reduced.
- B.2.9** | Bullying is minimised.

DIMENSION C *Evolving inclusive practices*

C.1 | **Orchestrating learning**

INDICATOR C.1.1 | Teaching is planned with the learning of all students in mind.

C.1.2 | Lessons encourage the participation of all students.

C.1.3 | Lessons develop an understanding of difference.

C.1.4 | Students are actively involved in their own learning.

C.1.5 | Students learn collaboratively.

C.1.6 | Assessment contributes to the achievements of all students.

C.1.7 | Classroom discipline is based on mutual respect.

C.1.8 | Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership.

C.1.9 | Teaching assistants support the learning and participation of all students.

C.1.10 | Homework contributes to the learning of all.

C.1.11 | All students take part in activities outside the classroom.

C.2 | **Mobilising resources**

INDICATOR C.2.1 | Student difference is used as a resource for teaching and learning.

C.2.2 | Staff expertise is fully utilised.

C.2.3 | Staff develop resources to support learning and participation.

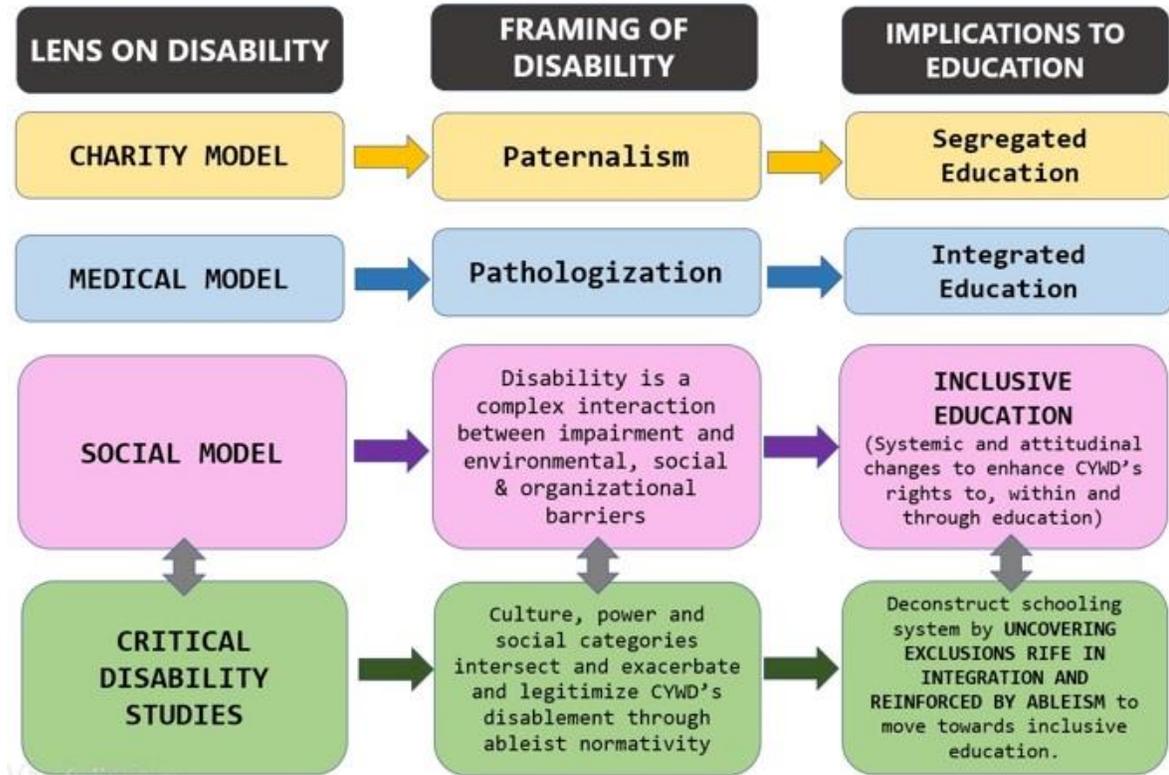
C.2.4 | Community resources are known and drawn upon.

C.2.5 | School resources are distributed fairly so that they support inclusion.

