UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

'TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A CASE OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN AFADZATO SOUTH DISTRICT, GHANA.'

RICHARD KORMLA AMETEFE

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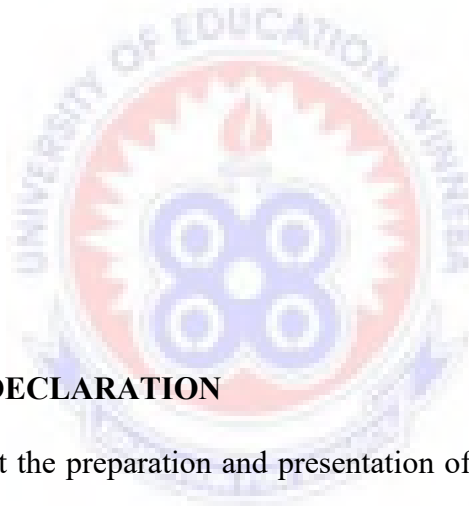**in the University of Education, Winneba**

JULY, 2019

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Richard Kormla Ametefe,** declare that the dissertation is my own original work with the exception of quotations and citations contained in published works which have been quoted or cited have been indicated and duly acknowledged by means of full reference.

Signature: ……………………………………….

Date: …………………………………………….

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this research work was duly supervised by me in accordance with the established research guidelines for the supervision of Dissertation in the University of Education, Winneba.

Supervisor's Name: DR. YAW NYADU OFFEI

Signature: …………………………………

Date: …………………………………….

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my families who have been so caring and concerned throughout my education up to this far.

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on 'teachers' experiences in teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools in Afadzato South District, Ghana. The research design used for this study was a Case Study using qualitative approach. The targeted population for the study was twenty (20) teachers in three selected public inclusive schools where there are learners with special educational needs having their education alongside their non-disabled counterparts in the Afadzato South district. The researcher used purposive sampling to select six (6) teachers for the study from the larger population. The researcher obtained data for the study through combination of instruments such as interview guide, and focused group discussion. This was because the methodology underpinning this study lends itself these instruments The main objectives of the study was to find out the teaching pedagogies that teachers within public schools can use in teaching learners with Special Educational Needs in public schools in Afadzato South District. It also found out availability of teaching resources teachers in public schools can use to effectively teach learners with Special Educational Needs. Again the study was to find out the exact behavior management techniques teachers can use in handling learners with disruptive behaviors in the classroom and the ways by which these teachers can be supported to improve upon teaching learners with Special Educational Needs in public schools. Four research questions with probes were formulated to guide the study. The finding indicated that most public school teachers find it difficult in teaching learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the inclusive settings because majority of these teachers do not have the required skills regarding the specific or appropriate teaching pedagogies to be used. In conclusion, it is important as a first step for teachers to allow the opportunity for learners with SEN to be enrolled into schools and the necessary actions on how they would be effectively taught can come into play. It is recommended that teachers teaching in public schools should develop a positive approach to teaching that promotes good behavior among all learners. However these approaches must be modified to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate to the learners with special educational needs in the classroom.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

The study is to find out teachers' experiences when teaching learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in public schools and it focuses on selected public basic schools in Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana. The aim is to explore the kind of teaching pedagogies teachers used in teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools. It is also to find out what teaching resources are available for teachers to effectively teach these learners in order to improve upon their academic performances in school. Again, the study is to explore the behavior management techniques and strategies public school teachers can employ in handling challenging and disrupting behaviors of some learners with special educational needs during teaching and learning activities in the schools and also to find out ways by which public school teachers can be supported to improve upon their task of teaching learners with special educational needs.

The growing demand for educating learners with special educational needs within public schools has resulted in classroom teachers having to take direct responsibility for the individual learning needs of all pupils within the schools. A recent report from the Afadzato South District District Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) result analysis (2017) found, however, that majority of candidates who performed poorly in the examination were learners identified as learners with special educational needs and who were failing to meet the District and state standards. An assortment of causes contributed to this poor performance and failures, for instance public school teachers' who are by law be responsible for teaching these learners claimed they do not know the necessary pedagogies of

teaching to use. Also, they lack teaching resources and materials, and are unable to handle some behavioral patterns of some of these learners with special educational needs during teaching and learning processes.

Ghana is one of the state parties which adopted the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which re-affirmed their commitment to achieve Education for All Children including children with special educational needs in inclusive settings or in public schools.

In recent times, teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools which is also referred to as inclusive education is currently a topical subject that is widely discussed in the field of education, Ghana included. It has invariably been referred to as part of Ghana's educational reform to ensure that learners with special educational needs have the opportunity to be educated alongside their peers without special needs or disabilities in public schools.

Grimes (2014) established that teachers are crucial in providing such quality education for all children. All over the world teachers are dedicated to ensuring the right to education for all children. Although many teachers are working in challenging circumstances (inappropriate teaching pedagogies, large classes, inadequate infrastructure, lack of basic teaching and learning materials, strange behavior patterns of some learners, high absenteeism, inflexible policies and curricula, low salaries, etc.), they are working hard to accommodate all learners in their schools. Despite the efforts of policy-makers, head teachers and teachers, many schools still lack teachers who are adequately trained and supported to meet the needs of some category of learners.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has estimated that worldwide 1.6 million additional teachers are needed to provide universal primary education by 2015 but has not been achieved.

There is a real risk that under the pressure to increase the number of teachers within a very short deadline, the quality of the teacher training will decrease. Inclusive education might be seen as a luxury, or as the responsibility of specialists, but inclusive education is crucial to ensure all children have access to quality education. Well-trained, supported and motivated teachers have an impact on the enrolment, participation and achievement of all children, and especially of learners with special educational needs/disabilities who need extra encouragement and support to have access to and stay in school.

However, many public basic schools in Ghana do not have the available teaching resources, few are qualified to use appropriate teaching methods or approaches, the ability to manage challenging and disrupted behaviors of some learners particularly in public schools in the rural areas. And this situation is worrying for teachers who by the policy are to teach learners irrespective of their nature.

Teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools acknowledges the classroom reality of diversity by providing multiple ways for these learners to access content and demonstrate their learning. Inclusive teachers draw from a repertoire of evidence-based practices to meet learners' needs.

Florian and Black-Hawkins' (2011) study of the craft knowledge of inclusive teachers found that an inclusive pedagogical approach focuses on all learners in the classroom, not only the learner who have been identified as requiring additional educational support. In this way, emphasis remains on what all learners need to know and the skills they need to demonstrate their learning.

This study addressed the issue of learners with special educational needs by examining experiences of teachers when teaching these learners regarding the kind of teaching pedagogies they use, resources available for effective teaching of the learner and how to manage challenging and disrupted behaviors of some of these learners in public schools as demanded from them by the policy.

Among all the factors that account for the growth and development of learners with special educational needs in their education is significantly and indisputably the teacher factor and their experience when teaching learners with special educational needs. Hence, no country can afford to neglect the education and training of teachers in a manner that would facilitate their ability to teach all learners. The quality and standard of education provided for learners with special educational needs will primarily depend on the quality of teachers. In Ghana, teacher training in respect to teaching learners with special educational needs has not received the recognition and importance that it deserves. The existing patterns and programmes of teacher training follow the traditional teacher education with emphasis on teaching general education students and little regard for teaching learners with special educational needs and the use of inclusive pedagogy.

Sharma, Forlin, Guang-xue, and Deppeler (2013) espoused that quality teacher training should be available before and during the implementation of an inclusive programme. This training should be grounded in sound inclusive pedagogy.

The education of learners with special educational needs was adopted in Ghana as government's strategic path of ensuring quality education for all children including children with special needs. It was developed as a plan to integrate children with special needs and those with disabilities into mainstream schools where feasible. However, it called for basic and in-depth in-service and pre-service courses to be

offered to teachers so that they are well equipped with necessary skills and knowledge to teach children with specific disabilities (Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy Document 2015).

Gorman and Drudy, (2010) stated that an in service programme is an approach to staff development that aims to support teachers to upgrade skills and knowledge in inclusive education while on their jobs. And this in-service training could be in the areas of teaching pedagogies, classroom behavior techniques, and support services teachers can use in teaching students with special educational needs.

Glazzard et al (2010) highlights that any reluctance from teachers to fully embrace the idea or the policy of teaching learners with special educational needs often stems from the fact that it places pressure on them to increase their performance and their level of accountability. The pressure here means there are inadequate teaching resources, lack of the requisite skills and others. Teachers are under a tremendous amount of pressure to meet numerous different standards and as it stands they may not approach teaching learners with special educational needs/disabilities with the level of care and commitment that would usually be required for it to have a greater success.

Another issue with teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools is that the idea of it can send teachers into a sense of panic as they may not feel prepared to undertake this task because of their inability to use the appropriate pedagogies, inadequate resources in their schools even though the policy says learners with special educational needs should be educated alongside their non-disabled peers.

Some teachers will have completed their teacher training at a time when the idea of including learners with special educational needs in public schools was not relevant in the life of the school, and therefore they have not been trained on how best

to handle certain situations. Areas such as large class size, inadequate teaching and learning materials and resources, lack of classroom behavior management strategies, teaching pedagogies and other related factors could affect effective teaching and learning of learners with special educational needs. Teachers who have graduated after the introduction of the inclusive education policy and courses are also uncertain whether the implementation and practice would meet the desired goal as or to ignore the policy when the majority of their fellow staff are not supportive of the idea. This research, therefore, seeks to investigate basic school teachers' experiences in teaching learners with special educational needs in three selected public schools in Afadzato South District of Ghana.

Despite the "Education Strategic Plans (2003-2015) and the goal four of the Sustainable Development Goals, (SDGs) which ensures that the education of children with special educational needs is provided for in mainstream schools, the overall quality of basic education in Afadzato South District remains generally poor for learners with special educational needs particularly in public schools.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Differences in educational opportunities for learners with special educational needs (SEN) depend not only on their individual cultural, economic, health or disability circumstances, but also on where they live and the ways in which educational systems are structured, regulated and supported in their home country. Regardless of these differences, there is widespread acknowledgement that teachers play a crucial role in providing quality education.

In all over the world countries that have long histories of compulsory school attendance, concerns about access and equity in schooling, and teacher quality remain relevant. Even in these countries, not all children especially learners with special

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educational needs are in school, and even when they are, they do not necessarily have positive experiences of education, nor do some have much to show for their time in school.

According to the 2019 7th African Forum on Visual Impairment held in Addis-Ababa in Ethiopia report, For example, in Uganda, majority of learners with special educational needs, to be specific, learners with visual impairment are not in school as a result of their disability.

Most school systems have children who are excluded, who do not participate in meaningful learning, or who are underachieved, giving a new impetus to the call for more inclusive education (Black- Hawkins, Florian, & Rouse, 2007). Afadzato South District, in the Volta Region of Ghana West Africa is no exception. The so called 'achievement gap' between those who achieve most and those who achieve least, is a major concern to most educationist for example teachers in selected public schools and the researcher as a special educator.

For more than three decades, the idea of teaching learners with special educational needs and their typically developing peers has being the subject of discussion. There are several compelling reasons to create high quality inclusive programs for these learners in schools (UNESCO, 2009). However, the report on the three years pilot program in Ghana from 2015 to 2018 did not cover much about teachers' experiences in teaching learners with special educational needs regarding teaching pedagogies. Hence, very little is known about the appropriate teaching pedagogies and strategies teachers can effectively employ in their teaching to ensure success for these learners with special educational needs in their classrooms in spite of the crucial role teacher's play in ensuring education for learners with disabilities within mainstream schools.

It is also uncertain, the exact behavioural management strategies and techniques teachers in public schools can adopt in their classrooms in order to handle learners with special educational needs with challenging behaviours in the Afadzato South District to ensure their access to the curriculum, though (Eriksson 1998, Konza, 2008) reported that, in addition to complying with government requirements, schools, administrators, and teachers set the tone and philosophy of a program. The tone with which you approach inclusion affects how teachers and families feel about inclusion as well as the capacity of the teacher to be successful in including students with special educational needs. It is therefore imperative to find out the behaviour management strategies and techniques teachers within public schools can adopt to teach learners with special educational needs effectively.

Again, it is also not known the kind of teaching and learning resources that are available for teachers who are made to provide education for learners with special educational needs within public schools to enhance their teaching in the district. Irrespective of the fact that use of appropriate teaching resources enhances the performance of all learners. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the resources that can help support teachers to teach learners with special educational needs within public schools in the Afadzato South district.

It cannot further be established as to how teachers could be supported to improve upon teaching learners with special educational needs in the district. (Kuyini & Mangope, 2011; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010) are of the view that teachers who experience positive results in the inclusion of learners with special educational needs are more inclined to include such learners and those who experience negative results are less likely to be inclined to include such learners. It is therefore important to find out ways that teachers in public schools can adequately be supported to improve upon

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their way of teaching that can effectively provide for learners with special educational needs within public schools in the Afadzato South district.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain an insight into teachers' experiences when teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools, with the aim that there was little research that documented teachers' experiences about teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools. Therefore, there was a justification to conduct this exploratory qualitative case study in Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana. Previous studies focused only on teaching learners with special educational needs and those with some form of disabilities in special schools level and not about teaching them in public or regular schools. Therefore there is a need to conduct such studies at public primary school level as well.

This is needed to inform planning of inclusive education and to refocus the content of inclusive teaching pedagogy, resources, and behavior management techniques in order to fully put public school teachers in position with skills and knowledge needed to be able to teach learners with diverse abilities.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

- Find out the teaching pedagogies that teachers within public schools can use in teaching learners with special educational needs in the Afadzato South district.

- Find out the teaching and learning resources that are available for teaching learners with special educational needs within public schools in the Afadzato South district.

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- Examine the behavioral management techniques teachers within public schools need to acquire in teaching students with special educational needs in the Afadzato South district.

- Explore ways by which teachers in public schools can be supported to improve upon teaching learners with special educational needs in the Afadzato South district.

1.4 Research Questions

The following questions guided the Study

1. What teaching pedagogies do teachers used in teaching learners with special educational needs within public schools in the Afadzato South district?

2. What teaching and learning resources are available for teachers within public schools to teach learners with special educational needs in the Afadzato South district?

3. What behavior management strategies and techniques do teachers need to acquire in managing challenging behaviors of learners with special educational needs in public classrooms in the Afadzato South district?

4. How can teachers of public schools be supported to improve upon teaching students with special educational needs in the Afadzato South district?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of the study would be useful to the teaching profession as training institutions would be challenged to review their curriculum to cover areas such as teaching pedagogies that would broaden basic school teachers' ability to teach learners with special educational needs within public schools. This would help promote a successful inclusion of learners with special educational needs within the mainstream settings. Findings from this study will also add valuable information to

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the body of literature available in Ghana concerning resources available for teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools that can help contribute significantly to existing knowledge.

From the findings of my research, I should also be able to report to Organizations and Department of Education championing the implementation of inclusive education about some management techniques that can be adopted by public school teachers in teaching learners with special educational needs in regular classrooms in Ghana. This report will help the national government to see how well the agenda of inclusive education policy has been achieved and to begin to explore what might need to change in order for including learners with special educational needs into regular schools education can become more widespread in the Afadzato South district of Ghana.

1.6 Limitation

This study was limited by inadequate time and funds in facilitating the research process. The researcher overcame this by ensuring that time and resources present were utilized efficiently and effectively. Another inevitable limitation was concealing of personal information by respondents. The respondents were assured that the information was to be used only for the purpose of the research and the utmost confidentiality with all the information given.

1.7 Organization of the study

The research was organized in five chapters. Chapter one discussed background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation, delimitation, and organization of the study. Chapter two described literature review which used theoretical framework. The theoretical framework covered areas such as Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

and the Inclusion model. Chapter three highlighted the methodology that was employed to collect data for the study. The methodology included research design, population, sample size and sampling technique, instrumentation, data collection procedure, ethical considerations. The fourth chapter presents data analysis and discussion of findings. Finally, chapter five provided the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future studies.

1.8 Delimitation

The study was limited to the three selected public schools in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana and therefore findings may vary across other schools in the districts and in the country too. Since the collection of data was restricted to only the three schools in district, generalizing the findings to other schools outside the district must be done with much caution. The analyses that were made was based on the views of teachers in these particular primary schools and the results of this study may differ from the views and experiences of teachers in other schools in this district and other Metropolitan / Municipal / Districts in the country. Finally, the study could not cover all aspects of teachers' experiences in teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools in this singular thesis.

1.9 Definition of terms

Learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN): For the purpose of this study, the term 'students with special educational needs' refers to or covers all students or learners beyond those who may be included as having a disability and those children who may be included as having a disability and those children who are failing in school because they experience barriers that prevent them from achieving optimal progress in their learning and development. (Government of Ghana Inclusive Education Policy pg. 4)

Teachers' experiences: Refers to the feelings, challenges teachers have about their ability to effectively teach students with special educational needs in mainstream schools.

Inclusive education: In Ghanaian context is defined as a plan and commitment to achieving both national and international goals for creating an environment for addressing the diverse educational needs of Ghanaian children. It can also be referred to as education of both able and non-disabled students in the same classroom with accommodations made to suit both categories of students.

Regular teachers: These are teachers in public schools that are not specifically for a type of disability but by law are responsible for teaching all learners in mainstream schools.

Learners with disability: These are individuals that have lost in a body function due to impairment.

