Education Re-Engineering in the New Normal World Festschrift for

Professor Rashid Adewumi Aderinoye

Edited by Kester Osegha Ojokheta Kehinde O. Kester

EDUCATION RE-ENGINEERING IN THE NEW NORMAL WORLD

A FESTSCHRIFT FOR PROFESSOR RASHID ADEWUMI ADERINOYE

Edited by

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Chapter 84

Meeting the Inclusive Education Needs of Students With Hearing Impairment in a New Normal World

J. Ajamu and O. O. Isaiah

Introduction

Education is the fundamental right of each child irrespective of his/her caste, religion or special need. All students, irrespective of their sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion to have equal opportunity in education Bhargava (2013).

Education is a necessity to every child which enables each student to fully participate in the learning environment that is designed for all students and is shared with peers in the chosen educational setting which promote a sense of belonging and ensure student progress toward appropriate personal, social, emotional and academic goals; students with hearing impairment are not left out in the area of inclusive education. Education in an inclusive setting appears to be a concept in this 21st century. This concept is beginning to gain recognition in the field of education. Children with and without disabilities are gradually being educated together in large scale societies. This is because most large scale countries have begun to recognise, appreciate, and accept children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Eskay and Oboegbulem (2013).

Inclusive education begins with the premise that all learners have unique characteristics, interests, abilities and particular learning needs and, further, that learners with special education needs must have equal access to and receive individual accommodation in the general education system. Inclusive education approaches differences and diversity affirmatively, recognising the value of such differences and the learning opportunities that such diversity offers. Inclusion implies transition from separate, segregated learning environments for persons with disabilities reflected in the "special education" approach, to schooling in the general education system.

According to national commission of special needs in education and training NCSNET (1997), Inclusive education is define as a learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, sexual preference, learning styles and language (Singh, 2020).

It is of uttermost importance to identify the process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of students with hearing impairment in adjusting to new learning system during the post-COVID-19 era by making online services, and particularly e-learning available to them in a way that respects and take into account their needs. Furthermore, this paper looked at how inclusive education practice could respond to the unique learning needs of students with hearing impairment in this new normal world, alongside with the support of stakeholders in adjusting to the new normal world.

Students with Hearing Impairment and their Unique Nature

Hearing impairment is an umbrella term that refers to different range of hearing loss from mild to profound which can be classified as deafness or hard-of-hearing. Moores (2001) defines deafness or hard-of-hearing in the following words: Deafness means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Students with hearing loss are not comparable to those of their hearing peers because of their hearing disability and lack of access to incidental learning (Braden, 1994; Schimes, 2000, Strong and Prine, 2000; Ademokoya and Oyewumi, 2001; Ademokoya, 2008). The question of how to provide students with hearing impairment with education responding to their unique learning needs makes an actual concern to special schools. For many reasons, the learning and teaching strategies of students with hearing impairment are unique and much different from those of their hearing counterparts.

First, the students themselves are different, as they are experiencing social, emotional, and intellectual challenges both in school and at home as a result of communication problems. Hearing is the key to learning spoken language and is important for the cognitive development of children. Without suitable interventions, hearing loss is a barrier to both education and social integration. Everybody has his or her own learning styles; therefore the learning style of students with hearing impairment needs to be considered in order to meet academic standards. There is no specific teaching strategies rather than application of variety of strategies adapted to individual deaf learners cognitive, linguistic, communication and social characteristics which could help them out in self- struggle, self-esteem issues, depression, academic problems and isolation is the most effective strategies.

The effect of COVID-19 on Students with Hearing Impairment in the New Normal World

COVID-19 has caused education disruptions and prolonged school closures around the world, which affected 90% of the world's student population and led most countries to think about alternative ways of providing education to ensure that learning never stops. Keeping education continuity in mind, most countries rushed to online distance education using online platforms, e-learning, and Information Communication Technology (ICTs), which set off an unplanned and rapid shift in the education sector, opened the door to many opportunities, highlighted existing and new disparities and gave rise to several challenges. To say the least, we were not prepared for disruption of this magnitude. Almost overnight, schools and universities around the world closed their gates, affecting 1.57 billion students in 191 countries. This unprecedented situation has significantly impacted the lives of students, whether they are pursuing studies abroad or in their own country (Giannini, 2020).

The closures implemented as a measure to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, has

led to an accelerated deployment of distance education solutions to ensure pedagogical continuity. The obstacles are multiple, ranging from low connectivity and lack of online content aligned with national curricula to teachers unprepared for this 'new normal'. Regardless of the level of education, the paramount danger is that learning inequalities will widen, marginalisation will increase, and the most disadvantaged students will find themselves unable to pursue their studies (Giannini, 2020).

