

**CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY TEACHERS WHEN TEACHING
LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN
MARAFA ZONE, MAGARINI DISTRICT,
KENYA**

**BY
THOMAS KOMBE YERI
BED/18281/71/DF**

**A DESSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND
DISTANCE LEARNING IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR
THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF
EDUCATION IN SPECIAL NEEDS OF
KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY**

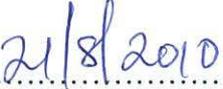
AUGUST,2010

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has never been submitted to any university for any award. Where the works of others have been cited acknowledgment has been made.

Signature..........

Thomas Kombe Yeri

Date..........

APPROVAL

I certify that the work submitted by this candidate was under my supervision. His work is ready for submission, to be evaluated for the award of a Bachelor of Education at Kampala International University.

Supervisor... 

Mr. Taligoola Deborah

Date 

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my wife Amina Omar Ali, my children Rehema Kombe, Mapenzi Kombe, Tatu Kombe, Kasichana Kombe, Maua Kombe and Kadzo Kombe for supporting me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My gratitude goes to my supervisor for the advice and guidance while I was writing this project and also for providing useful references in order to improve the quality of this project.

Special gratitude's to my wife Amina Omar Ali for her moral and financial support through out the course.

Finally I would like to acknowledge my dear parents who educated me and made me to reach where I am. May the Almighty guide me where they are.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
APPROVAL.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background Information.....	1
1.2 Statement Of Tue Problem.....	2
1.3 Purpose Of The Study.....	3
1.4 Objectives Of The Study.....	3
1.5 Research Questions.....	3
1.6 Significance Of The Study.....	4
1.7 Limitations And Delimitations.....	4
1.7.1 Limitations.....	4
1.7.2Delimitations.....	5
1.8 Definition Of Terms And Acronyms.....	5
CHAPTER TWO.....	6
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
2.0 Introduction.....	6
2.1 Explanation Of Learning Difficulties.....	6
2.3 Characteristics And Identification (Academic Dimensions).....	7

2.3.1 Written Language, Spelling And Reading Skills.....	7
2.3.2 General Mathematics.....	8
2.4 Characteristics And Identification.....	9
2.5 Causes Of Learning Difficulties.....	10
2.5.1 Socio-Emotional Problems.....	10
2.5.2 Imperfect Psychological Process.....	11
2.5.3 Environmental Factor.....	11
2.5.4 Education Factors.....	12
2.6 Legal And Illegal Drugs.....	12
2.7 Pre Natal And Post Natal Causes.....	12
2.8 Implications Of General And Specific Learning.....	13
2.8.1 Language Activities.....	13
2.8.2 Implications Of Learning Difficulties On Mathematics.....	13
2.8.3 Implications Of Learning Difficulties On Emotional Development.....	14
2.9 Intervention Strategies.....	14
2.9.1 Identifying Learners Instructional Needs.....	15
2.9.2 Instructional Planning And Implementation.....	15
2.9.3 Curriculum.....	16
CHAPTER THREE.....	17
METHODOLOGY.....	17
3.1 Introduction.....	17
3.2 Research Design.....	17
3.3 Sampling Procedure.....	17
3.4 Sample.....	17
3.5 Research Instruments.....	18
3.6 Procedure Of The Study.....	18
3.7 Data Analysis.....	19
CHAPTER FOUR.....	20
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	20

4.1 introduction.....	20
CHAPTER FIVE	30
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	30
5.0 Introduction	30
5.1 Discussion.....	30
5.2 Conclusion.....	32
5.3 Recommendations	32
REFERENCES	34
APPENDIX 1	35
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TECHERS.....	35
APPENDIX 2	37
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS.....	37

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In this introductory chapter of the study, the researcher gave the context and theoretical background of learning difficulties. The researcher proceeded to give the statement of the problem, the objectives and the research questions that would guide the scope of the study. The researcher also explained the limitations and delimitations that affected the progress of the study. The chapter ended with the definition of terms used as per the context.

1.1 Background Information

In an inclusive mode of education, many learners seem to fall prey to a myriad of learning difficulties at one stage or the other in their course of learning. Children all over the world have varied abilities and learning needs. Some of them, according to Mwaura (2002) experience different levels of difficulties, which could be specific or general in nature. Where these difficulties are specific, these children experience problems in one or more of the content areas of the curriculum such as in reading, writing, spelling or in Mathematics. While viewed under the context of learning difficulties, Ndurumo (1993) categorizes some learners to be just slow in learning and with reduced abilities in concept formation as compared to the rest of class exposed to the same learning background. He explains the possibility of some learners having general and severe learning problems in most areas of learning as may be characterized by poor performance in almost all the areas of the curriculum. The description therefore placed the different categories under one umbrella term, Learning Difficulties. Learners who experience learning difficulties have often been misunderstood in inclusive settings. Teachers in most schools when looking at their performance during normal teaching sessions, and also looking at their examination performance, have ended up branding and describing them derogatively with names and descriptions such as being lazy, not serious, inconsistent, underachievers and slow learners, Research carried out by Gearheart (1995) shows interestingly some observation worth of note that some learners in class seem bright and enthusiastic but fail

to perform according to their abilities or expected potential in specific areas of learning, therefore exhibiting what is so often described as significant discrepancy between the actual performance and (as already) their potential To give an example, a learner may strike a teacher as somebody with good potential in all areas of learning, but somehow he / she may simply fail to learn how to read for reasons a teacher may not understand or explain. There by, displaying a discrepancy between what is expected and what is observed In such analysis, it only helps to strengthen what some teachers think about such learners and does not help to change teachers derogatory description of such learners. However, these children do look normal because their handicap is so subtle and invisible to escape teachers scrutiny. These children have normal intelligence and some are even quite above average. They cannot be grouped correctly as mentally retarded. It is now becoming a concern that teachers in Marafa Zone are not making any progress in addressing the plight of many learners w ho have shown clear traits of belonging to the group of learners with learning difficulties. These learners have passed un-noticed from one academic ladder to the other but at the end of the final class in primary school, their performances have continuously been poor. There could be many reasons for their continued poor performance, yet teachers haven't escaped some of the blame for the state of affairs, as many parents and the community at large in this zone point accusing fingers to teachers and hold t he accusation strongly. The argument being that teachers spend long hours daily with learners, but teachers believe otherwise, yet there could be known or unknown challenges they face when teaching children.

