

## CHALLENGES FACED BY EDUCATORS IN THE INCLUSION OF BEGINNERS WITH DYSLEXIA IN MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study sought to explore the challenges faced by educators in the inclusion of beginners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools of Nkangala District in Mpumalanga province, South Africa. An exploratory case study design was adopted. Focus-group and semi-structured individual interviews were used to collect data. 10 mainstream primary schools which were conveniently sampled participated in this study. The same sampling procedure was used to select principals and senior teachers who taught Grade 1 and 3 classes. The major findings of the study were that some relevant stakeholders have a negative attitude towards the inclusion of learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools. These attitudes basically emanate from lack of specific inclusion policies, inadequate knowledge of dyslexia, limited teaching and learning resources and high workload. The study recommends the development of more specific inclusion policies, intensified dyslexia awareness programmes and workshops, improvisation of learning resources and reduction of teacher workload thereby promoting individual attendance to learners with dyslexia.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Inclusion, learners with dyslexia, infant education, mainstream primary school.*

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### INTRODUCTION

In the recent past, the education of persons with disabilities was the responsibility of special schools, homes and centres. While these could be commended for providing the best training and empowerment facilities, proponents of inclusivity have often criticized them for isolating affected individuals from their natural ecological environment and in some cases, giving them a distorted view of their niche in society (Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek & Leahy, 2015). Ntibebe (2011) adds that these institutions also deprive other units of society, such as the family, village and school, a chance to make their contribution to the development of learners with dyslexia. In view of this, current trends in most educational systems worldwide, continuously strive to ensure the inclusion of all learners with special needs in mainstream schools that are usually located within their respective communities.

According to Konza (2008), inclusive education involves restructuring the education system such that all schools may have the responsibility of providing the facilities, resources, and an appropriate curriculum for all students irrespective of their diverse needs. Inclusion is situated within a broad social justice agenda, which argues that equality for all must include access by all learners to a local school. This philosophy has further been supported by international and national legal frameworks. In view of this, the UNESCO Constitution of 1945 was ratified to mandate full and equal opportunities to education for all learners (Calderbank, 2009; Getty, Martin, Porter & Corral, 2012). This legislation received added impetus from the 1990 World

Conference on Education for All (Jomtien) which also set the goal of achieving universal primary education for learners in a flexible manner, while responding to their needs, cultural backgrounds and circumstances (Munene, 2015). The 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education called for governments to invest greater effort in early identification and adoption of inclusionary interventions (Calderbank, 2009). To further drive the inclusionary education philosophy, the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) was instituted (Chisaka *et al.*, 2013).

Individual countries also crafted their own educational policies that respond to the social justice agenda, embodied in inclusive education. In South Africa, the Education White Paper 6 outlines the government's new policies for a single undivided education system for all learners, including those with dyslexia (Department of Education, 2008). Ozernov-Palchik and Gaab (2016) relate dyslexia to a reading disorder which emanates from poor development and functioning of the brain. Dyslexic learners experience reading difficulties that vary from one to another. This depends on the type of dyslexia that an individual has and its severity. Paul and Norbury (2012) further observe that dyslexia can either be developmental or acquired. Developmental dyslexia is caused by biological anomalies while acquired dyslexia is caused by brain damage that would have occurred after the individual's acquisition of basic reading skills (Woollams, 2014). Detailed knowledge of dyslexia assists educators and other relevant stakeholders to provide educational interventions that have a potential to effectively promote the inclusion of such learners.

The South African government has further introduced the home language education policy which should be adhered to in the first four years of formal schooling (Hazeltine, 2013). Home language instruction facilitates understanding of concepts delivered hence creating fertile ground for mastery of the same content when taught in the second language which is usually English (Tshotsho, 2013). The implication to this notion is that, while it is emphasised that academic instruction for young learners should be delivered in their first language, rules of the second language must be gradually taught so that when the time comes for teaching using it, probably in the upper grades, the learners' academic development will not be drastically affected.

