



A Case Study on the Attitude of Teachers Towards Learners with Disabilities in Chipata District of Eastern Province Zambia

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at surveying teachers' attitude towards the deaf-blind learners. It was conducted at Magwero Deaf and Blind School, located in Chipata District in the Eastern Province of Zambia. Mixed method design was employed to gather data from teachers and learners with different disabilities. The research findings revealed that the causes for mass failure in English were more of a multifaceted problem. Some of the causes include a shortage of instructional materials, negative student attitudes toward the subject, an inadequate number of qualified English teachers, insufficient allocated teaching time for the subject and the government's limited contribution to support English education. Problems requiring joint involvement by all stakeholders have been detected and recommended were more qualified teachers, adequate instructional materials, and extra teaching periods to enhance English teaching and learning.

KEY WORDS

FERPA	Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FAPE	Fair and Appropriate Public Education
CBA	Curriculum-Based Assessment
EMP	Education Plan Monitoring
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' attitude toward learners with special needs is in most cases an important variable in an educational setting; it determines either creating the proper conditions for learning or teaching those same learners. Countless researchers have readily come to point out that the attitude teachers convey towards learners with special needs can directly impact on the learner. The purpose of this dissertation was therefore to investigate tertiary teachers' attitudes toward learners with special needs. This research was carried out in some selected secondary schools of Chipata District, located in Eastern Province. It is the belief of this dissertation that recent moves towards inclusion of students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms, have focused attention on how teachers perceive these students, what kind of learning success children will enjoy in mixed ability classes, and teachers' ability to provide effective instruction (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 1998). Not only must teachers strive to avoid imposing suffering they must also come up with new resources. These issues focus attention on the need to examine teachers' beliefs about their function generally and in relation to students in their classes who must cope with learning problems. Teachers' past experiences as learners are powerful in shaping conceptions and expectations about educating, and link with pre-service training in helping form beliefs for the process of teaching. Once a belief had been long-held it remained hard to change (Woolfolk-Hoy & Spero, 2005). It is a critical period when beliefs and attitudes are more likely to be influenced by outside sources, Preservice training. Consequently then, Being in Depth for teachers that is done throughout their training is concerned with trying to combat the many decades-old prejudice. In fact its original purpose still holds. There is a critical need to explore trainee teacher perceptions and attitudes towards students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). This research was aimed at providing an in-depth exploration of what trainee, primary and secondary school teachers feel about students with SLD

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' Attitude towards the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in the Regular Classroom: The Case of Selected Primary Schools in South Gondar Administrative Towns-Ethiopia

The participants of this research were general primary education teachers. And the questionnaire was the instrument of data collection. And the data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed by quantitative research methods. Results show that common learners' mean attitude scale score for real points beyond cut-off mean attitude scale scores it is significantly In short, teachers have a fairly positive attitude toward including students with disabilities in the mainstream classroom. Hence it is suggested that the training programs colleges and universities conduct must have included special needs education courses, static so all teachers graduate today with this sort of degree can improve their knowledge base or acquire new skills related to help those with disabilities successfully adapt to school life.

Nowadays it is nothing new for us to teach all our children together no matter what kind of physical or mental abilities they possess (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001). In this very context, a number of international declarations and laws have been established. Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 Hail the UN Convention on the Rights for the Children (1989). Salamanca Statement (1994) UNESCO's guidelines for the inclusive education of all (2005). This is a passionate appeal for humans who live by such moral principles – indeed for all of us – to admit those into our society already handicapped by some disability (Florian, 2008). One of the most important aspects of the classroom interaction is how teachers interpret and respond to their students' learning behavior. The instructor's attitudes and expectations both determine whether a student will succeed academically (Gaad, 2007).

Likewise, teachers' attitudes are a major factor in determining the success (or otherwise) of such policies (Ainscow, 1993; Ward, Center, 1994). What seems most unlikely in particular is that without the collaboration and active involvement of all concerned the rightful advent of towards teaching normally will be by no means secure. While most attention was initially focused on how negative teacher attitudes can act as barriers to inclusion, the methods by which positive teacher attitudes achieve inclusion are now being considered. Van Reusen, Shoho and Barker (2001) hypothesize that the attitudes and beliefs that teachers, administrators other school personnel have concerning inclusion learning capacity of students with disabilities might be influential to the learning settings of schools throughout present day times as well as wider echoes among America's population. It is argued that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are critical in ensuring the success of inclusion practices since teachers' acceptance of the policy of inclusion is likely to affect their commitment to implementing it (Norwich, 1994).

