



Review

Teachers' accommodative practices for effective inclusion of learners with learning disabilities in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon

Melem Linda Fangwi

Abstract

Department of Educational psychology/
Special Education, Faculty of
Education University of Buea,
Cameroon.

E-mail: mfangwi@gmail.com

Accommodations are alterations in the way tasks are presented that allow children with learning disabilities to complete the same assignments as other students. It does not alter subject content, nor give learners an unfair advantage in the case of assessments but makes it possible for pupils with Learning Disabilities to show what they know without being impeded by their disability. It is against this backdrop that this study was aimed at identifying the categories of learning disabilities and the academic accommodative practices used by classroom teachers to enable children with learning disabilities learn. The survey research design was used and 100 teachers were sampled from four primary schools in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon. The results show the following seven categories of learning disabilities found in classrooms: reading, attention, mathematical, spelling, and comprehensive, memory and writing problems. Teachers use the following categories of accommodative practices: the first being Record review and conferences: meeting with pupil for counselling, review of educational record, meeting with parent. Secondly: Environmental modification: class seating arrangement, schedule modification, teacher change, Individual seating, teacher position in class. Lastly: Instructional: modification of teaching methods used with group or class, modification in learning aids used with group or class, individual methods with regular materials, individual learning aids with regular materials, individual methods and materials different from group or class. Numerous challenges abound as the teachers struggle with these practices as such it is recommended that teacher education programmes at both the initial and in-service training levels should address specific accommodative skills for specific learning disabilities in children.

Keywords: Effective Inclusion, Learning Disabilities, Teachers' Accommodative Practices.

INTRODUCTION

Pupils who do not learn well in traditional educational situations are often labeled learning disabled. Learning disabled literally means "not able to learn", this creates a stigma for each learner labeled as such. Applying this label whether by teachers, parents, peers, and even the pupils themselves can make such pupils feel they are

stupid or below normal intelligence. Every learner can learn irrespective of their nature, and can excel in academics. Learners with learning disabilities learn differently from their peers and such pupils do not depict deficiencies in all aspects of education. It is worth emphasizing that a pupil may have difficulty in one

particular aspect of learning while mastering and excelling in others. Therefore, many pupils with learning disabilities may need certain modifications and accommodations to meet their specific differing learning needs.

Jones et al. (2015), holds that pupils with learning disabilities have average to above average intelligence although they have difficulty with processes related to learning. Learning disabilities range from mild to severe and express themselves in a variety of ways, which can make them difficult to identify. It can also be present with other conditions. Programming for pupils with learning disabilities, as well as the assessment of learning needs, is a collaborative process that begins with the pupils, parent(s), and classroom teachers.

Learning disabilities occur when one or more of the processes people use to learn and develop oral language, reading, writing, mathematics, social skills, executive functions, memory, and motor skills is/are not working properly. Pupils with such disabilities have average to above average intelligence but fail to learn as easily as their peers and as a result every aspect of their academic growth is affected (Milsom, 2013).

According to Thorvilson (2014), in most situations, a learning disability is not readily observable because there are no outward signs, as such many pupils with learning disabilities are often overlooked or misunderstood. Some instructors and administrators suspect that students who claim to have learning disabilities are faking it, are playing the system, or lack the intelligence needed to succeed. There are some common behaviours that pupils with learning disabilities often display. These can easily be recognized by the classroom teacher as signs that a learning disability may exist. In the early years, more of the signs indicating the possibility of a learning disability are related to oral language and motor skills while in the senior years, the greatest number of signs are related to executive functioning. This correlates with the major cognitive developmental stages of children and adolescents. In the Early Years, children's primary task is to develop language skills. In adolescence, the primary task is to develop the ability to plan, self-monitor, and executive functioning abilities.

According to Loannidi and Samara (2019), learners with learning disabilities have a fragmentary and mechanistic knowledge, which comprise of limited generalizations and poor ability in problem solving and processing of school and work material. Consequently, they are led to a cognitive stalemate, many times combined with difficulties in the process of social integration. Thus, these children exhibit the following characteristics:

- Personality and behavioral features such as low self-image and lack of motivation, behavioral problems

ranging from apathy and introversion to aggression and misconduct.

