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Perspectives of Teachers on the Teaching of Learners with Dyslexia at Intermediate Phase in Mainstream Primary Schools

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Abstract:

The inclusion of learners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools requires the provision of a least-restrictive teaching and learning environment which celebrates the uniqueness of all individuals. In view of this, the purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of teachers in teaching dyslexic learners at the intermediate phase in mainstream primary schools. A qualitative research approach was utilised in the study. This offered participants an opportunity to freely reveal their opinions on the phenomenon under investigation. The population for this study comprised teachers who taught classes with both dyslexic and non-dyslexic learners at the intermediate phase. Purposive sampling was used to select twenty-four teachers with a minimum of three years of teaching experience from the eight schools under study. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from the research participants. Data were analysed thematically. The study established that dyslexic learners face diverse reading, writing and arithmetic challenges and these affect their overall academic performance. The study recommends that teachers should consider the preferred learning styles of individuals with dyslexia in their planning and delivery of academic content.

Keywords: *Dyslexia, teaching, mainstream primary school, intermediate phase, individualised instruction, learner*

1. Introduction

The significance of reading competence in academic development and achievement cannot be overemphasised in today's education system. Snowing and Hulme (2005) state that most academic concepts are best mastered through the process of reading and understanding the reading material. Karemaker, Pitchford and O'Malley (2009) further contend that acquiring reading and writing skills contributes to effective schooling and facilitates social inclusion in a world where literacy seems to be highly upheld. In view of this, learners who cannot read and write are a cause of concern to both parents and teachers in most countries worldwide. Several researchers refer to this condition as dyslexia (Brasseur-Hock, Hock, Kieffer, Biancarosa & Deshler, 2011; Lemperou, Chostelidou & Griva, 2011). Apart from oral and written language deficits, most dyslexic learners have perceptual and memory disorders (Rowcliffe, 2002). Another challenge mostly encountered is that of phonological processing. Deficiency in this skill ultimately affects a learner's capacity to learn grapheme-phoneme correspondence. On a different note, Alexander-Passe (2007) stresses that failure to acquire effective reading and writing skills may further lead to the development of emotional and behavioural problems, which include low self-esteem, negative self-perception, disruptiveness and withdrawal from many academic activities performed during the teaching and learning process.

Dyslexia emanates from biological or cognitive factors (Regan & Woods, 2000). According to Rodrick (2008), researchers like Samuel Orton (1925), who viewed dyslexia as having a biological origin, described it as a neurological disorder. Since then, many researchers who have explored this avenue have investigated different areas that seem to link dyslexia and neurobiology (Ramus, 2004). On the other hand, Cylak (2010) opines that the reading process is a highly composite cognitive task that relies on brain systems that were originally devoted to other functions. There are many possible causes of dyslexia at a cognitive level and these include visual deficits, language-based deficits and auditory deficits (Ramus, 2004).

Notwithstanding the complicated nature of dyslexia, Ramus (2004) posits that the diverse needs of learners with dyslexia should be effectively met in the teaching and learning situation. Several aspects, however, seem to affect the academic success of the concerned individuals. Rodrick (2008) cites teachers' lack of knowledge, negative attitudes, and inadequate skills and experience as some of them. It is also assumed that constant changes in the curriculum may also contribute to some of the problems that are faced by teachers while facilitating and conducting tutorial sessions for the affected learners. This often happens when on-going professional teacher development workshops are not being effectively conducted. On the other hand, when learners have adapted to certain teaching and learning methodologies, they often find it difficult to switch to new ones (Robinson, 2002). Sudden curriculum changes in the South African education system do not seem to be helpful either. Since the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), the system has not fully established some generic ways of teaching and learning. First, the curriculum was adjusted to the National

Curriculum Statements (NCS), then to the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) (Robinson, 2002) and finally, to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS).

While the majority of teachers are still struggling to make sense of what is actually expected of them, Robinson (2002) contends that they are the primary and basic service providers in the education system. Therefore, the relevance of their opinions with regard to the education of learners with disabilities is vital. Teachers have the capacity to further influence the designing of educational programmes that are sensitive to the needs of such learners, inclusive of those with dyslexia. Therefore, this study sought to explore teachers' perspectives on effective teaching and learning of intermediate-phase learners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools with the ultimate goal of identifying effective strategies for improved service delivery.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that formed the basis of this study is the **dual-route model** of learning to read and write. This model presents approaches to cognitive development in which learners learn to read and write (Perfetti & Dunlop, 2008). In the dual-route model, the written language process is composed of two distinct interactive procedures: the lexical route and the non-lexical route. Reading occurs in two routes: through grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules and also via semantics which is the use of familiar words (Snowling & Hulme, 2005). According to Snowling and Hulme (2005), the use of the terms lexical and non-lexical was originated by Max Coltheart, referring to the two reading routes.

