UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EVALUATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICE IN

GHANA: SURVEY OF INCLUSIVE PILOT SCHOOLS

BY

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2009

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Inclusive education is a form of delivering educational services to all children irrespective of their physical characteristics, linguistic or racial background in regular schools. It has to do with commitment by government to educate every child to the maximum extent appropriate in the school and classroom he or she could otherwise attend. Inclusive education has become a developmental approach to the learning needs of all children, youth and adults, especially those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. Hitherto, children with disabilities were made to have their education in special schools. This education approach was based on the philosophy of segregation and institutionalization with specially trained teachers to handle them.

Many countries including Ghana had this traditional approach as the major medium for educating persons with disabilities. Traditionally, disabled children and those with other special educational needs have experienced exclusion and discrimination globally. Gadagbui (1998) informs how infants of ancient Greece, in the city states of the Spartans and Athens were destroyed at the discovery of their deformities before age three. In Ghana, during the ancient times people with disabilities were victimized by neglect, superstition, inaccurate stereotyping and exploitation (Anderson, 2004). In the views of Avoke and Avoke (2004), people with disabilities were perceived to be possessed with evil spirits, who bear curses and anger from gods for breaking taboos by their parents or families.

However, there has been growing drive towards full inclusion in recent years. This drive results in part from the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) which forms part of a broad human rights agenda (Evans & Lunt, 2002). To further the objective of Education for All, more than 300 participants representing 92 Governments and 25 international organizations met in Salamanca, Spain, from 7th to 10th June 1994 to consider the fundamental policy shifts required to promote an approach of inclusive education namely enabling schools to serve all children particularly those with special educational needs.

The Conference adopted the Salamanca Statement on principles, policy and practice in special needs education and a framework for action. These documents are informed by the principle of inclusion, by recognition of the need to work towards "school for all" that is, institutions which include everybody, celebrate differences, support learning and respond to individual needs (UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca Statement was restated at the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 2000 and supported by the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities proclaiming participation and equality for all. Importantly the Salamanca Conference made appeal to all governments as a matter of urgency to:

i. Give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve educational services so that all children could be included, regardless of difficulties.

ii. Adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education and to enroll all children in ordinary schools unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise.

iii. Ensure that organizations of people with disabilities along with parents and community bodies are involved in planning and decision-making.

iv. Put greater effort into pre-school strategies, as well as vocational aspects of

inclusive education.

The Government of Ghana realized the barriers to participation of students with disabilities in society and regular schools, and due to the pressure from disability active groups like the Ghana Society for the Blind (GSB) and Ghana Society for the Physically Disabled (GSPD) entered into an agreement in September, 2003 with Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) a British non-governmental organization. According to the agreement, the VSO would pilot inclusive education in ten districts within three regions, and upon its success, extend it to other regions (Agbenyega, 2007).

As a follow up to the international clarion calls towards inclusive education due to its numerous benefits (Stainback & Stainback, 1996; Winzer, 2005; D'Alonzo, Giordano & Vanleeuwen, 1997) and in line the Salamanca Declaration, the Government of Ghana supported the idea of establishing inclusive pilot schools in some regions to make provision for children with special needs. For example, inclusive pilot schools are found in three regions in Ghana. These include Amasaman, Ada and Accra Metro in Greater Accra Region. In the Central Region, there are inclusive schools in Winneba, Swedru and Cape Coast districts. The Eastern Region has four districts with inclusive pilot schools namely Somanya, Koforidua (New Juaben), Oda and Odumase.

These projects were piloted and implemented by a team of experts led by Professor Ainscow in 1996. In line with the Salamanca declaration, the Government of Ghana had an objective to fully implement inclusive education by 2015, that is to provide "equitable educational opportunities by integrating all children with mild special educational needs (SENs) in mainstream schools and full enrolments of hard-to-reach and out of school children by 2015"(Yekple & Avoke, 2006).

Although it is estimated that there are about 1.8 million persons with

disabilities (PWD) in Ghana, their educational attainment is remarkably lower as compared to that of people without disabilities (Kwawu, 1998). Over 60% of children identified as living with disabilities between the ages of 6 and 18 are not in school. By 1998, the number of PWD who had the opportunity of formal education to basic level was estimated to be only 2,500. Similarly, even those who continued through to the second cycle and tertiary levels are very few indeed (Deku & Mensah, 2004). In a similar study by Yekple and Avoke (2006), reported that, many children with disabilities in Ghana are either formally excluded from the mainstream education system or receive less favourable treatment than other children. According to Yekple and Avoke (2006), the Development of Education National Report of Ghana on the 2000 population census indicates that with a population of 670,000-804,000 school age children with disabilities, only 0.6% receive any form of education.

Statement of the Problem

Inclusive education is a laudable programme and has obvious benefits. In spite of these benefits, its implementation is perceived to have some problems. The problems lie in the principles and processes of inclusive education vis-à-vis what is being practiced in some parts of Ghana since its inception in 2003. For instance, professional development for the inclusion is not adequate as revealed by Avoke and Avoke (2004). Thus, teacher preparation in some of the universities in Ghana focused purely on methodologies and assessment practices that were not tailored to the needs of children with disabilities in inclusive schools.

It appears segment of trained teachers from the Colleges of Education as well as other tertiary institutions lack the capacity to teach pupils with special educational needs (SENs) in inclusive classes. Further, the nature of curriculum

seems to lack the element of flexibility which will be suitable for all learners with diverse backgrounds. The physical environments of schools counter the effectiveness of inclusion. For example, the kind of physical environment that is being used must be seen to be user friendly to all manner of pupils.

Finally, there appears to be the problem of teacher perception of inclusive education. For example, most teachers believe inclusive education creates more work for them (Hefflin & Bullock, 1999). Some teachers express negative perception about inclusive education. It is the aforementioned situations that have provided an impetus for the researcher to conduct an evaluation into the practice of inclusive education in Ghana.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study is to evaluate pilot schools with inclusive education orientation in Ghana. It is also to:

    i. Investigate the academic and professional preparation of teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education

    ii. Ascertain whether the curriculum in inclusive pilot schools meet the needs of persons with and without disabilities.

    iii. Investigate the extent to which the physical environment of the pilot inclusive schools is user friendly to persons with special education needs.

    iv. Examine the perception of teachers about inclusive education.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

    i. How are teachers academically and professionally prepared to handle all manner of children in inclusive schools?

ii.   What is the nature of curriculum used in inclusive pilot schools?

iii.   What kind of physical environment exists in inclusive education settings?

iv.   How do teachers perceive inclusive education?

Significance of the Study

The outcome of the work would inform the Ghana Education Service, teachers, educators, and other stakeholders in education about the progress of inclusive education in Ghana. Since the future of inclusive education is dependent upon concrete data regarding its benefits and limitations, it is hoped that results of this study would contribute towards an objective assessment of the programme.

The study would inform policy makers on the challenges and prospects inherent in the implementation of inclusive education. Basically it would help policy makers, experts and the GES on how teachers are prepared academically and professionally for inclusive education practice. It would help the policy makers and educators work on public perception about children with disability. That is the need for acceptance of people with disabilities in our educational centers.

Further, it is envisaged that this study would serve as a benchmark to guide the curriculum for teacher education in Ghana. Again, the study would provide information on the nature of curriculum used in inclusive pilot schools as well as the existing physical environmental centers.

This study will help allay the fears of teachers and teacher trainees about the perceived difficulties in inclusive education. It is envisaged that the study would attract the attention of other interested researchers to probe further into the pilot initiative of inclusive programme in the areas of community involvement, administrative patterns and support services.

Delimitation of the Study

The evaluation of any programme like inclusive education constitutes the basis of any strategy to improve that programme. With regard to the evaluation of inclusive education, the components of the programme were so numerous that it was not feasible to capture them in a single study. The scope of this study was therefore limited to the evaluation of teacher preparation, curriculum and physical environment as well as teacher perception of inclusive education.

Limitations of the Study

The study was mainly limited by time, finance, fatigue and material resources. This hindered the researcher from covering all the 35 pilot schools established in 2003. Nonetheless, since the schools sampled had similar characteristics with the rest of the schools practising inclusion, the data gathered were reliable and valid to produce credible results. There was general lack of co-operation from teachers mainly due to the fact that they do not benefit from numerous researches that have been conducted earlier. Some teachers even demanded financial token before answering the questions.

The Likert scale method adopted for the study has some limitations. For example, the "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" may not fit into "Agree" category among others. Also, the closed ended nature of the questionnaire somehow hindered respondents from providing candid personal opinions to the questions. This would have gone to enrich the data, because it would have brought in the element of diversity. This notwithstanding, through careful construction of the scale supported with relevant literature and expert appraisal, the validity was enhanced.

Definition of Terms

There are a number of terms that need to be defined to facilitate clarity of understanding. These include the following:

Perception – refers to an active process where sensations are organized and interpreted to form an inner representation of the world.

Inclusive education - means all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, being part of the school community.

Inclusive pilot schools - Schools implementing inclusive education policies on trial basis in selected districts in Ghana. At the time of the study there were 35 inclusive pilot schools found in 10 districts in Ghana.

Evaluation - It is the assessment of strengths and weaknesses of policies or programmes like inclusive education so as to improve their effectiveness.

Segregation - The policy or practice of separating people with disabilities from mainstream educational settings.

Children with disabilities: It refers to a wide range of disabilities and conditions that place limitation on children's learning school tasks.

Disability - The loss or (greatly) reduced ability to perform a function(s) due to damage or loss of a body part or organ.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction, the background to the study, the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The research questions, significance of the study as well as the delimitation of the scope and limitations of the study are included in this chapter. The chapter ends with definitions of terms and organization of the study.

Chapter Two focuses on the review of literature relevant to the study. It

consists of both empirical and theoretical literature. This includes the overview, definition, philosophy, characteristics, as well as merits and demerits of inclusive education. Teacher preparation for inclusion, inclusive curriculum, physical environment and teachers' perception of inclusive education are also discussed.

The third chapter deals with the research methodology. This consists of the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instrument, pre-testing, data collection procedures and data analysis.

Chapter Four presents an analysis and discussion of the results while chapter five covers the summary, conclusions as well as recommendations and areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the literature related to the subject matter of the study will be examined. Areas to be considered include:

1. Overview of Inclusive Education

2. Definition of   Inclusive Education

3. Philosophy of Inclusive Education

4. Characteristics of Inclusive Education

5. Merits and Demerits of Inclusive Education

6. Teacher Preparation and Training for Education

7. Inclusive Curriculum

8. Physical Environment for Inclusive Education

9. Teachers' Perception of Inclusive Education

Overview of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a policy of placing children with disabilities in regular classrooms in their neighbourhood schools with the aim of enabling them to participate in and contribute to the society. In the past, individuals were stigmatized by prevailing attitudes towards their disabilities (Winzer, 1996). Children who were different because of their disabilities were denied full and fair access to educational opportunities.

Some children were totally neglected and hidden away; others were abused, exploited or even put to death in Ghana (Heward & Orlansky, 1992; Morgan, 1987).

Some communities still attribute the causes of disabilities to curses from the gods. Agbenyega (2007, 2002); Oliver-Commey (2001) and Gelb (1995) postulated that disabilities are causes of heredity that, if left unchecked, would result in widespread problems. In the estimation of Yekple and Avoke (2006), humanitarian reform finally began in the half of the 18ᵗʰ century, with its optimism concerning the treatment and eventual care of people with disabilities.

However, when there were no cures, many professionals became convinced that it was necessary to segregate large number of children with disabilities. Institutions were put up for people with disabilities in some countries but had some connotation such as colony, asylum, prison and with focus on protection. This is consistent with what Winzer (1996), noted in North America in connection with special education. She stated that due to the differences of people with disabilities and the rest of the population, exceptional children were educated chiefly in institutional settings designed to protect the rest of society from the deviant child as much as to protect the children with disabilities from an intolerant and prejudiced world.

Some professionals believe that though individuals with disabilities have been with us, much attention has not been given to them. Yekple and Avoke (2006), contend that, in the past, many children with disabilities were entirely excluded from any public school. Further, they stated that many states in America had laws permitting public schools to deny any enrolment of children with disabilities. Local school officials had no legal obligation to grant student with disabilities the same educational access that students without disabilities enjoyed. Due to lack of facilities for people with disabilities, ideas of segregation had perpetuated until recently. The education of children with disabilities in regular schools in the United States and many other countries is related to the civil rights movement by which groups of

parents challenged the practice of segregation.

Since 1970, education for children with disabilities has greatly changed. Before that period, such children did not have educational opportunities as their peers without disabilities. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1997) in United States of America, some children with disabilities were not even educated in public schools; others who participated were often limited in their educational experiences because their disabilities were undetected. With the evolution of laws leading up to the IDEA 1997 (IDEA, PL. 105-17), schools are now mandated to provide students with disabilities equal educational opportunities. One of the main purposes of the IDEA (1997), is to ensure that all eligible students with disabilities are given special education and related services to meet their specific needs and to prepare them for employment and independent living.

Another purpose of the legislation is to guarantee that educators have available the necessary supports in order to increase the chances of success of their children with disabilities. The promise of providing a free appropriate public education for all children became an ambitious programme. The process of bringing inclusive goal culminated in the enactment of a major law (Public Law, 94-142) in the United States of America which created awareness and identification of exceptional children in public education programmes (Yekple & Avoke, 2006).

The idea behind inclusion of students with disabilities into community setting is based on recognition and acceptance of a range of human differences within a culture. This is in agreement with those who believe that, the demand for inclusion has its roots in earlier campaigns for access to education and human rights for all. This is driven by the beliefs that all forms of segregation are morally wrong and educationally inefficient (Stainback & Stainback, 1992). Thus, inclusion is necessary to avoid the negative effects of segregation because separate is not equal.

According to the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE, 2000) as much as possible, there should be increasing participation of students vis-a-vis reducing exclusion from the culture, curricula and community of local schools. A situation where student with disabilities are exempted from activities at school and in the society, is contrary to the spirit of inclusion. Last but not the least, is the emphasis on the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement. If these noble ideas are put to use, the dreams of making our schools inclusive will be realized. The CSIE posits that all these ideas go a long way to minimize all barriers to learning and participation of the students with disabilities within the culture, policies and practices of a school.

Inclusive education has grown from the belief that education is a basic human right and that it provides the foundation for a just society. All learners have a right to education regardless of their individual characteristics or difficulties. Hence there are a lot of international legislations that strongly advocate for countries to ensure appropriate education for all children including children with disabilities. The major impetus for inclusive education came from the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca. The Conference's recommendations were based on the principle of inclusion that…

> "….schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from linguistic, ethnic or culture minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups"
> (UNESCO, 1994, Framework for Action on Special Needs Education).

Ghana among many countries in the world is making conscious efforts in undertaking several initiatives on outlining education and social inclusion of persons

with disabilities. One of such efforts was the Development of Educational National Report of Ghana presented to the International Conference on Education in Geneva in 2004. It outlined several inclusion initiatives. These included:

1. The Special Education Division of the Ghana Education Service is mandated to carry policies that will ensure the social inclusion and quality education for those with disabilities.

2. Government policy is to provide educational opportunities for children and youth with special needs at pre-school levels to promote access and participation, equality and inclusion.

3. There is the need for urgent mobilization of financial, human and material resources towards the provision of educational opportunities for all children and youth with special needs and its effects towards inclusive education in Ghana. Finally, in the Education Strategy Plan 2003-2015, a more serious effort has led to a number of pilot initiatives in ten districts. These are Winneba, Swedru, Cape Coast, Amasaman, Accra, Ada, Odumase, Somanya, Oda, and Koforidua.

Definition of Inclusive Education

An evaluation of inclusive education practice in selected pilot schools demands a critical understanding of the concept by way of definition, philosophy, characteristics, merits and demerits. Other elements such as the nature of curriculum used, physical environment and teacher preparation and teacher perception of inclusion must be carefully delineated to determine whether the programme would be successful or otherwise. For a better understanding of inclusive education in pilot schools in Ghana among others, a number of definitions and explanations relevant to the study were considered to study the study.

