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**Analysis of Eswatini Senior Secondary School SiSwati Teachers'
Inclusive Education Practice**



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Analysis of Eswatini Senior Secondary School SiSwati Teachers' Inclusive Education Practice

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Inclusive education entails children's rights to education in spite of all; it implies that teachers align instruction alongside inclusivity. This study sought to analyze senior secondary school siSwati teachers' inclusive education practice, a case study of schools in the Shiselweni region, Nhlngano cluster. Its objectives were; to ascertain senior secondary school siSwati teacher's views about inclusive education practice; to determine senior secondary school siSwati teachers' implementation of inclusive education practice and to ascertain the challenges of inclusive education practice faced by senior secondary school siSwati teachers.

Methodology: The study employed the qualitative approach, blended semi- structured interviews, and document analysis as data collection instruments. A five (5) item semi-structured online interview guide and a document analyses guide with six (6) items designed by the researchers were used for data collection. Purposive sampling was used to select three (3) schools, six (6) teachers were used as participants. Data was analyzed using content analysis.

Findings: Findings revealed that teachers lack knowledge on inclusive education; inclusive education strategies were used with separate lessons; shortage of inclusive education resources and the broad siSwati curriculum are major challenges.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: It was concluded that teachers hold negative views towards inclusive education; use inclusive education strategies partially; unavailability of resources and the diversity of the siSwati syllabus are major challenges. It is recommended that teachers get capacitated; siSwati language and literature be taught as separate subjects and government provides inclusive education infrastructure.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, Differentiated learning, Pedagogy*

Introduction

Though the world is facing COVID-19 challenges in the education sector, quality, equity and inclusion in education remains the pillar. Teachers are expected to ensure quality education and fight for exclusion of learners in the COVID-19 pandemic context. Thus, inclusive education has become one of the major concepts that have been implemented or is in the process of implementation by schools worldwide. Inclusive education practice states that education must involve, accommodate or include everyone who may have been previously excluded before. In lobbying for inclusive education practice UNESCO (2021, p.21) in the Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education cite that “*every learner matters and matters equally*”. This slogan was adopted by schools worldwide through their respective governments and is interpreted to mean that every child is to have access to education regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional spiritual and linguistic ability. This concept is called inclusive education. Inclusive education practice is quality and equal education for all learners that is in line with every learner’s needs. The inclusive education concept is built upon the fact that each learner is unique with unique talents, abilities, strengths etc. An inclusive classroom is therefore, characterized by diverse learners with; emotional, physical, social and psychological needs in the same classroom. This means that the teacher must be aware of this and vary his or her teaching approaches, methods/activities and resources to cater for all the diverse learners in the classroom.

The inclusive education concept calls for change in the curriculum; require new and improved school approaches that accommodate every child admitted in the school. The inclusive pedagogy is a learner centered and participatory therefore, demand that teachers use new and improved teaching methods. The same thing applies to teaching resources and learning aids, they must be those that successfully cater for all learner needs. All these are the fundamental areas that implementation of inclusive education calls for. Inclusive education calls for intense training for teachers who clearly play an important role in executing the teaching and learning process and further act as facilitators in the learning process. This study sought to analyze Eswatini senior secondary school siSwati teachers’ inclusive education practice.

Background to the study

Inclusive education is a pedagogy that make effort to meet all learners regardless of age, social class, background, origin, race, linguistic ability etc. The notion of inclusive education is born out of the child’s right to education which is still one of the most recognized human rights that exist globally. This right is embedded in the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, it later on gave birth to a number of rights which includes the rights of persons with disabilities. Article 26 in the field of education proclaims that every citizen has a right to appropriate education regardless of gender, race, skin color, emotional and linguistic abilities and religion (Kisanjii, 1999). Inclusion and equity are foundations behind quality education (The Education 2030 Framework for Action as cited in UNESCO, 2000). The notion of inclusive education is aimed at ending discrimination and exclusion of learners with limited abilities and

was endorsed in the UNESCO (1994) Salamanca World Conference on Special needs education. The major assertion is that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. Since its initiation the world is on a mission of implementing inclusive education practice in their respective schools.

