Teacher Education Curriculum

Pre-Service Teachers' Preparation for Inclusive Education in Ghana

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Master's Thesis
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UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Autumn 2016

Title:

Teacher Education Curriculum

Sub-title:

Pre-Service Teachers' Preparation for Inclusive Education in Ghana

Abstract

Children with disabilities and Special Needs Education in Ghana are mainly trained in special schools. Those found in mainstream classrooms are continually sidelined, segregated, abused and discriminated against. To change from segregated form for children with disabilities to inclusiveness, Ghana has set 2015/2016 academic year for the beginning of the implementation of inclusive education.

This research was conducted to establish how Teacher Education Curriculum prepares pre-service teachers for inclusive education in Ghana. 6 pre-service teachers selected from Kumasi Metro schools and a master sampled from one college of education were involved in the study. The SNE curriculum for the training of pre-service teachers was reviewed to establish its suitability for the professional preparation of pre-service teachers to operate in inclusive environment. The research was guided by constructionist qualitative method and semi-structured interview guide was used as the measurement instrument.

The results of the study has shown that the content of the curriculum is designed to train teachers for special schools and fails to adequately and competently prepare pre-service teachers to handle children with special educational needs especially children with social, emotional and behavioural disorders in inclusive classroom. As a result, serious efforts are needed to review the content of the curriculum and design inclusive-based one which contains best practised proper and sufficient inclusive programmes to professionally and adequately prepare pre-service teachers for effective inclusive education implementation in the county.

Key words: inclusive education, teacher preparation programmes, curriculum, professional competence, inclusive classroom.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wife Esther Amponsah Sarfo, my son Kwabena Owusu Kanin and my daughter Melinda Ama Owusu Kanin for their unyielding support and co-operation throughout the years that I went through the programme.

Acknowledgement

My foremost appreciation goes to the Almighty God for giving me the strength to undertake this study.

I wish to deeply thank my wife and children for the support and time they had for me as I went through the programme.

I wish to thank ALL the institutions and individuals especially my respondents, who contributed in diverse ways to the successful completion of this work.

I wish to thank Mr. John Owusu of the Ghana Education Service (GES) in the Atwima Kwanwoma District for his invaluable support during data collection.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Ivar Morken for his support, encouragement, motivation and time, which he afforded me as I undertook this study. I am highly indebted to him.

I would also like to thank Denese Anne Brittain for her time and patience in her administrative work, which enabled me to complete this study.

Acronymes and Abbreviations

ASA   Association of Social Anthropologist

CHAT   Cultural Historic Activity Theory

DBE   Diploma in Basic Education

EFA   Education for All

fCUBE   free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

ICF   Inclusive Classification of Functions

I E   Inclusive Education

IEP   Individual Education Programme

ITE   Initial Teacher Education

LRE   Least Restrictive Environment

MDGs   Millennium Development Goals

NCSE   National Council for Special Education

PWDs   Persons with Disabilities

SEBD   Social, Emotional and Behavioural Disorder

SEN   Special Needs Education

SNE   Special Education Needs

TLMs   Teaching/Learning Materials

UDL   Universal Design for Learning

UNESCO United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organisation

ZPD   Zone of Proximal Development

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1. Introduction

The right to education is universal and expands to all children, youth and adults with or without disabilities. This right is protected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (2008). It is also addressed in several significant, international declarations, including the World Declaration for Education for All (1990), the UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000). Ensuring the right to education for all is at the centre of UNESCO's mission, which is also affirmed and recognized by all its member states. UNESCO is not only interested in the provision of mere education but is very much concerned with the right to qualitative education for all.

Ghana being a member state of UNESCO recognizes education as a fundamental human right for all its citizens since independence. The right to education is enshrined in the Principal Education Act of 1961. This Act is the first post-independence policy initiative in Ghana to provide a comprehensive equal access to education. The Act sought to provide a free, universal and compulsory basic education (of 6 years duration) for all children from 6 years of age. The Act states:

Every child who has attained the school going age as determined by the Minister shall attend a course of instruction as laid down by the Minister in a school recognized for the purpose by the Minister (Ghana Education Service, 2004, 2).

This Act was followed by a Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) policy which was the Ministry of Education's response to the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana Article 39 (2) which states:

The Government shall, within two years of parliament first meets after coming into force of this Constitution draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of free, compulsory and universal basic education (Government of Ghana, 1992, p. 40).

Based on these International Conventions and National Legal Frameworks, access to education in industrialized and developing countries has improved tremendously (UNESCO, 2009). Nevertheless, majority of children with disabilities in developing countries are currently out of schools, while many of those enrolled are not learning (UNESCO, Bangkok, 2009). Despite encouraging moves by governments in several countries to provide children with education, it is estimated that about 72 million children around the world do not have access to basic education (UNESCO, 2010). Furthermore, according to Nketsiah (2011) (UNESCO 2009), in spite of countries consenting to the many conventions and supporting international guidelines on children with special needs, discrimination, unfairness, suffering and exclusion still form part of everyday life of pupils with special needs around the world. Nketsiah attributed the problem partly to lack of quality teacher preparation.

Agbenyega & Deku (2011) suggest; ensuring that all children have access to quality education, education policies and practices must be inclusive of all learners, encourage the full participation of all, and promote diversity in schools as well as classrooms. Inclusive education demands that the teacher should be able to meet the needs of students with disabilities in a regular or ordinary classroom (Mukhopadhyay et al. 2009). In this view, teacher preparation for general classroom becomes very important in the attainment of proper inclusive classrooms. Mukhopadhyay et al. (2009) claim that teacher preparation is

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intrinsically linked to the quality of education delivered to all in a school. Inclusive settings therefore demand teachers (both general and subject) to be properly prepared to meet the learning needs of both with and without disabilities (Hamill, Jantzen, & Bargerhuff 1999 cited).

1.1 Defining Disability

To define the term disability remains a complex puzzle as there are many different groups of disabilities and among these groups there are vast individual differences. For instance, many people with impairments do not define themselves as having a disability. Some people with hearing impairment who use a sign language as their main form of communication, will not accept that they are disable but as a member of a language minority (sign language), suffering the same form of discrimination as many other language minority groups. Others prefer the term "difabled" or "different abled" (UNESCO, Bangkok 2009). According to Fukuchi (2009), the term disability is often associated with more "visible" forms of disabilities. Nevertheless, regardless of how the term "disability" is defined, it is important to remember that children are first and foremost children, whether they are able or disable.

The International Classification of Functions (ICF) defines "disability" as the outcome of the interactions between a person with impairment and the environmental and attitudinal barriers he or she may face. Following the ICF definition, a child with physical impairment who depends on a wheelchair for mobility and who goes to a school without ramps and/or accessible sanitation facilities obviously has a disability as a result of environmental barriers he or she faces. However, a child who is blind and has access to books and other learning materials in Braille, effective teacher support and a school that is welcoming, inclusive and accessible for all children has impairment but not necessarily a disability because he or she faces no environmental and attitudinal barriers. In conclusion, disability has been defined as a

restriction or inability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being, mostly resulting from impairment.

1.2 What Involves Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)

"Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties" is a canopy of a term without precision, and so difficult to properly define. Nevertheless, many of the children and youth who are described as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are those who have complex and chronic difficulties, which place them at risk of school and wider social exclusion. The meaning of socially acceptable behaviour greatly differs from one country, cultural, religious and traditional context to another. Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are therefore, strongly influenced by the background and situation of the children concerned (Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Association 2006. "Definitions – SEBD and Its Overlap with Disruptive and Anti – Social Behaviour and Mental Health Difficulties ADHD" page on htpp://www.sebda.org/resources/articles/Defining SEBD.pdf. August 24, 2012). The definition continues; children with different disabilities may develop social, emotional and behavioural difficulties if their needs are not addressed properly by parents and teachers. This group of children is characterized by:

- Children with social difficulties experience barriers in contact, play, and interaction with other children and/or adults
- Children with emotional difficulties struggle with their feelings (amongst others: fears, sadness. loneliness, moods and depression).
- Children with behavioural difficulties experience difficulties in controlling their own behaviour, while parents and teachers are often challenged and provoked by impulsive, aggressive and unpredictable behaviour.

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Children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties:

- Generally behave unusually

- May respond in an extreme fashion to a variety of social, personal, emotional or physical circumstances

- Have low self-image, anxiety, depression or withdrawal

- May show resentment, vindictiveness or defiance

- Can be silent or may threaten, interrupt, argue or swear

- Can act clingy or refuse contact

- May fail to attend classes, or be frequently absent from school

- May fail to observe rules or be disruptive, destructive, aggressive or violent

- Are often unable or unwilling to work without direct supervision

- Are restless and unable to concentrate

- Are often unable and/or unwilling to complete tasks and follow instructions

The inclusion of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in inclusive classroom can be particularly challenging for teachers and teachers need to be properly trained and prepared to face such challenges (Maureen, 2007).

1.3 Ghana and Teaching Profession

Ghana is a country found in West Africa. It has a surface area of about 23,537sq km. (92,100 sq miles). 15,017 sq km consist of land and 8,520 sq km forms water coverage of the surface. Ghana has a population of 24,658,823 which consist of 12,024,845 (48.8%) males and 12,633,978 females (51.2%) as indicated by 2010 Population and Housing Census. (Ghana Statistical Service Report on 2010 Population and Housing Census).

The government of Ghana is bent on achieving Universal Primary Education for both boys and girls and ensure gender parity index of 1:1 (MDG2&3). As the country achieves such

targets, one key challenge observed is the issue of quality teacher to ensure quality education (Madeez et al., 2007).

1.4 Training of Teachers for Ghanaian Basic Schools

Teachers are trained for basic schools in Ghana through Colleges of education. The institutions formerly offer a three-year 'Certificate A' to teachers and were later upgraded in 2004 to offer Diploma courses. Students spend two years on campus learning theory and in the third year, are assigned to classroom mentor teachers to undertake a one year professional placement while they continue to study through a distance mode. Education studies, cultural studies, physical education, English, basic science, basic mathematics, Ghanaian languages and basic agricultural sciences form core course components of study with only one required, introductory coursework on special education needs (SEN). Therefore, Nketsia appropriately established that in Ghana inadequate training of teachers is one of the major factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education.

As a result of inadequate training of teachers, it is believed many Ghanaian teachers have been found to be the greatest barrier to the education of the disabled in the normal classrooms. Agbenyega (2003) research brought to light how classroom teachers use disability labels. From his observation of four classrooms in Accra metropolis, the capital of Ghana, he concluded that disability labels are powerful tools, or weapons that society and teachers use to suppress and exclude students with disabilities/SEN.

Consequently, most pupils with disabilities/Special Educational Needs (SEN) such as pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties in Ghana either do not attend school at all or regularly fail and are made to repeat their classes for several years and in the long run they either dropout or asked to leave by school authorities (Agbenyega, 2003; Adera, 2007).

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1.5 Statement of the Problem

In fact, the Colleges of Education in Ghana are working tirelessly to produce more trained teachers to improve Pupil-Trained Teacher Ratio. However, because of absence of coherent policies in teachers' professional training and development, and since the content of many teacher training programmes lack reflective practice, active learning, innovation, creativity and partnership building, there is serious gap between the training provided and the realities of the classrooms, schools, their communities and world of work affecting teaching quality and learning for all (Yarboi-Tetteh 2008). Whilst teachers are expected to support inclusion, in Ghana, teachers are the main perpetrators of crimes against children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms because the way teachers are trained results in a system that is more likely to retain the status quo than to change (Fullan, 1993). According to Abgenyega (2003), many teachers in Ghana exclude students with SEN including those with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties when the teachers are teaching. Therefore, UNESCO (2009) reported that, people with disabilities including students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are more likely of becoming illiterates, and for that matter, impeding their chances to acquire higher education and employment. The situation raises the risk of such children becoming poor and having lower standard of living because schools and other centres of learning do not provide quality education that supports and responds to their diverse needs.