1.2 Statement Of Tue Problem

The continuous uncertainty of the dismal performance of learners with learning difficulties in Marafa Zone has parents wondering what has befallen on their children. Their concern is genuine as they argue that the futures of their children are at stake. No one from both teachers or parents is able to say with certainty why children are performing dismally. While teachers believe that they are doing their best, and that there could be other underlying reasons for the continuous poor performance, parents believe otherwise. Teachers spend most times with learners. In any given class, there are learners with learning difficulties who need specialized teaching if they have to show noticeable

progress. Teachers may have challenges teaching such learners. These are the challenges the researcher set to investigation intervention strategies that could be used by teachers to the benefit of learners.

1.3 Purpose Of The Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate in details challenges faced by teachers of learners with learning difficulties in Marafa Zone, Magarini District, offer solutions to the challenges so that teaching becomes effective, relevant and of value to learners). This would prepare learners adequately for academic advancement. With teaching challenges so that teaching becomes effective, Levant and of value of learners. This would prepare learners adequately for academic advancement with teaching challenges minimized or eradicate all together, learner's progress would help to restore parent's confidence in teachers.

1.4 Objectives Of The Study

This study was based on relevant objectives as detailed below: I to specifically establish problems encountered by teachers, when teaching learners with learning difficulties in inclusive learning and which hinders their academic learning and development.

2. To investigate the causes of the problems and their implications to academic learning and development.
3. To suggest relevant, credible and possible intervention strategies that could be used to eradicate or minimize problems to the benefit of learners.

1.5 Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following research questions

1. What problems do teachers encounter when teaching learners with learning difficulties?
2. What are the causes of the challenges that teachers of learners with learning difficulties

face when teaching such learners?

3. What measures, methods and teaching approaches should teachers use to help minimize teaching challenges that they face?

1.6 Significance of The Study

The findings of the study would be significant in the following ways: I From the recommendations, curriculum developers would know that the present curriculum in use in primary schools does not cater equitably for learners with special needs (such as those with learning difficulties) and requires overhauling, or modification of sections to include all kinds of learners.

2. From suggestions and recommendations, teachers would identify areas that need special attention, and use recommendations given for effective teaching or applications.

3. Learners who previously were ignored by teachers would benefit from efforts that teachers would put, to make them acquire knowledge; as teachers would use recommended teaching methods that benefit specific groups of learners.

4. The research could be used as reference material by future researchers on the subject.

1.7 Limitations And Delimitations

There were some limitations and delimitations that affected the study progress both positively and negatively. These were as follows:

1.7.1 Limitations

Time: Time factor was the greatest limitation, as the researcher had to perform her obligatory duties as a professional teacher, and only carry out research work when free or when permission is given by the head of institution where the researcher teaches.

- Lack of co-operation: At the place of work, some teachers did not co-operate for their own selfish ends, and didn't see how the study would help or benefit them or learners.

Some learners also didn't want to co-operate and avoided interview by the researcher.

- Referral literature: Local libraries in Magarini such as the Kenya National Library and

the British Council Library did not have relevant books on the subject. This forced researcher to travel to Kenya Institute of Education, Nairobi for relevant books on the subject.

- Finance: That was a self sponsored project, and needed funds to complete. Purchases of stationary, testing, traveling execs all bore hard on the researchers' financial capability.

1.7.2 Delimitations

Language: This was delimitation as the research was carried out in English and where necessary such as interviewing parents, the researcher used Kiswahili Teachers were proficient in English, and parents had no problem with Kiswahili.

1.8 Definition Of Terms And Acronyms

Autonomy- A feeling of self control and self determination

Cognitive- Thinking capacity

Derogatory- Dehumanizing words

Developmental delay- A lag in cognitive ,physical ,social-emotional aspects

Discrepancy- A difference

Dysfunction- Not working as required

Inclusive- Learners both "normal" and "with special needs" learn together

Intervention- Corrective measure

Language deficit- Under developed language skills

Learning deficit- Not able to grasp what is being taught

Pathology- Medical term meaning diseases

Perception- Ability to see, feel from an intellectual angle

Prevalence- Dominant

Strategy- A plan in relation to teaching method

Therapy- Contextually means help

Truancy- Deliberate absenteeism

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed literature related to the study from books, journals, newspapers, bulletins, research reports, modules and from internet downloaded information. The literature review will be arranged in the following order: - Explanation of learning difficulties, characteristics and identification both academic and behavioural, causes of learning difficulties, drugs, pre-natal and post-natal causes, implications of learning difficulties, intervention strategies.

2.1 Explanation of Learning Difficulties

It is true that in any inclusive setting such as schools or communities, one is likely to meet learners with diverse abilities and learning needs. Some of these learners may be experiencing certain levels of These difficulties could be specific, where the experience is in one or more of the content areas of the curriculum such as reading, writing, spelling or in Mathematics. In such scenario, according to Ogonda (2002) learners could be said to be experiencing specific learning difficulties, or disability.