Another strategy that has been considered vital in promoting the inclusion of learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools is the adoption of the National Reading Strategy (NRS), PREP/Planning, Attention, Simultaneous and Successive Processing (PASS), Reading Enhancement Programme and Whole Language Remediation Programme (DoE, 2008). The NRS programme is based on the PASS theory of intelligence. Its intention is to inculcate a reading culture amongst learners and teachers by providing support and resources. On the other hand, PREP seeks to improve simultaneous and successive processing that underlie reading, while at the same time avoiding the direct teaching of word-reading skills (Mahapatra, 2016). The whole language intervention is an approach which emphasises the integration of writing, speaking, reading, and listening when learning (Moghadam & Adel, 2011).

Despite continued effort to include learners with various types of dyslexia in schools, it was noted with great concern that there has been very slight progress in these learners' academic performance over the years. This affects the overall pass rate across all grade levels since reading is the basis of all learning. **To a large extent, the situation suggests a limitation either in the nature of the strategies that are adopted to accommodate affected learners or in the**

implementation of these strategies. Furthermore, the researchers also observed that while several studies have been conducted on the inclusion of learners with disabilities in the South African education system, very minimal research has specifically focused on dyslexia and its impact on inclusive education. This study therefore, sought to explore the challenges faced by educators on the inclusion of infant learners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools. This gave the basis to critically analyse major causes of experienced challenges before suggesting strategies for improved service delivery.

### Research Questions

The main research question was: *What challenges are faced by educators in the inclusion of beginners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools?*

The following subsidiary questions were raised:

- Which factors affect effective inclusion of beginners with dyslexia at primary level?
- What strategies can be employed to improve the inclusion of beginners with dyslexia at primary level?

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by the schema theory. The fundamental goal of this perspective is to explain the nature of information on text and how it is shaped and stored by the reader (Xiao-hui, Jun & Wei-hua, 2007). The assumption is that, meaning does not lie solely on print but interacts with the cognitive structure or schemata already present in the reader's mind. These schemata represent the "ideational scaffolding" or framework for understanding new information. Generalised schemata allows humans to make sense of a wide array of information or very abstract ideas. These can be modified or adapted when new information is learnt. This implies that an individual's interpretation of a printed message is to some extent influenced by his or her personal background, experiences, knowledge and beliefs (Ajideh, 2003; Jian-Ping & Lisha, 2016).

In the teaching of learners with dyslexia, the schema theory implies that, educators should have adequate knowledge about each individual's background. This includes the type of dyslexia that a person has as well as its causes. Gathering such information may require consultation with parents or caregivers and conducting a detailed assessment procedure (Zhao & Zhu, 2012; An, 2013). Furthermore, Jian-Ping and Li-sha (2016) contend that, the schema theory places much emphasis on the importance of utilising pre-existing knowledge and experience of the reader, setting purposes for reading, using effective learning resources and asking appropriate questions before and after reading. This implies teaching from known to unknown, thoroughly preparing for lessons before the actual teaching, adoption of teaching instruction that provides appropriate models or exemplars so that learners can develop schemata which forms the basis for inferring or solving reading challenges faced (Yu-hui, Li-rong & Yue, 2010).

The schema theory also substantiates the significance of motivating and building interest in learners before and during content delivery (Zhao & Zhu, 2012). If educators are to succeed in doing this, they must first have positive attitudes towards affected individuals. This may also influence other learners without special needs to view those with dyslexia positively hence facilitating the creation of a more conducive learning environment for all.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. According to Creswell (2003), this approach solicits the perceptions of participants about a phenomenon and the conclusions they draw from certain experiences. It emphasises the gathering of data in a natural environment (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In relation to this, an exploratory case study design was adopted. The population for this study was made up of teachers who taught grade 1 and 3 classes as well as principals of schools. The sample constituted 10 mainstream primary schools which were conveniently chosen based on their geographical location. From each school, 2 infant education teachers, each from grades 1 and 3 classes, were selected. All the 10 principals from the chosen schools were included in the study. Data were gathered through focus group and individual interviews. The interview questions mainly solicited the challenges of including infant education learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Permission for field entry was sought from Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Education, the context in which the study was conducted. Afterwards, appointments were made with the study participants prior the conduct of the interviews. The convenient times of the participants were considered so as to avoid disrupting other school programmes. The interviews began with debriefing sessions where participants were informed about the purpose of the study and its importance in improving the academic potentials of infant learners with dyslexia. Participants were also made aware of their freedom to participation and withdrawal at any point of the study. Issues of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were also highly considered.

