Teachers' Roles in Inclusive Education Practices in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The study examined teachers' roles in the implementation of inclusive education practices in the Central Region of Ghana. Qualitative case study design and multistage sampling technique were employed for the study. Semi-structured interview guide was used to gather data. Twenty-four teachers in twelve schools were interviewed. The findings revealed that some teachers varied their teaching methods and strategies to enable all learners have equal access to the curriculum. It was found that teachers had significant role to play in community sensitisation programme to educate the public on how learners with special educational needs would be accepted in the society. However, most teachers did not have much knowledge on how to screen and/or refer at risk learners for further evaluation to determine their real needs. Extensive in-service training must be offered by special education experts to enable teachers perform effectively in the practice of inclusive education.

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Keywords: education, inclusive, implementation, practices, teachers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education (IE) has been internationally recognised as a philosophy for attaining equity, justice, and quality education for all learners, especially those who have been traditionally excluded from mainstream education for reasons of disability, ethnicity, gender, or other characteristics. The philosophy of IE first drew attention at a conference held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. There are many international movements spearheading this practice. One of these movements toward the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream education that occurred in recent decades is the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. This was held in Salamanca in June 1994. This Salamanca statement called for inclusion to be the norm (UNESCO, 1994). Ghana is one of the 92 countries together with twenty-five international organisations that subscribe to the Salamanca Statement.

While IE has been implemented successfully in many developed countries, developing countries such as Ghana are still in the process of achieving this goal. For inclusion to work successfully there is the need for teachers, school administrators, professionals, and all other stakeholders to work together (UNESCO, 2005). Teachers should have the skills and understanding to make good practical decisions in their class teaching, such as placing learners with disabilities in front rows in class, giving clear explanations and responding to signals and communication from learners with SEN. Inclusive education calls for a joint effort of regular and special educator involvement. It is the responsibility of both regular and special teachers to develop and implement the curriculum and make instructional adaptations necessary to accommodate the specific needs of individual learners (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1996).

According to Kaufman and Hallahan (2005), successful teaching of learners who are different requires that they be grouped homogeneously so that special pedagogical approaches can be deployed by teachers who have been trained to use them. It can be argued that when special education is conceptualised in this manner, it

becomes a barrier to the development of inclusion because it prevents the rest of the educational system from taking responsibility for the learning of all learners. The concept of IE is inseparable from quality education. Quality education can only be achieved if the needs of all learners are addressed so that every learner is given an opportunity to succeed (Peters, 2003). Teachers are crucial in determining what happens in classrooms. The development of more inclusive classrooms requires teachers to cater for different student learning needs through the modification or curriculum differentiation (Forlin, 2006).

Teachers play a pivotal role in inclusive education. The literature on IE undisputedly stipulates that no matter how excellent the educational infrastructure might be, how well articulated educational policy might be, how well resourced a programme might be, effective inclusion does not take place until classroom teachers deliver relevant and meaningful instruction to students with SEN (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010). Although there is widespread support for inclusion at a philosophical level, there are some concerns that the policy of inclusion is difficult to implement because teachers are not sufficiently well prepared and supported to work in inclusive ways (Ashman & Elkins, 2005). Ghana's vision of shaping the future of learners with SEN in inclusive classroom can only be achieved if all teachers are proactive in moulding the character of individuals in their care. Teachers` knowledge, insight and understanding of government policy document in IE are necessary for the practice of inclusion in the classroom (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011). For IE to succeed, it is important that teachers and headteachers maintain a positive attitude towards inclusion.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

IE in Ghana can be traced as far back as the 1951 Accelerated Education Plan and the 1961 Education Act for free education which resulted in increases in basic level enrolment. This means that Ghana has a well-defined legal framework for learners with disabilities and their inclusion into regular classrooms. Educational services to the disabled individual are no longer charitable in Ghana, they are enshrined in the 1992 Constitution and emphasis is placed on almost all international conventions aimed at promoting and protecting the human rights of all citizens.