Some learners according to Njuki et al (2001) could be culprits of slow learning rates and abilities in concept formation as compared to the rest in the same class at school. While some learners according to Gearheart (1985) in all learning situations experience general and severe learning problems in most areas of learning, as may be characterized by their poor performance in almost all areas of any given curriculum. They experience greater difficulties in learning that the majority of learners in the same age bracket as them, with the resultant negative effect on academic and general mental development. To say with certainty that an individual child learning problem could be based on one known fact would be misleading.

Researchers have advanced explanations, although not conclusive on possible causes of learning problems. The possible reason as to why learners may develop learning

difficulties such as in English as a second language or Mathematics could be resulting from the family background, peer group instructors teaching approach, learner / teacher relationship, environmental influence and a host of other known, suspected or unknown reasons (Brooks, 1995).

2.3 Characteristics And Identification (Academic Dimensions)

With teaching experience in primary schools spanning some twenty years, the researcher can authoritatively make relevant contribution based on keen observation, and identification through learners responses to teaching. The researcher has observed frequently that the main skill areas likely to be affected in learners with learning difficulties include:

Written language, spelling, spoken language, comprehension, listening skills, basic reading and general Mathematics. Ekwall (1989) made elaborate observations on the above listed areas of language teaching and learning.

2.3.1 Written Language, Spelling And Reading Skills

Most learners with learning difficulties have problem with writing. Illegibility in writing is common; some may have difficulties expressing ideas on paper as they may have trouble remembering what to write. Their hands seem to be stubborn , and may write words they had no intention of writing. Even in copying from a book or the chalk board, they in many occasions copy inaccurately. This is promoted by their inability to remember letter sequence in words, some may have reversibility frequencies where great confusion arises in letters such as 'b' and 'd' or 'mate' for 'tame'. These confusions are usually extended into reading exercises, which are characterized by poor reading skills, exemplified by tendencies to read letters ,words backwards or upside down (reversals and inversions) in letters like 'b', 'd', 'p' or words like 'dip', 'bid' , 'pip'.

The problems according to Njuki (2001) *may* extend spoken, reading and listening language skills. In spoken reading and listening, Njuki asserts that in a speaking exercise, these learners may have trouble holding out in an argument contest characterized by inability to fish out and use appropriate words to express themselves. This means they

2.4 Characteristics And Identification

(BEHAVIOURAL DIMENSIONS)

While working with primary school children over the years, the researcher asserts that there are many behavioural patterns that distinguish learners with learning disabilities from the rest in any given situation.

Behavioural dimensions encompasses hyperactivity, hypoactivity, distractibility, poor sensory and perception, motor problems, poor motor control, short attention span and impulsivity. Most learners suffer in many of the areas listed.

Norvation(2000) and Ogonda (2001) both agree that hyperactivity is a distinctive character in many learners. This motor activity is not goal oriented One may notice that some children seem to be always on the move. In class, they fidget, wonder from desk to desk in search of nothing in particular except to find aft asking or playing mater In some cases, one may also notice learners who exhibit hypoactivity tendencies ,by just being passive during practical lessons. They tend to be moving slowly through life experiences. In class work, most of them do not finish assignments given.

Most learners, according to Ogonda (2002) also get easily distracted by other happenings not related to a learning session in class, and showing higher degrees on distractibility and less concentration. It is not uncommon to see these learners with impulsive tendencies where one may shout out answers before thinking or just pick any answer in a multiple choice question. Observation by the researcher has shown examples where a learner fails to co-ordinate use of both hands and eyes when carrying Out simple activities like lacing shoes or copying a drawn picture from a book, This according to Mwaura (2002) reflects poor co-ordination of both sensory and motor activities (perceptual motor difficulties) and it could go further where a learner becomes clumsy in carrying out fine and / or gross motor activities ,normally noticed in poor handwriting or writing in spaces between lines on a paper rather than on the line as others do, Studies by other researchers such as Grossman (983) and Mercer (1989) as cited in Wong (1995) have described aspects of short attention span where learners with learning

difficulties experience difficulties in concentrating on a task for a reasonable time span. They have the tendency to give up working before finishing or wait to see the end of most work they do, or done by peers in normal classroom situations.

2.5 Causes Of Learning Difficulties

there is disagreement on exact the root cause of learning difficulties among the professionals.

Learning difficulties is therefore a multidisciplinary area and the cause cannot be studied from a single perspective, immense input from various disciplines is therefore necessary.

Lerner (1976) listed areas that may be involved with learning disabilities. These are :-

- Speech and language pathology. Language development linguistics
- Curriculum development
- Psychology, Education, child development and learning theory
- Guiding and counseling and occupational therapists

- Other professionals.

Therefore, no discipline can claim so far to have a monopoly in learning disability field. The role of special education in school age children plays a very important role in remediation of learning disabilities, as detection at an early age by teachers would mean advising the concerned including teachers, before the problem go out of hand.

2.5.1 Socio-Emotional Problems

As [fare and Hare (1979) describes children with socio-emotional problems as being impulsive, explosive, lack of social competence, unable to adjust and have rapid mood variation from hour to hour. So a child who is emotionally deprived he / she will have learning difficulties /problems.

Motor problems

This includes both gross and fine motor areas. Gross motor activities deals with the use of large muscles of the body like jumping, kicking, throwing, lifting e.t.c. As stated by Kephart (1974) gross motor activities are learned before the fine motor activities. These

include the use of small muscles such as fingers to draw, write, copy and sketch. Deficit in gross motor activities cause children to be clumsy and awkward (Wallace and McLoughlin, 1975). These children experience problems with balance and playing football, volleyball, netball and basketball.

2.5.2 Imperfect Psychological Process

Some causes of learning disabilities are seen to be as a result of psychological disturbance (Reid and Hresko, 1978), (Wallace and M.C Loughlin, 1975). To is as a result of genetic factors whereby some families can have more than one child with learning difficulties. The learning difficulty can be passed from parents to offspring and more often in reading and language problems among biological relatives of the affected learner.

