

African Virtual University

Education: Education EDU17

# **SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

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Edward RUTONDOKI

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# Foreword

The African Virtual University (AVU) is proud to participate in increasing access to education in African countries through the production of quality learning materials. We are also proud to contribute to global knowledge as our Open Educational Resources (OERs) are mostly accessed from outside the African continent. This module was prepared in collaboration with twenty one (21) African partner institutions which participated in the AVU Multinational Project I and II.

From 2005 to 2011, an ICT-integrated Teacher Education Program, funded by the African Development Bank, was developed and offered by 12 universities drawn from 10 countries which worked collaboratively to design, develop, and deliver their own Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) programs for teachers in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math, ICTs for teachers, and Teacher Education Professional Development. Four Bachelors of Education in mathematics and sciences were developed and peer-reviewed by African Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from the participating institutions. A total of 73 modules were developed and translated to ensure availability in English, French and Portuguese making it a total of 219 modules. These modules have also been made available as Open Educational Resources (OER) on [oer.avu.org](http://oer.avu.org), and have since then been accessed over 2 million times.

In 2012 a second phase of this project was launched to build on the existing teacher education modules, learning from the lessons of the existing teacher education program, reviewing the existing modules and creating new ones. This exercise was completed in 2017.

On behalf of the African Virtual University and our patron, our partner institutions, the African Development Bank, I invite you to use this module in your institution, for your own education, to share it as widely as possible, and to participate actively in the AVU communities of practice of your interest. We are committed to be on the frontline of developing and sharing open educational resources.

The African Virtual University (AVU) is a Pan African Intergovernmental Organization established by charter with the mandate of significantly increasing access to quality higher education and training through the innovative use of information communication technologies. A Charter, establishing the AVU as an Intergovernmental Organization, has been signed so far by nineteen (19) African Governments - Kenya, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin, Ghana, Republic of Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, South Sudan, Sudan, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia and Cape Verde.

The following institutions participated in the teacher education program of the Multinational Project I: University of Nairobi – Kenya, Kyambogo University – Uganda, Open University of Tanzania, University of Zambia, University of Zimbabwe – Zimbabwe, Jimma University – Ethiopia, Amoud University - Somalia; Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD)-Senegal, Université d' Antananarivo – Madagascar, Universidade Pedagogica – Mozambique, East African University - Somalia, and University of Hargeisa - Somalia

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The following institutions participated in the teacher education program of the Multinational Project II: University of Juba (UOJ) - South Sudan, University of The Gambia (UTG), University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) – Nigeria, Open University of Sudan (OUS) – Sudan, University of Education Winneba (UEW) – Ghana, University of Cape Verde (UniCV) – Cape Verde, Institut des Sciences (IDS) – Burkina Faso, Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENSUP) - Mali, Université Abdou Moumouni (UAM) - Niger, Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de la Gombe (ISPG) – Democratic Republic of Congo and Escola Normal Superior Tchicote – Guinea Bissau

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# Production Credits

This second edition is the result of the revision of the first edition of this module. The informations provided below, at the exception of the name of the author of the first edition, refer to the second edition.

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## Supported By



AVU Multinational Project II funded by the African Development Bank.

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# I.Prerequisite courses of knowledge

This module should be studied alongside the following other modules: Educational Psychology, General Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Learning Psychology, Guidance and Counseling and Educational Testing and Evaluation. The module is an introductory course for teacher education trainees. It is advisable before studying this module for the student to acquaint himself or herself with principles in general psychology because many concepts in the area of special needs education are based on psychological principles. Therefore, the student needs to understand the contribution of psychology to the theory and practice of education, to be conversant with self-assessment procedures, to have good knowledge in his or her subjects and to know about the personality of learners. It is also important to know about learners' individual differences, moral, social, and cognitive development, theories of learning, guidance and counseling and educational testing and evaluation.

## II. Time

The module is divided up into three units. To cover this module, it will require about 120 hours distributed as follows:

Unit I 20 hours

Unit II 60 hours

Unit III 40 hours

## III. Material

To study this module better, you need the following:

- Some recommended text books in special needs education.
- Simulated material on CD/Video/DVD/Audio Cassettes/Radio Cassette Recorder
- Discussion sessions with colleagues.
- Web based materials.
- Items such as Braille, hearing aids and other materials used by persons with disabilities.

### **IV. Module Rationale**

For a long time in many African countries persons with disabilities have been marginalized. In some cases, parents regard having such children as a curse (Rukuni 2000). Therefore, one finds that these persons are discriminated against on the job market, in the provision of facilities and programmes meant to uplift their welfare and in educational opportunities. In fact, in some African countries, such as Uganda, derogatory labels are used to describe these people. For example in southwestern Uganda the word used to describe a person with physical disability is “ekirema” which means “a thing which became disabled”. Obviously persons with physical disability resent this dehumanizing label and use the word “omurema” which means a person with a physical disability. In the past, persons with physical disabilities were referred to as things not people. Nowadays the perception has changed somewhat, but still a lot needs to be done to improve interaction patterns and relationships between persons with physical disability and the “normal” people. This module is essentially about educational needs of persons with disabilities and strategies that can be used to empower them in their learning. The ultimate aim when teaching them is to put them on an equal footing as other persons who do not have disabilities. Therefore after reading through this module you should be in a better position to improve on the educational needs of persons with disabilities.

### **V. Content**

#### 5.1 Overview

This module deals with special needs education. It defines the concept of this type of education, identifies its different types, and discusses the concept of inclusive education and inclusive classroom management practices. It also analyses strategies and policies that can be put in place to enhance learning needs of persons with disabilities.

#### 5.2 Outline

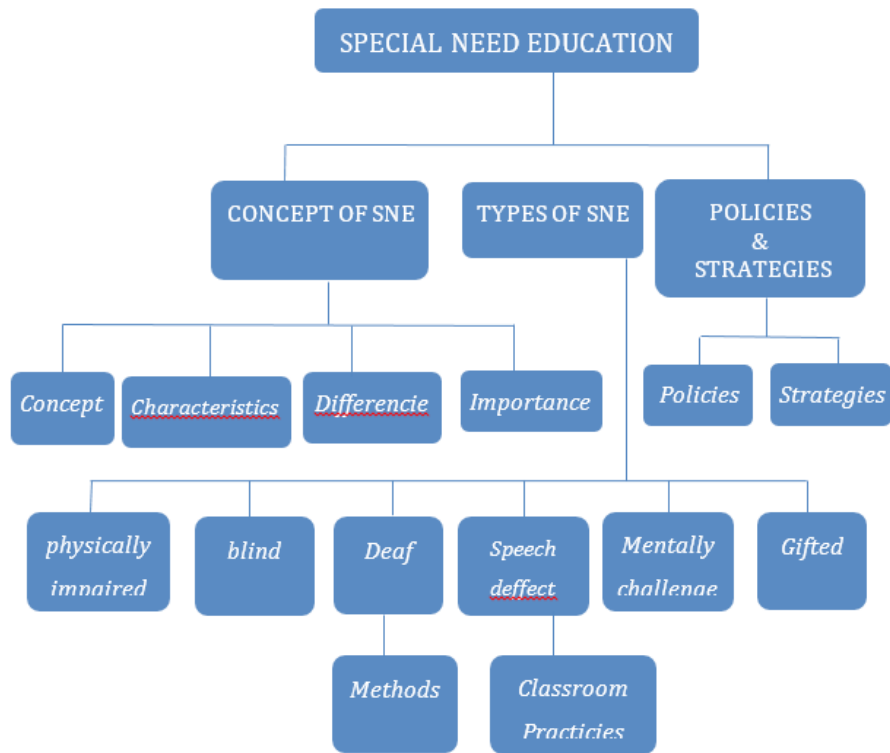
Unit 1:

Background to Special Needs Education and the concept of Inclusive Education.

Unit 2: Different types of Special Needs Education.

Unit 3: Strategies and Policies that should be adopted to improve Special Needs Education.

5.3 Graphic Organizer



**VI. General objectives**

The general objectives of the module are to:

- Familiarize students with the concept of Special Needs Education.
- Assist learners explain different types of special needs education.
- Expose learners to strategies and policies aimed at enhancing the quality of special needs education

## VII. Specific learning objectives

Unit 1: The concept of special needs education

By the end of this Unit, the student should be able to:

- Define the concept of special needs education
- Explain the term inclusive education
- Identify the characteristics of special needs education.
- Distinguish special needs education from other types of education e) Highlight the importance of special needs education

Unit 2: By the end of this Unit, the student should be able to:

- Identify the different types of special needs education
- Design methods and ways of assisting persons with disabilities learn better

Unit 3: By the end of this Unit, the student should be able to:

- Formulate strategies aimed at improving the quality of education of persons with disabilities
- Analyze policies appropriate to special needs education
- Formulate strategies to use when teaching learners with disabilities
- Discuss policies that can enhance special needs education in your country.