Gyimah (2009) citing Pearson (2005) and Beveridge (1999) is of the view that in spite of the" clarion call for all countries to go inclusive, there has not been a substantive definition for inclusive education"(p.2). He argues that inclusion can be more described than defined (p.2).

The term 'inclusion' has had a number of meanings often relating to disabilities or disaffected children. Historically, it has often been used to mean either the moving of disabled children into the mainstream settings or reducing the exclusion of disabled pupils from school. Integration was the term used in the 1980s but this came to be seen as 'placing of disabled children in a mainstream settings without providing the support they required and allowing' them to be there as long as they are able to fit into the existing system and cultures (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, n.d.).

Lindsay (2003) stipulates that inclusion denotes a complex and contested concept and its manifestations are many and varied. In the opinion of Okyere and Adams (2003), there is no clear consensus about a definition of inclusion. Hence there are numerous definitions of inclusions given by various professionals. According to Wikipedia Encyclopedia (n.d.), inclusive education is about the education of all children in mainstream schools and classrooms and the recent drive towards inclusive education is more than disability or 'special educational needs'. It reflects changes in social and political climate wherein a new approach characterizes thinking ability differences.

In the views of Fuchs and Fuchs (1994), inclusion is often considered a movement to merge special or regular education and to include children with disabilities fully into the 'mainstream' of education. It supposes that schools need to be restructured to accept all learners. Winzer (2005), sees inclusive education as a system of equity for students with exceptionalities that express a commitment to

educate each child to the maximum extent through placement, instruction and support in the most heterogeneous and appropriate educational environment.

Mittler (2000) defines inclusion as a radical reform of the school in terms of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and grouping of pupils. This suggests that inclusion is not about placing children in mainstream but it is about changing schools to make them responsive to the needs of children. On the part of Ozoji (2003), inclusive education means the education for all children and youth with and without disabilities studying together in ordinary pre-primary and primary school, college, universities with appropriate network of support. The implication is that inclusive education is a system where special needs children are placed or put within existing regular classroom along with normal children and special support and services are provided to meet their individual needs.

Inclusive education as a new movement in education is defined by Sandkull (2005), as an approach that recognizes the fact that each child is a unique learner and requires ordinary schools for education in their community regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, religious, linguistic or other differences. According to Skipper (2006), inclusive education is the one that provides a place for everyone to belong, is accepted, and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met .

This means that inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in society; rather, it is about transforming those systems and structures to improve them for everyone. This is further confirmed by Shear and Bauer (1994), that inclusion subsumes integration in which learners with disabilities attend the same schools but not necessarily the same classes, and mainstreaming in which learners with disabilities are included in general education

classes to increase their social interaction opportunities but not to address their educational goals.

Some professionals in the field of special education see inclusive education as full-time placement of all students with disabilities in regular classroom or any degree of integration into the mainstream. In the view of Lerner (1997), full inclusion is sometimes used to indicate that all children with disabilities including all categories and severities are instructed in general education, rather than special education settings.

Philosophy of Inclusive Education

The principle that school systems should provide for students with a wide range of needs can be supported from a relatively coherent set of basic assumptions. The Centre for School of Inclusive Education (CSIE, 2005), says that the philosophy of inclusive education is about school change to improve the educational system for all students. What this means is that, changes in the curriculum, changes in how teachers teach as well as how students with and without disabilities interact with and relate to one another.

Similarly, Winzer (2005) posits that reforms in special education echo the thrust towards inclusion in general education. Further, inclusive education practices reflect the changing culture of contemporary schools with emphasis on active learning, authentic assessment practices, applied curriculum, multi-level instructional approaches and increased attention to diverse student needs and individualism. The idea is that, school centres of learning and educational systems must change so that they become caring, nurturing and supportive educational communities, where the needs of all students and teachers are truly met.

The philosophy of inclusive education also touches on elimination of the

dual system. Inclusive schools no longer provide 'regular education' and 'special education'. Instead, inclusive school provides an inclusive education and as a result, students will be able to learn together (Winzer, 2005). Inclusion as a merger of regular and special education was mentioned in the mid-1980s (Will, 1986). In the mid-1980s, writers like Reynolds, Wang and Walberg (1987), called for joining of demonstrably effective practices from special compensatory and general education to establish a general educational system that is more inclusive, and better serves all students particularly those who require greater- than- usual educational support.

In order to ensure that all students learn and participate, teachers, schools and systems may need to change so that they can better accommodate the diversity of needs that students have and that they are included in all aspects of school life. The philosophy identifies any barriers within and around the school that hinder learning and participation   and reducing or removing these barriers. Winzer (2005), explained that if all students are to gain the skills they need to meet the challenges of life then all must be assured the same opportunities to succeed in school regardless of differences in learning, behaviour or other attributes.

To Ihenacho and Osuorji (2006), the philosophy of inclusive education is based on the fact that children that learn together live together. The explanation is that teachers who have taught in an inclusive classroom say the philosophy of inclusion hinges on helping students and teachers become better members of a community by creating new visions for communities and for schools. Inclusion is about membership and belonging to a community.

In the view of Sapon-Shevin (1992), inclusive schools are based on the belief that the world is an inclusive community with people who vary not only in terms of disabilities but in race, class, gender and religious backgrounds. Explaining further, Sapon-Shevin (1992) stated that because children will live as adults similar to the

world so it is important to learn and grow within communities as such. The position of the author is that, children should begin with the assumption that all children are included and their needs will be met in inclusive settings.

Special education is intimately connected to common views of social justice. The provision of less restrictive, more natural integrated environments for students with disabilities is an outgrowth of a social philosophy about individual civil rights that is so critical in the United States. Proponent argues that special classes are discriminatory and unequal and in violation of the democratic ethics that allows equal access to education for all students. That is, removal from the mainstream of education is inherently restrictive and limiting the right to be educated with one's peers is a civil right (Winzer, 2005).

At the core of inclusive education is the basic right to education, which is rooted in many international human right treaties since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948. Inclusive education has grown from the belief that education is a basic human right and that it provides the foundation for a more just society. All learners have a right to education, regardless of their individual characteristics or difficulties (UNESCO, 2000).

The issue of human rights is not limited to discrimination in terms of attitudinal but also lack of facilities and equipment that are user-friendly. To Avoke and Avoke (2004), a wheel-chair user remarked that disabled people living in residential/school establishments may experience a denial in terms of right to freedom of assembly and association. Denying a person with disability the right of education is a breach of human right.

According to Avoke and Avoke (2004), it is a basic right for all pupils to attend their mainstream schools and be fully included in their academic and social processes. Any form of segregation is seen as a potential threat to the achievement

of this basic right.

Characteristics of Inclusive Education

Educational changes no matter how lofty the goals will only take place over time and by enlightened, informed people as they truly become committed to a shared vision. For a school to be considered as inclusive, there are certain features that must be seen to be occurring. Stainback and Stainback (1996) postulated that, while inclusive schools are not identical to each other, they tend to share a number of similar characteristics. Okyere and Adams (2003) stated that there are five features of inclusive school that must be seen to be on-going.

An inclusive school is a school where every child is respected as part of the school community, and where each child is encouraged to learn and achieve as much as possible. In order to achieve that sense of belonging for each child, many schools have found that fostering a sense of community is of primary importance (Hocog & Qugley, 2009). In the views of Stainback and Stainback (1996), a sense of belonging to a group as a feature of inclusive schools states that all students including those with disabilities feel welcome as those without disabilities. Inclusive education generally starts with a philosophy that all children can learn and belong in the mainstream of school and community life. In such schools, no students including those with disabilities are relegated to the fringes of the school by placement in segregated wings, trailers or special classes.

Heterogeneous grouping is another feature espoused by Okyere and Adams (2003). This feature states that all students including those with special needs are educated together in groups and the number of students with and without disabilities approximates natural or normal proportions. For example, in a class of thirty students, there is one with a severe disability coupled with less significant disability

and many without disabilities. Inclusive education avoids being seen as 'centres' or 'cluster sites' for any category of students but accepting varied learning goals in heterogeneous grouping.

Stainback and Stainback (1988), stated that when appropriately organized, regular education classes can provide a wide variety of appropriate learning opportunities and challenges for students with a wide range of learning needs, interests and capabilities in meaningful ways in age-appropriate regular classes. For instance, during a map reading activity, one student may be called upon to discuss the economic system of the country. Another may be requested to identify a colour, while another may simply be requested to grasp and hold a corner of the map.

Another characteristic of inclusive education is shared activities with individualized outcomes. For example, students share educational experiences, such as lessons, laboratories, fieldwork and group learning at the same time. The learning objectives for the students are individualized to meet each student's learning needs. These are services based on needs rather than labels as posited by Stainback and Stainback (1996).

This is where provision of services is based on individual characteristics rather than as members of categorized groups. The essence of these services as noted by Lilly (1979) is to see students as individuals, and the data available concerning their instructional needs is for more specific and precise than what is implied from any categorized label.

Inclusive schools and classrooms do not focus on how to help any particular category of students such as those classified as disabled, to fit into the mainstream. Instead, the focus is on how to operate classrooms and schools as supportive communities that include and meet the needs of everyone (Sapon-Shevin, 1992). Personnel in such schools and classrooms purposefully foster community - a sense

that everyone belongs is accepted and supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met. Kluth (2005) opines that if the school culture is competitive, individualistic and authoritative, teachers will find it impossible to grow inclusive schooling.

Support facilitators or collaboration of teachers is also another feature of inclusive schools. Special educators generally integrate themselves into general education. It is imperative that inclusive schools have facilitators or collaborating teachers due to the diverse background of the pupils. Thousand and Villa (1989) stipulate that, even though some personnel become classroom teachers or consulting specialists, others may assume a role of encouraging and helping to organize support in general education classrooms.

Special educators have been referred to as collaborating teachers, support facilitators, methods and resource teachers or inclusion facilitators. Collaboration means that, the support facilitator, teachers, students and other school personnel assume an expert, supervisory or evaluation role. In this way, everyone (not just support facilitators) is involved in facilitating support system, and adapting instruction to individual needs (Stainback & Stainback, 1996).

Merits and Demerits of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is claimed by its advocates to have some merits for students. The merits are mainly social. For example, socialization in the school allows the students to learn communication skills and interaction skills from each other. Students can build friendships from these interactions and also learn about hobbies from each other. As friendship in school is important for the development of learning, when a student has a friend, the student can relate to a member of the

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classroom. Students' being able to relate to each other gives them a better learning environment. Involving peers without needs with special needs peers gives the student a positive attitude towards each other (inclusive school-Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, n.d.).

There have been reports on numerous investigations that have demonstrated the gains that can be achieved by students when they are provided appropriate educational experiences and support in inclusive settings, instead of special schools (Stainback & Stainback, 1996). According to Jenkins, Jewel, O'Connor, Jenkins and Troutner (1994), Madden and Slavin (1983) and Wang (1989) while academic gains are reported for those with mild disabilities, those with severe disabilities benefit more from gains in the areas of social competence, communication and engaged time (Kennedy & Itkonen, 1994).

This means children are able to develop friendships and learn social skills. Children with and without disabilities learn with and from each other in inclusive classes. The results of preliminary studies focusing on the academic performance of students who do not have disability labels indicated that there is no adverse effects of inclusion. The study indicates that there has been effect on the other children's academic learning by increasing awareness of their own capabilities and respect for themselves and others, which affects the learning climate and susceptibility to learning (Vandercook, Felltham, Sinclair & Tettie, 1991).

Another merit of inclusive education is the normalization of conditions for children with disabilities so that they grow and develop alongside their non-disabled counterparts both in the school setting and in the country. In the view of Nwazuoke (2000), it was the realization of the multiple merit of allowing children with disabilities access to neighbourhood school that they would have attended if they did not have the disabilities. Inclusive education is seen to be a field for preparing

children with disabilities for living comfortably and working in their communities and society as a whole. Research shows that the more time spent in regular public schools as children, the more individuals with disabilities achieved educationally and occupationally as adults (Okyere & Adams, 2003).

Further, for individuals to be accepted in the work place and community, individuals with disabilities have to learn how to function and perform in the regular world and interact with their peers. Pupils are the next generation to be in the workforce. So the time these children with disabilities spend in the classroom with their peers without disabilities   will allow them to communicate in the real world some day.   The point is that as a result of inclusion, there is some level of preparation of pupils for integrated community living. The 1982 Report of the Disability Rights, Education and Defense Fund found in America that "regardless of race, class, gender, type of disability, or age at its onset, the more time spent in integrated public school classes as children, the more people achieved educationally and occupationally as adults" (Ferguson & Asch,1989).

In another study by Wehman (1990), a similar   conclusion was that segregated classes do not lead to independence and competence, but instead foster an unrealistic sense of isolation. There is no doubt that for persons with disabilities to be accepted in the work place and the community, people with disabilities need to learn how to function and perform in the 'real regular' world and interact with their peers and equally important, their peers need to learn how to interact and function with them. On the other hand, if the educators and educational facilities are not made to suit persons with disabilities in inclusive settings, there could be the creation of special educational centres and in effect children with disabilities would be destined for a special life style and special employments.

Creating awareness by the teachers to the students in the classroom with the

special needs peers is one of the merits of inclusive education. The teacher can do a puppet show, show a movie, and have the pupils talk to the class. The teacher could also read a book to help the students describe his or her special needs. The class can ask questions about what they learned and what they want to know. This will help when the students are together in the classroom (Hefflin & Bullock, 1999).

One study by D'Alonzo, Giordano and Vanleeuwen (1997), reported on many academic and social benefits of inclusion from multiple studies. Two academic benefits were of particular interest. One benefit was found by Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Cutis and Goetz cited in D'Alonzo, Giordano and Vanleeuwen (1997), students with disabilities spend more time engaged in learning more in the general education setting they may not receive in the special education.

As cited earlier Giangreco and Cravedi-Cheng (1998) supported this, suggesting that often curriculum is questionable in special education settings. Shapiro (1999) found that students with disabilities learn a lot from the inclusive classroom because they were experiencing more peer interaction, ideas and activities.

Although, one concern of teachers reported by McLeskey and Waldron (2002), is that inclusion would bring academic performance down in the overall class. Another study refuted this statement. Shape, Yorke and Knight cited in D'Alonzo, Giordano and Vanleeuwen (1997), reported "The inclusion of students with disabilities is not associated with a decline in the academic or behavior performance of students without disabilities on standardized tests or report cards".

In spite of the benefits derived from inclusive education, there are opposing views. Winzer (1996) posited that, the equal educational treatment does not necessarily result in equal opportunity to learn. The implication is that combining children with and without disabilities in a regular classroom demand careful

planning. The time at the disposal of the teacher is too short for him/her to plan adequate programme for the education of the children with learning disabilities in the class. Ikujuni (2006) posits that there is likely to be clash of interest between the regular classroom teacher and the special educator. Regular classroom teachers are supposed to be guided by special educators. When this happens, the regular classroom teacher who sees the special educator as an imposter may not be favourably disposed to such idea. There could be instances where what special education teachers prefer may not be the choice of regular classroom teachers who know little or virtually nothing about teaching techniques for children with learning disabilities.

In the estimation of Walmsley and Allington (1995), very young children with disabilities find it extremely difficult to form friendships, although they are highly interested in their peers, discrimination among them develops preferences for specific playmates. These friendships are mostly unilateral, rarely reciprocated. Few playmates whom they choose as friends, choose them in return.

There are opponents of inclusive education who express some cautions about it. Enthusiasts have advocated for radical changes in teacher responsibility without showing that regular educators can actually support these changes (Minke, Bear Deaner & Griffin, 1996). Gerber (1988) theorized that given a class in which students' learning needs vary and instructional resources are limited, teachers cannot optimally match their instruction to meet the unique characteristics of all students. Inclusion requires extensive retraining of both regular and special education teachers in teaching, teacher problem solving and curricula framework. But training all teachers to be able to meet the needs of all students with disabilities is simply impossible from a practical standpoint (Palmer, Fuller, Arora & Nelson, 2001).