Another cause may be due to acquired trauma; this can be brain injury of the child which shows disturbances in perception thinking and emotional behavior. The disturbances may therefore interfere with normal learning process as stated by Mwaura (2002). Congenital causes may be due to unusual way of baby delivery especially where the baby is forced out by use of forceps.

2.5.3 Environmental Factor

Environmental factors here include the nutrition, safety, sensory stimulation and emotional and social development. Lorrit (1978), Reid and Hresko (1981), (Wallace and Mcloughlin, 1975). Environmental factors are external to the body of the child and are not part of psychological and biochemical functioning of the brain, but rather are found in the environment and affect the well being of the child and his learning. All growing up children need to apply all their senses in order to learn the environment. If not given enough time to exercise variety of activities that promote sensory integration, then they will end up not getting maximum sensory stimulation which encourages learning. This is more experienced with low-economic status families or urban areas where children are totally confined with busy caretakers, Ogembo (2002).

2.5.4 Education Factors

Education factors have been taken to cause learning difficulties in that, the instruction are given Out adequately through teaching ; this therefore prevents the children from mastering the subject matter; (Wallace and McLaughlin, 1975), (Hiisch, 1978) noted that inappropriate teaching methods are used by teachers to teach certain subjects. Such methods may make the child to master the subject matter. Using inappropriate methods may be attributed to teacher's lack of necessary teaching skills or knowledge in the subject matter (Mwaura, 2002).

2.6 Legal And Illegal Drugs

According to Bernard (996) drugs are poisonous toxins, taken without prescriptions from medical practitioners can be harmful to a developing foetus. The unborn child is extremely vulnerable to most drugs taken by their mothers during pregnancy. Cigarettes, alcohol, herbs are categorized in the definition of legal drugs. These drugs constrict blood flow, raises heart beats, increase blood pressure and respiration. The resultant effects is reduction of oxygen reaching the foetus, leading to brain abnormalities and learning difficulties of various types. Hard drugs such as heroin have much more serious effects on the foetus. They are referred to as illegal drugs. Babies whose mothers use hard drugs such as heroin are sometimes born already addicted to the drug. The effect is that such babies may have attention deficit and hyperactivity dis-orders thus increasing the risk of being born prematurely, and further brain damage with chances of developing learning difficulties from childhood.

2.7 Pre Natal And Post Natal Causes

According the American Nurses Association definition (1974) health means a sense of complete well being and the absence of disease. Unfortunately, childhood is riddled with diseases not matter how careful parents are; their children will suffer from many childhood ailments. Such diseases which are common and which affect children's well being and development include Rubella (German measles), among others. Other post natal causes which may lead to learning disability include injuries that occur on the head which can happen during accidents, blows on the head, or mental diseases.

Injuries sustained usually lead directly to causes of learning difficulties, since learning is a brain controlled function.

2.8 Implications Of General And Specific Learning

DIFFICULTIES.

The effects of learning disabilities on children's mental growth and development begins early and often continues to leave its mark well into the adolescent years. Children are affected negatively by their inability to perform well and in comparison to others who have no learning problems. This means for them to gain for the sake of their futures, any efforts at intervention must start as soon as a learning problem is detected. According to Erkwall (1989) learning difficulties have marked implications in spoken language, reading and Mathematics. Other researchers such as Lacey (1993) and Mercer (1989) have elaborately made references to implications on emotional and psychological development.

2.8.1 Language Activities

In spoken language, learners with learning difficulties may have problems in understanding abstract words, concrete words and words with multiple meanings. They may also have problems in making sentences, or phrases from groups of words. In reading as Erkwall adds, these learners may have problems in visual and auditory discrimination. Still they may experience greater problems in sound blending and sight words.

2.8.2 Implications Of Learning Difficulties On Mathematics

Still, experiences of most teachers of Mathematics will confirm Erkwall's observation that most learners with learning challenges have problems in discrimination of different shapes such as differentiating a triangle from a pyramid or an oval from a circle. Most learners cannot work out sums involving place values or simple addition involving carrying from ones to tens, subtractions involving borrowing from tens to ones, telling time, monetary values or working out worded sums.

2.8.3 Implications Of Learning Difficulties On Emotional Development

Emotional problems are very common among children with learning difficulties. Among the difficulties are inadequate self concept, personality problems, anxiety, inability to embrace interpersonal relationship, dependency.

According to Mercer (1989) the resultant consequence is that most learners become helpless because of the grips of the mentioned emotional problems, restricting their learning. Psychologically, as a result of the grip of emotions mentioned, children with learning difficulties display serious behavioural problems. They could be hyperactive, destructive, or completely withdrawn from attempts at learning.

2.9 Intervention Strategies

It is important to have good procedures in place that will enable teachers to work effectively with learners who have learning problems. Some of the procedures are not new but present what teachers do all the time in inclusive settings. For the purposes of discussion, the procedures could be arranged in themes. Richmond (1999) outlines this procedure:- Identify the learners difficulties, identify factors in the learners environment and within him / her that may affect learning, analyze the content to find out the aspects that may be contributing to the difficulties, plan on how the learners difficulties will be eliminated or reduced by formulating realistic objectives and stating the behavior or skill (s) to be developed. Designing or specifying the educational strategy, resources to be used and time the teacher will work with the learner.

Other researchers such as Ndurumo (1993) suggest that instructors should plan according to a schedule known to them, learners and other teachers so that a conflict of time, method and strategy should not overlap or conflict, Methods of affecting the plan should vary depending on the effect of tried procedures. Such methods could include task analysis, where a particular task is taught in units that eventually take care of the whole task.