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# VIII. Teaching and learning activities

## 8.1 Pre-assessment of knowledge in Special Needs Education

The pre-assessment questions are meant to test what the student already knows about the concepts covered in the module. The questions are multiple choices in nature.

### QUESTIONS

In each of the following multiple choice questions, select the best answer from the given options, A, B, C, or D

1. What is special needs education?
  - It is the type of education given to very special people
  - It is the type of education given to persons with disabilities
  - It is the education established by colonial masters
  - It is the type of education for very intelligent people.
  
2. Which of the following terms does not belong with others?
  - Hearing impairments
  - Low vision
  - Verbal fluency
  - Speech defects
  
3. Special needs education should
  - a) Cater for needs of teachers
  - b) Cater for needs of students
  - c) Assist persons with disabilities learn better
  - d) Assist persons with disabilities relate with others.
  
4. Persons that are hard of hearing
  - Are hard to deal with
  - Find difficulties in hearing
  - Don't understand
  - Hardly accept advice

5. Inclusive education
  - a) is segregative
  - b) Includes all aspects of the curriculum
  - c) Is based on general aspects of education
  - d) Addresses needs of all learners regardless of their condition.
6. Students with disabilities
  - a) Are exceptional
  - b) Suffer from all disabilities
  - c) Are difficult to relate with
  - d) Are not active in class
7. When teaching persons with disabilities it is best
  - a) To consult their parents
  - b) To consult the community
  - c) Invoke policies that are supportive to them
  - d) Teach them in groups
8. Sometimes persons with disabilities are stigmatized. This means
  - a) They are labeled negatively by the community
  - b) They are incapable of relating with themselves
  - c) They are incapable of relating with others
  - d) They have faulty coping patterns
9. When teaching persons with disabilities it is necessary to empower them in order to:
  - a) Improve their lives
  - b) Enhance their self-esteem
  - c) Reduce their suffering
  - d) Control their behavior
10. Which of the following should governments do to alleviate the plight of persons with disability?
  - a) Involve them in formulating policies affecting them
  - b) Legislate against discrimination and prejudice
  - c) Give them financial assistance

## VIII. Teaching and learning activities

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11. To facilitate their learning, blind students should be
  - a) Encouraged to interact with others
  - b) Benefit from various community programmes
  - c) Taught to use Braille typewriters
  - d) Taught survival strategies.
12. The deaf and hard of hearing persons usually
  - a) Are ambitious
  - b) Don't concentrate easily
  - c) Are under achievers
  - d) Deny that they are hard of hearing
13. A learner who cannot hear at all
  - a) Should be taught to hear
  - b) Should imitate his or her teacher
  - c) Should be taught to lip or speech read
  - d) Should be exposed to many teaching methods.
14. Physical disabilities
  - a) Affect one's intelligence
  - b) Cripple one's visual acuity
  - c) Relate to one's concentration span
  - d) Affect mobility
15. Spina bifida is
  - a) Congenital
  - b) Environmentally induced
  - c) Social conditioned
  - d) Always affects one's intelligence
16. Which of the following is not a type of epilepsy?
  - a) Petit Mal
  - b) Grand mal
  - c) Infantile autism
  - d) Jacksonian

17. The curriculum for mentally challenged individuals should stress
- a) Adaptation skills
  - b) Adoption skills
  - c) Numerical skills
  - d) Life skills
18. Which criterion cannot be used to determine that a child is gifted?
- a) Exposing him or her to hard material
  - b) The child's consistent scoring of high marks
  - c) The parents of the child's recommendation
  - d) Use of standardized tests on the child
19. Gifted children
- a) Are impossible to manage
  - b) Are impossible to control
  - c) Should follow a different curriculum from the rest of the learners.
  - d) Don't require any motivation
20. Dyslexia is
- a) Inability to concentrate and reason
  - b) A difficulty in learning to read and write
  - c) Inability to socialize
  - d) Inability to perceive relationships

**ANSWER KEY**

1. B 2. C 3. C 4. B 5. D 6. A 7. A 8. A 9. B 10. A 11. C 12. D 13. C 14. D 15. A 16. C 17. D 18. A  
19. C 20. B

**8.2 Pedagogical comment for learners**

If you got 10 or more items correct you are doing well, but if you obtained less, you need to work harder in order to pass the course.



### IX. Key concepts in the module

1. Education: This is a process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes and applying these attributes to solve problems in life.
2. Special Needs Education: It is a type of education given to persons with different types of disabilities such as blindness, deafness and hard of hearing, physical impairments, mental retardation and speech deficits.
3. Persons with disabilities: These are individuals who suffer certain disabilities such as blindness, deafness and hard of hearing, physical impairments. Mental retardation and speech deficits.
4. Inclusive Education: This is a type of education whereby learners' needs are addressed within the "mainstream" school system. Learners with disabilities and individual differences are catered for by the teacher and other professionals.
5. Integration: This is the provision of educational services to learners with disabilities in the regular school system. No special consideration is made with regard to special requirements and difficulties experienced by these learners.

# Learning Activity 1

The concept of Special Needs Education

## Objectives

By the end of this learning activity, you should be able to:

- a) Define the concept of special needs education
- b) Distinguish special needs education from other types of education
- c) Highlight the importance of special needs education

## Summary

A definition of special needs education is given and different types of education for persons with various disabilities specified, thus emphasizing the difference. Finally, the importance of special needs education is pointed out.

### Key words

Hard of hearing

Braille

Cognitive stimulation Self-esteem Exceptionalities

Sign language

## List of relevant readings

1. Akope, F, Alenyo D, & Okwaput, S. (2002) Distance Learning: Special Needs Education (Module 15) Inclusive Education. Kampala: UNISE.
2. Dale, N (1996) Working with families of children with special needs: Partnership and Practice .London: Rutledge.
3. Davison G.C and Neale J.M (1987) Abnormal Psychology. New York: John Wiley& Sons.
4. Gearheart, B.R (1986) Learning disabilities: Educational Strategies. Ohio: Merrill Publishing Company.
5. Hardman, M.I, Drew C.J and Egan, M.W (1996). Human exceptionality: Society, School and Family New York: Allyn and Bacon. Heward, W.L & Orlansky, M.D (1992) Exceptional children: An introductory survey of Special Education. New York: Merrill.

## Learning Activity I

### List of relevant resources

1. Text books
2. Computer with internet facility and copyright free resources
3. Video and CD-ROM
4. Radio cassette Recorder and audio tapes
5. TV set

### List of useful Links

#### Useful Link # 1

Title: Special Needs Education

URL: [http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA\\_E.PDF](http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF)

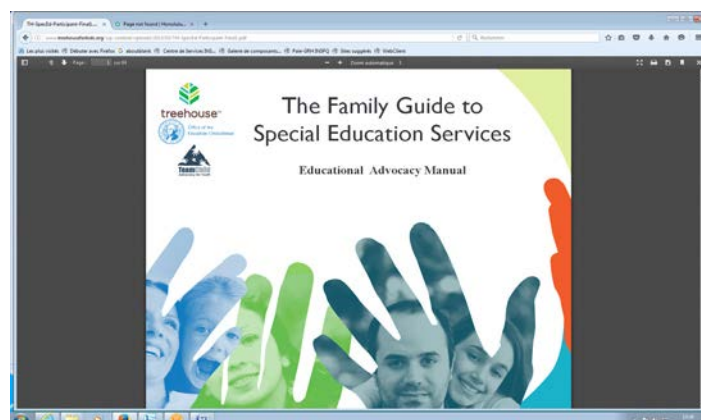
Description: This brief article gives a brief definition of Special Needs Education as intervention and support designed to address special educational needs. It argues that the term special needs education is currently used to replace the term "special education". It states that traditionally the older term referred to the education of children with disabilities that took place in special schools. But today in many countries this is no longer the case.

Rationale: The objectives and focus of special needs education has changed because it is now argued that if the learners are put in special schools, they will not progress optimally. And that is why inclusive education is being emphasized.

#### Useful Link # 2

Title: A Family Guide to Special Education.

URL: <http://www.treehouseforkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/TH-SpecEd-Participant-Final1.pdf>



Description: This is a manual of three house in Washington State in the United States. This document provides basic information on special needs education. Excerpts from "Make a Difference in a Child's Life: A Manual for Helping Children Get What They Need in School".

Rationale: The aim of the organization is to assist learners with disabilities excel It recognizes the important role played by parents and guardians in fostering high quality education standard. It stresses collaboration between these key stakeholders.

Useful Link # 3

Moving from a centralized and segregated education system to a decentralized and inclusive education approach.