Learners with Special Educational Needs: This may be defined as learners with disability, namely, visual, hearing, locomotors, and intellectual impairment. It extend beyond those who may be included in disability categories to cover those who are failing in school, as well as a wide variety of reasons that are known to be barriers to the learner's optimal progress in learning and development. (Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy pg: 6)

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The literature was reviewed to cover the following themes due to its relevance to the topic under study. They were gathered from abstracts, the internet, journals and from books.

- Pedagogies for teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools.

- Teaching and learning resources for teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools.

- Behavior management techniques in inclusive schools.

- Ways of improving teaching and learning in inclusive schools.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

When writing a research paper it is important to establish a theoretical framework that the research will follow. This research paper was written from a sociocultural perspective as it aims to bring forth the experiences of teachers when teaching learners with special educational needs in three selected public schools with the focused on teaching pedagogies, teaching resources, management techniques/strategies and ways that can improve the teaching of learners with special educational needs in these public schools. This framework stems from the ideas established by Vygotsky (1978 cited in Kozulin 2003) who believed that looking at problems from this perspective allowed the learner to actively participate in the construction of knowledge, which was usually based around the solving of a problem. The area under exploration in this study was the experiences, feelings and the level of readiness held by teachers towards teaching a learner with special educational needs

within the public schools with specific focused on teaching pedagogies, available teaching resources, how disruptive behaviors could be managed and the support services available for teachers to be able to teach these learners.

This study also considers the use of another Vygotskian theory known as the, 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) (Figure 1.1) as this is an important model to consider when looking at teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools which can also be termed as inclusive education for children with special educational needs. Vygotsky (1978 cited in Gauvain and Cole 1997) in providing this model has enabled educators to understand the internal development of learners. A model like this is essential when teaching learners with special educational needs as it enables their development to be categorized into, things they can do on their own, things they can do with help, and things they can't do. This is represented in the figure below:
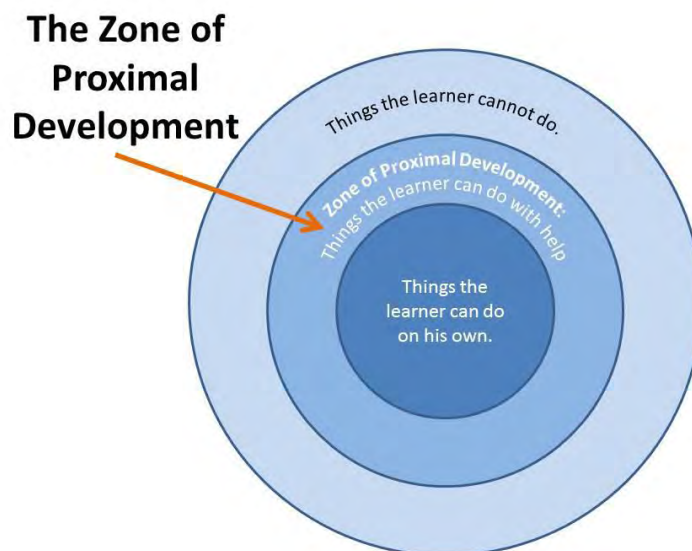
Figure 2.1 – Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) n.d)

Source: field work 2019

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) concept used by Vygotsky which is represented in the above figure in this study appeared to focus more on the interaction that involve schooling and academic learning. His perspective seems to insist on the ideal role of the public school teacher in providing scaffolding as a means of assisting learners on tasks within their zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky established that when a learner cannot accomplish a given task but the task is within the learner's zone of proximal development, using the right tools and appropriate assistance the learner may be able to accomplish the task. This assistance is also known as scaffolding. Scaffolding is a temporal support teacher and parents can give to a child to assist him or her to accomplish a task. After mastering the task scaffolding will be gradually removed and the learner will be able to complete the task on his or her own. (Vygotsky, 1978; Papalia. Et al, 1998).

To explain further, Brown, et al. (1993. P.191) spouses that Zone of Proximal Development can include people, adults and children with various degrees of expertise, but can also include artifacts such as books, videos; wall displays, scientific equipment, and a computer environment intended to support intentional learners.

Besides Vygotsky's (1978) believing that human development is a result of interaction between people and environment, he also added that, these interactions are not limited to people only but also to mediation tools or artifacts such as language and teaching materials or resources (various signs and symbols).

Feuerstein and Rand (1974), established that a child's cognitive development can be modified through the help of mediation. According to Werstsch (2007), mediation is Vygotskian central theme in his most writings. Mediation relates to important people in learner's lives and one of these people is the teacher (Vygotsky, 1978)). They are people who can select, organize and present information and / or

tasks they consider to be most appropriate for the child and bring the child a step further (Gage and Berliner, 1998; Papalia, et al, 1998).

Daniels, (2007) and Thompson, (2012a & b), also pointed out some of the various forms of mediation that effect progress within a ZPD as follows:

1. Direct instruction from a teacher or more capable peer. While initially didactic, the instructive voice can be internalized by the learner as part of his or her own inner speech

2. Modeling of a behavior or task by an expert that the learner initially initiates and ultimately internalizes and appropriates.

3. Feedback, either oral or written, that offers guidance and performance.

4. Questioning to assess or assist performance.

5. Reassurance or reinforcement of partially understood concepts.

6. Redirection or recursion through the learning process.

7. Joint exploration of meaning between teacher and students.

8. Peer collaboration involving critical thinking, problem-solving, or making decisions.

9. Scaffolding of a task, by the teacher in order to provide a constructive framework for the learner's developing mental processes.

10. Cognitive restructuring whereby perception, memory, and action are re-evaluated and re-ordered.

The internalization of these structures becomes part of the learner's inner self-regulating voice.

In this study the mediator is a regular public school teacher who uses tools such as language and teaching material and resources to help the child to discover and learn. The whole process of mediation by the teacher is based on her/his interactions

with learners. It will be important to consider the following: The teacher and learner interaction and teacher's presentation of teaching materials as mediation tools. The teacher is in between the learner and the teaching material. Therefore being a mediator will depend upon how a teacher integrates his/her learners with the learner former knowledge and the teaching material so that the learner can acquire new knowledge.

Another model which is important to consider in this research is the model of inclusion. While inclusive education is sought for all children regardless of their needs, there are varying stages (as seen in Figure 1.2). It is important for teachers to be aware of these different levels to know how they treat learners with special educational needs in their various schools. The model of inclusion explained that when trying to provide inclusive education by means of teaching learners with special educational needs along wide their non-disabled peers in public schools, as demanded by the Inclusive Education Policy and the new standard based curriculum, the circle labeled inclusion should be the best option. It simply means that, learners with special educational needs must form part of the student's population in that same classroom, and that the teaching pedagogies should meet their diverse needs. Also there must be adequate resources to support their teaching and classroom management techniques to manage their behaviors to ensure that they are really having education but not to be excluded, segregated or integrated as seen in the figure 2.2 below.
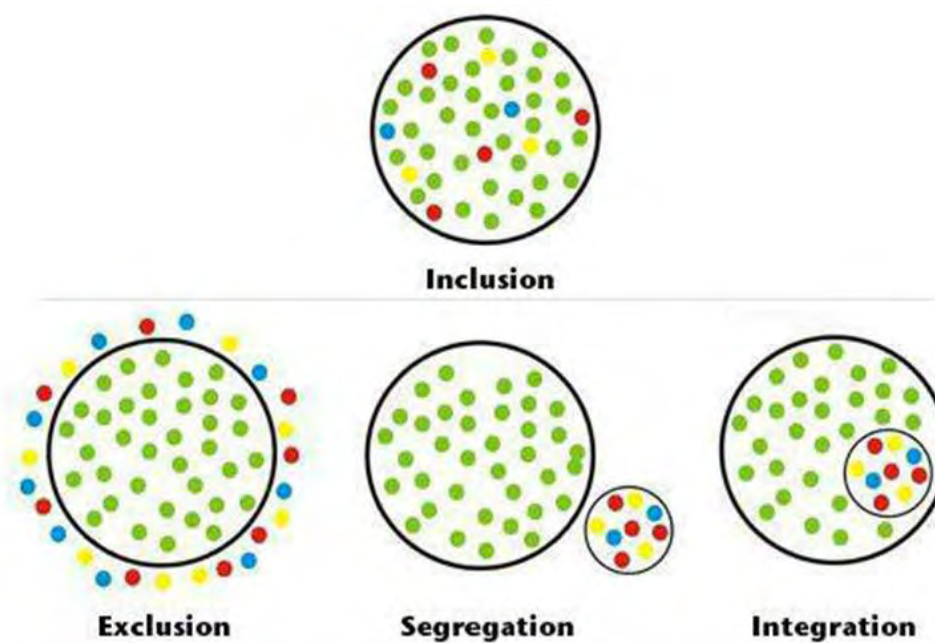
(Figure 2.2 : Inclusion, Exclusion, Segregation and Integration n.d)

Source: field work 2019

It is therefore imperative for teachers to ensure that all these key issues are considered to have positive experiences in teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools.

2.2 Pedagogies for teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools.

2.2.1 Inclusive pedagogy

Is defined as an approach intended to promote a culture of accommodating all and ensuring practice based on the use of diverse teaching strategies (Corbett, 2001). It is associated with a connective pedagogy that is, connecting learners with their own learning first, and then connecting their learning to the curriculum (Corbett, 2001). Inclusive pedagogy is a process whereby the learners constantly engage with the learning material, drawing on their experiences (Nilholm & Alm, 2010). The material

is presented as close as possible to reality and the learners are not passive recipients of knowledge but are allowed to attach subjective meaning to it.

In this research study, inclusive pedagogy refers to the totality of teaching methods, approaches, forms and principles that enhance learner participation. Teaching inclusively is central to this approach. Furthermore, inclusive pedagogy is also assumed to encompass beliefs and conceptions about what constitutes inclusive teaching and learning. However, there is still a debate raging around the question whether is there a pedagogy that is purely inclusive (Florian, 2009). Many UK authors such as Florian (2007), Farrell (1997), Nind et al. (2003), and Rief and Heimburge (2006) and have written about the inclusive strategies of teaching learners with special educational needs while borrowing strategies from special education discourse. By contrast, Engelbrecht (1999) (Republic of South Africa) and other UK authors such as Ainscow (2010), Ainscow and Booth (2002), Ainscow and Howes (2003), and Dyson (2001) argue that inclusive practices could be developed by encouraging participation and collaboration. For example, the Index for Inclusion (Ainscow and Booth, 2002) has served as a point of reference in this regard.

2.2.2 Traditional strategies-oriented view of inclusive pedagogy approach (behavioristic teaching approach)

The view that inclusion, as part of an inclusive education system, is about adopting certain teaching strategies derives from the traditional approach to teaching informed by the behavioristic approach to pedagogy. This teaching approach is aimed at changing the behavior of the learners. Learning is regarded as bringing about a change of behavior in the learner (Bekele and Melesse, 2011; Merrett and Wheldall, 2012). Behavioral teaching is an approach that occurs within the context of three premises, namely setting conditions, antecedence and the consequences. It is a method

that emphasizes the objective curriculum and it is often criticized for not being suitable for all areas of the curriculum (Farrell, 1997). It denies the learners the right to choose the learning material and regards teachers as more knowledgeable than the learners in contradistinction to the notion of "self-advocacy", which is a critical process that ensures that all learners are included in the classroom. It does little to encourage interaction between the teacher and the learner.

According to Farrell (1997), in order to include all learners in a lesson, it would be helpful if teachers could use behavioral teaching activities such as prompting, reinforcement and task analysis (Moore, 2012). Motivation is one of the phenomena that teachers could employ to manipulate the behavior of learners. Rewarding learners could ensure that all learners are engaged in a lesson. Learners should be encouraged to take their learning seriously and be in control of it. They should be given the opportunity to demonstrate how they have learned. The notion of "trial and error" (that is, trying to do things for oneself) is critical in encouraging learners to lead their own learning (Farrell, 1997).

Various teaching strategies intended to modify learner behavior are applied to support learners in the teaching and learning process; for example, the differentiated approach to teaching; reciprocal teaching; scaffolding instruction; the use of technology to aid inclusion; multiple intelligence; multi-level instruction; and multi-sensory instruction. Teachers have to vary their teaching according to the needs of their learners. In teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools varying the available methods and technologies would provide a good basis for including all the learners in the class. For instance, differentiated instruction is often defined as taking place in a general-education classroom that makes use of a wide variety of instructional options aimed at the increasingly diverse learning needs that

typically characterize an inclusive class nowadays (Bender, 2008; D'Amico, 2010; Hart, 1996; Rief and Heimburge, 2006). To implement differentiated instruction, the "cubing" method is used. Cubing is a method that helps learners to look at a phenomenon from six different perspectives, depending on how difficult it is to accommodate learner differences.

Differentiated teaching is a proactive method that is designed to respond to the needs of all learners. As such, it may inform the teaching and learning material, flexible groupings, and varied teaching methods and approaches (Rief and Heimburge, 2006).

Reciprocal teaching is described as rotating the position of an instructional leader between the teacher and the learner (Bender, 2008). Even though the individual learner may be taught how to direct his or her own learning, the teacher may use scaffolding to aid the learning of all the learners. Scaffolding is the process of assisting the learner to acquire new knowledge using his or her prior knowledge as a foundation (Bender, 2008).

Modern classrooms are equipped with the required technological devices to aid instruction, and teachers have to use such devices to ensure that all learners have access to the teaching material. For example, two technologies that appear to be dominant in the inclusive research literature are computer-assisted instruction (CAI) and information communication technology (ICT). The former (CAI) uses computers to conduct lessons, capture learner performances and give feedback about learner progress, while ICTs such as web quests, spreadsheets and graphic presentations are lately being used to support instruction.

Currently the universal design is popular. This is a framework used to adapt technology to the needs of all learners, for example modified keyboards, speech

recognition, text speech, scalable fonts, and the virtual environment. (Florian, 2007). Furthermore, the use of computer-assisted instruction highlights the significance of this kind of technology in building concept maps and organizing study guides. Different software programs are being developed, and the use of multimedia technology in promoting learning is growing. Similarly, the use of the Internet makes it possible for learners to meet 'cyber pals', publish their work, search websites for information, receive online mentoring by experts, and share class projects with others. Most teachers regard technology as a tool to aid their work and not as a replacement for the teacher (Bender 2008). While it is important for teachers to plan how they would promote participation among the learners in their classrooms, learners should not depend on these devices to a degree that hinders the learning process (Nind and Kellett, 2003).

The theory of multiple intelligence developed by Gardner (1983) holds that intelligence manifests itself in nine different ways, namely verbal-linguistic, mathematical-logical, musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic and existential (Bartolo et al., 2007; Vayrynen, 2003). Not all learners are at the same level of the learning experience. Consequently, teachers have to determine the level of the learners' learning experiences in order to adjust and modify their teaching to suit the needs of all the learners. Multi-level instruction is a strategy that teachers may use in responding to the varied levels of the learners' learning experiences. This form of instruction allows the learners to work at their own level of experience (Vayrynen, 2003).

Another important area of teaching pedagogies use in teaching learners with special educational needs is the use of the body senses in teaching. The use of the senses is regarded as one of the prominent practices of the teaching process. Multi-

sensory instruction is described as teaching that involves all the senses; that is, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling (Rief and Heimburge, 2006). Since learners use different senses to learn, teachers have to ensure that they are given a chance to use these senses during the learning process. In language teaching, the learner depends primarily on the use of perception and cognition to process information (Combley, 2001). The retention of the information learned is consolidated through the use of the senses. Teachers therefore have to plan which learning and teaching aids to use to enhance the use of the senses by the learners. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) draw attention to two different strategies which they purport enhance inclusion: (a) Work choice requires the classroom teacher to consult with colleagues to learn how to differentiate learning tasks so that specific accommodations for learners with special educational needs can be made; (b) Play zone refers to an area of the classroom where a range of active play choices are provided. Teachers select activities that are matched to individual student needs.

Teaching is a process whereby teachers impart knowledge to the learners or facilitate their learning process. Booth (cited in Ainscow and Sebba, 1992) believes that traditional teaching styles could be used to enhance inclusion but points out that it requires a measure of flexibility and awareness to switch approaches in such a manner that the needs of all learners are responded to. Therefore a more constructivist approach to pedagogy is advocated.

2.2.3 Constructivist view of teaching pedagogies for teaching in public schools.

Recent time's constructivist approaches to teaching laid emphasize on two-way interaction in the sense that learners are not the passive recipients of knowledge but also have to make a contribution to their own learning. Muijs and Reynolds (2001:

28) refer to these two-way approaches as "direct instruction" and "interactive teaching".

Constant interactive analysis is an important aspect of curriculum delivery (Brandon, 2011). Such an interactive analysis occurs within the framework of an interactive teaching approach. For interaction to be effective in the class, teachers have to acknowledge questioning and elicit responses from the learner (Muijs and Reynolds, 2001). Interactive teaching: fosters inclusion because the learners are catered for in the curriculum rather than being compelled to adjust to the curriculum (Nind and Kellett, 2003); focuses on the participation of the learner and places less emphasis on the outcome; is essentially teaching which is not tightly structured but creates environments which allow the learners to learn through the spontaneous use of language, play and free exploration of their environments; is a natural way of learning in the absence of a prescriptive structure (Farrell, 1997).

Teachers use different teaching approaches to interact with learners. The choice of a particular teaching approach or strategy is guided by the nature and availability of the learning material, type of learners, and the ability of the teacher to manage the process.

