

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

**CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION AT
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION LEVEL AT MPHABLELA PRIMARY SCHOOL IN
MZILIKAZI DISTRICT IN BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN PROVINCE.**

BY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to the Midlands State University for acceptance a dissertation entitled:

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my husband, mother and my siblings for their inspiration, prayers, support, encouragement and understanding.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to find out challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion at Mphahlela Primary School in Nkulumane, Bulawayo. The study adopted a descriptive survey. The instruments used were questionnaire and interviews. Five parents were interviewed together with nine teachers from Early Childhood department. In this study it was found out that there are challenges in the implementation of inclusion which are shortage of resources, inadequate infrastructure and shortage of skilled personnel who have basic knowledge on how to implement inclusion. Infrastructure should be modified, training of teachers and provision of resources are to be available for effective implementation. It was also found out that if inclusion is to be effectively implemented, it will benefit both learners who are disabled and those that are not disabled. Inclusion allows the learners to have a sense of belonging and to appreciate others. In-service training is also of critical importance so as to allow the teachers to have basic knowledge.

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CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEM AND CONTEXT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In as much as inclusion is of critical importance in the teaching and learning, its implementation has been faced by various challenges. The implementation of inclusion has faced many challenges which make it difficult for it to be implemented. This chapter will look at the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, assumptions and delimitations. Furthermore limitations, significance of the study, definition of terms and summary of the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion at Early Childhood Education level will be outlined.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In June (1994) more than 300 participants from 92 governments and 25 international organisations met in Salamanca Spain and formed a world conference on Special Needs Education. The conference adopted a new framework action which had to accommodate all children regardless of their disabilities. After the conference Zimbabwe adopted the inclusive education in 1996 which was called the Disabled Persons Act. One of the contributions made was that every child has a fundamental right to education. Therefore, there should be implementation of inclusion in the entire classrooms in all schools.

The researcher observed that there were challenges in the implementation of inclusion faced by different stakeholders which are parents, teachers, school administration and

learners. The researcher noticed the challenges decided to look at the depth of the challenges that are associated with implementing inclusion at Mphahlela Primary School in Mzilikazi District, Bulawayo. Inclusion is of critical importance at this level because it allows learners to be free and be able to express themselves as they will not be discriminated. Therefore it is important to have inclusive education to cater for all the children. According to UNESCO (2007) inclusive education is a way of engaging the learners of different mixture group to participate in classrooms and reducing exclusion of learners with special needs in education. This implies that children need to be included into the main classroom so as to get equal opportunity to education regardless of their disability. Through the implementation of inclusion at Early Childhood Education level will help the learners who are having different challenges to be catered for in schools. This is supported by the Salamanca Statement (1994) and The Disability Act of (1996) were by they recommend that inclusion will avoid discrimination of those children who were taken into special schools due to their disabilities and also to provide equal education to children. The Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry 1999 which also states that special attention should be given to marginalised groups such as the disabled and those in difficulties. In a research carried by Rose (2001) states that it has been more years that inclusion has been promoted in both developed and developing countries, but there are a number of barriers for full participation of all children particularly with disabilities. This implies that there are challenges faced in the implementation of inclusion in most schools and this is a disadvantage to the learners who have different learning abilities to be catered for. In a way it is noted that in many schools learners with different learning abilities are discriminated as there are is a lot of challenge that makes

it difficult for inclusion to be implemented hence the researcher decided to carry out a research on the challenges affecting implementation of inclusion at Early Childhood Education level. Fakolade (2009) states that equal education opportunities are not given to all the learners especially those with disabilities. This implies that learners with different learning abilities are not given equal education compared to those who are not disadvantaged. Therefore there is need for equal education opportunities to all the learners regardless of their abilities. This is supported by the United Nations (2017) which postulates that there is need for equal education opportunities to all the learners. After the researcher notice that learners with disabilities are not offered equal education opportunities, it motivated the researcher so as to find out possible solutions that may be taken into consideration in order for inclusion to be successful since learners with disabilities are included in mainstream classrooms.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PPROBLEM

The main purpose underlying the carrying out this research is to investigate the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion at Early Childhood Education level. It was discovered that there were so many challenges hindering the implementation of inclusion. The researcher decided to carry out an investigation on how inclusion can be implemented at this level and to come up with solutions to mitigate these challenges.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 What are the challenges associated with inclusion at Early Childhood Education level?

1.3.2 How can the challenges affecting inclusion be addressed?

1.3.3 How can the implementation of inclusion assist learning at Early Childhood Education level?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that many people would benefit especially learners who have special needs. Therefore the study is expected to be of help to different stakeholders like learners, parents and other teachers who seem to have different special needs. Furthermore, it is hoped that this survey will help the school administration, teachers and the policy makers and the community at large to improve on the challenges faced in implementing inclusion. This will also help teachers to implement inclusion from an early age of school in the teaching and learning.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher faced some time challenges carrying out the study, due to the fact that the study will be done during working hours. To curb this, the researcher used lunch time hour and also makes appointments to avoid inconveniencing the participant. Another challenge was that other teachers were busy with their work preparing for the next day or marking. The researcher resolved this challenge by taking advantage of staff developments and cocas meetings in order to reach all the targeted area of the study.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was carried out at Mphahlela Primary School in Mzilikazi District. The participants that were used are ECD teachers who are having inclusion in their classrooms. The study focused on the finding the challenges associated with implementing inclusion at Early Childhood Development level. The participants of the study were members of parents and teachers and school administrators.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.7.1 Inclusion