In the last decade, there has been an increased concern regarding the effects of inclusive practices on the achievement of learners in general education. Literature suggests that the implementation of inclusive education policies has been uneven (Evans & Lunt, 2002). Whilst there are many success stories to be told about inclusion (for example, Ainscow, 1997; Black-Hawkins, Florian & Rouse, 2007), there have also been failures and difficulties (Carrington & Elkins, 2002). There are numerous studies and researches surrounding the concept of IE, ranging from teachers' and parents' attitude and perception toward the implementation of inclusive education, to barriers or challenges of inclusive education (Ainscow, 1998; Gyimah, Ntim & Deku, 2012; Vanderpuye, 2013; Yekple & Deku, 2014), however, much of this research has not examine teachers' roles in the implementation of IE. Even though the Government of Ghana has adopted a cautious approach to the development and implementation of IE and is piloting it in certain regions and districts. It is unclear whether teachers are aware of the roles they must play. Avoke and Avoke (2004) observed that professional development for inclusion is not adequate because many teachers are not aware of their roles.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

- To examine teachers' roles in screening of learners with disabilities and SEN.
- To explore teachers' roles when referring learners at risk of developmental disabilities.
- To find out teachers' role when designing IEP for learners with special educational plan.
- To examine how teachers ensure that learners with disabilities and SEN have access to the school curriculum.

1.3 Research Questions

- What do teachers regard as their roles in screening of learners with disabilities and SEN?
- What roles do teachers play when referring learners at risk of developmental disabilities?
- What roles do teachers play in designing IEP for learners with special educational plan?
- How do teachers ensure that learners with disabilities and SEN have access to the school curriculum?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study would reveal gaps that have to be filled to enhance teachers' roles for a successful implementation of IE in the Central Region. Findings would benefit teachers and educational administrators in such roles as screening and referral, design of IEP and access to the school curriculum of learners with SEN would be explored to get information on current practice.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education policies worldwide are developed to integrate special need and regular education together in a unified education system. This cannot be done without teachers (Torombe, 2013). Inclusive Education is defined by UNESCO (2005) as a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. Thousand and Villa (2002) noted that inclusive practices involve substantial changes in both attitude and educational approaches. In contrast to the excellence and uniqueness of IE, Lewis (2000) intimated challenges questioning the rationale "behind getting same aged groups of students to learn where the real achievements of the less able will never be recognized as they will always be below the artificial average of their peers and where their final efforts are bound to be degraded in the common exam system" (pp. 98.)

Inclusive Education in Ghana has its root from the 1951 Accelerated Education Plan and the 1961 Education Act for free education which resulted in increases in basic level enrolment. This means that, Ghana has a well-defined legal framework for people with disabilities including children with disabilities and their inclusion in regular classrooms. In the 2003/2004 academic year, the Special Education Division (SPED) of Ghana Education Service (GES) in addressing the policy objectives initiated the implementation of IE on a pilot basis in ten (10) districts of three (3) regions namely, Greater Accra, Eastern and Central in 35 schools with learners population of 14,596. Despite these provisions, Kuyini (2004) and Kuyini and Desai (2006) reported that some Ghanaian principals and teachers possessed limited knowledge of the requirements of inclusion and that such educators were unlikely to have any reasonable capacity to provide appropriate instruction.

2.2 Teachers Roles in Screening and Referring

Screening and referral are integral part of IE because they are the first stages of the assessment process (Gyimah, Ntim & Deku, 2012). Berdine and Meyer (1987) indicated screening as the process of assessing many children for the purpose of identifying those who need more thorough evaluation to determine whether they have problems. Screening helps one to determine whether a child is likely to be eligible for special education services (Bigge & Shermis, 1999).

In screening teachers can identify children in each population, who perform below the normal ranges of development, areas of behaviours or intellectual achievement (Gyimah, et al., 2012). Gyimah and Yidana (2008) opine that screening helps to identify children at-risk or have problem for referral, helps teachers to seek for thorough assessment and enables them to know children who need special education services. Teachers as well as health personnel are the key figures involved in screening. This is because they usually deal with many children at a time (Gyimah et al., 2012). Symptoms of health, motor and behaviour problems of a child can be detected at birth by health personnel, but most academic problems

are undetected until a child reaches school going age. It is at this stage that classroom teachers can identify children who have academic and classroom behaviour problem.