Appendix 5

Linking disability, inclusion and education through different approaches

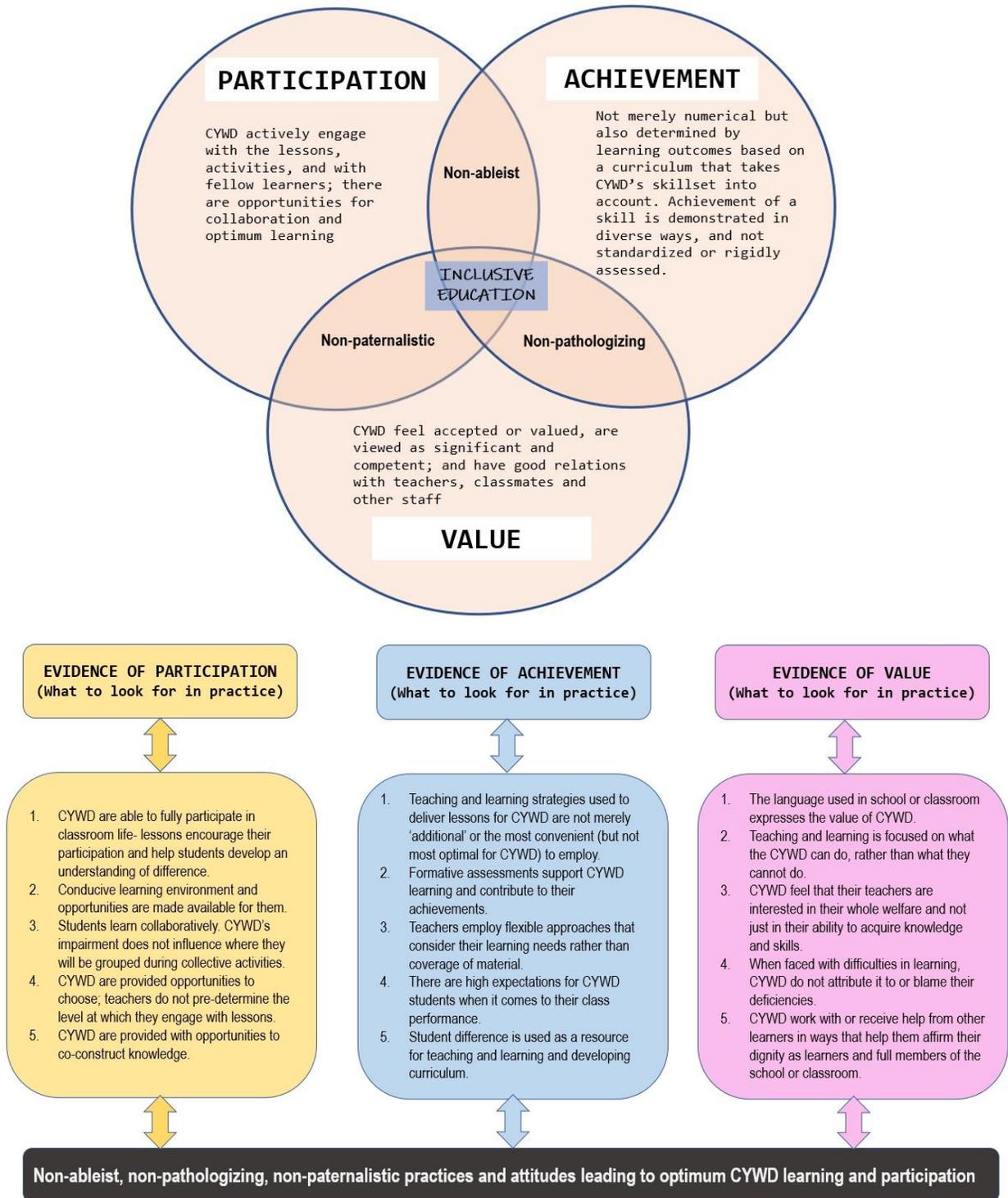
Sources: (Campbell 2009, Gannicott 2018, Goodley 2013, Goodley et al. 2019, Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2015, Rieser 2012, Ruairc 2013, Okwany 2020)



Appendix 6

The Three Areas of Inclusion and The Inclusive Education for CYWD in Action (IECA) Framework

Revised and merged indicators from Booth and Ainscow (2002: 39-41) and Florian and Spratt (2013) (Florian, 2014: 290-292) and grouped according to three aspects of inclusion (Anderson et al. 2014: 25)



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