



Teaching Models Used and Challenges Experienced in Secondary School Classes with Special Needs Learners in Tanzania

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Abstract: This study sought to establish the teaching models used and challenges experienced in secondary school classes with special needs learners in Tanzania, using a questionnaire and an interview schedule under the descriptive case study design. The study sample included 35 regular teachers, seven heads of schools, seven heads of departments and seven special needs teachers through the proportional and purposive sampling procedures. Data was analyzed through content analysis and descriptive statistics. The study established that collaborative teaching was the most preferred model compared to consultative and coaching models. A bigger number of children with disabilities was one of key challenges experienced in the inclusive classrooms as teachers failed to provide sufficient support to cater for the needs of special needs learners. Other challenges included lack of awareness of the Tanzanian Sign Language for Hearing Impairment and teachers' negative attitude toward learners with special needs. The study recommends that the government should recruit sufficient number of special education educators to work closely with regular teachers in supporting learners with disabilities in inclusive settings. Relevant authorities need to introduce the Tanzania Sign Language course as a compulsory course in teacher training colleges for educators to gain knowledge to effectively communicate in the inclusive settings. Finally, the government should provide seminars and workshops to teachers on the importance of inclusive education as such training will dispel negative attitudes of teachers towards children with disabilities.

Keywords: Disabilities; inclusive education; teaching model; inclusive class.

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Introduction

Although the concept of inclusive education has been enormously acknowledged in Tanzania since its legislation in 2008, its implementation in classroom situation creates challenging conditions to both teachers and children with disabilities. These challenges center on teaching and learning perspectives which include teachers' poor training in handling inclusive teaching. For instance, in inclusive schools with hearing impairment, teachers lack knowledge of Tanzanian Sign Language (TSL) (UNESCO/URT, 2007).

Other reported challenges include teachers and community attitudes towards children with special

needs, institutional policies and cultural norms which don't support inclusive culture. Furthermore, inclusive education implementation faces a challenge of insufficient teaching and learning facilities and absence of special needs units in school (UNESCO/URT, 2007; Kesho Trust, 2012; Vuzo, 2014).

Tanzania formulated the National Strategy for Inclusive Education (NSIE) (2009-2017) which focused on equitable access to quality education. The NSIE (2009-2017) engrossed on financing and resourcing inclusive education, developing curricula and materials to support learning and developing inclusive assessment and evaluation tools (MoEVT,

2007). Furthermore, NSIE of 2018 -2021) (URT, 2021) laid emphasis on the provision of education to all groups of people with special needs by ensuring access, participation and equity.

Furthermore, NSIE underscored the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills to special needs groups so as to enable them to actively contribute to the country's economic transformation into middle income and industrialized country in terms of involvement in income generating activities and application of modern technology in production (URT, 2010). Responding to the NSIE, the URT passed the Persons with Disability Act of 2010 (9) which focuses on equity and protection of such persons and provision of education and training in inclusive settings and provision of necessary support and services for learning (URT, 2010).

Recently, the United Republic of Tanzania launched the NSIE (2021/2022-2026) which is anchored on such values as the cornerstone for inclusive education as equity, rights to non-discriminatory education, respect to diversity, access for quality education and collaboration with education stakeholder. Further, the NSIE has stipulated firm steps to be taken to address challenges which have been facing the persistent challenges in the provision of education in inclusive setting in education system. Such steps include improving the education policy legislation framework for the purpose of integrating inclusive education values. The NSIE further sought to improve the education to learners with special educational needs, enhancing not only their participation in learning but also ensuring their retention in schools. The NSIE further glanced on the higher learning institutions to ensure that quality assurance mechanisms in terms of inclusive education are in place to accommodate the learning of students with special needs (URT, 2021).

However, despite the government pledges to speed-up the implementation of inclusive education, there are a lot of challenges which have not yet been addressed. Literature (Kesho Trust, 2012; Mkonongwa, 2014) reveal that policies are good but what is lacking is the implementation of such policies. In this regard, many children with special needs do not attend schools due to discrimination from society and those in schools still lack learning resources to enable them to achieve intended learning outcomes (UNESCO/ URT, 2007; Kesho Trust, 2012; Mkonongwa, 2014). Therefore, this

study sought to establish teaching models used and challenges experienced in secondary school classes with special needs learners in Tanzania. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What teaching models were used in inclusive classrooms?
2. What challenges were experienced in the inclusive classrooms?