Attitudes toward Students with SLD

Although not much research has been done about the attitudes of teachers toward students with SLD; this work implies that within inclusive classrooms teachers are not always positive and have Lensman; Re-Thinker The Classroom Teacher and the Learning Disabled A glance at most textbooks on SLDe students as their authors explain the origins, current status, remedies either formal or informal for their low impact on society, global problems they generate, etc DeSimone and Parmar (2006) Ra...

Mary E. Kyle (Ed.): Three teachers did the 'Survey on Teaching

Mathematics teaching mathematics to students who had disorders such as dyi and

The Anzac Journal the World orients mathematics books in this manner.

Their research was followed up by telephone interviews with 26 of the teachers who returned surveys. One of their most surprising-but rather dis-appointing-finds was that most of the respondents held clouded and unclear ideas about what distinguished a student with SLD from one who had merely low achievement. As a result, they also tended to think that that any modifications used on underachieving students should also work for the students with SLDs (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006).

Varying teacher attitude towards learners with special needs from School to School.

Teachers' attitude toward students with special needs attitude is different in different schools. In some schools, teachers worry that they will not have enough time and resources to make this approach work well. In order to successfully implement Integration, teachers say that:

An hour a day is the very least they require for planning; and On going in-service training should be available at all times;

Personal as well as material resources must also be obtainable. When the 'inclusiveness' of the students being educated in general education classrooms for those special needs students is increased -As Ayuwon's quote points out-the extra work which teachers must perform before, during and even after class, as well as on Saturdays in order to compile such material.

It is no longer enough just to teach children facts without making any provision for their different educational needs

In some schools, teachers with multiple proportions of pupils who have special requirements in their classrooms will require more extra planning than those who are in schools

In the general education teachers 'eyes extra work which those students classifies as learning disabled (LD) bring them is what is seen here. It does not match the general education teachers'views that there would

be extra planning needed for those who are classified intellectually disabled (ID) or they demonstrate behavior disorders (BD) etc.--rather it reflects the teachers' attitudes towards providing general instruction LaTeX between none of same life forms might look upon the other three species.

Of teachers' teaching attitudes towards pupils with disabilities in an integrated setting

A tendency towards inclusive mainstreaming of handicapped students appeared in some studies. A key to handling this problem of special education is involvement by general education teachers. This research investigated what variables affect teachers' attitudes towards enrollment within inclusive settings

of pupils with disabilities. These factors include years in service, whether a teacher has taken special education courses as part of his program preparation, differentiated instruction vs. homogeneous instruction, and previous experience with integration. Eighty general education teachers from Southwestern Michigan in a metropolitan school system answered a questionnaire containing 31 questions using both the 4-point Scale of Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC), and the four factors which lay behind teachers' attitudes generally towards inclusive students. (Cochran,1997). Teachers' Approval of Civic Education

The results of the study showed that when all independent variables were tested, just one proved to be a predictor of teachers' attitudes towards Instruction for Students with Disabilities, and that was taking any Credentials courses during graduate school As for the overall outcome of the survey in general, teachers indicated that they approve of Inclusion as an effective model for students with academic handicaps applicants, but also showed that they need Special Education training even though they feel able in themselves to teach handicapped students.

Teachers overall were in favor of main streaming, and they believe it helps students to get better socialize; that general education teachers should be required courses on Special Education in programming; and that having an aide in the classroom makes their attitudes towards students with disabilities much more positive.

Study implications beyond using the results extracted from STATIC to compare differences in teachers' attitudes towards students with special needs would be: (a) ascertain the relation between teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and their general attitudes concerning disabled persons; (b) study what effect teachers' attitudes have on special education student performance; (c) guide where special education students should be placed; (d) screen prospective teachers prior to employment; (e) structure teacher education programs; and (f) diagnostically focus remediation on specific attitude dimensions needing to be altered.

According to the variable with highest predictability on teachers' attitudes toward instructing students with disabilities in inclusive settings the specific recommendations are these: Teachers should always take any Special Education course offered during their graduate program; Greater numbers of courses must be offered for teachers in their preparation programs; if schools are to guarantee effective inclusion then they need to demand that their teachers have a graduate degree and have taken any Special Education course during their graduate program.

If no suggestions above can be put into action then there is still a more simple way out; the teachers who had the most positive scores on STATIC are the very people who know how to deal tactfully with the advantages and obstacles of inclusive education. They are the people who can, with that kind of attitude towards it, make an effective inclusion for students with disabilities into the general education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Burns and Grove (2003:195) give a specific definition of research design: "A blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the results." The research design determines what data is needed, how to collect and analyze it, and finally be sure all this prepares an effective answer to your study question. The research design employed in this study was both qualitative and quantitative. In this manner, two major sources were tapped to uncover critical principles of knowledge and methods to solve essential problems.

Sources of Data

The sources of data for this research were primary data direct from the teachers, pupils and school management who were involved. The other source was secondary data from publications such as books, Magazines, articles and related materials.

