Creating an Enabling Learning Environment for Learners with Visual Impairments Inlesotho Rural Schools by Using Asset-Based Approaches

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Abstract : Enabling the learning environment is a significant and adaptive technique necessary to navigate learners' educational challenges. However, research has indicated that quality provision of education in the environments that are enabling, especially to learners with visual impairments (LVIs, hereafter) in rural schools, remain an ongoing challenge globally. Hence, LVIs often have a lower level of academic performance as compared to their peers. To balance this gap and fulfill learners'fundamentalhuman rights¬ of receiving an equal quality education, appropriate measures and structures that make enabling learning environment a better place to learn must be better understood. This paper, therefore, intends to find possible means that rural schools of Lesotho can employ to make the learning environment for LVIs enabling. The present study aims to determine suitable assets that can be drawn to make the learning environment for LVIs enabling. The study is also informed by the transformative paradigm and situated within a qualitative research approach. Data were generated through focus group discussions with twelve teachers who were purposefully selected from two rural primary schools in Lesotho. The generated data were then analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework. The findings of the study indicated that participating teachers do have an understanding that rural schools boast of assets (existing and hidden) that have a positive influence in responding to the special educational needs of LVIs. However, the participants also admitted that although their schools boast of assets, they still experience limited knowledge about the use of the existing assets and thus, realized a need for improved collaboration, involvement of the existing assets, and enhancement of academic resources to make LVIs' learning environment enabling. The findings of this study highlight the significance of the effective use of assets. Additionally, coincides with literature that shows recognizing and tapping into the existing assets enable learning for LVIs. In conclusion, the participants in the current study indicated that for LVIs' learning environment to be enabling, there has to be sufficient use of the existing assets. The researchers, therefore, recommend that the appropriate use of assets is good, but may not be sufficient if the existing assets are not adequately managed. Hence,VILs experience a vicious cycle of vulnerability. It was thus, recommended that adequate use of assets and teachers' engagement as active assets should always be considered to make the learning environment a better place for LVIs to learan in the future

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