

**TEACHING METHODS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF MILDLY
RETARDED LEARNERS IN NYAMIRA, DIVISION NYAMIRA DISTRICT-KENYA**

KEYO MARGARET

BED/42456/92/DF

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF OPEN AND DISTANCE
LEARNING IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF BACHELORS DEGREE IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION OF
KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

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I also wish to thank the staff of Uhuru printers & Stationers for their dedicated services and care while typesetting designing and printing this work and all that have played part in the production of this work but I have not mentioned here, may God bless you.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this is my original work and has never been submitted to any University or institution of higher learning for the award of a degree or any award.

Signed:

.....

Okeyo Margaret

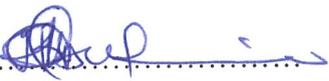
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Date: 22/8/11.....

APPROVAL

This work has been under my supervision and is now ready for submission

Mujuni Evarist (Suprvisor)

Signed: 

Date: 23/8/11.....

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my loving husband and late mother.

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to find out challenges encountered in teaching learners with specific learning difficulties.

The researcher was interested in finding out the views of different people towards the education of children with specific learning difficulties in the area, therefore qualitative approach was employed to collect data.

The researcher chose Headteachers, teachers, parents and children with specific learning difficulties as sample population because through them relevant and appropriate information would be obtained.

The researcher also used interview and questionnaire as research instruments. Interview guides were used to collect data from parents and children with specific learning difficulties because it enabled the researcher to make clarifications on some views given and make possible adjustments depending on their moods and needs. Headteachers and teachers were given questionnaires because they were assumed literate enough to handle these instruments.

The findings revealed that children with mental retardation in regular schools experienced some challenges which among others included; lack of specially trained teachers in needs education to cater for their learning needs and interests, inadequacy of appropriate equipment and learning materials, inappropriate teaching materials and methods, negative attitudes of teachers towards the education of the handicapped children, poor pupils' their poor attention span and interest to learn and high teacher–pupil ratio in class among others.

From the study, the following recommendations were made that; Special Needs Education should be co-opted into primary teachers' colleges as a course, government, NGOs and other stakeholders should intensify community awareness programmes about the rights of persons with disabilities, refresher courses should be provided to teachers to equip them with knowledge and skills to assist learners with special learning needs and teachers be trained to make and use the available local materials, primary school teachers should be encouraged to go for up grading special needs education, parents of children with special needs (hearing impaired) should be encouraged to learn sign language to enable the easy communication and get actively involved in the learning of their children among others.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

The concept of mental retardation is continually changing and these changes can be seen as a reflection of change in the perspective of persons with mental retardation based both on research and clear understanding of the issues involved in defining the concept as Kozma and Stock (1993) observe.

The American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR), a professional organization founded in 1876 recently drafted a new definition of mental retardation which not only maintains a functional perspective on retardation but also focuses on the relations among capabilities, environment and functioning (Luckasson et al (1992).

According to this definition, mental retardation refers to substantial limitation in present functioning. It is characterized by significantly sub-average intellectual functioning existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skills: Communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure and work. Mental retardation manifests itself before the age of 18 years.

Under IDEA, mental retardation is defined as significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period. Grossman (1983) observes that it adversely affects the child's educational

performance. Significantly sub-average intellectual functioning is defined as a score that is at least two standard deviations below the mean on a test of intelligence.

Based on the American Association on Mental retardation, Grossman (1983) and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association (1994) and using intelligence tests (IQ) scores, mental retardation occurs on the four levels of mild (score 50 through 55 to approximately 70), Moderate (score 35 through 40 to approximately 55), severe (score 20 through 25 to 40) and profound (score 20 through 25).

In Kenya, a mentally handicapped child is the one who has a limited level of intelligence and deficits in adaptive behavior. This condition usually arises between conception and 18 years of age (Ministry of Education 1995). The Kenyan Ministry of Education in its handbook on how to handle children with special needs notes that mentally handicapped children are usually categorized according to the severity of mental impairments as mildly, moderately, severely and profoundly handicapped or educable, trainable, severe and profound in terms of their measured intelligence scores or IQ tests. The classification of educable and trainable are referred to by other authors such as Brenie-Smith et al (1998).

About 87% of persons with mental retardation will only be a little slower than average in learning new information and skills. When they are still young, their limitations may not be obvious. They may not even be diagnosed as having mental retardation until they get to school. As they become adults, many people with mild retardation can live independently. They may not even be considered by others as having mental retardation.

The remaining 37% of persons with mental retardation score below 50 on the IQ test. These will have more difficulty in school, at home and community. A person with severe mental retardation

will need more intensive for his/her entire life. However, every child with mental retardation can be able to learn, develop and grow. With the appropriate support /help, all children all children with mental retardation can live meaningful life.