Sampling Techniques

Simple random sampling procedure consisted of 45 teachers, 8 class teachers and 1 head of department from each school where selected randomly. The class teachers where chosen using random sampling, 9 teachers were selected randomly from the chosen schools.

Data Collection

The data was collected by the researcher herself because it is the requirement of the course for the researcher to do so. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers and school management (Head teachers) while pupils were interviewed face to face. The researcher also included simple observations, where teachers' attitudes towards learners with special needs were observed closely and secretly.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To identify positive attitude practices teachers have towards learners with special needs in schools in Chipata district.

The first part of the questionnaires sought to identify positive attitude practices teachers have towards learners with special needs in schools in Chipata district. The practices illustrated below in the table where identified as positive practices in Chipata districts by the sampled respondents from the selected schools.

Table 1.

Positive attitude practices	Number of respondents	%
Awards and reinforcement	15	33
Shared rule making	10	22
Motivation	15	33
Others	5	11

The table above shows the number of respondents that choose positive attitude practices and how many percent it represents for total sample population. In total 45 teachers from the 2,223 respondents of teachers were chosen at random.

One respondent said there was benefit from the class because, any teacher comes to class and she sits there to listen what the teacher is saying. In some of the work given by teachers, she takes part.

In motivational terms, yes because I often advise her that nothing is yet too late and so in whatever work that her colleagues are doing, either in school or in class she should join along. I also gave her money, shoulder taps, applause and more.

Another respondent said "During the time I stay with them, and after analyzing what little assistance and support they require, pupils can do better. For example, I have in class a pupil who just because of his behavior problems would not be able to succeed or have any hope for the future at all; on the other hand despite his condition becomes Top student while one with low vision--if not handicapped from reading equally--would be second Joint Top Instead".

The instructional strategies disclosed by this study are in line with previous studies. For example, Ball shows how mixed-ability student groups as well as regular classes can use the inclusive capacity of the classroom to respond to individual differences in learning abilities and psychosocial development among students involving pupils with special needs in "mixed ability" groups can improve their motivation, meaningful participation in classroom life, personal learning outcomes and personal growth.

How can teacher attitude affect the academic performance of a learner negatively?

The third part of the questionnaire was set to respond on how teacher attitude can affect the learner's academic performance. The respondents identified the following stated ways in which the performance of learners can be affected.

Table 3 Methods employed as disciplinary measures

How attitude can affect the performance of the learners with special needs.	Number of respondents	Percentages
Feeling out of place due to negative attitude from teachers.	19	42
Loss of hope due to negative attitude.	18	40
The culture of viewing learners with special needs as being enabling.	8	17

In order that their attitude does not affect the learners' academic performance, the 45 investigated people surveyed identified some alternative methods which they employ. Some attitudes, however, put the entire class in a manner to make learning difficult. The response from 43% of the respondents was that this sort of negative perception can discourage pupils and render them disoriented in their environment. Other respondents believe that some attitude makes learners give up hope and stop believing in possibility--this was 40% of respondents' opinions. 17% of the respondents observed that for people to take on a culture in which they regard special needs students as being disabled is harmful both to these children and their academic achievement.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has generated data on how to improve teacher attitude towards learners with special needs within the schooling system, a topic which promises be useful to various educators and school administrators. The writer makes the following recommendations

- Educators or teachers should not send learners with special needs out the classroom if they misbehave. Some of these learners may be acting out not due to a lack of discipline, but rather as a result of their disability or special need so to speak.
- Rather than send learners off on suspension why don't teachers look for a meeting of minds with those with special need and perhaps get the parent that child involved in solving problem at hand?
- Teachers should sit down together and see how best they can be reacting to learners with special needs and to make means and ways to reinforce the good attributes these learners so as get best out of them.

- As for the school management in general, teachers and other staff should always be ready and willing to recommend a learner with special needs for specialist treatment whenever necessary.m
- This study therefore has implications for how teachers of the handicapped should be trained and where they should teach. It generates the following recommendations based on findings of research:
- The Ministry of Education (MOE) should include a number of special-needs/inclusive education courses in the teaching programs at all of its colleges and universities. It is important that all graduate teachers receive this sort education about special needs so that earlier teachers develop good attitudes toward disabled students Following upon this, schools and universities achieved ongoing cooperation with regional educational bureaus to further train serving teachers.

CONCLUSION

It was found in this study that most teachers knew about including disabled students in the regular classroom. However, amid a small portion of mutual school teachers, prior to this program does not have enough information. So some teachers tend to form negative attitudes towards students with disabilities. More remains to be done in order Inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular classroom School should mount awareness programs in association with special education professionals to maximize their awareness.

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