What is debatable is whether the curriculum for teachers in Colleges of Education in Ghana effectively train and prepare teachers to provide the needed divergent needs of students with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) in inclusive settings. The situation in the country demands robust research into the colleges of education curriculum and its impact on the training and preparation of teachers for inclusive classrooms. Among many other

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studies on inclusiveness in Ghana, investigating Colleges of Education Curriculum for the training and preparation of general teachers for inclusive classrooms has not received the needed attention. Therefore, this research is being carried out to examining Ghanaian Colleges of Education curriculum on special education needs (SEN), the knowledge and skills they offer teachers to face inclusive classrooms in general and particularly, students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This study scrutinizes critically the content (what the curriculum contains) and context (the definition of disability, inclusiveness and social, emotional and behavioural difficulty in the curriculum) and how they effectively prepare teachers for contemporary inclusive classrooms.   In view of the situation, the main problem of the study is whether the views of pre-service teachers and teachers of SNE curriculum at the Colleges of Education, could be used to establish the professional competence of pre-service teachers and point out the deficiencies in the training of teachers for inclusive classrooms in Ghana and for curriculum review.

1.6 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the views of Course Masters in Colleges of Education and Pre-service Teachers on Colleges of Education Curriculum in Ghana. The study will gather the views of these respondents on the usefulness of the curriculum in the preparation and training of teacher trainees to effectively operate in inclusive classrooms; and the adequacy of the pedagogical and social competencies acquired for inclusive classroom operation.

The study will also seek to dissect the content and context of the existing curriculum on Special Education Needs (SEN) that are being used in Colleges of Education in Ghana and the knowledge, skills, aptitudes and attitudes it offer to potential teachers. It also pointed out the gaps in the curriculum and sought to make suggestions based on the findings. The study

was conducted to find out whether the views of Course Masters and Pre-service Teachers could be used to improve the curriculum of Colleges of Education on Special Needs Education (SEN). Finally, appropriate recommendations have been made to the Ministry of Education (Teacher Training Division) and Colleges of Education for consideration and necessary action.

1.7 Significance of the Study

 The study of Colleges of Education Curriculum has many important benefits. In the first place, the views of the Course Masters and Pre-Service Teachers can help point out the programme's strengths and shortfalls. The examination of the curriculum could also serve as influential feedback for programme review. Secondly, the findings of the study could furnish policy makers ideas about actual competencies pertinent to the training and preparation of pre-service teachers to be able to effectively handle inclusive classrooms; particularly, children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). In a nutshell, for researchers in inclusive education, the study could spark further research into the content and context analyses of the Colleges of Education Curriculum on Inclusive Education and how it can better train and prepare teachers of basic schools to handle other disable students in inclusive environment.

1.8 Research Questions

The research questions of the study are based on the following:

1. What is the content and context of Ghanaian Colleges of Education Curriculum for Special Education Needs (SEN)?

2. To what extent does the curriculum prepare Pre-service teachers to handle inclusive classrooms?

3. How professionally competent are Ghanaian teachers to handle SEBD in inclusive classroom?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2. Introduction

The importance of teachers in the delivery of education to the disabled has been stressed. One of the strategic objectives of the flagship under the Education for All (EFA) is to promote teacher education (UNESCO, 2009). Teachers lacking skills and knowledge in the identification and support of the pupils with disabilities/SEN can themselves become challenge to the pupils learning and participation in education. Hence, it is very important for regular classroom teachers to be trained in identification of and the support of the pupils with disabilities/SEN in order for them to bring out the best in every child regardless of their needs. According to Norman, Caseau, and Stefanich (1998), little evidence exists describing the preparedness of educators who are teaching students who have special education needs and disabilities in inclusive classrooms. The chapter therefore reviews scholarly writings on inclusiveness, the curriculum importance for inclusive practices, theories and models of training of pre-service teachers that have helped to improve education delivery for all including the disabled (SEBDs) to support the study.

2.1 What Inclusive Education Is

The suggestions to train everybody in mainstream classrooms set the stage for the importance of inclusive education. Inclusive education is "a process intended to respond to students' diversity by increasing their participation and reducing exclusion within and from education" (UNESCO, 2009, 1). This definition considers inclusive education beyond disability issues and includes quality teaching, the attendance, involvement and achievement of all students,

especially those who, for different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized (UNESCO, 2009). Inclusiveness also refers to a school system that in both units and its effects continually works to ensure that each student has access to and is enabled to participate in the school community, to be part of the community in positive and reinforcing ways and whose identity is reflected in the operations of school community (Mackay & Burt-Garrans 2004, 6). It is believed that every child is different, they have different abilities; learn in different ways, and at different rates. Inclusiveness, learning friendly and barrier-free environments should therefore be promoted in every school and community throughout the world to ensure that all children develop full academic, social, emotional, and physical potentials. It is worthy to realize that a child potential cannot be developed without his or her social, emotional, and physical potentials because they are interdependent aspects of a child's development (UNESCO, Bangkok 2009).

Inclusive education, as indicated by Hittie & Peterson (2003), came with two fresh and extremely distinct principles, which are:

- Inclusion of all students, with mild to severe disabilities, in general education classes.

- Provision of supports and services within the general education class for both teachers and students (push-in services).

Ainscow, Booth, & Kingston (2006) also noted that, inclusion does not only relate with students with disabilities and SEN but is also much associated with increasing participation of all students. It includes how to remove barriers and encourage active involvement of all students in learning. Inclusion recognises both differences and similarities among all students in a manner that treats everyone equally. Inclusion does not place high value on students because of their progress and attainment, it does not only recognises that students differ from each other but also respects the divers ways in which students respond to individual tasks.

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Thus, inclusive classrooms and schools, the diverseness among students' interests, knowledge, skills, background, home language, attainment or impairment can be a valuable resource to support learning. Therefore, in inclusive classroom and school setting as identified by Hittie & Peterson (2003), engaging teaching techniques, commitment to educating diverse students together, collaboration among teachers and specialists in regular classroom to support students with special needs rather than separate education classrooms as well as school policies supporting teachers are promoted.

2.2 The Importance of Inclusiveness

There is increasing recognition across Europe, and more widely at international level, that is moving towards inclusive policy and practice in education is an imperative. Creating the conditions required for the successful inclusion of pupils with special needs in mainstream settings benefits all learners' (Council of the European Union, 2010, 5). The main mission of the concepts of inclusive education, inclusive teaching and inclusive classroom is to create a society in which all people irrespective of their ethnicity, cultural, linguistic, sexual, gender, and socioeconomic differences are valued, supported and cared for. Inclusive schools and communities are becoming functional all over the world and people with disability and SEN spearheading this movement (Hittie & Peterson, 2003). Researchers have found out that inclusiveness has tremendous benefits: According to Katz and Mirenda (2002a, 2002b), the benefits of inclusive education are both educational and social.

2.2.1 Educational Importance

In terms of educational benefits for students with special needs in inclusive settings, positive effects were found among children with disabilities than separate settings because they have the opportunity to engage more in different behaviours leading to improved gains (Katz and

Mirenda, 2002a). The authors also identify seven instructional contexts and teaching techniques as promoting academic achievement in inclusive classrooms; instructional arrangements; cooperative learning/peer tutoring; instructional adaptations; parallel or differentiated instructions; collaborative planning; curricula and performance-based assessment; and community instructions. They reiterated that a large body of research has identified effective instructional options for inclusive classrooms.

In a similar instance, (UNESCO, Bangkok 2009) believes that inclusive settings improve enrolment and help to minimize drop-out rates in schools. It increases parental/community participation in education and teachers become more responsive to the needs of all children in school thereby improving quality education delivery. It further promotes the literacy, numeracy and essential life skills acquisition of disable persons that gives them greater employment potentials which makes them self-reliant and enhances their contributions to the national development. Consequently, it becomes crucial to apply every effort especially through teaching and learning approaches to educate all children with disabilities especially those from the developing country like Ghana for them to realize their full talents and potentials.

Also, Inclusive schools that educate all children together well is very cost-effective than to establish different types of schools for different group of students with special needs (UNESCO, 2009). This is less costly especially, in low income countries where government finds it difficult funding education because of insufficient national budgets, lack of development assistance and where a lot of poor parents cannot afford the cost of education.

Moreover, Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman & Schattman (1993) study revealed that inclusion is beneficial to the students with disabilities, nondisabled classmates and the teachers themselves. The result of their study indicates that, many general education teachers

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who have had students with disabilities in their class discovered that students with severe disabilities become more active and sensitive to their environment and their acquisition of communication, social, motor, academic and other skills improve. Also the teachers observed that the level of the social/emotional growth of the nondisabled classmates improves as they become more flexible and aware of the needs of the students with disabilities. Their result further established that the presence of the students with disabilities caused teachers to be more reflective on their practices and increased their confidence to undertake teaching in a more adaptable style (as cited in McLeskey, 2007)

2.2.2 Social Importance

Furthermore, substantial evidence exists to show social benefits accrue to all students in inclusive settings (Katz and Mirenda 2002a, 2002b). They conclude that in terms of social and communication skills, friendship networks and parents and community attitudes are promoted.

 In addition, according to UNESCO (2009, 9), inclusive schools are able to change attitudes toward diversity by educating all children together, and form the basis for a just and non-discriminatory society. This means that, socially, the segregation of students with special needs leads to withdrawal from society. However, inclusive school settings will help students cultivate relationships and be part of community. Inclusion renders discrimination against minority ineffective because it ensures normalized community participation by providing all children with systematic instruction in the skills essential to their success in the social, environmental, and political contexts in which they will ultimately use these skills. It promotes socialization and acceptability by all. Stigmatization and prejudices are reduced and harmonious community which seeks complete development of individuals is assured.

2.3 Curriculum Importance

An important dimension of quality education is relevance. What is taught and how it is taught must be relevant. Activities for learning and environments must give the best possible opportunities for success. Curriculum and flexible delivery must be efficient and effective to meet the diverse needs of the person and the society. Accessible curricula establish greater learning opportunities for all students (Townsend, 2012). Teacher training curriculum ought to cover important content and context to provide the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies with diverse instructional strategies which are foundational to successful inclusion. Teaching all students in the same way no longer meets the rigorous academic demands of today's education reform (Hitchcock, 2002). Successful engagement of diverse students requires teachers to have competencies in diverse instructional methodology, social skills, positive attitude towards all children, different assessment methods, and diverse class management skills. According to Suzanne (2000), pre-service teacher preparation curriculum should be based on proper theories and models to appropriately and comprehensively prepare teachers to embrace the challenges of inclusive classrooms.

2.4 Theories of Inclusiveness

The concept of inclusiveness has been highlighted through a number of theories. The theory of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) emphasizes on providing opportunities to ensure that: Children with disabilities including children in public and private schools are educated with nondisabled children. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (Holdheide & Reschly, 2008). Vygotsky theory on dysontogenesis indicates a favourable societal view on children

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with disabilities given preference to strengthening and empowerment of individual skills rather than the traditional stress on weaknesses or deviation (Stetsenko, 2005).

Vygotskyian theory of social constructionism, states that "disorder" is not a tragedy and stresses the need for social upbringing and education of children with disabilities. Based on Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), contemporary educational model should be with less borderlines between ordinary and special education (Rodina, 2007) and consequently suggested ordinary education to become "inclusive". CHAT further demands that the process of inclusion must be implemented in a spontaneous fashion (Zaitsev, 2004). According to Zuckerman (1994), the main task of inclusive learning is to bring about a transformation of zone of proximal development (ZPD) as well as the zone of actual development. This puts teachers in a position to mediate in the development of the mental construction of children despite their needs and also to extend their social networks when they are educated in inclusive classroom.

On teaching and learning, the Behavoural Theories based on classical and operant conditioning posit that behaviour is the result of learning. The theorists insist that behaviour problems are due to faulty learning and re-inforcement of negative behaviour. Teachers should posses the requisite knowledge and skills to help decrease the frequency of negative behaviours and increase in desired behaviours in students.

Cognitivist assert that cognitive processes mediate behavioural and emotional responses. The theory insist that behavioural and emotional difficulties are the result of maladaptive/faulty thought processes. The cognitivists claim that increase in problem solving and self-management skills can help change in attributions. Therefore, teachers should posses skills and knowledge to develop students' problem solving skills, stress control, and self-instruction

Social learning based on determinism assertion believes that behaviour changes as a result of learning and influencing through interactions with others. Self-efficacy behaviour is influenced by outcome expectations. Consequently, teachers are expected to intervene using observational learning methods, teaching modelling and coping skills.