Siperstein and Leffert (1997), stated that inclusion assumes that students

with disabilities will be better accepted, have more friends and feel better about themselves. There is little empirical data for this assumption.   Mere physical presence in a class does not seem to enhance social competence. For example, the social outcomes of placing students with mental retardation in regular classrooms have been disappointing.   Often these children occupy a marginal position in the social network of the class. Social interaction is undeniably important to children with disabilities, but it is not the only variable related to success. Hence, we cannot play down the importance of academic and functional skills in favor of vague notions of friendship (Sasso, 2001).

Opponents of inclusive education believe that if it is the function of school to help individuals meet their needs and prepare them to lead productive and rewarding lives, then skills should be taught in the environment where they are most likely to occur, that is, the community, home or work setting. Students who are severely or profoundly disabled are best served in settings in which their cognitive development and social limitations can be addressed more intensively (Winzer, 2005).

Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Education

The policy of including pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools and classes is now firmly established in many jurisdictions worldwide. Successful implementation of such policy depends on teachers having the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies. This poses considerable challenges to both novice and experienced teachers (Eileen, 1999). Notwithstanding the challenges of teacher preparation and training, it is important as it provides quality education for all students in inclusive settings. For that reason, there has been increasing attention being paid to the nature of teacher   development (Whitworth, 2001).

In support of Eileen's (1999) views, Hardman, Drew and Egan (2002)

contend that preparing a teacher who will deal with children with special needs demands skills, expertise and knowledge that cannot simply be taken for granted. Rather, there   is a need for such skills, expertise and knowledge to be carefully examined, articulated and communicated so that the significance of the role of the teacher might be more appropriately highlighted and understood within the inclusive education institution.

As the world moves towards a more inclusive education system, it is imperative to equip teachers to work in more diverse classrooms from the start of their teaching careers. Golder, Norwich and Bayliss (2005), set their accounts in the contexts of policy requirements in England and international trends towards more inclusive teacher education. They report on an initiative designed to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of trainee teachers and to equip them to differentiate their teaching to meet the individual needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs.

The road towards inclusion continues to be a major challenge for most schools across many parts of the world. One reason is that the current classroom teachers were trained to either work in general education classroom or in special educational settings. Few general education teachers have had any coursework in special education and few special educators have had any training in teaching in large group settings or have expertise in content areas normally taught by general educators (Bursetein & Sears, 1998). Another reason is that teacher training programmes in colleges and universities are not offering enough course work to train new teachers to work in inclusive classrooms, so new teachers are unprepared to function in inclusive settings (Pugach & Johnson, 2002).

Whitworth (2001), postulates that preparing teachers who can teach in settings that are inclusive and meet the needs of all students will require a different

model of teacher preparation. Apart from teachers gaining the requisite knowledge and competencies in handling and preparation, there is also an important factor in improving teacher attitudes towards the implementation of an inclusive policy. Without the requisite training in inclusive education philosophy, it would be difficult for a teacher to accept and offer the necessary attention to a pupil with disability in the class. It is through training and preparation process that teachers develop the capacity in handling pupils with special needs (Whitworth, 2001).

Consistent with this claim is the submission made by Gerent and Hotz (2003), that today's classroom teachers must prepare all pupils to meet society's complex demands. Not only must teachers address the growing demand for academic excellence but they also become increasingly responsible for meeting the needs of diverse groups of pupils including those with disabilities and those who are at risk for school failure. These demands have resulted in the necessity of providing practical information regarding students' characteristics, effective institutional and behaviour management, techniques, consultation skills and individualized instruction to practicing teachers both in general education and special education roles (Gerent & Hotz, 2003).

Teacher preparation and training has attracted considerable attention due to the fact that it is considered an important factor in improving teacher attitudes towards the implementation of an inclusive policy (Gyimah, Sugden & Pearson, 2009). Gyimah et al. point out that teachers are the implementors of educational policies. Hence, it is imperative that a coherent plan exists for teacher training in special education needs (SEN), otherwise any attempt to include these children in the mainstream would be difficult (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

This is true to the extent where segments of teachers in teacher training college (now Colleges of Education) as well as other tertiary institutions in Ghana

lack the capacity to help pupils with special needs in class (Deku, 2008). It is obvious that inclusive education demands that all manner of pupils are educated under one roof hence the need for adequate preparation and training. Deku (2008) espoused that in Ghana, the increasing demand to educate learners with disabilities in inclusive education setting has received little consideration. Several researchers have noted the lack of professional training in inclusive teaching and practices for general and special education at the pre-service level (Burstein & Sears, 1998). To Whitworth (2001), if teacher education programmes are to prepare educators to be successful in the classrooms of the future, they must reconceptualize and design their approach to pre-service preparation of teachers.

Trends in Teacher Preparation and Inclusive Education

It is common to find research reports that reveal traditional teacher education programmes that generally consisting of a collection of separate courses in which theory is presented without much connection to teaching practice. Findings such as this lead to what Ben- Peretz (1995), calls a fragmented view of knowledge both in course work and in field experiences. Supporting this idea Brunner (1997), stated that teaching of theoretical conception must be inextricably linked to its application. An extensive review of 25 years of research report, into teacher education by Wideen, May, Smith and Moon (1998), concluded that the impact on student teachers' teaching as a result of traditional teacher education programme was relatively meagre.

According to Hardman, Drew and Egan (2002), teachers' education could well be argued only on students if the total ecology of the teacher preparation programme is coherently constructed and purposefully conducted. This very point is highlighted in the work of Hamilton and McWilliams (2000), who noted that

teachers' education needs to be integrated and organized in ways that address the too often disjointed nature of formal education.

In a move towards inclusive education, preparation of a professional teacher should not only focus on pre-service training but also on in-service training as well. Pugach (1988) argues that there should be a complete refashioning of teacher education programmes where the expertise of those who are currently aligned with education or with curriculum and instruction are blended. However, Pugach (1988) stated that the contention lies in how this blending will occur, what forms new teachers' education programmes should take and how the new organizational structure will support such programmes. Further, as a way of showing high levels of commitments to inclusive education, it is incumbent on special education professionals to be particularly proactive in the design of teacher education.

Currently, there is a new development in teacher preparation whereby all teachers should be encouraged to develop positive attitudes to the education of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. As such teachers must be equipped with relevant knowledge and skills to include all children. One of the innovations mandates teacher trainees to work intensively with one individual pupil rather than just having general classroom teaching practice. The purpose is to enhance conceptions about teaching needs, assessment and teaching skills. It is also for trainees to build a special personal relationship with one pupil in order to develop a positive attitude which could be generalized to their teaching (Garner, 1996).

As part of efforts in developing professionals for inclusive education, some countries have approved that special educational needs element become a condition for approving the courses. For example, the 1978 Warnock Report in United Kingdom stated that there should be special educational needs in all courses of

initial teacher training. Actually, it is one of the criteria that will give recognition to a professionally qualified teacher from Initial Teacher Education (Vlachou & Barton, 1994). In 1987, the British Government called on all student-teachers to be prepared to teach a full range of pupils in terms of their diversity of ability, behaviour and social background that they will find in the mainstream school. Other courses, like assessment and evaluation procedure (formal or informal) types of testing must be included and practical experience gained can be shared through workshops, group works and many others (Miller & Garner, 1996).

In Ghana, teacher educational institutions have a course in special needs education as part of the reforms towards inclusiveness. This course is taught at the Training Colleges in order to equip the trainees and prepare them for the tasks ahead. Previously, many of the teacher training institutions were meant for specialist and general or regular schools. For instance, Specialist Training College for the Deaf was established to cater for teachers to teach pupils with hearing problems. There was no compulsion for teacher trainees to learn about special education needs at the initial teacher training colleges. There was an option for teachers to be in the regular schools or a school for individuals with disabilities. As already stated, many of the educational institutions have now included special education needs in their curriculum.

At the tertiary levels, both Universities of Winneba and Cape Coast have special education programmes as part of their curriculum. At University of Education, Winneba, special needs education form part of the core courses. At the University of Cape Coast, the non-basic education students take one general course while the basic and psychology students take three courses in special educational needs programmes (Faculty of Education, UCC, 2005).

According to Jordan and Powell (2006), in England and Wales, students

entering the profession through post-graduate training course must now have a ten subject areas of the National Curriculum (Graduate Teachers Training Registry, 1994) and students with a first degree in psychology or humanities with specialism in education are now debarred from taking such courses unless the content of their first degree can be represented in terms of those subjects. As already indicated, teacher training and preparation in some of the universities in Ghana, were focused purely on methodologies and assessment practices that were not tailored to the needs of the children with disabilities in inclusive schools (Avoke & Avoke, 2004).

Variations in Initial Teacher Education and Inclusive Education

There is evidence in literature that shows variations in the extent of control countries have over Initial Teacher Education. Countries like Norway have a curriculum for teacher education and others like USA have advisory national standards. In Ghana, there is National Association of State Boards of Education that ensures that there is encouragement and fostering collaborative partnerships and joints training programmes between general education and special educators to encourage a greater capacity of both types of teachers.

Smith and Thorns (2006) stated that one issue that has attracted most attention over the past 20 years has been the adequacy of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in inclusive schools in terms of preparing teachers for the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools. For teachers to be able to handle issues pertaining to inclusive education, conscious efforts must be made to solidify philosophy of inclusiveness during training period. In relation to this, Garner (1996), argued that in order to meet more adequately the needs of all pupils especially those with SEN, inclusion issues should be embedded throughout all

aspects of such training. This is partly a consequence of the fact that several studies have frequently attributed teachers' lack of confidence in including pupils with SEN lessons to what they perceived as the generally 'inadequate' limited and overly theoretical nature of professional training they receive as part of Initial Teacher Training (Robertson, 1999).

As a conscious effort to equip teacher trainees, the Government of the United Kingdom in 1994 established the Teacher Training Association (TTA) with responsibilities for all initial teacher education. The responsibility of the TTA is to draw up standards for trainees teachers to meet, if they are to gain qualified teacher status. Some of these standards are specific to pupils but are particularly relevant to pupils with specialized educational needs. In Ghana, the Ghana Education Service (GES) has the mandate of training teachers for basic and secondary levels. The criteria for one to be recognized as a professional qualified teacher is not based particularly on one's knowledge in special needs education but on completion of one's academic programme.

Models of Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Education

In Whitworth's (2001), submission, in conceptualizing and designing an approach to pre-service preparation of teachers, there was a provision of an inclusive teacher preparation model. This model consists of two major dimensions. One dimension deals with the outcomes of the model and the other focuses on specific programme components. For a teacher to be effective in an inclusive environment, teacher preparation programmes must instill in the teacher an understanding and appreciation of diversity.

Many individuals coming into current teacher training programmes have had limited experiences with special needs children. Exposing pre-service teacher

candidate early and often to situations involving individuals who are uniquely able and who have different learning styles and needs is very important.

Preparing teachers to be flexible and creative is vital if teachers must be trained to meet situations and challenges that would demand their ability to deal with and adapt to change. To do this successfully, they must also have the ability to be flexible and creative in meeting these challenges and solving problems. This can be accomplished by providing experience that requires prospective teachers to develop creative problem-solving skills and to view situations from different perspectives. The other dimension which is the programme components includes collaborative teaching techniques and strategies as well as collaborative experiences (Whitworth, 2001).

Collaborative teaching concerns the instructional approach used in the classroom. It consists of co-teaching, collaborative planning, cooperative learning, integrated curriculum activities, collaborative evaluation and group process skill. To Whitworth (2001), the techniques and strategies model include accommodations, effective practice, modifying materials, resources and supports as well as instructional arrangements. Pre-service preparation should address appropriate accommodations in curriculum, instructional activities and evaluation procedure and the effective identification, development and utilization of resources. In addition, the pre-service programme should prepare teachers to use various types of instructional arrangements such as multi-level teaching, cooperative learning and peer tutoring.

The third component of an inclusive teacher preparation model relates to collaborative experiences. Unlike the collaborative teaching, where techniques and strategies primarily apply to the classroom, collaborative experiences relate to the field based experience of a prospective teacher. Collaborative experiences involve

multiple experience, practicum, students teaching, simulation, role-playing which are field based. Such experiences are essential since they bring the prospective teacher much closer to children with disabilities and as well understand them. Hence prospective teachers should be given the opportunity to observe and work in collaborative and in inclusive situations. This means that pre-service teachers should have multiple opportunities to observe and work in actual classrooms, where inclusive practices are being implemented.

Definition of Curriculum

Curriculum as explained by Maguvhe (n.d.) denotes "everything planned by the educator which will help to develop the learners. This can be an extra-mural sporting activity, a debate or even a visit to a library" (p.1). A curriculum could further be understood in the following two ways. Firstly, as a plan which may be written in a document. This plan reflects the knowledge, skills and attitudes that any society chooses to pass on to their children. Curriculum should secondly be seen as learning and teaching experiences that happen in any site of education.

Therefore, a curriculum is a carefully planned and well-written document that explicitly reflects the knowledge, skills, value and attitudes that are intended to be passed to or mediated to the future generation comprising both the old and the young. This document therefore gives educators room to manuvoure as well as to take their ideas, which are embodied in the curriculum document and enact them in their respective institutions for learning and classrooms.

Meaning of Inclusive Curriculum

An inclusive curriculum is a school curriculum that emphasizes the strengths but accommodates the needs of all children in the classroom. Although the

term inclusion typically refers to the integration of children with disabilities and developmental delays into general classroom, the inclusive curriculum expands that concept to include children with varying abilities, children who are at risk of school failure or drop out, children from various minority groups and culture and children with limited language skills (Hohennes & Derman Sparks, 1992).

The term 'inclusive curriculum' includes the teaching and learning environment, the course content, the processes of teaching and learning, and the assessment practices. Inclusive curriculum involves a commitment to equity and access and to principles of inclusion and diversity. Available literature indicates that good teaching includes the design of a curriculum that addresses features such as acknowledging and experience of all pupils. Consequently, the inclusive curriculum must embrace gender, cultural and socio-economic background, age, sexuality and differences related to ability and disability (UNESCO, 2003).

It is also important that curriculum becomes responsive and gives expression to the knowledge base of students and staff in teaching and learning. Another feature of good inclusive curriculum is to make clear the goals and standards, which include the key ideas or concepts of the discipline and the ways of arriving at an understanding of that discipline. It also provides fair access to mend distribution of resources.

The development of an inclusive curriculum in terms of content and structure is arguably, the most important factor in achieving inclusive education. But what kind of approach to the content of the curriculum would be appropriate to an inclusive ethics? According to World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 2000, there is no one way of packaging a curriculum and its contents appropriate to the full diversity of learners. Information gathered at the forum indicates that response to the challenges of educating learners from diverse background in many countries is

now seeking to abandon former parallel curriculum structure for the regular and special systems, a structure which has tended to exclude the marginalized (UNESCO, 2003).

Curriculum is said to be the cornerstone of successful education for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Without a coherent and relevant curriculum, the quality of education for pupils with learning difficulties will suffer (Farrell, 1997). Further, Farrell (1997) asserts that teaching techniques and approaches cannot be taught in a vacuum, therefore the first priority when planning teaching programme for pupils is to device what they should be taught. It is truly expedient to offer maximum attention developing and using curriculum for inclusive education for it will serve diverse needs. Avoke (2006), states that curriculum is influenced by the philosophical and educational needs and policies within specific countries.

Other professionals in the field of special education posit that in drawing up inclusive curriculum efforts should be made to avoid the stiff practice of assessment. In the view of McCormick and James (1990), inclusive education practices should be about departing from the traditional approach that seeks to measure quality in terms of the narrowly focused examination and test results. This approach looks unfriendly since members of inclusive education are varied in many respects. For that reason, schools that have encouraged assessment practices which alienate children with disabilities who struggle to meet the learning and achievement target of general curriculum need to take another look if inclusive practices are to be celebrated.