The cornerstone of collaboration is communication, which requires a voluntary, mutual and creative decision making process on the part of the teacher for it to occur effectively (Loreman et al., 2005). Collaborative teaching is described as teaching by two or more teachers delivering instruction to a diverse class of learners (Florian, 2007). Teachers should be willing to establish professional communities of learning with shared goals. They should be prepared to plan and share the responsibility of teaching (Leonard and Leonard, 2003; Murawski and Dieker, 2004; Smith 2004). The advantage of collaboration is that the expertise, knowledge, experiences and the

abilities of all teachers can be effectively utilized. It reduces the load of the individual teacher since the work is shared by the team.

It also has a positive effect on the esteem and the confidence of the teacher. More experienced teachers assist their less experienced colleagues, thereby improving the chances of good classroom teaching and management. The idea of ensuring partnerships with the learners to foster collaboration between teachers and learners is imperative because it fosters mutual learning (Jelly, Fuller and Bryers, 2000). Collaboration and cooperation between the teacher and the learner may have a profound effect on the thinking ability of the learner (Savolainen et al., 2012).The work of Reuven Feuerstein`s instrumental enrichment (IE) which has a positive influence on aspects such as the self-esteem of learners, improved behavior in the class and better attainment is a good example in this regard. The learners are taught to think critically and solve problems, which helps them to reach their learning destinations quickly and saves the teacher a great deal of hard work (Balshaw and Farrell, 2002; Jelly and Bryers, 2000).

On the other hand, facilitating learning also becomes significant in a constructivist view of inclusive pedagogy. Learning is regarded as a process by which learners acquire new knowledge and a process by which they retain knowledge acquired through learning processes. It is facilitated in different ways; therefore, to enhance inclusion during the learning process, teachers have to understand how learners learn. Learning is believed to mean different things to different learners. Therefore the concept has to be analyzed because, when defined, it is an unjustive that is context bound, as said before, and heavily influenced by the learner`s experiences (Watkins, Carnell and Lodge, 2007). Learning may occur in three stages: reception (acquiring facts or knowledge), construction (making meaning out of knowledge), and

reconstructing ('rebuilding' through interaction with others) and is influenced by the contact an individual is engaged in with others.

Several constructivist learning styles are found. For instance, collaborative learning is defined as a type of learning characterized by the identification and sharing of common reference points and models (Murphy, 1999). It involves sharing ideas and looking at the learning phenomenon from different perspectives. Collaborative learning is associated with what is called "classroom talk", which is the process whereby partners share information and plan together in presenting ideas explicitly and clearly enough to engage in joint reasoning, evaluation and decision-making (Murphy, 1999; Watkins et al., 2007). Collaborative activities give both the learner and the teacher feedback on their role during the learning process (Walton, 2012). The learning process has to be learner-centered and learners have to be in control of their own learning. Indeed, learning is meaningful when learners can relate what they have learned to what they already know (prior knowledge). Cesar and Santos (2006) refer to this collaboration as a "learning community" where learning is dependent on the communicative process, meaning is negotiated mutually, and knowledge is constructed collectively.

This is closely related to what Miles (2007) calls "creative learning" where the success of the learner is dependent on the success of the group. Peer tutoring is a system of learning whereby proficient learners assist their less proficient peers with their school work in a mutual academic relationship (Scruggs, Mastropieri and Marshak, 2012). Peer support emanates from collaborative team work when learners share tasks (Blanch, Duran, Valdebenito and Flores, 2012; Lorenz, 2002). According to Meijer (2003), peer tutoring appears to be effective in both the cognitive and affective (socio-emotional) domains of learner development. Leaners benefit from

their peers and invest heavily in building sound human relationships with their fellow learners, family and teachers (Blanch et al., 2012; Miles, 2007).

2.2.4 Child-Centered Pedagogy

Grimes (2014) in his book 'Teachers, Inclusive, Child-Centered, Teaching and Pedagogy' has explained child-centered pedagogy as one of the teaching pedagogies public school teachers can use in teaching all children including learners with special educational needs. According him, all teachers will meet children with very diverse backgrounds, abilities, interests and learning needs in their schools. As there is not a special pedagogy to teach children with disabilities, teachers in inclusive settings use a child-centered pedagogy to meet the needs of all the children. It is, however, not very helpful to make a rigid division between teacher-centered and child-centered education. In many parts of the world education is very traditional (rote learning) and within many cultures the respect for the teacher is very important.

When implementing a child-centered pedagogy the local conditions and culture should be respected and taken into account. It is possible to implement elements of child-centered pedagogy in a more traditional set-up. The key point we need to remember is that in order for teachers to develop a more inclusive pedagogy, they often need to begin to change their classroom behavior: where they stand, how they use resources, the way they speak to and interact with the children and the way they assess the children's learning. Grimes (2014) again came out with three features of child-centered pedagogy and espouse that, teachers should ensure that when teaching learners with special educational needs these three features must come to play. He explained them as follows:

2.2.4.1 Key features in child-centered pedagogy

- *Meaningful Learning Opportunities*

When students understand the purpose of the lessons and school activities, they will be more motivated. The link between what and how it is taught and the daily lives of the children is important. This can only be done if teachers make an effort to connect with their students, know what is important for them and create a relaxed atmosphere in which students feel safe to exchange with each other and the teacher. Some ideas on how to make this connection include:

1. Build lessons on previous knowledge and skills of students. The teacher needs to know the students very well and give them opportunities to show what they know and make significant contributions to the lessons.

2. Use daily experiences of the children as examples when explaining new concepts. This will increase the relevancy of the lessons for the children. Students can be encouraged to bring things from home and share their stories and experiences. Again, the teacher needs to be very aware of the living circumstances and culture of the students.

3. Make learning purposeful by giving children opportunities to practice what they have learned in daily situations.

4. Relate what the children learn in one subject to what they have learned in another subject. Many subjects are interrelated and it is important to show this coherence.

- **Cooperative Learning**

Within cooperative learning, students share responsibilities and resources in working towards common goals. Cooperative group work can be powerful in

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increasing children's understanding of concepts and positive attitudes towards the work and each other. When implemented well, group work allows teachers to spend more time with individuals and small groups. There are many different approaches to cooperative learning and group work. It is important for teachers to consider how to divide children into groups. To ensure group work is effective in inclusive classes, especially when teaching children with disabilities, it is best to avoid making groups based on ability levels. Placing all children with disabilities in one group can be very stigmatizing and offers children little opportunity for collaboration and learning. Creating groups of children with a variety of backgrounds provides most learning opportunities for all.

In teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools it is important for teachers to create an environment in which children feel valued and are supported to take risks and contribute. Group work needs to be planned carefully to ensure the activity is meaningful for all, and teachers need to be available during the tasks to give support where needed. The children will need to learn and practice skills to make group work successful (understanding the assignment, dividing the tasks and resources, taking turns, valuing each other's contributions, expressing ideas, and active listening, etc). The children can each preform a role. Make sure that the roles rotate and everyone gets to be the team leader, for example. It is important also that children with special educational needs/disabilities receive valuable and crucial roles in the group work. It might often be necessary to make ground rules with the children before starting group work.

To be meaningful, group work needs to go beyond situations where children complete tasks individually and assist others when needed. Most interesting learning experiences derive from situations where children depend on each other and have to

collaborate to complete an assignment. The different forms of interdependence during group work include:

1. Goal interdependence: the group has a single goal.

2. Reward interdependence: the whole group receives recognition for achieving the goal.

3. Resource interdependence: each child has different resources (materials and knowledge) that need to be combined in order to complete the assignment.

4. Role interdependence: each child has a different role, which is needed to complete the assignment (time-keeper, reporter, etc.)

- ***Attractive and Accessible Learning Settings***

The class and school environment can support child-centered learning and teaching. Child-centered learning spaces are welcoming for all children, are safe for all, enable equal participation of all learners and focus on self-discovery. Although it is important to create attractive and accessible learning spaces for all, this is not the end goal, but rather a means to implement child-centered learning approaches in which the right of all children to access quality education is valued and addressed. Some features of child-centered learning spaces include:

1. Physical space: ensure all children can move around freely in the class and school, work individually and in groups, and access learning resources when needed.

2. Learning corners: set up different learning corners in your class in which children can learn independently or in small groups through self-directed learning. In each corner, resources and instructions are presented. The corners give the students the opportunity to enrich what they have previously learned, to practice new skills and to explore new concepts. Students can participate in

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planning, organizing and managing the learning corners. This can strengthen the link between home and school.

3. Display areas: make a display board in the class in which you can show the work of (all) children and provide feedback on activities. Change the display board frequently and use it as a teaching aid.

4. Class library: books are very effective teaching aids which help children to learn new concepts, develop language and understand messages. Local books or books made by children can be just as effective as expensive children's books.

- **Quality teaching**

Quality teaching has been identified as a key component of positive outcomes for diverse learners (Alton-Lee, 2003), specifically for those with special educational needs/disabilities. There are a number of characteristics of quality teaching for learners with diverse abilities including a focus on learner achievement, inclusive and cohesive learning communities, clear links between school and the learner's culture, responsiveness to learning processes, availability of opportunity to learn, goals and resources (including ICT) are aligned, scaffolding and feedback are provided, self-regulation and meta-cognitive strategies are promoted, and teachers and students jointly engage in setting and assessing goals (Alton-Lee, 2003).

Another teaching pedagogy used when teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools is quality inclusive pedagogy. This relates to teachers' craft knowledge: what, why and how they do what they do (Florian, 2012). Teachers should be supported by their schools / systems to have the opportunity to enhance their own skills in reflection, instruction, management, and strategies for learning (Boyle, et al., 2011). By providing explicit or multi-faceted instruction

(aimed at ensuring students with disability are able to access the curriculum), there is often an unintended positive effect on academic attainment by other students in the classroom. Boyle, et al. (2011) describes this as a "professional positive" (p. 73) of inclusive practice.

- *Use of Adaptive curricula*

In Australia one aspect of good practice in teaching learners with special educational needs is the ability of the public school teacher to use adapted curricula to support student diversity (Salend, 2011). Differentiating the curriculum to cater for the individual needs and differing behaviors of children has become a key aspect of inclusive education, yet this requires considerable teacher expertise, planning, and preparation (Shaddock, 2009).

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority ACARA (2013) has recognized the need to use differentiated curriculum for some students with disability and has provided guidance to schools and teachers Australia-wide when using the Australian Curriculum. This direction includes advice on how to determine a starting point for students with special educational needs / disability and how to use the three dimensions of the Australian Curriculum (curriculum, general capabilities, and cross-curriculum priorities) to address the needs of all students in the classroom (ACARA, 2013). Examples of adjustments that may be made are provided to illustrate how students are able to participate in the curriculum. Students' changing needs must also be taken into account to ensure teachers are consistently meeting the requirements of students with disability to achieve appropriate outcomes (Boyle et al., 2011).

While all this teaching pedagogies are being used to enhance effective participation of students with special educational needs it is absolutely not the case in

Afadzato South District in the Republic of Ghana. Most public school teachers lack the necessary skills that can help them adapt the curricula and to put modifications in their instruction to be able to meet the requirement of students with special educational needs.

According to Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) guidelines by World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labor Organization (ILO), International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) child-centered approach to teaching students with special educational needs/disabilities means that all processes and structures in school are centered on supporting each child to learn and participate in active learning. It explains further that too often, the teacher, rigid curriculum or fixed timetable becomes the center of attention, regardless of whether the child with special needs is actually benefiting or learning. A teaching method that is child-centered /learner-centered also means "age-appropriate". Sometimes a child with special educational needs or disability may not be identified early enough to be begin basic education at the same time as his/her peers.

A child with intellectual impairment may be older but have a relatively young mental age. Therefore, it is important for teachers to respect the child's actual age when teaching and learning is going on in the school.

- *Play, activity-based learning and stimulation pedagogical approach*

  The education element of the CBR guidelines pointed out that young students with disabilities or special educational needs learn naturally and effectively through play and by taking part in everyday activities. Activity-based learning can be an effective alternative approach of teaching students with special educational needs/disabilities in situations where resources and time are

limited. It refers to how children learn when they are physically involved in activities that are useful or productive. Teachers in public schools must therefore modify their way of going about teaching students with special educational needs to ensure that their diverse needs are taken care of in the classroom. Stimulation is about providing an environment and activities that stimulate the child's development.

2.2.5 Multisensory instruction.

Morin (2014) highlights that learning often relies on a child's sight to look at text and pictures and to read information. It also relies on a child's hearing to listen to what the teacher is saying. Multisensory instruction isn't just limited to reading and listening. Instead, it tries to use all of the senses. Every lesson won't use all of a child's senses (taste, smell, touch, sight, hearing and movement). But in most multisensory lessons, students engage with the material in more than one way. For example, let's say the child's class is studying apples. The child might have the chance to visually examine, touch, smell and taste apples instead of just reading and listening to his teacher speak about how they grow. Then the child might hold a halved apple and count the number of seeds inside, one by one. That's multisensory teaching. It conveys information through things like touch and movement called tactile and kinesthetic elements as well as sight and hearing. It is imperative for teachers who teach students with special educational needs in public schools to use multisensory methods when teaching children with special needs. It helps them to be effectively included in the classroom.

In her write-up she again pointed out that all kids can benefit from multisensory lessons, including kids who don't have learning and attention issues. If a student learns something using more than one sense, the information is more likely to

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stay with him. But multisensory learning can be particularly helpful for kids with learning and attention issues. For example, these kids may have trouble with visual or auditory processing. That can make it hard for them to learn information through only reading or listening. Using multiple senses gives these and other kids more ways to connect with what they are learning. This type of hands-on learning can make it easier for students to:

- Collect information

- Make connections between new information and what they already know

- Understand and work through problems

- Use nonverbal problem-solving skill.

Multisensory instruction helps kids tap into their learning strengths to make connections and form memories. And it allows them to use a wider range of ways to show what they have learned. Multisensory teaching takes into account that different kids learn in different ways. It helps meet the varying needs of all kids not just those with learning and attention issues. And by providing multiple ways to learn, it gives every kid in the class a chance to succeed.

2.2.6 Personalized learning

Morin (2014) in her work also mentioned that kids learn in different ways and at different paces. Personalized learning is a teaching model and it is based on the premise that, each learner gets a "learning plan" based on how he or she learns, what he knows, and what his or her skills and interests are. It is the opposite of the "one size fits all" approach used in most schools. Learners work with their teachers to set both short-term and long-term goals. This process helps learners take ownership of

their learning. Teachers make sure learning plans or project-based learning match up with academic standards. And they check to see if learners are demonstrating the skills they're expected to learn as they progress through their education. Personalized learning is not a replacement for special education. It is an approach to general education that can work with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a 504 plan, response to intervention or other specialized intervention programs. But accommodations, supports and accessible learning strategies need to be essential parts of personalized learning. If done well, all students will be more engaged in their learning. And struggling students will get help sooner. If not done well, students with disabilities could fall further behind.

No two schools using personalized learning will look exactly the same. But here are four widely used model schools as follow. Each of these models sets high expectations for all students and aligns their learning to a set of rigorous standards.

1. *Schools that use learner profiles.*

   This type of school keeps an up-to-date record that provides a deep understanding of each student's individual strengths, needs, motivations, progress and goals. These profiles are updated far more often than a standard report card. And these detailed updates help teachers make decisions to positively impact student learning. A learner profile also helps students keep track of their own progress. It gives the teacher, the student and, in many schools, the parent a way to know if they need to change a learning method or make changes to goals before the student does poorly or fails.

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2. ***Schools that use personalized learning paths.***

This type of school helps each student customize a learning path that responds or adapts based on his progress, motivations and goals. For instance, a school might create a student's schedule based on weekly updates about his academic progress and interests. Each student's schedule is unique. But it's likely to include several learning methods. (These are often called "modalities.") The mix might include project-based learning with a small group of peers, independent work on certain skills or complex tasks, and one-on-one tutoring with a teacher. A personalized learning path allows a student to work on different skills at different paces. But that doesn't mean the school will let him fall far behind in any area. Teachers closely monitor each student and provide extra support as needed.

3. ***Schools that use competency-based progression.***

This type of school continually assesses students to monitor their progress toward specific goals. This system makes it clear to students what they need to master. These competencies include specific skills, knowledge and mindsets like developing resilience. Students are given options of how and when to demonstrate their mastery. For example, a student might work with a teacher to weave certain math skills into an internship at a retail store. The student might work on several competencies at the same time. When he masters one, he moves on to the next. The student gets the support or services he needs to help master the skills. The emphasis isn't on taking a test and getting a passing or failing grade. Instead, it's about continuous learning and having many chances to show knowledge.

4. ***Schools using flexible learning environments.***

This type of school adapts the environment students learn in, based on how they learn best. That includes things like the physical setup of the class, how the

school day is structured and how the teachers are allocated. For example, schools might look for ways to give teachers more time for small group instruction. It's not easy to redesign the way teachers use space, time and resources in the classroom. But this type of "design thinking" can help student needs reshape the learning environment. Personalized learning is not widely used in schools yet. Many aspects still need to be explored. But this approach has the potential to help reduce the stigma of special education and better meet the needs of kids with learning and attention issues. IEPs are too often focused mainly on deficits. But personalized learning paths can balance that by focusing on students' strengths and interests. Together, IEPs and personalized learning can give kids the supports to work on weaknesses and a customized path that engages their interests and helps them "own" their learning.