### **Data Analysis**

Collected data were analysed thematically. This involves coding and categorising data into different patterns using the inductive analysis method. Data decoding was established to identify the segments. Furthermore, those segments were analysed using codes which were grouped into themes.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The findings of the study are categorised in terms of two thematic areas. These are factors that affect the inclusion of learners with dyslexia at infant level and strategies that may be employed to improve service delivery. To protect the identity of participants, principals of schools were coded as P 1 to P 10 and teachers as T 1 to T 20.

### **Factors that Affect the Inclusion of Learners with Dyslexia**

This theme sought to establish the views of participants on factors that affect successful inclusion of beginners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools. These include negative attitudes, inadequate policies, limited knowledge of dyslexia, limited assessment services, lack of reading remedial programmes, educators' workload, shortage of resources and limited teacher supervision.

#### **Negative attitudes**

The study revealed that one of the factors that hinder successful inclusion of learners with dyslexia at infant level is the negative attitude of some relevant stakeholders. Such attitudes mainly emanate from the general belief that disability is closely linked to inability or incompetence. Educators who hold this notion believe that teaching learners with dyslexia is a

waste of time and resources as very little or no progress will be made. It was also gathered that, other teachers have negative attitudes that are caused by their limited knowledge of dyslexia. Such teachers cannot employ teaching strategies, techniques and media that are relevant when teaching learners with dyslexia. In view of this, two participants said:

*Some teachers have negative attitudes towards the inclusion because they are not aware of dyslexia or reading disorders (P3).*

*Others see disability as inability so with this view they do not put much effort to assist learners with dyslexia (T4).*

In addition, the study established that there is a close relationship between the teachers' and learners' attitudes. This implies that the teachers' negative perceptions about learners with dyslexia compromises their commitment towards learning. This may be noticed in submission of incomplete tasks, late attendance to school, absenteeism and poor academic performance. It also emerged that the negative attitudes of teachers may influence other learners without dyslexia to develop negative perceptions towards those affected. This often influences discrimination, stigmatisation and attachment of negative connotations. In this regard, two participants said:

*Most beginners with dyslexia are demotivated. I think they tend to view themselves as failures. When there are given homework they tend to return from home the following day without writing or completing the given tasks (P1).*

*Some learners are always late for school while others absent themselves regularly and this affects the success levels of these programmes (T10).*

It was also revealed in this study that the inclusion of learners with dyslexia also depends on the attitudes of the school leadership. Participants said that if the head of a school believes that learners with dyslexia can learn effectively in mainstream classes, then he or she would give adequate support and needed supervision in the teaching of such learners. Negative attitudes of the school leadership also leads to poor acknowledgement of the significance of parents' or community members' involvement in the inclusion of learners with dyslexia. Another observation made was that, in some schools, teachers have negative attitudes that they have adopted from their school heads who are, however, expected to be role models. In this regard, one participant revealed that:

*Some teachers have negative attitudes towards the learning of learners with special needs because it is within their school culture to view disability as inability. If school heads may all have positive attitudes towards these learners then higher are the chances of schools seeing inclusion as rewarding (T14).*