United Nation Education, Science and Cultural Organization (1994) observes that at least 10% of the world's total population lives with disabilities. This would make it appear that there are more learners with mental retardation than the currently receiving services. The majority of learners with mental retardation are those with mild mental retardation. Identification of these learners may consist of observations for pointers of low intellectual functioning and deficits in adaptive behavior.

These characteristics may be indicated by an impaired ability to learn, acquire and generalize concepts, process, understand and respond to information and apply knowledge in various settings such as school, home and community. It is also important to note that the learning and social behavioral characteristics of learners with mild mental retardation, learning disabilities and those who are not motivated (low achievers) are often so similar to observers that miss diagnosis (Kozma . C & Stock . J 1993). In any case, services for learners with special learning needs are not yet well developed in Kenya and in many cases children with mild mental retardation may not be easily recognized as having a disability.

Statement of the problem

Children with mild mental retardation are found in many regular schools but may not be easily recognized as having a disability among other learners; go without support services, adaptation and modifications for them to learn. This makes their learning ore challenging hence affecting

their performance. It is upon this background that this study was made to find out how the methods teachers use in teaching these children affect their performance.

The purpose of the study:

This study was purposely taken to find out the learning difficulties encountered by children with mental retardation in an inclusive setting.

Objectives:

The objectives of the study were:

- (i) To find out challenges faced by children with mental retardation in a regular classroom.
- (ii) To find out the methods used by teachers in teaching when teaching children with mental retardation in a regular school setting.
- (iii) To find out teachers' attitudes towards teaching children with mental retardation in regular schools.
- (iv) To suggest possible ways of improving the performance of children with mental retardation in regular schools.

Research Questions.

- (i) What challenges do children with mental retardation face in regular schools?
- (ii) What are the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion of mentally retarded children in regular schools.?
- (iii) What methods do regular teachers use in teaching children with mental retardation?

- (iv) What should be done to improve the performance of children with mental retardation under inclusive education?

The scope of study

The study was carried out in Nyamira division, Nyamira District of Kenya in the three elected schools of Kebirigo, Rirumi and Kabatta primary schools. It was majorly focussed on challenges faced by mentally retarded learners in mainstream schools.

Significance of the study:

The researcher hoped the result of the study would:

- (i) Help teachers to improve on their methods of teaching children mental retardation in regular classroom setting.
- (ii) Learners may be helped to gain confidence for free interaction to uplift their social status and improve their self-esteem as their poor performance may be partly be attributed to their failure to properly express themselves.
- (iii) The study will create awareness and improve cooperation between the handicapped ordinary learners for positive co-existence and readiness to help each other as members of the same society.
- (iv) Enable teachers to design appropriate instructional materials when teaching children with mental retardation.
- (v) Enable researcher to acquire knowledge and skills of teaching children with special educational needs. Teachers need to make special efforts to reach out for these children and involve them in all school activities like any other children.

Limitations:

- The study proved to be expensive as more funds were needed to meet expenses in designing and typing questionnaires, typing and binding final report, transport, lunch and others which was sometimes not available.
- Due to busy teaching schedule and other academic work, time was not enough for the study. This meant foregoing other study activities or working strain which may cause fatigue.
- Some methods used to collect data required meeting respondents and physical talking to them one by one. This took a long time and the respondent failed to give the information.

Delimitations:

- The study was carried out in familiar places where communication and interaction with respondents was easy.
- Some costs were minimised by short distances from researchers home to areas of the study. This therefore was no need of accommodation expenses as researcher to gather information.
- Transport was easy for the researcher when gathering information because most areas of the study were near the researcher's working station.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Academic performance	-learning achievements of mildly retarded children
Social	-Living in a group but not separate.
Special needs	-These are the problems that hinder effective learning of an individual.
Regular schools	-School setting where non-handicapped learners study along those with impairments.
Inclusion can belong	- Adjusting the home, school and society at large so that all individuals have the opportunity to interact, learn and experience feeling of and develop in accordance their potentials and challenges.
Disability	- Any loss or reduction of functional ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range generally considered normal for human beings.
Mental retardation	- A condition of slow mental development that hinders a learner from learning skills as quickly as his/her peers. A learner normally has difficulties with learning, understanding, behavior and communication.
Ordinary learners	- Learners who do not suffer from any kind of disability.
Impairment	- A loss or damage to a part of the body either through accident, disease or genetic factors.

- Mildly retarded -Children with low intellectual functioning and deficits in adaptive behavior.
- Motivation -encouraging children as they study so that they can make improvement and perform better.
- Teaching methods -tactics and approaches used to teach learners in schools so that they understand and perform well.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the ideas of other writers who have discussed similar issues related to the education of mentally retarded children. Their views have been found to be relevant to the study and may be of much help in understanding the challenges children with mental retardation experience in the mainstream setting.