Gyimah, et al, (2012) also state that referral becomes necessary whenever there is sufficient evidence that a child has a form of difficulty. This may be behavioural, sensory disability (that is hearing or visual problem), motor handicap, intellectual problem, and communication or health problems. Gyimah and Yidana (2008) are of the view that teachers must make referral, only when they have first attempted remediation efforts. By remediation efforts, they explained that it is initial steps the teacher takes to help a child to overcome a suspected difficulty. For example, the child's seating position can be changed. The teacher should be able to identify the children who display educationally disabling conditions and those whose performance indicates that they may be at risk for such conditions (Balshaw, 1999).

2.3 Curriculum Access or Modification

Central to the teaching and learning that occurs in schools is the curriculum. Curriculum is an umbrella concept that is comprehensive in scope and complex in practice and it includes all the learning experience offered by a school (Gardner & Boix-Mansilla, 1994). Curriculum modification includes a technical analysis of curriculum content, processes and outcomes by the teacher and the adjustments they make to their instructional practices to meet the specific learning needs of children with disability in their classroom (Opertti & Brady, 2011; Williams, 2011).

Curriculum modification is essential as it reduces the chances of stigma that disabled/SEN students can feel when teachers do not consider the special learning needs of disabled students (Florian, 2008). Shea and Bauer (1997) helps buttress the point that if teachers can make the classroom a place of equity and social acceptance for all learners, it will make one a better teacher by allowing him/her to bring the learners together as a group.

Runswick-Cole (2011) mentioned example of a curriculum modification/adaptation as teacher considering an alternative strategy that would include a boy who uses a wheelchair to participate in the regular physical education lesson without the sense of exclusion. Modifying or creating access to the curriculum is a must-do action in a class with children with diverse learning needs because it is the way to keep all learners in the school (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2002; Florian, 2008). It is important, therefore, for teachers to create a collaborative environment within the school so that their colleagues can draw from the experiences they have and get the support they need to differentiate effectively and accommodate learners successfully (ibid).

2.4 Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

An IEP is a written document that provides information on what strengths and weaknesses a child has and measures to help the child to overcome the difficulties (Gyimah, Ntim & Deku, 2012). The IEP is a written plan describing the special education programme and a service required by a particular child and is based on a thorough assessment of the child's strengths and needs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004).

IEPs are usually developed by a teacher in collaboration with parents. Parents have a wealth of information about their child which can help with the selection of appropriate IEP goals and strategies. To facilitate parental input, Gyimah, et al. (2012) opine that the teacher should:

● explain the IEP process prior to meetings and/or consultations so that parents know what to expect.
● provide a letter or pre-planning form that allows for input to be shared in writing, in a telephone interview or at a planning meeting.
● share information in advance so that parents are prepared to fully participate.

Ideally, planning the child's IEP is best achieved through collaboration, and should involve the combined efforts of the student, the parents, the school, and other professionals. However, one of the most frequent complaints voiced by parents is that they are not involved in this process, and they

often feel that their contribution is not regarded as equally important to that of the professionals (Pinkus, 2005).

Learners are more likely to respond positively to interventions when they understand the rationale and are given direct access to the process of decision making (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). Active pupil involvement also improves self-esteem, increases motivation and cooperation and can often provide important, unexpected, and illuminating information (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Glenny, 1996). The IEP provides teachers and parents with the opportunity to have a practical and realistic dialogue about the student's needs and to develop creative ways of meeting those needs.

III. METHODS

3.1 Design

A qualitative case study design was used for the study. The choice of this design helped the researchers to examine the roles of teachers in the implementation of IE in the Central Region of Ghana.

3.2 Population

The target population for the study was all teachers in the 58 pilot inclusive schools in six districts in the Central Region. The total population of teachers in these pilot inclusive schools were 406 at the time of the study.