### **Inadequate policies**

The study also identified inadequate policies as another impediment to effective inclusion of infant learners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools. While it is recognised that there are legal frameworks that support the inclusion of learners with disabilities in schools and the wider community, participants were emphatic that those that specifically spell out how those with dyslexia at infant level should be accommodated are not there. Individual schools and

learning centres tend to do what they consider relevant in their environments. The disadvantage of such a stance is that schools that hold negative perceptions towards inclusivity may put less effort in meeting the needs of affected learners than those that are optimistic. This suggests a co-relation between the availability of relevant policies and determination of educators towards the inclusion of learners with dyslexia. In view of this, two participants said:

*The Ministry's policy documents that we use to include learners with dyslexia in schools are not clear on the resources to be provided, teaching methodology and modifications to be made in the learning environment. This makes it very difficult for us to teach affected learners effectively (T5).*

*.....we do not have educational policies that direct us on how to include learners with problems at infant level and teachers do not take seriously programmes that do not have policies (P9).*

### **Limited knowledge of dyslexia**

Another challenge that the study established in the inclusion of infant learners with dyslexia is the educators' limited knowledge of dyslexia. In relation to this, participants explained that most qualified mainstream teachers are trained to implement the regular school curriculum which is designed for learners without or with minimal special needs. This denotes that they mostly do not possess requisite skills of developing and implementing effective teaching strategies that may curb the challenges encountered by dyslexic learners. Some reading problems are so varied and complicated that their management demands specific and relevant skills. Furthermore, it emerged that most personnel in school leadership also do not have full knowledge of dyslexia and this affects effective supervision of the teaching and learning of such individuals. In this regard, two participants said:

*When it comes to supervision of the learning of infant learners with dyslexia, I feel that I need better knowledge because when I went to college for initial teacher training I only did general teacher education. Therefore, am not a specialist in special needs education. This impact on quality supervision (P3).*

*...learners in the category of reading disabilities have complicated challenges that we can hardly understand (T20).*

### **Limited assessment services**

This investigation further discovered that, there are very limited formal or standardised tests meant to assess learners with dyslexia at primary school level and therefore schools rely on informal methods like observations and written work to identify those who may need particular assistance. While informal measures are commended for their relevancy in the initial assessment process, participants felt that there are only effective in identifying mild and moderate reading challenges. Those with severe to profound problems need a more detailed diagnosis process that mostly requires utilisation of standardised instruments. Lack of these instruments affects early identification and intervention which may further lead to worsening of a reading problem. In this regard, two participants said:

*We normally use observations and learners' written tasks to select those with reading problems...am not aware of other complicated instruments to identify especially those with serious reading problems at infant level (T18).*

*Teachers are the ones who assess learners with dyslexia in their classes and most of these teachers are incapacitated to identify those with serious reading problems (P7).*

### **Limited reading remedial programmes**

Participants of the study also revealed that another challenge that is faced in the inclusion of learners with dyslexia at the infant level is that there are very limited remedial programmes that are designed to meet the exceptional needs of such individuals. While regular teachers can assist those with less serious challenges, participants felt that those with severe to profound reading problems may need more intensive intervention strategies that require the services of a specialist reading teacher and more time for content mastery. Such remedial services can be provided after the normal teaching and learning periods. In relation to this, one participant said:

*The infant department has very limited remedial programmes meant to improve the reading potentials of those with serious reading challenges (T9)*

### **High workload**

The study established that most mainstream teachers in the infant category have a lot of work that they are expected to do and this impedes effective inclusion of learners with dyslexia. The work constitutes teaching a lot of academic skills, marking, improvising some learning materials, maintaining up to date records, attending meetings and staff development workshops. Participants felt that commitment to all these activities compromises the quantity of time allocated for individual teaching of learners with dyslexia. In relation to this, it emerged that the teacher-learner ratio in some schools is considerable high. One participant said:

*Teachers have a lot of work that they do. The classes they teach are sometimes very large, the records that they keep are also too much and the demand to improvise learning resources is rather too high. All these factors affect the teachers' ability to effectively cater for the needs of learners with dyslexia (P7).*