Meeting the Uniqueness of Learning Needs of Students with Hearing Impairment in a New Normal World

According to Christian Blind Mission (CBM, 2016), there are an estimated 250 million people with hearing loss in the world, of whom approximately 30 million are hearing impaired. Based on available figures, less than 1 percent of hearing impaired children in developing countries has access to any form of education. The education of hearing impaired children is affected by controversies of philosophical and methodological nature. Hearing impaired generally does not have access to appropriate services and tend to be neglected within available structures. Hearing impaired students are recognised as linguistic and cultural minorities that use a gestural or visual language as their basic learning form and that they need trained and experienced professionals (Baldwin, 1994).

Research on the academic achievement of students indicates that they lag far behind what is expected of their hearing peers at similar ages or grade levels (Allen, 1986). However, Deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) students who receive their instruction in general education classrooms are reported to have higher academic achievement than those who receive instruction in self-contained classrooms (Holt, 1994; Kluwin, 1993; Kluwin and Stinson, 1993). Deaf individuals present differences compared to their hearing. peers in terms of their learning proule. However, poor classroom listening conditions can create considerable difficulty for hard-of-hearing students thereby limiting their access to academic content. Language is likely to affect their performance in other core subjects such as Science, Social Studies and also Mathematics since these subjects are taught, written and read in English. The poor academic performance of Students with Hearing impairment (SHI) can be attributed to the challenges which they face in their education. A number of studies have proven that without the consideration of language as test base or the existence of multiple handicaps, there is no distinct dissimilarity between the intelligence of students with hearing impairment and that of their hearing mates; yet, students with hearing impairment perform poorer than their hearing mates in assessment tests (Vernon, 2005). Such distinct challenges of students with hearing impairment are caused by both direct and indirect factors.

The environment and basic methods selected for students with a hearing loss should be chosen based on the student's personality and individual needs, but each factor should incorporate the student's capabilities to reach the highest level of success. In addition, there is evidence of serious difficulties in text composition by the deaf; as a result of the lack of auditory input and differentiations in their working memory. Electronic learning (e-learning) is a relatively new and untraditional instructive method to today's era of technology. As a tool, it has facilitated educational processes for people around the globe. Subsequently, it must be accessible to people with a diverse range of hearing, sight, movement, and cognitive abilities.

Education Re-Engineering in the New Normal World

This highlights the need to provide opportunities for students with hearing impairment regardless of their disability, by making online services, and particularly elearning, available to them in a way that respects and take into account their needs. It is not only a matter of equal human rights, but also a need for the disabled, and speciûcally students with hearing impairment, to beneût from this technology and its advantages. These needs can be addressed through the use of suitable e-learning and multimedia ICT tools, which can enhance teaching and learning by offering interactivity and multiple representations for learning processes, (Khwaldeh, Matar, Hunaiti, 2007). Deaf persons have a special talking language Berry, (2001), sign language, which uses manual communication, body language and lip patterns instead of sounds (El-Soud Hassan, Kandil, Shohieb, 2010).

It is necessary, when designing e-learning systems for and hearing impaired individuals, to provide all audio in a visual way using text, subtitles, pictures, and sign language videos and also to create a graphical interface that is effective and understandable presenting educational activities in a logical and effective way for them. (Khwaldeh, Matar, Hunaiti, 2007). Use of text should be kept to a minimum level, since students with hearing impairment present to a certain extent, difficulties in reading comprehension. For example, studies show that deaf people who use sign language process images easier and more efficiently compared to words (Bueno, Fernández del Castillo, 2007). The designer and developer of an e-learning system for deaf and hearing impaired learners must take the aforementioned parameters, as well as principles and guidelines by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium into account in order to create a useful and motivational e-tool for them.

