

Integration of Special Needs Education in Primary Teacher Education Curriculum and Teacher Trainees' Skills for Instructional Efficacy in Kenya

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Abstract

Though teachers should be responsible for all the children in their classes, whom they should provide with appropriate educational experiences, previous research studies have consistently revealed that most general education teachers lack the capacity to handle learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN), despite the integration of Special Needs Education (SNE) in the Primary Teacher Education (PTE) curriculum. This paper reports the findings of a study that examined integration of SNE in the PTE curriculum and instructional efficacy among teacher trainees in Rift Valley, Kenya. The specific objective was to establish the relationship between integration of SNE in the current revised and rationalized PTE curriculum and the skills acquired by the teacher for instructional efficacy. A descriptive survey of teacher trainers and trainees using questionnaires, interviews and document analysis revealed that though the PTE curriculum was considered adequate in providing the trainees with skills to identify learners with SEN and to manage and cope with them in the general classroom, it did not provide them with the specific skills of adapting and using adapted learning resources, preparing supplementary activities, and preparing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for SEN. Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a significant relationship of .439 ($p=.022<.05$) between integration of SNE in the PTE curriculum and acquisition of skills among the teacher trainees. It was concluded that integration of SNE in the current revised and rationalized PTE curriculum was inadequate to provide skills for SNE to the teacher trainees, yet there is a significant relationship between curriculum integration and acquisition of skills. It is recommended that the integration of SNE in the PTE curriculum should be enhanced to ensure acquisition of specific skills by the teacher trainees on how to cater for children with SEN in the general classroom. This is hoped would contribute to promoting inclusive education in Kenya in response to the fundamental principle of education for all.

Key words: Curriculum integration, skills, instructional efficacy, special needs education, inclusive education.