

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN AN INCLUSIVE SETTING

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Abstract

In this paper effort was made to bring out the importance of education to a society and a nation in general. It also high lightens the importance of education to every member of the society, persons with special needs inclusive. It further gives a brief definition of inclusive education and finally, it outlined some strategies that a teacher teaching students with hearing impairment in an inclusive settings should employ to assist him/her in the process of teaching and learning.

Introduction

The Importance of education is undeniable for every single person. Apparent, people may become more useful and civilized if better educated. Without education, life would be disastrous and detrimental. Consequently, in Nigeria to this day, authorities and stakeholders in the educational sector are trying their best to make education accessible for everyone particularly the poor and persons with special needs; because the development of a country depends vastly on the standard of education, it must do everything in its power to improve it.

All categories of people need education to assist them contribute their quota towards the development of their societies and persons with special needs are not an exception. In Nigeria one of the four objectives of the National Policy on Education (2004, revised edition) is to “give equal educational opportunities to all children their physical, mental, sensory, psychological and emotional disabilities notwithstanding”. Among these categories of persons with special needs are the persons with hearing impairment which include the deaf and the hard of hearing.

To achieve the objectives of educating persons with special needs, there are many programs that are currently in use globally, and this is inclusive education.

What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusive education means that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belonging among other students, teachers, and support staff. The real challenge is to rebuild the developmental infrastructure for children and adolescents.

Inclusive education came into being in June 1994 when representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organizations organized the World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Salamanca, Spain. The Salamanca Statement and Framework proclaims that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs and that “those with special education needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them with a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting those needs.” The Salamanca Statement also asserts that educational systems that take into account the wide diversity of children’s characteristics and needs “are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire educational system (Peters, 2004).

Today, in many places across the country and the world, students with special needs are participating in integral academic, social and community settings that were unimaginable just 25 years ago. Teacher education over the 25 years ago has also changed and must continue to keep pace as the profession change (Thousand and Villa 2003). For an effective teaching and learning to take place in an inclusive setting with persons with hearing impairment, certain strategies needs to be taken by the teachers/interpreters and other support staff, some of these strategies are discussed below:

Facial expressions, gestures and other body language are some of the very important strategies for dealing and teaching students with hearing impairment in an inclusive setting, they assist a lot in conveying information to the students, they also express a lot of inner thought which were not conveyed through the verbal means and persons with hearing impairment are so blessed with reading meanings to facial, gesture and body language. But before this could be achieved the teacher should make sure that he gets the full attention of the students (face to face). He should not back the student when communicating of talking while writing on the chalkboard. The teacher should also avoid background noises, sounds taken for granted and ignored by hearing students could be amplified by hearing aids worn by the students with hard of hearing. In relation to the sitting arrangement the teacher should allow the students to sit where he likes in the classroom so as to allow smooth communication.

Another important strategy is that the teacher should make sure that he gives outline of the topics to be learnt for that term and teaching should start gradually from known to unknown ad abstract to concrete and visual aids should be used during teaching and learning process as anything leant through seeing last long in the memory. Any important announcement, assignments should be written on the chalkboard for the students to see and all writings should be legible.

However, there is another important strategy that cannot be ignored, that is the involving the interpreter in the classroom activities. The teacher should make use of an interpreter where needed, though some special educators can sign while teaching, though

this consumes much energy of the teacher. At the beginning of every academic year the teacher should give the interpreter outline of the topics or material so that the interpreter becomes familiar with new technical terms or vocabularies. During teaching process the interpreter should stand close to the side of the chalkboard that is been used by the teacher, thereby allowing the students to see clearly the signs and the writing on the chalkboard and when a question is asked, it should be directed to the teacher, but not the interpreter to answer the question on behalf of the teacher. Moreover, the teacher and the interpreter should face the light source.

Conclusion

In conclusion, strategies are very vital when teaching students with hearing impairment in an inclusive setting, because they assist a lot in the area of teaching and learning process, communication, and when the strategies are used correctly, each of the strategy will improve the students achievement, allow the teacher to have a wide range of instructional alternatives, promote diversified learning methods, integrate students with special needs into the general education.

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