Humanistic theory build on phenomenology believes that behavioural and emotional difficulties arise from low self-esteem and negative self-concept. The theory calls on teachers to develop in students' self-esteem, positive self-concept based on Maslow's hierarchy needs to increase their positive self-concepts.

Eco-systemic theory is also based on examinations and interpretations of interactions within and between systems (family, school, community) through interviews and observation the theory explains that behaviours are the results of interactions between systems. Negative interactions/interpretations give impetus to self-perpetuating cycles of negative behaviour. Teachers ought to positively change interactions and interpretations and self-sustaining to establish positive behaviours in students. Such work of teachers demand professional and practical competencies acquisition from teacher institutions.

Ecological theory based on social and physical environments speculate that behaviour occurs within a context and can be viewed as the result of person's environmental interactions. It is believed under this theory that behaviour difficulties manifest because of negative person-environmental interactions. Physical and social environment should be modified to develop awareness and change perceptions, beliefs and attitudes to ensure positive change in students.

A Bio-Psycho-Social approach to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties practitioners acknowledge that none of the theoretical perspectives described above provides all the answers and implores educators to use broad conceptual frameworks drawing on a range of theories, for understanding behaviour and developing interactions. The approach further

recognises the complexity of human beings whose functioning is determined by interrelated and inter dependent biological, psychological and social-cultural factors. The approach therefore, approves the application and integration of a number of theoretical approaches in considering students' current functioning and needs. It is also important to remember that behaviour may often be described according to the particular perspectives adopted by the teacher, parents or others.

As a result, success in the complex learning and social environment of the school depends on the multiplicity of variables many of which may be outside the direct control of the teacher (social-economic background, personality, aptitudes and abilities). Notwithstanding, several factors come directly under the control of the teacher (classroom management, relationship with pupils, engagement, differentiation) which have been proven to have significant effect on outcomes of all pupils.

All the theories and observations prove that teachers need sound conceptual and professional competencies to handle inclusive classrooms especially children with Social Emotional and Behavioural Disorders. Consequently, teacher institutions have the responsibility to adopt appropriate curriculum that could offer proper pre-service teacher training to strategically position them for inclusionary practices. All the theories were referred from British National Council for Special Education (NCSE, 2006) as highlighted by Maureen (2007).

2.5 Models of Training for Inclusive Practices

Based on the desire to prepare pre-service teachers to improve inclusive practices in general classrooms, Holdheihe and Reschly (2008) suggest inclusive innovation configuration concept for which they have been used for about 30 years to train pre-service teachers. It is also believed that the concept has been used as a professional development guide. The

innovation has two dimensions showing key principles and levels of implementation. The innovation configuration helps to improve teacher preparation and professional development which eventually helps to lead to improved achievements of students with disabilities in general classroom. The use of innovation configuration as a concept to train pre-service teachers provides a broad overview of the competencies taught and practice within teacher preparation programmes. Holdheihe and Rechly (2008) believe that innovation configuration concept promotes collaborative practices and encourages an examination of the similarities, differences, and gaps among programmes and draws important conclusions.

There are nine essential components of the inclusive services innovation configuration curriculum and the components are based on the extensive literature addressing the integration of students with disabilities in the general classroom setting (Scruggs et al., 2007: US Department of Education, 2005). The components are:

- Inclusion foundations
- Inclusive services models
- Collaborative teaming/planning
- Collaborative skills
- Access to the general education curriculum: universal design for learning
- Access to the general education curriculum: differentiated instruction
- Learning strategies, classroom organization and behavior management, and scientifically based reading instruction
- Family involvement
- Student self-determination and collaboration

2.5.1 Inclusion Foundations

Administrators and teachers should know the major legal and policy foundations for inclusive practices. Deep knowledge of legal principle, civil rights, conceptions of inclusion, and prior research on inclusion are essential areas of background knowledge.

2.5.2 Inclusive Services Models

Various models of inclusive teaching have been described, including the following: (1) the

consultant model in which the special educator consults with the general educator in areas

pertaining to curriculum adaptation, instructional accommodations, remediation for struggling

students, and assessment accommodations and/or modifications; (2) the coaching model in

which the general and special educators take turns coaching students in those areas of the

curriculum and instruction in which they have more knowledge and expertise; and (3) the

collaborative teaming model in which the special and general educator share equal

responsibility for the lesson design, implementation, and assessment of instruction (Austin,

2001; Scruggs et al., 2007). Choices among inclusion models should be guided by several

factors, including student abilities,

needs, teacher philosophy, knowledge, expertise, collaboration time, and administrative

     support

(Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Snell & Janney, 2000). All factors are integral to the decision-

     making

process and are enormously variable depending on the student, school climate, and

     educational

personnel (Gee, 2002; Snell & Janney, 2000).

2.5.3 Collaborative Teaming/Planning and Collaborative Skills

Historically, teaching has been a practice in which teachers spent most of their day alone in a

classroom, left to independently teach subject matter and manage discipline issues with little

opportunity to work with their colleagues (Friend & Bursuck, 2006). This isolation has

changed over the years as professional educators have acknowledged the need to work in

partnership with colleagues in order to meet the needs of diverse students (Cole et al., 2000). The standards and accountability requirements are motivating the growth of collaborative practices within the public schools (Austin, 2001).

Best practices regarding the characteristics of effective collaborative teams include similar goals and philosophies, the ability to recognize other contributions as equal, the ability to work as equal partners with shared responsibility and accountability, and pooling/sharing resources (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Snell & Janney, 2000).

Administrators are pivotal in the implementation and maintenance of effective collaboration, and they play a key role in nurturing a supportive inclusive environment (Bateman & Bateman, 2002). Administrators must provide ample training opportunities for both educators and related services personnel and the resources and support to establish shared planning times (Bateman & Bateman, 2002). A high level of collaboration requires a significant amount of trust between partners and an open, flexible approach in lesson planning and implementation of instructional strategies. Planning time requires a structure in which the teachers' roles and responsibilities are identified and negotiated along with daily management and instructional decisions (Cole et al., 2000). According to Waters and Burcroff (2007), graduates of teacher education programmes that "practice what they preach" and provide general and special education teacher candidates opportunities to see and experience collaboration in practice are better equipped to engage in collaborative teaching models.

2.5.4 Access to the General Education Curriculum

Competencies with diverse instructional strategies are introductory to successful inclusion and a key component of the Inclusive Practices Innovation Configuration. Diversity in ways that students learn and retain information and illustrate their knowledge can be just as varied as the students themselves. Teaching all students in the same way no longer meets the

rigorous academic demands of today's education reform (Hitchcock, Meyer, Rose, & Jackson, 2002). Successful engagement of diverse students requires diverse instructional methodology, curriculum materials, and assessment methods (Bateman & Bateman, 2002; Hitchcock et al., 2002). Access, participation, and progress in the general education curriculum for students with disabilities calls for an examination of the curriculum intended for the general population (Hitchcock et al., 2002). *Universal Design for Learning* (UDL) framework in curriculum design establishes challenging, yet attainable goals for all students and provides flexibility in the curriculum materials, instruction, and assessment methods (Hitchcock et al., 2002; Rose & Meyer, 2002). With UDL, the critical content to be learned must be identified and multiple, flexible methods for presenting concepts, engaging students, and means of expressing knowledge provided (Hall et al., 2003). Essential to UDL is the use of technology as an accommodation (e.g., text-to-speech software, speech-recognition software) and as a tool to modify curriculum (e.g., digitized text) (Hall et al., 2003). Accessible curricula establish greater learning opportunities for students with disabilities. Accessibility alone, however, may not foster student engagement or drive academic achievement. Instructional strategies also require diversification in order to effectively engage all students. Tomlinson (2001) has written extensively on the subject of differentiated instruction, distinguishing three elements of instruction that can be differentiated: content, process, and product. Differentiated instruction is designed to engage all students in learning by altering the process by which students are taught and allowing choices in the content and product (Choate, 2000a).

Alteration in content allows for student choice and flexibility in the content being taught and the materials and activities being used (Choate, 2000a; Tomlinson, 2001). Modifications in instructional processes allow flexibility in activities that reinforce the students' understanding of key concepts (Choate, 2000a, 2000b; Tomlinson, 2001). Choice in the product allows for a

multitude of avenues in which students can demonstrate their knowledge as a result of instruction (Choate, 2000a; Tomlinson, 2000). Teachers modify their instruction according to the students' readiness, interest, and learning profile (Choate, 2000a; Tomlinson, 2001). When provided with choices, students are able to learn through their strengths and are more likely to take responsibility for their own learning (Dunn, DeBello, Brennan, Krimsky, & Murrain, 1981).

Pre-service teachers need to have a wealth of knowledge about curriculum and instruction for successful inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Winn & Blanton, 2005). The principles associated with UDL, when implemented in the formulation and implementation of the curriculum through differentiated instruction to meet student needs, improve access and progress in the general education curriculum for students with disabilities (Tomlinson, 2000). Pre-service teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional development opportunities that reinforce the concepts associated with UDL and differentiated instruction equip teachers with the skills necessary to promote access to and progress in the general education curriculum for all students.

Pre-service teachers' exposure to a variety of inclusive services models influences their willingness and readiness to implement inclusive practices (Van Laarhoven et al., 2006). Moreover, teacher candidates with basic knowledge of and experience in alternative inclusive services models are better equipped to participate in designing individualized education programmes (IEPs) that foster better integration of students with disabilities into the general education curriculum, standards, and assessments. Teacher preparation programs and professional development that provide both the knowledge and experience in various service delivery models equip teacher candidates with the background knowledge and experience to deliver effective inclusive services.

2.5.5 Learning Strategies, Classroom Organization and Behaviour Management

Teacher preparation in the use of evidence-based instructional strategies—including learning strategies, classroom organization and behavior management, and scientifically based reading instruction—are integral to the success of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Teachers skilled in scientifically based reading instruction and classroom organization and behavior management have the competencies to establish classrooms conducive to learning and improved results for all students. Innovation configurations in classroom organization and behavior management and in scientifically based reading instruction are incorporated by reference in the Inclusive Practices Innovation Configuration (Oliver & Reschly, 2007).

2.5.6 Family Involvement

Family involvement is a critical component of the Inclusive Services Innovation Configuration Concept. Informed and supportive students and families often are powerful advocates for inclusive services (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Wood, 1998). The failure to anticipate student and parent concerns, however, can undermine inclusion efforts. Sharing consistent and frequent information on the purposes and benefits of inclusion and involving the students and families during the development and implementation of inclusion plans facilitates buy-in and secures support (Choate, 2000b; Friend & Bursuck, 2006). Moreover, offering data regarding student academic and social outcomes, in addition to family and teacher inclusion-satisfaction information, can be very persuasive and affirming (Gable et al., 2000). Teacher preparation programs and professional development activities that provide

teacher candidates with opportunities to acquire and practice family-involvement strategies facilitate support for inclusive practices.

2.5.7   Student Self-Determination and collaboration

No one has a greater interest in the success of inclusive efforts than the students with disabilities themselves. Students who are actively involved and engaged in planning and evaluating their learning experiences are more likely to improve academic achievement (Choate, 2000b). Pre-service teacher preparation programmes that recognize these needs and provide learning opportunities teacher candidates observe and practice explicit instructional techniques in self-monitoring and self-management promote student self-determination in inclusive environments (Friend & Bursuck, 2006).

Another teacher preparation model is where students take a field trip to a local sheltered workshop where they hear a presentation on transition services in the schools and community and view the set-up of this employment option for adults with disabilities. Assignments in the course include preparing a micro-teaching lesson in the student's content area with modifications noticeable; another is a child advocacy project where teacher students interview an outside agency about a particular disability and then prepare a product aimed at advocacy for that particular disability. The programme is important because most of the courses have a field study component which is vital in connecting the theory of teacher training course to practice.