- Cognitive and linguistic features such as small intellectual abilities, time lag, difficulties in remembering thoughts and information, lack of attention, poor methods and problem-solving strategies, phonological, morphological, semantic difficulties etc. language problems, as well as problems in mathematical calculations, and more.

Generally speaking, learners may be diagnosed with learning disabilities if they are of average or above-average intelligence and there is a significant discrepancy between their academic achievement and their intellectual ability (Rivera 2016). The more of these behaviours a student displays, the higher the probability that one or more of the neurological processes required to acquire, organize, retain, and understand both verbal and non-verbal information is not functioning typically. Thus, the goal of early recognition is not the simple identification of high-risk children, but also early intervention to reduce difficulties and preventative intervention with regard to secondary disorders accompanying the predominant difficulty or disability.

Understanding the implications of learning disabilities, and learning to accommodate students with learning disabilities are essential for every staff to provide academic and career opportunities for these students that are equivalent to those provided to their nondisabled peers. Once a child has been formally identified with a learning disability, the child or parent may request accommodations for that child's specific needs. The utilization of inclusive accommodative practices will foster the learning abilities of most learners with learning disabilities. Inclusive accommodative practices call for the restructuring of the school and its curriculum for effective harnessing of diversity in the classroom Thorvilson (2014).

According to McLaughlin et al. (2005), inclusion in education refers to a model wherein students with special needs spend most or all of their time with non-special (general education) needs students. In the context of special education, it applies to the utilization of an individualized education program and is built on the notion that it is more effective for students with special needs to have mixed experience in order for them to be more successful in social interactions leading to further success in life. Inclusive education differs from the 'integration' or 'mainstreaming' model of education, which tended to be concerned principally with disability and special educational needs, and learners changing or becoming 'ready for' or deserving of accommodation by the mainstream. By contrast, inclusion is about the child's right to participate and the school's duty to accept the child. A premium is placed upon full participation by

students with disabilities and upon respect for their social, civil, and educational rights. Feeling included is not limited to physical and cognitive disabilities, but also includes the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human differences.

According to Tchombe (2019), inclusion from the African perspective is a continuous process of bringing all together in the family, the community, age group, tribal groups, rural youths' group and so on. Through such practices each person or child is given a sense of belonging, the opportunity to participate, contribute, control and to be someone that shares with others. These practices, though not prescribed in policy statements, are effective because every person understands them and the implementation process remains a joint venture for the good of members of the community.

However holistically, inclusive education is seen as: "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children". Inclusive education is a major strategy to achieve education for all because it is an approach that looks into how to transform educational systems and other learning environments in order to respond to the diversity of learners. These transformations could take the form of accommodations that suits the unique needs of every learner in every sphere of education.

From the aforementioned one can deduced that "Inclusive education is an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination" and that is accommodation in itself.

Booth and Ainscow (2002) addressed two dimensions of inclusive education the first is sometimes called regular inclusion or partial inclusion, and the other is full inclusion. Regular or partial inclusive practice is not always inclusive but is a form of integration. For example, students with special needs are educated in regular classes for more than half of the day. Whenever possible, the students receive any additional help or special instruction in the general classroom, and the student is treated like a full member of the class. However, most specialized services are provided outside the regular classroom, particularly if these services require special equipment or might be disruptive to the rest of the class and students are pulled out of the regular classroom for these services. In this case, the student occasionally

leaves the regular classroom to attend smaller, more intensive instructional sessions in a resource room, or to receive other related services. This approach can be very similar to many mainstreaming practices, and may differ in little more than the educational ideals behind it.

In "full inclusion" setting, Booth and Ainscow (2002) reiterates that the students with special needs are always educated alongside students without special needs, as the first and desired option while maintaining appropriate supports and services. Some educators say this might be more effective for the students with special needs. At the extreme, full inclusion is the integration of all students, even those that require the most substantial educational and behavioral supports and services to be successful in regular classes and the elimination of special, segregated special education classes. Special education is considered a service, not a place and those services are integrated into the daily routines and classroom structure, environment, curriculum and strategies and brought to the student, instead of removing the student to meet his or her individual needs. For this to be effective, accommodations must be made at all levels.

