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## CHAPTER 47

### MANAGEMENT OF A RESULT ORIENTED INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

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#### **Introduction**

Management of inclusive classrooms for persons with special needs by regular teachers, involve the act of controlling and administering the pupils, materials and all that happens in the classroom so that pupils will acquire acceptable behavior and fully explore their potential ability academically. Terry, (2013) sees management as the social or interactional process involving a sequence of coordinated events planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling or leading in order to use the available resources to achieve a desired outcome in the fastest and most efficient way. An inclusive classroom is one that accepts inclusion as a necessary means of providing for the learning needs of children with Special Educational needs in an environment that takes into cognizance of diversity (Ali, 2014).

Inclusive education, therefore, means more than simply placing students with disabilities in regular education classrooms, it means giving students with disabilities the opportunity to participate as members in all school activities and affirming their right to such opportunity. Apparently, it is globally acclaimed that inclusive education has been an option and best practice in education of children and adults with special needs, and that special educators, parents and other stakeholders have not relented efforts in debating on the benefit of this education standard (Ajuwon, 2018). This scholar stresses further that the debate has been shaped largely by the principle of inclusion, which explained that ordinary schools should cater to all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances or personal characteristics. Internationally the Salamanca statement on inclusive education called on governments worldwide to provide a more inclusive education system that is underpinned by an ideological position based on recognition that all pupils should have a fundamental right and equal opportunity to experience education in mainstream schools (UNESCO, 2005).

Looking at inclusive education vividly, teachers are the driving force to the success of the programmes, including students with disabilities into regular classes. The prepared teachers are the custodian to advocate inclusive education programmes in order to make it more realistic and profitable to persons with special needs which kick against discrimination and stigmatization that is usually accorded to them by the populace. Inclusion is a step further in mainstreaming. It

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is the principle applied to accommodate/include all human beings, thus the full spectrum of diverse abilities, with one system, in such a manner that all involved can be assured of successful, equal and quality participation in real-life experiences from birth to death (Burden, 2018).

Education, be it segregation or inclusion, is a bedrock for development and advancement of individuals. Education is no doubt a potent instrument for development of an individual and the society at large. To have effective and sustainable education for people with special needs, teacher preparation in the system is imperative. Persons with special needs have over the years suffered a lot of setbacks in their education in Nigeria. This is because of the lack of adequate schools and classrooms and also, trained personnel are few. There is a lack of support services for effective management of a result oriented inclusive classroom. In Nigeria the practice of inclusive education is a myriad and theoretical as there are no proper policy frameworks to galvanize the system. Therefore, this chapter of the book is concentrating on the management of a result oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers.

The concept of inclusion has a value orientation based on the premise that all individuals with disabilities have a right to be included in naturally occurring settings and activities with their neighborhood siblings and friends. Okwudwu and Okechukwu (2008) saw inclusive education as the progressive increase in the participation of students in reduction of the exclusion from the culture, curricula and committee of local schools. Inclusive embodies the values, policies and practices that support the rights of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability to participate in a brand range of activities and contexts as full members of families, community and society (Odebiyi, 2016). Inclusive education is a system of education that caters for the special needs of pupils and students with visual, auditory and hearing impairment, mental retardation, emotional disorder, physical and health impairment and learning disabilities. Ajuwon (2018) describes inclusion or inclusive education as the philosophy and practice for educating children with special needs in general education settings. Nigeria as a nation supports the operation of inclusive education in its national policy. National Policy of Education (2004) states that:

*“Access to education shall be provided and inclusive education or integration of special classes and unit into ordinary/public schools under UBE scheme. Persons with special needs and learning disabled shall be provided with inclusive education service in school which normal persons attend, in age-appropriate general education classes directly supervised by general teachers” (p65).*

UNESCO (2005) defined inclusive education as responding to diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in leading and reducing exclusion within education. This means that all children have equal rights to quality education that caters for their individual needs. Inclusive education means that all students are welcomed by their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and

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are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of life in the school. Inclusive education is internationally recognized as a philosophy for attaining equity, justice and equality in education for all children, especially those who have been excluded from education for the reason of disabilities (Christopher and Elizabeth, 2012).

Inclusive education is important in the development of Nigerian communities because it brings students with and without special needs together to show the younger generation that a diverse group of people make up a community and that no one student is better than another. Different authors attempted to explain what inclusive education entails. For instance, inclusive education is the complete integration of every learner with and without special needs into the same learning environment in order to expose them to the same learning opportunities Ali, (2014). Furthermore, inclusive education can be interpreted as the philosophy and practice for educating students with disabilities in general education settings as well as full-time placement of children with mild and moderate disabilities in regular classrooms Riesern, (2012).