Indicator of mentally retarded children.

According to Githang'a M. (2002) some of the possible indicators of children with mental retardation may include, a child

1. Having low cognitive ability. They though process develop more slowly and they have difficulty in solving problems.
2. Having retarded motor development
3. Having difficulty in remembering experience or things learnt.
4. Being slow at acquiring and developing skills such as speaking and walking.
5. Being unnecessarily slow in carrying out tasks.
6. Not able to transfer the same activities into different situations.
7. Having disorders of memory and thinking.

Educational provision or children with mental retardation

According to Githang'a M. (2002) children with mental retardation, the teacher should arrange tasks in small sequential steps, where each step is taught and checked to ensure the child finds it interesting and is useful. The emphasis should be on developing the child's self confidence, language skills, and good habits of health, safety, work and play and also in vocational skills. All the above is for children with mild developmental disability.

For children with moderate developmental disability, they should be given support to develop habits of activities of daily living such as self care, cleanliness, health and eating behavior. They also need help in developing communication skills, the ability to follow directions and social skills. For children with severe and profound developmental disability, home or hospital visitation programmers may be required. They should be trained in communication skills, motor skills and social skills.

Historical overview of educational provision and development for mentally retarded children in Kenya.

According to Eron (2000) introduction to special needs education. In Kenya education for learners with mental retardation was provided in various forms. The main provision included private tuition, segregated education, integration or mainstreaming and inclusive education. The private tuition was provided by parents of children with special needs who hired persons to provide private education to their children in their homes. During this period, learners with mental handicap were neglected.

During the segregation period, learners who were mentally retarded or had special needs were catered for in segregated set – ups in the community. They might have been placed in special schools in which they learnt with others who had similar difficulties like themselves. There were schools for each impairment.

In the integration/mainstreaming period, the provision reflected the attempts to place learners with special needs in education in the mainstream regular education system. The focus was in three forms which were functional integration, locational integration and social integration.

Lastly, there was the inclusive education which addresses all the learners' needs in a regular classroom using all the available resources to create opportunities for them to learn together in preparing them for life.

Kenyan educational policies for disabled persons.

According to Eron (2000) introduction to special needs education. Since independence, the Kenya government has established many educational commissions to look into sustainability of the educational provision for all children. These educational commissions included the following;

1. The Kenya Education Commission (1964) – The Ominde report.

The commission advocated for integration of children with special needs in regular schools.

2. The National Committee on Education Objectives and policies (1976) – Gachathi Report.

The committee recommended the integration of children with special needs in the society by transferring learners with special needs in education in special schools to regular schools and other centres.

3. The Presidential working party on education and man power training for the next decade and beyond (1988) – The Kamunge Report.

It recommended that the media and national program me be used more intensively to create public awareness of the needs of people with disabilities.

4. Totally integrated quality education and Training (1999) – Koech Report.

The report emphasized the need for early intervention for children including those with disabilities and the disadvantages.

5. Education for all (EFA) – Kenya 2001 Education for All advocates for education be free and available to all Kenyans by 2015, to learners with different disabilities.

Objectives of Inclusion Inclusive Education

It refers to the philosophy of ensuring that schools, centres of learning and educational systems are open to all children. This enables the learners to be included in all aspects of school life.

For any policy to succeed there must be some objectives to be achieved at the end. Some of the inclusion objectives are:-

1. To facilitate inclusion of learners in all aspects of life.
2. To develop positive attitude in parents, teachers, peers and the community at large towards children with special needs in education.

3. To provided equal opportunities to all children to share knowledge, resources and experience.
4. To identify and minimize barriers to learning and development.
5. To assess and place learners with special needs in education.

Principles of inclusion

6. In any set up organization, all the members should be treated equally and to be made appreciated in all aspects. In line with this, the principles may:-
7. Call for equal opportunities to all learners to experience normal mainstream activities.
8. Advocate for accessibility to the learning process and the curriculum by all learners by differentiating the learning and assessment process according to the learners needs.
9. Recognizes and caters for individual differences in race, religion, abilities, disabilities or circumstances.
10. Calls for a child centered curriculum and the learner to attend the school that he/she would naturally go to in his community if he/she had no special needs.
11. According to (Kurt Kristensen, (2000) inclusion should aim at overcoming barriers to learning and development.

Advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education.

In inclusive education, all children learn and grow in the environment that they will eventually live and work in. As participation of those who are “different” takes root, all pupils and teachers gain the virtues of being accommodating, accepting patient and co-operative-thus all learners

benefit from learning and working in an inclusive educational system. Teachers get to share ideas and knowledge with each other, with parents and others, thus making education a meaningful aspect of everyday life. Inclusive education creates a school for all where all benefit resulting in an inclusive society.