Accommodations according to the National Center for Learning Disabilities (2006) are alterations in the way tasks are presented that allow children with disabilities to complete the same assignments as other students. Accommodations do not alter subject content, nor give learners an unfair advantage or in the case of assessments, change what the test measure. They do make it possible for pupils with LD to show what they know without being impeded by their disability. Therefore, many pupils with LD may not need major modifications to succeed but rather minor accommodations to meet their specific differing learning needs. Some accommodations are naturally evolving with changes in pedagogy as well as technology. If teachers recognize and understand the needs of pupils with LD, they can begin to accommodate these needs with resources at hand. With accommodations, pupils are still expected to know the same material and answer the same questions as fully as other pupils without disability, but they don't have to write their answers to show that they know the information.

The goal of accommodation is to give the student with a disability equal access to the learning environment. Individualized accommodations are not designed to give the student an advantage over other students, to alter a fundamental aspect of the course, nor to weaken academic rigor. Making accommodations for students with learning disabilities is crucial to their education, they are seen as "tools to increase participation and fair treatment of students with special needs" (Lovett, 2010).

Taylor and Coyne (2014), believes that teaching pupils with learning disabilities across settings is challenging. Both general education and special education teachers seek accommodations that foster the learning and

management of a class of heterogeneous learners. It is important to identify accommodations that are reasonable to ask of teachers in all classroom settings. Some accommodations are naturally evolving with changes in pedagogy as well as technology. If teachers recognize and understand the needs of learners, they can begin to accommodate these needs with resources at hand. Even a child with many needs is to be involved with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Just because a child has severe disabilities or needs modifications to the general curriculum does not mean that he or she may be removed from the general education class. If a child is removed from the general education class for any part of the school day, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team must include in the IEP an explanation for the child's nonparticipation.

Because accommodations can be so vital to helping children with disabilities access the general curriculum, participate in school (including extracurricular and nonacademic activities), and be educated alongside their peers without disabilities, Individual with Disabilities' Education Act (IDEA) reinforces their use again and again, in its requirements, in its definitions, and in its principles.

There have been laws that have been put in place to give students with learning disabilities a fair shot at an equal education. One of these laws is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or the IDEA, and it was created in 1997. This act was, "amended to require states to include students with disabilities in statewide assessments and to offer accommodations where appropriate" (Thurlow, 2005) also, according to this law, "states are also required to develop alternate means of assessment for those students who are unable to participate in standard assessments and to report the performance of these students" (Thurlow, 2005). These laws are in place to benefit the needs of the students when it is necessary, not give unfair advantages.

According to IDEA's the following accommodative practices should be implemented in the classrooms to facilitate the inclusion of learners with disabilities: the provision of audio tapes, presentation of instruction orally, provision of large print, reduction of items per page or line, and provision of designated reader, permission for learning disabled answers to be recorded, allowance for verbal responses, allowance for answers to be dictated to a scribe, allowance for the use of a tape recorder to capture responses, and permission for responses to be given via computer, also extension allotted time for a test and allow frequent breaks, provision of preferential seating position, provision of special lighting or acoustics, provision of a space with minimal distractions, administration of a test in small group setting and administer a test in private room or alternative test site, administration of a test at a specific time of the day,

administration of a test in several timed sessions or over several days and allowance of subtests to be taken in a different order, provision of special test preparation, provision on task or focusing prompts and provision of any reasonable accommodation that a student needs that does not fit under the existing categories.

The Center for Universal Design in Education as cited by (Rivera, 2016) described some of the functional limitations specific to learners with learning disabilities that may require accommodations:

Auditory perception and processing

The pupil may have difficulty processing information communicated through lectures or class discussions. He or she may have difficulty distinguishing subtle differences in sound or knowing which sounds to attend to.

Visual perception and processing

The pupil may have difficulty distinguishing subtle differences in shape (for example; the letters b and d), deciding what images to focus on when multiple images are present, skip words or repeat sections when reading, or misjudge depth or distance. He or she may have difficulty processing information communicated via overhead projection, through video, in graphs and charts, by email, or within web-based distance learning courses.

Information processing speed

The pupil may process auditory and visual information more slowly than the average person. He or she may be a slow reader because of the need for additional time to decode and comprehend written material.

Abstract reasoning

The pupil may have difficulty understanding the context of subjects which require high level reasoning skills.