2.6 Ghanaian Teachers and Inclusive Practices

Researchers of inclusive education practices in Ghana consistently found that despite the majority of teachers' support for inclusive education, they have limited knowledge of inclusive practices and their approaches to pedagogy remain punitive (Agbenyega, 2007

Kuyini & Desai, 2007, 2009). For example, an observation of pedagogy during field works in some primary schools show: some of the children with tears in their eyes and when the teacher was quizzed on what were wrong with the children, the teacher replied, "I caned all of them…I taught them well then I gave them work to do but they all failed… It is shocking…they don't know anything so I caned them. I am going to cane them again for this disgrace". It was observed that most of the kids were very timid, some unable to express themselves for fear of making mistakes that could attract punishment from the teacher (see Abgenyega Field observation, 5/11/2009). Ghanaian pedagogical practice considers the learning relationship as simply receiving knowledge from a higher authority.

It is an approach that rejects knowledge construction through mutual meaning making (Vygotsky, 1987; Daniels, 2001). Such approaches to pedagogy neither make connections with learners nor engage them so that they want to be at school. It demonstrates a departure from a school as a community of individuals learning and sharing knowledge together (Rogoff, 1994). In inclusive learning, all students, teachers and policy makers belong to the school community and therefore, value the differences embodied in various elements of the school (Keddie & Churchill, 2005). Ghanaian form of schooling on the other hand, considers schooling as simply receiving knowledge from a superior authority for replication (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). If the pedagogical landscape of the Ghanaian schooling systems privilege teachers' authority and knowledge over learners then individuals with learning difficulties are further subjugated.

Teacher methods and pedagogy in Ghana need to move from mere transmission of knowledge to a more inclusive approach that actively involves learners in producing knowledge. This approach values active involvement of all pupils where the voice of them are valued and respected. Current inclusive practices challenged traditional frameworks of pedagogy that view learners as passive receivers. It encourages a new discussion of education where

appropriate strategies of teaching and learning are used (Loreman, 2007). The situation calls for proper examination of the curriculum of colleges of education in Ghana and how it prepares pre-service teachers to equip them with appropriate skills to adopt and apply proper methods of teaching in inclusive settings.

2.6.1 Interpersonal Relationships for Inclusive Practices

Universal education theory recognizes and supports the crucial and important roles that parents and teachers play to develop education for their children (Kathleen et al., 2005). Parental involvement in education creates a safe and accepting learning environment in partnership with families, communities, teachers and pupils guided by the principles of mutual respect, support, and responsibility. Furthermore, it enhances commitment to educational excellence, democracy and social justice.

However, in Ghana teacher-pupil relationship is found to be inconsistent because in some instances teachers freely communicate with kids whilst in many occasions they use punishment as a corrective measure which perpetuates fear among children. Little is absorbed in the situation since the use of canes induces 'forced obedience'. The resultant situation is that many teachers do not even know disabled pupils who are being kept indoors by parents and parents also do not know what inclusive education is. It does not encourage access, retention of the disabled and participation in education in mainstream classrooms.

2.6.2 Classroom Management

Classroom management is a means by which teachers demonstrate the rights and responsibilities of members of the class as well as the school. Particularly, those members who are in conflict, either student and student or student and teacher. According to Turner

(2000) classroom management is about the provision and procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which instructions and learning can happen.

Unfortunately, Ghanaian teachers are perceived to be tyrant, abusive and frequently using canes on pupils. They many times subject pupils to abuse especially the disabled because they possess no proper management skills. In his study of Education and Inclusion: Pre-service teachers Preparedness for Creating Inclusive Classrooms, Nketsiah (2011) views Pre-service teachers management of the disabled in inclusive classrooms as a problem. The situation calls for improvement of Ghanaian pre-service teachers preparation in the area of inclusive classroom management.

2.6.3 Socialization Programmes

In addition to the factors enumerated, one important aspect of disability education is to propel the disabled to acquire skills of socialization so, teachers need to possess the competency to socialize with pupils and to be socialized by all. According to Turner (2000), a model of meeting the distinctive needs of inclusive classrooms is to create platform for socialization of the disabled and non-disabled.

Turner (2000) emphasized that as schools the world over move toward more inclusive models of education, both pre-service and in-service teachers must be prepared to promote socialization among all pupils. This can be met through establishment of field studies or practical situations where pupils with disability would be taken to explore their immediate and extended environments for practical learning. Teachers should also create effective and powerful inter-personal relationship amongst all students, teachers, principals and parents.

Regrettably, in many Ghanaian communities, disability is belief to be caused by anger of gods or punishment from gods as a result of an offence committed by the victims or their family, or

through witchery or sorcery (Agbenyega, 2003). As a result, children with disabilities are given abusive and dehumanizing labels based on superstitious and cultural beliefs. Superstition and cultural beliefs then become barrier to inclusive education because pupils with disabilities are excluded by these negative attitudes towards them (Agbenyega, 2003; Desai & Kuyini, 2006; Ocloo & Subbey, 2008). Again, such traditional beliefs are the major causes of the society's stigmatization of the disabled. As a result of stigmatization families and parents do not want the disabled to even come out. They therefore, do not see the need to educate them how much more allowing them to go as far as colleges to socialize? Teachers also do not have any platform to organize and meet them to socialize. The overview of the country indicates that many disabled are often ignored as a result of socio-cultural beliefs. The whole system makes socialization of the disabled and non-disabled virtually absent. Moreover, many teachers as well as the pupils do not even want to do anything with the disabled which therefore makes the disabled feel that they are excluded in inclusive schools.

2.6.4   Assessment Procedures

Examination scores judge the success in the present model of schooling. Such definition of success is bound to be a barrier by itself. In a scenario prevailing in India, examinations also drive many children, particularly the rural, the disadvantaged and the disabled, out of the school. It is a great filtering mechanism. It suits the system, since only a select few students, largely from the urban middle class, get high scores, in order to get admission into higher academic institutions, which have limited seats (Jha, 2002).

According to UNESCO (1994), inclusive schools are designed with a vision and principle that believe in the culture of rights, social justice and equity. It believes that all children are not the same, and accepts diversity as strength rather than a problem. It believes in certain basic pedagogy that children learn in different ways, and relates success more with the learning of

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life and social skills than scoring high marks in exams. The admission policy of such schools would accept children from a diverse community rather than reject on the ground of admission test scores. On the other hand, Holdheide & Reschly (2008) calls for progress monitoring which is based on formative evaluation instead of rigid tests.

In Ghana the conditions are not any different from Jha (2002) assertion. Admissions and assessments are strictly based on rigid tests which many times form barrier to the admission, participation, retention and achievement of the disabled.

2.6.5 Assistive Technology

According to Marian (2013), Assistive Technology for the disable refers to devices that enable people with disabilities to overcome the challenges their conditions present. It is among the best uses of technology. Assistive technology encompasses many devices, with the use of which people with disability may become more able, and can achieve greater independence. They may also be better equipped to perform at job places. According to the Assistive Technology Act (2010), it is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Computer equipment (and internet access) are empowering innovations in assistive technology for PWDs. These computers now come with ergonomic fixed or split keyboards for people with musculoskeletal problems, sophisticated scanning equipment, on-screen keyboards, head operated pointing devices, and voice recognition software. These and other technologies assist people with severe disorders due to any form of disability. Portable or computer related devices that can literally "speak", are helpful to people with speech disabilities. Additional technology devices for the disable include equipment such as

alternative pointing devices, and switches which can make it easier or possible for a person to use radios, televisions, microwaves, etc.

Devices are made to assist or replace (to an extent) whichever human function is compromised in the person. The utmost need for this technology stems from the facts that these people, though often physically handicapped, do not have reduced mental abilities. Assistive technology can help them overcome physical barriers to get integrated into society, attend school and have careers.

Assistive Technology situation in Ghana is very different. The Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulty students in the country are not properly screened and identified to be helped in any way. They are branded as bad people and radicals who do not want to respect the status quo. They are not helped in any form of assistive technology because society does not recognize their problems and also as a result of non-availability of such facilities in the country. The cost of few available ones are also far beyond the financial ability of many parents whilst government interventions do not also come.

2.7 Causes of Lack of Access for PWDs

Forlin (2010) enumerates some of the reasons why children do not attend school. Among the reasons are poverty, gender and disability. He went on to say that in some countries, schooling is not available due to lack of quality teachers. Forlin (2010) further states that some families decide not to send their children to school if they feel that the children may not receive high-quality education. For instance, if parents realize that their child cannot make any benefit from going to school, they will rather engage the child in an activity that will benefit the family economically.

Forlin (2010) argues that ''*increasing participation in schooling is not only about increasing school places and training more teachers, it also depends on improving the quality of teaching*'' (p. 47).

In order to improve the quality of teaching for all, Forlin (2010) points out that the development of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes to prepare teachers to respond to diversity and support inclusion should be a priority.

According to Ofsted (2008) cited in Forlin (2010), researchers, governments and teachers themselves are recognizing '*that ITE may not be preparing beginning teachers sufficiently well to meet the needs of all children in schools that are increasingly diverse*'' (p. 48).

Forlin (2010) points out that research done internationally indicates that among the greatest challenges to inclusion is the feeling by many teachers that they are not trained to deal with inclusion, diversity, behavior and SNE. He concludes on this basis that teacher education has to be reformed in order to better prepare all teachers to work in inclusive ways. To turn the situation round, different approaches based on new models of teacher training have been accepted and are being practised to equip teachers with the necessary competencies and social skills to handle classrooms of inclusiveness.

All the facts presented above suggest insights into the need to appropriately train pre-service teachers and the use of proper model(s) for the preparation of pre-service teachers in Ghana to effectively handle inclusive classrooms. It is in the context of this that the researcher gathered data on how Special Education Needs (SEN) curriculum in Ghanaian Colleges of Education prepares pre-service teachers for inclusive classrooms.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Research design is an overall plan for gathering and analyzing data including steps taken to enhance both internal and external validity (Gall et al. 2007). Research design enables the researcher to meet the purpose of the study. It involves detailed description of the procedures the researcher will use to find answers to the research questions. According to Laws et al (2003), there is the need to decide whether a research is aimed at positivist scheme of work or within social constructionist framework. Laws et al (2003, 274) claim that both approaches are practiced in many researches. This study was guided by Social Constructionist Research Theory.

Qualitative data was gathered on the respondents background, what they teach or learn on inclusive foundations, concepts of disability and inclusion, delivery models, instructional strategies, inclusive classroom management, the management of children with SEBD, inclusive classroom assessment strategies, supporting services, and knowledge and skills to handle inclusive classrooms. Participants were also asked to suggest ways of improving the curriculum.

Teachers of Special Needs Education in Colleges of Education and Pre-service teachers, who have been posted to schools since last academic year (from September, 2014) were sampled for the study and purposive sampling method was used.   Data collection method applied was semi-structured interview.

3.2 Sampling and Sampling Techniques

According to Gall et al (2003), target population can represent a large group scattered over a wide geographical area or a small group concentrated in a single area In this study, the target population to which the researcher intended to generalize the findings was teachers of Special Needs Education in Colleges of Education in Kumasi and the final year pre-service teachers who completed their training from colleges in the previous year.

Purposeful sampling was used to select one master from a college of education in Kumasi and six pre-service teachers as my research participants. With purposeful sampling, Gall et al., (2007) states that, ''the goal is to select cases that are likely to be ''information-rich'' with respect to the purposes of the study'' (p. 178). The study was conducted in Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana with a population of about 1.9 million. The city has two public Colleges of Education (one mixed and one only female). Three pre-service teachers from each College who have already completed their training and are working were selected as respondents in addition to the master who got selected making total sampling size seven.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

Data for the research was gathered through qualitative interviews, and revision of colleges of education curriculum on inclusive practices. Semi-structured interviews were conducted through building trust and good rapport with respondents, the interviews became most appropriate to obtain a great deal of information and also offered the chance to follow up on answers and clarify vague statements from respondents (Gall et al., 2007). The interviews allow the respondents to speak in their own way whilst their responses were recorded on audiotape and notes. The researcher examined and analysed the SEN curriculum used in preparing teachers for handling inclusive classrooms. As the data collection proceeded, constant evaluation was made to make appropriate adjustments. The adjustments were made to ensure a higher degree of validity and reliability.