Anati (2013) defines inclusion as, engaging learners with different special educational needs in classrooms so as to protect their right to education so that no learner is left behind because of the disability he or she may be having. Badza and Tafangombe (2011) say inclusion is a process whereby a child or a learner with disability is placed in a general education classroom with supplementary support and adaptation that allow the child to benefit from that placement. From the above definitions one can deduce that inclusion is the involvement of learners with disability in the learning process together with the non disabled with the aim of eliminating all forms of discrimination and helping them overcome their special educational needs.

1.7.2 Early Childhood Education

Morrison (2004) states that Early Childhood Education as the critical stage whereby the foundation of learners is enhanced in all the developmental milestones for the children's future, well-being and learning. Essa (2011) defines Early Childhood Education as the programme that facilitates learning of a child from zero to eight years. Thus Early Childhood Education (ECE) can be defined as a programme that aims at developing

children holistically at a tender, thus from conception to eight years. It can also be defined as educational programmes planned for learners from the age of zero to eight years.

1.8 SUMMARY

This chapter entailed the background of the study highlighting on how inclusion started. It also looked at then looked at the statement of the problem, research questions and significance of the study. Limitations, delimitations and definition of terms were also stated.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused mainly on the background of the research, the study examines on the challenges of implementing inclusion. This chapter mainly focuses on the literature review and to answer the questions asked on the previous chapter. The related literature review of this study shall be dealt under the following sub-headings, (a) what are the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion? (b) How can these challenges be addressed. (c) How can the implementation of inclusion assist learning at Early Childhood Education level?

2.1 What the challenges associated with inclusion at Early Childhood Education level?

In as much as inclusion is of critical importance it is face by challenges in its implementation and this may led to the learners with disabilities facing challenges. Inappropriate facilities and resources is one of the challenges that hinder the implementation of inclusion at early childhood education level. The facilities in most school were built for the learners who were not disabled and due to lack of those facilities it makes it difficult for inclusion to take place. Pollat (2011) states that the facilities are there but there were built for the learners who were not disabled. This implies that the facilities in the school do not facilitate inclusion to take place in early childhood. For example the Nziramasanga Commission (1999) advocate that all learners should be taken into mainstream classes in order for them to have equal

educational opportunity like other learners who are not disabled but this makes it difficult due to improper infrastructure. These resources and infrastructure include ramps, proper ablution facilities and Braille for the learners who are blind. In a way the shortage of these resources make inclusion a challenge to implement. This is supported by KESSP (2005-10) states that inclusion of learners with disabilities into mainstream classrooms is being affected by the shortage of equipment, inadequate infrastructure and facilities. This implies that the facilities at Mphahlela Primary School do not cater for inclusion to take place. Facilities like ramps for learners using wheel chairs are not there for the learners to make it easy for them to enter into the classrooms and proper ablution facilities are not there for the learners with disabilities hence making it unhygienic for learners in wheelchairs to use them. Fernando, Yasmin, Minto and Khan (2010) conclude that shortage of school infrastructure and limited learning materials for the learners are major causes that lead to failure of implementing inclusion. This implies that due to the resources that are short and the material that is limited in schools it makes it difficult for inclusion to be implemented.

The other challenge associated with the implementation of inclusion at early childhood education level is shortage or lack of skilled personnel who can cater for learners with different special educational needs. Most teachers do not have adequate knowledge on how to cater for different educational needs of learners hence making it difficult for inclusion to be implemented. For example teachers at early childhood education level were not given enough knowledge on catering for different needs of learners. This may hinder the implementation of inclusion. This is supported by Ward (1994) who postulates that teachers were trained in a time where special education training was not

taken into consideration in their training. This implies that most E.C.E trained personnel do not have enough or adequate knowledge to accommodate learners with special educational needs. In a way the current information given to teachers at college does not accommodate learners with special educational needs making it difficult for inclusion to take place. Teachers lack proper skills and have goal that do not cater for individual difference of the learners making difficult for inclusion take place. For example teachers at early childhood education level at may fail to move according to the pace of the learners with special needs and may end up calling those learners failures. This is supported by Konza (2002) who postulates that the teachers who are engaged in staff developments do not transfer the skill much from staff developments that they may be engaged in to transfer it in the classrooms. In a way making it difficult to assist and cater for learners with different educational needs. Teachers in most classes do not cater for the individual differences of the learners as they do not have the skills to assist them. According to Moyo (1995) teacher should teach an individual not a class. This implies that the teachers at early childhood education have to move according to the pace of the learners taking into consideration the individual differences of the learners as they grasp concept differently. In a way E.C.E practitioner at Mphahlela Primary School lack necessary skills that help in the implementation of inclusion.