Memory(long-term, short-term)

The pupil may have difficulty with the storing or recalling of information during short or long time periods.

Spoken and written language

The pupil may have difficulty with spelling (for example,

mixing up letters) or with speaking (for example, reversing words or phrases).

Mathematical calculation

The pupil may have difficulty manipulating numbers, may sometimes invert numbers, and may have difficulty converting problems described in words to mathematical expressions.

Executive functioning (planning and time management)

The pupil may have difficulty breaking larger projects into smaller sub-projects, creating and following a timeline, and meeting deadlines.

Accommodation is a process of addressing and responding to diversity of needs of all learners. It involves changes and modifications in contents, approaches, structure and strategies in educational offerings. It ensures the transformation of the entire school system to respond to a diversity of need. The restructuring of our Cameroonian educational system warrants decision makers to rethink and restructure policies, curricula, culture and practices in schools and learning environment. The delay and inability to reenact laws and principles for the restructuring of our school system makes the practice of accommodation an uphill task for teachers and educational administrators.

After the independence of Cameroon in 1961, the education of persons with disabilities was mostly provided in specialized centres. Only a few of such persons attended regular primary schools. Between 1972 and 1975 there were five centers offering special education in Cameroon. These schools were all found in Yaoundé and managed by religious groups. Approved privately owned special schools in all the regions of the country receive yearly subventions from the State to serve persons with disabilities (PWDs). It is worth noting that these schools never had accommodative practices for specific disabilities. What obtained was the use of general pedagogic strategy for all as well as one kind of infrastructure for all (Tchombe, 2014).

Laws and legislations have been established to improve on access to education and equality issues relating to persons with disabilities and others in disadvantaged situations. For example, about three major laws have been promulgated. They are Law N°83/013 of 21st July 1983 relating to the protection of handicapped persons followed by its text of application put in place in 1990. Measures were undertaken in 1998 after the Education Forum of 1995 to promote the educational rights of children and particularly those with

disabilities. On this account Law N° 98/004 of 14th April 1998 laying down guidelines for education in Cameroon was promulgated and in section 6, it states that, the State shall guarantee the right of every child to education. In most recent times a very important law was enacted. Law No. 2010/002/Of 13 April 2010 addressing the provision of special education, psychosocial support, socio-economic integration, medical prevention and access to employment, infrastructure, housing and transport for persons with disabilities.

In 2005, 11th October, a circular letter signed by the Minister of Secondary Education gave instructions on the management of visually impaired and hard of hearing students in the organization of public and class examinations. He emphasized the importance of making available Braille and sign language specialists. Only the brailing of examination is in practice. The absence of the use of accommodative practices for students in all public examinations as well as during the teaching and learning process remains a critical problem. The government of Cameroon has not made provision for all categories of disability for example, the problems of learning disabilities are enormous yet strategies for supporting them are still limited probably because it is not an obvious disability and its consequence is more on the individual than the general public (Tchombe et al., 2001). It is worth noting that there are no laws specifically on the utilization of accommodative practices and the various forms of in our Cameroonian schools at all levels.

By 2011, Cameroon had signed but not ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol, however, Nsamenang and Tchombe (2011) argue that, despite the drafting of a practical guide on persons with disabilities, access to infrastructure and buildings that are open to public use and the creation of partnerships to enhance the attendance of children with disabilities, still has a long way for actual realization.

As concerns policy on accommodative practices for inclusion, Lutfiyya and Wallegghem (2002) comment that government policies that refer to establishing rights but which do not provide the means of enforcing them are not only meaningless, but also dishonest as they give the impression that there are rights, when in fact, there are none. This reflects the situation in Cameroon. The transience of special education policies and of public governance policies in general, is manifested not only in jurisdictions that lack a strong legislative base, but also in jurisdictions that report a poor correlation between educational policy and practice.

Pupils with learning disabilities in Cameroon's institutions are facing a major setback because of the lack of specific accommodative practices. The unpreparedness of teachers in Cameroon is due to the fact that teacher training in some cases focuses on

Table 1. Showing schools and sample population for the study.

