

THE DAILY LIVING SKILLS (DLS): FOR IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD FOR LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (IDS)

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ABSTRACT

The present study was a case study undertaken to gather the views of teachers in the Zengeza cluster of Harare province of Zimbabwe. The study generated data through the use of in-depth open ended interviews and document analysis. Participants were selected from the 5 schools in Zengeza cluster that have children with IDs. A non-probability convenience sample of 40 research participants was used in the study. This comprised 5 heads of schools, 5 deputy heads and 30 teachers making a sample of 40 all in all. Results from the study, among others show that not all school heads, deputy heads, regular class teachers and specialist teachers were knowledgeable of the teaching of DLS to learners with intellectual disabilities. It emerged that most participants were demotivated by large class sizes attributed to shortage of resource materials and infrastructure. Most resource rooms were improvised and showed lack of concern by school authorities as they mostly did not bother to build resource rooms with ample space for learners. It also emerged that staff development programmes on the teaching of DLS were not offered in schools. Curriculum modification was being done by some teachers in schools but parental support somehow lacked. The study also found that learners with IDs benefitted a lot from the teaching of daily living skills. This was seen from the way learners performed after school. The curriculum of learners with IDs was partially modified by teachers may be due to the reason that they lacked training. The study recommended that there be awareness campaigns to effect attitude change through educating the teachers, headmasters, parents, peers and the whole community. All teacher training colleges should include courses on special education for children with IDs and internal staff development for teachers and heads currently in service, that is, pre-service and post service training. The government of Zimbabwe should ensure that all schools get adequate material, financial and human resources and the recommended class sizes. It should take into consideration the extra special needs of the intellectually disabled individuals. Learners with IDs should be taught functional academics for them to achieve self-sufficiency, independence and to be more acceptable in their community. Teachers have to use concrete aids every time for easy mastery of concepts by learners with intellectual disabilities. There is need for teachers, parents and other stakeholders to practice patience when teaching learners with IDs to master daily living skills. All stakeholders need to have positive attitudes towards learners with intellectual disabilities.

KEYWORDS: Teachers, Living Skills, Schools, Specialist Teachers, Learners, Dressing, Basic Reading, Grooming and Writing.