On the side of disadvantages, learners who have special needs may be mistreated by the normal learners with special needs may be limited. The environment may be also un-conducive for them. There may be lack of trained staff to cater for those learners in inclusive education and also the community may not be very much supportive.

Barriers of inclusive education.

According to Eron L. (2000) introduction to special needs. The barriers include:-

1. Curriculum barriers
2. Rigid educational approaches
3. Negative attitude
4. Insufficient human and material resources
5. Lack of community parents and involvement.
6. Teacher expectations from learners.
7. Competition and selection of students
8. Classroom repetitions and school desertion
9. Evaluation and promotion criteria that hinder inclusion.
10. Inaccessible environments
11. Lack of other regular teacher involvement.

How to prevent or minimize the barriers.

12. According to Eron L. (2000) barriers can be minimized as follows:-
13. Creating awareness about the nature, causes, prevention and intervention of conditions that create special needs.
14. Encourage the learners with special needs in education to accept their situation.
15. Diversifying the curriculum to suit individual learners needs.
16. Adapting examinations questions to suit the individual learners needs.
17. Identification of children with special needs in education in regular schools.

Traditional beliefs and attitudes towards mental retardation

According to Malusu J.M (1989) Christian religious education caring for the unprivileged).

For mentally handicapped learners, just like other disabilities, the African culture perceived cause differ from one society to the other. However, the most common cause is suover natural causes. These include God's will, witchcraft, punishment for wrong deeds and curse. Another perceived cause is inheritance sometimes viewed as a family curse.

Factors to consider

(i) Parents

According to Githang'a M (2002) some parents give priority to their children without special needs. They should give education to all their children regardless of their physical status. Some parents may tend to be over protective towards the child with special needs in education, thus preventing him/her from taking part in daily life activities. This may hamper the child's possibilities to develop his/her potentials.

(ii) Educators

Some teachers may object to having learners with special needs in education in their class or school fearing that the child will lower the mean score for their class or school. Many teachers think that working with children with disability or other special need calls for technical training

Teaching methods used by teachers in teaching mentally retarded children

Hergarty (1988) observed that joint participation in education activities is the full form of teaching children with special education needs. He further said that most of the schools have failed to teach children with special needs due to teachers who have not acquired knowledge and skills in modifying the materials and methods to meet the learning needs of the children with disabilities fully.

Aggarwal (1995) explains that, teaching methods are strategies and tactics of showing how to do this so that they will be able to do it themselves the choice of what is to be taught and how to teach it. Danshan (1995) claims that people who teach children with special learning needs before training do not have enough experience about educational methods for teaching those children. However, after training they get correct ways of working with them. This is true because during teacher training one is taken through methods of handling all learners. In the absence of training one doesn't have skills. It is worse for learners with special needs.

Senders (1988) explains that an effective teacher will present many examples of new concepts and will provide several opportunities to practice new skills. The teacher will help the learners' participation in their learning where necessary. The researcher is in agreement with this

observatin that the modelling of procedures can be acceptable and effective methods of instruction for a child with nental retardation.

Sanders goes on to say that teachers who are sensitive to needs of learners should employ a variety of visual aids to assist their comprehension of abstract concepts by providing concrete support e.g. charts, photographs, films, books and pupils mode of materials are usually available or easy mode and should be appropriate to the age and level of develoment. The researcher concurs with above that manipulative approaches provide concrete aid in developing concepts through discovery methods of teaching.

Kiltz and Wanyard (1993) observed that normally children learn a great deal from what goes on around them, that is through playing, learning and immitating. This is true because different ways through which pupils learn and variety of facilities will ensure that all pupils fulfill their potentials and help to make teaching more effective and stimulating for them.

The researcher in agreement, further noted that a variety of teaching mothods should be used to kill boredom among pupils and more so children with special learning needs for instance guided discovery, child to child, discussion, question and and asnwer, group work, observation among others should be employed to make learning more interest.

Attitudes of teachers towards inclusion of children with mental retardation

The term 'attitude' is a common word, which is widely used, in everyday life for example when the word is being refered to as having a negative or positive attitude.

Different researchers have offered a variety of definitions of attitude. According to Allport (1954) states an attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience.

From encyclopedia, an attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner. According to Triandis (1971) attitude refers to one idea, knowledge or perceptions of a given objects

Components of attitude

According to Triandis (1971) attitude has three components namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

(i) Cognitive component

This is the way people understand things. Accordingly, people attribute causes of mental to different factors. These attributions may lead them either to develop positive or negative attitudes towards the conditions of the mentally retarded children with this disability.