Buea subdivision		Bamenda III subdivision	
Name of School	No of Teachers	Name of School	No of teachers
Government practicing school Buea town	40	Government practicing school up station Bamenda	40
Porters House Education Centre Bokwai	10	CBC Up Station Bamenda	10
Total	50	Total	50

Table 2. Types of learning disabilities found in the school sampled for the study.

SN	Concepts	N %
1	Cannot read (dyslexia)	(43) 43%
2	Cannot attend to fact (attention deficit)	(22) 22%
3	Cannot solve mathematical problems (dyscalculia)	(10) 10%
4	Cannot spell (spelling disorder)	(7) 7%
5	Cannot understand (comprehensive disorder)	(7) 7%
6	Difficulties recalling (memory deficit)	(7) 7%
7	Writing difficulties (dysgraphia)	(4) 4%

Source: Study (2020)

curricular subjects rather than generic and specific pedagogical skills for specific disability types, capacity for critical thinking and creativity (Topping and Maloney, 2005).

According (Tchombe 2019), teachers do cite lack of resources as a barrier to quality mainstreaming of pupils with special education needs but do not know exactly what type of resources they are referring to. In Cameroon, there are barriers like the lack of experts and appropriate physical space, overcrowded classrooms, lack of human space, inappropriate curricular activities for pupils at risk and disadvantages, contradictions in Government policy, poor liaison with parents and other stakeholders. Due to the fact that accommodative practices are not mandatory by law and policies informing the education of persons with disabilities, many institutions do not practice it and the few who does only do so on individual bases.

The aim of the study was to:

1. Identify the categories of learning disabilities identified found in the classes.
2. Identify the accommodative practices used by classroom teachers to facilitate the effective inclusion of children with learning disabilities.

A total of four schools from two subdivisions in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon were consulted for this study as seen in Table 1 above.

From table one we recognized that 40 teachers were selected each from Government practicing school Buea town and Government practicing school Up Station

Bamenda making a total of 80 from government schools and 10 teachers each from porters House education center Bokwai and CBC Up Station Bamenda giving a total of 20 from the mission institutions. Thus, the study had as sample population a total of 100 teachers as participants in the study.

The study sets out to understand the kind of learning disabilities found in the classes taught by teachers sampled for the study, the kind of accommodative practices used by them to address their unique cases and what could be done to help them develop appropriate accommodative skills to address the needs of these learners. From their responses the following categories of learning disabilities were found in their classes.

From the findings of the study the following categories of learning disabilities were found in the sampled schools; children with reading difficulties 43%, attention deficit 22%, mathematical difficulties 10%, spelling, comprehension and memory difficulties were 7% each and 4% for those with writing difficulties. The children were identified using a variety of instruments such as: teachers' observations checklist, the study of their portfolios the administration of a teacher made test and a diagnostic tool for the identification of specific learning disabilities in children by Iheancho (2008) and Melem (2017). From the teacher observation checklist these learners exhibited these difficulties over a period of over six months consistently.

It is glaring from Table 2 above that a wide range of pupils with learning disabilities are found in our

Table 3. Educational Accommodative strategies used by teachers to help pupils with learning difficulties.

Educational Accommodative strategies used by teachers to help pupils with learning difficulties	N and Percentages
Record review and conferences	
Meeting with pupil/ for counselling	92.0%
Review of educational record	2.0%
Meeting with parent	72.0%
Environmental modification	
Class seating arrangement	78.0%
Schedule modification	2.0%
Teacher change	5.0%
Individual seating	93.0%
Teacher position in class	1.0%
Instructional	
Modification of teaching methods used with group or class	81.0%
Modification in learning aids used with group or class	13.0%
Individual methods with regular materials	54.0%
Individual learning aids with regular materials	10.0%
Individual methods and materials different from group or class	8.0%

Cameroonian primary schools as such teachers have to make use of accommodative practices to ensure that they are not left out in the teaching and learning process. As such the following accommodative strategies were identified by teachers as measures used to ensure that children with learning difficulties learn.