URL: <http://icevi.org/publications/ICEVI-WC2002/papers/01-topic/01-schoeman.htm>

Description: Although the article largely describes inclusive education in post-apartheid South Africa, it also has something to say about special needs education strategies and initiatives in that country. The document reports the statement made by the Minister of Education in White Paper 6. The minister asserted that the Government was determined to create special needs education as a non-racial and integrated component of the education system.

Rationale: The document highlights plans by the Government of South Africa in general and the Ministry of Education in particular to revamp special needs education and inclusive education in South Africa. Emphasis is put on redressing distortions and imbalances that characterized special needs education and inclusive education during the apartheid era.

### **Detailed description of learning activity**

The concept of special needs education.

According to Hallahan and Kauffman (2000:12) special education is specially designed instruction that meets the unusual needs of an exceptional student. An exceptional student is an individual with a disability or with disabilities. Therefore we can state that special needs education is the type of education designed to cater for the following type of disabilities: blindness, deafness, and hard of hearing, physical disabilities, mental retardation, speech defects and giftedness. These disabilities require specific types of education. For example, a blind person would require a Braille machine to read and write, a deaf or hard of hearing person individual would, depending on the magnitude of the disability, need hearing aids or in extreme cases be taught to lip read. The individual with a physical disability would require a wheelchair to help him or her in his or her movement. The mentally challenged individual should be empowered with life skills necessary for survival, such as, reading road signs, manipulating simple mathematical operations, social skills, physical, emotional and cognitive stimulation (Rukuni,2000). Persons with speech difficulties can be assisted by teaching them sign language and interpretation of facial expressions.

Special needs education is important because it motivates learners with disabilities, enhances their self-esteem and makes them less dependent on others. In this introductory unit, it is crucial that you explain clearly the concept of special needs education and how it is managed in your country. You also need to read and understand prescribed material, to discuss with your colleagues characteristics of special needs education and how to assist learners with exceptionalities derive maximum benefit from the type of education that your country offers. It is equally necessary for you to cite components of this type of education, similarities and differences with other types of education.

## Formative Evaluation

1. For this activity send your answers to your lecturer through e-mail via attachment. You may also chat with him or her through the internet
2. Try to obtain e-mails of your colleagues and send them your responses and ask them to do likewise. You will also need to keep corresponding amongst yourselves through e-mail via attachments.

### Questions

1. Why do you think special needs education is different from other types of education? (To answer this question fully you need to read the UNESCO article on special needs education which you can find on the following link: <http://www.unesco.org/education/inclusive> Then you will supplement the answers with the ones given in this module)
2. Write a 200 word essay explaining how you would advise educational managers improve educational services for learners with disabilities in your country.
3. Find time to interview a teacher of special needs education. What do the answers of the teacher you interviewed tell you about special needs education? Write your own view on the importance of special needs education?

### Possible answers

Question 1: You can consider the following ideas.

- It is the only type of education that addresses the educational needs of persons with disabilities.
- It puts more emphasis on practical approach to problem solving.
- It demands different assessment procedures.
- It involves participation of stakeholders more than other types; parents and professionals have to work more closely with teachers.
- It can be more effective than other types.
- It requires more specialized training.
- It is more demanding in terms of time and effort on the part of the teacher.

Question 2: Consider the following points:

- Organize workshops and seminars for teachers, parents, other professionals and community leaders.
- Request for funds from government, NGOs, and donors to buy equipment such as Braille, wheel chairs, textbooks, hearing aids, sight enhancing gadgets, and intelligence tests which are adapted to local conditions.
- Design assessment protocols for different learners with disabilities.

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- Organize regular review meetings with other professionals.
- Work out Individualized Education Programmes (IEPS) applicable in your own country.
- Ensure that inclusive education is put in place and advocate for it.

Question 3: Look at the following points:

- It is a special type of education significantly different from other types.
- Requires more planning.
- Does not employ traditional methods of teaching and assessment.
- Calls for more stakeholder involvement.
- Requires more funding.
- Focuses more on the development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of individual learners.
- Requires the teacher to consult parents, other professionals and the community more regularly.
- The teacher has to motivate the learners more by putting in place lasting self-esteem and confidence building measures and for enhancing life skills.

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# Learning Activity 2

The concept of inclusive education

## Objectives

By the end of this learning activity, you should be able to:

- (a) Explain the importance and the need for inclusive education
- (b) Outline the advantages and limitations of inclusive education
- (c) Explain how inclusive education differs from integration.

## Summary

This learning activity discusses the concept of inclusive education, the need to incorporate it into education systems of African countries and its importance. Advantages and drawbacks are then highlighted and an attempt is made to bring out the differences between this type of education and integration.

### Key words

Drawback Germane

Mainstream Integration

## List of relevant readings

Akope, F, Alenyo, D & Okwaput, S (2002) Distance Learning: Special Needs Education Module 15.

Kampala: UNISE.

Bayo, A. (2002) Distance Learning: Special Needs Education Module 10. Educational Approaches.

Kampala: UNISE

Howe, K.R, & Miramontes, O.B, (1992). The ethics of special education. New York: Teachers College Press.

Huefner, D.S (1994). The mainstreaming cases: Tensions and trends for school administrators. Educational Administration Quarterly, 30, 27- 55.

Kauffman, J.M. & Hallahan, D.P (1993). Toward a comprehensive delivery system: The necessity of identity, focus and authority for special education and other compensatory programs. In J.I Goodlad & T.C. Lovitt (eds.), Integrating general and special education. (pp.73-102) .Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Okot, D. (2002). Distance Learning: Special Needs Education Module.

UNISE. Management of Children under Difficult Circumstances. Kampala: UNISE.

### List of relevant resources

For this activity, you will require the following resources:

1. Textbooks
2. Computer with internet facility
3. Video and CD Rom
4. Copyright free materials

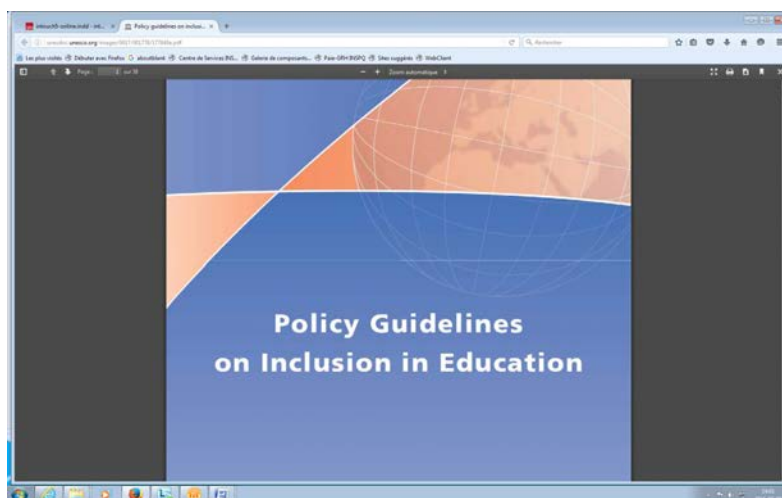
### List of useful links

Useful Link # 1

Open File on Inclusive Education Support Materials for Managers and Administrators.

Author: UNESCO (2009)

URL: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001778/177849e.pdf>



Description: This is a booklet on policy guideline on inclusive education for policy makers and managers charged with the responsibility of implementing inclusive education in educational institutions. The Dakar Educational Forum (2000) stressed the need for countries to incorporate inclusive education in their educational systems. The booklet analyses issues affecting inclusive education and is based on the UNESCO Open File on Inclusive Education.

Rationale: Inclusive education is the type of education that should cater for needs of all learners including those with disabilities. It focuses on obstacles and challenges in the education system which disadvantage learners especially individuals with disabilities. Such barriers include inappropriate curriculum, untrained teachers, and inadequate media for teaching and unsuitable buildings.



## Learning Activity 2

### Useful Link #2

Title: The Case for Inclusive Education as a Social Determinant of Health

Author: Underwood, K

URL: [http://www.inclusive-education.ca/resources/documents/inclusion\\_health.pdf](http://www.inclusive-education.ca/resources/documents/inclusion_health.pdf)

Description: This paper argues that individuals labelled with a disability as a social determinant of health should benefit from education available to everyone. This is because education is a human right and inclusive education can lead to quality teaching. Finally, benefits accruing from inclusive education have a bearing on the health status of people with disabilities. Evidence to support these observations is adduced from Canada and elsewhere.

Rationale: The paper asserts that there exists a strong relationship between the health status of an individual and the type of education he or she is supposed to access. This is best served by inclusive education.

### Useful Link # 3

Title: Inclusive education: A multi- dimensional international approach.

URL: <http://www.sfu.ca/oldlids/intouch/intouch5.pdf>



Description: This is an ongoing research project on inclusive education currently being undertaken by David Kaufman and others at Simon Fraser University. The project focuses on the development of a programme of training on inclusive pedagogies for the Faculty of Applied Sciences at that University. The programme is multidimensional and combines face to face workshops with online modules.