The other challenge associated with the implementation of inclusion at early childhood education level at Mphahlela Primary is discrimination (stigmatisation) of the learners. Discrimination is whereby learners with special educational needs are not rendered the equal opportunity as other learners as they are considered that they do not fulfil the required educational needs. Harrison and Oakland (2003) state that learners with

special educational needs are the most stigmatised in the world and are most excluded in the teaching and learning. This implies that learners with special needs are being stigmatised and therefore making it difficult to implement inclusion as these learners would be stigmatised and discriminated. For example, in a school setup they are usually looked down upon as most teachers believe that are useless and teachers do not bother to give them opportunity to express themselves. Other learners may also not want to play with the learners due the discrimination being influenced by the teachers. The discrimination starts from parents and teachers making it difficult for inclusion to be implemented. The teachers may discriminate the learners by asking the parents to take the learners to special schools like the King George or Riverside stimulation as they consider those learners a disturbance in the learning process. This is supported by Mporu (2008) who postulates that teachers in the Zimbabwean context believe that learners with special needs are regarded as less capable of fulfilling roles in general education program. A research carried by Groce (2004) also highlighted those children with special needs or have disabilities in developing countries usually do not go to school because they are believed to be disruptive to other learners. In a way discrimination make it difficult for inclusion to take place and be implemented in E.C.E classrooms as some parents and other different stakeholders because they may think that the teacher is giving much attention to the disabled learners thereby neglecting those who are not disabled. For example, in an ECD B class where there is a learner who is physically disabled and cannot walk without assistance of someone, as the teacher assist that learner some parents may think that the practitioner is giving much attention to that learner. In other ways parents make it difficult for inclusion to be

implemented in E.C.E classrooms. Ghouri, Abrar and Baloach (2010) teachers are also identifying teachers' unwillingness to educate learners with disabilities and this is an obstacle to inclusive education. This means that due to teacher's reluctance towards learners with disabilities it makes it difficult for inclusion to be implemented in schools. In a way most teachers in schools have a negative attitude and regard inclusion as a burden to them.

2.2 How can the challenges affecting inclusion addressed?

Inclusion at early childhood education level faces a lot of challenges; however these challenges can be addressed through building of proper infrastructure and to providing the required resources for inclusion to take place. According to Harvey and Usher (2002) the classrooms should have ramps in order for learners using wheel chairs to access the classrooms and be wide enough having space especially for those using wheelchairs to be able to move around the classrooms. A research carried by Groce (2004) also supports this by saying, in all the schools facilities need to be improved so as to ensure that they provide an environment that support inclusive education practice. Therefore, this implies that improvement of infrastructure should be taken into consideration in E.C.E classrooms in order for inclusion to be effective. The school has to create a free space to keep resources for learners with disabilities. Building of ramps and proper ablution facilities is also a necessity so that the learners who are using wheel chairs can be able to move in and out of classrooms without facing challenges. Also in order for inclusion to be successful in E.C.E classrooms furniture has to be spacious in order to allow those moving in wheel chairs to move freely. There is also need for equipment like Braille in order for learners to be able to read. The furniture for

inclusion must also promote inclusivity, for example the desks in a classroom should be at the level of the learners using wheelchairs in order for them to be able to write. Also for effective implementation of inclusion teachers need to have support of the administration in providing the equipment needed in order to implement inclusion. This is supported by Tahir and Khan (2010) who states that it is difficult for educators to ensure inclusion without support from school heads. In a way it is a challenge for the teachers to implement inclusion if they are not provided with proper equipment and facilities for effective teaching and learning of learners with different challenges.

Furthermore for inclusion to be implemented in E.C.E classrooms professional development is of paramount importance. All E.C.E teachers must have necessary knowledge and skills to implement inclusion effectively. Teachers must undergo staff developments, in-service training, refresher courses and many others to equip themselves with necessary skills for inclusion. A research carried out by LeRoy and Simpson (1996) found out that most teachers were trained in the field of special needs have more positive attitudes towards the learners with special needs than those who received no training at all. Fakolade (2009) subscribes the thought that professionally qualified teachers encompass added compassionate move towards the inclusion of learners with learning disabilities. In a way if teachers are well trained, it will enable the learners with different learning abilities to learn effectively in the mainstream classrooms. Therefore this implies that in order for inclusion to be effective in E.C.E classrooms teachers need full training in special needs for example the special needs course done at the United College of Education which offer teachers skills on how to handle learners with special needs. Teachers who are trained are in position to be patient with learners

who are disabled in inclusive education. The study findings of Lambe and Bones (2006) show that pre-service teacher training is the most suitable point of intervention to build up teachers' attitude towards inclusion of learners in regular class rooms. This implies that when the teachers are reinforced with inclusive practice skills and knowledge it will assist them to in catering for individual differences. The capacity development programme can assist to adapt different teaching and learning methods in order to cater for all the learners in the classrooms making it easy to implement inclusion. This in turn will assist the teacher to use relevant media for learners with disabilities. Through the staff developments and in-service training E.C.E practitioners will be able to prepare required materials for learners during teaching. For example, learners who are blind to use Braille when reading or writing large prints in case of learners who are partially blind so that they will be able to see.