Two sets of interview questions were designed. One for the SNE Masters and the other one for Pre-service teachers. The whole interview guide was divided into different main parts. Masters' interview guide has 52 items and Pre-service teachers guide also has the same 52 items. The items were prepared to find out the background of the respondents. Participants were also quizzed to express their opinion on inclusive foundation, concepts of inclusive, models, instructional and learning strategies. The study also measured classroom and SEBD management skills of teachers, support services, assessment procedures, knowledge of inclusive practices, and skills of delivery.

All the questions were intended to collect both theoretical and practical information from respondents. Open-ended questions were posed to delve further into respondents' opinion,

attitudes and perceptions as per attached as an appendix. Participants were further asked to make any meaningful suggestions that are pertinent to the study.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

Gall et al (2003) advised that it is extremely relevant that questionnaire and interview designs satisfy the same requirements of validity and reliability applicable to other data-collection measures in educational research. This is highly recommended, especially, when the researcher is not using already existing instruments but designs his/her own instruments. There is no numerical way to express content validity, however, Gall et al (2003), indicated that content validity can be determined by panel of experts in the field who can judge its adequacy. Therefore, the researcher ensured content validity of the research instruments by asking some colleagues as well as experts such as the supervisor to review and judge the content validity of the research instruments. The interview guide was also pilot tested and regularly adjusted to ensure their validity and reliability.

3.5 Ethical Issues and Data Collection Procedure

In the first place, a clear written brief which explains the intended research and its purpose were circulated to seek permission from the Principal of Wesley College of Education – Kumasi to select the Master for SEN in the college as a respondent for the study. The Metro Director of education in Kumasi was also contacted for permission to conduct the research in her schools before the Master concerned and teachers were contacted. According to the Association of Social Anthropologist of the Commonwealth (ASA), researchers should communicate information and obtain informed consent from the researched to maintain research ethics.

Having obtained approval another letters to seek consent of participation were dispatched to the Pre-service teachers who have been selected. Participants were assured of their privacy and confidentiality. This is necessary for research ethics. Permission and assurance of security raise respondents' cooperation to provide data (Creswell, 2005). The researcher created a good rapport so as to have the confidence of the respondents to respond to the interview guide without any fear. He gave the guide personally to the respondents and four days after, a meeting was scheduled at the schools' premises with the teachers whilst the

researcher aided the questioning and participants responding. All the questioning and responses were recorded on audiotape. This gave respondents enough time for them to think through the interview guide and to avoid any undue pressure on the participants. The telephone numbers of respondents were collected and two days later fair returns were communicated to them to show appreciation. This falls in line with Law et al. (2003) believe that researchers should ethically make fair returns to avoid respondents being exploited. The researcher transcribed and coded the responses for further analyses.

Based on the above methods, sampling approaches, measurement instrument and ethical procedures, the researcher obtained enough primary data for the research and the responses were used as the basis for the measurement system. Furthermore, secondary data in the form of documents, journals, articles, books including college curriculum were consulted for important and cost effective background information for the study. This is in line with Steppingstone (2004) assertion that secondary data helps a researcher to gain initial insight into the research problem and the data is gathered for purposes other than the completion of a research project.

3.6 Data Analyses

The study reviewed the curriculum of colleges of education and sought to find out from respondents how the curriculum prepares them for their professional career. The curriculum was analysed under various components which was classified into 10 elements. Part 1 had various definition of disability, part 2 dealt with methods, part 3 highlighted evaluation approaches, part 4 talks about the distinction between SEN and Regular Classroom, and the purpose of the curriculum was captured under part 5. The rationale for SEN curriculum came under part 6, delivery models are treated under part 7, part 8 reveals reasons for classification of individuals with special needs, part 9 shows professionals in SNE and the last part treated the equipment and materials for SEN.

The semi-structured interview guide that was used to gather data from respondents was also divided into 14 parts. Part 1 was to establish respondents background information. Part 2 was to decide participants ideas on inclusive foundation, part 3 measured their views on concepts of inclusive education, part 4, models of inclusive education, and part 5 assessed participants knowledge on inclusive instructional strategies. Part 6 dealt with teachers ideas on inclusive

class organization, part 7 found out how teachers understand inclusive learning strategies, part 8 measured how they have been prepared to manage children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (SEBD) in mainstream classroom, and part 9 asked respondents to disclose what they know about methods of assessing PWDs in their classrooms. Furthermore, Part 10 determined participants thoughts on collaborative strategies, part 11 asked them to state the knowledge they have acquired to practice inclusiveness, and part 12 enquired about their skills for inclusive practices. Parts 13 and 14 dealt with respondents suggestions to improve inclusive practices and any other comments they wanted to pass respectively.

Part 1 has 9 interview items, part 2 has 3, part 3 has 4, part 4 has 3 and part 5 has 1 item. Parts 6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13 and 14 have 1,1,1,1,1,4,8,3,4, and 1 items respectively.

CHAPTER 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter fundamentally deals with the analyses of the SEN curriculum in the colleges of education and qualitative data that were collected from teachers sampled. The curriculum was analysed under each part and the results were accordingly stated. In addition, each participant voice submissions were transcribed and analysed under each of the 14 themes on the interview guide.

4.2 Review of Special Needs Education (SEN) Curriculum

The special needs education curriculum for colleges of education was reviewed and found to contain the following topics and sub-headings: has the definition of SEN, the Rationale for Special Education Needs, delivery models in Special Education and categories of special needs children.

4.2.1 Definition

The curriculum defines SEN from different viewpoints such as the medical view which stresses on pathological conditions, social context which looks at it in terms of problems of socialization and individual authorities.

4.2.2 Methods

The curriculum indicates that since special needs education deals with children who are characteristically different service delivery should be planned carefully and orderly delivered.

4.2.3 Evaluation

The curriculum suggest that evaluation of instruction in SEN should be constant so as to get feedback for remedial measures to be done.

4.2.4 The Purpose of the Curriculum

1. To equip pre-service teachers with the requisite attitudes to properly relate to assist the special needs child to learn

2. To introduce pre-service teachers to relevant materials used in special needs education and equip them with the knowledge on their production and use

3. To equip them with competencies in the use of appropriate methods used in special needs children

4. To equip pre-service teachers with the relevant assessment skills to properly assess SEN children

5. To make pre-service teachers with various motivational techniques used in handling Special Needs Classroom

6. To equip pre-service teachers with knowledge on the various categories of exceptionality and the management systems to appropriately handle each category in and out of the classroom

4.2.5 Rationale for Special Needs Education (SNE)

Family and societal relief, economic independence, self help, social skills, motor skills, intellectual abilities and conflict reduction are highlighted as why SEN is important.

4.2.6 Delivery Models in Special Education

Various models as shown by the curriculum are;

Regular class

Regular class with consultation

Regular class with itinerant teacher

Regular class with resource room

Special class

Hospital / Home bound

4.2.7 Reasons for Classification of Individuals with Special Needs

I. To help trained special personnel to help each group overcome their specific challenges

II. To draw government and other stakeholders attention to the needs of the SEN

III. To promote research work in the area of disability and its prevention

IV. To help develop appropriate teaching methods suitable for the need of each category of disability

V. To place such individual in appropriate setting to enable them work at their own pace.

4.2.8 Professionals in Special Needs Education

The professionals mentioned in the curriculum are special education teachers, regular education teachers, itinerant teachers, peripatetic teachers, school psychologists, school counsellors, social workers, school nurse, audiologists, ophthalmologists, speech and language therapists, special education administrators, and physiotherapists.

4.2.9 Equipment and Materials

Those stated in the curriculum and their uses are audiometers, speech training unit, hearing aids, snelling charts, Braille, stylus slates, tape recorders, and otoscopes and their uses.

4.2.10 Categories of SEN

The categories mentioned are gifted/talented children, mental retardation, visual impairment and the auditory system. Areas covered under various categories of special needs children are mainly identification criteria, characteristics and identification of various special needs, causes of various forms of disability and teaching/managing the special needs persons. The curriculum provides only one semester training for pre-service teachers. Having completed the analysis of the main components of the curriculum, the respondents submissions were also analysed

4.3 Analysis of Responses

4.3.1 Respondent 1

Qualification is Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) and Period of SEN training is 1 Semester

Inclusion Foundation

He said children with disabilities have the right to equal education opportunities and government policy on the education of the PWD is equal and accessible education for all.

Concepts

He described the concept disability as person's inability to perform basic functions and mentioned some form of disability in mainstream classroom as mentally retarded and SEBD. He does not know the concept of inclusion. He said Emotional and Behavioural Disorder child usually steals, fights and insults.

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Models

Some delivery models he mentioned are regular classroom with itinerant teacher and classroom with resource teacher. He said, the appropriate model is regular classroom with special teacher.

Teaching Methods for Inclusive Classroom

He does not know some methods of teaching inclusive classroom

Classroom Organization for Inclusionary Practices

Appropriate classroom organization; re-arranging children after you identify their peculiar needs

Learning Strategies.

Some learning strategies are exploration and the use of hands.

Managing the Child with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Disorders

He said that the management of SEBD is to refer them to other professionals like medical doctor and psychologist.

Assessment Methods

Assess individual through questions, marking and remediation and give enough time for work completion.

Collaboration

Discuss the conditions of the child with parents and sensitize them to accept the child no matter the condition. Involve co-teachers to handle special areas when needed. School principals should provide the right environment for teaching and learning and to provide TLMs.

Knowledge of Inclusiveness

Remedial strategies learned is to organize remedial where necessary. No on-campus practical experience and field observation. The participant claimed that the curriculum was improperly

and hurriedly handled. He accepted having low level of knowledge and not at all satisfied with his inclusionary knowledge.

Skills

He could not mentioned any identification method and could also not state any form of assistive technology. He said nothing about augmentative and alternative communication.

Suggestions

The respondent suggested that colleges of education should take time to equip pre-service teachers with skills, knowledge and practical experiences. Again, he said the curriculum should be planned towards inclusion and more semesters should be used to properly train pre-service teachers. He also called for in-service training for in-service teachers and finally called for inclusiveness to be encouraged.

4.3.2   Respondent 2

Background Information

Qualification is Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) and Period of SEN training is 1 Semester He teaches at the Junior High School and he has a learning difficulty student at his class.

Inclusion Foundation

He does not know anything about the rights of PWDs and the policy of educating them.

Concepts.

He described "disability" as inability to use part of the body. He mentioned learning difficulty as disability and could not properly describe the concept of inclusion. He described a child with SEBD as one who thinks and reacts abnormally.

Models

He simply mentioned 'regular class' as a delivery model of SEN and said the appropriate model for educating children with SEN is special class.

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Instructional Strategies

The respondent said he does not know any instructional method for inclusive education delivery.

Classroom Management

He does not know any inclusive classroom management

Learning Strategies

He also responded, "I don't know" when he was called to mentioned some learning strategies.

Managing a Child with SEBD

He does not know any model for the management of children with SEBDs

Assessment Methods

Furthermore, he does not know any assessment procedure to evaluate PWDs.

Collaboration

He does not know how to involve parents, students, co-teachers and school principals in inclusive service delivery.

Knowledge

He again said he does not know remedial strategies for inclusion. He did not receive on-campus and field experiences on inclusive practices. He has low knowledge on inclusion and also not at all satisfied with his knowledge on inclusiveness.

Skills

The participant said through the behaviour of the student and his performance in class one could identify whether he/she is SEN. He does not know assistive technology and anything about augmentative and alternative communication.

Suggestions

The respondent needs more training on inclusion and colleges of education should use more time to teach pre-service teachers the content of the curriculum. He called for in-service

training to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers. He said more than a semester training of pre-service teachers is very important.

Other Comments

The respondent could not give any other comment.

4.3.3   Respondent 3

Background Information

Respondent 3 has DBE and has taught for 1 year. She received 2 semesters of SEN training and currently teaching at Primary level, where she has a learning difficulty child.

Inclusive Foundation

She said SEN pupils have the right to education and mentioned government policy on educating PWDs as practice segregation.

Concepts

She replied that the concept disability stands for any person with deformity and some form of disability is blindness. In her opinion, inclusion is including PWDs in mainstream classrooms and described a child with SEBD as one who does not pay attention in class and one who is emotionally unstable.