As major turning points in the Kingdom of Eswatini towards the introduction of inclusive education, the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in Eswatini National Curriculum Framework (2018, p.3) and Education Sector Policy (EDSEC) (2011) postulates that education should incorporate inclusive education principles which seeks to ensure that every learner, regardless of age, gender, capacity to learn or level of achievement, benefits from curriculum delivery. As further efforts the EDSEC 2018 states that “*Education must serve to ensure equitable access to inclusive, life-long quality education and training for all Swazi citizens, through sustained implementation and resourcing of a comprehensive education and training policy*”, (MoET, 2018, p. 3). Thus, quality, equity and accessible education are major inclusive education concepts in the Kingdom of Eswatini curriculum summed up as Education for All.

The concept of inclusive education is also, emphasized in the Eswatini Child Protection and Welfare Act (2012) that cite four pillars towards child’s growth and development being; non-discrimination, best interest, involvement in matters affecting the child and child participation in any project or activity meant to help the child. The inclusive education principle emphasizes the right of every learner to quality and equitable education that meet his or her basic learning needs, and regard diversity of backgrounds and learning abilities as learning opportunities. This has direct effect on schools’ infrastructure, teaching methods as well as teaching materials. According to a speech by the late Deputy Prime Minister of Eswatini in 2010, honorable Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini, the national response to psycho- social needs of children is to assure that every learner in the Kingdom of Eswatini meaningfully participate and benefit in the teaching and learning process.

SiSwati is one of the core subjects taught under the senior secondary school curriculum in Eswatini. The senior secondary school curriculum compels native speakers to learn siSwati as first language and non-native speakers as second language. The major focus for this study was the teaching of siSwati as a first language. The rationale for First Language siSwati is based on siSwati being one of the official languages of Eswatini, the other being English (Eswatini General Certificate of Secondary Education (EGCSE), SiSwati Syllabus, 2021-2023). The siSwati language, literature and culture are three components taught under the siSwati as a first language curriculum. The teaching methodology regards language and literature as interrelated concepts in that there is language in literature, literature in language vice versa. Under the culture component learners are taught different topics on the Emaswati culture. The curriculum for the senior secondary schools in Eswatini is the Eswatini General Certificate of Secondary Education (EGCSE) curriculum.

The EGCSE curriculum regard that each learner is unique with special talents and abilities therefore, compel that instruction offered must use be practical. Numeracy (mathematical ideas,

techniques and applications), problem solving, communication and language, technological awareness and applications, critical thinking, work and study, independent learning and working with others are the array of skills that the EGCSE curriculum aim to equip learners with (EGCSE SiSwati Syllabus, 2021-2023). Besides equipping learners with the above-mentioned skills, siSwati by virtue of being a language also equip learners with the four language skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking. The project/research, field work, group work, debate, resource persons, role play or drama and values clarifications are teaching methods recommended for use by the EGCSE curriculum.

SiSwati being one of the core subjects taught in senior secondary implies that siSwati teachers need to ensure that the classroom environment caters for all learners needs for education to meet the intended goals. Learning the mother tongue is important because it allows for easy comprehension of concepts and further enhances learners' participation in the teaching and learning process as learners show interest in learning through a medium they understand, by virtue of it being a mother tongue (Hertzler, 1968). It also develops a sense of pride and a strong sense of self identity to learners. Additionally, learning siSwati makes learners to remain connected to their culture/roots.

The idea of inclusive education is not totally new as it was introduced to the country a decade ago. However, the researchers in this study have observed that each time a new concept is introduced there will be challenges. Though, the major focus for teaching and learning nowadays is on COVID-19 learning challenges and expectations, COVID-19 or no COVID-19 learners are still unique with different abilities, strengths, potentials and capabilities. Therefore, whether instruction is offered through face- to face, blend face-to face with online or is fully online, must be accommodative of all learner types. Thus, the study sought to examine senior secondary school siSwati teachers' inclusive education practice in the Shiselweni region of the Kingdom of Eswatini, Nhlngano cluster.

Statement of Problem

Inclusive education rests on the principle of education for all and equal opportunities in the face of diversity and calamity. Despite, the hype for online learning Eswatini schools are still characterized by diverse learner needs with physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistics and any other, thus, call for use of inclusive education practices. Additionally, regardless of the vast literature on inclusive education in Eswatini there is no research done that analyzes teachers' practices of implementing inclusive education in the teaching of siSwati. The study therefore sought to analyze senior secondary school siSwati teachers' inclusive education practice.

Research Objectives

1. To ascertain senior secondary school siSwati teacher's views about inclusive education practice.
2. To determine senior secondary school siSwati teachers' implementation of inclusive education practice.