Ndurumo suggests further that constant review and evaluation of the learner's progress is necessary, for the purposes of evaluating progress. If progress is not seen then teaching

plans should be modified or changed all together to suit learners needs. Strategic methods outlined could fit into a phrase used by educationists termed Diagnostic Prescriptive teaching. It means the teacher diagnoses the problem and prescribes a solution for the problem detected.

2.9.1 Identifying Learners Instructional Needs

An article appearing in the Kenya Teacher Quarterly News of Saturday, June 2004 gives an insight of interest usually portrayed by teachers in trying to help learners in their classes who show behaviours that are grossly in contrast to normal behaviours exhibited by others. The article goes on to explain that such interest is short lived, as a teacher discovers that he can not correct the behaviours. The suggestion by the same article is that sustained intervention usually works, yet not many teachers are keen to sustain remedial undertaking.

Before attempting to remediate a learning problem, it would be correct first to establish that a learner has problem in a given area of learning. One suggestion by Hack (1995) is when a teacher notices that a learner fails repeatedly in a specific content area, even when repeated instructions have been given against a backdrop of majority class support; it means there is a specific learning problem. To get to the problem, it would require that the teacher go through a learners history (case history) plan and observe the learner by giving the same exercise in smaller units to find out which area the problem lies. This would help in intervention. The case history is usually taken to give the teacher the learner's historical background, and whether the current problem has any relationship with the learner's concentration or recall abilities, which diverts attention.

2.9.2 Instructional Planning And Implementation

Once the content and error analysis has been carried out, instructional planning should start. Mwaura (2002) suggests that the teacher should look for relevant resources for each skill area needing instructions. The criteria for determination of whether learning has taken place should be established (Testing? Interview?) The amount of time required to complete remedial should be known along with time when teaching or remedial help will be carried out. Methodology and strategy to be used should also be planned. These

methods include task analysis, multisensory approaches, individualized Educational Programmes (I.E.P). Once these above are completed, help programme should be set in motion immediately. Yet the biggest problem most teachers in primary schools have is lack of skills, knowledge and training required to carry out effective teaching. It is imperative to not according to Mwaura (2002) that to date, no meaningful programmes in special education is in the Teachers College curriculum, as the colleges continue to equip teachers with knowledge and skills for teaching considered 'normal'. K.I.S.E has a complete Special Needs Education curriculum, and more teachers are currently undertaking S.N.E training which will go a long way in solving Special Needs Requirements.

2.9.3 Curriculum

According to Kilei (2003) any curriculum developed should consider the learners educational needs. It takes into account learners developmental milestone for it to be effective. With the introduction of Free Primary Education, the aspect where the curriculum takes into account learners developmental milestone no longer works towards that end. There are many cases where old children in terms of chronological age are found in classes one or two as old as 12 or 13 years of age, and even old men of 40 join lower classes. There are criticisms as to the amount of content in the primary school curriculum, The Kenya Teacher quarterly magazine, June 2003, made comments to the effect that not one class in the primary 1-8 ever finishes the teaching meant for learners for the 12 months of the year.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presented the methods used to carry out the study. These methods included research design, sample and sampling procedure, instruments used, procedure of the study and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher used a survey design method, where data was collected by use of questionnaires given to teachers. An interview schedule was also used to collect data from parents of learners. The data was collected in quantitative form using numerals.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

The population targeted were teachers in Marafa zone numbering about two hundred spread in about twenty schools in both public and private schools. Parents of learners were also targeted ;their number being about two hundred parents. The researcher then used simple random sampling to arrive at representational numbers in the zone for both teachers and parents.

3.4 Sample

From the population of teachers and parents in the zone, twenty teachers (10%) and twenty parents (10 %) were picked as respondents. Teachers were selected as they are the teachers of learners with learning difficulties. Their parents were also selected as most of the complaints about the performance of their children originated from them. The selection from the two groups was gender balanced. This means ten female teachers and ten male teachers, ten female parents and ten male parents. Half the number of parents married, while the other half comprised of single parents with children, or divorced parents but taking care of their children. For teachers, some had taught for many years, while a few were new graduates from teacher training colleges. Most parents who were

selected as respondents had no relevant education, and was the reason why interview schedules were used rather than giving them questionnaires to complete.

3.5 Research Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires for teachers which had 10 questions, with choices of answers ranging from two to three choices where teachers had to pick one answer of their choice. The researcher also used an interview schedule for parents with 10 questions and choices for answers given. The interview schedule was preferred when interviewing as they could not understand questions in written form because most were illiterate. It was necessary at some point to ask parents questions using Kiswahili, translated from the interview schedule for them to understand better before responding. Parents were interviewed individually in their homes while teachers were given questionnaires to complete questions in the questionnaires, and the interview schedule answered the research objectives.

3.6 Procedure of the Study

The researcher at the beginning reviewed literature related to the study from different sources. These sources included relevant books, encyclopedias, newspapers, other research reports, journals and internet downloaded information. This was preceded by development of the research proposal based on the theme of the study. The researcher then prepared questionnaires for teachers and an interview schedule for parents. After preparing these tools, the researcher proceeded to test their effectiveness by carrying out a pilot study in two schools from the zone. Permission was then sought from heads of institutions allowing the researcher to select respondents from their institutions. The researcher then visited schools, and issued questionnaires to randomly selected teachers to be part of her respondents. The researcher also prepared and interviewed selected parents in their homes. The researcher finally organized and analyzed data from questionnaires and the interview schedule and proceeded to write the report.

3.7 Data Analysis

The researcher, using completed questionnaires extracted data from them and placed them in tables which showed category, frequency and percentage calculation of frequencies of answers. Observation and description of numerical presentation, with detailed analysis. In some cases, graphs and pie charts used to present respondents responses following the A.P.A format.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 introduction

In this chapter, the researcher analyzed the findings of the study. The findings were presented in tables which showed category, frequency and percentages from the tally of each response. They were also presented in graphs, and a few were translated in pie charts. They all reflected responses from teachers and parents.

