

INCLUSIVE AND SPECIAL EDUCATION: TEACHING CAREER AND JOB CREATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The Universal Basic Education Programme is the Nigerian response to the global call for Education For All (EFA) by the year 2000 with a major goal of provision of free basic education for every Nigerian child of schooling-going age. The increasing enrollment of special needs children in schools due to the inclusive policy of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) coupled with shortage of qualified teachers will create favourable job opportunities for special teachers. To qualify the teacher must have completed preparatory programmes, receive a bachelor degree and in some cases, master's degree with a full knowledge of method used in special education.

Introduction

Education is an enterprise which sets out to instill values, attitudes, and skills in members of the society. It is a process of personal development, a veritable means of developing human resources. Adelow (2006), opined that human development is an umbrella term used to describe the quantity and the quality of life that is sustained over time. It can also imply an increase in the capacity of persons within a community to contribute to a variety of areas of life; social, economic, political, bureaucratic and technological.

Today, the world wide trend with respect to the education of people with special needs is towards inclusion; that is the schooling of every child or learner in a neighborhood regular school, without any distinction as to their physical, sensory and

mental differences but making adoption in the school environment wherever possible with view of removing all barriers to learning with educational institutions thereby creating room for more employment of teachers and other auxiliary staff.

The increasing of enrolment of special need children in school due to the inclusive policy of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) coupled with shortage of qualified special teachers will create favourable job opportunities for special teachers. The Universal Basic education (UBE) Programme is the Nigerian response to the global call for 'education for all'. (ETF) in the year 2000 with a major goal of provision of free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age. According to Obani

(2000), this inclusiveness implies that, Person in all manners and conditions including those with special needs will be taken into account in same school.

Special Education Teaching Career Overview

Children and youths with a variety of disabilities are taught by special education teachers. A small percentage of special education teachers. A small percentage of special education teachers instruct basic literacy and life skills to students and pupils with mental retardation or autism. However, most students in special education have mild to moderate disabilities and teachers modify the general education curriculum to meet the individual needs of their students. Although some teachers work with pre-school aged children such as infants and toddlers, the majority of special education teachers work with the students of the primary and secondary school level.

Knight (1998) listed disabilities that qualify students for special education programmes to include traumatic brain injury, combined deafness and blindness, autism, visual impairment, orthopedic impairment, multiple disabilities, hearing impairments, emotional disturbance, mental retardation, speech or language impairments, specific learning disabilities and other health impairments. Students entering a special education programme are sorted into the categories to help special education teachers prepare to work with specific group of learners. It is important for special education teachers to identify a child's special need as early as

possible to help increase his success in school.

Teaching Methods in Special Education (Inclusive)

Special education teachers use many teaching methods to help their students learn. This method can include small group work, problem solving, assignment or individual instruction depending on the disability. Special education teachers make sure that special accommodations are provided for students taking examinations when they are needed. This adjustment may include lengthening the time allowed to take the test or having the question read orally to the students.

Special education students have an individualized education programmes (IEP) partly drafted by the special education teachers. The IEP sets appropriate goals for each students based on his individual learning style and ability. The programme outlines details and steps designed to help student progress to the level at which they may transit to secondary school and beyond or to employment. Parents, school administrator, teachers (general and special teachers) are to review the IEP with teachers frequently communicating to parents recommended methods that will help learning at home and inform them of their child development (Ibrahim, 1998).

The Task of the Special Teacher

Special education teachers help their student's progress not only academically but also behaviorally by helping them develop emotional

awareness, conduct themselves in a manner that is socially acceptable, and feel comfortable in social situations. Teachers strive to help their students obtain certain academic and behavioural levels so they prepare them for every day life after they complete their school. Teaching routine skills and providing counselling are ways in which special education teachers can help their students succeed after graduation. In addition to these tasks, the special education teachers must also grade tests and home work/assignments, assignment work appropriate for each student. (Tyre & Young, 1991).

Special education teachers spend much of their time communicating with school administrator, occupational and physical therapists, social worker and parents. They may also communicate with other teachers especially their students' general education teachers who they may work with in the same class room as schools aim to become inclusive. (Obani, 2006) opined that general educators will have to adjust their curriculum and teaching strategies with the help of special education teachers to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. The work of the teachers, teachers assistants and others such as therapists and social workers, is coordinated by the special education teachers to make sure that the requirement of inclusive special programmes are met.

Job Setting

There are many different job setting in which a special education teacher may work. A few teach only special

education students in their classroom; some work with general education teachers as resource teachers to provide individualized assistance to students with disabilities; other team teach with general education teachers in classes comprised of both general and special education students. Some teachers work with special education student for only part of the day in a resource room apart from their general classes. A small number of special education teachers tutor homebound or hospitalized students or teach in other residential facilities. Many parents, who have infants with medical problems that slow or inhibit their normal development, hire special education teachers to work with the child and themselves. (Ayoku, 1995). These teachers demonstrate activities and strategies to stimulate the infants and encourage development of the child's skill.

Career Training and Job Qualification

Many programmes in special education are offered at Universities and Colleges through out the country at doctoral, masters' and bachelors degree levels and at certificate level of the Colleges of Education with NCE Certificate. Courses are designed to educate students in areas such as child growth and development, special education policies and legalities, educational psychology and courses sharing knowledge and skills needed for teaching students with disabilities. To qualify as a special educator, a student must specialize in an area of special education in some programmes while other students may

study many specialized areas to earn a general special education degree. In development countries such as the United State, a special education teacher requires a license to be qualified as a special teacher along side with the above requirements (Gulliford, 1995)

Conclusion

In response to the inclusive policy occasioned by the Universal basic Education Programmes, there is the demand for special education teachers to fill vacant positions in schools. This will provide job opportunity for special teacher with qualification in the field. They must have the abilities to communicate effectively and apply different types of teaching techniques to reach every student. They should readily accept the differences of others and motivate their students to learn.

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