The other suggested solution for effective implementation of inclusion at E.C.E level at Mphahlela primary school is to that they have to be sessions whereby they counsel learners, parents and other teachers not to discriminate those who are disabled through Guidance and Counselling sessions. In order for discrimination to be avoided it calls for teachers to have positive attitude towards the learners who are disabled. Fakolade (2009) points out that that professionally qualified teachers have more favourable attitude towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities. This is supported by Mpofu (2008) who postulates that inclusion can only be successful when teachers are willing and are able to implement the intentional strategies in their classrooms. This implies that in order for equal educational opportunities to be offered to the learners even if they have challenges teachers need to be trained professional and have positive attitude.

Clough and Corbert (2000) also support this by saying that it is important that teachers have a positive attitude and love and respect children, also being able to acknowledge and are ready to stimulate children and use their knowledge and creativity. This implies that in order for inclusion to be successfully implemented in E.C.E classrooms teachers need to have a positive attitude towards learners with special needs and this will encourage learners and parents to also have a positive attitude. A research carried by Lambe and Bones (2006) states that inclusion can be thriving if a sociable and accessible learning atmosphere is provided to all children to make sure inclusion take place in mainstream education system. This implies that if the school administration creates an environment that will allow the learners with different special education needs, it will be easy for the parents and teachers to have a positive attitude in teaching and bringing the learners to school thereby successful implementation of inclusion.

2.3. How can the implementation of inclusion assist learning at Early Childhood Education level?

If inclusion is implemented well at early childhood education level it may assist the learners in a more different way as all the learners will be catered for regardless of their special educational needs it may assist the learners in a more important way as they will develop holistically and they get a chance to associate with other learners that is cognitive development. Fitzgerald (2004) points out that any studies point out that inclusion at a tender age help the learners to develop cognitive development. This implies that implementation of inclusion will help the learners with different special educational need to develop intellectually as they will be given chance and enough time to explore and experiment different activities that will help them develop intellectual.

Furthermore inclusion helps the learners to socialise with others and have a sense of belonging in the classroom as they will not be discriminated. Keyser (2006) states that according to a group of scholar's inclusion promotes children's interest and they become responsible in their own learning. This implies that through inclusion the learners with special educational needs whenever involved in their own learning they get the chance to express themselves as they will be working together with parents, teachers and other learners. Through implementation of inclusion learners behaviour is moulded. This is supported by Kuyayama (2015) who postulates that if parents and teachers work together with combined effort they produce good results in moulding of behaviour of the child. In a way some learners with special educational needs tend to have undesirable behaviour which in turn if teachers and parents work together it can be moulded. This helps eradicate any unwanted behaviours in the child as they will be fully aware that their parents and teachers are working together in their education.

Summary

This chapter dealt with the literature review on the challenges faced on the implementation of inclusion and on how the challenges can be addressed in order for inclusion to take place. Furthermore the benefits top learners on the implementation of inclusion were also highlighted.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section of the study dealt with the research methods on the study of the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion at Mphahlela Primary School in Bulawayo metropolitan province under the following sub-headings research design, population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures plan, data presentation and analysis plan, validity and reliability of the research instruments and ethical considerations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted descriptive survey design in the study of the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion at Early Childhood Education level. The design shall fit well in the study because it shall allow the researcher to gather information from a selected study population on factors surrounding a problem or a phenomenon and systematically describes a situation to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce model of these relationships. Furthermore, it encourages use of survey data which are the two main data collection methods for this study. The descriptive survey design also assisted the researcher to study the opinions, attitudes and experiences of the primary respondents of the study on the challenges associated with inclusion at Early Childhood Education level.

3.2 Population

The study population consist of teachers and the administration at Mphahlela Primary school. Best and Kahn (2009) notes that study population consists of the total number of people where information of the study is desired. Each class at Mphahlela Primary School in Nkulumane District in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province which has **2 ECD A** with 25 learners and **3 ECD B** classes with 33 learners each and 1 teacher per class 6 Grade 1 and 2 teachers and therefore, the overall population of the study shall be 149 children and 11 teachers and 5 parents or caregivers of children doing early childhood learning who have different special education needs.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Quota sampling was used to select 5 parents of the 11 ECD classes using convenience sampling technique based on their availability when the study is going to be carried out and 1 teacher per class was interviewed who shall be purposively selected since there are the teachers dealing with Early Childhood learning at the Mphahlela Primary in Mzilikazi District, Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. The Early Childhood Educators were given interviewed together with the parents of the learners with special educational needs. Furthermore, the researcher dealt with the politics of access and trust that may arise when dealing with unknown personnel given the sensitivity of the matter under study through clearly explaining the primary participants of the study the purpose of the study and seeking their consent for participation as well as stopping the exercise if they feel so. 11 teachers in ECD and 5 parents were used in the collection of data.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection methods and instruments shall be interview. The interview shall be used on teachers and parents. The interviews were made face-to-face, where communication between the researcher and the interviewees was conducted and use of verbal and non-verbal communication was used to obtain more facts from the participants of the study. Farrokhi and Mahoudi-Hamudabad (2013) describes interview as a director with numerous scheduled interrogations then gives room to the interviewer to adjust phrasing and order of questions. Interview was the one used as it gives freedom to the interviewer to search more or let the interviewee elaborate more on the question.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures Plan

Primary and secondary data shall be used for collection of data and these shall begin after the researcher gets approval from the Faculty of Education at Midlands State University with an endorsement letter for field research. Thereafter, permission from the relevant ministries and other local authorities shall be sought from the teachers and parents of early childhood and the administrators to determine the challenges of that are associated with implementing inclusion at Early Childhood Education at Mphahlela Primary School in Nkulumane in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province before any data are to be collected. Prior arrangements shall be arranged with the parents, administrators and teachers on their own venues and convenient times for the administration of the research instruments and their consents to participate in this study shall also be sought. The participants will be interviewed according to the arranged dates with the researcher.