### **Limited resources**

It also emerged that the shortage of teaching and learning resources in most schools also hampers effective inclusion learners with dyslexia at infant level. Participants felt that such learners may require to use individual reading books as this might enable them to read and complete given tasks at their own pace. Sharing of books which is normally the case in most schools hardly allows this. In addition to shortage of relevant reading books, the study also established that other necessary resources, like the ICT gadgets are also limited in schools. These offer reading games and activities that enhance the reading potentials of struggling learners. In view of this, one participant said:

*.....another challenge that we have in schools the shortage of materials like textbooks, library books and ICT gadgets that can improve the general reading levels of learners with dyslexia (P6)*

### **Strategies that can be employed to Improve Service Delivery**

This theme sought to establish the views of participants on the way in which the challenges that hinder successful inclusion of learners with dyslexia can be countered. Suggestions include intensifying dyslexia awareness campaigns and workshops, development of more relevant

policies, provision of detailed assessment services, administration of more intensive remedial programmes, reducing the workload of educators and provision of more learning resources.

#### Intensifying dyslexia awareness campaigns and workshops

The study established that in order to improve the inclusion of infant learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools, there is a need for relevant stakeholders like teachers, school heads and parents to develop positive attitudes towards the learning and assistance given to concerned individuals. This can be achieved through regularly conducting dyslexia awareness campaigns both in schools and communities. Such programmes should focus on demystifying myths and beliefs associated with being dyslexic. Educators need to be aware of the importance of their attitude in developing a dyslexia-friendly learning environment and the ultimate academic educational development of such persons. On the other hand, it is also significant for parents to realise the relevancy of their support and involvement from assessment right through to implementation and evaluation of inclusionary practices. One participant said:

*Over and above, awareness campaigns should be done in schools and communities so that relevant stakeholders can realise the relationship between their attitude and academic development of learners (P2).*

#### Provision of expert teachers

Interactions with participants further revealed that there is an urgent need for the provision of expert teachers who are adequately skilled to facilitate the inclusion of learners with dyslexia. However, they had mixed feelings on how this can be achieved. Some suggested that, the teaching skills of teachers already in service need to be improved so that they can be in a better position to offer relevant services. In this regard, more workshops on the inclusion of dyslexic learners in mainstream schools are to be regularly conducted in provinces and districts. On the contrary, other participants strongly believed that, specialist teachers in reading need to be allocated to every school so that these can act as resource persons. In relation to this, two participants said:

*Provision of specialist teachers for the inclusion of learners with dyslexia at infant level goes a long way in improving their learning. These also act as resource persons in various schools (P3).*

*I think the first thing is to empower the teachers effectively. They do not need these one day, one week workshops but rather we need longer periods in the teaching of reading. If this is impossible then the government should allocate specialists teachers in every school who will focus on the reading aspects (T2).*

#### Development of more relevant policies

The study suggested that there is an indisputable need for the Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders to facilitate the provision of adequate and specific policies for the inclusion of infant learners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools. This might provide a foundation for provinces, districts and schools to design their own policies that relate to different contexts. Participants were also emphatic that such policies must specify inclusionary programmes to be offered, support services for educators, resource allocation and other modifications to be made both in the teaching instruction and the learning environment. It further emerged that the provided educational policies need to be reviewed and amended

regularly so as to maintain their relevancy in a dynamic education system. In this regard, two participants said:

*The responsible authorities must ensure the development and implementation of inclusion policies meant for learners with dyslexia at infant level (T12).*

*The policies and intervention programmes must be regularly reviewed to improve their relevancy and efficiency (P6).*