From the point of view of Omeda, (2016) inclusive education has to do with education that is designed for all learners without considering their strength, weakness, ability, disability, socioeconomic and political background or any other factor. In another development NPE (2004) maintained that, every Nigerian child shall have a right to educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imaginary disability. Inclusive education is the cornerstone of a transformational agenda, designed to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access and according to Obani (2004), people with Special Educational needs are exceptional people who may be experiencing learning problems and difficulties as a result of difficulties or handicap or other forms of special needs. They however, require individually planned and systematically monitored arrangements of physical settings, special requirements and materials, special teaching procedures and other interventions in order to achieve their greatest possible independence, self-sufficiency, academic success and self-fulfillment.

Education for persons with Special Educational needs Act 2004 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria defines Special Educational needs as a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition. Special Educational needs as a term is related to terms like disability, impairment, handicap and special needs (Egunjobi, 2013). A student/child requires Special Educational needs if she/he has disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local authority (Jha, 2012).

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According to Adebisi (2013), the concept of Special Educational needs and identification of children with Special Educational needs has always been a thing of negligence as there is still a high proportion of ignorance and lack of legislation to pursue the implementation of inclusion, at least at pilot level. Siyanbola and Osobisi (2013) categorized people with Special Educational needs as those who enrolled in schools but are experiencing much difficulty, whether temporarily or permanently, those living in severe poverty in remote places far from any schooling facilities, those who are victims of war and armed conflicts, street children, criminals and ex-convicts, prostitutes and young single mothers who have dropped out of school, miscreants and misguided youths on the streets touting and hawking wares and children of school age who lead adult disabled beggars around. All the above-mentioned categories of persons with Special Educational needs require the support of well-trained teachers and there is need for effective management of a result oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers, in order to handle and manage such people at schools which brings us to the definition and characteristics of an ideal inclusive classroom.

Inclusive classroom is a classroom where learning often happens in small groups with peers helping and supporting each other. Olunkotun, (2017) in his view stressed that inclusive classroom affords the special needs children the opportunity to surmount certain problems of labels and social stigma. In fact, a well-managed inclusive classroom supports the academic and social development of all children with or without special needs, helps reduce problem behaviors, prevents the majority of potential negative behaviors and enhances the achievement of education for all in Nigeria. Federal Government of Nigeria, FGN (2014) stipulated inclusive education as the new educational facility that government will provide to ensure equal access to education. Magrab (2013) described inclusive classroom as the method that acknowledge the difference in a child and accept the child in a regular school despite the barrier or physical challenges affecting the child to receive quality education. In the view of Abednego (2012), the inclusive classroom has the following characteristics: -

- (a) The inclusive classroom is an environment where a lot of students are doing different learning activities at the same time based on their IEP (Individual Educational Programme) with people helping them. Students must move from one environment to another.
- (b) Learning takes place in small groups in the inclusive classroom with the learners helping and supporting each other.
- (c) In the inclusive classroom, the student is the centre of activities.
- (d) The students in an inclusive classroom are involved in making the rule of conduct and behaviour and are expected to follow these rules in order to meet contracted expectations for curricular.
- (e) The inclusive classroom involves the creation of positive learning environments for effective performance of students in the classroom free from stigmatization



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Asides the management of the inclusive classroom efficiently by the Special Education teachers, it is pertinent that the following main components should also be considered in the management of a result-oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers:

**The Teachers:** Ferguson (2000) in Okeke-Oti (2010) stated that all teachers, those just preparing to teach and those who have been teaching for decades need to develop the capacity to better address all kinds of student 's diversity because disability is just one of the diversities and needs present in the classroom. The teachers must be able to manage themselves first, go for training, collaborate and plan effectively with special educators.

**Collaboration:** Special educators must form partnerships with general educators to create inclusive school environments for all pupils/students. There are multiple methods of teacher collaboration, including co-teaching, peer coaching, collaboration consultation, and collaborative problem solving (Brownell, Adams, Sindelaar, Waldron, & Van Hover (2016). They explained that regardless of the model, the focus is on teachers working together with an assumption but collaboration that leads to improved student academic achievement.

**Restructured Classroom:** Learning environment classroom requires restructuring to allow inclusion of all children with special needs condition NPE (2014). Architectural designs shall be barrier free thus taking into account special needs or pupils/students.go movement signs, resource centers, ramps, widen doors for wheelchairs, lower toilets, etc.

**Adapted Curriculum:** Curriculum when adopted, some changes are made to meet the learning needs of special pupils. For these reasons various models of curriculum exist for intervention purposes, such as developmental model, remedial and compensatory model, functional model and the enrichment triad model for the gifted and talented.