Nature of Inclusive Curriculum

For a curriculum to be regarded as suitable for inclusive schooling, certain

characteristics must be seen. UNESCO (2003) sees inclusive curriculum as based on a view of learning as something which takes place when students are actively involved in making sense of their experiences. This emphasizes the role of the teacher as facilitators rather than instructors. The inclusive curriculum should be flexible enough to respond to the needs of all students. It should therefore not be rigidly prescribed at a national or central level. Inclusive curricula are constructed flexibly to allow not only for school level adaptations and development but also for adaptation and modifications to meet the individual students' needs and to suit each teachers' style of working. A key issue for policy makers is how they enable schools to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of individual students and how they can encouraged this approach (UNESCO, 2003).

According to the final document on nature of curriculum, UNESCO (1994) stated categorically that acquisition of knowledge is not only a matter of formal and theoretical instruction. The content should be general to high standards and the needs of individuals to enable them to participate fully in developments. Teachers should relate to pupils' own experience and to practical concerns in order to motivate them better. Authors such as Ramas and Fletcher (1988), opined that the nature of curriculum is such that it can be developed to suit various societies taking into consideration persons with disabilities. Ramas and Fletcher (1988) cited the Mexican Society to buttress their point that Mexico is perceived to be multi-cultural and multi-lingual in nature. Hence the adaptations of broad-based quality and flexible basic curriculum which is sensitive to the needs of all students, albeit, optional in some of its parts.

According to the EFA Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, 2000, there are some countries which prescribe a national curriculum for all pupils, for example, United Kingdom and France. In the United States, such an imposition would be anathema,

although there is national scholastic testing. In some countries, they try to develop basic learning curriculum. For instance, countries like Bangladesh have developed what they call the essential learning curriculum comprising linguistic, social, aesthetic, scientific, physical, mathematical, spatial and spiritual dimensions. In some parts of Africa, textbooks and curricula are 'off the shield' products, developed in an European Metropolitan language and culture. These are neither conducive to a responsive approach to teaching nor expressive of learning-centred methods and approaches grounded in values of democracy and human right required in moving towards inclusive education (UNESCO, 2003).

The inclusive curriculum should encompass an ethos and values of inclusion, what one could describe as feeling comfortable with diversity and institutional structures processes and procedure expressive of human rights, equity and democratic practices (Butorac, 1997). In essence, it does not matter what way the knowledge of the curriculum is packaged, provided that it embraces to encourage ink progression through and completion of the cycle, making sure that it does not exclude any major means of knowing and understanding. The curriculum means inclusion education must be receptive to change and sufficiently malleable for the insertion of new knowledge into the curricular structure.

The World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 2000 revealed that the nature of inclusive curricula needs to acknowledge both affective and dimensions of knowledge and the need for the development of psychomotor capacities. Further, the structure and procedure of the school must also leave sufficient flexibility to the professionals on the ground to adapt the content and its delivery to the individual needs of the local community and indigenous knowledge.

Specialist curricula for specific groups are still common (UNESCO, 2000). In some few countries, the general curricular for all pupils is adapted according to

the needs of specific categories of children or in relation to the needs of individual children regardless of category. In these situations, there are attempts to make the general curriculum accessible to groups or individuals by breaking the work down into smaller steps, through the support of teachers. It is the belief of many professionals that inflexibility and content-heavy curricula are usually the major causes of marginalization and exclusion in educational centres.

Physical Environment for Inclusive Education

The accessibility of the physical environment is a crucial factor in determining whether a school can include and provide quality education for children with diverse abilities and needs. To UNESCO (2004), the accessibility of environment applies to aspects of both the physical and psychosocial school environment. For example, mobility and transportation issues, the physical layout and constitution of the school compound, attitudes and values, teaching methods and the language of instructions. The nature of the relationship between teachers and children, administrators and teachers or school staff and parents need to be considered seriously when discussing issues pertaining to learning environment (UNESCO, 2004). For the purpose of the topic under discussion, the focus will be on physical and psycho-social school environment.

As the concept of inclusive education moves on, physical environment is one of the factors that must be considered seriously. Hitherto, the physical environment that existed suited those without disabilities. Hence, conscious efforts need to be made to provide adequate facilities that will be suitable to manifest the philosophy of inclusion. Physical environment is made up of the classroom and furnishing. The nature of the physical environment and its arrangements has effect on the behaviour of both teachers and students (Smith, Neisworth & Green, 1978).

Smith et al explained that environmental constraints make it difficult to teach running skills in a closet, demonstrate cooking and food preparation techniques in a gymnasium, or supervise small-group discussions in a large-auditorium with fixed seats.

Appropriate physical environment is a critical factor in achieving effective teaching and learning; consequently, classroom management which is part of physical environment must be enhanced. In support, Weinstein and Nignango (1997) stated that careful planning of the physical environment is an integral part of good classroom management as this setting can influence the way teachers and students feel, think and behave. The environment exerts an influence on the academic performance of students. Research showed that classroom characteristics affect attitudes and social behaviour but have little impact (with the exception of seating arrangements) on students' achievement (Doyle, 1986; Weinstein, 1979).

Physical environment also considers skills possessed by the teacher in classroom organization and management to ensure maximum use of time to enhance learning in the classroom (Okyere & Adams, 2003). The careful planning in this context refers to the skills and knowledge of a teacher in organizing and managing a classroom.

Theoretically, the concept of inclusion demands acceptance of every individual, that is, zero rejection in the school. For this reason, physical environment must be seen to be suitable for all. In the report of UK Department for Education and Employment (2001), effective school design is a manifestation of the same philosophy that sees the inclusion of all students in regular classrooms as befitting both students who do and do not have disabilities and exclusions. For instance, provision of spaces must be enough to accommodate all students in general areas of a school and surrounding grounds example, classrooms, hallways and washrooms.

In doing so, it will often achieve surprising and superior design solutions that benefit everyone. It is imperative that schools that do not have these facilities will make modifications to allow access to students with disabilities.

The environment of the classroom should also be barrier free. The room should be arranged to allow easy travel between desks and tables. Instructional materials should be placed within reach and storage space should be provided for special equipment such as magnification devices, crutches and adapted keyboards for computers. In addition, bookshelves, chalkboards and bulletin boards should be conveniently located and low enough to permit their use by students in wheelchairs (Weinstein & Nignango, 1997).

Contributing further, the United Kingdom Department of Education and Employment (2001) states that there must be enough space to accommodate all students in general areas of a school and surrounding grounds (classrooms, hallways, exists or washrooms). This can include the provision of quiet space where students with sensory disabilities can exercise and study away from noisy and distracting areas. For physical movement for students with mobility disabilities, long distances between activity spaces, steps to rooms on multiple floors, slippery outdoor surfaces, heavy doors and narrow doorways can induce fatigue and feelings of exclusion. Closely following this point is how to find ways for students with sensory disabilities (e.g. blindness, sensory, change attributable to autism etc.) who may have problems with direction and movement from space to space which can lead to increased levels of anxiety and frustration. This in turn, can lead to behaviour difficulties within the classroom. Aids to way finding include accessible design and location of sign (including Braille); differentiating areas within the school by colour, style, size, noise, or smell and bringing students' attention to these difficulties, design of prominent landmark and removal of clusters which detracts

from the individuality of an area (Lewis & Doorlag, 2003).

Further, Lewis and Doorlag (2003) stated that a primary concern with any environment is the safety of its inhabitants. Once children get to school, there are other physical access issues to consider in regard to entering the school buildings and ease of movement around the teaching and recreation areas. It is essential since the physical safety and comfort of children should also be a major concern in all schools. Learning will be more accessible for all when everyone feels safe and comfortable. Lewis and Doorlag (2003) stipulate that many of the newer school buildings are designed to be barrier-free, that is architectural barriers are avoided to allow individuals with disabilities entry to and use of the facility. Again, buildings have elevators and ramps, stairs have hand rails for persons with crutches or canes, doorways are wide enough to allow wheelchairs to pass through and bathroom facilities are specially designed.

In countries like America, it is mandatory for designers to modify buildings. Four Legislative Acts pertain in the provision for such facilities namely PL. 94-142, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, PL 99-457 and PL 101-336. Although, PL 94-142 did not specifically mention or deal with facilities, its basic intent was to require accessibility to progress. The regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1977 are also explicit in their relationship to facilities. A major sub-section of the regulations focus on programme accessibility (Federal Register, 1977, Section 50, Section C. 84-121). This means that the programme required for students are accessible. While Section 504 regulations do not require that every classroom or school building be accessible, the specific educational programmes that are appropriate for students must be accessible to all.

In Ghana, Tsagli (1998) reports that, there are no guidelines or clear-cut policies on the planning and designing of infrastructure of public buildings and

recreational facilities. Lack of such facilities is a potential derail in the implementation of inclusive education. Avoke and Avoke (2004) submit that for inclusion to be successful there must be adequate facilities and equipment both within and outside the classroom.

Physical environment involves making the condition pleasant. It is necessary since it is comfortable, attractive and enhances learning. Lewis and Doorlag (2003) posit that, the comfort of students and teachers depends on factors such as temperature, ventilation, lighting and noise level. The classic study on environment attractiveness was conducted by Maslow and Mintz (1956), cited in Weinstein and Nignango (1997). The study revealed that interviewers and interviewee put in 'ugly' rooms complained of headaches, fatigue and discomfort. Furthermore, one of the interviews finished more quickly apparently to escape from the unpleasant setting. This situation is in sharp contrast to those kept in the 'beautiful' room.

Subsequent studies have also demonstrated that aesthetically pleasing environments can influence behaviour. For example, primary-grade children in rooms decorated with 'happy' pictures showed more persistence at tasks than those in rooms with sad or neutral pictures (Fullan, 1998). Supporting this assertion, Weinstein (1979) stated that attractiveness of the learning environment help improve attendance, participation and attitudes towards instructions.

One aspect of aesthetic appeal is the use of colour. Smith et al. (1978) caution against dark or bright colours for classroom walls. They say that 'wall surfaces should be light in tone and subdued though not drab in hue, so that they can better function as a pleasant background for whatever is placed on them or occurs in front of them'. Lewis and Doorlag (2003) remarked that room decorations also affect its attractiveness. Furnishings, bulletin boards, pictures, posters, mobiles and

displays of education materials and equipment all contribute to visual appeal.

In addition to comfortability, ventilation should be adequate so that the room is not stuffy. All work area should be well-lighted and free from glare; some students with visual impairments may require special lighting. Research suggests that windows permit natural illumination but may offer distractions to students; these distractions can be avoided by building windows above eye level or by temporarily drawing the drapes. Noises can also distract students from their work or interfere with their ability to hear others speak. Sound-proofed walls, carpeting, acoustical ceiling tiles and drapes help to decrease unwanted environmental sounds (D' Alonzo, D'Alonzo & Mauser, 1979).

Environment physiologists also point out that the effect of the classroom environment can be both direct and indirect (Adams & Biddle, 1970). Explaining further, they contended that if students are seated in rows and unable to carry on a class discussion because they cannot hear one another, the environment is directly hindering their participation. Indirectly, the students can infer from the seating arrangements that the teacher does not really want them to interact. According to Okyere and Adams (2003), in any inclusive classroom, organization and managements are paramount in order to meet the diverse needs of the students. Okyere and Adams defined classroom organization as the teacher directed activities which ensure the efficient operation of the classroom, thus, providing the optimal conditions for learning and order. From a study by Smith et al. (1995), there are guiding principles from research. These are:

1. Good classroom organization/management must be planned, it does not just happen

2. Proactive classroom managers fare better than reactive ones

3. Consistency is the key to establishing an effective management programme

4. Teacher characteristics that promote good management are awareness of what is happening in class and being able to handle several events at the same time.

Children need a caring and stimulating learning environment to understand what is being taught and to interact effectively with their peers and teachers. Teacher should consider making adjustments in methods, materials, settings and schedules to accommodate students rather than trying to make children adjust to the existing practices. Such adjustments will enhance education quality for all children and not only those with a disability (Thomas, Walker & Webb, 1997). A nurturing positive classroom environment is needed if children with special needs are to feel part of the group (Okyere & Adams, 2003). Much of these atmospheres can be created by the teachers' attitude towards the children with special needs.

In addition, Okyere and Adams (2003) posit that if the teacher demonstrates respect for children with disabilities, treating them as valued members of the class, then others will do likewise. As a teacher working in an inclusive setting, one needs to listen to their students, be consistent and patient and respect children's individual learning styles. Also, teachers of inclusive settings need to accept that children learn at a different rate and in different ways and so plan lessons with diversity and difference in mind. More so, as part of classroom psychosocial atmosphere of an inclusive system, teachers' respond flexibly and creatively both to the individual needs of particular children and to the needs of all children in the classroom.

It is also imperative that teachers cooperate with families and community members to ensure that girls and boys are in school and that their learning is optimized. Last but not the least, is the fact that, teachers need to plan activities according to the learning taking place, rather than according to a fixed interpretation of the curriculum.

Physical environment also includes how the physical setting is organized. What it means is that the classroom should be arranged to accommodate children with special needs as well as learning activities. Okyere and Adams (2003) postulate that there should be enough rooms designated as a reading corner, writer's corner among others. To them, there should be room to move round, especially if there is a student with a physical disability. According to Smith, Nelsdworth and Green (1978) environmental constraints make it difficult to teach running skills in the closet, demonstrate cooking and food preparation techniques in a gymnasium, or supervise small group discussions in a large auditorium with fixed seats. Lewis and Doorlag (2003) state that the environment exerts the greatest influence on the non-academic performance of students. Research asserts that characteristics affect attitudes and social behaviour but have little (with the exception of seating arrangements) on student achievement (Doyle, 1986; Weinstein, 1979).

Physical environment can be seen as creating welcoming accessible and safe school as well as ensuring barrier-free environment. It is considered as a critical part of efforts to promote inclusive education. Children must be able to travel to school in safety and be protected from accident and injury on school grounds. They must be encouraged and enabled to participate as fully as possible in all the learning and recreational activities the school offers (Thomas et al., 1997).

Perception of Teachers about Inclusive Education

According to Preminger and Brogan (1968), perception is seen as the act, power, process or product of perceiving knowledge through the senses of the existence and properties of matter and the external world. Further explanation was given as any insight or intuitive judgment that implies unusual discernment of fact or truth. Some authors like Allport (1955), see perception as any act or process of

knowing objects, facts and truth, whether experienced by thought, awareness of objects or consciousness. Perception also involves an interaction or transaction between an individual and his environment. Thus, the individual receives information from the external world which in some way modifies his experience and behaviour.

Teacher perception of inclusive education is diverse and reflects either positive or negative knowledge about the process. Teacher perception forms part of the few issues in the current form of delivering educational needs of all children. It is one of the crucial issues in determining success or failure of the inclusive education programme (Bennett, De Luca & Bruns, 1997). Teacher perception of an inclusive setting is very crucial since it involves changes in teachers' role, how teachers view themselves, their learners and their colleagues. The teacher beliefs, knowledge and values are brought to bear in creating the effective learning environment for pupils' experience (Bennett et al. 1997). As teachers are agents of education, they enhance inclusive practices and ensure equality of opportunities among students in inclusive settings. Teachers help to promote the kind of pupils who believe in and are capable of participating in inclusive societies. Therefore, whatever values a child may acquire may depend on the kind of training obtained from teachers.

In the views of Osler and Starkey (1996), the way in which teachers carry out their professional activity will have a profound effect on the extent to which their students learn the attitudes and values associated with inclusion. How teachers perceive inclusive education has been identified by researchers in the field of special education as one of the main factors to the implementation of inclusive education (Reynolds, 2001). Teacher perception may act to facilitate or constrain the implementation of policies which may be considered radical or controversial. For

the success of innovative and challenging programmes must surely depend upon the cooperation and commitment of those directly involved (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000). Teachers are good role models for any educational institutions, so they need to project good values. That is why educational system must involve inclusive practices and ensure quality of opportunities.