3. To ascertain the challenges of inclusive education practice faced by senior secondary school siSwati teachers.

Research questions

1. What are senior secondary school siSwati teacher's views about inclusive education practice?
2. How do senior secondary school siSwati teachers implement inclusive education practice?
3. What are the challenges of inclusive education practice faced by senior secondary school siSwati teachers?

Theoretical Framework

The study is framed within the theory of change by Michael Fullan (1982). Fullan (1982) claims that change takes four phases namely: initiation, implementation, continuation and outcome. The major focus of this study was the implementation phase which involves the quality and practicality of the programme. In this phase the programme is put into practice. Fullan and Stiegerlbauer (1991) advises that there is a role to be played by the different stakeholders responsible for the change implementation. Fullan and Stiegerlbauer (1991) grouped the stakeholders responsible for change in education into two; as the local and federal. Under the local is the; school district, board of community, principal and the teacher, under federal level stakeholders is the government and other agencies. These according to Fullan and Stiegerlbauer (1991) should possess certain characteristics of the change and consider certain issues before committing a change effort. Under characteristics of change Fullan and Stiegerlbauer (1991) cite that beyond being clear about the need for the change and its goals, they must consider the complexity; the extent of change required for those responsible for implementation as well as the quality and practicality of the program. A stern warning by Fullan and Stiegerlbauer (1991) is that successful change will inevitably involve some conflict and disagreements.

This study is on the practical aspect of inclusive education in the classroom specifically in the senior secondary school siSwati classroom. It examined teachers' inclusive education practices; its participants are teachers who are the main agents in inclusive education.

Fullan (1991) also reveals that, one should not also assume that people will only change if there is pressure to do so, rather change needs a supportive environment, and opportunities to share experiences with others in similar situations. Fullan (1991) further on, advises that not only knowledge form the basis for change but a combination of knowledge, politics and intuition. The assumptions above therefore, mean that any change in education may not seem to be as simple as it seems. Thus, the study sought to examine senior secondary school siSwati teachers' inclusive education practice.

Literature review

Research on inclusive education practice reveals that its implementation, like all trends require innovation with all components of the school system though not complete overhaul (Save the Children, 2008; Fullan & Miles, 2016; iProject Master, 2021). To make education inclusive, all stakeholders must be inclusive; administrators and their management styles, teachers, and school structures (Save the Children, 2008; iProject Master, 2021). UNESCO (2000) as cited in the International Human Rights Framework cite teachers as major agents in the promotion of inclusive education. Also, teachers' lesson plans must be accommodative of individual learning styles (Tomlinson as cited in Weselby (2021). To implement inclusive education practice, teachers are to offer learners equal opportunities and equal accessibility to instruction thus, making instruction balanced (Weselby & the Resilient Educator, 2021). This means that education must be non-discriminatory, be offered at the best interest of the child and involve all learners. Therefore, teachers are to adapt their instruction in a way that cater for different learner intelligent styles; present content using different instructional strategies.

Differentiated instruction

Scholars on inclusive education practice suggest differentiated instruction as a strategy for inclusive education practice (Abbati, 2012; Weselby, 2021). The major proponent of differentiation/differentiated learning is Carol Ann Tomlinson. Differentiation is a pedagogy that aims to meet all learner types in one session (Tomlinson as cited in Weselby, 2021). According to Abbati (2012) differentiated instruction has been described in a multitude of ways, but all definitions share a common core focus that differentiated instruction attempts to provide equal access to high quality instruction for diverse learners. Therefore, teaching activities, resources and assessment must be helpful to learners' individual needs, levels and styles. Use of differentiated learning require teachers' understanding of the social, emotional, and psychological needs of all students in the classroom (Weselby & the Resilient Educator, 2021). Teachers are therefore obligated to support and ensure that learners have quality and equal access to learning by varying teaching methods, resources and tasks during the teaching and learning process.

According to Abbati (2012) effective implementation of differentiated instruction must be both organizational and pedagogical. The organizational context involves providing extra resources; creating small class groups; materials that allow for highly individualized approaches to instruction and normative traditions such as values, beliefs and commitment to equity across classes (Abbati, 2012). The pedagogical context refers to curriculum and instructional strategies which are tasks, resources, activities, targets and learning support to individual learners' needs, styles and levels of learning (Abbati, 2012). This approach allows teachers to further differentiate learners' abilities, and then identify the appropriate teaching aids or materials and ensure equity amongst learners in the teaching and learning process. Differentiated instruction can be implemented through the content offered, the teaching process, product and the learning environment (Weselby 2021).