Chiromo (2006) suggests that data collection and procedures is a way of giving active details such as how, when and who runs the instruments during the collection of data. When permission has been granted, the researcher interviewed the participants through recording them so as to avoid chances of losing them and also enhance confidentiality.

3.6 Data presentation and analysis plan

Data collected was collected through the use of interviews were by teacher, parents and administrators were interviewed to give opinions and attitudes on the challenges of implementing inclusion at early childhood education level. Data to be collected through the use of interviews shall be narrated, described, analysed and interpreted in thematic coding. This view is supported by Berg (2006) who defines data presentation as the logical breaking down and presenting of statistics and logical techniques to describe and evaluate phenomena. This suggests that data collected were to be analysed according to themes in relation to problem to check whether responses answers or fails to answer the research questions. The use of interviews was for the purpose of analysing the findings.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the instruments

The research instruments were developed basing on the research questions and sub-problems from different related literature review of the study. The data collection method ensured the validity of the research as more than two people were interviewed in order to collect the data. The researcher's supervisor verified and confirmed the instruments before data collection process.

3.8 Ethical Considerations of the study

The ethical aspects to be addressed by the researcher included obtaining authority to conduct research from the parents and teachers before embarking on the research, respect for a person's freedom, the right for self-determination, autonomy, volunteerism, confidentiality, consent and respect for person's freedom. All respondents are going to be politely asked to participate by the researcher prior to the study. Respondents are to be adequately informed about the nature of the study and they are going to be explained that they free to withdraw anytime during the period of study if they feel so without any reprimand.

3.9 Summary

The chapter presented the methodology used in this research. The research used descriptive research design as it offered more analytical approach in this research. The data collection methods and instruments were interviews and questionnaires.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and discussion. The respondents of this research study were administrators, teachers and parents of learners from the Mphahlela primary school in Nkulumane, Mzilikazi District, Bulawayo.

4.1 Findings from research question number 1 which says: What are the challenges associated with inclusion at Early Childhood Education level?

The findings were from interviews. The participants who were to be interviewed participated quite well. The information for the parents and teachers resulted from parents' interview guide. The people who were interviewed included five parents, the teachers from the ECE department, that is, ECD A up to grade 2 as well as four administration officials.

4.1.1 Findings from interview

The responses obtained by the researcher indicated that most teachers were willing to work even if they had some challenges. Some teachers even engaged in some methods to assist the learners with challenges in order for them to get the equal opportunity to education like other learners although they had insufficient knowledge to assist the learners. This is evidenced by one of the participants, who stated that,

“At college we were not taught on how to handle learners with disability, we were only told that we will meet such learners. However since I have them I try to use maturity and try to assist the learners with challenges.”

Another participant said,

“Most schools are percentage driven hence making it difficult for inclusion to be implemented.”

This implies that learners with disabilities are referred to as the one who will make the class percentage pass rate drop.

Participant 1 from the parents said,

“Negative attitudes of some learners towards the learners with disabilities make it difficult for the child to learners freely since they will be laughing at the learner especially the physically challenged.”

This might imply that the negative attitude towards the learners with disabilities make the learners to be uncomfortable. Participant 3 from the teachers also agreed by saying,

“Some learners who are not physically challenged when they first meet learners with disabilities they tend to shun them and avoid playing with them.”

Another participant highlighted that,

“Lack of resources makes inclusion difficult to implement”

Another participant stated that, *“inclusion at school is done at Early Childhood Education only, however in upper grades the learners are exempted to their own class in the school.”*

This implies that the shortage of adequate resources to use in the implementation of inclusion makes the teachers to have a negative attitude as they are not provided with the resources that can assist the learners in the teaching and learning process.

4.1.2 Discussion of research question number 1 which says, “What are the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion.”

The majority of the teachers who took part in the study were of the view that the shortage of resources in the school was hindering effective implementation of inclusion in the school. The findings from the research showed that resources were lacking in ECE for effective implementation of inclusion. Coonbs (1995) asserts that education materials are used to stimulate learning, sustain awareness, add variety to the lesson and relate one subject to other subjects. Therefore with the shortage of resources it is difficult to cater for the learners with diverse needs, however, if the resources are provided to the teachers it may allow them to implement inclusion effectively. According to Eshiwani (1985) deficiency of school resources affect learning in both primary and secondary schools. Participant 1 said, *“Shortage of resources in school makes it difficult for them to cater for learners with different special educational needs.”* This is in agreement with Chireshe (2011) who asserts that the shortage of resources is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education. This means that shortage of the resources in the ECE classrooms made it difficult for inclusion to be effectively implemented. This

study found out that most classes in the classrooms resources were not enough or inadequate for the learners to use especially to those with special educational needs. Lack of adequate materials hinders effective learning, making it difficult for learners with disabilities to be equipped with relevant knowledge and skills for learning. A study carried by Mpofu (2000) asserts that in order to produce to all learners including those with severe handicaps equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services with the needed accompanying aids lamented on the shortage of resources as an obstruction to the implementation of inclusive education. In a way if the learners are provided with supplementary aids for them it will enable effective implementation. For example one participant noted that, *“one of her learners was having a hearing problem.”* If such a learner is provided with hearing aids it will enable the learners to get the equal educational opportunity just like the other learners who do not have challenges in hearing.