Rationale: The project looks at a multidimensional approach to training learners in an inclusive education environment.

### Useful Link # 4

Inclusive Education: An EFA Strategy for all children.

URL: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079993288/InclusiveEdu\\_efa\\_strategy\\_for\\_children.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079993288/InclusiveEdu_efa_strategy_for_children.pdf)

Description: This document looks at lessons learnt about the implementation of inclusive education in economically well off and less developed countries. Economic issues, namely financing and mobilizing cost-effective resources for inclusive education are discussed. The document also discusses progress made towards implementing inclusive education and critical policy issues regarding effective implementation.

Rationale: The Salamanca Framework for Action, 1994 among other declarations stressed that countries should ensure that they cater for inclusive education in their systems of education. This Declaration was buttressed by the Dakar Declaration which adopted a World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 2000. In all these declarations, inclusive education and the need for its implementation was discussed. Therefore, to achieve EFA goals, inclusive education should be instituted in the curricula the world over.

### **Detailed description of the learning activity**

Many countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOS) and educational managers at all levels have started to recognize the need, relevance and use of inclusive education. It is therefore germane that you familiarize yourself with this practice and get to know how you can implement it in your own classroom in the future. Akope, Alenyo & Okwaput (2002) define inclusive education as a process of addressing learners' needs within the "mainstream" school using all resources that can be accessed by the teacher and that this type of education creates chances of learning and preparing its recipients for good quality life. This concept should not be confused with integration. The process of integration requires of learners with disabilities to study who do not suffer disabilities. No special attention is given to learners with disabilities and they have to attend classes in the usual schools and to adjust to the conditions there. It therefore follows that learners with disabilities do not benefit fully from integration since they cannot be fully involved in all learning activities. They become the disadvantaged lot in the classroom since they do not benefit from special programmes.

Inclusive education aims, among other things, at ensuring that learners with disabilities are not marginalized in the classroom, in the community. Therefore these persons should be given all opportunities to access any type of education, employment, health services, cultural activities, community and domestic services and information (Akope, Alenyo & Okwaput, 2002)

An inclusive school caters for all learners without discrimination, prejudice or malice. It recognizes the fact that individuals do differ and that each individual learner has something to contribute to the learning and teaching process. It takes cognizance of each individual's potential, value and worth. It inculcates a sense of pride and self-esteem. It encourages exploration, creativity, innovation and improvisation. It fosters respect altruism and a sincere concern for others. In such a school teachers are afforded an opportunity to share ideas and learn more about the learners, and especially students with disabilities. Because such a school caters for all types of learners, community and parental involvement is more practiced.

In an inclusive environment, learners with disabilities are given chance to interact with other learners, thereby enhancing their interaction skills and patterns. In the long run both categories of learners come to appreciate one another, to break any barriers and to do away with stigmatization. This will instill confidence and enable learners with disability to appreciate the saying that disability does not mean inability.

## Learning Activity 2

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The UNESCO (1994) Framework for Action on Special Needs Education asserts among other things that inclusive education is based on human rights and that all individuals should have access to education irrespective of status or condition. Inclusive education was boosted after the World Conference on special needs education in Salamanca in 1994. Some of the recommendations of this conference were that disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups should have access to education. This type of education follows a flexible curriculum; teachers have to learn to work outside traditional subject boundaries and to play a collaborative role with parents, other professionals, international donors and NGOs. Assessment takes into consideration the characteristics of the individual and there should be no discrimination whatsoever. Many countries, international organizations, NGOs and educational managers at all levels have started to accord inclusive education the status that it deserves. It is therefore germane that you familiarize yourself with this concept and apply it in your classroom in future. According to Akope, Alenyo & Okwaput (2002), inclusive education addresses learners' needs within the mainstream school using all resources available to the teacher. This type of education prepares the recipients for good quality life and instills in them a sense of fairness, justice and altruism, which are values cherished by many societies.

Inclusive education should not be confused with integration. The process of integration requires of learners with disabilities to study with others who do not suffer disabilities without paying special attention to the disabilities. For example, no special equipment may be purchased for these exceptional learners and the teacher is under no obligation to devise special teaching methods for these learners. These exceptional learners are put in the usual schools and classes and have to adjust to the conditions there. It therefore follows that learners with disabilities do not benefit fully from integration since they are not completely involved in all learning activities.

### **Formative Evaluation**

Learning Tip 1: To do this exercise successfully, it would be advisable to discuss your responses with your colleague first and then submit the answers to your lecturer via the internet.

Qn. 1. What are the advantages and limitations of inclusive education in your country?

Qn. 2. As a teacher of special needs education in future, how will you address the challenges brought by inclusive education?

Qn. 3. Explain how you can foster inclusive education in your classroom.

### Possible answers

Qn.1 .You can consider the following points:

- It gives an opportunity to special needs learners live and grow with the others, but not isolating them.
- It enhances interaction patterns and social relations of learners with disabilities.
- Enables exceptional learners develop self-esteem and self-concept.
- Caters for the individual differences of all learners.
- Creates an opportunity for learners with exceptionalities perfect their language skills, their cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.
- Enables other learners appreciate the difficulties that exceptional learners endure.
- Creates room for more stakeholder involvement, thus improving the conditions of learners with disabilities and the standard of the school.

You can consider the following limitations:

- If pupils are not sufficiently sensitized, they may shun learners with disabilities.
- In attempting to address issues, problems and concerns of exceptional learners, the quality and standards of education may suffer.
- Running parallel assessment may be challenging for the special needs education teacher.
- Unlike his or her counterpart teacher in a non-inclusive learning environment, the special needs education is kept busy and may have little time to do his or her private work.
- If teachers of special needs are not given extra pay, they may be demotivated and scale down their commitment. Unfortunately, because of lack of sufficient funds, weak economies in developing countries and failure in these countries to prioritize, sometimes the special needs education teacher is not adequately remunerated.

Qn. 2 .Look at the following points:

- Consult with stakeholders.
- Conduct regular meetings with fellow teachers and your head teacher.
- Formulate workable time tables and work plans.
- Carry out guidance and counseling sessions with the learners.
- Engage in action research which will enable you identify problems.
- Adhere to set deadlines.
- Be approachable, accommodative and sensitive to individual learners' needs.

## Learning Activity 2

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Qn. 3. Consider the following points:

- Identify the type of learners you have.
- In the class sitting arrangement ensure that whenever possible, exceptional learners sit with the others.
- Do not discriminate against either group and do not show pity to learners with disabilities.
- Keep in touch with parents and other professionals.
- Identify learners' needs through a need assessment study where necessary.

# Learning Activity 3

Types of special needs education

## Objectives

By the end of this activity, you should be able to:

- Identify different types of special needs education
- Design appropriate methods of teaching persons with special needs in an inclusive environment.

## Summary

This learning activity is about the following types of special needs education that can be given to persons with disabilities: the deaf and hard of hearing, the blind, and persons with speech difficulties, physical disabilities, mental retardation and giftedness.

### Key words

Hard of hearing

Braille

Mental retardation

White cane

## List of relevant readings

1. Bogdan, D, (2006) Who may be literate? Disability and resistance to the cultural denial of competence. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43 (2) 163-192.
2. Green, S, Davis, Karshmer, E, March and Straight B (2005) Living with Stigma: The impact of labeling, Stereotyping, Separation, Status loss and discrimination in the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. *Sociological Inquiry*, 75 (2) 197-215.
3. Hallahan D P & Kauffman, J M (2006) *Exceptional Learners: Introduction to Special Education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

## List of resources

1. Prescribed texts in this module
2. Web based materials which are copyright free
3. Computer with internet facility

### 4. Video and CD Rom

#### List of Useful Links

##### Useful Link # 1

Title: Social and Cultural Foundations of American Education

URL: [https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Social\\_and\\_Cultural\\_Foundations\\_of\\_American\\_Education](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Social_and_Cultural_Foundations_of_American_Education)

Description: This article gives tips to a teacher about handling learner's individual differences. It cites among other documents legislation that has been put in place to protect persons with disabilities such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It also discusses the importance of IEP as an important educational tool for people with disabilities. The document has an essay question and five multiple choice questions which you as a distance learner should find useful. Answers for the multiple choice questions are given.

Rationale: A teacher should always cater for individual differences of his or her learners in the course of teaching. This becomes all the more important when the teacher is teaching learners with disabilities. The document presents a powerful case for handling learners with exceptionalities. For a teacher to be successful, he or she has to assist learners individually. He or she has additional responsibility when the learners have disabilities.