Content

To be inclusive the content offered in the teaching and learning process must be aligned to the set standards by the state and the school district (Weselby 2021). It is therefore imperative that the teacher is aware that some learners may not be familiar with the set content whilst others may have background information. Lundrum and McDuffie (2010) reveal that content must be for some disabled learners according to their needs, strengths, goals for school, independent living and employment. This is implemented with a curriculum that includes prevocational skills and functional skills. Depending on the level of understanding and knowledge of the content, learners' needs and abilities must be identified and be catered for accordingly. For instance, given a siSwati lesson on a short story in literature, the teacher can ask learners questions that require remembering and understanding, those that require application and analysis of content and those that require evaluation and creativity. This will successfully accommodate all the learners in the class in terms of understanding the content, both low and high achieving learners.

Process

Inclusive education practice entails that the teaching and learning process involves the use of appropriate methods and materials to accommodate all the learners in the classroom. Weselby (2021) reveals that learners in a classroom do not require the same amount of attention from their teachers which therefore means that some could choose to work in small groups, pairs or even alone. Just as differentiated learning identifies that each learner has preferred learning styles based on their different needs. This implies that instruction must be varied in the form of small groups, pairs and individual tasks. For instance, visual learners and word learners need textbooks and images; auditory learners need to listen to audios and the teacher; kinesthetic learners need to be given opportunity to interact with the content and others in small groups either virtually or physically. Croft (2010) opines that inclusive pedagogy accepts that learners have individual needs but sees pedagogically significant differences that are set in the interaction between the school and the learner, influenced by the teacher. This basically means that the teacher's responsibility is not only identifying but catering for every learner's needs since inclusive education practice is mostly characterized by diversity in the classroom.

Diversified learner needs

The common diversified learner needs as identified by Weselby (2021) are visual learners, auditory learners, kinesthetic learners and word/linguistic learners. It is therefore, recommended that teachers use auditory, visual, kinesthetic and words when delivering material (Weselby, 2021).

Visual learners

These learners learn properly through vision or visual images. Gilakjan (2012) reveals that these learners depend on their teacher's non-verbal cues which includes body language to help with understanding in the classroom. He further states that they favor sitting in the front of the class and this is to ensure that they see every non-verbal gesture that the teacher or other learners display. Visual learners also prefer to think and learn in pictures and get information through visual means

such as diagrams, videos and pictures (Richland, 2018). They learn well with presentations especially those in color. It is therefore important for a teacher to use pictures, videos, demonstrations and a lot of visuals in class to ensure that the learners who learn properly through them are catered for. These learners do not learn through hearing such that if a teacher uses verbal instructions, they become disruptive in class. Inclusive education practice entails that in the teaching of siSwati the teacher should bring pictures, videos and charts to aid the learning process and for learners to see their culture. Literature for these learners is boring if they only have to read without any demonstrations and pictures to aid their understanding. In the siSwati class a teacher should make sure she uses demonstrations and ask learners to also dramatize what happens in their texts; novel, short story, drama or poetry.

Auditory learners

These kinds of learners learn through listening. Gilakjan (2012) states that these learners understand information through listening and interpreting information through emphasis, speed and pitch. They gain knowledge from reading out loud in the classroom and may have full understanding of information that is written. Aural channels such as verbal discussions and listening to others' speech proves effective for these learners (Awla, 2014). Allowing a lot of discussions and chances for learners to express themselves in the learning process is very important. These learners want to be part of the learning process. Using pictures and demonstrations becomes boring to them as they prefer to be part of the discussion and feel engaged. A siSwati teacher can therefore include these learners by giving them class discussions, presentations, reading texts aloud in literature, reciting poems and allowing them to do most of the talking. This will help them grasp content, acquire skills and to learn the language aspect of the siSwati subject.

Kinesthetic learners

These are learners that learn well hands-on and favor interaction with the physical world (Sun, 2020). This is often misunderstood as a behavior problem but it is a learning style. These learners learn through engagement of all senses; sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste. They learn successfully through movement, story and visuals. Tomlinson and Imbeu (2010) reveal that students can secure new information and ideas through reading a novel or listening to it on tape, reading independently or with a partner participating in group demonstrations, engaging in online research or communicating with experts and participation in small groups. It is therefore important for teachers to vary strategies otherwise learners get bored. If teachers use the lecture method, they usually make funny noises in class because they want to move around and basically be a part of the learning process. Teachers therefore must make means to engage learners during the learning process. They should give learners opportunity to go out and find information using the project teaching method. Also, learners need to dramatize where possible mainly in literature and culture. Using field trips and changing the learning environment now and then depending on the lesson

would be more effective. Providing learners the opportunity to work hands on in a siSwati lesson for language learning, culture and literature is very engaging for these learners.

