

Evaluation of Teachers in Special Education Centers in Ogun State, Southwestern Nigeria

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Introduction: Special education is designed to meet the needs of a child with disability. The Federal Government of Nigeria defines such disabilities to include visual, hearing, physical and health, albinism, intellectual, emotional and behavioral disorders, speech and language, learning and multiple disabilities^[1]. Current global teaching involves the adoption of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) which has 9 components^[2] [compensatory skills, functional academic skills, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills] and over the years, the question, as to whether teachers are teaching what is deemed necessary for disabled students to become confident, independent and employable adults have been asked^[3]. Hence the need to evaluate the program of the teachers, determine the educational skills available for pupils and eventually identify the special needs and limitations to training in Special schools in Ogun State.

Methods: A cross sectional survey involving teachers from 3 of the 5 Special schools in Ogun State using a semi structured questionnaire. Ethical approval was obtained from the Babcock University Review Ethical Committee. Data analysis was done using SPSS Version 17.

Results: Fifty-three teachers completed the questionnaires with a mean age of 38.6 ±7.1years. Thirty-six 38% were females and 12 [22.6%] were blind. Ninety-six percent had Special education training but only 24.5% updates within the last 5 years. Each teacher, teaches an average of 16

pupils/day in academics [88.7%], socials [83%], career education [60.4%], independent living [58.5%] and recreational skills [52.8%]. The main disabilities noted amongst their pupils were visual impairment [32.1%] and Hearing impairment [57.2%] and others [mental retardation, autism].The major limitations especially for the visually challenged were poor school topography, lack of basic braille materials, writing frames, computers, internet facility, Healthcare facilities, recreational and vocational centers, no portable water and electricity.

Discussion: Seventy-five percent of the teachers had no opportunity to update their training over the last 5 years. Non-availability of Braille materials put lots of pressure on the sighted teachers, who have to read all available textbooks unto a tape for the visually impaired teachers. Presently the school for the blind has no portable water and students need to fetch water from a well with the potential fear of falling into the well. These blind teachers are practically helpless.

Conclusion: Despite having undergone special education training, lack of adequate facilities and incorporation of the globally accepted Expanded Core Curriculum limits the rehabilitation skills of these teachers

Recommendations: There is an urgent need to foster collaboration between cooperate bodies and the State Government to improve the quality of special education in Ogun State.

References

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