(ii) Affective component

This is the way human beings feel about something or a situation. Therefore, affective component consists of feelings, emotions and moods that people experience in relation to an object. These affective responses could range from extremely positives to extremely negative.

(iii) Behavioral component

The behavioral component contains actions that people portray in relation to the attitude, actions or one's wish to act in a particular manner (Triandis et al (11971). Since these behavior responses range from extremely positive to negative, they can then be evaluated meaningfully. For instance, who portray a negative attitude towards an object will show a behavior that iis

negative. In line with this many psychologists agree that attitudes determine what we attend to in our environment, how we perceive the information about the object of our attention and how we respond to that object (Barns 1991 as cited in Mwaura' thesis).

Attitudes influence the way people behave towards, feel about others. Cecil et al (1987) observe that “..... generally the hadicaped encounter so many negative experiences that it is difficult for them to develop positive attitudes. The major negative attitude is academic failure. Furthermore, handicapped experience negative reactions from others and these reactions can not be hidden which results in lack of confidence in abilities and lower self-attitude”.

Horn (1995) noted that teachers also show negative attitudes in the classroom. Attitudes of teachers are characterized by labeling handicapped children. He also observed that ordinary children reject their handicapped peers which is a sign of negative attitudes. The researcher in agreement noted that such lebel's portray negative attitudes towards learners. Therefore, the need for right attitude should be upheld and emphasized.

Okech (1992) noted that people exhibit negative attitudes towards handicaped children This is true in that negative attitudes are seen through neglects, isolation, denial and killing children with disability.

As observed by Lingstand and Whyte (1995) that negative attitudes can also influence parent practices in particular way; Most learners with mental retardation are being neglected by their parents as a result of poor guidance from the teachers who already have negative attitudes towards their learning.

Crisci (1981) states that “Negative attitudes may rise from frustrations of not having the necessary skills”. In this situation it becomes clear that ordinary teachers who have had relatively

little or no formal preparation for working with children with special needs respond negatively to the idea of inclusion.

As Okech (1992) noted, people exhibit negative attitudes towards children with disabilities. This is a true observation in that negative attitudes are seen through neglect, isolation and denial among others. Therefore, there is need for massive sensitisation to create positive attitude in teachers to promote confidence and trust among learners if the mentally retarded children are to learn better.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher looked at research design, the area of study, the target population, research instruments, procedure for data collection and data analysis.

Research design

The study used descriptive research design as it involved qualitative methods of data collection. This study adopted a descriptive research design. This enabled the researcher to obtain a better understanding of the challenges mildly mentally retarded learners face in regular schools not only in this area but elsewhere world over. The method chosen allowed a collection of comprehensive and extensive data and provided an in-depth understanding of the topic under study

Area of study

The study was carried out Nyamira division, Nyamira district-Kenya. The area was chosen because the researcher teaches in this area and has identified learners with hearing impairment and their minimal performance. The sampled schools have large numbers of learners and teachers as well.

Target population and sample size

The study concentrated on teachers and management of the sampled schools from the area. The management and teachers helped in investigating challenges facing hearing impaired learners

and suggesting possible intervention strategies. The population involved in the study comprised Head teachers, teachers and learners from the sampled schools in the division.

Sampling procedure

Respondents were selected using convenient sampling but with regard to their individual ability to provide the required information through each instrument. Convenient sampling enables the researcher to choose the nearest and most convenient person to act as a respondent for the study. The process is continued until the required sample size has been reached. Both male and female teachers were given equal opportunities to participate in the study.

Research instruments

The researcher used questionnaire approach as it was considered ideal for collecting required data. It is the most commonly method used when respondents can be easily reached and are willing to cooperate. This method can reach a larger number of subjects who are able to read and write independently. The respondents have freedom to say whatever they want to say and what they know since their identity is not revealed

Data collection procedure

The researcher developed questionnaire from the set objectives of the study. With the introduction letter from Kampala International University, the researcher obtained permission from the Head teachers of the sampled schools to carry out the study. The researcher then designed a program on how to visit the schools at different times. The researcher distributed questionnaires to the sampled respondents and collected them later after they had been filled.

Data analysis

After the data had been collected, brief information was presented in frequency distribution. The data was analyzed in three columns; the first column showed category, the second showed frequency and the last showed percentages. The data collected was analyzed, presented and then discussed briefly concerning hearing impaired learners. The data in frequency columns was converted into percentages and recorded in percentage columns. It consisted of a number of tables, well analyzed and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Introduction

In this chapter attempts are made to interpret the findings. Also key information enabled the researcher to relate the specific objectives and give a clear picture of the results. The researcher recorded the data collected and then analyzed, tabulated and interpreted the data using tables.