Word/linguistic learners

According to Weselby (2021) these learners learn through words. They are also referred to as reading/writing or linguistic learners. They need to read and write words in order to master content successfully. Thus, with this type teachers are to give them written works; reading a variety of siSwati texts, a reading assignment, written statements, quizzes etc. Killen (2016) suggest that this it must be accompanied with exchanging ideas and answering of questions as a problem-solving technique that help learners answer the question at hand while enhancing their deeper understanding of knowledge and acquisition of skills.

The researchers in this study view that there is no “the” learning style towards inclusive education practice, except that teachers should strive to understand their learner types and choose the relevant learning style to use. Out of the array of recommended learner-centered teaching methods, the following are recommended as much more effective for differentiated learning pedagogy; discussion, field trip, brainstorming, lecture, role-play or dramatization.

Product

When the teaching content and process are inclusive, the teaching product must as well be inclusive. Product is what learners demonstrate at the end of learning (Weselby, 2021). Learners’ mastery of content and skills in an inclusive class must be demonstrated through the use of different assessment and evaluation tools; tests, classwork, quizzes, assignments and etc. Besides, summative evaluation teachers also ask questions during the lesson to check for learners’ understanding of content delivered and not only content but skills as well. These questions must be inclusive i.e. assess both low and higher order skills; be varied in nature by assessing not only the learners’ thinking capabilities but speaking, reading and writing as well. According to Lundrum and McDuffie (2010) inclusive education products should be assessed through writing of different assignments and responding to alternate assessments to demonstrate their understanding of given content. This means that assessment should be one that also fits learner’s abilities and teachers are obligated to make sure that they modify the form of assessment. According to Weselby (2021) teachers can use book reports for learners to write and read, visual learners can be assigned tasks that require that they create a graphic organizer of the story, auditory learners can give oral reports and kinesthetic learners can build a diorama illustrating the story. Allowing the learners to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding of the siSwati subject according to their identified needs is very important in individualized instruction.

Learning environment

Besides, the content, process and product inclusive education practice require that the physical and psychological environments are inclusive friendly as well. A flexible and conducive classroom furniture for all learners is very important when it comes to differentiated learning (Professional

Practice, 2019). The infrastructure in the school needs to be one that physically allows all learners to move around the school without any restrictions. Such conditions allow teachers to vary their teaching strategies without being restricted. This therefore implies that inclusive education practice does not only implicate the teacher but also the school and the government at large beginning with the aim, vision and mission statements.

Challenges of inclusive education

Differentiated instruction could be tagged as an all-inclusive approach to learning and teaching Abbati (2012). Therefore, in ensuring effective implementation of this approach, great attention should be also given to the challenges teachers as the main stakeholders face when implementing this form of instruction which basically characterizes the inclusive concept of teaching and learning. The following are some of the many barriers or challenges teachers face upon implementing inclusive education practice; teacher attitudes, lack of teacher training, class size, shortage of teaching resources and materials, time constraints and the dense curriculum.

Teacher attitudes

Teachers that work in classrooms that have students with mixed skill levels have reported having various attitudes about the students in these classrooms (Dee, 2011). Teachers' attitudes towards the inclusive education practice are mostly based on the idea that teachers who may have knowledge of differentiated instruction usually have attitude towards it as it may seem impractical. The impracticality of this is associated with the dense curriculum to cover in a given time frame, the huge numbers in the classrooms and the inadequate resources and materials to cater for all the learners in every lesson (Percy & Duplass, 2011). Also, the negative attitudes are associated to the fact that since the inclusive concept was introduced a decade ago, some teachers have not been properly introduced to the idea but may be used to the teacher centered approach for teaching and learning. Teachers also feel pressure because of assessments when students with disabilities are in their classrooms (Percy & Duplass, 2011). Identifying the different learner needs and actually ensuring that each learner is adequately catered for seems like a lot of pressure for teachers.