Table 4.1 Professional qualification

Category	Frequency]	Percentage
Primary	14	70%
S.N.E Diploma	4	20%
Untrained Trs	2	10%
S.N.E Degree	-	0%
Total	20	100%

The study findings in table 4.1(above shows that majority of teachers are of primary one (PL),as shown by 70 % response. Those with special needs Diploma qualification were represented by 20 %, while those without any training were by 10 % of teaching fraternity. There was no teacher with a degree in special needs education. These are disturbing analysis for a zone that would like to be recognized in education circles. Primary I teachers are trained to teach 'normal' children but not learners with some special needs. The Diploma S.N.E trained teachers are few and their impact would be minimal compared to the number of schools in the division and specifically in the zone. The zone according to the analysis has some 10% untrained teachers One may wonder

about their input handling teaching jobs, let alone teaching learners with learning d faculties Still the zone is dis-advantaged for having not a single S.N.E Degree holder.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Short attention span	10	50%
Lack of concentration	5	25 %
Memory and recall	3	15 %
Frequent absenteeism Total	2	10 %
	20	100 %

(Observation and analysis

Result of the findings in table 4.2 show that short attention span problems are dominant in most classes with 50 % respondents citing it. This was followed by lack of concentration problems registering 25 % of respondents' choices. Problem of learners with memory recall was cited by 15 % of respondents while problems of frequent absenteeism had a 10 % response from teachers. It is clear that most learners have one problem or the other which hinders them from progressive learning. This further translates in challenges for teachers as these are barriers to learning and development. To handle these problems would require the expertise of skilled teachers without which most learners would always lag behind.

Table 4.2 which one among problems listed are most common in classes you teach?

Table 4.3 Teachers choice for intervention on problems listed

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Enforce lessons using Cain	6	30%
Use relevant resources	6	30%
Unit facts teaching	4	20%
Frequent lesson repeats	4	20%
Total	20	100%

Observation and analysis

The findings table 4.3 on teachers intervention choices show that enforcing lesson by use of the Cain and letting pupils learn at their own pace were preferred intervention measures. These were indicated by 30 % response for the former and 30 % for the latter. 20 % of respondents preferred unit facts teaching as a good intervention measure, while another 20 % of respondents preferred frequent repeat of lessons. It is seen in the above analysis, the researcher doesn't agree on use of Cain as an intervention measure, in fact the Cain is punitive rather than corrective. The choice where pupils are let to learn at own pace can only be effective under guidance of structured lessons, while frequent lesson repeats could be preferred, although it has the danger of tiring pupils. Unit facts teaching is usually most effective, as learners move forward after mastering given units.

Table 4.4 Comments on teaching of Mathematics concepts in primary 7 and 8

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Confusing	0	50%
Difficult	6	30%
Manageable	4	20 %
Total	20	100 %

Observation and analysis

Analysis of table 4.4 above shows that 50% of respondents find it confusing teaching mathematical concepts in primary 7 and 8. Another 30 % of respondents find it difficult while only 20 % indicated they can manage. This translates to a decision that because of the teaching being confusing or difficult, many learners specifically those with learning problems would find learning complications in Maths, as teachers who are supposed to teach them are themselves poor according to findings.

Table 4.5 Teachers choice on correct description of the Kenyan Primary school curriculum

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Discriminate S.N.E learners	10	50%
Well structured for all learners	10	50%
Total	20	100 %

The responses in table 4.5 show that 50% of teachers believe the curriculum discriminates SN. learners, while 50 % of teachers believe it is well structured for all learners, Experiences as a teacher confirms what the respondents have indicated, that it discriminates special needs learners. This is true as the no part of the primary school curriculum has any provision for special needs learners. It leaves out such important areas such as the I.E.P or mediated learning experience nor does it explain how to teach a hearing impaired or cerebral palsied learners, to mention only a few.

Table 4.6 Learners in class having problems such as sigh, hearing, communication that interferes with their learning

Category No	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	100%	100%
No	-	0%
Total	20	100%

According study findings in table 4.6, all respondents were in agreement that there were learners with special needs problems in their classes that hindered their learning and development. Since there are such learners, this is in par with challenges teachers face in teaching them. It has been found in this research that most teachers are not trained to handle learners with special needs, such as those with learning difficulties.

Table 4.7 teacher’s opinion on whether 35 min allocation per lesson is enough as per curriculum

Category No	Frequency	Percentage
No	20	100%
Yes	-	0%
Total	20	100%

-According to findings in table 4.7 above, all teachers were in agreement that the 35 min allocated per lesson in the present curriculum is not enough. This was shown by 100 % response for “No” it is true. This cannot be enough given the fact that some learners are slow in learning because of various learning problems they may be having.

Table 4.8 opinion on the truth about few teachers being competent in teaching S.N.E learners

Category No	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	16	80%
No	4	20%
Total	20	100%

Observation and analysis

The study finding in table 4.8 above had 80 % of respondents indicating it was true that few teachers were competent. But 20 % of teachers indicated that it wasn’t true. The reality is that since most teachers were of primary I professional grades, they would not

be competent enough since they didn't have special needs education training which provide for specialized training on S.N.E, The findings in the above table only strengthened the truth, apart from the 20 % respondents who according to the findings elsewhere in the study had special needs education.

Table 4.9 Co-operation from parents in matters of learning involving their children

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	50%
No	10	50%
Total	20	100%

According the study findings in table 4.9 regarding parents co-operation in matters of their children learning, 50 % indicated that parents do co-operate while 50% indicated otherwise. For their children to gain from a good learning atmosphere with teachers love and respect, cooperation is vital, since it is a reciprocation of good relationship that set the best learning environment for children. Co-operation would involve discussion on child's needs and requirements that can be facilitated by the two sides.