The Table 3 above points out the methods used by teachers to address the difficulties faced by pupils in their classes it is worth noting that most of the teachers made use of not just one method, some made use of all the methods depending on the nature of the learners condition and these methods are:

Record review and conferences

This reflect teachers' individual strategies, to enable pupils become active participants in their learning. Ninety two percent (92%) of the teachers indicated that they used meeting with pupil as a means to help them out of their difficulties, 72.0% of the teachers said they meet with the parents of the children and the least employed method was review of educational record (2.0%). The utilization of this rubric makes us understand that teachers wants parents and pupils to be active participants in their own education. Though this does not imbibe skills in the learners it brings about a change in attitude towards learning disabilities and gives the opportunity for each learner to be valued. Meeting with a child with learning disability is vital as it enables, him or her becomes educated about his or her strengths and

weaknesses and makes him or her a direct partner in deciding how to meet his or her special needs. It also helps to promote social and emotional adjustment as well as facilitate attitude change.

In most of the basic education institutions in Cameroon counselling services are absent making the teachers to take the place of the counsellors. Thus, meeting with the parents and other family members help them to accept the condition and prepares them to be active participants in the education of the child. Family members become part of the goal setting process and rewards for success in the home to promote optimal conditions for these children to reach their fullest potential. In addition, these teachers can work with the family to facilitate the emotional adjustment of all family members by encouraging positive feelings for one another within the family, discussing how to balance attention for each child in the family, and specifying methods for support and stress reduction for the parents.

According to Jorun and Jeyaprathaban (2016), every committed teacher is dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all learners. They act on the belief that all learners can learn. They treat learners equitably, recognizing the individual differences that distinguish their learners from one another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice, as appropriate, on the basis of observation and knowledge of their learners' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances, and peer relationships.

Buli-Holmberg (2008) holds that teachers who understand how learners develop and learn. They

incorporate the prevailing theories of cognition and intelligence in their practice. They are aware of the influence of context and culture on behavior. They develop learners' cognitive capacity and respect for learning. Equally important, they foster students' self-esteem; motivation; character; sense of civic responsibility; and respect for individual, cultural, religious, and racial differences. It is against this backdrop that meeting with pupils and parents as well as record review and conferences is very vital for learners with learning disabilities.

Environmental modifications

93.0% of the teachers said, in order to remedy the difficulties of these children they change their seating positions in class and 78% said they had to modify the class seating arrangement as a whole, 5% of them said they actually had to change the child's class so that a different teacher could teach the child. While 2% said they changed their teaching schedule for some subjects and 1% said they modified their position in class respectively.

The human space is vitally important for managing the classroom. According to the National Center for learning disabilities (2006) once a child has been formally identified with a learning disability, the child or parent may request accommodations for that child's specific needs. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act states that a child's IEP (Individualized Education Program) team which both parent and child are a part of must decide which accommodations are appropriate for him or her. Any appropriate accommodations should be written into a student's IEP.

Teachers are expected to create, enrich, maintain, and alter instructional settings to capture and sustain the interest of their learners. They make the most effective use of time in their instruction. They are adept at engaging learners and adults to assist their teaching and making use of their colleagues' knowledge and expertise to complement their own. They are also expected to contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development, and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit, and they are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

Angelica (2016), holds that classroom seating arrangements is vitally important for an inclusive classroom setting. As example, the seating position of a

child with learning disabilities determines the nature and frequency of teacher pupil contact. Recognition of each learner's strength and success is a motivating element for that learner. Other factors of great importance are enabling students to belong and connect, promote students' independence, sensitive to diversity needs, make students feel comfortable and enable them to use their strength. One of the six categories of accommodation is the Setting of the classroom as well as the school environment. They stipulated that the following should be provided:

- Provision of preferential seating
- Provision of special lighting or acoustics
- Provision of a space with minimal distractions

Instructional modification

It is another method employed by teachers to remedy these learning disabilities in our Cameroonian schools. 81% of the teachers modified the teaching methods used in order to help these children meet up with their learning expectations. 54.0% of them said they made use of individual methods with regular materials, 130% of them said they modified the learning aids used with group or class, 100% of them said they had to design individual learning aids with regular materials just to enable them meet up with learning. Eight percent (8%) of them made use of individual methods and material different from group or class to help them meet with the others in class. This is in line with the stipulations from the National Center for Learning Disabilities (2006). The utilization of multiple instructional technique is the enhancement of the implementation of inclusive pedagogy thus confirming the fact that differentiated teaching is of great value in a class where there are diverse learners.

