

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

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Abstract

Inclusive education takes place in an integrated classroom where teachers, learners, and other paraprofessionals of both normal pupils and children with special needs interact to achieve individual learner's educational goals. To achieve the goals, this paper examines the concept of inclusive classroom, children with visual impairment, components of inclusive classroom, strategies for effective inclusive classroom management, and methodology in inclusive education. It also offers strategies for teaching primary children with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom.

Introduction

Management of inclusive classrooms of pupils with visual impairment by regular teacher, involve the act of controlling and administering the pupils, materials and all that happens in the classroom so that pupils will acquire acceptable behavior and fully explore their potential ability academically. Peretomode, (1999) sees management as the social or interactional process involving sequence of coordinated events planning organizing, coordinating and controlling or leading in order to use the available resources to achieve a desired outcome in the fastest and most efficient way. An inclusive schooling is one that accepts inclusion as a necessary means of providing for the learning needs of children with visual impairment in an environment that take into cognizance of diversity (Ali, 2014).

Concept of an inclusive classroom

Inclusive education programme is an educational programme that can enhance the achievement of education for all in Nigeria. Federal Government of Nigeria, FGN (2014) stipulated inclusive education as the new educational facility that government will provide to ensure equal access to education. Inclusive classroom is a classroom where learning often happens in small groups with peer helping and supporting each other. Olukotun, (2007) in his view stressed that inclusive education affords the special needs children the opportunity to surmount certain problems of Labels and social stigma.

Characteristics of inclusive classroom

The inclusive classroom has the following characteristic:-

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- The inclusive classroom is an environment where a lot of students are doing different learning activities at the same time based on their IEP with people helping them. Student must move from one environment to another.
 - Learning takes place in small groups in the inclusive classroom with the learners helping and supporting each other.
 - In the inclusive classroom, the student is the centre of activities. The student are involved in making the rule of conduct and behaviour and are expected to follow these rules in order to meet contracted expectations for curricular; (Abednego 2012).

Visual impairment

Okeke, (2001) defined vision as a vital factor in the development process and well being of children and adult. Visual impairment describes the reduce function of the eye, it performance is measured by specific visual tests such as those for acuity, visual field colour vision, and near vision. A visual impairment occurs when any part of the optical system is defective, diseased, or malfunctions (Virginia 1991, revised 1996). Defectives includes: Absence of an Iris and or eyes themselves dislocation of the lens; holes in the retina, and drainage system that are stopped up. Refractive errors is due to eye balls that are too short or too long, improperly shaped cornea, albinism etc. Diseases such as, diabetes and some types of retinal diseases. While malfunctions occur due to defective parts or secondarily, to body disease such as rubella.

Component of an inclusive classroom

The following are the main components to be considered in the management of inclusive classrooms:

The teachers: Ferguson (2000) in Okeke-Oti (2010) stated that all teachers, those just preparing to teach and those who have been teaching for decades need to develop the capacity to better address all kinds of student's diversity because disability is just one of the diversity and needs present in the classroom. The teachers must be able to manage themselves first, go for training, collaborate and plan effectively with special educators.

Collaboration: special educators must form partnership with general educators to create inclusive school environments for all students. There are multiple methods of teacher collaboration, including co-teaching, peer coaching collaboration consultation, and collaborative problem solving (Brownell, Adams, Sindelaar, Waldron, & Van Hover (2006). They explained that regardless of the model, the focus is on teachers working together with an assumption but collaboration leads to improved student academic achievement.

Restructured classroom: learning environment classroom required restructuring to allow inclusion of all children with special needs condition. NPE,(2014). Architectural designs shall be barrier free, that take into account special needs or pupils with disable

e.g movement signs, resource centers, ramp, widen doors for wheel chairs, lower toilet, etc.

Adapted curriculum: curriculum when adopted some changes are made to meet the learning needs of special pupils. For these reasons various model of curriculum exist for intervention purposes, such as developmental model, remedial and compensatory model, functional model and the enrichment trial model for the gifted and talented.