Table 4.10 intervention methods mostly used by teachers

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Extended teaching hours	10	50%
Involving other teachers	5	25%
Use appropriate teaching methods	4	20%
Involving parents	1	5%
Total	20	100%

The study finding in table 4.10 came out with the following facts. As high as 50 % of teachers extend teaching hours to help learners. Still 25 % of teachers *involve* other teachers to help them. While 20% of respondents indicated use of appropriate teaching methods. Some teachers indicated that they involve parents to help in their finding solutions that can help learners (5 %).

The indications by the findings are that teachers try all methods to find solutions that help in intervention strategies. This is a good sign that efforts are made in all areas to h&p learners.

Table 4.12 Whether children have enough homework to adequately occupy them

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	90%
No	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Most parents according to the finding in table 4.12 indicated that their children do not have enough work for homework as represented by 80 % response, against 20 % response for parents who indicated otherwise. Challenges would not cease as long as children have little to carry home in terms of homework. Children are therefore idle at home and to improve would require a change in the trend. It poses challenges to teachers as with an involved curriculum, teachers would find it difficult to cover it.

Table 4.13 Most true reason why children perform poorly

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers not serious	14	70%
Children don't work hard	2	10%
Over enrolled classes	3	15%
Too many subjects	2	5%
Total	20	100%

Most respondents cited teachers as not being serious as a reason for children's poor performance as shown by 70 % parent's response. Some parents cited over enrolled classes as being reason for the same as shown by 15 % response, while others indicated that it is children who do not work hard, 10 %. A few indicated that it was because the primary school syllabus is crowded with many subjects. There could be a lot of truth on the probability of teachers not being serious with their teaching. It compromises learning especially for with learning difficulties. With over enrolled classes, the performance will always be poor, for obvious reasons such as teachers not being able to conduct I.E.P for poor or slow As for there being too many subjects in the curriculum, it would be helpful if subjects were amalgamated and most contents not directly helpful and useful struck out. This would improve the quality of remaining content and improve on their relevancy.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Understand learners problem first	14	70%
Have specialized training	4	20%
Involve learners in practical work	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Observation and analysis

According to the findings in table 4. 14, many parents suggested that teachers understand learners problems to enable them improve performance as shown by 70 % response from parents. Other parents (20%) suggested specialized training for teachers, while some (10%) preferred that teachers involve learners in practical work. Those are effective suggestions of concerned parents and backed by the researcher. Teaching alone without remedial plans aimed at improving performance would not help learners with learning difficulties.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the findings of the study by identifying major findings, and commenting on possible reasons why the results appear as they are. These are compared to results of previous research by other researchers. The researcher also will draw conclusion and finally make recommendations from the study findings that will go a long way in solving challenges that teachers face when teaching learners with learning for the benefit of their learning and development.

5.1 Discussion

The major obstacle to helping learners with special needs such as those with learning difficulties is the shortage of teachers trained in special needs. The findings in this study found out that majority of teachers do not have the necessary professional qualifications useful in addressing problems of special needs, since majority of teachers are Primary trained. This category of teachers cannot effectively teach learners with special needs as their training in college did not have in their curriculum special needs. This fact is also detailed by Mwaura (2002) who suggests that Primary I teachers (and they are the majority) advance their training by joining such institutions as Kenya Institute of Special Education.

The study also found out that teachers have problems because learners themselves have serious problems of short attention span, lack of concentration, memory and recall and absenteeism. This puts into dis-array major efforts by teachers in trying to make meaningful advancement in helping children. The learning problems by such learners makes it difficult also for teachers to carry out many programmes as they have to first correct the problems by putting in place corrective procedures such as dealing with memory recall, attention deficit,

Concentration abnormalities, before embarking on meaningful and progressive teaching. This is backed by Hack (1995) with suggestion that peripheral problems like memory or concentration problems be addressed first before meaningful teaching can be done. It was seen from the findings that some teachers as a method of intervention preferred use of the Cain to enforce lessons. The researcher does not agree with this for obvious reasons, that it does not serve any purpose except as a punishment for not grasping facts taught. It is antisocial. The researcher agrees with other intervention strategies from the findings such as use of relevant resources and unit facts teaching. This is also recommended by Ndurumo (1993) who elaborates on task analysis method where a task is carried out in units till the whole task is completed. The findings of the study also suggest that as a measure before planning intervention teachers should understand learner's problems first. This is backed by Erkwall (1989) who opinions that learners may have many problems such as those of understanding concepts, in languages exercises or Mathematics, hearing or sight, which may hinder efforts made by teachers in planned instructions.

The study findings indicated that most teachers were not competent. Mathematics teachers for upper primary classes (std 7 and 8) as majority admitted that some concepts were confusing while other concepts were difficult, only a few admitted that they were comfortable with the concepts. This is direct cause of poor performance by learners since their teachers could not therefore teach certain concepts. Wallace and McLoughlin (1975) who confirms that use of inappropriate teaching methods is usually attributed to lack of knowledge in the subject matter.

The curriculum for primary schools has been criticized for being punitive to both learners and teachers. The study finding came out with facts that the 35 minutes allocation for a lesson was not enough to carry out effective teaching and learning. This is confirmed by the Kenya Teacher (June 2003). The comments in the magazine is to the effect that not one single / class in primary school ever finished the yearly work planned in the syllabus extracted from the curriculum.

5.2 Conclusion

The study revealed that there is a big shortage of special needs trained teachers as majority of teachers in the zone are of Primary I professional grades and do not have enough skill, expertise or knowledge to teach learners with special needs such as those with learning difficulties.

