

Strategies to Improve the Teaching of Learners Identified with Vision Challenge in Two Mainstream Schools

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Abstract:- This article reports on the strategies for improving the teaching of learners identified with vision loss in mainstream classroom. Engaging strategies for improving teaching of LVI at the present juncture especially during the time of COVID-19 appears to be worrisome to most researchers, teachers, principals and experts in the field of inclusive education. Giving this challenge, the implementation of strategies to improve the teaching of LVI in mainstream classroom become the only alternative. In compacting the challenge this study explored several strategies for teaching LVI in two mainstream schools in Dr. Kenneth Kaunda region. The study adopted qualitative approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. A total number of twelve participants were selected in this study. The afore illustration indicated that the two principals and Senior Education Specialist (SES) showed clear understanding of what teaching strategies are and teachers as real and practical implementers of teaching strategies do not have clear understanding of these. It was also found that even though LVI are now physically integrated in mainstream classrooms they are not truly included as the challenge is aggravated by teacher's lack of training. Teacher training should be enhanced to improve the teaching of LVI.

Keywords:- Teaching Strategy, Inclusion, Inclusive School, Mainstream School, Special Needs and Visual Impairment.

I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of inclusive education system has been an ideal for educational reforms that transpired after 1994 democratic election. In 1994 the world conference on special needs was held in Salamanca, Spain, and the outcomes of this conference informed the worldwide movement towards inclusive education (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 1994). The reforms required that the fundamental rights of basic education for all (EFA) learners should be equal and needs to address the imbalance of the past focus being on access, equity and redress. The introduction of strategies to improve the inclusion of LVI in mainstream is the action taken to address the afore challenges.

The strategies that teachers employ to deliver the subject content to learners especially those with visual impairment will determine whether the learners will understand or not, therefore it is pivotal to have relevant and improved strategies that will enhance learner performance.

A reading strategy seeks to examine the ability or inability to read printed material and diagrams (Klapwijk, 2015). Learners with visual impairment may access information in a variety of ways; for example, Braille, audio, or enlarged print. Braille readers cannot skim read and may take up to three times as long as other learners to read a text (Fast, 2018:07).

For the demonstration teaching strategy to be successful in the utilisation of strategies to improve teaching of LVI, the teacher needs to take the following preparations into consideration (Weaver, 2014:11).

- The teacher needs to rehearse their presentation in advance of the lesson.
- Anticipate any difficult step or possible interruption.
- Obtain all materials, tools, equipment, visual and teaching aids in advance and check their usefulness.
- Have all materials within reach and conveniently arranged.
- Time the demonstration NOT to exceed 15 minutes.

In the presenting demonstration strategy, the teacher must ensure that all learners can see and hear the lesson. Being in a relaxed mode and making use of humour may prevent mishaps and be to the teacher's advantage, thus encouraging and enhancing learner participation in the lesson presentation. "Keeping eye contact with the entire class and asking questions encourage attentiveness and these results in learners comprehending the demonstration lesson with ease. The use of gestures, emphasis on key points, observing safety rules, proper instruction and allowing sufficient interval provoke learners' interest in more learning (Nel et al., 2016).

Teachers as the main figures in implementing successful teaching strategies, they must therefore acquire knowledge and skills pertaining the implementation of teaching strategies. Several teachers showed frustrations and a lack of knowledge and skills to work with learners with

visual impairment in implementing differentiated teaching strategies in inclusive classrooms.

The research indicates that teachers who were trained prior 1994 in South African colleges and universities were not trained to deal with learners with visual impairment as inclusive was not a module offered in higher education institutions. Teachers' knowledge in teaching learners especially in the choice of relevant teaching strategy is pivotal, therefore teachers' knowledge and application of required skills is essential.

➤ *Research Design*

Interpretive paradigm was embedded in the study, which is "the way of studying human experience through empathetic identification with the individual" (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016:04). Thus, it is essential to understand the experience from the participant's perception. The interpretive paradigm functions on the assumptions that there are no fixed realities; rather, people make individual and subjective meanings about the world as they integrate with it.