Again, schools must promote the kind of pupils who believe in and are capable of participating in inclusive societies, and this involves education of inclusion. For instance, Wilson (2000) stated that for children to learn to be just for example, they need to attend a school that provides a just environment. It presupposes that the way in which teachers carry out their professional activities will have a profound effect on the extent to which their pupils learn the attitudes and value associated with inclusion.

Although inclusive education is a human right issue, many educators have mixed perceptions towards the programme. In a study that examined mainstream and special teachers' perceptions of inclusion through the use of focus group interviews, Vaughn, Schumn, Jallard, Slusher & Saumell (1996), found that majority of teachers who were non- participants in inclusive programmes had strong negative feelings. Their reasons were class size, inadequate resources, effect on other children as well as teacher preparation. On the contrary, teachers who were involved in inclusion activities gave favourable response. A study by Villa, Thousand, Meyers and Nevin (1996), reported that teacher commitment often emerges at the end of the implementation cycle and also gained mastery of professional expertise needed to implement inclusive programme.

According to Giangreco and Cravedi-Cheng (1998), many teachers both special education and general education, in the past could not successfully teach students with disabilities. Giangreco and Cravedi-Cheng stated that because these

students with disabilities often spent much of their time in the special education classroom where their expectations were lowered, they had little interaction with their peers without disabilities, spent too much time without instructional activities and where sometimes the curriculum could be questioned.

Acceptance of children with disabilities in inclusive schools depends on the type and severity of disability. Forlin (1995) found that educators were cautiously accepting of including a child with cognitive disability and were more accepting of children with physical disability. The degree of acceptance for part-time integration was high for children considered to have mild or moderate special educational needs (SENs). The majority of educators (95%) believed that mild physically disabled children should be integrated part-time into mainstream classes and only a small number of educators (6%) considered full-time placement of children with severe physical disability as acceptable. Similarly, the majority of educators (86%) believed that only children with mild intellectual disability should be integrated part-time into mainstream classes. Forlin's (1995) findings indicated that the degree of acceptance by educators for the placement of children with SEN in mainstream classes declined rapidly with a converse increase in the severity of the disability across both physical and cognitive categories, and placement should be part-time rather than full-time.

Hefflin and Bullock (1999) surveyed special education and general teachers' perception towards inclusion specifically with students with emotional or behavioural disorders. Their study found that the top problems of inclusion reported by special education and general education teachers were inadequate support and training, non-proportional ratios (more students with disabilities in classrooms, than normally would be), teachers feeling unprepared to meet academic needs of students with disabilities, behaviour management issue and too much extra time, making curriculum adaptations and collaboration.

There is also a perception among teachers that inclusive education is a forced policy. This stems from a number of reasons. One of them is the fear that they do not have the necessary knowledge or abilities to adequately teach students with special needs (McLeskey & Waldon, 2002; D' Alonzo, Giordano & Vanleeuween, 1997; Shade & Stewart, 2001). Because of lack of necessary knowledge there is a perception among some teachers that inclusive education is a forced policy.

Another perception held by teachers regarding inclusion is that it creates more work for them (Hefflin & Bullock, 1999). This can be particularly frustrating for teachers and cause negative attitudes towards inclusion, especially if they are already feeling overwhelmed with their regular workload. Jones, Thorn, Thompson and Wilde (2002), reported that the teacher workload consequences from inclusion could also have negative effects. Though additional accommodation may need to be made, Kochlar, West and Taymans (2000), reported that often the general education students could benefit from some of the accommodations too. Since collaboration is such a major goal of educators, one step towards addressing these issues is by teachers sharing the workload.

The perception of teachers about inclusive education is that it is difficult to achieve because teachers lack confidence in instructional skills. The majority of literature reviewed such as McLeskey and Waldron (2002), D' Alonzo, Giordano and Vanleeuwen (1997) and Shade and Stewart (2001), reported that general education teachers stated they needed extra training in the area of teaching students with special needs in order to be adequately prepared. One study by Leyser and Tappendorf (2001), said that teachers needed various activities included in in-service or pre-services on this subject such as simulations, discussions, panel presentations and relevant information about disabilities. General educators required training in classroom management strategies. According to Simpson and Myles

(1997), educators need to be knowledgeable about structuring methods such as the use of antecedents, contingencies, consequences and manipulation of other things in the general education classroom that can better meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Support services are essential in making inclusive education successful. Support services could be seen as both physical and human resources. The physical resources of support services include teaching materials, information technology equipment and the restructured physical environment whilst human resources include learning support assistants, special teachers and speech therapists and administrators. Janney, Snell, Beers and Raynes (1995), found that the majority of teachers in their study were resistant initially to accept children with SEN in their classes because they anticipated a worst-case scenario where both they and the children with SEN would be left to fend for themselves. Later, these teachers were receptive towards these children after having received necessary and sufficient support. These and many empirical studies show support services are vital to teachers' perceptions. Studies have shown that having psychologists or special education teachers who can provide information and assistance to a specific handicapped child, or use appropriate behaviour management strategies or teaching techniques, makes them more positive towards inclusion (Horne, 1980).

Teacher perception is also influenced by the nature of class size and the number of children with disabilities present. There have been a number of studies that reveal some effects of class size on inclusion. Bennett (1987) reviewed studies on effect of class size and found broad agreement among researchers on the following general conclusions: That smaller classes result in increased student-teacher contact; that smaller classes appear to result in greater achievement gains for students with lower academic ability and for those who are economically or socially

disadvantaged. It also came to light that classroom management improved in smaller classes and very small classes of five or fewer students to produce considerably higher achievement.

Summary of Literature Review

Major issues emerged from the theoretical and empirical review of literature. Various authors have different definitions and views of inclusive education. While some professionals see inclusive education as placing persons with disabilities under one roof with non-disabled pupils, some suggest a radical reform in the components of education including curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and grouping of pupils. The review of literature indicated that inclusive education is affirmed to be a process of increasing the participation of all students irrespective of their differences in regular schools.

Inclusive education is a process of advancing the involvement of all students irrespective of their differences in a school, where their aspirations and dreams could be met through restructured cultures, policies and practices that are relevant to quality education for all. Teacher preparation for inclusive schools was seen to be adequate in terms of theoretical training but lack the needed practical element for teachers to ably handle pupils with disabilities. Curriculum is flexible in terms of its modification in meeting the needs of diverse pupils.

The physical environment of inclusive schools must have the suitability element that would be accepted and convenient for all persons with disabilities. The perceptions teachers have of inclusive education are both positive and negative in relation with their dealings with the pupils especially those with disabilities. The review of literature on teacher preparation, curriculum, physical environment and perception of inclusive education set the benchmarks to undertake holistic evaluation of the programme in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology adopted for the study on the evaluation of inclusive education in Ghana. The highlights of this chapter include the research design, population, the sample and the technique for sampling, instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments and the data collection procedure and analysis.

The Research Design

The research was a descriptive survey. This enabled the researcher to collect information on the current state and practice of inclusive education in order to conduct an evaluation of pilot schools in Ghana. According to Cohen, Morrison and Manion (2004) in descriptive survey design, researchers gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared. The descriptive survey helps to deal essentially with questions concerning what exists with respect to variables or prevailing conditions in a situation (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1990).

In this realm, the evaluation of inclusive pilot schools fits well in the design. McMillan and Schumacher (1997) view then descriptive survey design as is suitable to enable the investigator select a sample or respondents and administer a questionnaire or conduct an interview to collect information on variables of

interest. The other rationale mentioned by the writers is that accurate information could be obtained for large numbers of people with a small sample using a descriptive design.

Descriptive survey design has many merits. For instance, the design provides a more accurate and meaningful picture of event and seeks to explain peoples' perception and behaviour on the basis of data gathered at a particular time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). This allows for in-depth follow up questions and items that are unclear to be explained. The main advantage of descriptive survey design is that it has the potential to provide a lot of information from quite a large sample of respondents (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993).

In spite of the advantages, the descriptive survey design is beset with some disadvantages. According to authors such as Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2004), in descriptive survey, there is the difficulty of ensuring that the questions answered are clear and not misleading. The reason is that survey results can vary greatly due to the exact wording of questions. As a result, it may produce unreliable results. There is also the difficulty of obtaining adequate number of questionnaire completed and returned for meaningful analysis to be made in some cases. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the descriptive survey design was found to be most appropriate and applicable for the study. It would help the researcher gather accurate data on teachers on variables underlying the study for concrete conclusions to be made.

Population

Population refers to the entire universe of elements or cases the researcher is interested for the study. The target population for the study consisted of all teachers in the inclusive education oriented schools in ten (10) districts of Ghana.

The accessible population however, was all teachers in the 35 inclusive pilot schools in Ghana.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample denotes a small and representative proportion of the population. Sampling enables the researcher to study a relatively small number of units in place of the target population and to obtain data that is representative of the whole population (Sarantakos, 1998). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2004) suggest that a sample size of thirty is held by many to be the minimum number of cases if researchers plan to use some form of statistical analysis on their data. However, the writers caution that the size of the sample would depend on the relationship researchers want to explore within the sub-groups of the entire sample.

The sample was made up of the inclusive pilot schools located in Eastern, Greater Accra and Central Regions of Ghana. In each region, there are three districts which practice inclusive education and each district accommodates 3 or 4 inclusive pilot schools. Each school has Primary 1 to Primary 6 classrooms with regular class teachers. For this study, a sample size of 134 teachers was used. In all, the sample was selected from 24 inclusive pilot schools in Ghana.

Basically, two main sampling techniques were used in selecting the sample for the study. Firstly, the simple random sampling technique was used to select 24 schools out of 35 schools from the districts through the lottery procedure. This technique was used because it gives all units of the target population equal chances of being selected. According to Amedahe (2002), simple random sampling is appropriate when a population of study is similar in characteristics of interest. A list of all districts with the pilot inclusive schools were written on pieces of papers and put in a box. Seven (7) districts were picked out of ten districts. These

comprised three districts from Greater Accra Region, two from Central Region and Eastern Region respectively.

Secondly, the purposive sampling technique was used in selecting   134 teachers in twenty-four (24) inclusive pilot schools. These teachers are trained for the practice inclusive education. Sarantakos (1998) states that purposive technique enables researcher to purposively sample subjects which in their opinion are thought to be relevant to the research topic. In purposive sampling, the units of the sample are intentionally picked for study because of their qualities which are not randomly distributed in the universe, but they are typically or they exhibit most of the characteristics of interest to the study (Kumekpor, 2000).

A list of all the inclusive practice school was collected from the Special Education head office in Accra. The districts, schools and teachers involved in the study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1:

Districts, schools and teachers

Districts	Schools	Teachers
Accra Metro	4	24
Dangbwe East (Ada)	3	18
Ga-West (Amasaman)	3	18
Awutu-Efutu-Senya	4	18
Agona Swedru	3	16
New Juaben (Koforidua)	4	22
Oda	3	18
Total	24	134

Research Instruments

The main instruments used to collect the data were questionnaire and an observation guide. The questionnaire was adopted because as Kerlings (1971) stated, it is widely used for collecting data in educational research, since it is very effective for seeking information about practices and conditions, and for enquiring into the opinions and attitudes. Further, each question had certain purpose and elicited information related to a specific aspect of the research questions. Sarantakos (1998) contends that questionnaire is a way of translating research topics into variables, variables into indicators and indicators into questions. In the views of Cohen, Mansion and Morrison (2004), questionnaire is widely used and is a useful

instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, numerical data and being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher. The researcher was however not unaware of the low return rate associated with the use of questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed using the Likert scale format. Authors such as Amedahe (2002) and Oppenheim (1992) state that Likert scaled questionnaire have high return rate and are advantageous compared to open ended questionnaire. The four-point Likert scaled questionnaire was mainly used and had various score values. Positive statements were scored as Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1; as well as Very Good = 4, Good = 3, Poor = 2 and Very Poor = 1.

The questionnaire for teachers was made up of five segments. The first part elicited the bio-data of the respondents. The second section was to discover the level of teacher preparation for inclusive schools. The third section looked at the nature of the curriculum that was being used by inclusive schools. The fourth section covered the suitability of physical environment. The last section found out the perception teachers had about inclusive schools. In all, there were 49 items in the questionnaire excluding information on the demographic data.

Observation is a method of data collection that employs vision as its main means of data collection. According to Amedahe (2002), in observation studies the researcher collect data on the current status of subjects by watching them and listening and recording what they observe rather than asking questions about them. The researcher used an observation guide to get additional information on the nature of physical environment of inclusive education. This was very relevant in shedding more light on the questionnaire items on physical environment.

Validity of Instrument

In order to enhance the validity of the study, the questionnaire was given to the researcher's supervisors and some lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundations for expert evaluation. This made them to give both face and content related evidence to the items and examined whether the items related to the research questions and comprehensively cover the details of the study. Suggestions made were incorporated to refine the content and improve the questionnaire. Further, the instrument was pre-tested to strengthen its usefulness.

Pre-testing of the Instruments

A pre-testing of the instrument was carried out on 24 teachers from four inclusive schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. These schools were excluded from the study. The aim of the pre-testing was to improve the validity and reliability of the instruments. The teacher respondents were given draft copies of the questionnaire and introductory letters. The respondents were told to discuss verbally and frankly with the researcher any ambiguity, incoherence or incomprehension that they experienced about any aspect of the draft questionnaire. The necessary corrections were effected after the trial testing.

The results that evolved from the trial study heightened the zeal and enthusiasm of the researcher to proceed with the study. It became necessary to reduce the open-ended items from twenty to twelve in order to lessen the burden of the respondents. It was also to make the questionnaire clearer, attractive and convenient to the respondents.

Reliability of Instrument

The pre-test results were used to determine the reliability of the instruments

with the Cronbach's Alpha measure of internal consistency. The measure provides knowledge of the average correlation among the items that make up the scale of the instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha measure of internal consistency is useful when measures have multiple scored items such as attitudinal scale (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1990). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Version 15.0) was used for the calculations. The final instrument had internal consistency reliability of 0.84.This is quite high.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Head of Department of Educational Foundations. The letter spelt out the purpose of the study, the need for individual participation, anonymity as well as confidentiality of respondents' response. After establishing the necessary contact with the headteachers of the selected schools, permission was granted for the administration of the instruments. The purpose of the study and procedure for responding to the questionnaire was explained to respondents.

In order to ensure clarity of how the questionnaire was to be completed, the researcher administered the questionnaire to respondents personally during normal school time. This was to ensure that headteachers and teachers cooperated and participated and helped greatly in obtaining a high return rate of questionnaire. Intermittently, the researcher collected information on the nature of physical environment in inclusive pilot schools using the observation guide. Photographs were taken during the process of observing (Refer to appendix C).

The researcher used four weeks to distribute and collect the answered questionnaire. Research participants were given a minimum of one day to respond to the questionnaire. This ensured very high return rate of about 93.0% which was very

encouraging. Some of the respondents were expecting financial token from the researcher, whilst a few reneged on the promise of answering the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

For effective statistical presentation and analysis, the questionnaires were serially numbered to facilitate easy identification. It was necessary to observe this precaution to ensure quick detection of tiny source of errors when they occur in the tabulation of the data. Responses to the various items in the questionnaires were then added, tabulated and statistically analyzed. As the study was a descriptive survey, the statistical analysis used consisted mainly of frequencies and percentages. Beside, the results were discussed with references to available literature where appropriate.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents an analyses of the data gathered from the field in relation to the evaluation of inclusive education in Ghana. The chapter has been divided into two main sections. The first section of the questionnaire covered an analysis of demographic data while the second discussed the main data. The first part focused on variables like gender, age range, teaching experience, years of teaching at current school and professional qualification. The biographical data is important because it helps the researcher to know the background of the respondents. It provides a fair idea of their level of maturity, experience and depth of knowledge about their profession.

ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Demographic characteristics of teachers are essential for inclusive education practice. The demographic data were analyzed in terms of teachers' gender, age range, teaching experience, years of teaching at current school and professional qualification.

Gender of Respondents

Data was collected on teachers' gender to ascertain the number of males and females involved in the study. This information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Teachers' gender (N=134)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	48	35.8
Female	86	63.2
Total	134	100.0

 Source: Field data, April, 2009

Table 2 depicts that there were 48 (35.8%) male teachers and 86 (64.2%) females. Clearly, more female teachers participated in the study than males. The disparity is a probable reflection of the general dominance of female teachers in most basic schools in Ghana. This is no exception for the inclusive pilot schools selected for the study.

Age range of respondents

Age is assumed to be one of the indicators of maturity and experience. It was therefore relevant to know the age group of the respondents, in order to determine the level of maturity of those teaching in inclusive schools. Information on respondents' age range is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Age range of respondents (N=134)

Age Range	Frequency	Percent (%)
25 – 30 years	73	54.5
31 – 35 years	13	9.7
36 – 40 years	3	2.2
41-45 years	23	17.2
More than 46 years	22	16.4
Total	134	100.0

 Source: Field data, April, 2009.

From Table 3 the age range of   25-30 years formed the dominant group, making up 54.5%.This was followed by 41-45 years which had 17.2% .The least percentage age group was 36-40 years that was 2.2%. Thus, there are many younger teachers in inclusive pilot schools which could be a platform for promoting effective inclusive education in Ghana. Such younger teachers have been found to be more supportive of inclusion and exhibit favourable attitudes than older ones (Clough & Lindsay, 1991).

Teaching experience of respondents

Teaching experience is relevant to help determine the length of time teachers have been teaching at various schools. Table 4 has information on teachers' experience.

Table 4

Teachers' teaching experience (N=134)

Years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 - 2years	54	40.3
3 - 4years	39	29.1
5 - 6years	12	9.0
More than 6years	29	21.6
Total	134	100.0

Source: Field data April, 2009

From the table, 54 (40.3%)   teachers had taught for 2 years and below, whilst 80 (59.7%) had taught for 3 years and above. Clearly, the number of teachers with minimum years of 3 teaching was the majority. This means that, teachers   of inclusive schools have some amount of teaching experience with children with disabilities.   This would make teachers supportive of the inclusion process (Clough & Lindsay, 1991).

Number of Years Teachers Have Taught at Current School

The number of years teachers had spent at their current school was determined to make it easier to know the turnover rate of teachers in inclusive schools. Table 5 shows this information.

Table 5

Years teachers had taught at current school (N=134)

Years at Current School	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 2 years	58	43.3
3 – 4 years	52	38.8
5 – 6 years	24	17.9
Total	134	100.0

Source: Field data, April 2009

From Table 5, it is evident that 58 (43.3%) teachers had taught at their respective schools for two years and below while 52 (38.8%) had taught for three to four years. The five to six year group was 24 (17.9%). The mean years teaching at current school was 1.74 with a standard deviation of 0.74. This means that the number of years teachers have spent at their current schools was dispersed from the mean (approximately 2 years). It means some of the teachers have been at their current schools longer than others. Thus, teachers who have spent over 2 years at the current school might have gained relevant experience by acquiring some requisite skills, knowledge attitudes and values for effective inclusive education practice. This experience is essential to overcoming some negating attitudes that serve as barriers to inclusion.

Academic Qualification of Respondents

Data on the academic qualification of teachers was obtained for the study. Table 6 shows information on the academic qualification of teachers in involved the

study.

Table 6

Teachers' academic qualification (N=134)

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
3-Year Post- Secondary	67	50.0
Diploma in Education	32	23.9
Degree in Education	32	23.9
Degree in Special Education	3	2.2
Total	134	100.0

Source: Field data, April 2009

Table 6 indicates that most teachers, 67 (50.0%) had 3 year post-secondary Certificate. Thirty two (23.9%) teachers each had Diploma in Education and Degree in Education respectively. Interestingly, only 3(2.9%) teachers had Degree in Special Education. This shows that majority of the teaching staff had the academic qualification which can be the basis for effective implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. Thus, only a handful of the teachers in inclusive pilot schools had the requisite qualification. Hence, efforts should be made to train more qualified teachers for inclusive schools.

ANALYSIS OF MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research questions were analyzed question by question in terms of teacher preparation, curriculum, physical environment and perception of inclusive

education.

Research Question 1

How are teachers prepared academically and professionally to handle all manner of children in inclusive schools?

Section B of the questionnaire was used to answer research question one which consisted of eleven statements. For easy and quick analysis teacher responses to 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' were placed in the 'Agree' category, while 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' were placed in the 'Disagree' category. Table 7 gives an overview of teacher academic and professional preparation for inclusive education.

Table 7

Teacher preparation for inclusive education (N = 134)

Teacher preparation	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Pre-service preparation had exposed teachers to understand and appreciate students with diverse needs and disabilities	122 (91.0)	12 (9.0)
Training programmes enable teachers to be flexible and creative in meeting challenges in inclusive schools	116 (86.6)	18 (13.4)
Pre-service preparation provided opportunities for practicum experience in inclusive settings	14 (10.5)	120 (89.5)
Training programme focused on collaborative teaching skills such as co-teaching classes	99 (73.9)	35 (26.1)
Teachers collaborate with experts and specialist to gain knowledge and skills for inclusive practices	93 (69.4)	41 (30.6)
Teachers attend workshops organized on inclusive and special educational practices	91 (67.9)	43 (32.1)
Teachers always participate in in-service programmes organized for them	90 (67.2)	44 (32.1)
Seminars are organized for teachers since inclusion started in my school	69 (51.5)	48 (48.5)
In-service training emphasizes the use of peer tutoring as a method of teaching in class	92 (68.6)	42 (31.4)
The use of instructional adaptation processes were emphasized during my training	92 (68.6)	42 (31.4)
Class management skills were taught as part of my training	79 (58.9)	55 (41.9)

Pre-service preparation is essential for the success of inclusive education. From Table 7, 122 (91.0%) teachers agreed with the statement that "pre-service preparation had exposed teachers to understand and appreciate students with diverse needs and disabilities". The teachers' assertion for the need for a comprehensive pre-service preparation is consistent with Golder, Norwich and Bayliss (2005), appraisal of the policy requirements in England and international developments, which has initiated programmes to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of trainee teachers. The exposure helps the would-be teachers to adapt their teaching to meet individual needs.

Pertaining to the statement "training programmes enable teachers to be flexible and creative in meeting challenges in inclusive schools", teachers responded as follows, 116 (86.6%) answered positive, while 18 (13.4%) gave negative response. Majority of teachers believed that their training prepared them to be flexible. This makes a teacher to be effective in an inclusive school where pupils have special educational needs. The flexible element in training programmes helps the teacher trainees in overcoming some challenges in discharging their duties. Flexibility and creativity are important elements in training a teacher for inclusive schools (Whitworth, 2001).

Practicum experience gained during pre-service preparations of teachers was found to be woefully inadequate as depicted in Table 7. Fourteen (11.5%) teachers agreed to the statement, while as many as 120 (89.5%) disagreed strongly. Garner (1996), emphasizes the need for teacher trainees working intensively with one individual pupil to gain relevant knowledge and skills rather than just having general classroom teaching service. It is clear from the research that much is not being done in making practicum an essential component in the training of teachers for inclusive schools. Experts and teachers who are knowledgeable and would supervise

practicum experiences may be absent. It is recently that a full course in Special Education has been added to the curriculum of Teacher Training Colleges which produce most teachers for inclusive schools.

Collaborative teaching skills are essential ingredient for teachers in inclusive education. While 99 (73.9%) teachers stated they were equipped with collaborative teaching skills, 35(26.1%) said they were not so equipped. Thus, most teachers engage in collaborative learning, integrated activities, collaborative evaluation and group process skills in inclusive schools (Whitworth, 2001). Collaborative teaching skills enable teachers to co-teach classes and are essential skills that are expected from teachers. Even though there was a high positive response from the teachers, in reality, the teachers do not display much collaborative teaching skills in their classrooms.

The statement "teachers collaborate with experts and specialists to gain knowledge and skills for inclusion" attracted positive response. Ninety-three (69.4%) teachers agreed with the statement while 41 (3.6%) disagreed. Collaboration between special education and general education teachers is essentially important for inclusion. In support Leyser and Tappendorf (2001) maintained that collaboration between special and general education teachers is very useful and teachers learn skills on how to effectively collaborate and team-teach in inclusive classes. Further, Voltz, Brazil and Ford (2001) said that it is important for the special education and general education teachers to collaborate on issues, concerns and appropriate instructions and structures in the classroom for students with disabilities. Hence, the entire school should not leave special educators alone as experts as we move towards more inclusive classes.

From Table 7, there is clear indication that workshops were organized for teachers in inclusive schools. Whereas 91 (67.9%) teachers were of positive view

that they attended workshops organized on special and inclusive education practices to complement their knowledge in handling children with disabilities, only 43 (32.1%) had contrary view on attending workshops. Probably, these teachers have not been exposed to the importance of workshops on inclusion. Usually, workshops on inclusion and special education expose teachers to new trends and developments as well as changes in curriculum and the latest information communication and technology.

Most teachers in inclusive schools participated in in-service programmes organized for them. While 90 (67.2%) teachers maintained they participated in in-service training programmes, 44 (32.8%) teachers disagreed with the assertion. In-service training is important for professional development since it makes teachers feel more confident in teaching pupils with special needs (Branes & Pastures, 1997). In-service programmes organized for teachers assist them to prepare adequately for classroom instruction and also adopt new strategies in the delivery of instruction. Hence, periodic in-service programmes for teachers of inclusive schools are important.

Seminars on special and inclusive education were organized for teachers. From Table 8, 69 (51.5%) teachers indicated that seminars were organized for them as part of their professional growth and development. However, close to 50.0% attended no seminars. Seminars are good for professional development since they serve as avenues where teachers are exposed to emerging standards such as views of learning and to change their roles and practice accordingly. In view of this, a lot of efforts and importance must be given to make seminars successful.

In-service training which emphasizes the use of peer tutoring as a method of teaching in class had 92 (68.6%) of the respondents answering in the affirmative, while 42 (31.5%) in the negative. Peer-tutoring has been identified as an effective

method of teaching in an inclusive classroom especially those with learning disabilities (Shea & Bauer, 1994). This method if properly used in inclusive schools can enhance teaching and learning process and also benefit pupils with disabilities.

As to whether instructional adaptation processes were emphasized during training, 42 (31.4%) teachers agreed, while 92 (68.6%) disagreed. If such important components of teacher training are not given serious attention to teacher trainees, then the situation leaves much to be desired. The reason being that if teachers are unable to adapt to suit the diversity of children's needs during teaching and learning process, those with learning disabilities would not benefit from the educational process.

The statement "class management skills were taught as part of my training" attracted positive response from 79 (58.9%) teachers, while 55 (41.9%) responded in the negative that they are not competent in dealing with children with disabilities. Classroom management skills are essential if a teacher is to succeed in an inclusive environment. Supporting this view, Okyere and Adams (2003) stated that classroom organization and management are paramount in order to meet the diverse needs of the students in any inclusive classroom.

Extent of Teacher Preparation

Teacher preparation for inclusion is essential. A summary of the extent of teacher preparation for inclusive education is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Adequacy of teacher preparation for inclusive education (N=134)

Level of Teacher Preparation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Adequate	126	94.0
Inadequate	8	6.0
Total	134	100.0

Source: Field data, April 2009

In the Table, as many as 126 (94.0%) teachers were of the view that their preparation to handle pupils with diverse background was adequate, whilst 8 (6.0%) teachers said their preparation was inadequate. This means most teachers in inclusive schools possess the relevant competencies in terms of knowledge and skills to handle all manner of children with disabilities. The adequacy of teacher preparation would promote effective inclusive education practice.

Improving Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Education

Teachers involved in the study gave various responses to the question "how can teacher preparation for inclusive schools be improved? Table 9 indicates suggestions on improving teacher preparation for inclusive education.

Table 9

Improving teacher preparation for inclusive education (N=134)

Improving Teacher Preparation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Organizing workshops	44	32.8
Regular in-service training to help teachers to handle pupils with disabilities	60	44.8
Opportunities for practicum and field experiences	30	22.4
Total	134	100.0

Source: Field data, April 2009

Forty-four (44.8%) teachers answered that there was the need for organizing workshops for teachers in inclusive schools. To the teachers, organizing workshops is done to upgrade teachers' knowledge in the teaching of inclusive schools. Sixty (44.8%) teachers stated that there should be regular in-service training to help teachers to handle pupils with disabilities. However, thirty (22.4%) teachers were of the opinion that opportunities for practicum and field experiences should be made available as much as possible to enrich the knowledge of teacher trainees. Thus, the organization of workshops, regular in-service training and opportunities for practicum and field experiences are vital for improving teacher preparation for inclusive education.

Research Question 2

What is the nature of curriculum used in inclusive pilot schools?

For easy and quick analysis, responses to "Strongly Agree" and "Agree"

were put in the" Agree" category while "Disagree" and Strongly Disagree" were placed in the "Disagree" category. Table 10 provides a summary of teacher responses on the nature of curriculum used in inclusive pilot schools.

Table 10

Curriculum used in inclusive pilot schools

Nature of Curriculum	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Teachers are allowed to modify curriculum	73 (54.4)	61 (54.6)
Curriculum is driven by philosophical and developmental needs of the country for inclusive education	62 (46.3)	72 (53.7)
Teachers were involved in the process of writing the syllabus for inclusion	47 (35.1)	87 (64.9)
The school curriculum focuses on the development of self-help skills	70 (52.2)	64 (47.8)
The school curriculum develops vocational skills	68 (50.7)	66 (49.3)
The school curriculum ensures that all children participate fully in school and classroom activities and games	81 (60.5)	53 (39.5)
The school curriculum promotes socialization skills for children with disabilities	63 (47.0)	71 (53.0)
The school curriculum equips children with disabilities with communication skills	60 (44.8)	74 (55.2)
The school curriculum emphasizes basic reading	92 (68.7)	42 (31.3)
Curriculum prepares children with disabilities for community living	67 (50.0)	67 (50.0)

It is important that teachers are allowed or given the opportunity to modify the school curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils. In response to the statement "teachers are allowed to modify curriculum", 73 (54.4%) teachers were in agreement, while 61 (45.6%) answered in the negative. Modifying the curriculum is important in interpreting the school's formal curriculum by teachers into learning objectives and activities to suit an individual or a group of pupils. This is consistent with the views expressed by Comfort (1990) cited in Koga and Hall (1996) that due to the diverse nature of the school system, it is in order if teachers use their prerogative to enhance their teaching. Inability of the teachers to modify their curriculum due to its rigidity may not benefit some of the pupils especially those with disabilities.

As to whether the school curriculum is driven by the philosophical and developmental needs of the country for inclusive education, 62 (46.3%) teachers gave favourable response as against 72 (46.3%) who disagreed. Countries all over the world transmit their ideal values through education to its successive generations which consequently reflect the developmental needs of the people. In view of this, the curriculum is drawn taking he needs of the country.

On the involvement of teachers in the process of writing the syllabus for inclusive schools, 47 (35.1%) teachers responded positively while 87 (64.9%) had a contrary view. This means a lot of teachers are not involved in the writing of curriculum for inclusive schools. Teachers would only be made to implement curriculum as designed by others which differs from their own inputs and beliefs. According to Conley (1991) teachers' beliefs and practices influence both curriculum practices in the classrooms and reform issues on curricular implementation.