##### Useful Link #2

Title: Methods of Communication with the Deaf

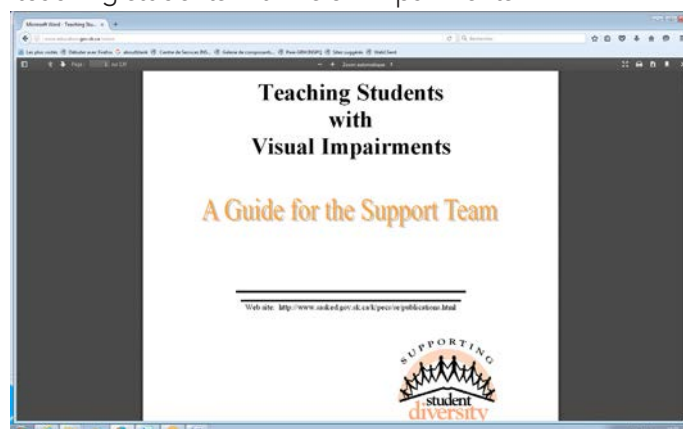
URL: <http://www.zak.co.il/deaf-info/old/methods.html>.

Description: The document lists and describes methods that have been used in the past and present to communicate with the deaf. These methods can also apply to some persons who are hard of hearing. The methods are: Auditory/ oral, Auditory/verbal, Cued speech and others. The author chooses an example from the English language.

Rationale: A teacher of special Needs Education has to devise ways and means of communicating with the deaf if they happen to be in his or her class. It is therefore important for you as the special needs education teacher to be to familiarize yourself with these methods so that you communicate effectively with your deaf learners

##### Useful Link # 3

Title: Strategies for teaching students with vision impairments.



## SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

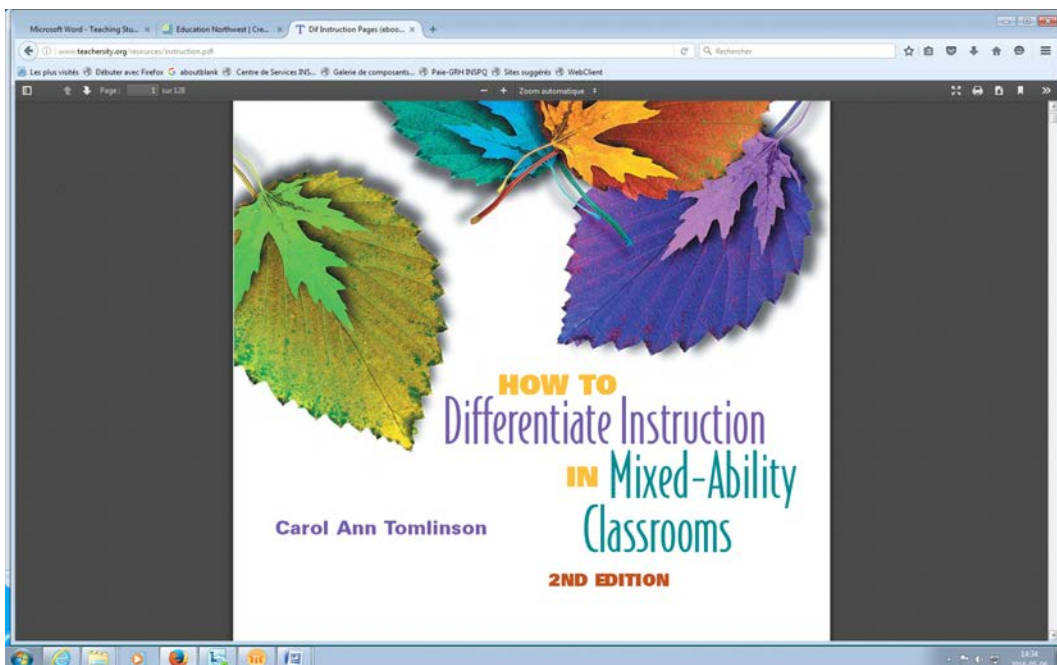
Description: The article describes two main categories of visual impairment, namely Low Vision and Blind. It asserts that that overcoming student's visual limitation requires unique strategies based on the magnitude of the student's particular impairment and communication skill. The author gives a list of pre- cautions a teacher should adopt when teaching these categories of students.

Rationale: A teacher of special needs to vary methods of teaching even when dealing with a certain type of disability, because there will always be differences even in a specific category. Therefore, the teacher should increase on the use of vision-enhancing materials and be specific in giving directions. Use of highly descriptive words is recommended.

Useful Link # 4

Title: How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms.

URL: <http://www.teachersity.org/resources/instruction.pdf>



Description: This article gives tips on how a special needs teacher can handle gifted learners. It is indicated that the teacher should learn about available opportunities for distance learning. It is also recommended that the practice of acceleration which is a practice whereby bright learners can be allowed to skip classes can be considered. Learning from the experience of others is another strategy recommended. The teacher is advised to conduct informal assessments and to revise Piaget& Bloom's concepts. Finally, it is recommended that outside resources be utilized. There is an attachment to this article which specifically handles methods to use when teaching gifted children.

Rationale: The document examines approaches that you can use as a teacher of learners with special needs and argues for the use of special methods which are not ordinarily used with "normal" learners. This is as it should be because these learners are quite different in many respects from other learners.



## Learning Activity 3

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### Useful Link # 5

Title: Challenges Teachers are facing.

URL: [http://www.corwin.com/upm-data/6940\\_bartell\\_ch\\_1.pdf](http://www.corwin.com/upm-data/6940_bartell_ch_1.pdf)

Description: The article explores the commitments that new teachers bring to their roles and the challenges they face. It sets forth the need for the development of a comprehensive induction program to help all new teachers become fully committed and more effective in the classroom.

Rationale: A mentally challenged learner should be assisted to come to terms with contextual, social and individual difficulties (Olivier& Williams, 2007). This is mainly because his or her repertoire for reasoning and problem solving skills is limited. Such a learner is incapable of meeting the demands and expectations imposed on him or on her by society. Unfortunately, society sometimes has little patience for such a learner.

### Useful Link 6

Title: Communication and speech disorders.

URL: <http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentssupportservices/publications/CommunicationDisordersHandbook.pdf>

Description: In this article a teacher handling learners with speech defects is advised to ask the learner to repeat certain concepts whenever necessary, to ensure that noise is completely controlled , to work with partners , to present information in writing , to produce visual work and to deal on one to one basis with the teacher. The teacher should also encourage fellow learners who do not have speech difficulties to be patient and understanding as this learner labors to make a point.

Rationale: Communication disorders constitute a formidable challenge to a teacher of special needs. He or she has to sort out problems related to articulation, voice, fluency and must not confuse regional accents with communication disability. It is also important for this teacher to note that communication disorders are usually accompanied by other disabilities; they rarely occur singly.

### Useful Link # 7

Title: Strategies for teaching students with communication disorders.

URL: <http://www.sesd.info/inclusion%20site/disabilities%20teaching%20strategies/Communication%20Disorders/communication%20disorders%20strategies.htm>

Description: This article discusses communication disorders involving problems in speech, language and hearing. Of special concern are disorders such as stuttering, aphasia and others. Environmental conditions have been implicated as some of the causes of these disorders. Sometimes these disorders originate from other dysfunctions such as dyslexia, cerebral palsy and mental retardation.

Rationale: These problems can make the work of a teacher extremely difficult if not handled properly. It is therefore important that the teacher exercise a high degree of flexibility when

teaching these individuals. The teacher should be in constant touch with these learners, allow them to tape lessons and where he or she feels incompetent hire the services of an interpreter or a sign language expert. Patience, being a good listener and provision of varied activities are other attributes demanded of such a teacher.

Useful Link # 8

Title: Strategies for teaching students with hearing impairments.

URL: <https://www.sdcity.edu/Portals/0/CollegeServices/StudentServices/DSPS/QT1-DHI.pdf>

Description: This document analyses different methods that can be used to teach the deaf, the hard of hearing and the deaf-blind. General strategies, teacher presentation, auditory materials, teaching reading, testing, group interaction with these learners, field experience and research are all discussed.

Rationale: Because sometimes learners with this disability feign that they have understood what is being taught, the teacher has to try and identify learners who do not easily understand. One of the ways to do this is to ask them questions even when they have not put up their hands. The teacher often forgets that such students do not require extra care hence the need to use these methods which will keep the teacher "awake" and focused.

### **Detailed description of the learning activity**

Different types of disabilities call for different types of approach although all learners with disabilities might be studying together and even with learners without disabilities, in an inclusive environment. You as a teacher of special needs education have to make special arrangements for learners with physical disabilities for example. You have to arrange for them space for their wheel chairs and have to exempt them from certain physical exercises during physical education lessons. As for learners who are mentally challenged, you have to design special assessment protocols that are easy enough to follow. They should also follow an easier curriculum so that their mental faculties are not overtaxed.

At the other extreme you have learners who are gifted. Although strictly speaking learners who are gifted might not have disabilities, they nevertheless need special attention from the teacher. They should also follow a different curriculum which is harder so that they do not become bored, restless and indiscipline. You therefore need to use methods such as group discussion, project method, and inquiry method and open textbook method. These methods will lead to individual creativity, tapping and development of talent.