Table 1: Distribution of Inclusive Pilot Schools in the Central Region

No	District	Pilot inclusive Schools	Population of Teachers Male Female		Total Population
1	Awutu Senya	4	10	15	25
2	Agona West	8	32	24	56
3	Agona East	6	22	18	40
4	Kasoa	10	32	38	70
5	Efutu Municipal	23	78	81	159
6	Cape Coast	7	26	30	56
Total		58	200	206	406

Source: Central Region Education Office

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed the multistage sampling technique. Firstly, the researcher employed the simple random sampling technique to select 12 schools across the six districts. This was done through the lottery method. Since some districts had more IE schools than others, we proportionally selected the schools to give fair and evenly selection of schools from the various districts. Twenty-four (24) teachers were systematically sampled to form the sample size. Two (2) teachers (a male and a female) were sampled from each school out of the 12 schools selected, to form the 24 teachers (See Table 2).

Table 2: Proportional Sample of Schools and Teachers

No	Districts	Number of Pilot Inclusive schools	Number of schools sampled	Number of teachers sampled
1	Awutu Sanya	4	1	2
2	Agona West	8	2	4
3	Agona East	6	1	2
4	Kasoa	10	2	4
5	Efutu Municipal	23	5	10

| 6 | Cape Coast | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | | 58 | 12 | 24 |

3.4 Instrumentation

The semi-structured interview guide was used for the study. The interview involved the use of open-ended questions. The questions were self-constructed based on the literature on IE. The interview guide had 5 sections. Section 1 dealt with demography information of the respondent. Section 2, 3 and 4 asked questions which elicited information about the respondent's roles in curriculum adaptation, screening and referral, development of IEP. Each section had at least 3 questions and a follow-up question were asked after each question when necessary.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

We conducted interviews with teachers that were selected from each of the schools for the study. During the interview, permission was sought to tape record the information given by the teachers. In line with this, Kvale (1996) explains that interview in qualitative research attempts to understand the world from the subjective way, to unfold the meaning of people's understandings, to discover their lived world prior to scientific justifications. Each interview section lasted for 45 to 55 minutes and in all, one month–two weeks was used to collect all the data.

3.5 Data Analysis

The thematic approach to qualitative data analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) cited in Vanderpuye, (2013) was adopted for this study. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organises and describes one's data set in detail" (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.79).

3.6 Results of the Study

The study sought to examine teachers' roles in inclusive education practices in the Central Region of Ghana. Twenty-one (21) respondents were used for the study, which is less than the required sample of 24. It was found that male respondents were 13 (61.9%) and female respondents were 8 (38.1%).

3.7 Screening and Referral

On whom should be responsible for screening and how screening should be done for special educational need learners, respondents offered varied views. One respondent coded R21 offered the view that *"With the screening, I believe there are other people who are specialised so I am being a teacher the little I can I do when I identified a child with special needs……… I will invite an expert to assist me in the screening and referral issues"*. Some respondents did not know what screening and referral was, however, they offered views that were not related to what is known about screening and referral. In one instance, respondent R8 indicated that *"There is this provision that is err the special need teachers, therapeutic teachers and so on. These teachers are solely trained to deal with learners with these challenge or the other that is special learners…………., in curbing this situation, teachers have to be re-trained in the use of the sign language with the idea that in the end special needs learners would be mixed with those that are not having their problem"*. Despite teachers' role in IE, screening and referral is only known by special trained teachers.

On what a teacher should do, when he/she identifies a child who may have SEN and/or disabilities in his/her class, views were shared adequately but with variations or dissimilarities.

Respondent R21 indicated that *"……………, the pupil who has that problem should be seated in a place or position that he or she can have access or can have access to hear. Those with sight issues, for them it depends, whether long or short sightedness. If its long sightedness he or she should be seated in front and those with short should be at the back of class"*. The revelation shows that teachers do not know about what to do when they identify a child with special educational needs in their classes.