Lack of teacher training

Teachers must have knowledge about differentiated instruction to make sure all activities are created for students to meet the basic learning goals (Dixon et al., 2014). Teachers need to confirm these specific learning targets first to guarantee that all activities successfully meet the standard and further provides opportunities for all students in the classroom to be successful (Dobbertin, 2012). This requires the teacher to be well equipped on the specifics of differentiated instruction classroom therefore, teachers need to be fully trained by the government to understand the consequences of having special education students in their classrooms (Woodcock, 2013). Since teachers are the main stakeholders when it comes to inclusive education and its implementation, it

is very important for teachers to be trained thoroughly about the ins and outs of the concept. However, this seems to be a common challenge across the board.

Class size

The high number of students per classroom makes it tougher for teachers to differentiate the lesson to cater for diversity in the classroom. This is due to the rise in the diversity, needs, number of groups formed and time taken to deliver content which further complicates classroom management (Aldossari, 2018; Wan, 2015). If the number of students in a class are high it will be hard for one teacher to identify each learner's need and also make sure that they are all catered for.

Shortage of teaching resources and materials

Teachers acknowledge that not all students learn the same way however, most classrooms are not set up to meet the individual needs of all the students (Fuchs, 2010). Teaching methods and teaching materials work hand in hand in ensuring learner's diversities are catered for in classrooms. However, this has been a challenge since schools and the government have failed to make sure that teachers have access to teaching materials. This has been an issue because inclusive education requires a lot and costly teaching materials. Oakes and Saunders (2004) state that shortage of learning materials had a negative impact on learners especially the disables ones with less knowledge about a subject.

Time constraints and dense curriculum

Preparation time and instruction time are a huge factor in ensuring effective differentiated instruction implementation (De Jager, 2013). However, teachers feel that it is burdensome to cover the whole curriculum while meeting the needs of all students (Percy & Duplass, 2011). Differentiated Instruction requires proper modification to teaching aids and support by teachers at varying proficiency levels of learner groups which results in teachers finding it as heavy workload compared to the existing workload they have (Maddox, 2015). Teachers are also loaded with too much responsibilities which limits them from preparing their lesson properly (De Jager, 2013).

Empirical Studies

Pushpa, Maithly and Umapathi (2018) from India studied teaching methods adopted by teachers in teaching inclusive education. The study was qualitative and utilized the interview as a major instrument. Participants were randomly sampled. The study revealed that methods adopted by teachers include peer teaching, small group exercises, drawing, role play and storytelling. It further shows that peer teaching was adopted more among children with visual impairment and hearing impairment. Small group exercises like album making and puzzle arrangement were also adapted by teachers to bring inclusiveness in the classroom. Teachers were also said to have reported that they gave drawing exercise to all children except for the visually impaired. Role playing and storytelling were selected by teachers in teaching children with special needs. For curricula activities teachers selected drawing, project work, debate and discussion, storytelling and album

making. A few teachers expressed that they had no idea about these activities hence did not involve Children with special needs. This study recommends that general education teachers need to recognize and understand student's abilities. Also, teachers are encouraged to prepare themselves to accept additional roles and equip them with needed skills, to choose right teaching method to manage the inclusive classes.

Obedayo and Ngwenya (2015) in the Kingdom of Eswatini studied challenges in the implementation of inclusive education at Lulakeni Cluster Primary schools in Shiselweni District of Swaziland. The study employed the descriptive or survey research design, with a population of 14 primary schools, 14 head teachers and 70 grade one to five teachers. Information was collected through the questionnaire. Obedayo and Ngwenya (2015) found that the level of teaching / learning resources were challenges in the implementation of inclusive education. Learning environments were also a challenge as they were not friendly enough. Educators were also found to be lacking understanding and uncertain about their roles.

Gama and Thwala (2016) in the Kingdom of Eswatini studied Swazi teachers' challenges in including learners with Dyslexia in mainstream classrooms. The study used qualitative research method; a phenomenological design was used to conceptualize the essence of the teacher's challenges. It used individualized interviews and data was thematically presented. The findings of the study suggest that teachers experience a lot of challenges emanating from the lack of training, and monetary support from the Swazi Government. Other challenges mentioned were class sizes, insufficient time, lack of parental involvement and limited knowledge on language constructs.

Methodology

The study used qualitative research methodology, a case study of teachers teaching (EGCSE) siSwati in the Shiselweni region. Creswell et al. (2016) reveal that qualitative research is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs, points of view and attitudes that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are being felt and trends that are developing. This study is an examination of senior secondary school siSwati teachers' inclusive education practice, a trend in education that is still being developed. This therefore qualifies qualitative research approach as suitable for use in examining teachers' views, prevailing challenges and practices associated with inclusive education.