**Individual Educational Programme (IEP):** IEP is a written statement that shows a plan of action for providing adequate Special Education services to an individual with special needs. The content of IEP includes the child's current educational performance, expected annual goals, short term instructional objectives and other services needed by the child, duration of the programme and the procedure for evaluation. IEP will aid the teachers to adequately manage and meet the learning needs of children with Special Educational needs.

The thesis statement in this chapter includes the following: management of a result-oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers, relevance of managing a result-oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers, challenges of managing a result-oriented inclusive classroom, implications of managing a result-oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers, conclusion and suggestions.



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## Relevance of Managing a Result-oriented Inclusive Classroom

The following among others are the relevance of managing a result-oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers:

i. **Families' visions of a typical life for their children can come true:** All parents want their children to be accepted by their peers, have friends and lead regular lives. Inclusive classrooms can make this vision a reality for many children with disabilities as they learn to live a fulfilled life devoid of stigmatization.

ii. **Children develop positive understanding of themselves and others:** When children attend classes that reflect the similarities and differences of people in the real world, they learn to appreciate diversity. Respect and understanding grow when children of different abilities and cultures play and learn together in an inclusive classroom.

iii. **Friendships develop:** Schools are important places for children to develop friendships and learn social skills. Children with and without disabilities learn with and from each other in inclusive classes.

iv. **Children learn important academic skills:** In inclusive classrooms, children with and without disabilities are expected to learn to read, write, and do math. With higher expectations and good instruction children with disabilities learn academic skills alongside their friends.

v. **All children learn by being together:** Because the philosophy of inclusive education is aimed at helping all children learn, everyone in the classroom benefits and asks questions without fear. Children learn at their own pace and style within a monitored learning environment where a result-oriented classroom is well managed.

In the words of Ali (2014), teachers occupy an important position in the teaching and learning enterprise. It is generally believed that educators, more than any other school personnel, determine the nature and extent of learning achievement in schools. Shade and Stewart (2001) observed that teachers normally report frustration, burden, fear, and inadequacies because they don't believe that they have the abilities to meet the individual needs of children with special needs in their classroom. This is because their professional skills were not developed before they entered the workforce of inclusive setting. It is crucial that teachers already teaching be provided with skills and techniques for inclusive education. It is expected that teachers in Nigeria should update their professional skills on a regular basis to enhance their teaching performance especially for inclusive classrooms.

Hence, teachers need innovative training about inclusive principles and the basics of diversity to ensure that their attitudes and approaches do not prevent disabled children from gaining equal access to the curriculum. Training should be ongoing provided in short courses (or modules) and should take place within a local school environment preferably their own school. Training should take place at both pre-service and in-service stages. The management of effective implementation of inclusiveness depends on the high quality of professional

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preparation of teachers at pre- and in-service levels to equip them for and update their knowledge and skill in meeting the needs and aspirations of a diverse school population. Originally, some teachers had negative attitudes towards inclusiveness due to the fact that they were trained to cope with learners who experienced barriers to learning and that their schools did not have the facilities or equipment needed by these learners. Schools need restructuring and educators need innovative in-service training for a successful inclusive school to become a possibility.

Iheanacho in Christopher and Elizabeth (2012) has outlined the following indefatigable innovative roles the teacher in Special Education has to play in the inclusive classroom for efficiency and effectiveness:

- i. Knowledgeable about the child's instructional goals and objectives, special strategies and objectives that will accomplish him for the day-to-day progress of the child.
- ii. Observing, analyzing, selecting and sequencing learning rather than falling further behind.
- iii. To motivate and reinforce children with special needs.
- iv. Act as resource or itinerant teacher in regular schools.
- v. In the hospital setting, special educators work as speech and language therapists for stroke victims.
- vi. Specialneeds educators for those with visual impairment play the role of Braille transcribers, translators for normal book prints.
- vii. Act as educational therapies for children with special needs whether in a home or special centres, school bound or hospital bound.
- viii. They act as guidance and counselors to the parents of children with special needs.
- ix. They also train the parents to be able to take the primary responsibility of teaching their children at home.
- x. Often participating in developing curriculum for children with special needs.
- xi. They play the role of master educational therapies. In this case, they seek diagnostic causes of failures or problems, whether environmental, organic or both and tailor cause contents to suit individuals' understanding.
- xii. The special needs educators for those with learning impairment work as audiologists in the audiological unit to measure the level of the hearing loss and to know the types of learning that will be appropriate for each child. They can work as sign language interpreters and news casters to the hearing impaired in factories, classrooms, government ministries and establishments, television studios and conferences.
- xiii. Special needs education teachers should serve as advocates in legislative matters championing the course of special needs children, initiating workshops, seminars and conferences on behalf of children with special needs.