3.8 Curriculum Access

For teachers to get learners to actively participate in their classes' activities, respondents indicated that they employ various means and strategies so that at the end of the day objectives can be realised. In doing so, one respondent R21 indicated that "*Role play sometimes can be used to get learners to participate fully in class. You give them the chance to ask questions and ask them questions too. Questions should be distributed and appropriate everyone. Let's say you share answers with the learners and among their colleagues*". This means that for teachers to involve learners actively in class roles must be assigned to them and teachers will have to observe them as they perform these roles. This will go a long way to help both able and disabled learners participate actively in class since it gives every pupil an opportunity to be part of the learning process. In another instance, respondent R15 shared that "*Hmm learners with disability, yes first and foremost, I being a teacher I need to psyche the pupil with disability for him or her to know that he or she is also part of the class. Now doing that I will include therrr, therrr learners with disability to learners who are not suffering from disability during class like teaching using the activity method yeah, I will group them too so that they feel being part of the group in the class. Even though activity method takes much time in teaching and learning process but that will be best for me to improve my learners' performance in class*". It is therefore evident that teachers in their course of work try to get the learners to participate actively in class.

On the teaching methods used by teachers to improve upon learners' performance, some respondents touched on many methodologies. Some respondents indicated using discussion, activity, and demonstration methods and this is what respondent R11 had to say "*For teaching method, it depends on the class. The discussion method can be very good for others and not good for others too. You blend all methods depending on the topic. You can do demonstration and group whether homogenous or heterogeneous groupings*". For respondent R9, the method he usually employs is the activity method. He had

this to say about the issue "*Even though the activity method takes much time in teaching and learning process but that is best for me to improve my learners' performance in class*". Apart from this, some teachers could not give concrete methods and accepted the fact that they have forgotten because it has been a while, they have read about the teaching methods. Respondent R18 had this to say "*You must adopt the methods that the learners understand the most in the class*. Follow-up question which I asked was "what are some of these methods"? R18 replied: "*For the methods I have forgotten*".

For the kind of teaching aids and their usage, respondents made mention of TLMs such as charts, videos, and flash cards in facilitating teaching and learning in the class. Respondent R6 said that "*Now with the teaching aids, I for one, I use, I normally use videos and chats to help facilitate my teaching and learning activities. Now in its usage especially with the videos, at times err I allow them to watch the videos on the lesson I'm teaching and after that I discuss with them. At times too as the video is playing, I explain to my learners' stage by stage*".

In ending the interview sessions, respondents were asked about suggestions they could offer to improve teachers' roles in the implementation of inclusive education in the Central Region of Ghana. In their responses, some respondents indicated that scholarships should be given to teachers who would want to pursue courses in special education so that they can be equipped to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education. Respondent R1 suggested that "*Scholarships should be given to teachers to specialise in special education so that they will come back to help in the screening process. In fact, it is difficult identifying learners with special needs but I use their gesture as they most often look quite in class because they may not understand whatever I'm doing as a teacher in the class due to their situation. In short, we don't have expertise in doing screening and referral; we use our layman's expertise so specialists should be asked to be moving from school to school*".

Again, it was suggested that society as a whole and teachers in general should have positive view about disabled learners. This will facilitate the implementation of inclusive education and again teachers re-training would be laudable in meeting the implementation demands. Besides, inclusive education is good but its strength rests on resources. To get it done, funding should be a shared responsibility, and this was what Respondent R18 suggested

> "*Like as I was saying, err, sometimes it comes with funding. Having to prepare and teach all the lessons you must use aids especially at the primary level. Piaget even said at a point, a child cannot think in abstract terms so having to use the TLMs, you make the thing concrete for them to understand. So it is very important that we use it but how many subjects can you teach with these TLMs so government has to provide them*".

3.9 Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

On the issue of soliciting for teachers' understanding about the Individualised Educational Plan, there were diverse views about their understanding of IEP. Respondent R5 said that "*IEP is good but very demanding and in this case we plan on the various issues in the class. If it is done right, the outcome would be wonderful but very demanding because we at primary level teach all subjects and teach individual students too based on their programme*". Respondent R4 indicated that "*We normally do in-service training from time to time, so let's say for example periodically, teachers are selected for workshops on these things and they also come back to help impart them onto their colleagues who were not part of such workshops. In short, we don't have expertise in doing screening and referral; we use our layman's expertise so specialists should be asked to be moving from school to school*". Based on responses given, it appeared that most teachers did not know or understand what IEP is. This lack of understanding about what IEP is may imply that there is inadequate training in inclusive education.