Purposive sampling was used to select three (3) schools and two (2) teachers per school making a total of six (6) for the study. Online interviews and document analysis were used as instruments. A semi-structured interview guide with seven (7) items and a document analyses guide with six (6) items both designed by the researchers were administered with the (6) six teachers of siSwati in the Shiselweni region.

A semi structured interview was used to allow the participants to elaborate deeper on their inclusive practice. The documents analysed were siSwati teacher's preparation books because it reveals the possible teaching methods and teaching materials the teacher uses in class during the

lesson hence it qualifies as an accurate tool to show the extent to which siSwati teachers apply inclusive pedagogy in their classrooms during their lessons. Online interviews were conducted through WhatsApp Messenger in respect to COVID-19 rule of separating from others as much as possible.

Findings

Research question 1. Senior secondary school siSwati teacher's views about inclusive education practice

Data for this question was gathered through the semi-structured online interviews. Table 1 is a presentation of the themes on the different views of the teachers on inclusive education practice.

Table 1

Eswatini senior secondary school siSwati teacher's views on inclusive education practice.

Inclusive education practice as costly

Inclusive education practice as demanding change in assessment

Inclusive education practice as requiring improvement with resources

Inclusive education as convenient with special schools and special teachers

Teachers view inclusive education as costly and demanding resources in that it requires a great improvement with existing school facilities. A teacher complained that;

“I suggest government enforce this with the schools that already have infrastructure for special needs children because here besides that I don't have the time to understand learners but to teach them. Even if I may try to understand them what will I use? I see this as a frustration as no one think about learning material in siSwati”. A teacher who echoed this one made reference to special schools

“I am happy that Eswatini already has got special schools that cater for learners with special needs because honesty I cannot handle all learners as the classes are jam-packed”.

A teacher who seemed to be worried about the learners' performance comments that;

“I do try to involve all my learners but most of the time I fail to interact with all of them because they are too many and siSwati has a lot of components to teach, if I can concentrate on their differences, it would mean I am not teaching for the examination”.

A teacher who supported the idea of being concerned about the examination added that;

“The learners seat for one and the same examination if I concentrate on the learners’ and not the curriculum I may not cover all the topics recommended”.

Research question 2. Senior secondary school siSwati teachers’ implementation of inclusive education practice.

Data for this question was gathered through the online semi-structured interview and document analysis. Themes to this research question were organized according to; the teaching process (methods/activities used), the teaching product (assessment) and the learning environment (resources).

Theme 1: The teaching process (methods/activities)

Most teachers revealed that they use inclusive teaching methods or activities though they do not incorporate them in one lesson. They reveal that they use them in different topics.

One respondent revealed that; *“I use the lecture method for grammar lessons and use question and answer to find out if learners are following but for my culture lessons, I try to use group discussions and presentations”.*

Another teacher revealed that; *“Depending on how far behind I am with the syllabus I use dramatization when teaching culture and group discussions for literature lesson”.*

One teacher revealed that; *“It is unfortunate that due to COVID 19 as teachers we are unable to deliver content as we should because we are far behind with the syllabus so for me it is lecture throughout.”*

Teachers’ lesson preparation books were analyzed to trace inclusive education practices. Findings revealed that teachers use inclusive teaching methods mainly; dramatization, group discussions and the lecture with different topics of the siSwati syllabus. Also, the findings reveal that teachers vary individual and group work, there was no pair work used.

Theme 2: The teaching product (assessment)

Findings revealed that assessment of EGCSE siSwati was informed by the nature of the final assessment, as a result most teachers confessed to be using past examination papers to assess their learners’ acquisition of knowledge and skills in the siSwati subject.

One teacher explained that; *“Since I started teaching, I have been using the past examination papers to prepare my learners for the examination otherwise they would be failing”.*

Another teacher claimed that;

“Assessing learners’ practical abilities waste time for siSwati yet the syllabus demands a lot of literature books to be read. I do this just to make my learners enjoy the skills.”

Findings from the analysis of teachers’ lesson plans concur with findings from the interviews as they revealed that teachers do not use inclusive education practice when it comes to assessment as

they assign learners traditional assessment questions that require them to write throughout. Though they were mostly Higher Order Tasks (HOT) that are essay in form, none of them had to do with oral or speaking also, a few of them were assessing creative abilities.

Theme 3: The learning environment (resources)

Teachers were also, probed if teaching aids and resources they used are inclusive. The findings revealed that teachers use demonstrations by the learners themselves and rarely use charts, diagrams, videos, and pictures. A teacher who showed interest in the question lamented that;

“My school have got the Emaswati attire so I demonstrate it while teaching on the Emaswati attire, at times I assign learners to bring theirs for use in class”.