Personalized learning can also give students the chance to build self-advocacy skills. It encourages them to speak up about what interests them. It also allows them to be equal partners in their learning experience. Personalized learning has a lot of potential, but it also has some risks. Teachers might not have enough inclusion training to make this approach accessible to all students. They might not know how to support kids with executive functioning issues. They might not know how to track competencies or analyze other kinds of student data. The key is to make sure that when schools start using personalized learning, teachers have the training to meet the needs of all children. And the more you know, the more involved you can be in the conversation.

2.3 Teaching and learning resources available for teaching students with special educational needs in public schools.

For this study the researcher, would take teaching and learning resources to mean materials, devices, and other things that can be used to support activities of teaching and learning in the classroom. In Australia, adjustments has been made to school cultures, organizational practices and teacher behavior to expedites action for teaching learners with special educational needs in government schools for effective implementation of inclusive practice (Shaddock, 2006; Shaddock, Neill, van Limbeek & Hoffman-Rapp, 2007). Schools need to provide appropriate support, collaboration, planning and feedback to teachers to ensure they are able to use good practice in relation to inclusive education which also means teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools. This is clearly articulated in Australian legislation (for example the Disability Standards for Education, 2005), supporting the teaching of learners with special needs/disability in public schools (inclusion) as it points to the need for collaboration, participation, curriculum support, and learner wellbeing as areas in which staff are required to consider the needs of individual learners (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006).

In relation to curriculum, for example, the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006) state clearly that "education providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the course or program is designed in such a way that the learner is, or any learner with disability or special educational needs is, able to participate in the learning experiences (including the assessment and certification requirements) of the course or program, and any relevant supplementary course or program, on the same basis as a student without disability, and without experiencing discrimination" (p. 23).

Evidence of good practice in relation to assisting teachers also consists of appropriate provision of services to support the inclusion of learners with disability (Boyle, et al. 2011). Quality teaching practices in the classroom require support and school-wide collaboration and school leaders, in particular, have an important role to play in supporting and nurturing quality teaching in school staff (Salisbury & McGregor, 2005). Central to the services provided, though, are the policies which underpin them.

- ***Alternative curricula as resource material for teaching learners with special educational needs***

  In some instances in Australia, education departments in various Australian regions have decided to introduce the use of alternative curricula or resources to assist learners with significant disability and those with special educational needs to achieve outcomes appropriate to their future environments. For example:

- *The Victorian DEECD (2013) uses ABLES (Abilities Based Learning and Education Support) resources to support students with special educational needs and to assist in the development of an individual learning plan for the student. These resources consist of an assessment tool, directions on setting individual learning goals (keeping in mind the Victorian Essential Learning Standards [VELS]), and research-based strategies to support students' learning.*

- *The DET (2013) in WA has recently piloted a program known as ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) which aims to offer a range of programs for students aged 11-25 years, at all ability levels, specifically targeting students with significant disability at the senior*

secondary level. DET posits that "ASDAN is a curriculum development organization and an internationally recognized awarding body, which grew out of research work at the University of the West of England in the 1980s. ASDAN programs and qualifications blend activity-based curriculum enrichment with a framework for the development, assessment and accreditation of key skills and other personal and social skills, with emphasis on negotiation, co-operation and rewarding achievement" (DET, WA, 2013, Para. 3).

A further example of alternative curriculum includes life-skills curricula developed by the NSW Board of Studies (2007) which is designed to be embedded in regular settings (Years 7-10) or completely replace the existing curricula (Years 11&12).

- *Assistive and adaptive technologies*

The rapid increase in available technologies (both assistive and instructive) has provided teachers with an ever-increasing range of tools to support learners with special educational needs/disability in the mainstream classroom (Bryant, Bryant, Shih & Seok, 2010; Dalton & Roush, 2010). Assistive technology allows learners with disability to access physical environments, be mobile, communicate effectively, access computers, and enhance functional skills that may be difficult without the technology. Article 9 [Accessibility] of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability CRPD, (United Nations, 2006) discusses the right of individuals with disability to access information and communication technologies and systems on an equal basis with others. Assistive technology comes in low, medium, and high-tech forms and has been found to assist with academic success when selected to match the individual needs of the learner (Simpson, McBride, Lowdermilk & Lynch, 2009). It is

undeniable fact; the increase in iPads and other mobile learning technologies in classrooms have been cited as improving learners' productivity, creativity and engagement while allowing for differentiated, explicit and individualized instruction (Mulholland, 2011). Many schools throughout Australia are increasingly adopting these forms of technologies (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Vic, n.d.).

- *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*

    In Australia, the use of UDL is considered a good resource for including learners with special educational needs in public schools. In 2007, Van Kraayenoord described good inclusive pedagogical practices which have been undertaken in classrooms in Australia. Examples of these practices are concepts of differentiation and UDL. Types of differentiation undertaken include "…allowing extra time, expecting less work, using different outcomes, and providing help with writing" (p. 392). It was noted, though, that there was inconsistency among settings in which these strategies were used, even though the same students were accessing both regular and special education settings.

Universal Design, in contrast to differentiation, is concerned with "the conscious and deliberate creation of lessons and outcomes that allow all learners access to and participation in the same curricula" (p. 392). Van Krayenoord (2007) describes Universal Design for Learning as being able to provide "accessible, flexible, usable and customizable curriculum for all students", which can be used in combination with instructional differentiation.

- *Individual Educational plan (IEP)*

    Individual educational plan is a resource material useful for effective teaching of learners with special educational needs including those with disabilities. It can be

termed as a plan that involves lay out of all the activities that is strictly followed to guide the education of children with special educational needs. In Australia individual planning for learners with special educational needs / disability is considered to be the cornerstone of good practice in catering for the needs of all learners (Dempsey, 2012). Individual planning provides for the inclusion of key stakeholders in the process (DETE, Old, 2012). The engagement of the parents and the learners themselves is seen, though, as critical to development of effective Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and is highlighted by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (2013) in WA which notes that "If there is a legitimate reason for a learner to be following a modified curriculum (for example, an individual education plan, documented learning plan or differentiated learning plan), schools should negotiate and document any variation to the reporting of the learners' achievement with the learner and his/her parents or carers" (p. 3).

All jurisdictions in Australia use some form of individual planning, under different titles. For example, IEP (Individual Education Plan or Program), EAP (Education Adjustment Plan), NEP (Negotiated Education Plan) or ILP (Individual Learning Plan), to document the individual requirements and outcomes for learners. Although all states and territories provide individualized planning for students, Dempsey (2012) states that there is a great deal of inconsistency in the way these are being used and in the number of learners with disability with these plans. He goes further to suggest that "being provided with an IEP is heavily influenced by the serendipity of the state you reside in and the type of school system in which you are enrolled" (p. 29). Dempsey highlights the need for a more consistent use of IEPs with students with disability in Australia.

Shaddock, MacDonald, Hook, Giorcelli and Arthur-Kelly (2009) similarly emphasize that "individual plans can be valuable but they first must be seen as a process that actually helps" (p. 69), rather than just as an administrative requirement or to keep stakeholders happy. Individual planning, in the form of IEPs, can be used within a personalized learning environment, which is becoming an increasingly popular model in some Australian jurisdictions (DEECD, Vic, 2007). Personalized learning refers to all students in the classroom being central to the learning and is a different model to that of individualized instruction. ICT is a key component of personalized learning, along with concepts of lifelong learning and communities of collaboration (DEECD, 2007). While personalized learning does not target any particular group of students, it may allow for a range of diverse students to experience greater success in learning outcomes, due to stronger student engagement in the learning. For some students with significant difficulties, however, specific planning may still be required.

2.4. Behavior management strategies in inclusive schools.

The Salamanca Statement marked the beginning of an international movement towards inclusion of children identified with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools (UNESCO 1994). Children might struggle at school because of learning/academic needs, social difficulties, emotional and behavioral difficulties, or frequently combinations of these, and responsibility for their inclusion falls to class teachers. Patterns of problematic behaviors, such as noncompliance and aggression are negatively correlated with children's academic performance (DiLalla, Marcus, and Wright-Phillips 2004). Similarly, these behaviors are correlated with stressed teacher–pupil relationships and poorer peer interactions (McMahon, Wells, and Kotler 2006).

Children identified with special educational needs (SEN) and behavioral difficulties present extra challenges to educators and require additional supports in school. This additional support also falls on teacher's skills and expertise to be able to provide for these children on equal basis as others. According to an international journal called "*INTO Guidance on Managing Challenging Behaviors in schools*" the most effective method adopted by teachers when attempting to manage challenging behavior is to prevent it occurring in the first place. To this end, many schools have developed strategies to promote positive behavior. This is based on the assumption that most behavior patterns (negative and positive) are learned, and therefore, that acceptable behavior can also be learned. It is also based on the belief that behavior is contextual, so children can be taught to behave in a certain way in the school context. Acceptable behavior is then reinforced in a school and classroom climate which is supportive of positive behavior.

Mainstream schools are becoming increasingly inclusive, and therefore regularly teachers encounter a situation where they meet children with challenging behavior as an aspect of special education. A positive approach to the promotion of good behavior benefits all children, including those with special educational needs. However, approaches must be modified to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate to the child with special educational needs.

Children have an inherent need for a safe and secure environment. The classroom, in many instances, may be the only stable element in the life of a child not experiencing such security in other parts of his/ her life. Teachers model positive behavior by treating children and adults with respect and building up a positive relationship with pupils.

Children react well to routines and boundaries. There is, of course, a natural tendency to try and push out boundaries that are set and to test their limits. Establishing and maintaining rules and routines in the classroom requires a good deal of effort from teachers, but it has been shown to promote positive behavior. The following strategies have been found to be effective in promoting positive behavior in classrooms, when implemented appropriately. Develop clear and simple classroom rules in discussion with the children.

These can be displayed in the classroom, perhaps with pictorial clues for non-readers. About three to five rules, stated in terms of observable behaviors is sufficient for most classes. Positive statements such as "We put our hands up when we want to speak" are preferable to negative statements such as "No shouting out in class". Rules can be taught and practiced through role-play, and reinforced by praise or reward. It is important that there are positive consequences for children who keep the rules. There must also be consequences for those who do not. All children respond to attention and therefore a focus on positive behavior will reinforce positive behavior. Many teachers make a point of trying to catch children being good and praise or reward them for this, placing the focus of attention in the classroom on the majority of children who behave appropriately. In many classrooms, teachers have adopted a formalized approach to rewards and praise, where children earn tokens, points or stickers for positive behavior.

Gordon (1996) gives the following advice on the use of rewards:

- *Reward appropriate behavior as soon as possible;*

- *Make the pay–offs small, and attainable;*

- *Make the rewards cumulative;*

- *Make the pay-offs co-operative (i.e. encouraging the class to work together for a reward);*

- *Never take back a reward; and*

- *Use the element of surprise (e.g. by giving a double reward unexpectedly).*

  Many disruptive behaviors occur at transition times, for example when children are moving from one activity to another. It is therefore essential to plan for routines and transitions. Transitions can be flagged by the teacher e.g "In five minutes, we will finish this activity and eat our lunch". A child with a specific learning difficulty may, for example, find organizing books and equipment as a particular challenge. A verbal or visual clue about what will happen next can therefore help with management of classroom life.

Giving clear instructions to children about what is required of them is part of everyday life in the classroom. Teachers give an enormous number of commands during the school day with some research indicating an average number of thirty-five in a half-hour period. This has been shown to rise to sixty where children have more behavior Problems (Webster-Stratton, 1999).

Webster-Stratton describes children as being caught in a "command storm". In order to make teachers' instructions more effective she suggests that commands should be:

- *Delivered after the teacher has sought and gained attention;*

- *Short, clear and specific;*

- *Expressed in positive terms;*

- *Followed by time for children to comply;*

- *Followed up by positive reinforcement of children who have followed the commands; and*

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- *Reinforced by giving further signals to non-compliant children such as by standing close, using eye-contact and using their name.*

  Children must be aware that misbehavior has clear, consistent consequences, and that failure to keep rules or to behave well will incur consequences. These can be presented to a child as a choice, where a teacher might say "I have asked you twice to work quietly. If you continue to talk, you will have to work at another table." This is a way of holding children accountable for their behavior. Consequences should be consistent, promptly applied, reasonable and related to the behavior concerned.

  A Whole-School Approach A shared ethos for the school, which emphasizes care, respect and responsibility, can be both a starting point and a result of an emphasis on positive behavior. Practical manifestations of such an ethos include school assemblies where success is celebrated, a welcoming attitude to parents, 'buddying' of younger children or children with special education needs, a sharing of responsibility with students and the use of children's first names. The cornerstone of such an approach is that it is shared by the whole school community, including staff, children, parents and the Board of Governors. The approach taken by the school must also be appropriate to the context in which the school operates, including factors related to the broader community and the legislation governing this area.

Webster (2017) espouses that behavior is one of the greatest challenges a special education teacher faces. This is especially true when students receiving special education services are in inclusive classrooms. There are a number of strategies that teachers both special and general education can employ to help with these situations. To him, the most effective way to deal with difficult behavior is to prevent it. It really is as simple as that, but that's also sometimes easier to say than to put into practice in

real life. Preventing bad behavior means creating a classroom environment that reinforces positive behavior. At the same time, you want to stimulate attention and imagination and make your expectations clear to the students.

Webster went on to explain that to start, you can create a comprehensive classroom management plan. Beyond establishing rules, this plan will help you institute classroom routines; develop strategies to keep student's organized, and implement Positive Behavior Support systems. He again went on to explain that before you have to put a Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) in place, there are other strategies you can try. These will help refocus behavior and avoid those higher, and more official, levels of intervention. In his write-up he said first of all, as a teacher, it is important that you understand the potential behavioral and emotional disorders children in your classroom may be dealing with. These may include psychiatric disorders or behavioral disabilities and each student will come to class with their own needs. Then, we also need to define what inappropriate behavior is. This helps us understand why a student may be acting out the way she has in the past. It also gives us guidance in properly confronting these actions. With this background, behavior management becomes part of classroom management. Here, you can begin to implement strategies to support a positive learning environment. This may include behavior contracts between yourself, the student, and their parents. It could also involve rewards for positive behavior. For example, many teachers use interactive tools like the "Token Economy" to recognize good behavior in the classroom. These point systems can be customized to fit the individual needs of your students and classroom.

As part of the strategies for managing behavior difficulties of students with special educational needs in public schools the web

https://www.specialeducationguide.com/pre-k-12/behavior-and-classroom-management/classroom-management-7-tips have come out with 7 tips from experienced teachers which public school teachers can adopt to enhance upon managing disruptive behaviors of some students with special educational needs in their classrooms. These are further explained below:

- ***Ensuring good classroom management***

  Classroom management starts months before you or your students step into the classroom. Experienced teachers end each year troubleshooting their classroom management strategies from the previous school year. While not a comprehensive guide, here are seven tips that can make classroom management a little less challenging and help you fulfill your goal of keeping all students safe, engaged, learning and on task.

- ***Establishing Relationship***

  As a teacher, your relationship with a student starts the moment you meet them. No matter how difficult a student may be, you need to embrace the challenge of getting to know him or her. Every child deserves love. Life has enough hard knocks in store for a child who struggles socially, and you may be one of the few people that child believes cares about him or her. This could make a difference in his or her life choices, or at least in his or her decision not to disrupt your class. Many teachers naturally form relationships with children. They enjoy their presence, listen to them and respond appropriately, look with interest at what children show them from a rock star's picture in a notebook to a squishy worm and ask questions about it. They learn their students' names and greet them at the door. When a dispute arises, they listen and try to be fair. They don't play favorites.   Teaching is a very active job, especially in

higher grade levels, in which teachers have less than two minutes per child per class period to establish a relationship.

- *Creating a positive learning climate*

One of the most important things you can do to proactively manage your class is to establish a climate that encourages learning. Teachers need to be aware of students' intellectual, emotional, physical and social needs and establish rules and procedures to meet them. Students should be recognized as individuals, each of whom has something to offer. Arrange student seating strategically, grouping students by skill level or arranging them in a manner that's conducive to group work or sharing in pairs. Also, plan for patterns of movement within the classroom and have your students practice until it is second nature; moving students in a structured, timed way can enliven your classroom, while maintaining control and adding focus. Nothing is as impressive and cohesive as a class moving into prearranged groups for an activity in 30 seconds. This also allows for more variety in your lessons; for instance, you could teach a 15-minute lesson to students at their desks, then move the class to a different setting and teach a different, but related 20-minute lesson. Establishing student expectations is also an important part of establishing a positive learning climate. Make sure that every student is welcomed in a group and expected to participate. Also, practice good time management and plan to teach from the first day of school.

- *Encouraging Helpful Hands*

Letting students take part in the classroom helps them feel invested and it can be a help to you as well! Some experienced teachers use task cards on which students' names rotate weekly. Strategies such as this provide fair ways to

distribute classroom jobs. It can also be helpful to post a sign that tells how to do a job. For instance, if you assign students to straighten and clean a bookshelf, you might place a list of steps to follow on the bookshelf. You might also allow students to help in more casual ways, such as assigning group runners for supplies or allowing students to pass out papers or straighten the room. These tasks can serve as helpful self-esteem builders for a child who often feels left out; however, you should note how many times a student helps to avoid favoritism.

- *Teach needed skills*

  You should teach students the skills needed for success in your classroom. Often, teachers think about teaching content, without realizing how important it is to teach other skills, such as social skills, thinking skills, study skills, test-taking skills, problem-solving skills, memory skills and self-regulation. Many school issues disappear after a few lessons in anger management or another needed skill. Students can benefit greatly if you find small segments of time to teach and model a skill; however, you may need to be creative, since not all students need instruction in the same skill. However, if students are struggling to get along with peers, be organized or be on time, which is better: to discipline them for what they lack or to teach them what they need to know?