Literature Review

This part provides a review of literature on the key areas focused in this study which are inclusive education and teaching models in inclusive classrooms.

Inclusive Education

Inclusion can be defined in different ways. According to Florian (2005, p.32) inclusion is "...the opportunity for persons with disability to participate fully in educational, employment, consumer, recreational, community and domestic activities...." UNESCO (2005) considers inclusion as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through increasing participation in learning.

According to Booth and Ainscow (2002) and Ainscow et al. (2006), inclusion is the processes of increasing the participation of students while reducing their exclusion. Inclusive practice requires significant changes to be made in the content, delivery and organization of mainstream programs. It should be a whole school endeavor to accommodate the learning needs of all students regardless of their individual differences.

Inclusive education refers to the process of integrating children with disability in regular classroom. it aims at making them feel valued and equal with those without disabilities (Skrtric, 1991; Kearney, 2009). It therefore reflects a deep commitment to create an education system that values and respects diversity and supports all learners" (Swartz, 2004).

Inclusive education is a system of education in which all learners are enrolled and they actively participate in regular schools regardless of their diverse backgrounds and abilities without any kind of discrimination. When discussing issues of inclusive education, we should not confine ourselves only to children with disability but this includes children with special needs such as those marginalized and discriminated in the system of

education. Inclusive education aims at opening wider opportunities for children with special education needs to realize their full potentials (MOEVT, 2009).

The British Psychological Society (2002) contends that inclusive education should consider rejecting segregation or exclusion of learners, maximizing the participation of all learners, making learning more meaningful and relevant for all and rethinking and restructuring policies, curricula, culture and practices in schools and learning environments so that diverse learning can be realized.

Teaching Models in Inclusive Classrooms

Scholars (Kisanji, 1999; Walter-Thomas et al., 2000) developed models of teaching in inclusive classrooms to make the learning more effective. However, there is no agreement amongst them on the number of models accepted in inclusive education settings. Daack (1999), for example, argued that there are three basic models of teaching inclusive classrooms. These are consultative model, teaming model and collaborative model.

Kisanji (1999), on the other hand, points out three models which are Community Based Support Programs (CBSP), School Intervention Teams (SITs) and Itinerant Programs (IPs). CBSP is based on the belief that the community has a responsibility to ensure that community structures such as schools, hospitals and other facilities and resources are available and accessible to all persons including those with disabilities (Weissbourd, 1990; Kisanji, 1999). School Intervention Teams model aims at addressing challenges of learning such as stigma and discrimination, lack of learning facilities in inclusive schools and counselling services in order to facilitate the learning of children with disabilities. The teams are made of teachers and children subject clubs (Kisanji, 1999; Kratochwill & Steele (2004). The primary purpose of the SITs is prevention of discrimination. With regard to IPs, teachers provide educational services to children with disabilities in children's homes by visiting them. In this model, teachers help families in environments that promote development and learning (Kisanji, 1999).

Walther-Thomas et al. (2000) are in favor of three types of models of teaching inclusive classrooms which are consultative model, collaborative model, and coaching model as they are more focused in an inclusive school setting.

Consultative Teaching Model

According to Brown and Schulte (1987), the consultative model refers to an interactive relationship which may involve a special needs teacher, school counsellor and client who may be a student in this context. In this mode, teachers, school counsellor and children with disabilities work together to attend teaching and learning challenges. Sugai and Tindal (1993) defined consultation as a structured series of interactions or problem-solving steps that occur between two or more individuals in order to address teaching and learning challenges in inclusive settings. Consultative model in education context is an indirect service delivery in which professionals meet and solve problems to maximize teaching (Idol, 2006).

Consultative model has several benefits to teachers and learners. The model is useful as a transition strategy to students from primary to secondary school. Basing on this model, students with disabilities make consultation on suitable carriers to focus on in secondary schools. Correspondingly, parents make consultations with special education teachers about children's transition from primary school to secondary school considering nature of their disabilities. Furthermore, it is a low cost model and it is appropriate for students with learning difficulties and students who are at risk as through it, it is easier to provide intervention services. Furthermore, through consultation, teachers may share knowledge and skills between or amongst themselves (Burdette, 1999). Consultative model has two primary goals: provision of remedial problem solving services and increasing consultee's skills so that they can prevent or respond to learning problems in future (Brown et al., 2008, Burdette, 1999). Consultative model is normally applied alongside with other models like collaborative model (Todd, 2010).