Learners who are blind should be trained in the use of a Braille machine. This therefore means that you as a teacher must know how to use the Braille. Additionally, these students should be taught to use the cane so that they do not get lost when moving about.

The deaf and hard of hearing should be given special hearing gadgets and in some cases be taught to lip read. Learners with speech difficulties should be assisted by a speech therapist on your recommendation as a teacher of special needs education in collaboration with the parents of these learners. Then you can teach them sign language. This special language will greatly facilitate communication between you and the students.

### Formative Evaluation

Learning Tip 2: In order to do this activity correctly, you need to have a Braille machine and you also need to know how to operate it. Try to obtain some road signs. Since this is a group activity, try to work on it with a colleague or an experienced teacher in your school who can act as your mentor. After doing the activity, send your answers to your lecturer via internet. Ensure that persons with disabilities mentioned in this activity are available.

Each category of learners with disabilities should be given a different task or tasks. Look at the following tasks:

- Blind learners: Read any 200 word passage from a book of your own choice and let the students transcribe it on their Braille machines. This activity could take about 20 minutes.
- The deaf and learners with speech difficulties: Ask the learners to demonstrate in 5 minutes the problems they encounter as learners with a hearing disability/ speech difficulties
- The mentally challenged: Ask these learners to interpret 5 road signs. This activity could take 10 minutes.
- Persons with physical disability: Unless they have multiple disabilities, these learners will not require special academic tasks. In a language lesson for example you can ask them to write a 200 word essay on why they like a particular subject in 30 minutes

### Possible hints

- The passage should be at the ability level of the learners. Learners should also be timed to enhance speed
- You need to time this activity for each presentation. Instruct learners to observe presentations carefully and critically. Wrap up the lesson by demonstrating the problems yourself. Where you find challenges, enlist the support of a sign language expert.

The mentally challenged learners:

Draw the 5 signs on the chalkboard or if you have already printed copies, use those. Ask the learners to describe them and the function they serve. Make sure you reinforce each of them however little they contribute. This will greatly motivate them.

Time this activity and observe whether gifted learners have taken a comparatively shorter time. If this is the case, it could be one of the pointers that they found the task easy. Then you can design a special task for them such as interpreting Wole Soyinka's poem, titled Telephone conversation.

# Learning Activity 4

Policies and strategies to improve special needs education

## Objectives

By the end of this learning activity, you should be able to:

- Explain the terms policy and strategy
- Distinguish policies and strategies that can be used to enhance the quality of education given to people with disabilities
- Propose long lasting policies and strategies that can sustain special needs education.

## Summary

This learning activity looks at policies and strategies that can sustain special needs education in Africa. In order to have quality education for all and to meet the EFA goals, sound policies and strategies have to be implemented and African countries have to work in partnership with UN Agencies such as UNESCO, NGOs and other organizations in order to uplift the quality of education for persons with disabilities and especially to reach the poorest of the poor.

### Key words

Policy Strategy

impede

### List of relevant readings

1. Donald, D., Lazarus, S. and Lolwana, P. (1997). Educational Psychology in social context. Challenges of developing social issues and special needs in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
2. Fine, M. (1991). Collaboration with parents of exceptional children. Brandon: Clinical Psychology Publishing Company.
3. Riddell, S& Brown, S (1994) .Special education needs policy in the 1990's. London and New York: Rutledge.
4. Yell, M. L. (1998). The law and special education. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
5. Yell, M. L. & Shriner, J .G. (1997) The IDEA amendments of 1997: Implications for special and general education teachers, administrators, and teacher trainers. Focus on Exceptional Children, 30 (1), 1-19.
6. United Nations (1993) Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities.

### List of relevant resources

1. Computer with internet connectivity
2. Web based copyright free materials
3. Policy Documents on Special Needs Education in your country
4. Video and CD Rom

List of useful links

Useful Link # 1

Title: Human Rights

The right to education of persons with disabilities

Description: This document considers the rights of persons with disabilities and the policies and strategies that can lead to the fulfillment of these rights. It reiterates the decisions made at the Salamanca Conference on Special Education in 1994 which urged countries to legislate and enact policies and strategies aimed at affecting the right to education. It was recommended that financial measures be instituted to make quality education for people with disabilities a reality. Obstacles such as the discrepancy between normative framework and resources are described and so does the lack of political will.

Rationale: Quality education to persons with disabilities can only be ensured when the right policies and strategies are put in place. It is therefore high time developing countries and especially in Africa adopted policies and strategies that can promote high quality education , not only for persons with disabilities but also for everyone else.

### **Detailed description of the learning activity**

In order for special needs education to be beneficial to persons with disabilities, it must be supported by policies and strategies which are long lasting and sustainable. All stakeholders in the education sector should be involved in the formulation of these policies and strategies. Parents of these learners, persons with disabilities themselves, education managers at all levels should all take part. Funding organizations should also be consulted as they would wish to see that their funds are put to the intended purpose

Special needs education is an expensive venture and so African countries need to increase their investment in this sector and should especially cater for the poorest of the poor in the provision of educational services, for they are often overlooked. Improved access to this type of education requires commitment and political good will on the part of politicians and other policy makers. UNESCO has been at the fore front in supporting special needs education in developing countries. Also in 2006 the United Nations General Assembly issued a proclamation which gave guidelines in matters of policy and implementation strategy of special needs education. The Document among other things recommended that although there are some challenges in the implementation of special needs education, the alternative of excluding big section of the community from accessing education would be more costly.

The document also recommended that countries take immediate steps and eliminate constitutional barriers and offer free and compulsory education to all children. The rights of persons with disabilities should be ensured; the ministry of education should take charge for the provision of all types of education and budgets of administration of education should be amalgamated. As a long term strategy, training of teacher administrators and teachers should be done immediately and conditions impeding teachers' work should be removed. The curriculum offered should reflect the best practice and school facilities such as buildings should be designed to meet the needs of all learners with disabilities.

To ensure that learners with disabilities benefit maximally, it is important that research be engaged in to improve the quality of education and always compare with what is taking place in other countries especially those that have succeeded in imparting quality education to their citizens who live with disabilities.

### **Formative Evaluation**

Learning Tip 3 : To do this activity well, you need to hold a number of discussions with your colleagues, an experienced teacher in your school who can serve as your mentor and Educational Managers at your district, province or at the Ministry of Education headquarters.

Question 1. What would you think are important elements to include in a policy for learners with special needs?

Question 2. Imagine you have had a meeting with your Area Education Officer.

Suggest recommendations you would give him or her to improve the quality of special needs education in your country.

Question 3. As a teacher of special needs education, what challenges are you likely to face in your classroom? Suggest how you would overcome these challenges.

### **Possible answers**

Question 1

You can consider the following points: Source of funding.

- Participation of parents or guardians, persons with disabilities themselves, education managers and political leaders.
- Input from specialists such as doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, sociologists and counsellors.
- Contribution from human rights organizations.
- Consider how the policy will be monitored and evaluated in the short run and in the long run.
- Critically consider the facilities available.
- Assessment protocols should also be considered

## Learning Activity 4

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### Question 2.

Look at the following suggestions:

- Provision of learning inputs such as Braille machines, wheel chairs, white canes, intelligence tests, hearing aids and vision enhancing gadgets.
- Regular inspection in the schools.
- Organizing seminars and workshops and induction courses.
- Funding some Guest Speakers to visit schools and inspire learners with disabilities.
- Providing funding for school activities such as concerts and science fairs.
- Possibility of availing funds for teachers to travel to other countries offering better quality special needs education.
- Providing funds to teachers to go for further training, hence enhancing their skills.

### Question 3

You can consider the following challenges:

- Large classes.
- Lack of adequate facilities for all learners with disabilities.
- Cooperation from parents; some may be over protective and others may be rejecting
- Running a parallel curriculum in an inclusive setting.
- Teaching in an inclusive environment is not easy so as a teacher you have to be a jack of all trades and yet this is seldom possible.
- Finding time to teach, interact with parents and other professionals, etc.
- Ensuring that high quality of education is maintained and yet running different types of assessment

### How to overcome these challenges.

- Group your learners according to the type of disability.
- Approach various stakeholders for assistance in availing the necessary facilities. Channel your request through your head teacher and Area Education officer.
- Sensitize parents through regular meetings with them and in some other cases, guide and counsel them.
- Attend refresher courses and update yourself with techniques of running parallel curriculum. It might be necessary to even go for a higher degree and specialize in this area.
- Formulate a realistic time table for yourself and follow it. Keep researching in the area of special needs education.

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- Liaise with other teachers and design a timetable for meeting these people, say every Monday and Friday at 4 pm and so on, depending of course on your teaching timetable.
- Remember the old adage? Once a teacher always a teacher. So you have to keep reading in order to update and re-skill yourself.