- *Set Up Structure and Procedures*

  Structure and procedures are vital parts of classroom management. Every part of the day needs to be thought through and brought into alignment with what works best for your teaching style, your students' personalities, the age group and any special challenges that could cause a distraction.

Start planning as soon as you see the classroom. Envision each class; ask yourself what you will do and how it can be done easily. When your students arrive, get them on board by teaching classroom procedures, along with your content, during the first week of class. For example, explain how to enter, how get the needed supplies and start the warm-up exercise during the first few minutes of class, how to turn in and pass out work, how to work in a group, how to move between activities and how to exit the classroom. Also, be sure to cover your expectations, including how to behave in class and the consequences of misbehavior.

- ***Organize the Lesson***

    A lesson that engages all students, moves forward smoothly and allows the teacher to talk to every child can only be accomplished through preparation. You need to design your lesson with classroom management in mind. First, build as many teaching strategies and interventions as possible into the lesson. Use time management techniques (like setting a timer to help the class transition through a series of activities), and implement quick feedback techniques, such as a checklist to keep up with student progress. Next, plan one-on-one and small group strategies, design appropriate movement and allow time for social interaction and reflection time. For instance, you could ask students to write in their journals at the end of an activity to give them time to think about what they just learned. Organization also involves spending time after school arranging handouts, preparing supplies, writing on the board and taking care of other tasks. In doing so, you can prevent pauses during the lesson and better manage your classroom.

- *Use Effective Discipline*

    Classroom management can help you avoid most discipline problems. At the beginning of the school year, be sure to explain and post your discipline plan, establishing that no one will be put down, bullied or made fun of in class because it is a "safe zone" where everyone, including the teacher, is allowed to make mistakes and learn from them. Usually, this forms a cohesive learning environment, where students trust you to take care of their needs and where they respect one another. Much can be said about positive (or negative) peer pressure in a class. If there are students who want to learn and they act accordingly, the dynamic of the class will likely remain fairly stable; however, if students who don't want to learn disrupt and influence their peers, you may need stronger discipline skills or even an administrator to fall back on. Even if you are diligent in setting up your discipline plan and have developed signals to warn students that they are about to be disciplined, not every student will comply. When that happens, follow the steps of your discipline plan. If that doesn't work, you may refer the student to response to intervention (RTI), or you may spend time researching other available discipline plans for ideas. Whatever, you do, don't give up, the students who are not disrupting and even those who are need you.

2.5 Ways of improving teaching and learning in inclusive schools.

It is undeniable fact that teachers still bear a bulk of the burden and there has to be an improvement in the instructional strategies for the district to record a sustainable improvement in giving quality education to learners with special educational needs in public schools. Teaching and instruction according to Adebayo (2009) usually sets forth principles and strategies of optimizing learning. Learning

involves relatively permanent change in behavior in the areas of knowledge, attitudes and skills as a result of exposure to specific experiences. The teacher should be more concerned with how teaching and instruction in general can bring about effective and efficient learning in the learner. He noted that teaching is perhaps as complex as the human behavior it intends to control, modify and transform.

From the foregoing, therefore, the center of teaching and instruction is the teacher and this suggests that, to achieve totality in the education of learners with special educational needs, some strategies should be worked out to improve the general performance of learners. In this research therefore, the researcher has chosen to use and discussed Lawal (2000) explanation of the stages in instructional process, stages and approaches to learner plan development, and the strategies for effective classroom instructions as one of the ways of improving and supporting teachers when teaching learners with special educational needs, in public schools. The instructional process, stages and approaches to learner plan development mentioned above is explained below:

- ***Stages in Instructional Process***

To improve upon teaching and instruction in public schools, Lawal (2000) described some stages in teaching and instructional process with the aid of a diagram which depict the process as a continuous process that begins from planning to implementation to evaluation and after which there is a feedback that takes the process back to where it started and flow in the same previous manner. For the purpose of clarity, the diagram is reproduced in figure 2.3 below.
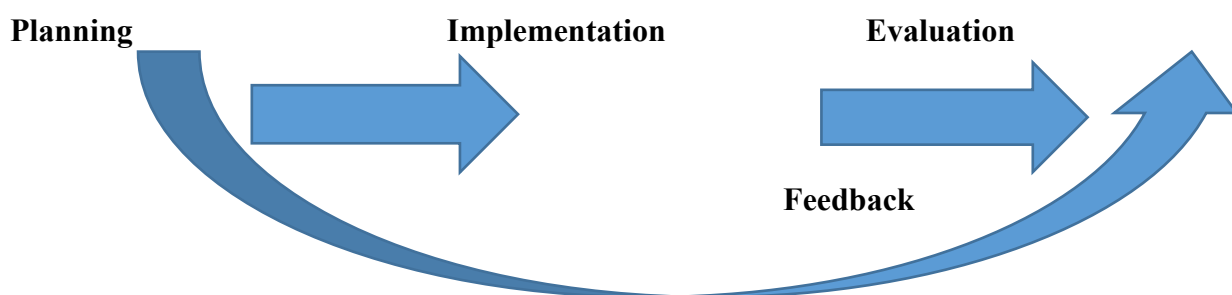
Figure 2.3: the simplified model of the instruction process

Source: field work 2019

The model of the process of instruction in the figure above is applicable to the following hierarchical layers in educational processes:

1. Curriculum development (ultimate)

2. Scheme of work development (intermediate)

3. Lesson development (proximate)

   Adebayo (2009) pointed out that all these three process should be of interest and concern to classroom teachers. The one which is most centered on them is the proximate process of lesson development, which involves the micro-process of planning, implementation, and evaluation of teaching and learning activities as the key components of instructional process.

- ***Stages and Approaches to Lesson Development***

The three stages that Lawal (2000) described as a process of teaching and instruction and when teachers adhere to it can improve teaching and learning for all students including students with special educational needs in public schools are explained below. The first stage and approach is the planning stage.

1. ***Planning***

   According to Lawal, Planning is usually for the future, but a sensible and sensitive planner must also look backward. In other words, to plan effectively for the future, teachers need to address and possibly redress the past. If, for

instance, a teacher's last lesson proved unsuccessful, as indicated in the learner's poor achievement scores, the teacher would need to undertake some corrective or remedial teaching and also develop some form of diagnostic evaluation into the beginning of the next lesson to ensure learners 'adequate entry behavior. He continued to establish that if, on the other hand, the previous lesson proved largely successful, the teacher still needs to undertake prognostic evaluation as a strategy of developing the learner's current achievement into the plan for the next lesson.

Under the planning stage, the teacher has to answer the fundamental questions of whom, why, what, when, and how (Adebayo, 2009). Little wonder why Milkova (2012) sees the planning as the designing of the teacher's road map of what students need to learn and how it will be done effectively during the class time. Milkova, pointed out that a successful lesson plan addresses and integrates three key components of objectives for student learning, teaching/learning activities, strategies to check students understanding. The researcher is also of the same view that when teachers follow this stage carefully, teaching and learning for students with special educational needs' difficulties could be addressed. Effective planning lesson planning goes a long way to enhance the inclusion of all learners including students with special educational needs.

The second stage and approach Lawal described as ways of improving learning for students with special educational needs is the implementation stage.

2. *Implementation*

He espouses that this is the stage at which the teacher actualizes his/her plan by integrating the art and science of teaching with contextual factors of the school and the classroom, among others. The contextual system according to

Edem (2007) includes the variables of the society, the community, the school and the classroom within which teaching or instruction take place. The teacher as an individual rarely has any direct control over the context of the society and the community, and hardly any control on the intrinsic factors that hampers or enhances learning within an individual. However, the teacher can better play his role as an agent of change if he/she can have access to developmental trends in the science of teaching while attempting to develop his/her talents, knowledge, skills, and attitude into an effective and efficient art through a conscious and systematic refining of his/her personality.

In the process of implementing his teaching plan, Edem (2007) highlights that the teacher initiates and sustains active and lively classroom interaction through carefully selected and implemented techniques of:

i. *Introduction*: The teacher may introduce the lesson to the students with a question bearing in mind the stated objectives of the lesson this is to know their preconceived notion about the topic. Milkova (2012) gives an example of taking a simple poll by asking how many of you have heard of X? Raise your hand if you have.

ii. *Presentation*: the lesson should be broken into bits (i.e. through the use of task analysis) and presented in steps flowing continuously from simple to complex. The teacher must estimate how much time to spend in each of the segments and the relevant examples to use. All these should be done during the planning stage of the lesson and strictly followed when in the classroom.

iii.   ***Evaluation***: this is simply the means of checking for understanding. Without having clearly stated objectives, it will be very difficult for the teacher to know if the students understand what has been taught. The teacher also have to give room for the students to ask question, it is usually better for him/her to anticipate before time the kind of questions that the students may ask. The evaluation is the feedback mechanism that eventually leads to the next planning – implementation – evaluation process.

iv.   ***Summary***: the teacher should go over the lesson highlighting the main points of the lesson. It is a very important to note that the evaluation outcome will form the bases of the summary.

Another ways by which the teaching and learning of students with special educational needs can be improve in public schools is the strategies Iheanacho (1986) and Santrock (2004) has outlined as effective inclusive education classroom teaching instruction.

- ***Strategies for Effective Inclusive education Classroom Instruction***

The Classroom Teacher- In the instructional area, Iheanacho (1986) and Santrock (2004) point out that a competent teacher should demonstrate the ability to:

1. *Set annual goals (i.e. long term goals with short term objectives).*

2. *Assess and describe each child in terms of academic performance, social adjustment and motor performance.*

3. *Know areas of strength and weaknesses of a child in mathematics, reading, language skills, etc.*

4. *Plan instruction using test result data.*

5. *Prepare materials for instruction.*

6. *Implement a child's Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) to achieve his long term and short term objectives.*

7. *Develop curriculum that suits each child's age level, vocabulary and mental development.*

8. *Creativity must come into pay in the preparation instructional materials for individual or group work.*

9. *Make good use of package teaching materials.*

10. *Task analyze a child's instruction in a way that it will improve on the child's learning behavior.*

11. *Carry out continuous assessment as he/she teaches in order to make necessary change to meet the child's needs.*

12. *Know how to use proper reinforcement to achieve his/her goals.*

In this study, the issue of what can be done to improve teaching and learning for learners with special educational needs considers the function of heads/principal/proprietors of schools. It is notable among other things that heads of schools can influence teaching and learning activities in our schools. In this regards, Iheanacho (1986) and Edem (2007) came out with some modern practices that heads of schools should acquaint themselves with that can improve upon teaching and learning. According to them School heads or principals should acquaint themselves with modern practices in the teaching and learning process so as to be able to advice the teachers on the best classroom set up and requirements. The following were suggested by Iheanacho (1986) and Edem (2007) as the strategies through which basic school heads and administrators can help to improve classroom instruction.

1. *Communication. Discussing with teachers on how to set realistic instructional goals at various class levels; taking into consideration the individual differences of the children.*

2. *Helping teachers adjust the curriculum so as to suit the special needs students in the classroom (i.e. in the case of inclusive education).*

3. *Helping the teacher to locate and prepare interesting instructional materials.*

   4. Informing teachers about support services available such as in-service training, workshops, conferences, seminars, etc.

   Headmasters of schools have the highly complex task of utilizing and directing both the human and material resources available to him towards the attainment of the school goals. As a school leader, he has the legal power to protect his students against the excesses of the teachers and resolve any friction that may arise between them. For instance, a teacher's capacity to influence the students he teaches goes far beyond teaching in the classroom to include but not limited to the effect of his attitudes, mannerisms, and ways of doing things in and outside the classroom.

The central focal point of the school is teaching. Therefore, the primary duty of the school heads and principals and teachers is to plan and coordinate.

- **Pre-service and in-service professional learning and development for public school teachers**

Pre-service teacher education

There are quite of a number of international research confirming that pre-service teacher education programs have not traditionally prepared teachers well for teaching students with special educational needs in public inclusive schools (Abu-Heran et al, 2014; Ashan et al. 2013; Bhatnagar & Das, 2014; Das et al. 2013; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2014). As an example, Das, Kuyini &

Desai (2013) conducted a research and found out that 70% of their sample of 349 primary school teachers in Delhi had neither received any training in special education, nor had experience with teaching students with disabilities. And this is not different in many of our schools in Afadzato South District. This finding is supported by Bhatnagar and Das (2014) who conducted focus group interviews with 20 secondary teachers selected from four administrative zones in New Delhi. The secondary teachers in this study did not feel prepared to teach students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Similarly, Bukvic (2014) surveyed 86 Croatian teachers who were employed in regular schools where students with special needs were enrolled. The findings indicated that 70% of this group reported having no or very little knowledge about teaching students with special education needs. Abu-Heran et al. (2014) presented a questionnaire to 340 teachers randomly sampled from the teaching population of Palestine, where the process the researchers described as 'integration' was in its infancy. Palestinian teachers were generally concerned about the inadequacy of their preparation. In Cyprus, Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2014) also found that teachers were dissatisfied with their initial teacher education for inclusion.

In this same way Burke and Sutherland (2004) reporting on a study conducted in the United States, reached different conclusions on pre-service teacher education. According to them surveying Initial Teacher Education (ITE) candidates and in-service teachers in New York, they found that pre-service teachers believed their teacher preparation programs provided them with the skills to work with diverse learners, but in-service teachers believed that the ITE programs were inadequate. The differences between the views of pre-service and in-service teachers could be due to the fact that many of the teachers surveyed were trained before the idea of teaching

students with special educational needs in public schools which is termed as inclusive education was included in coursework. It is also possible that while pre-service teachers thought their courses provided the knowledge and skills required, when they had full responsibility of planning for and teaching classes they may have found that this was not the case.

Florian (2012) admonished that in terms of what teachers need to know and be able to do, is that educational administrators and decision makers should move beyond debating whether beginning teachers need to know how to improve teaching and learning, or whether they need more specialist knowledge about disability and the learning needs of specific groups of learners. She writes: "One thing is clear: the adults who work in schools need to be better at sharing their professional knowledge and skills with each other" (p.219). Florian calls for the development and research of new forms of professional knowledge that target inclusive education and which outline ways of working with and through others.

It is her belief that the skills and knowledge required for working with adults, and children, should form an essential element of all teacher preparation courses. Ashan, Deppler and Sharma (2013) note that the aim of ITE should be to equip teachers who are willing to teach in inclusive classrooms. These researchers found that female pre-service teachers showed more positive attitudes towards inclusive education than males. Overall, they concluded that simply attending inclusive pre-service teacher preparation courses is not sufficient for developing positive values and beliefs. Curriculum content, practicum opportunities and experience with children with special educational needs/disabilities were all deemed to contribute to the better preparation of teacher candidates for inclusive classrooms.

Still hammering on pre-service teacher education curriculum, the researcher would like to refer a literature work conducted by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education on teacher education for inclusion in 2010.

These groups are of the view that an initial teacher education curriculum should include information about diversity amongst the school population and also how to translate theory about responding to diversity into practice. Specific suggestions included that initial teacher education should promote "reflection on issues of norm, difference, inclusion, intercultural education, positive attitudes and high expectations, innovative skill in assessment, good communication and information communication technology"

This report states that inclusive teachers should be able to provide:

1. *developmentally appropriate content for students;*

2. *clear instructions;*

3. *opportunities for students to practice at an appropriate level of difficulty;*

4. *opportunities for students to participate in appropriately designed task progressions; and*

5. *Accurate feedback on and assessment of subject matter and role performance.*

   Additionally, Di Gennaro et al. (2014) advocate training pre-service teachers in critical reflection as a means of assisting them to become perpetual problem solvers who analytically question what is happening in their classrooms. Suggested means of developing reflective practice for pre-service teachers include the use of reflective journaling, portfolios, mind-mapping, storyboarding, scenario based role plays, micro-teaching and video reflection. They noted that teacher education courses should "aim at reorienting teaching methods to be in line with inclusive values and support teachers in handling

the complexity characterizing the educational context of the twenty-first century"

In an attempt to map gaps in teacher education programs for inclusive education across the United States, Zion and Sobel (2014) undertook a comprehensive series of research and evaluation activities, which included gathering data from 17 focus groups comprising 102 current pre-service teachers, recent graduates, clinical teachers, principals, students and families of students with diverse needs. The aim was to identify the skill sets needed by teachers to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities. Zion and Sobel (2014) pinpointed disparities across pre-service program in four critical areas:

1. *socio-cultural knowledge;*
2. *affirmative attitude;*
3. *collaborative skills; and*
4. *Pedagogic diversity.*

Hamman et al. (2013) found that practicing teachers who serve as mentors during field experience represent one of the most important sources of information accessed by pre-service teachers regarding how to provide instruction to students with disabilities. In Hamman et al's study, three questionnaires were distributed to 337 pre-service teachers at a south-western US university on completion of their teaching practicum. One questionnaire asked pre-service teachers about inclusive education in the practicum. The second questionnaire focused on collaboration with supervising teachers, and the third questionnaire targeted evidence of teaching efficacy. Findings of this study were that both scaffold collaboration and a focus on inclusion contributed to pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy for implementing

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inclusive practices. Importantly, Hamman et al. (2013) concluded that, "conscientious, collaborative co-operating teachers make an important contribution to the capabilities of their students"

In summary we can conclude that pre-service teachers require information about developing curriculum that is responsive to diversity, and allows all students to participate in learning and demonstrate growth. The development of collaborative skills is also important in pre-service teacher education. Teacher candidates who are well versed in sharing knowledge and skills and who can communicate about inclusive practices are more likely to rate their classroom interactions as efficacious and engage in continuing professional learning. Ideally, teaching, practicum and community service experiences all provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to learn from quality examples of inclusion and to employ critical reflective practices.