Consultative model has several benefits to teachers and learners as it is conveniently applied to students who do not need the intensity of direct service as they are able to get service on part of the time. The model is useful as a transition strategy to students from primary to secondary schools. In school setting, the child can be guided to choose the right path and career in academic transition from lower level to higher level of education (Daack (1999; Idol, 2006). Further, it is a low cost model and it is efficient to students with learning difficulties and students who are at risk as through it, it is easier to provide intervention services. Furthermore, through

consultation, teachers may share knowledge and skills between or amongst themselves (Burdette, 1999). Consultative model has two primary goals: provision of remedial problem solving services and increasing consultee's skills so that they can prevent or respond to learning problems in future (Brown et al., 2008, Burdette, 1999). Consultative model is normally applied alongside with other models like collaborative model (Todd, 2010).

Collaborative Teaching Model

Collaborative model has a number of names such as co-teaching, pull-in, supportive learning and teaming (Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Murawski & Swanson, 2001). Collaborative model basically refers to an interaction professional use in sharing ideas and skills in order to undertake shared responsibilities. According to Friend and Cook (1989), collaboration is a style for direct interaction between at least two parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision-making as they work toward a common goal. Collaboration in education involves co-equal professionals who voluntarily plan together to achieve common teaching and learning goals (Friend et al, 2010). In this model, a general education teacher works with a special education teacher, the role of special education teacher being that of a specialist while the general teacher is the content specialist (Amerman & Fleres, 2003; Hurt, 2012). Collaborative teaching model is conducted when teaching and non-teaching staff decide to share responsibility and mutual ownership, resources and joint accountability to assist children to learn (Friend et. al. 2010). The non-teaching staff (audiologists, language therapists, counsellors) provide technical skills to teaching staff in order to enhance teaching and learning in the school.

Collaborative teaming process provides on-going opportunities for general and special education teachers and parents to share the knowledge, skills, and experience in order to bring about new methods of individualizing learning (Reilly, 2014). According to Whitworth (1999), characteristics of collaborative teaching model involve valuing the contribution of each participant and providing each member an equal power in decision making. For example, a special needs teacher can provide advice on the way to accommodate a child with learning disorder in inclusive classroom. As a result, participants accept equal responsibilities and the outcome of the decision made. Furthermore, participants are able to share materials and resources.

Collaborative teaching model supports collaborative learning. In doing so, the teacher can guide students to work in groups so that they can learn from each other. Students are required to help each other and accept the responsibility of team working for the purpose of sharing knowledge and experience in learning (Gillie & Boyle, 2010).

Collaborative teaching model comprises of the following teaching strategies (Scruggs et al., 2007):

- One to teach, one to assist: Here the general education teacher assumes the teaching responsibility while the special education teacher provides support. The advantage of this strategy is that teachers share skills and make observations of students' participation during learning process.
- Station teaching: Teaching stations are created and teachers provide individual support at different stations. This strategy enables teachers to divide content into three or more groups and rotate from one group to another.
- Parallel teaching: Teachers teach the same or similar content in different groupings. In parallel teaching, the class is split randomly according to learning profiles. Teachers work in small groups to increase support of each student and to monitor students' understanding.
- Alternative teaching: one teacher instructs most of the class and the other teacher teach a modified version of the lesson to a smaller group of students who require an alternative support.
- Interactive teaching: In this teaching strategy, teachers share teaching responsibilities and lead equally instructional activities.

Coaching Model

Coaching, according to Thomas and Saslow (2007), is a training strategy which targets at helping employees to gain a greater sense of self awareness, building knowledge and skills and adapting certain aspects of behavior. Coaching is normally driven by organizational aims. In school settings, coaching is a school - based professional development which aims at improving instructional needs. According to Neufeld and Roper (2003), there are two types of coaches in the educational setting. The first type is change coaching which is concerned with

organization improvement. Change coaching further focuses on empowering leadership capabilities to principals, heads of schools and heads of departments and helps schools in maximizing the use of available resources. The second type is content coaching which focuses on improving teachers' instructional skills in the subject areas. According to Knight (2009) and West (2012), content coaching involves experienced teachers working together with new teachers for the purpose of nurturing the novice teachers. This is done in terms of model teaching, co-teaching and problem solving tasks, observation of lessons and focused feedback.