Individual educational programme (IEP). IEP is a written statement that shows a plan of action for providing adequate special education services to an individual with special needs. The content of IEP includes the child current educational performance, expected annual goals, short term instructional objectives and other service needed by the child, duration of the programme and the procedure for evaluation. IEP will aid the teachers to adequately manage and meet the learning needs of children with visual impairment.

Strategies for effective inclusive classroom management

For the child with visual impairment to benefit optimally from inclusion, it is imperative for teachers who teach at the basic level to be able to teach a wide range of pupils in the classroom. The strategies below have been found to be effective for any classroom teacher who wants to develop an inclusive and supportive classroom environment. They were adopted from the study and research of Knol (2008), any techniques that will assist a child with learning difficulties are also effective for the general classroom population which includes pupils with visual impairment. The strategies as enumerated by Knol (2008) as follows:

Getting the Basics Right:

- a. The teacher should maximize teaching time. Goor and Shwenn in Knol (2008), Observed that a teacher who maximizes teaching time is going to be more effective not only with students with learning difficulties but with the whole classroom.
- b. The teacher should implement level of accepted behavior pattern from the beginning of the school year such as classroom rules, as this reduce misbehavior in the class and allows the teacher to re-establish discipline quickly, when needed (Mcphillimy, 1996). The teacher should develop written instructions on the board, and the listening and speaking strategies for different purpose, uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process and uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process.

Methodology in inclusive education

The following five methods are necessary in meeting the individual and collective learning needs of every member of an inclusive classroom:

- **One to one support technique:** the method adopts the traditional regular classroom arrangement but has two teachers one instructs and other provides

support (supportive teacher) and assistance to the learners. These teachers will rotate roles as lessons changed so that each teacher, the general education teacher and the special education teacher, have a chance to take on the main instructors role as well as the supportive instructor role.

- **Station teaching:** when using this method the classroom arrangement is divided into two or three different sections and learners too. An equal division of pupils with visual impairment and those without should be done. The general education teacher should instruct one group while other teacher instructs the second group. The main lesson is divided into two segments sand each teacher will teach one segment. At the end of the lesson the group will rotate and each teacher will give the lesson again.
- **Parallel teaching strategy:** this is method is used when teachers plan together and then teach the same information to two separate groups of pupils in the same class and at the same time.
- **Alternative teaching technique:** the alternative teaching method is used by two teachers with, two groups, one teacher who works with the majority of the learners, while a second teacher works with a small group of learners.
- **Team teaching technique:** this consists of two teachers who are both responsible for planning and are actively involved in classroom management and instruction. A general education and a special education teacher are both heading the class. For example, in mathematics lessons, the teaches take turns discussing the lesson and can using tactile materials such as pictures for counting graphs and models perhaps the best advantage of team teaching is that both teaches have an active and equal role in the classroom.

Inclusion strategies for teaching pupils with visual impairment

The student who is blind or visually impaired will need assistance to be provided with orientation in order to be included in all the school activities. Teachers will need to collaborate and communicate with guest school head and cafeteria workers to name a few places in order to ensure that the total school and educational environment are safe and accessible to pupils with visual impairment. Developing friendships and having positive social interactions may requires a help on your part to advocate for them and build acceptance. Efforts should be made to place the students with other students, especially if other students in the classroom are positioned in clusters. For fire drills, the mobile students should be instructed to take hold of the nearest adult or student and quickly and quietly follow others. Initial orientation to the lunchroom may be necessary so the student with a visual impairment can learn where trays are located, where lines form, and so forth, students with visual impairment should be provided with preferential seating during assemblies and movies. It would also be helpful to arrange for someone to sit next to them during movies, assemblies or special events and must endeavor to explain what is happening from the beginning up to the end of the events.

Conclusion

Inclusive education is part of the universal rights to education, which is extended to all children, youth and adults with disabilities to gain access to education in regular classroom. For effective management of inclusive classroom for children with visual impairment, number of components must be considered such as, teacher, collaboration, restructured classroom, adapted curriculum and individualized educational programme. Henceforth, the above mentioned strategies which were used to teach children with visual impairment should be added to the curriculum for teacher education programme in Nigeria. With all discussions, inclusive classroom serve as beneficial to all children, pupils with visual impairment inclusive.

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