Table 1: No of special needs teachers

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	40
No	6	60
Total	20	100

Table 1
presents

the findings from Head teachers of the sampled schools. This reveals that few teachers have been trained in Special Needs Education as only 40% of them has received this special training to handle children with special learning needs. 60% of the teachers in the sampled schools have not had training in special needs education.

It is paramount that government, Non-government agencies and other stakeholders should sponsor more teachers for refresher courses and training in special needs education to acquire more skills in helping all children under inclusive learning.

Table 2: Performance of learners with mental retardation in regular schools

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Low	7	58.3
Poor	3	25
Fair	2	16.6
Total	12	100

The table above shows responses from nine teachers from the three selected schools. Majority of the respondents (58.3%) indicated that the performance of mentally retarded children was poor as compared to their ordinary peers. 25% of the respondents said that these children perform poorly while only 2 respondents (16.6%) reported fair performance by these children.

Table 3: Challenges faced by mentally retarded children in an inclusive setting

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Hard to get teachers fast explanations	5	55.5
Fear to disturb others by asking for pardons	4	44.4
Too many confusing speeches	3	33.3
Don't mark our work	3	33.3
Noisy classroom environment	2	22.2
Abuse from the hearing learners	1	11.1
Teachers refuse to repeat for mentally retarded children	1	11.1

The findings in table two are responses from the nine children with mental retardation from the three selected schools. Five respondents (55.5%) revealed that they find it hard to follow the fast explanations teachers use while teaching. Other four children said that in most cases they fear to ask for pardons from teachers or fellow hearing learner for fear of disturbing them. Three pupils also revealed that teachers use a lot of speech which are hard to understand without help from others. Some children also revealed that sometimes teacher refuse to ark their work. Some children (22.2%) also complained of being disturbed by others in the environment perhaps due to congested classes because of large enrolments. Others expressed disappointment that they were being labeled and abused by their peers while others complained of teachers refusing to repeat for them in case they attempt to ask for pardons. It is evident from these responses that the teachers' attitude towards these learners was negative.

Table 4: Teachers' attitude towards inclusion of learners with mental retardation

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Fair	1	33.3
Poor	2	66.6
Total	3	100

Table presents responses from the three heasteachers in the sampled schools and majority of them indicate poor attitudes of teachers towards inclusion. Some respondents (33.3) sad their teachers have fair attitude towards inclusion. However the fact that none of the headteachers reported positive responses indicates they have noted negative situations in their schools. The

fair response could be a representative of few teachers who have trained in special needs education.

Table 5: Causes of negative attitude in teachers towards inclusion of learners with mental retardation.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Difficulty in instructing the children	3	100
Lack of instructional materials	3	100
Children are aggressive to fellow learners and teachers	2	66.6
They take long to understand instructions	2	66.6
They are stubborn and hard to teach	1	33.3

These were responses from the three headteachers of the sampled schools and have concurred with the researcher's view that their teachers have negative attitude towards inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. The table above illustrates that all the sampled headteachers overwhelmingly revealed that of skills to instruct these children was the most threatening factor to teachers in teaching learners with special learning needs in the regular schools. This in turn makes both learners and teachers lose interest in each other and learning.

All the respondents also indicated that teaching mentally retarded learners is hard without proper and enough instructional materials

Two respondents (66.6%) shared the view that mentally retarded children are aggressive to both peers and teachers. This creates resentment towards these children from their peers and teachers.

This same number also shared the belief that mentally retarded children do not easily follow instructions and are very slow to learn with others in addition to being hard to teach.

Table 6: Methods used by teachers to teach mentally retarded children in regular schools

METHODS	SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS RESPONSES			NUMBER OF TEACHERS	PERCENTAGE
	A	B	C		
Demonstration	03	03	03	09	100%
Teacher – Centred	03	03	03	09	100%
Talk and Chalk	03	03	03	09	100%
Gesturing	03	03	02		88.8%
Individualised method	01	02	01	04	44.4%
Group work	00	01	02	03	33.3%

The table above shows that 9 (100%) teachers use demonstration, teacher centred and talk and chalk methods while teaching. From the table IV above it was revealed that demonstration, Teacher centres and Talk and chalk were commonly used with respondents meeting them respectively. However some of these methods especially talk and chalk method do not cater for the learning needs of these children.s

One respondent also revealed the mentally retarded children are stubborn and hard to teach and disturb others thus causing unrest in class.

Table 7: Suggestions for improving the performance of children with mental retardation in an inclusive setting.

Responses	No. Of Headteachers	No. Of Teachers	Total
Provision of enough enough teaching/learning materials	3	3	6
Use of child to child methods	2	3	5
Giving enough time for children to practice	2	2	4
Reducing the teacher-pupil ratio	2	1	3
Refresher courses for teachers	2	1	3
Special allowances for teachers handling these children	3	-	3
Teaching handicapped children separately	1	1	2

The table above presents suggestions from nine respondents both headteachers and teachers from the three sampled schools. As shown, the majority of the respondents suggested provision of enough teaching/learning materials and equipment may improve the performance of children with hearing impairment in the mainstream schools.