Models

The delivery model of SEN mentioned is regular classroom with consultation and one with resource room. The appropriate delivery model is regular classroom with resource room.

Instructional Strategies

She mentioned regular classroom with consultation and resource room as instructional methods.

Classroom organization

She mentioned inclusion and grouping as classroom management styles.

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Learning Strategies

She reported that she was taught to use playing with real things which helps easy learning

Managing the Child with SEBD

She claimed that she learned about behavioural and humanistic models

Assessment

The respondent said it is very difficult to measure the performance of PWDs.

Collaboration

She said parents should be trained to help such children at home and also to educate parents to accept the children in whatever condition they find themselves. The respondent indicated that children with disabilities should be involved at all stages and sustain their interest in delivery stage. She reported that co-teachers and head teachers should be encouraged to get involved in the education of the PWDs.

Knowledge

The respondent said she learned about re-teaching and helping PWDs outside the normal classroom. She did not participate in inclusive practices on-campus and also on the field. She conceded that she has little knowledge on SEN and also not satisfied with her knowledge on Inclusion.

Skills

The methods of identifying PWDs she mentioned is the child's inattentiveness during delivery. She did not learned anything about assistive technology and also does not know augmentative and alternative communications.

Suggestions

The respondent suggested what she called "exclusive training of teachers" with special curriculum and special centres so that teachers could be properly trained. She again suggested that pre-service teachers need to receive SEN throughout the three year course. She further

recommended organization of in-service training, workshops, and special courses to improve teachers knowledge and skills. She however did not give any other comment.

4.3.4   Respondent 4

Background Information

The qualification is DBE and received instruction on SNE for the whole 3 years of her professional training. She handles primary level and has visual and hearing impaired pupils in her class.

Inclusive Foundation

She explained the right of children with disabilities as having equal access to education and the government's policy is to provide equal educational opportunities for all children in Ghana.

Concepts

The respondent described disability as deviation from the norm and mentioned learning difficulty, visually impaired, hyperactivity and speech defect as some forms of SEN found in mainstream classrooms. In her opinion, inclusion is putting PWDs and non-disabled together in the same class. She portrayed a child with SEBD as a hyperactive who does anything without paying recourse to teacher's instructions.

Models

She mentioned regular class with special teacher as a model of delivery and the model appropriate for educating children with SEN is regular class with resource room and person.

Instructional Methods

Respondent declared brainstorming, field trips, demonstration as some instructional strategies.

Classroom Management

Rearrangement of pupils to promote participation by all children.

Learning Strategies

Some inclusive learning strategies stated are engaging all students using TLMs during delivery and also give enough time for pupils to complete work

Managing the Child with SEBD

She reported medical model as a management model she learned.

Assessment Methods

She uses questions, interviews observation and practice to assess her pupils.

Collaboration

The asks parents to guide and provide the needs of the PWDs. She also learned to engage PWDs in lesson planning, choice of TLMs and during delivery. She learned to involve other teachers in planning and sharing ideas during meetings and also use school principals as liaison officers between teachers and parents

Knowledge

The respondent was taught to use questioning and change of methods to provide remedial services to those who need them. She got practical experience on campus during her training. She also received practical experience on the field and believes the content of the SEN curriculum is enough to fully prepare pre-service teachers for inclusive purposes. The respondent maintained that her knowledge on inclusion is okay but called for more training. As such, she declared that she is not satisfied with her knowledge on inclusiveness.

Skills

The respondent said she has been trained to use questions, interviews and observation to identify pupils with SEN. She conceded that she knows nothing about assistive technology but stated that augmentative and alternative communications are used to promote conversation from different pupils for the use of different ideas to promote teaching and learning in inclusive classrooms.

Suggestions

She suggested the use of teacher motivation to raise pre-service teachers' interest to provide inclusive service delivery. The respondent suggested more semesters for the training of teachers and also recommended practical training of pre-service teachers. To improve teachers' knowledge and skills, the respondent suggested in-service training. She finally mentioned teacher motivation and equipping teachers with practical knowledge and skills to help teachers.

4.3.5   Respondent 5 (Teacher of the Curriculum)

This respondent is a Master at a college of education and a teacher of the curriculum. He has Master of Science Degree (Disability Rehabilitation and Development) and specialized in Visual Impairment. He pursued the SNE for 3 years and has been teaching at the college for 6 years. The master said pre-service teachers are taken through SNE for one semester and the overall objective of the course is to help pre-service teachers to understand PWDs in their classrooms but inclusion is not part of the course.

Inclusive Foundation

The respondent revealed that the rights of PWDs are enshrined in the constitution of Ghana and government's policy on inclusive education is protected by Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) policy.

Concepts

 The respondent revealed that the concept of disability demands that the curriculum trains pre-service teachers on how to handle disable children like visually impaired, mentally retarded and physically challenged and the concept of inclusion sees every child as capable of learning and therefore be encouraged to learn. The master continued that SEBD child is one with social troubles and such a child should be counselled and encouraged to be of positive

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behaviour and proposed that parents be contacted to discuss issues for the better education of the child.

Models

On delivery models of SEN, the respondent said all the models are stated on the curriculum

Instructional Strategies

He believes that the instructional methods that pre-service teachers receive on SEN borders with the knowledge and skills to handle PWDs and refer them to medical professionals and special schools where possible.

Learning Strategies

The master said the pre-service teachers are taught to early identify PWDs and make referrals

Classroom Organization

The respondent indicated that pre-service teachers are trained to make identification and re-arrangement to ensure that all children participate in learning. He is with the view that pre-service teachers have the skills to make early identification and appropriate referrals.

Managing the Child with SEBD

Here, the respondent could not give any proper answer when he was asked to tell some models of managing children with SEBD.

Assessment Methods

The participant said that it is too difficult for teachers to properly assess PWDs so teachers are taught to identify the needs of a child and assess him/her accordingly.

Collaboration: He stated that teachers are prepared to use Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), parental discussions and interactions to help provide inclusive services. The pre-service teachers are tutored to acquire practical skills on how PWDs are involved in lesson delivery. For example sometimes, pre-service teachers are taken to centres to see PWDs playing games with the non-disabled. Pre-service teachers are prepared to segregate the

PWDs and be given to special teachers to be assisted as a means of involving co-teachers in inclusive practices. Furthermore, he claimed that teachers are trained to involve principals in planning and to decide on what to do.

Knowledge

The respondent said as a remedial strategy teachers are educated to identify individual children's needs for medical intervention or where needed recommend for special schools. He disclosed that on-campus inclusive teaching is done but the time for the exercise is too limited which needs to be extended. However, the master said field observations are not carried out

Skills

The respondent reported that the SEN curriculum teaches pre-service teachers to identify pupils with SEN through observation. He further said the curriculum prepares teacher trainees to be aware of various technological devices and their uses. He revealed that teacher trainees do not learn anything on augmentative and alternative communication.

Challenges

- The curriculum is too loaded and needs to be broken for more semesters.
- The curriculum does not prepare pre-service teachers sufficiently to handle inclusive classrooms.
- Lack of special laboratories and practical materials to provide practical training for per-service teachers.

Suggestions

- Laboratories are needed and the subject should be taught throughout 3 year
- The content of the SEN curriculum is too theoretical and needs to be reviewed.
- Conferences and workshops have to be organized for pre-service teachers and invite specialists to periodically talk with pre-service teachers.
- Government should help improve upon the existing SEN curriculum.

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4.3.6   Respondent 6

Respondent 6 has Diploma in Basic Education and has 1 year teaching experience. She had 1 semestrial learning of SEN. She teaches at primary level and has learning difficulty pupils in the class.

Inclusion Foundation

The respondent stated that the right of children with disabilities is the right to education for all and the government's policy is to provide equal educational opportunities for all children.

Concepts

The respondent explained disability as where a child cannot do what others could do. She said, learning difficulty and hard to hear are some forms of SEN found in normal classrooms. She explained inclusion as putting children with disabilities and non-disabled in the same class for learning and also described SEBD as a child who is restless in class.

Models

She mentioned regular class with resource room and special class as some delivery models and also said special class is the appropriate model for children with disabilities.

Instructional Methods

The respondent referred to discussions and lecture approaches as instructional methods learned.

Class Management

She claimed she learned re-arrangement of pupils to ensure full participation of all pupils

Learning Strategies: She arranges children for participation and give sufficient time to children to complete work.

Managing the Child with SEBD

The respondent mentioned medical and psychodynamic models for handling SEBD

Assessment Methods

The respondent declared, she has been prepared to use exercises and tests to assess all pupils.

Collaboration

She has been trained to contact parents to take decision on the needs of PWDs but did not train to involve children with disabilities in her teaching. Additionally, she was taught to ask colleague teachers to handle areas of difficulty and also include head teachers to assist where possible.

Knowledge

The respondent said she has been trained to give special attention to deserving pupils and change methods to suit the needs of pupils with disability. She did not receive practical training from college or from the field. She said that the curriculum is too loaded but lacks inclusive component. She believes she has low level of knowledge on inclusion and accordingly not satisfied with her knowledge to handle inclusive classroom.

Skills

The respondent reported that she has been trained to use observational and questioning skills to identify pupils with disabilities in class. She however asserted that she knows nothing about assistive technology as well as argumentative and alternative communication.

Suggestions

She called for more training and proper motivation to raise her interest and also suggested longer training of pre-service teachers. She requested for inclusive component in the curriculum. The respondent called for in-service training for teachers and recommended for the inclusion of practical training for pre-service teachers. She however, did not give any other comment.

4.3.7   Respondent 7

Background Information

Has DBE and has 1 year teaching experience. He received a semester's education from SEN curriculum. He teaches at primary school as a general teacher who has a low intelligent quotient pupil in the class.

Inclusion Foundation.

Here, the respondent responded that pupils with disabilities have the right to free Compulsory Universal Basic Education and that forms government policy for educating PWDs.

Concepts

The respondent indicated that a child who cannot do normal things is disabled. Visually impaired and learning difficulty were stated as some forms of SEN in mainstream classrooms. Unfortunately, this respondent could not disclose his opinion on inclusion. He described SEBD as a child who causes trouble in class and in the school.

Models

He said that he has been taught about special schools as a model of delivery and thinks that model is appropriate for educating children with disability.

Instructional Methods

This respondent revealed instructional method learned as medical and behavioural models.

Classroom Organization

He again reported that he has been trained to arrange the class so that children can learn and also give enough time for pupils to complete work.

Learning Strategies

The participant said that the learning approaches he knows are soliciting from children responses to questions and encouraging pupils to explore.

Managing the Child with SEBD

He claimed he learned identification, counselling and referral models for managing SEBD in inclusive classrooms.

Assessment Approaches

The methods of assessment he has been trained to use are oral questioning, exercises and tests to assess children with SEN.

Collaboration

The respondent replied that he was taught to call parents to discuss PWDs conditions and to decide what needs to be done. Questioning could be used to involve children with disability in teaching and learning and also teachers are contacted to share ideas on inclusive practices. School principals get awareness of the condition of the child with disability so as to help provide education for all children.

Knowledge

The respondent said he was trained to change methods and also pay attention to pupils who need help as a way of remediation. He did not received on-campus practical training or from the field. He said SEN curriculum contains a lot but has no inclusive part. The respondent described his level of knowledge on inclusion as low and therefore not satisfied with his level of knowledge.

Skills

The identification methods he claimed to have learned is observation through the actions and inactions of the child. He mentioned that assistive technology are devices that pupils with disability use to operate but could not say something on augmentative and alternative communications.

Suggestions

He suggested that he needs more training on inclusion to raise and sustain his interest in SEN.

He requested for inclusion of practical element and more semesters to teach the curriculum.

He again suggested that he needs practical training through in-service professional development. He finally recommended that the curriculum should be inclusive based with practical aspect which would be taught throughout the 3 years that teachers are trained.

Other Comments

He called for special teachers to help classroom teachers give better education to PWDs in mainstream classrooms and also appealed to government to provide TLMs to aid the teaching of PWDs.