With regard to whether the school curriculum focused on the development of

self-help skills for children with disabilities, 70 (52.2%) teachers were in agreement to that statement. However, 64 (47.8%) teachers disagreed that the curriculum focuses on self-help skills for children with disabilities. Self-help skills consist of all the tasks and functions persons perform, in accordance with their abilities in order to lead lives as independently as possible (Hartlan, 1996). Self-help skills include personal hygiene, food preparation, money management and time monitoring. This is important to make the persons with disabilities lead independent lives.

The issue of whether the school curriculum develops vocational skills for children with disabilities attracted almost a divided response. Sixty-eight (50.7%) teachers answered in the positive, while 66(49.3%) did not agree to that statement. Vocational skill training is important for children with disabilities to find work and earn a living.

As to whether the school curriculum ensures that all children participate fully in school and classroom activities and games, 81(60.5%) teachers responded positively while 53(39.5%) were of contrary view. What this meant is that, some of the children did not participate in school activities and games. This situation contradicts the ideal of inclusive school that inclusion deals with schools that are open to all students, and that ensures all students learn and participate in all activities (Hefflin & Bullock, 1999).

From Table 10, it is conspicuous that the school curriculum did not promote socialization skills for children with disabilities. While 71(53.0%) teachers maintained that socialization skills were not much emphasized, 63(47.0%) teachers disagreed. This finding indicates that much is not being done for children with disabilities to acquire socialization skills like greeting and social ethics in our society. However, socialization skills are important for effective functioning of children with disabilities in inclusive settings. Hence, efforts must be made to teach

these skills so as to make pupils with disabilities in inclusive schools fit in our society.

Communication skills are essential part of the curriculum in inclusive schools. However, 74(55.2%) teachers disagreed with the statement that "the school curriculum equips children with disabilities with communication skills". Only 60(44.8%) teachers responded positively to the statement. This means many of the teachers were not teaching communicative skills. Developing communicative skills for children with disabilities will facilitate their interaction with others, communicate appropriately in various situations, and also make sense of what others say in inclusive environment.

The statement "the school curriculum emphasizes basic reading" attracted an affirmative response. Ninety-two (68.7%) teachers agreed that basic reading was emphasized for children with disabilities in inclusive environment. Less than 42(31.3%) teachers disagreed with the assertion. It is refreshing that teachers believe the school curriculum stresses basic reading. This is because the curriculum builds a foundation for literacy by providing language rich environment through activities such as story telling and recitation of poems.

As to whether the school curriculum prepares children with disabilities for community living, 67(50.0%) teachers were in agreement, with 67(50.0%) disagreement. The respondents were split in their opinions. Children with disabilities need adequate preparation for community. Communal living is a right. All children must therefore be prepared to live in their communities so as to achieve the goals and ideals of inclusion. This preparation should be made possible by the school curriculum.

Appropriateness of Curriculum for Inclusive Education

The appropriateness of the curriculum is an important issue in inclusive education. Table 11 shows responses on the appropriateness of the school curriculum for inclusive schools.

Table 11

Appropriateness of inclusive curriculum (N=134)

Appropriateness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Appropriate	116	86.6
Inappropriate	18	15.4
Total	134	100.0

Source: Field data, April 2009

On the appropriateness or otherwise of curriculum for inclusive schools, 116(86.6%) teachers said the curriculum was appropriate in meeting diverse needs of children with disabilities, but 18(13.4%) disagreed with the statement. Inappropriate curriculum used in inclusive schools may lead to exclusion of children with disabilities. However, appropriate and suitable curriculum is important for achieving inclusive education.

Improving Curriculum for Inclusive Education

This was an open-ended question that sought to elicit views from teachers on the improvement of curriculum. Teachers expressed some opinions on how best the curriculum for inclusive education can be improved in order to meet the varying needs of children with disabilities in inclusive schools. Most teachers said that:

i. The curriculum should stress on vocational skills as many children with disabilities earn their basic living through it.

ii.Teachers must be involved in the process of writing the curriculum for inclusive schools since they are the implementers.

iii.Adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials must accompany the curriculum.

iv. Curriculum should be flexible and easily adaptable.

Research Question 3

What kind of physical environment is available in inclusive school settings?

For analysis to be made easier and clearer teachers response to 'Very Good' and 'Good' statements were put into 'Good' category while 'Poor' and 'Very poor' were placed in 'Poor' category. Table 12 presents information on physical environment of inclusive schools.

Table 12

Nature of physical environment for inclusive schools

Nature of physical environment	Good (%)	Poor (%)
The ventilation in the classrooms and buildings	69 (51.5)	65 (48.5)
School compound and safety and comfort of pupils with disabilities	32 (58.8)	102 (76.2)
The decorations (pictures) and paintings of classrooms and other buildings	41 (22.9)	93 (77.1)
The seating arrangement in classrooms for teaching and learning	47 (35.1)	87 (64.9)
The physical environment and movement of children with disabilities	24 (14.9)	110 (85.1)
Classrooms and effective use of facilities like bookshelves and notice boards by all children with disabilities	20 (17.1)	114 (82.9)
The buildings and the surroundings (washrooms, lavatory and playing fields) and they accommodate the school pupils	44 (32.8)	90 (67.2)
The natural and artificial illumination (light) in classrooms and other buildings	49 (36.6)	85 (63.4)

It is evident from Table 12 that the physical environment in inclusive schools was not the best. On the issue of ventilation in the classrooms and buildings 69 (51.5%) teachers indicated that the situation is good, while 65 (48.5%) expressed disagreement. Ventilation is important for the comfort of teachers and pupils in the school. Lewis and Doorlag (2003) posit that the comfort of students and teachers

depend on factors such as temperature, ventilation, lighting and noise level. Getting as many as 65 (48.5%) teachers disagreeing on the state of ventilation in the classrooms and buildings reveals the lack of comfort for teachers and pupils in the school. Poor ventilation would affect teacher output and general concentration levels of children with disabilities during instructional hours in inclusive schools.

With regard to the nature of school compound and the safety and comfort of pupils with disabilities, majority of the teachers 102 (76.2%) were of a strong view that the situation was poor for inclusive schools. Only 32(28.8%) of teachers said the school compound was safe and comfortable. Looking at the figures, one can conclude that the school compound can pose a challenge to both teachers and children it was unsafe and uncomfortable for them. In support Lewis and Doorlag, (2003) said a primary concern for any environment is the safety of its inhabitants. Once children get to school, efforts should be made regarding accessibility to entering the school buildings and ease of movement around the teaching and recreational areas.

Most teachers 93(77.1%) maintained that the decorations and paintings on the walls were of poor quality. They were unattractive for teachers and children with disabilities. However, 41(22.9%) teachers said that, the decorations and painting on walls were of good quality and attractive. Children learn by what they see. Colourful decorations and paintings related to the lesson enhance the teaching and learning process. Buttressing, Smith et al (1978) stress on aesthetic appeal and use of colour in order to function better as a pleasant background for whatever is placed on walls or occurs in front of children.

Seating arrangement in classrooms for teaching and learning greatly enhance classroom work. However, responses from the teachers did not present a positive picture. Ninety-three (68.7%) teachers stated that seating arrangement in inclusive

schools was poorly done, while 47(35.3%) said seating arrangement was good and does enhance classroom work. Most teachers see seating arrangement in inclusive schools as limiting because if students are seated and unable to carry out and perform activities and class discussions, the environment is indirectly hindering their participation. Consistent with this is what Okyere and Adams (2003) posit that, inclusive classroom organization and management are paramount in order to meet the diverse needs of the pupils.

While a substantial number of teachers, 110 (82.1%), said that the physical environment was poor and does not facilitate the movement of children with disabilities in inclusive schools, 24(17.9%) thought otherwise. The poor nature of the physical environment meant that pupils with disabilities in inclusive schools would have some difficulty moving in and out of the school compound. However, inclusive environment should be welcoming and barrier free to promote optimal movement of children with disabilities.

Again, the classrooms were unsuitable for effective use of facilities like bookshelves and notice boards by all children with disabilities (CWDs). A significant number of teachers 114 (85.1%) asserted that the classrooms hindered effective use of facilities by children with disabilities, but 20 (14.9%) teachers objected to the assertion. Thus, CWDs in inclusive schools will be unable to utilize such facilities. Observing from a distance, the researcher saw that bookshelves, chalkboard and wall charts and other instructional materials were not placed within the reach of children in inclusive schools. Such facilities were usually placed a bit higher than the height of children.

Notably, 101(75.4%) teachers affirmed that the buildings and the surrounding grounds (washrooms, lavatory and playing fields) were poor and could not accommodate the school pupils. However, 33 (24.6%) were of contrary view.

The United Kingdom Department for Education and Employment Report (2001) made mention of the fact that effective school design is a manifestation of the same philosophy that sees the inclusion of all students in regular classrooms as benefiting both students who do and do not have disabilities. In view of this, provision of spaces must be enough to accommodate all students in general areas of a school and surrounding grounds, for example, classrooms, hallways and washrooms. The researcher observed that, the recreational grounds were weedy, others were stony, a situation that may pose a threat to the lives of the children especially those who have disabilities (Refer to Appendix E)

With regard to natural and artificial illumination (light) in classrooms and other buildings, 101 (75.4%) teachers felt that the situation does not augur well for inclusive schools especially where there are children with blurred vision. This creates an uncomfortable situation for the pupils. The architectural designs of the school buildings prevent adequate natural illumination whilst artificial light is woefully inadequate. In the estimation of Lewis and Doorlag (2003), natural and artificial illumination in classrooms makes teachers and pupils comfortable during teaching and learning in inclusive schools. Photographs captured from inclusive schools used for the study attest to the fact that natural and artificial illumination was generally poor (Appendix E).

Accessibility and Suitability of Physical Environment in Inclusive Schools

Table 13 presents data on the accessibility of the physical environment for children with disabilities as well as its suitability for school activities such as games and physical education.

Table 13

Accessibility and suitability of physical environment for children with disabilities

Accessibility and Suitability of Physical Environment	YES (%)	NO (%)	Total (%)
Physical layout is accessible to all children with disabilities	44 (32.8)	90 (67.2)	134 (100)
Physical environment is suitable for school activities such as games and physical education	46 (34.3)	88 (65.7)	134 (100)

It is clear from Table 13 that the physical environment is not accessible and suitable for inclusion. Evidently, 90 (67.2%) teachers concluded that the physical layout was inaccessible to all children, especially those with disabilities. This means that children with disabilities especially those with neuromotor problems would have difficulty accessing the environment.

Again, 88 (65.7%) teachers found the physical environment unsuitable for school activities such as games and physical education. This finding indicates that there will be some difficulties organizing games and physical education activities. The conclusion is that children in inclusive schools would not derive the enjoyment and benefits of games and physical education.

Appropriateness of Physical Environment

Appropriate physical environment is vital for inclusion. Teacher responses on the appropriateness of the physical environment for inclusive education are indicated in Table 14.

Table 14

Appropriate physical environment for inclusive education (N=134)

Appropriateness of Physical Environment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Appropriate	-	-
Appropriate	10	7.5
Inappropriate	124	92.5
Total	134	100.0

Source: Field data, April 2009

From Table 14, it is obvious that the physical environment is inappropriate for inclusive schools. This is evident by the response of 124(92.5%) teachers. This finding indicates that good architectural designs that facilitate easy movement for children with neuromotor problems, good ventilation in classrooms and buildings and the comfortability of the school compound for inclusive schools are lacking. However, 10(7.5%) teachers said that the environment is appropriate for pupils in inclusive schools.

Improving Physical Environment in Inclusive Schools

Teachers suggested various ways on how to improve physical environment in inclusive schools in order to make it accessible and suitable for children with disabilities. These include:

1. Improving ventilation and decorations in classrooms and buildings.

2. Efficient seating arrangements in classrooms.

3. Architectural designs of school buildings must provide enough natural and artificial illumination.

Using the observation guide (Appendix B) as a way of determining the appropriateness or otherwise of the physical environment, the researcher realized that the physical environment of inclusive schools was not really appropriate. There was poor ventilation in some classrooms and buildings, and the school compound was generally uncomfortable. In sum, the poor physical environment was confirmed by the photographs that were taken during the research (Appendix D).

Research Question 4

How do teachers perceive inclusive education?

For easy and quick analysis, teacher responses to "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" are placed in the "Agree'' "category while "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" were placed in the "Disagree" category. Table 15 depicts a summary of teacher responses divided into 'agree' and 'disagree' of perception of teachers about inclusive education.

Table 15

Teachers' perception of inclusive education

Teachers' perception	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Acceptance of children with disabilities in inclusive schools depends on the severity of disability	111 (82.8)	23 (17.2)
Children with disabilities in inclusive schools display inappropriate behaviours	90 (67.2)	44 (32.8)
Including children with disabilities is a forced policy for teachers	80 (59.7)	54 (40.4)
Inclusive education creates more work and burden for teachers	120 (89.6)	14 (10.4)
Inclusion benefits all children with and without disabilities	86 (64.2)	48 (35.8)
Inclusion facilitates friendship formation among children with and without disabilities	110 (82.1)	24 (17.9)
Inclusion is difficult to achieve because teachers lack confidence in instructional skills	116 (86.5)	18 (13.5)
Large class size can hamper successful inclusion	124 (92.8)	10 (7.2)
For inclusion to succeed support services are essential	118 (82.8)	23 (17.2)

It is obvious from Table 15 that teachers' acceptance of children disabilities in inclusive schools depends on the severity of disabilities as 111(82.8%) teachers affirmed this conviction. This means, not all manner of children with various forms of disabilities may be accepted in inclusive schools (Gyimah, Sugden & Pearson, 2009). Usually teachers are unwilling to accept children with severe disabilities

because teachers do not have the requisite knowledge and skills in educating them. In support, teachers were unanimous in rejecting inclusion of children with severe disabilities. Children with mild, moderate disabilities present relatively less problems and easy to manage as opposed to those with severe- profound disabilities in inclusive schools (Ward, Center & Bochner, 1994).

Most teachers 90 (67.2%) were of the conviction that children with disabilities in inclusive schools display inappropriate behaviours while 44 (32.8%) disagreed. It is clear that children with inappropriate behaviours can be a cause for exclusion. Such behaviours are usually problematic for teachers to manage in inclusive schools. As a result, teachers may express nagging and negative comments about the inclusion of children who display inappropriate behaviours.

With regard to the statement "including children with disabilities in schools being a forced   policy for teachers", as many as 80(59.7%) teachers responded in the affirmative while 54(40.5%) responded in the negative. Some respondents who believe inclusion education is a forced policy felt that they were ill-prepared in handling children with disabilities. Such teachers feel their training was not geared towards teaching at inclusive settings and may object the policy and perceived inclusion as a "forced" policy. On the contrary, teachers whose training prepared them for inclusive schools may not consider inclusion as a forced policy. Hence they may perceive inclusion in a positive light.

An important aspect of inclusive policy is its benefits for all children with and without disabilities. It is welcoming that most teachers recognized the benefit of inclusion. As shown in Table 15, 86 (64.2%) teachers indicated that inclusive policy benefits all children with and without disabilities. Only 48 (35.5%) held a contrary view. The affirmative views are consistent with Shapiro's (1999) that students with disabilities learn a lot from the inclusive classroom because they are experiencing

more peer interaction, ideas and activities. Those with negative views are in conformity with McLeskey and Waldron (2002) that inclusion would bring academic performance down in the overall class.

From Table 15, it is obvious that 120(89.6%) teachers had the conviction that inclusive creates more work and burden for teachers. Such teachers foresee the education of pupils with and without disabilities as a tedious task. This revelation suggests that teachers may feel frustrated and that may generate some negative attitude towards inclusion especially where they already feel they are overwhelmed with regular school workload. In support, Hefflin and Bullock (1999), said inclusion creates more work.