Methodology

Design

This study employed the descriptive case study design which observes and describes behaviors of

people under investigation (Denscombe, 2008) for the purpose of providing in depth account of events, relationships and experiences (Creswell, 2014).

Population and Sampling

The total population in this study was 561 regular and special needs teachers, heads of departments and heads of schools in seven schools, namely Tumaini, Shinyanga, Bwiru Boys, Mkolani, Kazima, Tabora Girls and Musoma Technical. Probability proportional sampling was used to select 35 regular teachers from the seven inclusive secondary schools. One head of school, one head of department and one special needs teacher was purposely selected from each school. Schools visited enrolled learners with disabilities in hearing impairment, visual physical and albinism. As Table 2 demonstrates:

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Respondents	Sex		Experience in Teaching Inclusive Classroom		Sampling Technique	Total
	F	M	<5years	>5years		
Heads of schools	√	√	√	√	Purposive	7
Heads of departments	√	√	√	√	Purposive	7
Special needs teachers	√	√	√	√	Purposive	7
Regular teachers	√	√	√	√	Simple Random	35

Table 2: School Students' Disability Profile

School	Hearing	Visual	Physical	Albinism	Other
Tumaini		√		√	
Shinyanga		√	√	√	
Bwiru Boys	√		√		
Mkolani	√			√	
Kazima	√	√	√	√	
Tabora Girls		√		√	
Musoma Technical	√	√	√	√	

Table 3: Zone, Regions, Participants and Schools Involved in the Study

Zone	Region	Name of School	Participants
Central	Singida	Tumaini	8
Lake	Mwanza	Bwiru boys	9
		Mkolani	9
Western	Musoma	Musoma technical	7
		Tabora	
		Kazima	7
	Tabora girls	7	
	Shinyanga	Shinyanga	7
Total	5 regions	7 schools	56

Table 3 indicates a summary of number of respondents and regions where the sample was drawn.

Research Instruments

The study employed a questionnaire which was administered to regular teachers to gather information about teaching models and challenges

teachers in inclusive classes faced. Besides, interviews were administered to special needs teachers, heads of department and heads of schools in order to solicit in-depth information about the teaching models adapted and challenges faced by teachers in inclusive classrooms.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability were attained through the use of data triangulation method: the use of more than one instrument such as a questionnaire and interviews as advocated by Gall and Borg (2007). Similarly, two experts provided their opinions for improvement of the tools before the data collection sessions took place.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Qualitative data which were collected through interviews was analyzed through content analysis while the quantitative data collected through questionnaires was analysed through descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure that the study is conducted in accordance with ethical standards, the researcher requested a permission from the Regional Administrative

Secretary (RAS) in each region. Secondly, respondents were free to participate and withdraw at any time when data was being collected. Lastly, the researcher adhered to confidentiality and anonymity norms by excluding names of respondents in data.

Findings and Discussion

This study was guided by three research questions aimed to exploit information about teaching models in inclusive secondary schools.

Research Question1: What teaching models were used in inclusive classrooms?

Table 4 indicates that 41 (73.2%) teachers used the collaborative teaching model. Collaborative model refers to an interactive and professional sharing of ideas and skills in order to support shared responsibilities. According to Friend and Cook (1989), collaboration is a style for direct interaction between at least two parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision- making as they work toward a common goal. Collaboration between regular teacher and special needs teacher supports the teaching and learning process to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities.

Table 4: Teaching Model Adapted in Inclusive Classroom

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Collaborative	41	73.2
2	Consultative	12	21.4
3	Coaching	3	5.4
Total		56	100

Furthermore, 12 (21.4%) teachers used the consultative model. According Brown et al. (2008), the consultative model refers to an interactive relationship which may involve a special needs teacher, school counsellor and a client who may be a student in this context. In this mode, teachers, school counsellors and children with disabilities worked together to address teaching and learning challenges.