Qualitative research is an inquiry application, useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon (Austin & Sutton, 2015), which is the teaching strategies for learners with visual impairment. Qualitative research also allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of social realities and derive a comprehensive portrait of a range of human endeavours, interactions, situations and perceptions (Crossman, 2017).

➤ *Research Questions*

The research questions are formulated as follows:

- What teaching strategies are effective for LVI in inclusive classroom?
- How can the teaching strategies for LVI in inclusive classrooms be improved?

➤ *Research Aims and Objectives*

The study aims to explore the strategies to improve the teaching of LVI in inclusive classrooms.

For the aims to be achieved, the following objectives were set:

- To become familiar with the concept of teaching strategies;
- To explore teaching strategies that will enhance the successful inclusion of LVI.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teachers' readiness to implement successful, improved teaching strategies is still questionable because teachers are not adequately trained in using differentiated strategies. The first question asked teachers to define teaching strategies according to their understanding of the concept. Most teachers indicated that they were not aware of the concept teaching strategy and this is how they responded. Teachers and schools will be classified as school 1 teacher 1 in the discussion below:

Educators responded that as some are new in the system they do not know much about how differentiated teaching strategy is implemented and they are not yet trained in the implementation of differentiated teaching strategies:

T1S1: *I do not know much about the differentiated teaching strategy as I am new teacher in the school. The teacher hired by School governing body peaking, as a newly appointed teacher in teaching fraternity.*

Another teacher from the same school responded:

- **T2S1:** *I do not have any idea of what is all about teaching strategies.*

Another teacher from the same school displayed the same feeling. This is what they said in their response:

- **T3S1:** *I do not understand much about differentiated teaching strategy what I think is that it is the preparation when the teacher prepares the lesson to the class. How the teacher prepares his files and plan on how he is going to teach learners.*

Most teachers showed that they are still not sure of what teaching strategies are, they also indicated that they are not sure or aware of the different teaching strategies that must be implemented to cater the needs of the learners with learning barriers.

- **T4S2:** *Is the way you are teaching because we have different learners with different understanding. It is where those learners with low cognitive will be given more simple tasks and those that are clever will be given tougher activities to enhance and challenge their intellect.*

It was clear and found that many teachers did not have understanding of the concept teaching strategy hence they could not implement differentiated teaching strategies to enhance understanding of learners.

Even though principals showed understanding of the concept it is still questionable to teachers as the implementers of teaching strategies, principal one from school one will be classified as P1S1 and this is how he responded:

- **P1S1:** *Teaching strategy is the process whereby learners are tough in the implementation of several teaching method where some learners will be given different tasks to explore their level of understanding. The teacher consider those that grasps slowly and that they must not be left behind with curriculum coverage.*

The second principal i.e. P1S2 also showed clear understanding of the concept and he responded:

- **P2S2:** *Teaching strategy is the way in which teacher put in place different method of teaching so that all learners may achieve equally in the classroom. All learners must*

be taken on board. The teacher consider putting in practice different teaching method to cater the needs of learners who are said to be slow learners.

In contrary, the Senior Education Specialist (SES) showed more knowledge on the implementation of differentiated teaching strategies and this is how they responded:

- **SESI:** Teaching strategy refers to the approach, the methodology that one follows that one particular person plan to present his lesson.

Most education specialist displayed more understanding of the implementation of differentiated teaching strategies.

III. CONCLUSION

The study intends to explore different strategies for improving the teaching of learners with impairment in two mainstream school in Matlosana district. The study outlined few teaching strategies that catered the needs of learners with visual impairment. From the collected data it was found that many teachers do not know types of teaching strategies that can be implemented to enhance and encourage participation of learners with learning barriers.

Teachers as the immediate managers in the implementation of different teaching strategies they must have immense knowledge in the implementation of different teaching strategies. It was revealed that very few work shopped are held and those that are held do not hold much water in ensuring that teachers are well trained in the implementation of teaching strategies. It was also divulged that teachers are implementing the same teaching strategies that is why learners with visual impairment are not catered for. Therefore it was suggested that teachers need immediate training in the implementation of differentiated teaching strategies.

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