- ***In-service professional development and learning for public school teachers.*** In recent time the term 'professional development' has become associated with the delivery of some kind of in-service program, often to whole school staff groups, that is intended to influence or change teacher practice responsive to current trends in education. Professional learning implies a more internalized process where individual teachers interact with information and ideas about teaching and learning to further develop their skills and knowledge. It is undeniable, fact that, in order for teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools which can be termed as inclusive education to be successful or for public school teachers to stand in a position to effectively teach learners with special educational needs in public schools or in inclusive settings, teachers need to continually update their knowledge and to apply information about meeting the needs of diverse learners in

inclusive classrooms. Smith and Tyler (2011) note, that "Education reform requires a generation of highly effective teachers who are willing and knowledgeable to accomplish the goal of improving the learning of diverse learners" (p. 325).

It is also believed that one means of up skilling of teachers is for teachers to undertake post-graduate studies that prepare them for inclusive education. In the United Kingdom, Male (2011) surveyed 48 teachers enrolled in a Master of Education Program in special and inclusive education. Teachers were surveyed at the beginning and end of a ten-week introductory module in order to ascertain whether their attitudes towards inclusive education had changed. Before undertaking the module teachers held generally positive attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with physical/sensory difficulties, social difficulties and academic difficulties. They were less positive about including learners with behavioral difficulties. At the end of the period of focused professional development, results showed that the teachers had more positive attitudes towards all students. The researchers caution, though, that the teachers had demonstrated pre-existing interest through their voluntary enrolment in the module and may have been open to attitudinal change. But this is not the case in Afadzato South, Ghana and the researcher believed when teachers can willingly come out and avail themselves to such professional programs their attitude towards teaching in inclusive schools would change to the positive.

Similarly, in trying to find out about teacher professional development in the form of in-service training programs Takala, Haussttatter, Ahl and Head (2012) conducted a comparative study in three European countries namely; Norway, Sweden and Finland. In the study, they sampled and questioned 241 teachers who engaged in post-graduate courses with an inclusive education focus. These teachers were from

Norway, Sweden and Finland and had both special and general classroom experience. There are inherent differences in approaches to inclusion in these three countries. In Norway there is no special education and no special education teachers are employed. The Swedish education system, however, includes special teacher education and pedagogy, with special pedagogues working as advisors in schools in roles that focus on the whole school system.

In Finland, special education teachers are employed within the education system. Finland has the higher proportion of students in special schools or classes of these three countries. The findings from the questionnaires indicated that teachers, including special teachers, actively sought to improve their skills to teach students with a range of disabilities.

In the same way O'Gorman and Drudy (2010) also investigated the professional development of specialist teachers working in regular schools as part of a large-scale research project. Questionnaire responses from learning support, resource and special education teachers in 399 primary schools and 416 post primary schools were analyzed. Teachers ranked their needs for professional development as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Ranking of professional development needs from O'Gorman and Drudy (2010)

Areas of professional development	Percentage of 'High' Ranks
Individual education plan	19.9%
General up-skilling or non-specific courses	16.2%
Knowledge of specific disabilities	11.2%
Administrative skills	6.5%
Testing, diagnosis and assessment	5.9%
Teaching methodologies relevant to SEN	5.15%
Contact with experienced teachers	4.2%

Professional development of teachers as means of supporting them to improve upon their way of teaching students with special educational needs for inclusion needs to be tailored to specific needs identified in particular school settings. Jenkins and Yoshimura (2010) contend that professional development should prepare teachers to both identify student needs and determine how best to meet them. These authors present a five-step framework to structure professional development practices at a school level and are explained below:

1. *Build readiness – Conduct awareness-building activities and plan collaboratively before training and implementation. Reflect on the school vision and needs. Identify broad goals for the professional development activity;*

2. *Conduct planning – Translate the broad goals into detailed plans for activities to build knowledge and skills and plans for application. Establish a planning team representative of the teaching faculty. Consider opportunities for active learning, pacing of learning, allowing time for reflection;*

3. *Implement training – Space professional development activities over time to promote integration of knowledge into practice;*

4. *Allow for implementation – Provide support for teachers while they integrate knowledge to practice; and*

5. *Maintenance – Provide continuous monitoring and reassessment of professional development activities. Encourage reflection, which may either be shared or kept confidential.*

In furtherance to what should be done for teachers to support them to improve upon their teaching Walton et al. (2014) concluded that equipping teachers to

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be effective in inclusive settings requires more than workshops alone. They state that systemic support for teachers is crucial in their professional development. Teachers never stop learning; they set up a process of perpetual learning by seeking evidence on which to base their professional organization and activity. Teachers, as professionals, never reach a point where they know all there is to know about teaching and learning, simply because learners change and bring differences to their learning and teachers change in light of experience, new professional learning and engaging with new students.

In Australia and New Zealand ongoing professional learning in the form in-service training is part of all teacher-accreditation frameworks and is also, of course, important in terms of learning that lasts. This must be seen as important in Afadzato South District, Ghana to enhance teachers' ability to teach all children with diverse needs. Ideally, teachers monitor their own professional learning needs, align them to the learning needs of their students and actively engage in the kind of professional development that improves their practice in a targeted and collaborative way.

To draw the curtains on professional development of teachers as a way of improving on their ability to effectively teach students with needs, the way forward is to share understandings of inclusive teaching practices, co-constructing the content of professional learning in ways that translate research into practice and meet the specific needs of schools. One way is that, external partners and university faculty working in partnership with teachers, or teachers working together from specialist and regular settings, can provide fresh perspectives on how to improve professional knowledge and outcomes for students with disabilities. As Loughran (2015) notes, in-service professional learning requires reviewing current practice with fresh eyes. The success of large scale blended learning courses illustrates one way forward. Whatever

direction is taken, the collection of data from teachers about their professional learning needs is a necessary foundational step.

Teachers' professional learning can be supported through organizational cultures and communities of practice where there are opportunities for teachers to discuss educational research and its potential to impact the classroom experience. One best way to do it is to use Anwaruddin work. Anwaruddin (2015) describes the need for researchers to understand how teachers interrogate and interpret theoretical knowledge in order to develop their pedagogical knowledge. He suggests there is a need for teachers to be engaged in research and for researchers to view teachers as professional partners in active learning communities. And in this way teachers can contribute to relevant research, collect data and make their own determinations, which can underpin their evidence-based practice.

In summing up the actual fact is that teachers require evidence-based professional learning that is grounded in both theory and practice. This is what the researcher would suggest to all educational administrators especially in Afadzato South District where this study is conducted that they ensure teachers in their schools have in order to assist them do effective teaching especially when it comes to teaching students with special educational needs in public schools.

In 21st century classrooms the focus is on the relationship between teaching and learning that takes place in each and every lesson. The best practice is that there should be adaptation and modification of materials, instruction, content and assessment in order to meet the needs of a range of learners. Teachers must ensure that there is flexibility, negotiation and choice in the modern classroom. Learning should be for all. Teachers should also be more involved in their own professional learning currently than ever before. Timperley (2011) explains that, in the past,

professional development for teachers was geared towards the transmission of information. In her recent writings, Timperley advocates for the greater engagement of teachers in their professional learning, because they are 'adaptive experts' – self-regulating learners, not passive recipients of knowledge.

Teachers engaging in professional learning are both generators and users of knowledge, engaging in reflection to improve practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). The purpose of reflection on teaching is to differentiate between effective and ineffective practices and to understand why some practices are more effective with particular groups of students than others. This reflection can be personal or facilitated. Increasingly pre-service and in-service courses comprise of experiences related to classrooms with the aim of bridging the research to practice gap. In examining the pedagogy of new teachers in Scotland, for example, Spratt and Florian (2015) explored the links between theoretical ideas and evidence of learning and teaching.

Finally, Allen (2003) and Timperley (2011) emphasize, ongoing improvement in student attainment and teacher professional practice should be the desired outcome of all professional learning programs. At the heart of professional learning is the examination of current practice, for example, how does my teaching practice fit with current theory and how can it be improved? Professional learning communities are a means of examining theory and practice in education but they cannot operate without the support of school leadership (Le Clerc et al. 2012).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Research design

The research design used for this study was a Case Study using qualitative approach. The main objective was to find out teachers' experiences when teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools. Qualitative research approach can provide answers to the questions of who, what, when, where, and how relevant to a particular research problem.

In broad terms, qualitative research is an approach that allows the researcher to examine peoples' experience in detail by using a specific set of research methods such as in – depth interviews, focus group discussion, observation, content analysis, visual methods, and life histories or biographies (Bailey, Hennink and Hutter, 2011, p. 9). The qualitative methodology was used in order to gain in-depth information from the respondents of the three selected schools.

Data was gathered through focus group interviews. Creswell (2003) defines qualitative research as an enquiry useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon. The phenomenon in this study is teaching learners with special educational needs/disabilities within the target schools. A phenomenological approach is often used for co-operative researcher where participant relationships such as an open-ended dialogue in a focus group (Luttrell, 2010). This allows a researcher to know more about this phenomenon, the researcher asked teachers both broad and specific questions in order to understand their personal views and experiences.

Furthermore, Best and Kahn (1998) emphasized that qualitative data are useful within the research setting because participants will freely express their thoughts, perceptions and experiences in more detail in relation to the research topic. For

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instance, since the study's primary focus was on teachers' experiences in teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools, research participants (teachers) were given the opportunity to share their personal reflections in relation to how they experience or view the said topic. Thus, in order to obtain in-depth information on the research topic, the study incorporated some of the basic characteristics of a qualitative research paradigm. These included conducting fieldwork, where the researcher had to physically visit the selected public schools and research participants to seek permission in order to conduct the interviews in the interviewees" natural setting (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

3.1 Population

The population for the study was twenty (20) teachers in three selected public inclusive schools where there are learners with special educational needs having their education alongside their non-disabled counterparts in the Afadzato South district. These teachers continue to give education to children with special needs / disabilities in mainstream schools. Creswell (2005) opines that population is a group of individuals with same characteristics, either small or large depending on which group the researcher would like to study within this wide range of population. However, Avoke (2005) refers population as the group of interest to the researcher, and these population exhibits characteristics that is of interest to the researcher, therefore a justified population for the study.

16.20 **Sample size**

Six (6) public school teachers from three selected basic schools were purposively selected to participate in the study. The purposeful sampling was used because the respondents were teachers who have ever though and those who were at the time of the study teaching learners with special educational needs in their

classrooms. Sampling is a process of selecting just a small group of people as representatives from a large group called the population (Nicholas, 2006). In this study, purposive sampling was used; and the informants were selected for a good reason tied to the purposes of the topic. Thus according to Patton (1990), purposeful sampling refers to a procedure in qualitative study whereby informants are selected because of some characteristic. In this regard, only public school teachers were key informants thus leaving out the four special education resource teachers working in the Afadzato South District.

3.2 Sampling technique

The researcher used purposive sampling to select the six (6) teachers for the study from the larger population. Purposive sampling is considered ideal as it will permit the researcher to intently select the site and individuals for the study and learn or understand the principal phenomenon or their lived experiences (Creswell, 2003). In addition, as the main purpose of the study states, the main target was teachers in public schools in the Afadzato South District, and not special needs education teachers or special education resource teachers. Therefore the criterion of choosing informants was based on the fact that only public school teachers were wanted for the interview. Another criterion for choosing the informants was teachers who have ever taught and those who are still teaching students with special educational needs in public schools were a good choice to answer the questions.

A total of six teachers from three public basic schools were interviewed. The three schools are represented by letter A, B, and C. The teachers are also represented by teacher A1, A2, B1, B2 and C1, C2. The main reason for used of these letters instead of real names is due to ethical considerations, which should be applicable to the rules of conduct in research (Holloway, 1997)

3.3 Instrumentation

To obtain data for the study, a combination of instruments such as interview guide, and focused group discussion was used in collecting data for the study. This is because the methodology underpinning this study lends itself these instruments. The focus group discussion was considered appropriate to ensure triangulation of views from the participants. Interview is a verbal conversation between two people with the aim of collecting relevant information for the purpose of carrying out a research work (Bailey Hinnink and Hutter, 2011). It enables respondents to express their views, opinion, feelings, beliefs, insights and experiences about a problem in question through the use of probing questions.

The major reason for which the researcher decided to use interview method was to obtain description of the lived world of the respondents with respect to the interpretations of the meaning of the described problem (Kvale, 2009). It is also to allow collecting of detailed information from teachers about their experiences when they teach students with special educational needs in public schools since most of them do not have the requisite skills to effectively deliver to expectation in these schools. Through the establishment of trust and good rapport with the informants, a researcher is likely to get more information by using interview compared to other methods of collecting data.

The focus group interview with respondents lasted for one hour fifty-six minutes. The interview questions were formulated on the basis of the main research questions guiding the study. The national language in Ghana is English, and the medium of instruction in all basic schools. Therefore all respondents were interviewed in English for better communication between the researcher and the interviewees.

3.4 Procedure for data collection

A pilot study was planned and it was conducted with teacher trainees on teaching practice in the district capital town of the Afadzato South district where the study was conducted before starting the collection of the actual data. This helps the researcher to review and to restructure the tools for data collection in order to obtain relevant information that focuses on the research questions and to develop a deeper understanding of the situation to be studied. It is advisable that researchers practice the tools for data collection that they will use in carrying out their studies before conducting the actual research to enable them to be familiar with the tools before conducting the research (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008)

After the pilot study a familiarization visit was made to the schools and permission sought in a form of an introductory letter from the researcher's university. The letter was handed over to the head teachers in order to explain the purpose of the study to the teachers, and seek their concern and ensure them of all the necessary confidentiality. This is to enable the researcher to schedule time to come back to collect data for the study.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Punch (2014) espouses that research involves collection of data from people, about people and writing about these people anticipated ethical issues which is required in making an argument for a study. Therefore researchers need to protect their research participants; develop a trust in them; promote the integrity of research; guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on organizations and institutions; and cope with new, challenging problems (Israel & Hay, 2006)

According to Harry, Sturges, and Klingner (2005) biases in qualitative research are not considered problematic as long as the biases, assumptions, and

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possible influential backgrounds are noted. The identities of all participants in this study were protected with the removal of all distinguishing information from the data set. An introductory letter from the researcher's institution was given to all the three schools under study. Letter and number were used instead of names. Conducting the study at the participants' school with their natural work setting presented minimal risk to them. Additionally, conducting the research at the schools where the participants really teach reduced potential internal and external threats (Creswell, 2012).

Participants had access to all relevant information about the study. All data pertaining to the study are stored and password protected on the researcher's self-phone and computer. The data will be kept well and entry into the data file requires a password so as to avoid unauthorized access to the data file.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This study investigated teachers' experiences in teaching learners with special educational needs in three selected public schools in Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana. This chapter presents analysis of results and discussion of the findings in two parts.

Part A deals with the demographical characteristics of respondents according to gender, age, class, number of years teaching with Ghana Education Service, educational level, qualification, professional or non-professional and number of years teaching learners with special educational needs. Part B addresses the research questions findings and discussion of result.

The method used to collect the data was focus group interview. The design is purely a case study using qualitative approach. The number of respondents was six (6) and was purposefully selected because they are teaching learners with Special Educational Needs in the selected schools.

4.1 Demographical data on respondents

Total of six respondents were interviewed on their personal data including; gender, age, number of years handling SEN pupils, number of years with GES, educational background and qualifications. Below are the percentage distributions of the variables (personal data). Of the six respondents 2 (33.3%) were females and 4 (66.7%) were males. This indicates the gender disparities among teachers teaching at the basic school level in the district, thus Basic (1 to 6). It is believed and stated by most people that since females by nature handle children's better than males hence the gender disparity.

For age distribution of respondents it was obtained that 2 representing (33.3%) ranges between 51- 60 years and 21 – 30 years respectively while 1 (16.67%) ranges between 41-50 years and 31- 40 years respectively. It is deduced from the result that as many as 66.6% of the respondents were young and have more years ahead of them to work.

Responds from participants shows that, 3 (50%) had been teaching learners with special educational needs for 2 years at the time of study. 2 (33.3%) and 1 (16.7%) had been teaching learners with SEN for 2 years and 5 years respectively. The result shows that only one participant had at least 5 years working experience of teaching learners with SEN.

Considering number of years each participant has been teaching in GES. As many as 4 (66.7%) ranges from 5 – 10 years while one each representing 16.7 ranges from 11-15 years and over 20 years respectively. Compared to the number of years respondents worked with learners with SEN, it was revealed that majority of the participants have little experience teaching and working with learners with SEN.

For professionalism majority four (4) representing 66.7% were trained teachers. Out of the four trained teachers three attend College of Education and one attend University. The two of the three who attend College of Education holds a Diploma in Basics Education Certificate while one of them holds Teachers Certificate 'A'. The one who attend University hold a first degree in (B.Ed.) in Basic Education. The rest two of the six participants were untrained teachers. One of them holds High National Diploma (HND) certificate from Polytechnic while the other holds Middle Sch. Certificate.

Finding from the demographic dataset reveals that majority of the participants has very little experience with learners with SEN in the selected schools in Afadzato

South District in the Volta Region of Ghana and hence had some influence on their methods of handling learners with SEN in the district.