A study by Santoli, Sachs, Romey and McClurg (2008) postulate that despite the fact that almost all the teachers who were interviewed were willing to make necessary accommodation for learners with disabilities, the majority of the teachers felt that those students with disabilities should not be educated in the mainstream classrooms no matter what the simplicity or seriousness of the disability. Temel (2000) states that people have negative attitudes towards learners with disability that include cultural beliefs whereby people believed that people with disability were witches or were witch crafted. In other words, they believe that disability is inability as they are not able as stated by one participant who said, *“Schools are percentage driven and learners with disabilities may make the percentage pass rate drop.”* The participant went on to say,

“learners with disabilities need to be taken to their own classrooms where they are given manual work that would help them in future.”

From the above findings, the researcher concluded that teachers in the school were not adequately trained to cater for learners with disabilities, there is a shortage of resources and the infrastructure is not conducive for the learners with disabilities making it difficult for the learners to get equal educational opportunities just like their able bodied peers. Negative attitudes is also another hindrance to inclusive education as most stake holders like administrators, teachers, parents and learners have negative attitudes towards inclusive education.

4.2 Findings from research question number 2 which says: How can the challenges affecting inclusion be addressed?

4.2.1 Findings from interviews

Implementation of inclusion faces a lot of challenges however; there are solutions that need to be done for effective implementation. This is so as evidenced by the responses got from the interviewed participants. If the teachers are well equipped with basic knowledge on handling learners with different educational needs inclusion will be successful in mainstream classrooms.

Participant 2 stated that,

“There is need for the teachers to be taught through staff developments and workshops on how to cater for the learners with different special needs since at college they were not taught.”

Another participant also stated that,

“If workshops and staff developments are conducted to the teachers they will be able to implement inclusion effectively”

This implies that since the teachers are already in the field and they do not have the basic knowledge on catering for the learners it is important for them to be equipped with basic knowledge as they are already employed without the basic knowledge on handling the learners.

Another participant also highlighted that, *“The government needs to educate teachers in schools through workshops.”*

Another participant noted that,

“Building of infrastructure that will cater for the learners with disabilities is important to allow them to move freely especially ramps and proper ablution facilities.”

This implies that if the infrastructure is revisited in most main stream school it will allow the learners to be accommodated especially those on wheelchairs when they want to move around the ramps will allow them to move freely. Ablution facilities will also help the learners not to contact diseases as they will be designed in a way that allows the learners on wheel chairs to balance.

One participant stated that,

“The government needs to revisit the teacher to pupil ratio so as to allow the teachers to cater for diverse learners needs.”

This implies that if the teacher to pupil ratio is revised and the teachers get the number of learners which is manageable like the ratio 1:40 it will enable the teachers to cater for learners with special needs as they will be catered for on individual basis as the number will be convenient to cater for them individually.

From another participant it was noted that,

“Learners need to be encouraged not to laugh at other learners who have challenges so that they will feel welcomed and be able to express themselves.”

4.2.2 Discussions from research question number 2 which says: How can the challenges affecting inclusion be addressed?

Amvaminds and Norwich (2002) postulate that teachers cannot promote inclusive education while they lack experience or encouragement. This is also supported by Ainscow and Farrell (2003) who point out the majority of the teachers feel they have got a difficult enough job, having to work without aids for learners with challenges. This is in agreement with one participant, who highlighted that, *“if resources are provided especially to those with challenges it will not be a task to implement inclusion and the teacher to pupil ratio is reduced so as to enable us to have one on one in assisting the learners in an inclusive set up.”*

Banks (2000) noted that teachers should acquire skills needed to translate knowledge into effective enriched curriculum. This implies that teachers in ECE should be trained in inclusive education so as to allow proper and equal educational opportunities to all the learners. In a way teachers should be well trained in handling such learners or through the use of staff developments they can be equipped in order to cater for the learners.

Azjen (1991) points out that attitude plays a significant role in determining behaviour. This implies that if different stakeholders have a positive attitude towards inclusive education it will allow the implementation of inclusion to be successful at Early Childhood Education level. This is supported by another participant who highlighted, *“that if stakeholders are equipped with knowledge they will have positive attitudes towards inclusion.”* In a way starting from the Ministry to the Education Officers, administrators, parents, teachers and learners, if they have the positive attitude there will be effective implementation of inclusion.