Nonetheless, some teachers knew what IEP is and the importance of planning towards its implementation. On what teachers should do before the design of IEP, R16 indicated that "*you need to plan and go by the plan by assembling all materials that are needed*". On what to do after IEP R16 stated that "*in ensuring the success of the plan as a teacher, you must be diligent, and whatever that goes into the plan, you get your materials available from school authority and engage the child by motivating him or her. Attention is very important in this situation as you go through the plan step-by-step through the child centred method. Give instructions to the child and observe the child if he's following the instructions. You ask questions and give tasks to them as you observe*". This shows that those who knew about IEP also knew about the importance of planning.

In answering the question on what teachers should do to ensure the success of IEP, varied responses were given probably due to the lack of understanding on the part of some the inclusive teachers. In one interaction, R17 reported that "*So before we come to the teacher we start with the authorities. The new schools or old schools can be* (stammered) *'err err' like built for people that use the armchair can be able to come school without any other special assistance..............*" Then also the provision of the necessary devices e.g. a child that has hearing impairment would have to be given a hearing aid".

IV. DISCUSSION

4.1 Screening and Referral

It was evident from the study that most teachers do not know what screening and referral entail and offered views that were not directly related to the subject matter. Most respondents did not know who should be responsible for screening, how screening could be and what they can do as teachers when they identify a pupil with a special educational need. This situation may be because of the inadequacy of the training they had concerning special education as a course. Either they might have forgotten what they learnt, or they were poorly taught. The situation can have

adverse effects on a child at-risk because their identification might be difficult, and this can delay remedies needed to overcome their conditions. Although responses were not direct, they can partly contribute to screening and this goes in line with Gyimah et al., (2012) that in screening several learners in schools, teachers are able to identify learners in each population, who perform below the normal ranges of development, areas of behaviours or intellectual achievement.

The respondents' feedback on who should be responsible for screening and referral of learners suspected to be at-risk and/or with SEN in the classroom, indicated that they do not know it was their responsibility. Rather, many referred to specialists trained for that purpose, while forgetting that specialists are invited after identification to give probable remedies to the situation. This view is in congruent with the assertion that teachers are responsible for identifying learners who display educationally disabling condition and those whose performance indicates that they may be at-risk for such conditions. Teachers are to use various methods or procedures to screen individuals who have at-risk conditions, Winzer (as cited in Gyimah, et al. 2012).

On what teachers can do when they identify someone with SEN in their classroom, it was revealed that teachers are not specifically aware of what to do when they identify a child who is at-risk and/or with SEN. It means that some teachers do not offer remediation anytime they identify learners with disability or SEN, and this buttresses the point made by Gyimah and Yidana (2008), that teachers can only do referral if they have tried remediation strategies to curb the situation. However, many of the respondents gave responses that were not related to the question and this situation may be because of the inadequacy of the training they had in special education. Again, either they might have forgotten what they learnt, or they were poorly taught. The situation can have a telling effect on any potential special child because their identification might be difficult on the part of teachers, and this can delay subsequent intervention.

4.2 Curriculum Access

On what teachers can do to ensure that all learners participate actively in an inclusive classroom, respondents emphasised on role play, peer tutoring and giving preference to low achieving students in the classroom. They further indicated that learners could be placed in positions that would allow them to benefit from whatever activity that goes on within the teaching environment. The responses go in line with the creation of equal access to curriculum by all learners, which is relevant to any school whether mainstream or inclusive as opined by Babbage, Byers, and Redding (2000). All learners need to be given the chance to learn and in so doing they may grasp every opportunity to enrich their lives.

About the teaching methods that would help to improve upon students' performance, respondents reported they used the discussion, role-play, activity, and demonstration methods. To them, these methods give every pupil the opportunity to do and observe whatever goes on and equally get engaged by practicing some concepts that pertain to teaching and learning. There were few instances where some teachers were not able to give clear cut methodologies they employ in teaching. When they were probed, they indicated that they have forgotten. In fact, this revelation is worrying because teachers are mandated to know the methodology or pedagogy to use to benefit the entire class. But in a situation like this, where teachers report that they have forgotten the methods, where lies the fate of the learners they teach? Such teachers may in one way or the other cause more harm than good to learners they teach.