CHAPTER 5: MAJOR FINDINGS

5.1 Discussions

Naturally, teachers have difficulties dealing with change and inclusion of students with special needs is one of the changes that teachers have been battling with because of the perceived inadequate professional preparation of pre-service teachers and the effect it might have on the PWDs teaching and learning processes in the classroom. Inclusive education cannot be implemented if teachers antagonize with it. Therefore, teachers' knowledge and skills on how inclusive education works, what works within inclusive settings and the conditions for effective inclusive education is very important for its implementation because inclusive education relies on what teachers do in classrooms (Meijer, 2004).

5.2 Major Findings

Background

All the respondents had had Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) an indication that all respondents are professionally prepared to teach at the basic level of education in Ghana. All six of the pre-service teachers sampled for the study were teaching at the basic level but not in special schools. The level at which pre-service teachers are required to teach (mainstream basic schools) makes their SEN training which focuses at the special schools virtually useless. The best method to get the best out of teachers for the disabled is to include the teaching of the disabled in the curriculum of the Colleges of Education (Turner, 2003). In this study, the majority of four out of six respondents and the master of the curriculum said pre-service teachers are trained for one semester. However, One semester preparation of pre-service teachers fails to furnish teachers with the professional skills, knowledge and attitudes to better function in inclusive setting (Winn & Blanton, 2005). Therefore, the study projects that pre-

service teachers in Ghana do not get enough time to be professionally prepared for inclusive education.

Some Special Education Needs found in Mainstream Classroom

The most mentioned SEN found in mainstream classroom is learning difficulty and one could easily figure out that all the mentioned SEN are those that are found in the curriculum. It demonstrates the power of curriculum in the preparation of teachers for their future orientation.

This finding is in line with a study by Sarfo (2011) which also found learning disability as the most dominant disability in Ghanaian mainstream classrooms. However, this is in contradiction with a similar study by Opoku-Inkoom (2009) which found visual impairment as the most identified SEN. The study also found out that behavioural and emotional problems were the least mentioned SEN and undoubtedly, were not identified by any of the respondents at all. Similarly, the study by Opoku-Inkoom (2009) also found out that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Emotional Behavioural Disorder were the least indentified SEN. These findings might suggest that the pre-service teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to identify other kinds of SEN especially SEBD because of limitations of the curriculum.

Inclusive Foundations

Deep knowledge of the laws and policies for inclusion, civil rights conceptions of inclusion, and prior research on inclusion are essential areas of background knowledge (Holdheide and Reschly, 2008). It was established by the study that colleges of education curriculum for SEN does not contain inclusive foundations. The rights and policies of inclusion are not stated in the curriculum and this reflected respondents' low knowledge exhibited when they were asked to tell the rights and policies regarding the provision of education for PWDs. The finding exonerates Essel (2015) when her study on barriers of education for PWDs showed 73% of

respondents wrongly declaring that the rights and policies of Ghana on the education of children with disabilities promote segregation. The inference here is that teachers become disadvantaged to apply and defend the rights of PWDs when necessary and also fail to deliver required services to the PWDs as an obligation.

Concepts

Teachers' knowledge of SEN is extremely important in the identification, provision of interventional measures and suitable instructional strategies for successful inclusion of students with SEN in the regular classroom (Nketsiah, 2013). Like the meaning given by the curriculum to disability, a careful analysis of the definitions offered for "disability" by the respondents which emphasize a persons' inability to do normal things revealed that almost all of them hammered the impediment of the child without any reference to the learning needs of such a child. The connection between the content of the curriculum and respondents' definitions of disability gives ample proof that colleges of education fail to adequately and properly prepare pre-service teachers for inclusion pursue. As such, pre-service teachers lack knowledge and skills to accurately define disability and effectively identify different forms of SEN, provide the necessary interventions, and also use suitable instructional methods to achieve better results among PWDs in inclusive classrooms.

Inclusion Explained

UNESCO (2009) defines inclusion as a process intended to respond to students' diversity by creating their participation and reducing exclusion within and from education. The definition encompasses quality teaching, attendance, participation and achievement of education by all. Four respondents who attempted to give meaning to inclusion as well as the master see inclusion as putting pupils with disability and non-disability together in the same classroom for learning. Such definition views inclusion as only provision of access without thinking of their responsibilities as teachers to ensure attendance of all, promoting participation of all,

offering quality teaching and assessing achievements. The responses reflect professional incompetence of pre-service teachers on inclusion as a result of insufficient training they receive from colleges of education which has been established by the revision of the curriculum. The study here gives support to Agbenyega (2007, 43) finding which reveals that inadequate training of pre-service and in-service teachers is a problem which confronts inclusive education in Ghana.

Description of Person with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (SEBD)

Social, emotional and behavioural disorders student have disruptive and anti-social behaviour and are strongly influenced by the background and situation of the children concerned (Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Association Report, 2006). To have such children in class can be particularly challenging and teachers need proper training to face such challenges (Maureen, 2007). The curriculum offers very little on SEBD. No identification strategies, and teaching/learning approaches to contain these students in mainstream classrooms are missing from the curriculum. The description given by all the respondents can be summed up as "students with disruptive behaviours". This description gives attention to the characteristics of such children but does not attend to the fundamental causes of the situation. For instance if teachers and parents fail to properly attend to the needs of the child especially those who are already living with disability the person's social emotional behaviour becomes disturbed (Maureen, 2007). Therefore, aside from natural causes, teachers and parents are expected to be well prepared to contain children with SEBD. As exposed by the content of the curriculum and respondents submissions, pre-service teachers are not sufficiently prepared to handle inclusive classroom where children with SEBD are found. The implication is that such children stand the risk of being marginalized and abused in mainstream classrooms.

Models

Teacher candidates with basic knowledge of and experience in alternative inclusive services models are better equipped to participate in designing individualized education programmes (Van Laarhoven et al., 2006). According to the findings, all the respondents except one made reference to alternative inclusive services models. Nevertheless, 3 respondents recommended special schools as appropriate for the education of the PWDs whilst another 3 claimed that appropriate model of delivery is regular class with resource room but the Master could not give any appropriate model. One important observation made was that respondents are knowledgeable about inclusive delivery models because such models mentioned are found in the curriculum of colleges of education. However, the practicability of the mentioned alternative models remains an impossibility because of non-availability of resources, infrastructure and other professionals. It is also believed that those who recommended special schools for PWDs did it not because they do not know the appropriate model but because alternative models are difficult to implement at the current state. Many times the reason for the exclusion is inadequate support for students and teachers (Hittie and Peterson, 2003). The finding is also comparable to Bofa's (2015) study from which 70.4% recommended special schools for the PWDs as a result of lack of support. The implication is that although teachers are aware of different alternative models they are incapable of using them and children with disabilities stand the danger of getting little in normal classroom.

Instructional Strategies/Methods

Adera (2007) findings support the fact that, lack of effective instructional strategies and classroom management skills are to be blamed for proper inclusive development. These lacks result in high stress levels among teachers and a major contributory factor to poor academic performance among students with special needs. Consequently, there is the need for teachers to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to enable them develop effective instructional

programmes, class management approaches and learning methods which will improve educational experiences and achievements for all students and teacher retention because teacher quality has a great deal of influence on teacher commitment and effectiveness (Abram, 2005; Hill & Barth, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001 as cited in Adera, 2007). In fact, the findings of this study indicated that 4 respondents do not know of any inclusive teaching methods and 2 mentioned few methods. Rearrangement of classroom to aide learning featured prominently as class management approach and the respondents could virtually not mentioned any proper learning strategy. Such responses reflect serious inappropriateness of the curriculum of colleges of education. Pre-service teachers are dangerously unknowledgeable about teaching/learning and class management strategies for inclusive development. The findings contradicts Nketsiah (2013) assertion that pre-service teachers in Ghana have knowledge and skills to apply suitable inclusive methods but might be challenged by limited infrastructure and facilities. Therefore, by the findings of this study it could be concluded that Ghanaian pre-service teachers lack instructional and managerial appropriateness to offer credible inclusive education.

Assessment Methods

Knowledge in diverse methods of assessing students is paramount in inclusionary practices. It helps to determine achievement and plan for remediation. But when examinations, tests and exercises scores are allowed to judge the success in the present model of schooling then success is bound to be a barrier by itself (Jha, 2008). The findings of this study indicates that 3 respondents prefer questioning for evaluation, 1 likes interview, another 1 uses observation, 2 prefer tests and exercises respectively (Note: some respondents mentioned more than 1 method). The result again exposes the deficiency of the colleges SEN curriculum which train pre-service teachers to use rigid and limited approaches of measuring achievements. The finding largely concurs Essel (2015) observation that admissions and assessments are strictly

based on rigid tests which many times form barrier to the admission, participation, retention and achievement of PWDs. By the findings of the study it is believed teachers are not professionally well prepared to use modern stratagems of assessment of all children in inclusive setting.

Collaboration

According to Waters and Burcroff (2007), graduates of teacher education programmes that "practice what they preach" and provide general and special education teacher candidates opportunities to see and experience collaboration in practice are better equipped to engage in collaborative teaching models. Although collaborative practices are not found in the curriculum, majority of the respondents demonstrated an appreciable knowledge of collaboration with parents, other teachers and school principals. Nevertheless, they were not specific on how to involve children in their work. The study does not agree with Bofa (2015) whose study revealed that 77.7% hardly involve parents, other teachers and head teachers for inclusion. The findings support the concept of seeing inclusive teaching/learning, as an embodiment of all students, teachers, head teachers, parents, and other professionals (Keddie & Churchill, 2005).

Knowledge

The most important factor in championing inclusive education is equipping all teachers with the professional knowledge, skills and experiences to enable them to educate all learners regardless of their individual needs (Watkins, 2003). The findings depict that at least, 5 out of the 6 pre-service teachers sampled said something to show they are knowledgeable to certain extent on the conduct of remedial and the master also suggested special attention as a form of remedial for weaker pupils. Regrettably almost all of the respondents did not have practical training both on-campus and on the field. 4 respondents described the curriculum as too loaded and theory-based whilst 2 could not say anything on the content of the curriculum. The

impression being created here is that the curriculum is least fit for the training of pre-service teachers. Except 1 all respondents have low levels of knowledge and are dissatisfied with their knowledge on inclusion. The findings truly mirror the content of the curriculum because it is loaded for a semester's programme, lacks practical training and inclusive component and therefore not fit for training pre-service teachers who are expected to teach in regular classrooms. This buttresses Agbenyega (2007) claim that Ghanaian pre-service teachers are not properly and sufficiently trained and have little knowledge and experiences to practice inclusion. The impact is that teachers lacking knowledge and experiences in the identification and support of the pupils with disabilities/SEN can themselves become challenge to the pupils learning and participation in education (UNESCO, 2009).

Skills

Appropriate skills acquisition leads to improved students' performance and supports the identification and effectiveness of individualizing instruction to accommodate the differing knowledge and skills which different students bring to the classrooms (Wenglinsky, 2000). The respondents have demonstrated their skills on identification strategies when 4 said they have been trained to use observation for identification and 3 said they received training to use children's behaviour and performance. Five out of six teachers said they did not know about assistive technology although the master stated pre-service teachers are taught about technological devices and their uses. They (6 out of 7) respondents also admitted that they are not aware of augmentative and alternative communications. While respondents have skills to identify PWDs, as a result of such identification skills being stated on the curriculum, they are not conscious of various assistive technology available because few mentioned in the curriculum are meant for only hearing and visual impairments. The respondents including the master are not skilful in augmentative and alternative communications which is not surprising by the content of their training programme for inclusive practices. It lends support to Essel

(2015) recording of 90% of teachers showing no knowledge on assistive technology and effective communication skills and it also reinforces what the curriculum contains. Lack of innovative skills, poor planning and preparation, inadequate supports for students and teachers have been found as barriers to inclusion (Hittie & Peterson 2003). So, PWDs are at risk to be barricaded in regular classroom if per-service teachers are not provided with necessary skills.