# Learning Activity 5

Empowering learners with disabilities

## Objectives

By the end of this learning activity, you should be able to:

- a) Use interactive methods when teaching persons with disabilities
- b) Design ways of fostering self-esteem in learners with disabilities.

## Summary

Learners with disabilities can be empowered in a number of ways, such as involving them in practical activities, providing literature about successful persons with disabilities, organizing competitions for them, inviting guest speakers with disabilities to talk to them and to teach them life skills.

### Key words

Life skills

Improvisation

Individualized Education Programme (IEP)

Empowerment

Learner friendly methods

Self-esteem

## List of relevant readings

1. Bateman, B, D, & Linden, M, A. (1998). Better IEPs: How to develop legally correct and educationally useful programs (3rd ed). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.
2. Goodman, J. F & Bond, L. (1993) The Individualized Education Program: A retrospective critique. *Journal of Special Education*, 26, 408-422.
3. Hallahan, P, H & Kauffman J.M (2006) *Exceptional Learners: Introduction to special education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
4. Howe, K, R. & Miramontes, O .B. (1992) *The ethics of special education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
5. Kauffman, J .M, (1995) Why we must celebrate a diversity of restrictive environments. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 10, 225-232.

6. Kauffman J. M. (1999a), Today's special education and its messages for tomorrow. *Journal of Special Education*, 32, 244-254.
7. Yell, M, L, (1998) *The law and special education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

### List of relevant resources

1. Computer with internet facility and copyright free materials
2. Video and CD Rom
3. Radio cassette Recorder and audio tapes
4. TV set
5. Pupils

### List of useful links

Useful Link # 1

Title: Contemporary Educational Psychology/ Chapter 5: Students with Special Educational Needs.

URL:

[https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Contemporary\\_Educational\\_Psychology/Chapter\\_5:\\_Students\\_with\\_Special\\_Educational\\_Needs](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Contemporary_Educational_Psychology/Chapter_5:_Students_with_Special_Educational_Needs)

Description: This article looks at growing support for people with disabilities, legislation and its effects in the United States. It then goes on to consider the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 in that country. The Americans Disabilities Act of (1990 ADA) is then briefly described, followed by Individual with Disabilities Education Act (or IDEA). Responsibilities of Teachers for Students with Disabilities is yet another topic described in this document. The document then dwells at length with Alternative Assessments for individuals with disabilities before tackling the concept of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). This concept means a combination of settings that involve learners with regular classrooms and programmes. There then follows a detailed description of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which we have already touched on. The document then outlines the following categories of disabilities: Learning Disabilities, Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Intellectual disabilities, Behavioural disorders and Physical disabilities and sensory impairments. Finally, the document analyses the value of including students with special needs with "normal" students in the learning process.

Rationale: This document argues that learners with exceptionalities should be considered just like any other learners. But since they are vulnerable, they should benefit from legal protection. Teachers have the duty and obligation to ensure that these learners also benefit from special assessments and are integrated and included in all educational programmes.

## Learning Activity 5

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### Useful Link # 2

Title: Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning.

URL: <http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/confintea/pdf/con5eng.pdf>

Description: This article discusses proclamations made during a conference in Hamburg. Although it mainly focuses on adult learning, there are some sections on special needs education. Among other things, it highlights the need to empower persons with disabilities, raises awareness about prejudice and discrimination and champions the cause of other marginalized groups such as women and persons with disabilities.

Rationale: In many societies adult learners, women, and persons with disabilities are marginalized. This Declaration advocates for change of attitude towards these marginalized groups. There is therefore an urgent need to improve the quality of life of these people and to empower them by making them conscious of their rights.

### Useful Links # 3

Title: 20 Tips to Promote Positive Self-Esteem in Kids with LD

Author: Richard Lavoie.

URL: <http://www.ricklavoie.com/esteemart.html>

Description: After outlining the 20 tips, the author asserts that the child's self-esteem is determined by the unfettered acceptance he or she receives from others and from the parents. He opines that four areas are crucial in determining self-esteem, namely: Social (acceptance, friendships), Competence (in skill area), Physical (clothing, attractiveness) and Character (effort, generosity)

Rationale: For any person to learn properly and meaningfully, he or she must have a positive regard of himself/herself. This concept of self-esteem should therefore be inculcated in an individual right from childhood.

### Useful Link # 4

Title: UN convention on disability.

URL: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

Description: This UN document discusses among other things sexual and reproductive health services for persons with disabilities. There have been some amendments suggested by some countries.

Rationale: Persons with disabilities should be accorded the same facilities like persons without disabilities in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, essential medical treatment and essential nutrition in order for them to have good lives.

### **Detailed description of the learning activity**

This learning activity is designed to help you as a special needs teacher use interactive methods of teaching when conducting lessons with learners with disabilities. These are usually referred to as participatory methods or learner -friendly methods. When using these methods, you encourage learners to be active and you design activities which will make them learn by doing those activities. These methods involve a lot of questioning and the learner will be directed to the right answers by the teacher through such questioning. They also involve a lot of questioning and experimentation. By engaging in such activities, the individual learns better and is able to apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes in various situations. He or she will be in a better position to solve problems affecting him or her and others.

Examples of such methods are: guided discussion, discovery method, experimentation, individual projects and others. One of the most powerful tools a special needs education teacher can use to assist learners with disabilities is the Individualized Education Programme, (IEP). According to Hallahan and Kauffman(2006),this programme spells out clearly what teachers should do in order to meet the needs of individual exceptional learners, but the plan must first be approved by parents or guardians. You will need to assist learners solve problems in a practical way. For this reason you will have to emphasize use of experiments in clarifying concepts. As much as possible use your immediate environment and encourage improvisation. Learners should also engage in debate and drama activities when practicing what they have learnt. This enables learners internalize learnt material more easily.

You can enhance learner's self-esteem by discussing with them success stories of great people with disability past and present. This can be done by availing literature about such people. As for persons who are blind, they can be taught to use a white cane to locate certain places. In time such people become confident and after practicing many times, they will easily locate various destinations.

Another way of enhancing self-esteem in learners with disabilities is to encourage healthy competitions in them. Take a simple example. Suppose you organize a reading competition between blind and sighted students and somehow blind students do better. In this case blind students might be encouraged to maintain their standard and will certainly be motivated.

You can also foster self-esteem in these learners by periodically inviting guest speakers who are with disabilities but who have big positions in society. This will make learners with disabilities want to excel and be like those guest speakers. Teaching learners life skills like

self-awareness, coping with stress, coping with emotion, decision making, and assertiveness is also an effective way of empowering learners with disabilities.

### Formative evaluation

Learning Tip 4: try to request a teacher who is versed with drama to assist you organize a role play. If you are unable to get him or her, ask any experienced teacher who knows various teaching methods. He or she will know how to carry out a role play and will assist you. Then you can do various role plays about empowering learners with disabilities. Discuss the final answers with your colleagues before dispatching them to your lecturer via the internet.

Question 1: In about 200 words, explain the methods you would use to empower learners with disabilities. Choose different methods and not the ones described above.

Question 2: What effect will the empowering of your learners have on their academic success?

### Possible answers.

Question 1

You can consider the following participatory learning methods:

Think-pair-share. In this method, learners form pairs. Then they discuss some activity and then present their findings to the rest of the class. But this method does not work with learners with speech defects though it is applicable to learners with other disabilities.

Brainstorming. This is a method whereby individuals contribute different ideas to a question. Even if an idea is not correct, you do not reject it outright; you wait and at the end of the activity, you go through all the ideas presented and reach consensus with every one by improving and enriching what the students have given. This method also works with all learners with disabilities except those with speech disabilities.

Demonstration method. In this method you assign learners different activities and ask them to report their findings. Also you may show your learners how something operates. For example, you can teach blind students how to use a Braille machine using this method. This method is quite effective when teaching students with speech disabilities.

Role play. To use this method you can ask students to act a short simple play highlighting a certain activity or responsibility. An example would be female students demonstrating what a mother does or males depicting what a father does. Note however that role plays are not gender-specific; female students may perform female roles and male roles. The same thing of course applies to male students. Obviously, this method won't work with blind students though it is an effective learning tool with learners who have other disabilities.

- Buzz groups. Here learners are allowed to talk in groups but in low tones so that they do not disturb one another. They then agree and a representative or representatives of each group present the findings.

### Question 2

You can consider the following points:

- Ability for learners to solve problems
- Improved study skills
- Increased knowledge base
- Enhanced skills and competences
- Improved interaction skills and peer support
- Enhanced self- esteem and confidence
- Abilities for exploration and initiative are sharpened
- Self-reliance.

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# XI.Glossary

**Assertiveness:** The ability by someone to express strong feelings strongly and clearly without hurting or annoying others.