### **Provision of detailed assessment services**

The study further discovered that in order to gain a deeper insight into the problems experienced by infant learners with dyslexia then provide relevant services, a detailed assessment procedure must be conducted. This encompasses the adoption of both informal and formal or standardised assessment techniques. These should vary so that effective diagnosis of specific reading difficulties experienced by learners may be enhanced. It also emerged that, all assessment tests must be culturally relevant to serve their intent. Provision of adequate time for the conduct of an assessment procedure must be allocated so that all learners with dyslexia may be able to complete given tasks. Another suggestion that was made is that, prior to actual assessment, concerned learners need to be appraised of the importance of this endeavour and their readiness for it must be ascertained. Participants also felt that the assessment environment must be conducive. This implies removal of possible distractions. In view of this, one participant said:

*Learners with dyslexia must be thoroughly assessed using a variety of tests before they are assisted. This will help in understanding the actual problem that a learner has (P4).*

### **Administration of more intensive remedial programmes**

Participants of the study strongly emphasised that in order to effectively meet the needs of all learners with dyslexia, inclusive of those that have severe to profound reading challenges, schools should consider the development and implementation of more intensive reading remedial programmes. These can be administered after the normal teaching and learning time so that learners may not miss out on some academic concepts taught in their actual classes. Remedial programmes facilitate individual teaching and effective content mastery as learners will be afforded an opportunity to learn at their own pace. Participants also emphasised that such interventions must be administered by expert teachers hence this calls for the production of more knowledgeable teachers regarding the teaching of dyslexic learners at primary school level. In this regard, one participant said:

*Schools must provide reading remedial programmes to meet the needs of learners with more severe reading challenges. Such programmes must be given by teachers who understand dyslexia very well (P9)*

### **Reducing the workload of educators**

It also emerged that another way of improving the inclusion of learners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools is reduction of the educators' workload. In this regard, several strategies were proposed. One of these is eradication of multi-grade teaching in some schools. Participants stressed that this demands a lot of commitment from the teacher and in the process, compromises one's ability to attend to individual needs of dyslexic learners. Another idea that

was strongly emphasised is the development of manageable classes in terms of size. In relation to this, one participant said:

*The issue of composite classes or multi-grade teaching must be avoided because this is a burden to a teacher who might be failing to meet the needs of a single grade (P8).*

### **Provision of adequate and relevant learning resources**

It also emerged that there is an indisputable need for the government and other relevant stakeholders to provide adequate and relevant teaching and learning resources. Availability of appropriate materials is one of the criteria for dyslexia-friendly practice. In relation to this, participants cited writing materials, textbooks, well-resourced libraries and computers as examples of requisite materials. It was also suggested that teachers need to work with learners and the entire community in the improvisation of reading materials that can be useful in implementing inclusive education. Two participants said:

*The government should also provide schools with ICT gadgets and other reading resources that match the learners' needs (T18).*

*The government should also assist schools to build well-resourced libraries so as to create a reading culture in learners (P10).*

### **Improved monitoring and supervision services**

The study also found that there is a need to improve the monitoring and supervision of the inclusion of infant learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools. Principals of schools need to be regularly oriented on the best ways to offer supervision services to teachers. Another suggestion that was made is that teachers should be urged to be self-supervisors. This may be achieved through stronger commitment to work, keeping up to date records and monitoring the progress of learners closely. Collegial supervision was cited as another way of improving the teaching, learning and inclusion of learners with dyslexia. Through this, educators may learn from each other and improve their professional skills accordingly. One participant said:

*Teachers should also learn to be self-supervisors in the inclusion and teaching of learners with dyslexia. This means that they should be committed in their work, implement available inclusionary programmes, keep the necessary records, change teaching strategies, research on how some concepts should be taught, collaborate with other teachers so that they learn from one another and monitor the learners' progress regularly. Ehh... all this constitutes self-supervision (P1).*

## **DISCUSSION**

The inclusion of learners with dyslexia at infant level in most mainstream schools is affected by a number of factors. One of these is the attitude of relevant stakeholders which comprise teachers, school management teams, parents or caregivers and other learners in the school who do not have this disability. Myths, certain beliefs, lack of detailed knowledge about dyslexia emerged as one of the causes of negative perceptions towards the individuals affected. In order to eradicate such attitudes hence promoting the inclusion of affected learners, the study substantiated that dyslexia awareness campaigns and staff development workshops must be regularly held in schools and communities. These must primarily focus on changing the

negative attitudes of relevant stakeholders, improving the acceptance of individuals with dyslexia, equipping educators with requisite teaching skills and encouraging the development of least-restrictive learning environments (Konza, 2008; Jian-Ping & Li-sha, 2016).