Another teacher explained how easy it is to demonstrate culture topics and poems retrieved online *“To teach traditional poetry and culture I download videos online, they are helpful in that my learners listen to them though, they only hear without seeing as my school do not have the equipment for displaying”.*

Findings from analysis of teachers’ lesson preparation books align with responses from the interviews, showed use of ICT resources; mostly audios downloaded from teachers’ personal gadgets. Most of these were used by teachers as set inductions to the lessons or preludes.

Discussions

Teachers view that inclusive education practice demand sufficient resources therefore it is costly and convenient for use by special schools. The findings concur with a concern by Fuchs (2010) that most classrooms are not set up to meet the individual needs of all the students. Though in the case of Eswatini one cannot say that the government has failed to provide schools with inclusive teaching materials, according to Fuchs (2010) inclusive education practice is delayed by that most governments have failed to make sure that teachers have access to teaching materials. Fullan and Stiegerlbauer (1991) view that as one of the complexities of change in education. Obedayo and Ngwenya (2015) add that besides learning resources the learning environments also hinder the implementation of inclusive education in that they are unfriendly.

Findings reveal that teachers engage inclusive education practice through the use of both teacher-centered and learner-centered teaching methods/activities. The findings concur with Weselby (2021) that to offer inclusive education teachers are to cater for visual, auditory, kinesthetic and linguistic learners. To concur with the notion of offering varied instruction Gilakjan (2012) states that some learners understand information through listening and interpreting, others learn through reading aloud in class for deeper understanding of written information. Awla (2014) cite that some learners learn better through aural channels; verbal discussions, listening and responding to one another for exchange of ideas. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) refer to such processes as academic discussions that help learners’ secure new ideas and information. Killen (2016) view it as problem-

solving techniques that does not only help learners answer the question at hand but enhances their deeper understanding of knowledge and acquisition of skills.

In an inclusive class, instruction should be varied from small groups, pairs and whole class. Contrary, the findings revealed that teachers rarely used pair work; vary small groups and whole class discussions. This concurs with Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) who view that to vary instruction students must be exposed into reading a novel or listening to it on tape, reading independently or with a partner, participating in group demonstrations, engaging in online research in which they communicate with different information and people globally.

Therefore, in choosing the right teaching method Pushpa et al. (2018) advise teachers that the starting point is recognition and understanding of student's abilities, getting themselves prepared, accept their roles and additional roles if need be and thereafter, equip themselves with the required skills. Contrary, Obedayo and Ngwenya (2015) reported that educators were also found to be lacking understanding and uncertain about their roles

Teachers do not use inclusive education assessment practices. The findings are contrary to Landrum & McDuffie (2010) who view that inclusive education products should be exposed into writing different assignments and respond to alternative assessments in order for them to demonstrate their understanding of given content. This means that assessment should be designed such that it fits learner's abilities. Weselby (2021) suggest that teachers can use book reports for learners to write and read, visual learners can be assigned tasks that require that they create a graphic organizer of the story, auditory learners can give oral reports and kinesthetic learners can build a diorama illustrating the story. Thus, teachers are obligated to make sure that they modify the form of assessment from traditional to alternative.

Findings revealed that teachers do practice inclusive education with teaching aids or resources. However, teachers are concerned that most of the time they use their own resources as most schools do not provide. The findings concur with Fuchs (2010) who complained that though teaching methods and teaching materials work hand in hand in ensuring that education caters for diverse learner needs this is challenged by schools and the government failure to provide teaching material. Abbati (2010) on the other hand, emphasized that the government and school environments are organizational contexts that should drive implementation of differentiated learning through providing extra resources.

Conclusions

Teachers view inclusive education practice as costly in that it requires improvement with infrastructure and change in assessment practices. Teachers implement inclusive education practice partially during the teaching process in that they used activities that cater mostly for the visual, auditory and linguistic learners though not in one lesson. However, teachers have challenges in implementing inclusive education practice with teaching material and the product/assessment because besides that the environment/ schools are not inclusive friendly they

also have limited infrastructure. Therefore, infrastructure and exam-oriented teaching are the major challenge behind implementation of inclusive education practice in the teaching of siSwati.

Recommendations

Effective implementation of inclusive education practice require change from traditional to alternative assessment and provision of infrastructure.

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