A dual-route model provides a powerful theoretical framework for interpreting the written language performance of individuals with acquired surface dyslexia, acquired phonological dyslexia and developmental dyslexia (Rapcsak et al., 2007). Acquired surface dyslexia arises after brain damage in a previously literate person. It is characterised by difficulty in reading and spelling irregular words, which indicates impairment in the lexical route (Snowling & Hulme, 2005). Acquired phonological dyslexia occurs when there is damage in non-lexical route while the lexical route that allows reading familiar words remains intact. It results in an inability to read non-words aloud and identify the sounds of a single letter. Developmental dyslexia refers to the deficit which is normally diagnosed in learners who have difficulty in acquiring a normal reading skill for their appropriate age or have never attained a normal level of reading (Lallier, Tainturier, Dering, Donnadieu, Valdois & Thiery, 2011).

3. Methodology

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. According to Creswell (2003), this approach caters to the perspectives of participants about a phenomenon and the conclusions they draw from certain experiences. It emphasises gathering data in a natural environment (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Maree, 2007). In relation to this, an exploratory case study design was adopted. The population for this study was made up of intermediate-phase teachers who taught Grades 4, 5 and 6. The circuit under study had a total of 24 primary schools and only 8 were purposively chosen on the basis of their geographical location. These were conveniently located within accessible distance of the school in which the researcher was stationed. From each school, 3 intermediate phase teachers, each from grades 4, 5 and 6, were selected, making up a sample of 24 participants. Data were solicited through individual interviews. An interview schedule was used to guide the interviews to explore the experiences of teachers as well as the challenges they face in teaching dyslexic learners in mainstream schools.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the District Department of Education and the Principals of schools prior to actually interviewing the participants. 20-25 minute interviews were conducted with the selected teachers during tea break and lunchtime. Interviews were carried out at the indicated times to prevent the research process from interfering with the normal working schedules of participants. The offices of participants and their specialised rooms were used for interviews based on the conviction of the researcher that they offered a convenient platform for genuine discussions. The interviews began with debriefing sessions where participants were informed about the objectives of the study and its significance in improving the academic development of learners with dyslexia. Participants were assured that their contributions would be treated confidently and that anonymity was paramount in presenting results. It was emphasised that participants are free to participate and withdraw from the study at any point in the endeavour. Participants of the study were given codes to protect the exposure of their identity. Collected data were analysed thematically. This entailed the transcription of the voice recordings of interviews of participants. The transcriptions were read again and again to foster an understanding of the responses of participants regarding the teaching of learners with dyslexia. The contents of the interviews were used to develop typical patterns in the data. These patterns were harnessed to develop themes, which were generally consistent with the research objectives. Data were then collated as guided by the ascertained themes. This meant that the verbatim statements of participants were organised to support the findings of the study that were arranged thematically.

4. Findings of the Study

The report on the findings of the study ensued as informed by the purpose of the study. The main themes that emerged from the study include the signs and symptoms of dyslexia, support services for learners with dyslexia and challenges faced by teachers in teaching learners with dyslexia.

4.1. Theme 1: Signs and Symptoms of Dyslexia

The responses of participants on the signs and symptoms of dyslexia include poor visual processing of information, poor auditory processing of information, poor automatic and fluent reading skills and poor performance in written tasks.

4.1.1. Sub-theme 1: Poor Visual Processing of Information

The study established that some learners with dyslexia experience difficulties regarding visual perception of information. This involves visual discrimination, visual closure and memory or concentration. Participants explained that learners with visual discrimination problems cannot identify similarities and differences in objects, pictures, letters and words. They often confuse 'similar' looking letters like 'n and u; m and w; b and d'. This is also closely related to seeing letters and words in reverse, where words like 'was' would be read as 'saw' and 'not' as 'ton,' amongst others. Those with challenges associated with visual closure were said to be unable to successfully complete given words like 'moth-r; b-x; bo-ks'. Furthermore, dyslexic learners who exhibit visual closure deficits often fail to recall letters or words previously learnt or mastered. In other words, they fail to retrieve them from memory when required. The ability to remember words through the arrangement of letters helps learners to fill in missing letters and subsequently read the ensuing words correctly. Other visual challenges faced by learners with dyslexia, as identified by participants, include poor left/right, up/down, and bottom/above orientation. In view of this, two participants said:

- T21: *Learners with reading deficits have problems in mastering the features of letters and words such that they are not easily discriminated against in the process of reading and writing.*
- T2: *Sometimes, learners with dyslexia hardly read and write any correct sentence because they encounter problems in recalling information from memory. They also adopt a wrong reading orientation as they usually progress from right to left or bottom up.*

