Experiences of Students with SLD at University: A Case Study

Authors : Lorna Martha Dreyer

Abstract : Consistent with the changing paradigm on the rights of people with disabilities and in pursuit of social justice, there is internationally an increase in students with disabilities enrolling at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This trend challenges HEI's to transform and attain Education for All (EFA) as a global imperative. However, while physical and sensory disabilities are observable, students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) do not present with any visible indications and are often referred to as "hidden" or "invisible" disabilities. This qualitative case study aimed to illuminate the experiences of students with SLDs at a South African university. The research was, therefore, guided by Vygotsky's social-cultural theory (SCT). This research was conducted within a basic qualitative research methodology embedded in an interpretive paradigm. Data was collected through an online background survey and semi-structured interviews. Thematic qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the collected data systematically. From a social justice perspective, the major findings suggest that there are several factors that impede equal education for students with SLDs at university. Most participants in this small-scale study experienced a lack of acknowledgment and support from lecturers. They reported valuing the support of family and friends more than that of lecturers. It is concluded that lecturers need to be reflective of their pedagogical practices if authentic inclusion is to be realised.

Keywords : higher education, inclusive education, pedagogy,social-cultural theory, specific learning disabilities

Conference Title : ICHETLPA 2023 : International Conference on Higher Education Teaching, Learning, Pedagogy and Assessment

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : August 17-18, 2023