On the type of teaching aids used and how they use them in getting learners to understand whatever the teacher presents, respondents indicated that they use charts, videos, and flash cards as aids to teach. Although some teachers reported they find it difficult getting teaching aids, they make use of what is available to them because of the value it adds to delivery of a lesson in the classroom. In doing so, the subject information produced by the learners is remembered better than the same information

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presented to the learners by the teacher (Jacoby, 1978 & McDaniel, Friedman & Bourne, 1978). Teaching with TLMs encourages the pupil to search for relevant knowledge rather than the teacher monopolising the transmission of information to the learners.

On suggestions teachers could offer on the implementation of inclusive education in the Central Region, respondents indicated that teachers should be sponsored on special education programmes. Learners with SEN should be separated and given special attention within the inclusive school environment. This suggestion is in contrast with the Framework for Action on Special Education cited in Yekple and Deku (2014) which contend that learners with SEN must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting their needs. Stainback and Stainback (1996) buttress that the reason for including learners in the mainstream is to avoid the ill effects of segregation inherent when learners are placed in special schools and classes.

4.3 Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

The respondents shared their views on IEP and these views were contrary to what is known as much as special education is concerned. Gyimah, Ntim and Deku (2012) point out that IEP is a written document that provides information on what strengths and weaknesses a child has and measures that can be taken to help the child to overcome the difficulties. Notwithstanding the understanding gap, Respondent R14 said that *"IEP is a plan a teacher designs if he or she identifies a pupil with SEN so that he can give much attention to such pupil"*. This response seemingly relates to the meaning of IEP offered by Ontario Ministry of Education (2004) that IEP is a written plan describing the special education programme and a service required by a particular child and is based on a thorough assessment of the child's strengths and needs. Based on these submissions, it is evident that not all teachers know or understand what IEP is. This lack of a concrete understanding about IEP on the part of inclusive teachers might be because of lack of

training, or the non-existence of such programmes in the schools they teach. This indicates that learners with SEN who happen to find themselves in the hands of these teachers in these inclusive schools are not getting exactly what is required for them to function as expected.

On what a teacher can do before and after an IEP programme, respondents applied their general knowledge about management of lessons and students in the classroom, which is contrary to that of IEP programme. Respondents' emphases were on planning, executing, and evaluating what has been planned and executed on daily basis. According to NCSE (2006), IEP involves setting appropriate goals, and monitoring and evaluating progress on a regular basis.

On how to ensure the success of IEP programme, respondents re-echoed the stance of proper planning and commitment in educational programme without reference to whatever logistics a teacher has at his/her disposal. The revelation is in line with the idea that teachers should be involved actively, at a level appropriate to their maturity and understanding in the monitoring and review of their own progress (Gearheart, Weishahn & Gearheart, 1988).

V. CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that teachers at the basic school do not actively and adequately play their role well to ensure successful implementation of IE in the Central Region of Ghana. They may require some in service training to help them play their expected roles as teachers. Pre-service teachers in the various colleges of education in Ghana should be taken through courses that will equip them with the requisite knowledge and skills in the aspect of screening and referral of learners suspected to be at-risk, IEP development and its implementation as well as curriculum adaptation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should be equipped with knowledge and skills through in-service training and workshops by Ghana Education Service and

Ministry of Education. Teacher training programmes must be broadened to equip pre-service teachers with enough knowledge to screen and refer at-risk learners and enable them to develop and implement IEP after completion.

- In the quest to promote social acceptance among children with SEN and/or disabilities, it is imperative for Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information as well as Ministry of Gender, Women and Children Affairs to assist in educating the society about the need to accept and include children with SEN/or disabilities without hindrance.

- The Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service should be jointly responsible for training teachers on curriculum adaptation, with Ghana Education Service focusing on the lesson plan, and how to use TLM to involve all learners.

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