**Braille:** A machine with raised dots on which blind people read with their fingers different letters and symbols.

**Brainstorming:** A method of teaching whereby a teacher receives answers from students whether correct or not but processes them with the students thereby leading them to the right answers.

**Buzz groups:** A method of teaching whereby groups of students discuss answers to questions set by the teacher and then present their findings.

**Cognitive stimulation :** This is the exciting of the brain of someone or some people through questioning or narrating some interesting information.

**Coping with emotion:** This is the capacity by an individual or individuals to control strong feelings about an experience or experiences they have gone through.

**Coping with stress:** This is the ability by an individual or individuals to come to terms or withstand a painful experience they have undergone.

**Creativity:** This is the capacity by an individual or individuals to design some- thing that is original.

**Critical thinking:** A type of thinking whereby you consider the strong points and the weak points of something.

**Demonstration method:** This is a method of teaching whereby a teacher or students present things they have done to enhance teaching and learning

**Drawback :** Disadvantage.

**Empowerment:** A process of building self-confidence in an individual or individuals.

**Exceptionalities:** These are individual differences of persons with disabilities.

**Experiential methods:** These are methods of teaching which stress active participation of a learner in his or her learning. Sometimes they are referred to as child-centered or learner friendly methods or interactive methods.

**Germane:** Relevant.

**Hard of hearing:** Someone who is hard of hearing hears partially. His or hearing capacity is impaired but not severely as opposed to a deaf person who does not hear completely.

**Improvisation:** Substituting something because you cannot access it due to lack of money to buy it for use.

**Individualized Education Programme:** This is a learning programme for learners with disabilities drawn up by a team of special needs education experts for each child with disability to ensure that the learner maximally benefits.

**Life skills:** These are psychosocial skills an individual uses or should use to survive and live harmoniously with others.

**Mainstream:** General classes.

**Mental retardation:** This is subnormal intellectual functioning and maladaptive skills of an individual.

**Impede.** This means to prevent or to frustrate

**Policy:** This is a decision or decisions taken by an individual or individuals that will shape actions, ideas, trends or practices in a country or organization.

**Self-awareness:** This is a life skill whereby an individual is required to assess his or her strong traits before engaging in any type of behavior.

**Self-esteem:** This is positive regard of one self. An individual with high self-esteem is confident, optimistic and success-oriented.

**Sign language:** A means of communication with persons with speech disability or with the deaf where words are substituted with gestures. It has its own alphabet expressed in symbols.

**Strategy.** This is a long term plan aimed at achieving a goal or goals.

**Think-pair-share:** A method of teaching whereby individual learners pair up, think about a learning task or tasks and present them jointly. What is presented is an agreed position by the pair.



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## XII.Compiled list of Compulsory Readings

Reading # 1: Teaching the Blind to See.

Reference: May 1975 Fate Magazine Author: Agatha Tutko <http://www.creativespirit.net/carolannliaros/BlindAware/blinda.html>

Abstract: This very interesting and exciting article depicts a story of how one Carol Ann Liaros is teaching the blind to "see". She was doing this through extrasensory perception. She set herself three objectives: to develop the ability of visually handicapped individuals through techniques of stimulating dermal response; to help visually handicapped persons implement skills of determining colours, shapes, and positions of material objects and to discover whether such factors as age and intelligence would influence the acquisition of such skills. After seven weeks training, several blind persons discovered that they were able to "see" in a way they could not verbalize nor even understand

Rationale: This article describes an interesting scenario and asserts that not all is lost for the blind. It argues that given the appropriate stimulation, motivation and right methods it is possible to work on the sense of sight for the blind so that they "see" certain things. I strongly recommend this reading.

Reading # 2: Teaching students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Complete reference : Birkbeck, University of London- Microsoft Internet Explorer. (Retrieved on 5 December 2007)

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/disability/resources/hearing>

Abstract: This document discusses various approaches of teaching persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. It looks at techniques of guiding these students and even explores methods to use when assisting students with an interpreter. The teacher is cautioned that some methods will work and others will not. The degree of impairment and the background of the student will affect the usefulness and applicability of these methods .The teacher is given tips on how to use auditory materials, the laboratory, how to teach reading, how to handle group interaction and discussion, field experiences, research and testing.

Rationale: This reading offers comprehensive methods to both the teacher and students with hearing disabilities. The language is clear and sufficiently precise and even gives provision to the teacher to call upon the assistance of an interpreter if needs be. Operations definitions of the terms deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind are given.

### **XIII. List of Multi Media Resources**

Recommended textbooks and journals

Simulated material on CD/Video/DVD/Audio Cassettes/Radio Cassette

Recorder

Discussion with colleagues

Web based copyright free materials

Items such as Braille, hearing aids and other gadgets used by persons with disabilities.

Computer with internet facility

### **XIV. Synthesis of the module**

At the beginning of this module, we defined special needs education as a type of education given to persons with disabilities. These disabilities are physical, deafness and hard of hearing, speech disorders, blindness and mental retardation. Although giftedness is, strictly speaking not a disability, it is usually included as persons who fall into this category cannot benefit from the education ordinarily given to persons without disabilities. Emphasis was put on inclusive education as opposed to integration. We then discussed characteristics of different types of disabilities and the methods special needs teachers use to optimize the learning of individuals with disabilities. Policies and strategies to use in enhancing the quality of this type of education were also discussed. The module finally examined the techniques teachers of special education can use to empower learners with disabilities and to enhance their self-esteem.

### **XV. Summative evaluation**

Learning Tip 5

This is a final Assessment for this Module. It is a strictly individual assessment so you will work on it alone. Answers should be sent to your lecturer for marking and grading. The process of sending the work will be through the internet.

In this section, you are going to be examined on what we have been sharing in this module. It is a final assessment in this module, so to speak. You are therefore advised to look at the questions carefully and I hope you managed to access all the links and reference materials recommended to you. Please do not rush and first ensure that you have read the module and internalized it before attempting the questions. In this summative evaluation, we are essentially testing your ability to compose detailed, logically argued and creative responses.

There are four essay questions which are in the main, based on the four learning activities in the module. A marking guide has been developed to assess you. Each question carries a maximum mark of 25 marks, giving a total of 100 marks. We are seeking in this exercise to find out whether you have understood the concepts in the module and whether you can apply them in your classroom as you strive to impart quality teaching to all your learners especially those with disabilities.

### The questions are given below:

Question 1: Discuss the role of a Special Needs Teacher in an inclusive classroom.

Question 2: Of what importance is Special Needs Education to you as an aspiring teacher in this field?

Question 3: Examine the techniques you can use to empower learners with disabilities.

Question 4 : Analyze policies that can be adopted by your country to strengthen Special Needs Education.

### Answer Key

Question 1.

The role of a special needs education teacher.

- To guide and counsel his or her learners.
- To cater for all the individual differences of learners: personality, socioeconomic status, age, sex and emotional differences.
- To create harmonious relationships among learners with disabilities on the one hand and those without on the other.
- To collaborate with parents and other professionals with a view to enhancing academic success and character development.
- To act as a role model for his or her learners to emulate.
- To carry out parallel assessment of different categories of learners in his or her classroom.
- To instill confidence among all learners especially those with disabilities.

Question 2. Importance of special needs education for the teacher.

- Makes the teacher intellectually versatile since he or she has to apply varied methods and has to teach varied content to the learners.
- Enables the teacher understand learners' individual differences.
- Equips the teacher with basic diagnostic skills of different disabilities so that he or she works easily with parents and other professionals.
- Cultivates patience, tolerance and perseverance which are important attributes when one is serving others.
- Can enhance the teacher's reputation as he or she works with others in his or her country and beyond.
- Enables the teacher to be skilled in using Braille machines and other assistive devices for learners with disabilities.

Question 3. Techniques to use to empower learners with disabilities.

- Engage all learners in various learning tasks and experiments.
- Liaise with educational managers, politicians, and other opinion leaders through the teacher's immediate supervisor to foster learning.
- Engage in action research and identify problems to solve in the classroom.
- Arrange science fairs and concerts and invite Guest Speakers to inspire learners.
- Organize school trips so that learners are exposed to varied surroundings.
- Cultivate rapport for all learners but be consistent, assertive and methodical when dealing with them
- Assign learners different leadership roles e.g. as group leaders.
- Strive to learn all their names in order to motivate them.
- Do not reject their wrong answers outright; rather improve upon them.

Question 4. Policies

- Advocate for increased funding
- Get in touch with influential figures in the country and draw their attention to the plight of your learners with disabilities.
- Contact various funding agencies through your head teacher.
- Push for legislation for inclusive education through your member of parliament.
- Champion the cause of human rights for everyone.
- Sensitize the community through seminars and workshops.
- Arrange for prize giving to persons with disability who excel.

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## **XVII. Main author of the module**

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