Finally, 3 (5.4%) teachers used the coaching model. Coaching model is a training strategy aiming at helping teachers to gain a greater sense of self awareness, building knowledge and skills and adapting certain aspect of behavior. Coaching model focused on improving teachers' instructional skills in the subject areas. In this case, experienced teachers worked together with new teachers for the purpose of nurturing new teachers. In harmony with

the assertion of Knight (2009) and West, (2012), this was done in terms of model teaching, co-teaching and problem solving tasks.

Research Question 2: What were experienced challenges in the inclusive classrooms?

Teachers reported a challenge of having a bigger number of children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Respondents cited an example of one class having twenty students with a Hearing Impairment. The number of students with disabilities in inclusive classroom should not exceed ten in a standard class of 40 students to enable the teacher to effectively accommodate the learning needs (Bulat et al., 2017). On the contrary, each class had more than ten students with disabilities. The situation made it difficult for teachers to accommodate learning needs during the teaching

process. In response to this challenge, scholars propose co-teaching as a key strategy in a situation of an inclusive classroom with bigger number of students with disabilities (Numberger-Hagg et al., 2008; Friend et al., 2010). Two teachers can be involved in teaching with different tasks, one teacher teaching while another observing and providing assistance (Numberger-Hagg et al., 2008; Friend et al., 2010).

Lack of awareness of the Tanzanian Sign Language for Hearing Impairment was another reported challenge. Tanzanian Sign Language is a standardized sign language used for communication to deaf persons and hearing persons in the country. Particularly, teachers reported that students with hearing impairment managed only local signs. By local signs we mean a sign language used in a smaller area within the country (Zeshan, et. al., 2013). Therefore, students had to spend time to learn Tanzania Sign Language while lessons are in progress.

Another challenge is that some regular teachers (those without special education expertise) felt delayed completing the topics. They reported that they had to do a lot of repetition so that students with HI could understand the content. This is contrary what Schirmer *et al.* (2012) recommended that repeated reading strategy is helpful in fostering reading fluency of students with HI.

The semi structured interview revealed that some teachers did not expect students with disabilities to perform better than those without disabilities. Similarly, a study by Mngo and Mngo (2018) in Cameroon reported that teachers who had no background of special needs education displayed resistance to the inclusive education system. Besides, the resistance was due to ignorance on how to teach and accommodate students with special educational needs in inclusive classrooms. This experience concurs with findings of a previous study conducted by Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou (2006) with Greek regular teachers who displayed negative attitude towards inclusion. Iyeoma and Toyosi (2017) assert that attitude is everything in learning. Hence, teachers' positive attitude is pivotal for implementation of inclusive education. Positive attitudes towards children with disabilities may influence teachers to devise accommodation and modification strategies which will foster teaching and learning of children with disabilities in inclusive classroom.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study came up with the following conclusions:

1. Collaborative teaching was the most preferred model in the inclusive classrooms. This might be due its benefits such as a possibility of sharing skills and knowledge on how to provide support to students in the inclusive condition. Other approaches which were least used in the inclusive classrooms included consultative and coaching models.
2. A bigger number of children with disabilities was one of key challenges experienced in the inclusive classrooms as teachers failed to provide sufficient support to cater for the needs of special needs learners whose number was beyond their ability to handle.
3. Another challenge was lack of awareness of the Tanzanian Sign Language for Hearing Impairment as students managed only local signs. Therefore, they had to spend time to learn the Tanzania Sign Language while lessons were in progress which led to failure to finish the syllabus on time.
4. Some teachers had negative attitude toward learners with special needs as they did not expect students with disabilities to perform better than students without disabilities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the government recruits sufficient number of special education educators to work closely with regular teachers in supporting learners with disabilities in inclusive settings. In service training is recommended to those who teach inclusive classrooms for better teaching-learning outcomes. Relevant authorities need to introduce the Tanzania Sign Language course as a compulsory course in teacher training colleges for educators to gain sufficient knowledge to effectively communicate in inclusive settings so as to meet the needs of hearing impairment learners. It is also recommended that provision of consultative and coaching models be enhanced for those who teach inclusive classrooms to improve their teaching and learning sessions. Finally, the government should provide seminars and workshops to teachers on the importance of inclusive education as such training will dispel negative attitudes of teachers towards children with disabilities.

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