Chireshe (2011) postulates that teachers who teach learners with infirmities need to have necessary qualifications in order to cater for the learners individually. This implies that teachers in Early Childhood Education should be trained in special needs education so as to allow the teachers to assist the learners and also learners to get equal opportunities like their able bodied peers. This is in agreement with one participant who highlighted that, *“teachers need to get knowledge on handling learners with disabilities so that they will not treat the learners as special cases and assist them according to their individual needs.”* Mafa (2012) also pointed out that, problems encountered by teachers when handling inclusive classes bring the need of appropriateness of the teachers training programme that the teacher trainees are exposed to during the pre-teacher training. This implies that teachers need in-service training in order to equip them with basic knowledge and ways on how to cater for the learners with different special educational needs. This is in agreement with another participant who stated that, *“there is need for staff developments for teachers who are already employed so that they can be equipped with the knowledge on handling learners.”*

From the above findings, the researcher concluded that through staff developments, providing resources and building proper infrastructure will help overcome the challenges that are faced in the implementation of inclusion. The researcher also noted that if teachers were given basic knowledge, staff developed and trained through workshops inclusion will be successful in Early Childhood Education. Parents, teachers and administrators all need to be educated on how to deal with learners so that they can have a positive attitude towards the learners.

4.3. Findings from research question number 3 which says: How can the implementation of inclusion assist learning at Early Childhood Education level?

4.3.1 Findings from interviews

The findings from the interviews noted that through the implementation of inclusion learners with disabilities learn to engage freely and at times their disability improves. This was noted from one participant, who stated that,

“Through being at school and playing with other learners his speech has improved and he is able to speak not using baby language.”

Another participant went on to say,

“Learners enjoy freely as they play with others and this helps them to have a sense of belonging and feel free to express themselves whenever there is need.”

This showed that learners with disabilities when included in regular classrooms they will enjoy playing with others and participate in different activities like their peers.

Another participant stated that,

“Through engaging learners with disability in regular classrooms it helps the learners to develop different skills and learn to socialise with others.”

Another participant suggested that,

“Learners develop different milestones as they engage in different activities with different peers.”

Learners get to participate in different activities and develop different milestones as they play, participate and engage in different activities.

Another participant went on to say,

“Learners gain acceptance as they are involved with learners who are disabled on a day to day basis.”

This implies that learners also get to appreciate their peers who have challenges and learn on how to relate with them making it easy for them to participate in different activities which will increase the learner’s participation in the teaching and learning process.

4.3.2 Discussions from research question number 3 which says: How can the implementation of inclusion assist learning at Early Childhood Education level?

Avramidis et al (2000) state that nonstop involvements of including learners with disabilities into mainstream sets seemed to be a vital factor in shaping educator's views towards inclusive education. This implies that learners through being involved in mainstream classroom teachers end up having a positive attitude towards the learners and also have a better view on inclusive education as they work with learners on a daily basis. Mafa (2012) points out those learners with disabilities who attend mainstream schools are more confident than those who are not. This is supported by one participant who highlighted that, *"if the learners are included in mainstream classroom they gain more confidence and they are able to express themselves as they feel welcomed."* In other words, learner's confidence is boosted as they are given chance just like other learners to express themselves in classrooms during the process of learning.

Pavri (2004) states that teachers should know all of their children, know their characteristics, encourage social behaviour and support the learners to have creative involvements in preschools while also being able to familiarise their instructions to the developmental level of each child and use tactics that facilitate teaching in the classroom. By doing the above it makes teaching and learning effective as all the learners will be catered for and are involved in their learning. This is supported by another participant who stated that, *"in order for the teachers to be able to handle learners with special needs they need to be taught on how to handle them so that they will be able to cater for individual needs."* This implies that if the teachers have the basic knowledge they will know on catering for the learners and they will be able to recognize the individual needs making it easy for the learners to feel welcomed and be able to express themselves.

One participant stated that, *“inclusion allows learners’ ego and morale to be boosted as learners will now be used to the learners and at times end up challenging able bodied peer’s intellectually and fit in the society.”*

Inclusion also benefits learners both with and without disabilities, mostly in the area of social development. For many children with disabilities, inclusive surroundings can positively impact learner’s levels of commitment, social recognition, and bonds. (Odom, Buysee, and Soukakou 2011). In a way inclusion does not benefit learners with disabilities only but also those without disabilities benefit as they gain different skills. The researcher noted that through involving learners with and without disabilities together helps the learners as they gain skills like socialising, acceptance and also cooperate together as they play.

Holahan and Costenbader(2000) learners with infirmities who are involved in high-quality classrooms with their typically developing peers stand to acquire positive gains across developmental milestones. Researchers found out that inclusion has long and meaningful impacts on learners with disabilities.

Santrock 2009) states that learning begins at infancy. This means that young learners benefit from early learning which has led to many learners at Early Childhood Education level to develop different skills since they are included in main stream classrooms. Diamond and Hong (2010) found that normally developing children are also more likely to approach their decisions to include children with disabilities in play based on equality and equity. This implies that as the learners are engaged together in the learning process on a day to day basis it allows them to appreciate and include the learners in the activities they do making it easy for the learners to express themselves.

The researcher can conclude that both learners with disabilities and without disabilities benefit from inclusion as they gain different social skills and learn to appreciate each other. The teachers also benefit as they learn to cater for the different individual needs of the learners. Learners also get to socialise and be able to handle their differences through the process of learning.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study. The findings were presented according to the following themes; challenges affecting implementation of inclusion; suggestions for effective implementation of inclusion and ways in which inclusive education help learning in Early Childhood Education. Therefore, the next chapter presents the summary of the survey as a whole as well as the major conclusions made by the researcher. Some recommendations will also be made based on the data presented in the in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, summary, conclusions and recommendations of the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion at Early Childhood Education level at Mphahlela Primary school, Mzilikazi District in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province for further research.