Many teachers from the study indicated that inclusion facilitates friendship formation among children with and without disabilities. From Table 15, it is evident that 110 (82.1%) teachers in inclusive schools did not doubt the statement that "inclusion facilitates friendship formation" but 24(17.9%) teachers disagreed. Through socialization in the school, pupils can build friendships which are very important elements for the development of learning. Friendship with children with and without disabilities is an important avenue to counter the feeling of isolation and loneliness in mainstream environment. It is refreshing that many teachers acknowledged that inclusion promotes friendship among all children.

With respect to the statement "inclusion is difficult to achieve because teachers lack confidence in instructional skills", 116 (86.5%) teachers said inclusion is difficult because they lack confidence in instructional skills but 18 (13.5%) disagreed. This lack of confidence in teachers' instructional skills would affect the planning and implementation of instructional modification for all children in the inclusive class. Consequently, teachers may adopt inappropriate instructional skills and methods which would hamper the success of inclusive education. Teachers with

low sense of teaching efficacy are less likely to hold positive attitude towards inclusion (Soodak & Podell, 1994).

From Table 15, 124(92.6%) teachers agreed that large class size can hamper successful inclusion. However, 10 (7.4%) teachers said successful inclusion is not affected by large class size. Large class size has its own problems in inclusive schools. For instance, there is already workload for teachers to deal with. In inclusive schools, the teacher has to pay attention and deal with individual children whether with disabilities or not. Hence, class size must be small in order for a teacher to work effectively in inclusive schools.

Support services are essential to the success of inclusive education. As many as 111 (82.8%) teachers strongly believed that for inclusion to succeed, support services are essential. However, 23 (17.2%) had a contrary view. The availability of support services at the classroom and school levels is a major factor associated with positive attitude towards inclusion and its success. Support services in all forms are important if a teacher in an inclusive school is to be effective (Clough & Lindsay, 1991). Teachers who had expressed a contrary view about the role of support of services may be unaware of their availability and benefits of such services for inclusion.

How Teachers Perceive the Importance Inclusive of Education

Teacher perception of the importance of inclusive education is key to its practice and success. Table 16 provides data collected on how teachers perceive the practice of inclusion.

Table 16

Perception about the importance of inclusive education (N=134)

Perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very important	-	-
Important	94	70.1
Not important	40	29.9
Total	134	100.0

From Table 16, there is a vivid indication that teachers perceive inclusive education as important. Whereas 94 (70.1%) teachers perceived inclusive education as important, 40(29.9%) claimed inclusive education is unimportant. Teachers who perceived inclusive education as important noted that the concept benefits all children with and without disabilities. Among the benefits is the friendship formation and interrelationships, avoidance of discrimination and expansion of access to educational opportunities for all children in line with the Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Conversely, teachers who had negative views about the importance of inclusive education affirmed that inclusive education creates more work and burden, children with disabilities display inappropriate behaviours and ultimately inclusion does not benefit children with disabilities.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the final chapter of the study. It presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations for the study.

Summary

The main purpose of the study was to evaluate inclusive education practice in selected pilot schools in Ghana. The descriptive survey design was employed for the study. Two main sampling methods were adopted in selecting 24 schools and 134 teachers in the inclusive oriented schools in Ghana. A Likert-scale structured questionnaire was used for the data collection. The internal consistency reliability co-efficient of the questionnaire was 0.84. The study was guided by four main research questions. Data gathered were analyzed using frequencies, percentages and the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, Version 15.0) was used for the calculations.

Main Findings

1. The study indicated that there was adequate teacher preparation for inclusive education. This was shown by the affirmative responses from the teachers as shown in Table 7 and Table 8. However, approximately 90.0% of teachers were not provided opportunities for practical experience in inclusive setting during their pre-service preparation.

2. The findings from the study revealed that the nature of curriculum used in

the inclusive schools is flexible, but most teachers (64.9%) were not involved in the process of writing the syllabus for inclusion. There was room for curricular modification to suit pupils with disabilities. However, the curriculum did not emphasize much on the vocational, self-help, socialization and communication skill development for pupils with disabilities.

3. The study also revealed that the physical environment is not suitable for inclusive schools. Majority of the teachers 82.9% believed the physical environment affected movement of children with disabilities especially those with physical disabilities. Some of the school compounds were undulating, stony and weedy which pose challenges to movement.

4. It came to light that majority of the teachers had negative perception about inclusive schools. Approximately 90.0% of teachers said inclusive education creates more work and burden for them. Teachers saw inclusion as a policy and teachers lack confidence in instructional skills. However, 70.1% of teachers see inclusive education as important because of its benefits.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

i.   Teachers in inclusive oriented schools are academically qualified but not professionally equipped to handle pupils with disabilities. This is due to the unavailability of practicum avenues for the teacher trainees and adequate courses in inclusive practices.

ii. Curriculum used in inclusive schools has some level of flexibility but not devoid of individual teacher's judgment in terms of modification to suit the pupils' needs.

iii. Physical environment that exists in inclusive-oriented schools is unsuitable and affected mobility for children with disabilities especially those with neuromotor problems.

iv. Teachers in inclusive-oriented schools hold negative perception about inclusive education. This is because inclusion creates more work, teachers lack confidence in instructional skills and that, inclusion is a forced policy.

It is evident that there are concrete efforts and movement towards inclusive education in Ghana and other countries due to its multi-dimensional benefits for children with and without disabilities, teachers, school administrators, parents and society at large. The establishment of inclusive pilot schools in most regions of Ghana is key testimony of government's mandate and commitment to providing education for all children with and without disabilities. However, for inclusive education to succeed and meet the diverse needs of all children, quality teacher preparation, appropriate curriculum, suitable physical environment and positive perception are paramount and cannot be discounted.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations have been made:

1. The Ghana Education Service in collaboration with initial teacher education centres must provide ample avenues for fieldwork or practicum experiences in inclusive schools before completion of teacher education programmes. This should be periodically complemented with seminars and in-service participation to broaden teachers' knowledge on current development about inclusive education practices.

2. There should also be effective collaboration between regular teachers and

other specialists to enhance the instruction and provision of services for children with disabilities in inclusive schools.

3. The curriculum for inclusive oriented schools must be more vocationally based to suit the needs of pupils with disabilities. Teachers should be involved in writing the syllabus for inclusive schools through representation at the Curriculum Research Development and Division.

4. Physical environment or school compound of inclusive schools must be safe and comfortable for both teachers and pupils regarding accessibility to entering the school buildings and easy movement around the teaching and learning areas.

Areas for Further Research

The current research is based on teacher preparation, nature of curriculum, suitability of physical environment and teacher perception of inclusive education in Ghana. It is suggested that:

1. Further studies should be conducted on support services for pre-service training for inclusive education.

2. A study on community involvement in inclusive schools should be undertaken

3. There should be a research on administrative patterns of inclusive schools.

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Questionnaire for Teachers in Inclusive Pilot Schools

Purpose: This questionnaire seeks to find out the extent inclusive education is being practised in Ghana and ways to improve its practice. It would be appreciated if you could respond candidly to this questionnaire. Your confidentiality is assured and please bear in mind the exercise is purely academic.

Section A: Personal Data

Instructions: Provide appropriate responses to each of the items by ticking (√) where necessary.

1. Gender	Male	[ ]
	Female	[ ]
2. Age Range	25 – 30	[ ]
	31 – 35	[ ]
	36 – 40	[ ]
	41 – 45	[ ]
	46 years and above	[ ]
3. Teaching Experience	1 – 5 Years	[ ]
	6 – 10 Years	[ ]
	11 – 15 Years	[ ]
	16 – 20 Years	[ ]
	21 + Years	[ ]

4. Years of teaching at current school

	1 – 2 Years	[ ]
	3 – 4 Years	[ ]

5 – 6   Years   [   ]

More than 6 Years   [   ]

5. Professional Qualifications

3-Year Post Secondary Cert 'A'   [   ]

Diploma in Education   [   ]

Diploma in Special Education   [   ]

Degree in Education   [   ]

Degree in Special Education   [   ]

Masters Degree in Education   [   ]

Others (specify)   [   ]

SECTION B: Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Education

Instructions: Please, indicate with a tick (√) in the appropriate box the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about how teachers in the pilot inclusive schools are equipped academically and professionally to handle all manner of children. The response options are**:** 4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagree.

1. Pre-service preparation exposed teachers to understand and appreciate students with diverse needs and disabilities

   SA [   ]   A [   ]   D [   ]   SD [   ]

2. Training programmes enables teachers to be flexible and creative in meeting challenges in inclusive schools

   SA [   ]   A [   ]   D [   ]   SD [   ]

3. Pre- service preparation provided opportunities for practicum experiences in inclusive settings

   SA [   ]   A [   ]   D [   ]   SD [   ]

4. Training programme focused on collaborative teaching skills such as co-teaching classes

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

5. I collaborate with experts and specialists to gain knowledge and skills for inclusive practices

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

6. I attend workshops organized on inclusive and special educational practices

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

7. I always participate in in-service programmes organized for teachers

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

8. Seminars are organized for teachers since inclusion started in my school

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

9. In-service training emphasizes the use of peer tutoring as a method of teaching in class

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

10. The use of instructional adaptation processes were emphasized during my training

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

11. Class management skills were taught as part of my training

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

12. How adequate is your preparation for inclusive education?

   [ ] Very Adequate   [ ] Adequate   [ ] Inadequate

13. What can be done to improve on your preparation for inclusive education?

...............……………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Section C: Curriculum for Inclusive Education

Direction: The following statements focus on the nature and appropriateness of the school curriculum in meeting the needs of children in inclusive schools. Indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement by ticking an appropriate option. The response options are: 4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagree.

14. Teachers are allowed to modify the curriculum to meet students' needs

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

15. The curriculum is driven by the philosophical and developmental needs of the country for inclusive education

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

16. Teachers were involved in the process of writing the syllabus for inclusion

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

17. The school curriculum focuses on the development of self-help skills

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

18. The school curriculum develops vocational skills for children with disabilities

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

19. The school ensures that all children participate fully in school and classroom activities and games

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

20. The school curriculum promotes socialization skills for children with disabilities

   SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

21. The school curriculum equips children with disabilities with communication skills

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

22. The school curriculum emphasizes basic reading skills for children with disabilities

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

23. The school curriculum prepares children with disabilities for community living

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

24. Do you think the school curriculum is appropriate for children with disabilities?

    [ ] Very Appropriate [ ] Appropriate   [ ] Inappropriate

25. What can be done to improve on the school curriculum?

....……………………………………………..

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Section D: Physical Environment for Inclusive Education

Direction: These statements focus on the nature and appropriateness of the physical environment for inclusive schools. Rate them with respect to the practice of inclusive education as 4 = Very Good, 3 = Good, 2 =Poor and 1 = Very Poor.

26. The ventilation in the classrooms and buildings

    VG [ ]   G [ ]   P [ ]   VP [ ]

27. School compound and the safety and comfort of pupils with disabilities

    VG [ ]   G [ ]   P [ ]   VP [ ]

28. The decorations (pictures) and paintings of classrooms and other buildings

    VG [ ]   G [ ]   P [ ]   VP [ ]

29. The seating arrangements in classrooms for   teaching and learning

    VG [ ]   G [ ]   P [ ]   VP [   ]

30. The physical environment and movements of children with disabilities

    VG [ ]   G [ ]   P [ ]   VP [   ]

31. The effective use of facilities like bookshelves and notice boards by all children with disabilities

    VG [ ]   G [ ]   P [ ]   VP [   ]

32. The buildings and the surrounding grounds (washrooms, lavatory, and playing fields) and how they accommodate the school pupils

    VG [ ]   G [ ]   P [ ]   VP [   ]

33. The natural and artificial illumination (light) in classrooms and other buildings

    VG [ ]   G [ ]   P [ ]   VP [   ]

Utilization and interaction with physical environment

34. The physical layout is accessible to all children with disabilities

    [ ] Yes   [ ] No

35. Is the physical environment suitable for school activities such as games and physical education?

    [ ] Yes   [ ] No

36. How do you rate the appropriateness of the physical environment for inclusive education?

    [ ] Very Appropriate   [ ] Appropriate   [ ] Inappropriate

37. What can be done to improve the physical environment? ....
……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………...
……………………………………………………………………………………………...
……………………………………………………………………………………………

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Section E: Teacher Perception of Inclusive Education

Direction: The following some of the statements teachers express towards Inclusive Education. Indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement by ticking an appropriate option. The response options are**:** 4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagree

38. Acceptance of children with disabilities in inclusive schools depends on the type and severity of disability

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

39. Children with disabilities in inclusive schools display inappropriate behaviours

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

40. Including children with disabilities in schools is a forced policy for teachers

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

41. Inclusive education creates more work and burden for teachers

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

42. Inclusion benefits all children with and without disabilities

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

43. Inclusion facilitates friendship formation among children with and without disabilities

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

44. Inclusion is difficult to achieve because teachers lack confidence in instructional skills

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

45. Large class sizes can hamper successful inclusion

    SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

46. For inclusion to succeed, support services are essential.

SA [ ]   A [ ]   D [ ]   SD [ ]

47. How do you perceive the practice of inclusive education?

[ ] Very important   [ ] Important   [ ] Not Important

APPENDIX B

Observation Guide on Physical Environment for Inclusive Education

School………………………………………… District…………………………

Observe the following aspects of the physical environment of inclusive schools and tick as 4= Very Good, 3=Good, 2= Poor and 1= Very Poor where appropriate.

Statement	V G	G	P	VP
The ventilation in the classrooms and buildings				
School compound and the safety and comfort of pupils with disabilities				
The decorations (pictures) and paintings of classrooms and other buildings				
The seating arrangements in classrooms for teaching and learning				
The physical environment and movements of children with disabilities				
Classroom use of facilities like bookshelves and notice boards by all children with disabilities				
The buildings and the surrounding grounds (washrooms, lavatory, and playing fields) and how they accommodate the school pupils				
The natural and artificial illumination (light) in classrooms and other buildings				

Utilization and Interaction with Physical Environment

The physical layout is accessible to all children with disabilities

    [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Is the physical environment is suitable for school activities such as games and physical education?

[   ] Yes   [   ] No

How do you rate the appropriateness of the physical environment for inclusive education?

[   ] Very Appropriate   [   ] Appropriate   [   ] Inappropriate

APPENDIX C

Letter of Introduction

Reliability of Instrument

Reliability Analysis – Scale (Alpha)

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Cases Valid	24	100.0
Exclude(a)	0	0.0
Total	24	100.0

A list wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.84	0.82	49

Scale Statistic

Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	N of Items
121.5417	191.216	13.82807	49

APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EVALUATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICE IN GHANA: SURVEY OF INCLUSIVE PILOT SCHOOLS

BY

JOYCE BENEDICTA DANSO

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

DECEMBER, 2009

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature…………………… Date…………………….

Name: Joyce Benedicta Danso

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: ………………… Date…………………..

Name: Mr. Prosper Deku

Co-Supervisor's Signature: …………………. Date…………………..

Name: Dr. Emmanuel K. Gyimah

ABSTRACT

This study evaluated inclusive education practice in Ghana. The study considered how teachers were equipped academically and professionally to handle children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools. It also examined were the curriculum used in these schools, the physical environment as well as how teachers perceived inclusive education.

One hundred and thirty-four (134) teachers in twenty-four (24) inclusive pilot schools were selected for the study. A four-point Likert-scale structured questionnaire supported with an observation guide was the main instruments used to collect data for the study. Data was analyzed with simple frequencies and percentages with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 15.0). The Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. The coefficient yielded 0.84.

The study revealed that 94.0% of the teachers were adequately prepared for inclusive schools and most teachers held positive perception about inclusive education. The curriculum in use for inclusive schools is flexible which allows for adaptation. However, the kind of physical environment meant for inclusive schools was not suitable.

Among the recommendations is the need for Ghana Education Service to collaborate with the Initial Teacher Education Colleges to offer opportunities for fieldwork or practicum to enrich teacher trainees' knowledge in handling pupils with disabilities in inclusive schools.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my dear husband Mr. Daniel Danso and children: Derrick, Dennis and Dean.

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