The fundamental principle of Inclusive Education is that all children should have the opportunity to learn together. Diversity remains a common characteristic in all classrooms where strength, and differences and not deficit should be at the base of education practices. It is the fundamental responsibility of all those who teach and of all those who support teachers to build on children's strength, to believe in all children's capacity to learn, and to uphold their right to learn. We must eradicate discriminative practices in our schools by introducing accommodative policy that level the playground for every learner irrespective of their status. Implementing accommodative practices in a school or classroom foster learning. Even a child with many needs is to be involved with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Because accommodations can be so vital to helping children with disabilities access the general curriculum, participate in school (including extracurricular and non-academic activities), and be educated alongside

their peers without disabilities, IDEA reinforces their use again and again, in its requirements, definitions, and principles.

The findings among many issues illustrate the importance for the integration of strategies and techniques to meet students' different needs. Varying teaching strategies and using techniques for effective transitions and linkages of ideas are valuable skills. It is observed that there is need for planned opportunities for nurturing friendship, supportive behaviours and nurturing positive role models. How a teacher manages classroom space for effective pedagogic activities, particularly in the context of large class size, is a common phenomenon. Of importance is managing space in ways that permits classroom individual and group contacts in accepting all, giving a chance to all and giving a sense of belonging through establishing interpersonal relationships and respect. The strategies illustrated, highlight what teachers do, not only need to increase participation but also to improve and promote self-esteem and self-efficacy. The significance of the correlations illustrates that each time a learner is encouraged to contribute and for each contribution made, the learner's perception of self is enhanced positively (Tchombe, 2019).

This paper exhibits the type of educational accommodative practices by teachers in Cameroon. Though not every stipulated practice by IDEA is being implemented in our classrooms the effort being put in place is worth commending taking into cognizance the fact that most of these teachers have not been trained for inclusive practices (Woodcock, 2013, p. 16). The implementation of these practices exhibit that these teachers do not have a negative attitude towards these learners with learning disabilities. When teachers have negative attitudes toward their students with disabilities, "they tend to expect low achievement and inappropriate behavior from those students" and also, "they view individuals with disabilities as different from and inferior to individuals without disabilities" (Milsom, 2013). Teachers should know better than to be judgmental in this day and age. Being negative towards students is a major con. It is the teacher's job to care for their students and give them guidance. Instead of having negative feelings toward these students, teachers should educate themselves on how to handle these students.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the fundamental principle of Inclusive Education is that all children should have the opportunity to learn together. We must eradicate the divide between special schools and regular schools except in situations where this cannot be avoided through the provision of accommodation practices to all children following their

unique educational needs. Inclusive Education is cost-effective, financially and psychologically. Moreover, the costs of exclusion are high in terms of lost productivity, lost human potential, lost health and wellbeing.

From the study, it is clear that intuitive teachers have core values and competences. It is recommended that these issues form part of teacher education programmes at both the initial and in-service training levels. Some of such indicators as measures for training and evaluation could include: classroom organizational values; the ethics of teaching and moral contract; imaginative and creativity skills and teachers' pedagogic competences. These should form part of the foundation courses in teacher education, directing pedagogic design and assessing learning outcomes. There should be a strong practice-based training for student-teachers to practice the new holistic approach that is learner centered. The mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the identified indicators of skills, competences and values in inclusive practice should be made available.

In considering teachers' profile for inclusive practices, there is an urgent need for practical and conceptual understanding of inclusion from pedagogical perspective. The critical questions for reflection are: what competences do teachers need to manage an inclusive classroom in Cameroon? What abilities do teachers have to incorporate accommodative practices in their classrooms without changing the subject or test content in our Cameroonian classrooms? Each competence requires certain attitude/belief, knowledge and skills. Teacher preparation must address both the generic and specific competences to enable them be able to address inclusive and accommodative pedagogical practices in the classrooms.

According to Tchombe (2019), there are four important factors which corroborates with EU's stipulated profiles for inclusion relevant for teacher preparation; (1) Knowledge and Understanding: continuing personal professional development, (2) Practice and skills: Supporting all learners by setting high expectations for each, (3) Values and ethics: Valuing learner diversity, and (4) interpersonal skills: working with other. These factors form the basis for the implementation of effective accommodative strategies for the enhancement of inclusion in our Cameroonian schools. There is need therefore or the incorporation of these in our teacher education programs across the various sectors of education (Basic, Secondary and Tertiary) in Cameroon.