Other five respondents suggested use of child-to-child method to do better for the children may be in position to their deaf peers. This was in line with other respondents (four) who suggested that giving enough time for these children to learn and practice what has been learnt would do better.

Three other respondents suggested refresher courses for teachers so as to acquire knowledge and skills about exceptional children. Some other respondents (three) suggested cutting down the teacher-pupil ratio to allow them enough time to attend to individual differences and help these children effectively.

Some other two respondents suggested teaching mentally retarded learners separately in their own class. However the current trends and advocacy of education for all do not support this idea. It rather favours inclusive/mainstream setting.

Another group of respondents (two) proposed special token/allowance to teachers involved in teaching learners with special learning needs for their work proves to be more tiresome. This is however an indication of poor attitude towards educating these children.

It is important to note that a teacher is an important person in the growth and development of a child. Therefore teachers need to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to assist all children despite the handicaps the child may have. Teachers should therefore be sent for further studies or on refresher courses for the benefit of all the children in their schools. For instance they need to acquire skills such as the use of varied teaching methods, means of assisting those with special learning needs in the mainstream not separately.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses and concludes the findings of the study and suggests recommendations according to the set objectives of the study.

Discussion of results on objective one

Findings as noted in table 2 show that children with mental retardation performed poorly compared to their ordinary peers. Majority of the respondents (58.3%) indicated that the performance of mentally retarded children was low as compared to their ordinary counterparts. 25% of the respondents said that these children perform poorly while only 2 respondents (16.6%) reported fair performance by these children. The fact that none of the respondents revealed good performance was enough to come to this conclusion. It may also be said that the 16% that reported fair performance needed to protect the image of their schools but in actual sense the performance may not be much different from the responses of the majority. The poor/fair performance may be attributed to negative attitude of teachers towards teaching handicapped learners, unfavorable classroom/school environment as noted in table 3 (chapter four) and unfriendly teaching methods among others. It is therefore important that teachers use concrete examples, real objects, events and situations in order to make clear explanations for the mentally retarded learners to benefit from the learning process. John Mani (2004) observes that; “When I hear, forget, when I see, I remember and when I do, I understand”. Teachers therefore ought to

use visual aids for learners to understand concepts and involve them in as many learning exercises as possible.

Discussion of results on objective two.

This objective was meant to find out the challenges faced by children with mental retardation in regular schools. Responses of the mentally retarded children as illustrated in table 2 (chapter four) reveal that these children face a number of challenges in a mainstream class/school. The major challenge seems to stem from poor communication skills of these children that they may not be easily understood by teachers. As revealed by the findings, most teachers make fast explanations hard to be followed and later on understood by these children. Moreover most of these children revealed that fear to ask questions and pardons for fear to disturb others perhaps this is from the past experience/responses they they have suffered whenever they tried to ask. This elaborates how lack of communication techniques as a result of failure of teachers and learners to effectively communicate with each other. It should be noted that effective learning/teaching requires active participation of both the teacher and learners. Where this participation is dominated by one party, learning may not take place.

Ceaser (1996) stresses that teachers are faced with the task of delivering content to learners which require effective communication that involves sitting arrangement, class control and use of pupil-centered learning. Therefore for effective teaching and full participation of learners, teachers should always be equipped with methods, education materials, subject matter, teaching techniques and means of communication in handling learners.

Kizito and Sakwa (194) further argue that; “The most effective way of fulfilling those basic needs is the ability to communicate with people around us”. A person’s failure to make interactions with other people and the environment may result into social problems like stereotypic behavior patterns not good for society and the child itself. In order to avoid such behaviors, teachers and parents as well should be committed to helping children easily associate with others.

Discussion of results on objective three.

Objective four was set to find out teachers’ views and attitudes towards inclusion of learners with mental retardation in the mainstream.

The findings on this objective have indicated that most of respondents have negative attitudes towards disabled learners. According to responses from sampled teachers and headteachers it is evident that teachers prefer teaching ordinary learners to handicapped children and some of the reasons being:

Difficulties in communication, they do not easily follow instructions and lack of instructional materials. However, such statements are not real but a result of bias and misconception. Negative attitude was thus found out to be one of the barriers to handicapped children’s learning and development and hence a great challenge to children under children in mainstream school arrangement.

In reference to revelations on the questions about teachers’ views and attitudes towards teaching learners with mental retardation , lack of training in special needs education was sighted by majority respondents.

The above situation makes teachers lose interest in teaching mentally retarded learners and the school at large accord such children low value leading to stigmatization. The teacher should therefore learn to accept and assist the handicapped in their classrooms.

