

MODIFIED CURRICULUM AND THE ROLE OF OTHER PROFESSIONAL AS ESSENTIAL APPARATUS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper discusses the efforts for effective and successful institutionalization of inclusive education in Nigeria. It also focuses on some apparatus that make the institutionalization possible which are modified curriculum and role of other professionals. This can help the genuine institutionalization of the programme, and some recommendations were made as per steps to take in order to have a successful adoption of inclusive education in Nigeria.

Introduction

In the 1990, inclusion captured the field after the world conference on special need education in Salamanca in 1994, with the adoption of the Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education. The statement which was adopted by the representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organizations. In June 1994, has definitely set the policy agenda for the inclusive education on a global basis (UNESCO, 1994). to quote from the Salamanca statement ...

“we the delegates of the world conference on special needs education.....hereby reaffirm our commitment to education for all, recognizing the necessity and urgency of providing education to children, youth and adults with SE within the regular education system, and further hereby endorse the framework for action on S.N.E., that government and organizations may be guided by the spirit of its provisions and recommendations” (UNESCO, 1994).

Inclusive education is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through inclusive practices in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in contents approaches structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO, 2005). For the successful implementation of inclusive education many pillars have to be considered, example, funding, barrier to free leaning equipments, adequate trained personnel and the essential apparatus are modified curriculum which when adopted can cater for the special need individuals hence they cannot copple with normal school curriculum and also the use of

other professionals which will observe and assist different problem which both the regular and special education teachers will not is also very essential.

In this paper pillars of supportive successful implementation of inclusive education will be discussed for the programme to be given a solid foundation for an excellent initial take up and purposeful everlasting of the programme. The paper, then gives some recommendations.

In order to have adequate sustainable and improved implementation of inclusive education that will cater for all children with special needs, modified curriculum and the role of other professional will be given prior consideration.

Modified Curriculum

Successful Inclusion practices depend on special adaptation and modification of curriculum, the present curriculum of the regular school system in Nigeria should be re-worked in the light of inclusive practices in the schools.

Curriculum designers should therefore plan the learning experiences in a way that the unique needs of the children are adequately addressed. the roles of supportive staff such as sign language interpreters for hearing impaired and other ancillary should be therefore spelled. It should be pointed out that large classes should not be encouraged given the fact that children with disabilities benefits more from individualized educational programme, the schools must make conscious attempts within the framework of the curriculum to address in a differential manner the learning needs of each child. As Corbett (2001) puts it differentiation means using many teaching styles and sharing special skills. The reason for this is that children as well as obtain information in a multiplicity of ways while some prefer oral stimulus, others opt for visual cues.

The curriculum designers should also plan the curriculum in the following manner:-

- The curriculum has to be structured and to be capable of being taught in such a way that all students can access it.
- The curriculum has to be unpinned by a model of learning which is itself inclusive. It needs to accommodate a range of learning styles and to emphasize skills and knowledge with are relevant to students.
- The curriculum should have sufficient flexibility for responding to the needs of particular students' communities and religious, linguistic, ethnic or other groups. Therefore it cannot be rigidly prescribed at national or central level.
- The curriculum need to have basic levels which students with varying levels of entry skills can access. Progress needs to be managed and assessed so that all students experience success.
- Mittler (2000) outlined three key principles for developing a more inclusive curriculum as:
 - i. Setting suitable learning challenges
 - ii. Responding to pupil's diverse learning skills

- iii. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The Curriculum must embrace all the learning experiences that are available to students in their schools and communities; it therefore has to be rigorous, but flexible enough to respond to the very diverse characteristics of students.

The Roles of other professionals

For effective implementation of inclusive education in our schools, the services of other professionals are required if teaching and learning is to be meaningful to special need children, Carr-Saunders in Ozoji (2005) defined professional as one with specialized training for the purpose of supplying skilled services. A special education professional, is one who has a general knowledge of education but with specialized skills in the education of the persons with special needs. Professionals in special education and other related disciplines are the pivot of the success of inclusive education; persons with special needs in an inclusive setting require the cooperation of the professionals and non-professionals to work as a team to help them to be educated together in the same classroom.

In an inclusive setting, all professionals in special education with different skills in their area of specialization work together as a team to educate the child within the same environment.

The professionals that should be involved in this service provision in an inclusive education setting include the following:-

- The Psychologist, Audiologist, Educational Technologist, Medical Doctors, Guidance and Counselor, the Sociologist, Optician, the Otologist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners, Physical Therapist, Social Worker, Orthopedist, Pediatrician and Physical Education Teachers.

Some of the roles played by the above mentioned special education professionals as listed by Ihenacho (1989) include:

- Observing, analyzing, selecting and sequencing learning tasks so that the child overcomes his delays rather than falling further behind.
- Actual delivery of educational therapies to the children with exceptionality in school.
- Motivation and reinforcing the special need children in the school.
- Carrying out identification and assessment on the special need children for the purpose of educational placement.
- Serving as consultants that provide support or assistance to regular school teachers.
- They often participate in developing curriculum for persons with special needs to include both practical and theoretical.
- In hospital setting, special education professionals have role to play as speech and language therapist for stroke victims.
- The special for deaf work as audiologist to measure the level of hearing loss and to know the type of hearing aid that will be appropriate for each child. They can also

work as sign language interpreters and news announcers for hearing impaired in factories, classrooms, government ministries, television studios, conferences etc.

- Finally, the special education professionals are playing a very important role as advocates in legislative matter championing the course of person with special needs, initiating societal awareness, workshops, seminars and conferences on behalf of the exceptional children (Abang 2000).

For successful implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria, there is need for the effective utilization of the various categories of professionals that could make the programme functional.

Conclusion

For successful execution of inclusive educational practices in Nigeria, there are peculiar roles to be carried out by the government, teachers and parents. This system can only be successful if teething problems that prevent effective implementation of segregation, mainstreaming/integration are promptly taken care of in the bud. Inclusive Education can be a reality and successfully institutionalize in Nigeria by putting the necessary things in place.

For effective institutionalization of inclusive education in Nigeria after modified curriculum the role of other professional the following need to be enforced:-

- A strong financial support and total commitment from the government.
- Adequate material, human resources and responsive parent feedback.
- The government should declare war on the negative attitudes of the people through various enlightenment programmes.
- Provision of competent trained professionals is crucial to the implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria.
- Adequate remuneration of teachers should be greatly considered.
- Research is needed to find out how pedagogy curriculum and school classroom organization contribute to marginalizing students so that we can build more inclusive education communities (Slee 2003). In Ozoji 2005.

Areas like: Buildings; schools organization; Pedagogy; Assessment; Staffing; School Ethos; Extracurricular activities; Parent Involvement need to be change, for inclusive to succeed in Nigeria

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