REFERENCES

- Booth T, Ainscow M (2002) *The Index for Inclusion*, 2nd edition. Bristol: Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education.
- Buli-Holmberg J (2008). Teachers role in Inclusive education. In Bjornstud, H. and Nilsen, S. (2008): *Adapted Education – intension and school*

- development: Oslo: Gyldendal Akademiske.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2006).
- Jones BA, Smith HH, Hensley-Maloney L, Gansle KA (2015). Applying response to intervention to identify learning disabilities in students with visual impairments. *Intervention In School And Clinic*, 51(1), 28-36.
- Jorun B, Sujathamalini J (2016) Effective Practice in Inclusive and Special Needs Education. *Int. J. Special Educ.* Vol 31, No: 1.
- Loannidi V, Samara E (2019). Children with Learning Difficulties and Conditions of School Inclusion -a brief report and a Constant Challenge of Inclusive Education, *Eur. J. Educ. Stud.* Vol 6, 3.
- Lovett BJ (2010). Extended time testing accommodations for students with disabilities: Answers to five fundamental questions. *Rev.Educ. Res.*, 80(4), 611-638.
- Lutfiyya ZM, Van Walleghem J (2002). Educational provisions for students with exceptional learning needs. *Exceptionality Education Canada*, II (2&3), 79-98.
- Maki KE, Floyd RG, Roberson T (2015). State learning disability eligibility criteria: A comprehensive review. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 30(4), 457-469.
- McLaughlin M, Blacher J, Duffy S, Hardman M, McDonnell J, Nisbet J, Safer N, Snell M (2005). Effective education in the least restrictive environment. In: K.C. Lakin & A. Turnbull, *National Goals and Research for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*. Washington, DC: The Arc of the US and the American Association on Mental Retardation.
- Milsom A (2013). Creating Positive School Experiences for Students with Disabilities. Retrieved September 29, 2016, from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/creating-positive-school-experiences-students>.
- National Center for Learning Disabilities (2006).
- Nsameng AB, Tchombe MST (2011). (Eds). *Handbook of African Educational Theories and Practices, A Generative Teacher Education Curriculum*, Yaounde: Presses universitaires d' Afrique.
- Rivera Angelica R (2016). Importance of Accommodating Elementary School Students with Learning Disabilities Capstone Projects and Master's Theses. 33. https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all/33
- Taylor L, Coyne E (2014). Teachers' attitudes and knowledge about dyslexia: Are they affecting children diagnosed with dyslexia? *Dyslexia Review*, 25, 20-23.
- Tchombe MST (2019). Psychological Parameters in Teaching. An African Perspective to Learning as a process for cognitive enrichment. *Designed House Limbe*.
- Tchombe TM, Tarpeh E, Mopoi N (2001). Street Children in Cameroon, Problems and Perspectives. *J. Psychol. Afr., South of the Sahara, the Caribbean and Afro-Latin America*. Vol. II, No. 2 pp 101-123
- Thorvilson L (2014, March). Factors influencing student placement decisions in elementary school assignments. *Education Doctoral Dissertations in Leadership*. Paper 42.
- Thurlow ML, Lazarus SS, Thompson SJ, Morris AB (2005). State policies on assessment participation and accommodations for students with disabilities. *J. Special Educ.*, 38(4), 232-240.
- Topping K, Maloney S (2005). *The Routledge Falmer Reader in Inclusive Education*. London. Routledge Falmer.
- UNESCO (2009). *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education*. UNESCO: Paris. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001778/177849e.p>
- UNESCO Chair Buea (2014). *Transnational Research on Inclusive Education in Institutions in Africa; the Preparedness of Educators: The Case of Cameroon*.
- United Nations (2006). "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Article 2" page on <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml> [11 Jan. 2008].
- United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organisation (2005). *Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring access to education for all*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Woodcock S (2013). Trainee teachers' attitudes towards students with specific learning disabilities. *Aus. J. Teach. Educ.*, 38(8).
- Zelkowitz A (2015). "Strategies for Special Education and Inclusion Classrooms". *Scholastic*. Retrieved 31 May.