Theme ONE:

4.2 Pedagogies teachers used in teaching learners with SEN in public schools.

To answer this research question, the interview data collected were used. The following were the responses from the questions.

Pedagogy in education is methods of instruction or techniques of teaching (Loughran, 2006). According to McDonald (1992), pedagogy is an art molded by purposeful and oftentimes, speedy reasoning.

From the interview the following responses were made by the participants seeking their views about the specific teaching pedagogy they employed in teaching learners with SEN. According to teacher A1, B2 and C1 share similar views by stating that they employ the use of demonstration method in teaching learners with SEN.

This finding is in line with Farrell (1997) who explains that learners should be encouraged to take their learning seriously and be in control of it. They should be given the opportunity to demonstrate how they have learned. The notion of "trial and error" (that is, trying to do things for oneself) is critical in encouraging learners to lead their own learning. It was added that, they at times just cope with the learners during teaching and learning periods, because it is mostly difficult to handle the learners with SEN. Teacher C2 responded that;

"I use remedial and my own sign language method, since am not an expert in teaching learners with SEN though I did a course during my professional education as a teacher. Because the boy in my class was having speech problem so if I ask him something he will not be able to talk to me". (Verbatim expression by teacher C2).

Again, another participant who was teacher B1 also said she uses coping and demonstration pedagogies in teaching the child. Again this finding conforms to Farrell (1997) who stated that the use of demonstration teaching pedagogy encourages learners to lead their own leaning.

It is deduced from the responds that almost all the teachers are attempting to manage and teach learners with SEN in their respective schools but not necessarily taking care of the learners as expected due to lack of expertise and therefore must art.

The above finding or indication contradict with Vygotskian (1978) theory on Zone of Proximal Development which establishes that when a learner cannot accomplish a given task but the task is within the learner's zone of proximal development, using the right tools and appropriate assistance by the classroom teacher the learner may be able to accomplish the task. This assistance is also known as scaffolding.

Scaffolding is a temporal support teacher and parents can give to a child to assist him or her to accomplish a task. After mastering the task scaffolding will be gradually removed and the learner will be able to complete the task on his or her own (Vygotsky, 1978; Papalia. Et al, 1998).

Furthermore, Eisner (2002) recommends that the artistry of teaching is found in how teachers craft action, the linguistic features of language, the skill demonstrated in managing interaction, or the choice of an appropriate explanation of an apt. it is however, noted that teachers employ the use of demonstration, coping management and remedial as the means of supporting learners with SEN in some selected schools in the Afadzato South District.

Regarding their experiences using the pedagogies they responded as followed. Apart from teacher C1 who has different view about the experiences each of the

participants had in applying the particular pedagogy they employ in teaching learners with SEN. Teacher C1 reported that, teaching learners with SEN alongside their peers without difficulties is time consuming and it delays progress of the class. Thus attempting balance teaching to satisfy every learner. This is because, as demanded by the new standard based curriculum in Ghana, teachers are required to bridge the gap between low and high achievers (equity).

Teacher A2, A1, B1 & 2 and C2 said that there is difficulty handling the learner with SEN and so they at times neglect them in the process due to the large class size. As a result some of learners were repeated twice due to low performance in academic work. This finding indicates that in most of the selected schools in the Afadzato South District, learners with special educational needs were only passive recipients of knowledge during teaching and learning activities.

However this finding again contradicts the explanation given by Muijs and Reynolds (2001). They established that in recent times constructivist approaches to teaching encourages effective learner participation in the classroom. Their explanation laid emphasis on two-way interaction in the sense that learners are not the passive recipients of knowledge but also have to make a contribution to their own learning. Muijs and Reynolds (2001: 28) refer to these two-way approaches as "direct instruction" and "interactive teaching".

Brandon (2011) also noted that constant interactive analysis is an important aspect of curriculum delivery. He further explains that such an interactive analysis occurs within the framework of an interactive teaching approach. For interaction to be effective in the class, teachers have to acknowledge questioning and elicit responses from the learner (Muijs and Reynolds, 2001). Interactive teaching: fosters inclusion because the learners are catered for in the curriculum rather than being compelled to

adjust to the curriculum (Nind and Kellett, 2003); focuses on the participation of the learner and places less emphasis on the outcome; is essentially teaching which is not tightly structured but creates environments which allow the learners to learn through the spontaneous use of language, play and free exploration of their environments; is a natural way of learning in the absence of a prescriptive structure (Farrell, 1997).

Despite the various pedagogical approaches used by the respondents majority of them still struggle to teach learners with SEN with understanding. Though more than half of the respondents are with professional training on learners with SEN than untrained teachers among the respondents.

The interview revealed that there are no differences between professional teachers and non-professional teachers with regards to their pedagogical experience regarding the teaching of learners with SEN.

As earlier stated in item (a) above, all six respondents, teachers (A1 &2, B1 &2, C1 & 2) representing 100 percentage indicates that the little pedagogies they used help them in a way and it makes the work a bit easy to handling the learners with SEN, however, we just managing though we know there is more to be done. This attests that there are many teachers who are just managing the learners with SEN without giving them the required attention.

Regarding whether these pedagogies are sufficient to help them do effective teaching. Some of the comments from respondents included these:

Teacher A1 said that "*For me who am untrained teacher the teaching pedagogies I used are not sufficient. I need to be introduce to more modern teaching pedagogies in teaching learners with special education needs to enable me to be in comfortable position to meet the needs of the boy in my class".* (Verbatim expression by teacher A1).

This finding is in conformity with the finding from D' Amico et al (2010). They explains that in teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools varying the available methods and technologies would provide a good basis for including all the learners in the class. For instance, differentiated instruction is often defined as taking place in a general-education classroom that makes use of a wide variety of instructional options aimed at the increasingly diverse learning needs that typically characterize an inclusive class nowadays.

Teacher B2 also responded that looking at the way we struggle in teaching one thing several times to the girl with special needs in my class, may be the method I am using is not working. So if I can be of help to acquire some additional skills it will be good in order to include him in the classroom. Teacher B1, A2, B1, C1and C2 also expressed the same opinion with their colleagues. From the responds it shows that teachers still expressed lack of understanding for the use of the new curriculum for pre-tertiary education. In other words the curriculum explained that teachers should do community or cooperative learning in their classrooms to foster participation of all learners and do same as teachers in order to update themselves and also new knowledge as well approaches in handling learner's diversity.

This finding is also in line with Grimes (2014)'s finding in her write-up on child-centered pedagogies. Grimes mentioned cooperative learning as one of the critical features of child-centered teaching pedagogies and explain that within cooperative learning, students share responsibilities and resources in working towards common goals. Cooperative group work can be powerful in increasing children's understanding of concepts and positive attitudes towards the work and each other. When implemented well, group work allows teachers to spend more time with individuals and small groups. There are many different approaches to cooperative

learning and group work. It is important for teachers to consider how to divide children into groups. To ensure group work is effective in inclusive classes, especially when teaching children with special educational needs/disabilities, it is best to avoid making groups based on ability levels. Placing all children with disabilities in one group can be very stigmatizing and offers children little opportunity for collaboration and learning. Creating groups of children with a variety of backgrounds provides most learning opportunities for all.

Regarding what areas do you consider lacking in the pedagogies where support is needed? Teacher C1 respondent as follows:

"I need sign language skills as methods to enable me do effective teaching when handling learners with SEN in my school". (Verbatim expression by teacher C1). Teacher B2 also said the differentiation and scaffolding pedagogies that has been introduce in the new Standard Based Curriculum for basic schools would be of help. So if the Ghana Education Service in this district can give more training it will help.

The analysis and finding above concerning the use of differentiated instruction and scaffolding is in line with the views of Farrell (1997). This researcher noted that they are various teaching strategies intended to modify learner behavior are applied to support learners in the teaching process; for example, the differentiated approach to teaching; reciprocal teaching; scaffolding instruction; the use of technology to aid inclusion; multiple intelligence; multi-level instruction; and multi-sensory instruction. Teachers have to vary their teaching according to the needs of their learners

Again, another respondent who was a male participant, thus teacher A1 responded that:

One very important area that is lacking is the pedagogy that can be used to teach mathematics especially to the visually impaired child.

He commented this way:

"This is because I don't have any skills in managing him in my class". (Verbatim expression by teacher A1). Teacher A2, B1 and C2 said they are of the same opinion with their colleague teacher C1.

Again, the respond from teachers B2 maintain that there is room for improvement as far as the new standard base curriculum is concerned. Though not directly expressed by other teachers, their communication shows that they also need some level of explanation of the curriculum. As many as four teachers expressed the need for workshop on how to handle learners with visual impairment in the public school.

The statements from all six respondents unveiled that there are a number of needs for teachers in order to handle learners with SEN. Meanwhile, There is a collective reception within literature of the need to locate the education of learners with SEN within inclusive course of action and practice, with highlighting on improving the whole learning environment and the blend of teaching and learning processes applicable to all learners; an approach that should serve to prevent some learner's from requiring to be identified as having SEN.

Summary of findings from research question 1

The finding indicates that most public school teachers find it difficult in teaching learners with special educational needs (SEN) in the inclusive settings. And this is because majority of these teachers do not have the required skills regarding the specific or appropriate teaching methods or teaching pedagogies to use. It was also found that with the little training they had during their professional training put them in the position to do some demonstration during their teaching and learning activities in their classrooms. Some also were of the view that they are only managing learners

with special educational needs in their classroom by coping with them when it comes to teaching and learning activities in the school.

Theme TWO:

4.3 Teaching resources available for teaching learners with SEN in public

    schools.

The following were the responses:

Regarding what resources do their schools have to support teaching learners with special educational needs?

Learning resources are texts, videos, software, and other materials that teachers can use to support learners to meet the potentials for learning defined by Ghana Education Service curricula.

According to Teacher B1,

"*I have never been given any resources to support the general teaching in my school let alone to support the teaching of learners with special educational needs. My school does not have any resources in the school. If you like let us go to our store room for you to see for yourself*". (Verbatim expression by teacher B1).

The analysis and finding above concerning the kind of resources schools in Afadzato South have to support teaching learners with special educational needs in the selected is in contradiction with the work of Bryant et al (2010). Bryant indicated that there are rapid increase in available technologies (both assistive and instructive) has provided teachers with an ever-increasing range of tools to support learners with special educational needs/disability in the mainstream classroom.

Teacher C2 also stated that, the only resources we have in our school are word and sentence cards and pictures of objects to support the teaching of learners with special needs. Teacher A1, A2, B2 and C1 also said they share the same opinion with teacher

C2. From the responds it appears that teachers lack resources in their schools to assist learners with SEN. Though reference to the curriculum mentioned a good number of quality resources that can be used in teaching both learners with SEN and those without SEN.

Regarding the adequacy of the resources,

Teacher B2 responded by saying that:

"The resources are woefully inadequate to help me meet as a teacher to meet the needs of the boy with special needs in my class". I cannot give the little resource to him alone at the expense of the other peers. So I usually don't mind him so much". (Verbatim expression by teacher B2). Teacher B1 said that the resources we have are just not enough to support our teaching. We need devices like tape recorders to record lessons for some of the learners to be going through at home.

This finding is in line with Mulholland (2011) who stated that it is undeniable fact that, the increase in Ipads and other mobile learning devices and technologies in classrooms has been cited as improving learner's productivity, creativity and engagement while allowing for differentiated, explicit and individualized instruction. All other respondents supported the opinion of teacher B2 and concluded that as a result of the inadequate resources they are unable to do effective teaching. Therefore these devices mentioned by teacher B1 will help them catch up with their peers." It very clear from the responds that 100% of teachers lack adequate resources hence have difficulty in teaching learners with SEN.

Though the respondents expressed lack of adequate resources in their schools. They few of the respondents indicate some source of support with regard to teaching learning resources. Teacher B1 responded that the word and sentence cards were

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brought to the school by their PTA executives during the school's speech and price giving day celebration last time.

Teacher B2 also said that:

"They got their own from Plan International Ghana, an NGO, working in supporting less endowed schools in some selected communities in the district". However, teacher A1, A2, C1 and teacher C2 responded that for their school they never experience anybody bringing to the school resources than the old ones that the school have.

Teacher B2 said the children fines it very difficult to understand or follow lesson during teaching and learning activities in the classroom due to the limited and inappropriate resources. Teacher B1 also confirmed it that due to the inappropriate nature of the resources; the learners do not understand the lesson whenever he teaches especially those with special needs. Teacher C1, C2, A1 and A2 are of the view that because the resources are not many sharing them evenly is not always possible, so it is always challenging using them.

Summary of findings from research question 2

Findings from the research question 2 indicate that teachers lack teaching and learning resources in teaching in the general classroom where there are learners with special educational needs. It was also found that it was clear that the little readily available resources in various schools are woefully inadequate. As a result, teachers teaching learners with SEN in public schools are unable to do effective teaching that would enhance full participation of learners with special educational needs in schools in the district. It was concluded by the respondents that because the resources are not in their appropriate format and are woefully inadequate learners with special educational needs do not understand most of the lessons they treat in class.

Theme Three:

4.4 Behavior management strategies/techniques teachers need to teach learners

   with SEN in their classrooms?

The following were the responses;

Regarding managing disruptive behaviors some learners with SEN put up in class.

For teacher B1 responded that:

"The learner with SEN in my class can just get up and slap the colleague without seeing any wrong with it. Meanwhile, I have difficulty managing the behavior because I have no special competence to do so but rather talk to the victim not to mind the act". (Verbatim expression by teacher B1).

The finding above does not conform or contradict with Farrell (1997), who expressed that in order to include all learners in a lesson, it would be helpful if teachers could use behavioral teaching activities such as prompting, reinforcement and task analysis in the classroom. Also Moore (2012) mentioned that motivation is one of the phenomena that teachers could employ to manipulate the behavior of learners. Rewarding learners could ensure that all learners are engaged in a lesson. Learners should be encouraged to take their learning seriously and be in control of it. They should be given the opportunity to demonstrate how they have learned. The notion of "trial and error" (that is, trying to do things for oneself) is critical in encouraging learners to lead their own learning (Farrell, 1997). The researcher therefore suggests that teachers in a way be encouraged to use various teaching strategies as outlined by Farrell, in the classroom to be able to have positive experiences with their learners. They went on to say that this attitude by some of these learners is more than a border to all staffs in the school. So they plead to the district education office to do something about it, because the parents of the victims are

equally not taking it kindly. Again this expression by the respondents regarding disruptive behaviors of learners in the classroom falls in line with the finding in an international journal called "*INTO Guidance on Managing Challenging Behaviors in schools*". In this article it was stated that children identified with special educational needs (SEN) and behavioral difficulties present extra challenges to educators and require additional supports in school. This additional support also falls on teacher's skills and expertise to be able to provide for these children on equal basis as others. According to this same journal, the most effective method adopted by teachers when attempting to manage challenging behavior is to prevent it occurring in the first place. To this end, many schools have developed strategies to promote positive behavior. This is based on the assumption that most behavior patterns (negative and positive) are learned, and therefore, that acceptable behavior can also be learned. It is also based on the belief that behavior is contextual, so children can be taught to behave in a certain way in the school context. Acceptable behavior is then reinforced in a school and classroom climate which is supportive of positive behavior. Teacher B1 maintains that the behaviors to large extent influenced his/her teaching, because it is not any special skills that we have so we always found it difficult to control the class when the learner with SEN in the class begins to do the things. Teacher B1 again responded by saying that:

"*At times I even stop the lesson to calm the innocent once first and all this delays the progress of class left alone teaching*". (Verbatim expression by teacher B1) In addition other teachers like C1 &2 and B2 shared similarly sentiment.

This finding is in with the finding of DiLalla et al (2004) who established that patterns of problematic behaviors, such as noncompliance and aggression are negatively correlated with children's academic performance. Similarly, these behaviors are

correlated with stressed teacher – pupil relationships and poorer peer interactions (McMahon, Wells, and Kotler 2006). This means there are disruptive behaviors by learners with SEN in the classrooms in schools in Afadzato South District but teachers lack the expertise to address the problem approximately and professionally. Teacher A1 continued and said that:

"The girl in my class will never want to answer any question in class. Even when I ask her to repeat things after me she will not mind me. She can just get up and leave the classroom without seeking for permission". (Verbatim expression by teacher A1)

This finding correlates with Webster (2017) finding about disruptive behaviors of some learners with special educational needs in the regular school systems. Webster espouses that behavior is one of the greatest challenges a special education teacher faces. This is especially true when learners receiving special education services are in inclusive classrooms. Teacher A1 explained that since we do not have any management measures to control the learner with SEN in our school we allowed them to do what they want unless the act would resolve into something serious that can cause them or anyone else. Teacher C2, C1 and B2 also said that at times during lessons, the learner with SEN in their class can collect his friend's book without asking. In such act you have to stop teaching and manage to collect the book otherwise he/she would destroy it. But oftentimes due to lack of special skills in handling them it becomes destructive and very offends. Teacher A2 said that: "The learner in his class likes beating his colleagues even when they don't wrong him. Managing the behavior is difficult but we sometimes do with the help of other teachers on the compound, since we all lack competence and skills we mostly attempt offering gift but rarely worked.