The study was also able to establish that teachers face challenges because learners themselves have serious problems such as lack of concentration during instructions, short attention span, absenteeism and memory recall problems. It was established by the findings that use of relevant teaching resources, unit facts teaching and task analysis method of teachers are relevant in teaching learners with learning difficulties. It was also revealed that teachers to be effective and for learners to gain from instructions, teachers need to understand learners problems, individual needs and what effective methods to use when teaching after establishing learners needs. This applies specifically when facilitating language exercises. Most teachers according to the findings were not competent Mathematics teachers as they didn't have knowledge of Mathematics concepts for upper primary classes, forcing the use of inappropriate teaching methods devoid of required knowledge.

It was also established that the curriculum for primary schools was too congested, while time allocation of 35 per period was not sufficient as most classes in any given school ended a year without completing the syllabus derived from the curriculum.

5.3 Recommendations

The researcher has the following recommendations to make, based on the study findings:

1. Because of the lack of trained special needs teachers and their shortage in schools, there is great need for the Government to train more teachers for special needs education. There is also need for District education offices to organize workshops and seminars for special needs training. This would help to give teachers relevant skills and knowledge in handling all cases in children's learning.

2. There is greater need for teachers to have relevant skills and expertise in handling learners with distinctive special problems such as attention deficit problems, concentration, memory and recall problems. These need special attention to help learners move in par with the class, and minimize teaching challenges, skills and expertise should come from seminars and workshops for teaching improvement.
3. It is also recommended that the Government, N.G.O's, parents association should provide relevant resources to schools to make teaching easy and possible for all learners.
4. Teachers should also use and explore modern teaching techniques such as unit facts teaching, I.E.P and mediated learning experiences that have now proved successful. In order to reach all learners regardless of problems they may have.
5. The subject of curriculum should be looked into by Kenya Institute of Education; variations, correction, moderation, overhauling and having specialized curriculums for different categories of special needs learning. The content of the curriculum should be reduced to what teachers can manage to teach, while time allocation for a lesson should be increased through the curriculum from 35 minutes to 50 minutes. This should give more work time especially in subjects like Mathematics, which is usually slow and difficult to teach.

REFERENCES

- Benard,C(1996) *Learning & Development*.London: Blackwell Pubi. Corn.
- Brooks,E.M (1995) *Psychology Application to Modern Lqe* :Boston Muffin Co.
- Erkwall,E.E(1 989) *Correcting Reading Problems* Columbus Merrill Publ. Company
- Gearheart ,B (1985) *Learning Disabilities Education Strategies*.London : Mosbey Co. Ltd.
- Grossman,H (1983) *Mental Retardation ClassiJication*.Washington A.M.H School & Press.
- Hack,P. (1995) *Learning & Development*.Oxford University Press.
- Hare B,A, & Hare J.M(1977) *Teaching Young Handicapped Children*.NewYork:Mission Press.
- Kilei,B.(2003) *Curriculum & Learning*.KISE Publishing.
- Lacey,P. (1993) *Curriculum & Support Services*, Boston Muffin Co.
- Mercer,C . D (1989) *Instructions to Teachers on Mental Problems* Colombus : Merrill Publ.Co.
- Mwaura, S. (2002) *Introduction to Children with Special Needs in Education*.NRB KI SE Publication.
- Ndururno,M.M (1993) *Exceptional Developmental Consequences and Intervention*.NRB,Longman Kenya.
- Njuki ,E.P(2001) *Learners with Learning Dfflculties,Inclusive Set up*.NRB .KISE publication.
- Norvation (2000) *Hyperactivity Dis-orders* .Johanesburg Norvation Press. School Based Teacher
- Ogonda,G. (2002) *Children with Specific Learning DWiculties*.Nairobi :KISE Publication.
- Richmond,R.C(1990) *Special Needs Support*.Oxford: University Press.
- School Based Teacher Development(2001) *Teaching in the Primai'y €iassroom*:Nairobi GVT Printer.

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHERS

Kindly answer the questions given by ticking your appropriate choice. Answers you give are strictly for the purpose of this study.

Do not write your name.

I. What is your professional qualification?

Primary S.N.E Diploma Untrained S.N.E Degree

2. Are there learners in the classes you teach with the following problems?

Lack of concentration Memory and recall

Frequent absenteeism Short attention span

3. With learners who exhibit memory and recall, concentration, and attention

Difficulties, what is your best choice for intervention?

Teach facts in unit Repeat lessons frequently

Enforce facts by use of Cain Let them learn at own pace

4. What would you say about teaching of Mathematical concepts in upper primary classes?

(Primary 7 and 8)? Confusing Difficult Manageable

5 Which among the choices given below would you say describe adequately the Kenyan Primary school curriculum?

Discriminate Special Needs learners

Well structured for all learners

6. Do some learners you teach in class have problems such as sight,

Hearing, communication, physical that to your understanding interfere with their learning?

Yes No

7. As per the curriculum, do you think time allocation for most lessons (normally 35 min) is enough to carry out effective instructions? Yes No

8. Investigations have shown that few teachers are competent teaching learners with special needs is it true? Yes No

9. Do most parents co-operate in matters of learning involving their children? No Yes El

10. Involving parents, extending teaching hours, use of appropriate teaching methods and involving teachers to help are intervention methods. Which one do you use most in your class?

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

Your answer will help us help your children Please respond truthfully for and to the best of your knowledge.

1) Do you think that teachers are responsible for the continuous poor performance of learners in this region? Yes No

2) Does your child have enough homework from school to occupy him / her adequately? Yes No

3) Comments below have been taken to be among reasons for children's poor performance.

Which one could be most true?

Children do not work hard

Teachers are not serious

Classes are over-enrolled

Subjects are too many

4) Among the suggestions listed, which one can help teachers to improve children's performance?

Have specialized training

Understand learner's problems first

Involve learners in practical work