Conclusion

It should be noted that the trend no longer supports the special schools system, therefore children with special educational needs should be placed under inclusive school system. Three things therefore have to be put into consideration namely; Environment, Curriculum and Teaching approaches. Teachers handling children with mental retardation should have compassion and love for assisting these children to learn and accept them as they are, freely interact with them, coming down to their level, building good rapport and knowing their likes and dislikes. Teachers should endeavor to get more knowledge the learning needs of children with special needs by going for further studies, attending refresher courses and workshops on Special Needs Education.

Recommendations

The children statute clearly states that it is the right of every child to live and receive all basic needs of life including food, shelter, clothing, medical care, love respect and education. Therefore after gathering all the information, the researcher made some recommendations which when implemented may improve on the education and performance of children with special educational needs. These include:

- (i) Special needs department-EARS should organize a number of sign language seminars at subcounty and parish levels for teachers, parents and pupils in mainstream schools. It

should be noted that sign language seminars currently being organized at regional levels are very expensive and attended by few. This could be best done with the help government and non-government organizations working with persons with disabilities who may provide instructors and logistics. This may help to bridge the gap between children with disabilities, ordinary children, teachers and parents.

(ii) Creation of resource room facilities within every mainstream school, with a variety of to cater for the learning needs of all children with special needs. There should also be trained teachers to be made responsible for special education in each regular school.

(iii) There is need to co-opt special needs education into Primary Teacher Training Colleges. The current system of training special needs at Diploma level minimumly favors special needs education. A few teachers who receive training either at Diploma or Degree level do not go back to class. They are instead placed in leadership positions such as Headteachers, inspectors or hired by rich non-government organisations which have high demand for them. It is therefore important that primary teacher training colleges take up the responsibility of training special needs teachers so that teachers get a 'dose' to take to primary schools where they are neededmost.

(iv) Intensifying awareness programs. It should be noted that although Special Needs Education/EARS has carried out awareness sensitisation seminars in many districts country schools, many people in the community have no had enough information about inclusive learning. EARS therefore to intensify its awareness activities. The work of sensitisation should however not only be done by EARS/SNE staff but involve different categories of concerned professionals and stakeholders. While organizing seminars and

other programs about persons with disabilities like education of the deaf children, their involvement is of great importance. The idea behind this involvement is to bridge the gap between persons with disabilities and the community

(v) Since it has been found out that the majority of teachers are untrained special teachers in main stream, many teachers should go for up grading in special needs education at Kampala International University and KISE.

(vi) Parents of children with hearing impairment should be encouraged to attend sign language classes and take their children to school when they are still young and they should be taught some sign language to enable them learn to communicate with their children easily and then in helping them learn at home.

(vii) Seminars for teachers to learn to make and use educational materials from local materials should be organised locally by districts. Local manpower should be utilised to train and other people who are more experienced be incase there are areas where competence seems to be limited. This will increase the number of teachers with skills and eliminate the problem of teachers depending on the already made teaching/ learning materials which are expensive and scarce.

In a word, I suggest that there should be more research studies in future to find out more challenges found by teachers not only in teaching children with hearing impairment especially in regular schools.

APPENDIX 1

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APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADTEACHERS

I am carrying out research on the difficulties encountered by learners with mental retardation in an inclusive setting. This study is solely purposely for studt purposes for the awrd of a degree in special needs education of Kampala International University. I request you to willingly answer these questions.

Thank you.

Name of school

1. What is the general school enrolment?

2. Do you have special trained teachers for children with mental retardation?

Tick Yes

No

3. What methods do your teachers use in teaching these children?

.....

4. What challenges do you meet in trying to instruct learners withmental retardation?

.....

.....

5. What facilities teachers in your school to teach children with mental retardation?

.....

Thank you.

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

I am a student from Kampala International University carrying out research on causes of poor performance in science among children with retardation in the mainstream schools. I request you to answer these questions willingly.

Name of school

1. What is the general enrolment of your class?

.....

2. Are you a specialist teacher in teaching children with learning difficulties?

Yes No

3. Have you ever attended any any special training/refresher course on teaching children with special learning needs?

.....

4. Do you teach mentally retarded children?

.....

5. What challenges do you meet in using the methods above?

.....



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Office of the Director

Date: 18th August, 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

REG NO.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Research/Project.

The above named is our student in the College of Open Education and Distance Learning (CODL), pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Education Special Needs.

He or she wishes to carry out Research in your school/ Organization.

Research is a requirement for the award of a Bachelors Degree in Education Special Needs. Any assistance accorded to him or her will be highly appreciated.

Thank you,


J.S. Owoeye, Ph.D
Director, CODL.