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## **Challenges of Managing a Result-Oriented Inclusive Classroom for Special Education Teachers**

The challenges of managing a result-oriented inclusive classroom could be attributed to the local culture of the society, parents, guardians and their perceptions of educating people with disabilities. However, Ahmed (2011) posits that in Nigeria, despite genuine efforts to educate children with disabilities in public schools, a substantial number of them are still suffering from neglect due to societal misconception's insufficient resources, manpower and funding. A classroom Special Education teacher is expected to select educational methodology to best suit each student. This is a challenging goal for one teacher who potentially has more than 30 students in each of six to eight classes. Most students can be grouped with other students whose educational needs are similar. This may reduce the planning required to two or three groups. If you add special needs students who have learning delays, developmental issues, or who speak little or no English, this task can feel almost insurmountable especially if the inclusive classroom does not include a co-teacher.

The biggest challenge for Special Education teachers who have students in an inclusive classroom is being available to every student. For example, if a Special Education teacher has 50 students who are distributed through the classes during any given period there is no way to assist every student every day. Students may have to be pulled out of class a few times a week for additional services, which also impacts the ability of the child and classroom teacher to maintain pace. If the Special Education teacher rotates into different classes on different days, they are not able to get the full educational picture of the class and may not be there when the student needs them most.

There are still some challenges that need to be recognized in a classroom of 30 with one or two Special Education students, it can be difficult for the Special Education teacher to give the individual time and attention the students require and deserve. If the teacher is focusing on the special needs students, the students who need a more challenging environment may be overlooked because they are able to succeed with minimal assistance. While the students will likely succeed in the class, they may not feel challenged and may become bored and disinterested in the class. If the teacher tries to make the class more challenging for the mainstream students, the Special Education students may feel singled out when their individualized educational expectations become more noticeable in areas such as presentations, projects and homework requirements. Being in every class together may actually alienate the students more than if they were separated from specific classes.

## **Implication of Managing a Result-Oriented Inclusive Classroom for Special Education Teachers**

Persons with Special Educational needs are those who have difficulties in realizing their human potentials. Their emotional, physical, social or intellectual

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performance falls below or rises above that of others. Inclusive education or inclusion in the context of this chapter can be interpreted as the practice and philosophy of educating special children in regular schools. This is to say that all persons have equal rights to learn irrespective of physical, cognitive, emotional or psycho-social factors or a combination of these. The persons with special needs include: those with hearing impairment, gifted and talented, visual, speech and language impairment, orthopedic impairment, social maladjustment, learning disabilities and multiple impairments. Persons with Special Educational needs require skilled identification, intervention and special care from trained Special Education teachers

The implication of this chapter for special needs education is that the best way of eradicating stigmatization and discrimination is through the management of a result oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers, where all persons, despite their differences are accepted. No wonder, Eduwen (2017) asserted that teachers are the essential elements recognized by the society to be in charge of the art and science of training manpower, be it inclusive or conventional. It is important to note that a result-oriented inclusiveness goes a long way in changing the mind-set of both the physically-challenged and the physically fit child.

Special Education teachers are expected to have a background of general education as well as professional preparation that includes the psychology, emotional and philosophical condition of children or adolescents, the principles and techniques of teaching and the historical foundations of education. Teacher education is an inevitable tool for successful implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria. Persons with Special Educational needs require skilled identification, intervention and special care from trained special educators. It is the submission of this chapter that the gateway to achieving a result-oriented inclusive classroom, is through effective management of Special Education teachers for efficiency. Thus, all hands must be on deck to ensure that this aspect of education is given the attention it deserves.

## **Conclusion**

Inclusive education is part of the universal rights to education, which is extended to all children, youth and adults with special needs to gain access to education in regular classrooms. For adequate management of a result-oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers, a number of components must be considered such as, teacher collaboration, restructured classroom, adapted curriculum and individualized educational programme, with teachers of Special Education as the pivot in the system. When already existing teachers are adequately prepared, the sustainability of a result-oriented inclusive classroom can be assured because they would be able to address the numerous challenges within the system. This paper has not provided all the solutions for the management of a result oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers, but has touched the major aspects which can assist all the stakeholders in the sector by making teachers

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to be awarded of the enormous responsibility they have in making inclusive education a reality in Nigeria.

### **Suggestions**

For the proper management of a result-oriented inclusive classroom for Special Education teachers to be efficient in Nigeria, the following suggestions were proffered:

- Governments at all levels should make inclusive education compulsory in all schools and colleges to avoid discrimination against persons with Special Educational needs.
- Special Education teachers in both government and private schools should update their knowledge in the field of inclusive education as this will go a long way in making them more relevant.
- There should be training and retraining of Special Education teachers.
- There is a need for availability of manpower, funding and adequate instructional materials to ginger/motivate teachers and the learners within the system.

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