This analysis and finding about public school teachers on offering gift in a form of rewarding learners with challenging behaviors in the classroom when they misbehave is in line with the finding in an international journal called "*INTO Guidance on Managing Challenging Behavior in Schools*". In this journal, it clearly stated that many teachers make a point of trying to catch children being good and praise or reward them for this, placing the focus of attention in the classroom on the majority of children who behave appropriately. In many classrooms, teachers have adopted a formalized approach to rewards and praise, where children earn tokens, points or stickers for positive behavior. Similarly, the finding supports the advice of Gordon (1996) who advised on the use of rewards. He advised that reward should follow a pattern as follows: "*Reward appropriate behavior as soon as possible; Make the pay–offs small, and attainable; Make the rewards cumulative; Make the pay-offs co-operative (i.e. encouraging the class to work together for a reward); Never take back a reward; and Use the element of surprise (e.g. by giving a double reward unexpectedly)*"

Teacher C2, C1, B2, A1 and A2 also shared the same opinion with teacher B1. It was also revealed that, at times the learners with SEN gets frustrated and even when we report to the headmasters of the school they will only say we should just manage them. Regarding what challenges they face with the behaviors of these learners. They responded as follows:

Majority of the teacher expressed that parents reacts to said behaviors by learners with SEN concerning the other victim learners. Teacher A1 made known that parents of the children whose items these learners with special needs destroys at times come to the school to rein insults on us. Teacher C1 also responded that I find it difficult to even teach them. "In fact is very challenging teaching this boy in my class." Teacher A2

said that parents are the major challenge to him. They don't cooperate with us at all. When it comes to exams or buying books they don't care. Teacher C2, B1 and B2 also said they share the same opinion with earlier participants.

With regards to how they address the challenges they face teaching these learners, few measures were outlined. The following were the responses:

Teacher C1 stated that:

"*At times I only resort to canning the learner with SEN*" (Verbatim response by teacher C1). Teacher C2 said he usually invite the parents to come around so that we discuss issues about the learner with SEN. Teacher B2 also stated that we always want this issues to be discuss at PTA meetings with parents and other stakeholders but is yet to happen. Teacher A1 said they always advice parents to provide the basic needs such as food and books for the learners with SEN so that they will stop fighting over these items with their colleagues in class. Teacher B1 and A2 said they use to offer counseling service to the peers to accept and understand the learners with SEN and that they will change.

This assertion is in line with Bekele et al. (2012) who established that traditional approach to teaching informed by the behavioristic approach to pedagogy is a teaching approach aimed at changing the behavior of the learners. And learning is regarded as bringing about a change of behavior in the learner.

Summary of findings from research question 3

It was revealed from the responses gathered from participants on research question three that teachers mandated to teach in public schools in Afadzato District where there are learners with SEN lack expertise that would enable them control and manage learners with SEN who at times put up disruptive behavior or attitudes in the classroom both in teaching and learning engagement and in co-curricular activities in

the school. It was also found that co-teaching or co-support teaching encourages behavior management of learners with SEN in schools and enhances effective handling of learners who put up some form of disruptive behaviors in class during teaching and learning activities. In addition, it was found that offering of gift as a way of rewarding good behavior helps in managing behavior of learners with SEN in public schools in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana. It was concluded by the respondents that disruptive behaviors exhibited by learners with SEN in classrooms hinders effective teaching and learning activities in public schools where there are learners with special educational needs having their education but much training and in-service training is needed for teachers to upgrade their skills of effectively handling these learners to be able to benefit from the life of the school.

Theme four

4.5 Support that public school teachers need to improve upon teaching learners with SEN in their schools

To support teachers to improve teaching learners with SEN, the statements were outlined as follows:

"Teacher A1 indicates that we need to be supported by organizing of in-service training and workshops for all teachers. This will help us know the new ways of teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools" (Verbatim expression by teacher A1).

This finding is in line with Jenkins and Yoshimura (2010) who contended that professional development should prepare teachers to both identify learner's needs and determine how best to meet them. Teacher A2 also maintain that, they need to be

motivated by means of increasing their salaries for the additional time spent on remedial teaching to some of the learners with SEN.

"*Teacher B1 responded by saying that special needs educators should be attached to all the schools in the Afadzato South District to help complement the work of the class teachers in the school*" (Verbatim response from teacher B1). She continued to stress that the few of them we have in the district are not enough though they are doing marvelous work. Teacher B2, C1 and C2 concerted to the view of teacher A1 and that they also agreed to the fact that workshops and in-service training will go long way to support them do effective work.

This finding support the idea of Gorman and Drudy, (2010) who stated that an in service programme is an approach to staff development that aims to support teachers to upgrade skills and knowledge in inclusive education while on their jobs. And this in-service training could be in the areas of teaching pedagogies, classroom behavior techniques, and support services teachers can use in teaching students with special educational needs.

Focusing on what the school in the district can do to improve education of learners with SEN. It was revealed by teacher B1 and B2 that our school authorities should resourced them in order to improve the education of the learners with SEN.

Teacher C1 said "*the government should train more personnel in the area of special education to help in the education of learners with SEN so that they can complement the work of the class teachers*" (Verbatim response from teacher C1). Teacher A2 and A1 responded by saying their school should use part of the capitation grant to provide resources for the school to enhance the teaching of all learners including learners with special needs in the school.

This finding falls in line with the research work of Boyle et al. (2011) who established that teachers should be supported by their schools / systems to have the opportunity to enhance their own skills in reflection, instruction, management, and strategies.

Teacher C2 said "*it will be good if teachers can be doing co-teaching*" (Verbatim response from teacher C2). That is teachers who have skills in special needs should be made to assist those who do not have the skills to ensure smooth teaching and learning in our schools.

This finding, again, is in line with a provision made in the Australian legislation, specific, the Disability Standards for Education, 2005. It was indicated that schools need to provide appropriate support, collaboration, planning and feedback to teachers to ensure they are able to use good practice in relation to inclusive education which also means teaching learners with special educational needs in public schools

It was also noted by two of the respondents, A1 and A2 of the six teachers that some government and GES officials occupationally comes round to provide support to their schools. However, majority indicates that they never had any support from the government or the GES concerning the teaching of learners with SEN. The few who had support urged that they would like the visit by the office as support to the handling of learners with SEN to continue and improve.

One of the items sought to determine how teachers are coping with the requirement of teaching learners with SEN as a policy issue. Teacher C1 and C2 said they are only managing the children in their classes. The law demands that we teach them so we are also doing our best. Teacher B1 and B2 said for them they are only doing something to represent something. They stated that though the learners with SEN are in the school alright but they don't think the learners are getting anything much. Teacher A1

and A2 also stated that it is a big pressure teaching learners with SEN in our schools. They went ahead to state that they are just managing the learners with SEN in their class because the resources are not there to use.

This response from the two respondents is in line with Glazzard et al (2010) who highlights that any reluctance from teachers to fully embrace the idea or the policy of teaching learners with special educational needs often stems from the fact that it places pressure on them to increase their performance and their level of accountability. The pressure here means there are inadequate teaching resources, lack of the requisite skills and others tools and materials.

Summary of findings from research question 4

Findings from the research question four indicates that in-service training and workshops could be one of the ways by which public school teachers can be supported to improve the teaching of learners with SEN in public schools. However, this is lacking in schools selected for this study in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana. It was revealed that though public school teachers are by law required to teach learners with SEN in mainstream system they have not been adequately supported to do effective teaching. Also, motivating teachers of learners with SEN in public schools in any form can help enhance the urge of teachers to willingly accept the responsibility of teaching learners with SEN in their classrooms.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and the recommendation for the study.

5.1 Summary

This study focused on Teachers' experiences in teaching learners with Special Educational Needs in public schools. The main objective of the study was to find out which teaching pedagogies, resources and behavior management techniques/strategies teachers within public schools can use to be able to effectively teach learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Disabilities in Afadzato South District. It also examined ways by which teachers in public schools can be support to improve upon teaching learners with SEN in the study location. The following research questions were raised that guided the study;

1. What teaching pedagogies do teachers used in teaching learners with special educational needs within public schools in the Afadzato South district?

2. What teaching and learning resources are available for teachers within public schools to teach learners with special educational needs in the Afadzato South district?

3. What behavior management strategies and techniques do teachers need to acquire in managing challenging behaviors of learners with special educational needs in public classrooms in the Afadzato South district?

4. How can teachers of public schools be supported to improve upon teaching students with special educational needs in the Afadzato South District?

The study employed a qualitative case study with focused group interview for data collection. Six individuals were purposefully sampled to take part in the study. Findings from the responds revealed that almost all the respondents have little or no knowledge about teaching learners with SEN. This maintains that they are no differences between professional and non-professional teachers in handling learners with SEN. It was also noted that all the six schools selected for the purpose of the study have very few or no teaching and learning resources that aid the effective teaching and learning and also catering for learners with SEN in their classrooms. It was revealed that the teachers adopt teaching methods such as demonstration and coping strategies in teaching and handling learners with SEN in the classrooms but are not the appropriate pedagogies for teaching the learners. This also established that the teachers lack the knowledge of appropriate teaching and learning pedagogies or methods in teaching and learning activities in their schools. This has also influenced in their teaching and behavior management as far as learners with SEN are concerned. Behavior management was a big problem to all six respondents. It was therefore suggested by the respondents that workshops or in-service trainings should be organized for them in order to be able to handle learners with SEN well. They also remarked that the schools should be attached with special education specialists or special educators so that they can help complement the work of the classroom teachers if the nation wants to practice mainstreaming or inclusive education.

5.2 Conclusions

The present study examined teachers' experiences when teaching learners with SEN in public schools with regards to teaching pedagogies, teaching and learning resources, behavior management strategies and ways to improve upon teaching learners with SEN in public schools. This was regarded as being important if the

challenges of addressing difficulties and pressure public school teachers faced with the policy of giving education to learners with SEN in inclusive setting can be confronted effectively. While there is a broad consensus on what constitutes an inclusive pedagogy, it is apparent that its conceptualization needs to be re-evaluated. The reason is that most teachers base their understanding of the concept on their own their individual interpretation of what it means, on their position within the philosophy of inclusion, and consequently on their own pedagogic philosophy and approach. This paper therefore lays the foundation for further discussion on the elusive and complex concept of inclusive pedagogy. It is important as a first step for teachers to allow the opportunity for learners with SEN to be enrolled into schools and the necessary actions on how they would be effectively taught can come into play. School authorities and school administrators, teachers, uses various ways to support teachers in teaching all learners including learners with SEN. Invariably there are many methods used in teaching learners with SEN in public schools. In Ghana, most cases of poor performance of learners in general and those with SEN are referred to teachers and the Ghana Education Service (GES) to solve. Educationists, parents, government and administrators all have a role and responsibility to perform in dealing with issues of educating all learners and specifically learners with SEN. (Ghana' Inclusive Education Policy 2006). Since teachers are the principal actors in the education of learners with SEN, their feelings and experiences teaching learners are deemed a necessary first step towards ensuring quality education delivery for learners with SEN in schools.

The findings of the research when published would inform readers in identifying whether they are specific teaching pedagogies, teaching resources and management strategies public school teachers can use to effectively teach learners

with SEN towards ensuring their full participation in the classroom. Also, the recommendations of this study when made available to teachers teaching in public schools would enable them know the best practices or teaching pedagogies suitable for teaching all learners in enhancing positive experiences with learners with SEN in public schools.

Furthermore, it is hoped that the findings of this study will enlighten educational administrators, teachers on the acceptable and recommended teaching pedagogies, teaching resources, behavior management techniques, and ways teachers can be support to improve upon teaching learners with SEN in public schools. Learners with SEN, who also have access to the findings of this research, will be in position to advocate for quality education wherever they find themselves whether in public or specialized institutions. Despite the numerous research work conducted on teachers' experience teaching learners with SEN in foreign countries, there is apparently lack of empirical studies in Ghana relating to this area of study. The study would also provide the basis for other prospective researchers to study into other domains of teacher experiences when teaching learners with SEN in public schools not covered in this research.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study it is recommended that:

1. There should be regular professional up skilling for all teachers teaching in public schools in order to develop the all the necessary skills that would enable them to effectively teach all learners including learners with SEN to achieve their academic goals. This is to help increase their performance and their level of accountability to stakeholders involved in education in the district where the study was conducted and the country as whole.

2. Teachers teaching in public schools should develop a positive approach to teaching that promotes good behavior among all learners. However these approaches must be modified to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate to the learners with special educational needs in the classroom.

3. The researcher also suggests that the Ghana Education Service should ensure, that there is quality teacher training and this be should be available before and during the implementation of an inclusive program such as teaching learners with SEN in public schools. And this training should be grounded in sound inclusive pedagogy.

4. Furthermore, teaching learners with SEN called for basic and in-depth in-service courses to be offered to teachers so that they are well equipped with necessary skills and knowledge to teach children with specific learning needs (Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy Document 2015).

5. Educational administrators should also ensure that teachers teaching in their schools have evidence-based professional learning that is grounded in both theory and practice. And must ensure teachers teaching in their basic schools have the needed available resource in order to assist them do effective teaching especially when it comes to teaching learners with SEN.

6. Teachers who have more years in the teaching discipline and still have the passion for teaching should be given orientation or regular in-service training in order to put them in a position to offer quality education for learners with SEN.

5.4. Suggestion for further research

The present study covered only teachers in selected schools in Afadzato South District of the Volta Region. A replication of the study in other Districts in the region is suggested.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESPONDENTS

This interview guide is to find out teachers' experiences when teaching students with special educational needs in three public basic schools in Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana.

N.B All the information given in this interview will be treated with strict confidence.

Please give your response to the interview as honestly as possible.

PERSONAL INFORMATION INCLUDING DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS

Section A

Please tick   [ ]   where appropriate.

1. Name of school: School A **[ ]** School B **[ ]** School C **[ ]**
2. Gender: Male **[ ]**   Female **[ ]**

3. Age: 21-30 years   **[ ]**

                          31-40 years   **[ ]**

                          41-50 years   **[ ]**

                          51- 60 years   **[ ]**

                          60 & above   **[ ]**

4. Class: 1 **[ ]**   2 **[ ]**   3 **[ ]**   4 **[ ]**   5 **[ ]**
   6 **[ ]**

5. Number of years in teaching service:

$$
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{1-5} & \text{[ ]} \\
\text{5-10} & \text{[ ]} \\
\text{11-15} & \text{[ ]} \\
\text{16-20} & \text{[ ]} \\
\text{21 and above} & \text{[ ]}
\end{array}
$$

6. Educational background: Secondary **[ ]**   College of Education **[ ]**
   University **[ ]**

7. Qualification: Certificate 'A' **[ ]**

   Diploma   **[ ]**

   B.ED   **[ ]**

   M.phil   **[ ]**

   M.ED   **[ ]**

   PhD   **[ ]**

8. Numbers of years teaching learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

$$
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{1-5} & \text{[ ]} \\
\text{5-10} & \text{[ ]} \\
\text{11-15} & \text{[ ]} \\
\text{16-20} & \text{[ ]} \\
\text{21\& above} & \text{[ ]}
\end{array}
$$

9. Professional teacher: [ ]   non-professional   [ ]

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

SPECIMEN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR RESPONDENTS

A STUDY ON TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES TEACHING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AFADZATO SOUTH DISTRICT, GHANA.

Dear Respondent,

These questions are to initiate conversation on the issues under study for discussion and clarification. I hope you will respond to this interview as frankly as you could for your responses are confidential.

Thank you.

Richard Kormla Ametefe

Introduction to interview sessions.

I would like to thank you for making yourself available today. My name is Richard Kormla Ametefe and I am from the University of Education, Winneba. I am conducting a study on teachers' experiences when teaching students with special educational needs in public schools. Some of the topics I am going to discuss concern teaching pedagogies used in teaching, teaching resources available for teachers towards effective teaching, how to manage challenging behaviors of some students with special needs in classroom, whether there are ways to support teachers to improve upon teaching these students in public schools.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Question ONE: What Pedagogies do teachers used in teaching learners with SEN in your school in Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

    a. What specific teaching pedagogies do you used in teaching learners with SEN in your classroom in Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

    b. What are your experiences using these pedagogies during teaching and learning activities in Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

    c. How do the pedagogies help you to teach learners with special educational needs in the classroom?

    d. Do you think these pedagogies are sufficient to help you do effective teaching in your school?

    e. What areas do you consider lacking in the pedagogies where support is needed?

Research Question TWO: What Teaching resources are available for teaching learners with SEN in your schools in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

    f. What resources does your school have to support the teaching of learners with SEN in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

    g. If you have how adequate are they to meet the needs of learners with SEN in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

h. How do you get these resources to influence your teaching towards inclusive practices in your school in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

i. What are the challenges you face in using the resources during teaching and learning activities in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

Research Question THREE: What Behavior management strategies/techniques teachers need in your to teach learners with SEN in their classrooms?

j. What are some of the disrupting behaviors that learners with SEN put up during classroom activities?

k. What skills do you have in managing the disrupting behaviors that some learners with SEN put up in classroom activities?

l. How do these skills influence your teaching towards inclusive practices?

m. What challenges do you face with these behaviors of some of these students?

n. How do you address these challenges to enable you teach these learners effectively?

Research Question FOUR: How can public school teachers be supported to improve upon teaching learners with SEN in their schools?

o. In which ways do you think you can be supported to effectively teach learners with SEN in public schools in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

p. In what ways can your school improve the education of learners with SEN in public schools in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

q. How is GES and government supporting your school to improve teaching of learners with SEN in the Afadzato South District in the Volta Region of Ghana?

r. As a teacher of SEN in your school to what extent are you coping with the requirements (skills, competences) teaching learners with SEN?