Special Education Teachers' Knowledge and Application of the Concept of Curriculum Adaptation for Learners with Special Education Needs in Zambia

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Abstract : This paper presents results of a study conducted to establish special education teachers' knowledge and application of curriculum adaptation of the 2013 revised curriculum in Zambia. From a sample of 134 respondents (120 special education teachers, 12 education officers, and 2 curriculum specialists), the study collected both quantitative and qualitative data to establish whether teachers understood and applied the concept of curriculum adaptation in teaching learners with special education needs. To obtain data validity and reliability, the researchers collected data by use of mixed methods. Semi-structured questionnaires and interviews were administered. Lesson Observations and post-lesson discussions were conducted on 12 selected teachers from the 120 sample that answered the questionnaires. Frequencies, percentages, and significant differences were derived through the statistical package for social sciences. Qualitative data were analyzed with the help of NVIVO qualitative software to create themes and obtain coding density to help with conclusions. Both quantitative and qualitative data were concurrently compared and related. The results revealed that special education teachers lacked a thorough understanding of the concept of curriculum adaptation, thus denying learners with special education needs the opportunity to benefit from the revised curriculum. The teachers were not oriented on the revised curriculum and hence facing numerous challenges trying to adapt the curriculum. The study recommended training of special education teachers in curriculum adaptation.