Responsibilities of Stakeholders on Students With Hearing Impairment in the New Normal World

Who are the stakeholders for disability inclusion? In order to include the perspectives of persons with disabilities throughout the Education system it is crucial to understand and involve the stakeholders concerned. From federal to local government, and from private to public spheres, stakeholders for disability inclusion include the following: Special Educators, teachers, parents, family school principal and members of the community. A stakeholder is not necessarily under contract to implement certain activities. However, their role is still important to the success of making students with hearing impairment adjust to the new normal world. Singh (2020) identified various responsibilities of the stakeholders as discussed below:-

Responsibilities of Special Educators

The role of special educator should be developed in inclusive on how students with hearing impairment can benefit maximally school in the new normal world. The Special educator's roles in inclusive education cannot be over emphases due to their contributions as they provide technical support to the teacher inside and outside the classroom to support the learning of students with additional educational requisites. They provide technical support to students with additional requisites to facilitate their learning inside and outside the classroom. They develop skills, concepts and behaviours related directly to the disability or challenges of students with additional requisites that should take place inside the school. They initiate individual educational planning

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for students with additional requisites and ensure its implementation. They ensure the involvement of parents of students with additional requisites in the educational processes of their children. They collaborate closely with teachers, other professionals and administrators to foster the teaching and learning of students with additional requisites.

Responsibilities of the of Teachers

Teachers are critical actors in inclusive education and have a tremendous influence on the quality of education that a child receives. The teacher is unique in that he/she can fit many different roles in the educational environment (www. british council.org/ connectingclassrooms).

Inclusion requires sufficient numbers of teachers who are adequately prepared and trained to promote the right of persons with disabilities. Such training may include, as relevant, a focus on utilisation of accessible technology, where available, to enhance the educational experience of students with disabilities and also ensuring that persons with disabilities can both bring in specialist skills and understanding, and can make a strong contribution to reducing discrimination.

Responsibilities of the Family

Family members of students with hearing impairment often have a great deal to teach the professionals because they have an intimate knowledge of their child and their particular impairment. Similarly the families of other marginalised groups have a great deal to 'teach' the teachers about their way of life and belief systems. Greater family and community involvement in formal education is essential to the inclusion process (Kaur, 2016).

The parents were also trained to communicate more effectively with teachers and other professionals. They are now confident that their experience of being parents of children with disabilities is extremely valuable. They did not receive special training to be the parents of disables children, and they do not think that teachers would benefit from special training. They prefer a problem-based approach to training and together with ministry staff they are able to advise teachers in the school setting. None of the teachers has 'special' expertise in a particular impairment or an increased salary. All the teachers are responsible for ensuring that disabled children are included. The teachers in the pilot schools, together with the parents, are a major resource for promoting inclusion in society. Also the parents act as agents of dealing with negative attitude, as a source of love and solidarity, agents of early identification and intervention.

Responsibilities of the Parents

Various authors have posited parental participation in education figures as one of the most important aspects of current educational reforms in many countries, and also as the fundamental principle of the contemporary concept of inclusive education (Tassoni, 2003; Farell and Jones, 2000). Parents are thus facing increased demands related to the process of their children's education. As parents of students with hearing impairment; the following have to be observed to assist their children: encouraging them, educating their children at home, discussing about the child performance with the class teacher, being aware of school policies, programmes, rules and routines and be informed and involved in education decisions that affect their children.

Responsibilities of the Principals

The Principals conceptualise and understand the needs of students with hearing impairment and they make sure that these needs are adequately met. They exert substantial capacity and influence on the day-to-day activities of teachers and students. In addition, the Principals are responsible for Selecting special education staff, ensure that all students benefit from inclusion and supporting the education of all students.

Conclusion

This chapter sheds light on inclusive education practice which addressed and responded to the diversity of needs of learners through increasing participation by all categories of learners in the learning environment. It touches on how to provide students with hearing impairment with education by responding to their unique learning needs which makes an actual concern to special schools. The negative influence of the COVID-19 crisis on education has been unprecedented. It badly affected classroom teaching and learning especially among learners with hearing impairment. Therefore this paper highlights the need to provide opportunities for students with hearing impairment regardless of their disability, by making online services, and particularly e-learning, available to them in a way that respects and take into account of their needs.

Recommendations

Inclusive education is a product of enabling environment for all categories of students with special needs. Against this background, it is recommended that:

- The ministry of education should include the use of e-learning for educating learners with hearing impairment during the post covid-19 period.
- (2) Designers of e-learning interfaces must recognise and take into account the special needs of students with hearing impairment that occur on both communicative and cognitive levels. This is because the linguistic and literacy skills may differ and also reading and writing skills may be affected.
- (3) Designers of e-learning systems for students with hearing impairment should provide all audio in a visual way using text, sub-titles, pictures, and sign language videos.
- (4) The stakeholders of inclusive education should stand in gap by encouraging students with hearing impairment develop the interest in using e-learning another method of learning during the post COVID 19 period.
- (5) The curriculum planners should include use of e-learning system for students with hearing impairment in their plan.
- (6) The ministry of education should make provision for in-service training for the teachers on the effective use of the e-learning system for students with hearing impairment.

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