5.1 Summary

Chapter one presented the background on the challenges associated with implementing inclusion at Early Childhood Education level. The chapter further explained statement of the problem, research questions and the significance of the study. Furthermore, limitations and delimitations of the study were also highlighted. Key terms which are inclusion and Early Childhood education were the key terms defined in chapter one.

The second chapter focused on both theoretical framework that is literature review. Literature was reviewed under the following sub headings which are, what are the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion at Early Childhood Education level, how can the challenges be addressed and how can the implementation of inclusion assist Early Childhood Education learners.

In chapter three the research methodology was explored. Research design, population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection instruments and data collection procedures were also highlighted. Furthermore data presentation and analysis, validity

and reliability of instruments and ethical considerations on the research were also highlighted in the chapter.

Chapter four focused on the results of the data collected and discussions. Data was collected using interviews and was narrated and analysed in chapter four. The findings were also discussed in relation to literature on the challenges of implementing inclusion, suggestions that can be made for effective implementation of inclusion and on how inclusion helps the learners at Early Childhood Education.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that:

Although learners with different disabilities were enrolled at the school in Early Childhood Education classrooms there were challenges faced in implementing inclusion fully and for it to be successful. There were no qualified or skilled personnel in handling learners with special needs. Infrastructure in most classes in the school was not adequate to accommodate learners who have disabilities. Also negative attitudes from different stakeholders that is parents, administrators, teachers and other learners was also another challenge that hindered proper implementation. Relevant teaching and learning materials were unavailable to cater for the needs of learners who are disabled in inclusive education.

There were suggestions highlighted in order for effective inclusion to take place in the school. The suggestions were that the teachers need to be taught or trained at colleges so that they can have basic knowledge on special needs education. Provision of resources and building of proper infrastructure to accommodate all the learners in the

learning process. Staff developments and workshops to help equip teachers with basic knowledge. Different stakeholders such as learners and community members need to be educated on handling learners.

If inclusion is effectively implemented learners will benefit as they are included in the classrooms. Learners without disabilities will also learn on how to accommodate learners with different learning abilities. For example as they engage with others they benefit from their peers and also gain social skills. Stigmatization will also be removed and learners will be treated the same. Learners will also get equal education opportunities and also have access to education. They also have a sense of belonging as they will feel free to express themselves.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the researcher came up with the following recommendations that will help improve on the implementation of inclusion at Early Childhood Education level:

- To the Ministry to moderate syllabus on training of Early Childhood Education so that teachers at colleges are offered basic knowledge on handling learners with all kinds of disabilities as they train.
- To the Ministry of Primary and Secondary to equip teachers who are already in the field with basic knowledge on inclusion through conducting staff developments and workshops.

- The Ministry to revise the teacher to pupil ratio so that all the learners will be catered for and to have enough space since classes are overcrowded due to large ratio.
- The school needs to provide resources that are needed by the learners who have challenges so that inclusion can be effective.
- The school to build proper infrastructure that will accommodate all the learners especially the ablution facilities.
- The parents and community to have positive attitudes towards the learners with disabilities.
- Parents and community need to be equipped with knowledge on the importance of inclusion to the learners.
- Learners in inclusive settings needs to be taught on taught on the importance of inclusive education.
- Counselling of learners with disabilities so that they are motivated to go to school.

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INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS

My name is Sidumisile Ndalimani, a student at Midlands State University. I am doing a research on the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion at ECE level at Mabhukudwana Primary, Mzilikazi District in Bulawayo Metropolitan. Your cooperation will be appreciated. Information provided will be for research purposes and confidential.

SECTION A: Personal Information

1. Gender Male: Female:
2. Work experience
- 1-5 Years: 6-9 Years 10 Years+
3. Employment
- Employed Not Employed:
4. Level of Education/ Qualification
- Grade 7: 'O' Level: 'A' Level:
- Others:
-

SECTION B

1. Which grade do you teach?
2. How many learners do you teach?
3. Are the learners with different special education needs?
4. How do you cater for these learners?
5. Can you describe what you understand by the term inclusion?
6. Is it effectively implemented in schools, if yes how?
7. Are there challenges faced in the implementation of inclusion?
Yes: No:
8. Can you name the challenges which hinder inclusion?
9. How can the challenges be addressed?
10. Do you think implementation of inclusion is important?
11. Yes: No:

Can you explain why?

INTERVIEW FOR PARENTS

My name is Sidumisile Ndalimani, a student at Midlands State University. I am doing a research on the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion at ECE level at Mabhukudwana Primary, Mzilikazi District in Bulawayo Metropolitan. Your cooperation will be appreciated. Information provided will be for research purposes and confidential.

1. How many children do you have who are going to school?
2. How many are attending ECE?
3. Do you have any learners who have disabilities?
4. If yes, what kind of disability does the child have?
5. How do you handle the disability of the child?
6. What do you think about teaching learners with disability with those that are not disabled?
7. Explain why
8. Are the learners with special needs catered for the same way as those without disabilities?
9. If so how
10. Do you have any suggestions about inclusive education?