Lack of adequate policies was also discovered to be another impediment towards the provision of effective inclusion of learners with dyslexia. While it is commended that there are international and national legal provisions that support inclusivity (Munene, 2015; Konza, 2008), the concern raised was on the extent to which these specify the suitable teaching and learning resources, teaching methodology, continuous professional development training and supervision of inclusionary practices. In view of this, the study emphasises the development of more specific policies that give a clear direction on how the entire process of inclusion may be executed. These must also be reviewed regularly so that they maintain their relevance in a dynamic education system.

Limited assessment procedures emerged as another factor that impacts on the inclusion of infant learners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools. Despite this, Zha and Zhu (2012) maintain that assessment forms the basis for intervention. In the area of study, most schools relied on informal assessment techniques on the identification of affected learners and this proved to be more useful to those with mild to moderate challenges than those with severe to profound disabilities. The former requires more detailed assessment procedures that basically utilise standardised instruments. The use of a multi-disciplinary team in the entire assessment process was also considered vital as it enhances thorough diagnosis of reading challenges faced by learners.

A limitation in the availability of reading remedial programmes also emerged as another factor which affects effective inclusion of learners with dyslexia at infant level. While regular class teachers can manage to meet the needs of those with mild to moderate reading challenges, more intensive interventions are needed for those with severe to profound difficulties. Apart from improving the reading potentials, remedial programmes afford learners with dyslexia an opportunity to learn at their pace and in the process enhancing content mastery. The study also contended that the administration of such interventions must be done as soon as the problem is identified to avoid further complications (Calderbank, 2009). Above all, the expertise of specialist teachers who understand the diverse nature of learners with dyslexia must be considered in all the processes undertaken.

The high workload that educators have is one other impediment in the inclusion of infant learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools. Teachers are expected to thoroughly prepare for their daily lessons, improvise teaching-learning media, deliver learning matter, mark given tasks, give remedial services to needy learners, evaluate the entire teaching and learning process and keep up to date records. This amount of work has a potential to discourage one's motivation to attend to the individual needs of learners with dyslexia. Zhao and Zhu (2012) emphasise that educators must always encourage learners in their learning. However, for them to do this successfully they themselves must first be motivated. In addition, the large classes found in most mainstream classes make it even more difficult for teachers to be diligent to their work. The impact of the workload may be countered by reducing the teacher-learner ratio and combining teaching and learning records that are related. The provision of specialist reading teachers in all schools may also be a long-lasting solution to the challenges experienced by schools.

Another crucial aspect that determines successful inclusion of infant learners with dyslexia is teacher supervision. In view of this, the study discovered that most principals who are expected to ensure the smooth running of every programme in schools have limited knowledge of dyslexia hence this compromises their effectiveness in supervising teachers of such learners. To counter this limitation, continuous professional development training must not only focus on teachers, as is the case in most developing countries, but be considerate of the needs of school leaders as well. Above all, collegial supervision is also commended for its ability to ensure professional growth as educators assist and learn from one another.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that successful inclusion of beginners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools is dependent upon various factors which include the attitudes of relevant stakeholders, level of knowledge about dyslexia, needs of learners affected, availability of resources, suitability of the learning environment and effective supervision services. This therefore means that the entire process of inclusion demands a collaborative approach, whereby different stakeholders like schools, communities and other parastatals would work together towards achieving the same vision of alleviating the challenges faced by beginners.

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