Suggestions and Other Comments

Respondents were asked to propose what should be done to improve the content of the curriculum, and to improve professional competence of pre-service teachers. On teachers' interest, 5 participants out of 6 demanded more training on inclusion to raise their interest in inclusive services. This demand was backed by the master of the curriculum. The suggestion is in conformity with the content of the curriculum which is found to be special schools oriented and too loaded for a semester. 6 respondents again suggested that more semesters should be allotted for the teaching of inclusion in colleges of education. The suggestion is justified because one semester training of pre-service teachers do not sufficiently prepare them to handle inclusive classrooms properly (Turner, 2003). The respondents were unanimous to call for in-service training of teachers to improve teachers' professional competencies since on-the-job training improves teachers' classroom performance (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 10). As a final suggestion, 4 participants were concerned with the provision of inclusive aspect of the curriculum which was followed by request for practical training for which 3 respondents requested. The finding is in line with the assertion that theoretical training should be supported by practical aspects to make teachers knowledgeable and skilful in their delivery to meet the diverse needs children bring to class (Singhal, 2009). General and special education teacher preparation programmes with practical training broadens teachers' horizon in the implementation of inclusive education (Miller & Stayton, 2006).

5.3 Major Implications of the Study

The major implications by the revision of the curriculum and the analyses of responses could be wrapped up as teacher training programme in colleges of education in Ghana is mainly geared towards SEN in special schools. In this case, it can also be speculated that pre-service teachers are not satisfactorily prepared for inclusive practices. Accordingly, it is believed that pre-service teachers are professionally inexperienced, incompetent and unskilful to handle children with disabilities especially those with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (SEBD) in mainstream classrooms.

5.4 Suggestions

This section discusses the suggestions for improving pre-service teacher preparation and professional development in serving students with disabilities in the general education classroom. The suggestions are organized around the improvement of the content of the colleges of education SEN curriculum and how it should be used for the preparation of pre-service teachers.

Improvement of the Content of the Colleges of Education SEN Curriculum

This recommendations demand attention to the following:

- The curriculum contains proper inclusive foundations that fully explain the policies of inclusive education expected to be implemented in the country and full rights of children with disabilities in Ghana

- That the curriculum contains all the 13 categories of disabilities being classified and accepted in Ghana (Nketsiah, 2013)

- That the curriculum appropriately explains all the various models of inclusive practices as enshrined in the curriculum (Friend & Bursuck, 2006)

- That the curriculum provides all teachers (general and special education) with a background in content knowledge and specialized instructional strategies and class management approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners (Bateman & Bateman, 2002)

- That the curriculum contains proper assessment methods that can help teachers to properly measure the performance of PWDs and non-disabled in inclusive classroom (Jha, 2008).

- That the curriculum creates experiences for pre-service teachers that shift from traditional to collaborative roles with shared responsibility for planning, instructing, and assessing student performance (Winn & Blanton, 2005)

- That the curriculum provides approaches for partnerships with schools to provide opportunities for both general and special education teachers to see and experience alternative service models, including differing levels of inclusive practices (Smith et al., 1998)

- That the curriculum provides pre-service teacher preparation programmes so that they are provided with opportunities to identify SEN in mainstream classroom and participate in and learn about inclusive practices with diverse students (Miller & Stayton, 2006)

- That the curriculum provides field experiences in which teacher candidates participate with feedback in situations where inclusive practices and collaboration occur routinely (Kozleski et al., 2002).

- That the curriculum presents avenues for pre-service teachers to learn about modern assistive technologies and their uses and also provides various communication skills including augmentative and alternative approaches (Marian, 2013)

How it Should be Used for the Preparation of Pre-service Teachers

After the revision of the content of the curriculum and participants responses, the researcher would want to suggest that the content should be revised and adequate number of semesters be given for its implementation to train pre-service teachers. Much is not known about the qualification and professional competence of SEN teaching personnel in colleges of education. Nevertheless, based on the qualification and background of the master sampled, much training in the area of inclusion is needed and in-service training would also be suggested for them.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Recommendations

New curriculum consistent with inclusive practices based on "best practices" development is recommended to produce pre-service teachers capable of supporting inclusive services. Also, only 6 pre-service teachers from 6 schools and one master from 1 college of education were involved in the study. Therefore, it is highly recommended that another comprehensive study would be extended to other pre-service teachers and colleges of education. The study used qualitative interview guide to gather data and further research in this direction using quantitative approach is recommended. Also, extra research needs to be carried out to establish what could be done to improve the existing curriculum to make it more inclusionary approach based on best practices. These combined efforts hold promise for improving the achievement of students with disabilities and for realizing the academic expectations of free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: PERMISSION LETTER

Olav M. Troviks vei 20

0864 Oslo

Norway

Email: yawusu97@yahoo.co.uk

28th August, 2012

The Principal

(Name deleted for ethical reasons) College of Education

Kumasi

Dear Madam/Sir,

APPLICATION FOR LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL.

I am a student of the University of Oslo, Norway, pursuing a Master's degree programme in Special Needs Education. I am currently in Ghana to embark on a research programme for my Master's Thesis on the topic, '' **Teacher Education Curriculum: Pre-Service Teachers Preparation for Inclusive Education in Ghana** 'as part of the requirements of the degree programme.

To be able to conduct the research, I will need the assistance of some of your staff members especially Masters who teach the SNE curriculum.

I would, therefore, be grateful if you could provide me with a Letter of Introduction to be able to contact your students and Masters who can assist me in the research programme.

Please find attached a copy of a Letter of Introduction from my University in Norway.

Counting on your usual co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

……………………………

Yaw Owusu

Appendix B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am a Master's Degree student in the University of Oslo-Norway. I am conducting a research on **Teacher Education Curriculum: Pre-Service Teachers Preparation for Inclusive Education in Ghana** to measure the level at which SNE curriculum prepares teachers for inclusive classrooms. I would be very grateful if you could take time off your busy schedule to respond to my data collection questions.

I want to assure you that the exercise is solely for academic purpose and I take blame for all limitations of the research. All ethics of international research especially, protection of identity and confidentiality of respondents would be highly respected. On this note, I seek consent of participants to freely, fully and honestly participate to help build better education system for our unfortunate children with disabilities.

Thanks in anticipation of your fullest cooperation.

....   Sign……………………………..

Yaw Owusu   Name………………………………

(Researcher)   (Respondent)

University of Oslo - Norway   Date………………………………..

Appendix C: Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. What is your qualification?

2. How long have you been teaching since you completed college?

3. How long have you been in this school?

4. Did you learn inclusive education at college?

5. How many semesters were you taken through SNE curriculum

6. At what level of school do you teach? (KG, Primary, JHS)

7. Are you a general or subject teacher?

8. Do you have children with disabilities in your class?

9. If yes, what kind of disabilities do they have?

INCLUSION FOUNDATION

1. Can you tell me the rights that children with disabilities have in Ghana?

2. Can you tell me the government's policy on educating children with disabilities? (guide: to provide equal educational opportunities for all children, to promote access and participation, quality and inclusion.

3. Where did you learn the rights of disable children and government's policy on educating disable children? (guide: from college, from print media, from electronic media , from other books, from co-workers, from other source)

CONCEPTS

1. (a) What do you understand by the concept, ''Disability? (b) Can you mention some forms of disabilities?

2. In your opinion, what do you understand by the concept of Inclusion?

3. Can you describe a child with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (EBD)?

4. From where did you learn about the concepts? (guide: from college, from print media, from electronic media , from other books, from co-workers, from other source)

MODELS

1. What are some of the delivery models of Special Needs Education? (guide: regular class, regular class with consultation, regular class with itinerant tr, regular class with resource room, (special class, hospital/home bound).

2. From where did you learn about the models? (guide: from college, from print media, from electronic media , from other books, from co-workers, from other source)

3. Which of these models do you think is appropriate for educating children with SNE?

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES/METHODS

1. What methods of inclusive practices did you learn from college?

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

1. Can you tell me what you learnt from college about inclusive classroom organisation/management?

LEARNING STRATEGIES

1. What are some of the inclusive learning strategies that you learnt during your teacher-training period?

MANAGING THE CHILD WITH SEBD

2. What models for managing SEBD did you learn from college through the SEN curriculum? (Guide: medical model, psychodynamic model, humanistic model, behaviour model).

ASSESSMENT

1. How have you been trained to assess children with SEN in your class?

SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Can you tell me how the training you received from college taught you how to involve parents in inclusive practices?

2. Can you tell me how you have been trained to involve the child with disabilities in your teaching? (During planning, preparation, delivery and evaluation stages).

3. How were you trained from college to involve co-teachers in inclusive practices? (planning, delivery and assessment of children with disabilities?

4. Can you tell me the training you got from college on the involvement of school principals in handling inclusive classrooms?

KNOWLEDGE

1. What remedial strategies for inclusion did you learn from college?

2. Did you have the opportunity to participate in and learn about inclusive practices on-campus?

3. What are your views on such exercises?

4. Did you go to the field to observe inclusive practices?

5. What are your views on inclusive practices on the field?

6. How would you describe the contents of the SEN curriculum?

7. In your opinion, how would you describe your level of knowledge after going through the SNE curriculum?

8. Could you tell me how satisfied you are about your knowledge on inclusion?

SKILLS

1. What did you learn on methods of identifying people with SEN? How have you been trained to identify people with SNE

2. Can you tell me what you learnt about assistive technology?

3. Can you tell me what you learnt about augmentative and alternative communication?

SUGGESTIONS

1. What do you suggest could be done to raise your interest in SNE?

2. What do you suggest should be done to improve on the content of the syllabus?

3. What do you think should be done to improve your knowledge and skills in inclusive education?

4. What are your final suggestions/comments on the SNE curriculum?

Any Other Comment(s)

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INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS OF THE CURRICULUM

Background Questions

1. What is your qualification?

2. What course relating to SNE did you pursue at the university?

3. How many semesters did you pursue such SNE courses

4. How long have you been teaching at this college?

5. How many semesters do you teach SNE to a batch of teacher trainees?

6. Are you a subject or a general master?

7. What subject(s) do you teach?

8. What is the overall objective of the SNE curriculum?

Inclusive Foundation

1. Can you tell me what you teach on the rights of children with disabilities in Ghana through the SNE curriculum?

2. What government policy on inclusive education do you teach from the SNE curriculum?

Concepts

1. What concepts of disability are taught form the SNE curriculum?

2. What concepts of inclusion are taught from the SNE curriculum?

3. What do you teach on children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD)?

Models

1. What are some of the delivery models of SNE do you teach?

Instructional Strategies

1. What method(s) of inclusive teaching does the SNE curriculum teach?

Learning Strategies

1. What learning strategies do you teach from the SNE curriculum

Classroom Organization/Management

1. Can you tell me what inclusive methods of class management the SNE curriculum teaches?

2. How do you expect pre-service teachers to organize/manage inclusive classrooms?

Managing the Child with SEBD

1. What models of SEBD are taught from the SNE curriculum?

Assessment

1. What method of assessment does the SNE curriculum teach?

Support Services

1. Can you tell me what SNE curriculum teaches on parental involvement in inclusive practices?

2. How does the SNE curriculum prepare teachers to involve children with disabilities in inclusive practices

3. How does the SNE curriculum prepare teachers to involve co-teachers in inclusive practices

4. How does the SNE curriculum prepare teachers to involve school principals in inclusive practices

Knowledge

1. What remedial strategies does the SNE curriculum teach?

2. Do you organize on-campus inclusive teaching for teacher trainees?

3. If yes, what are your views on such exercise?

4. Do you take teacher trainees to the field to observe inclusive practices?

5. If yes, what are your views on the exercise?

Skills

1. What does the SNE curriculum teach on methods of identifying pupils with SNE?

2. From what teacher trainees learn how do you expect them to identify pupils with SNE?

3. Can you tell me what the SNE curriculum teaches on assistive technology?

4. What does the curriculum teach on argumentative and alternative communication?

Challenges

1. What can you say about the content of the SNE syllabus?

2. In your opinion, how sufficient is the syllabus in preparing the students to handle inclusive classrooms?

3. As SNE master, are there any challenges you face in your work?

4. Could you tell me what some of those challenges are?

5. How would you describe your students' interest in studying of SNE? Why?

Suggestions

5. What do you suggest could be done to raise the interest of student teachers in SNE?

6. What do you suggest should be done to improve on the content of the syllabus?

7. What do you think should be done to improve teacher trainees' knowledge and skills in inclusive education?

Any Other Comment(s)

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