4.1.2. Sub-theme 2: Poor Auditory Processing of Information

The study further revealed that some dyslexic learners experience problems in the processing of auditory information. It is common to see such learners tilting their heads during instruction as a sign that they have speech-sound deficits. Participants also emphasised that auditory sensory deficits may further cause impaired speech perception leading to limited phonemic awareness of sounds. Phonemic awareness problems subsequently result in difficulties in learning letter-sound correspondences during the process of reading development. In addition, some dyslexic learners tend to mishear or substitute words that sound like the actual auditory target. In this case, some may read n, p as b and d as t'. Other related challenges encountered may encompass having flat or monotonic speech while reading and receptive language deficits, which include semantics and syntax. It also emerged that short memory of letters and words previously taught is another indicator of dyslexia. This is often reflected in the spelling of new words and dictation tasks. In regard to this, one participant said:

- T16: *Dyslexic learners reflect hearing challenges that cause them to tilt their heads during instruction or continuously seek further clarification or explanation from teachers.*

4.1.3. Sub-theme 3: Poor Automatic and Fluent Reading Skills

It further emerged that some learners with dyslexia experience poor automatic word recognition and fluency. Those with automaticity deficits are recognised through poor rapid naming of visuals, such as numerals, letters, colours and objects. These identification activities involve a combination of phonological, orthographic and processing tasks, which represent a similar microcosm of cognitive tasks that are involved in reading development. Affected individuals often read very slowly and show a lack of confidence in tackling given learning tasks. Participants also said that those with fluency problems can be identified by their inability to articulate and pronounce letters and words clearly. In relation to this, two participants said:

- T7: *Yeah, to identify these learners is very simple. You can give them a simple reading activity to do individually. When they read, they will be stammering and pronouncing some words incorrectly. They can skip some of the words while reading and do not have confidence while doing in-class activities. They look a bit frustrated.*
- T18: *When they read, they point word for word most of the time; they even pronounce words incorrectly. It is difficult for them to sound up the alphabets. They cannot read the whole sentence without skipping some of the words."*

4.1.4. Sub-theme 4: Poor Performance in Written Tasks

The most notable concerns shared by teachers were the tendency of dyslexic learners to copy information incorrectly. Participants commented that the inability of dyslexic learners to read affects their writing skills. As such, they cannot complete whole sentences without making spelling errors, such as copying sentences incorrectly and writing wrong spellings. Some participants indicated that it is difficult for dyslexic learners to break words into syllables. They also have difficulties with spelling and grammar. Below is what two participants said:

- T12: *It is also difficult when it comes to writing exercises. Dyslexic learners cannot even copy sentences correctly. They write wrong spellings because they do not know or understand what they are writing about. Their handwriting is so bad. You cannot read what they are writing about.*
- T8: *They write what they think or anything that comes to their mind. It is hard for them to copy the sentence on the board. They copy sentences incorrectly and they skip some of the words.*

4.2. Theme 2: Challenges Faced by Teachers

The responses of participants on the challenges faced by teachers in teaching dyslexic learners showed that they are affected by limited knowledge of dyslexia, negative attitudes of administrators, other learners and parents, inadequate resources, large classes and inadequate time allocation.

4.2.1. Sub-theme 1: Limited Knowledge of Dyslexia

Teachers were perceived to experience difficulties in teaching learners with dyslexia owing to their lack of awareness and knowledge of this specific learning disability. Some teachers may not struggle with identifying indicators of dyslexia, although what is required beyond this detection appears to be where the problem begins. Teachers experience hurdles in teaching learners with dyslexia because they lack training in the area. A majority of them were trained to handle mainstream classes and, as such, find themselves with scarce knowledge about the nature of dyslexia and how to institute individualised instruction. One participant said:

- T12: *Most teachers lack the expertise to teach dyslexic learners because they are not clear about its nature, diagnosis, causes and strategies to mitigate its effects. Training institutions generally prepare teachers for general classes, and as such, they lack knowledge and understanding of reading and writing deficits.*

It also came to light that teachers use improper methods to teach reading and writing in mainstream schools because either they ignore the learning needs of learners with dyslexia or they do not know these needs. Furthermore, lack of language knowledge in teachers appeared as one of the issues that hinder the academic success of learners with reading challenges. The limited literacy training and knowledge on the part of teachers not only constrain their academic achievement but may also further lead to social and emotional problems.

4.2.2. Sub-theme 2: Attitudes of Stakeholders

Participants revealed that the general feeling of teachers that they do not have abilities to teach learners with dyslexia was one of the causes of their negative attitudes towards such individuals. Most teachers have significant misconceptions about dyslexia. Learners with dyslexia generally exhibit poor reading and writing skills. Their educational deficits, such as poor word recognition, letter-sound association and automatic reading, render them incapable of matching other classmates. Teaching dyslexic learners also requires patience from teachers, which is usually scarce as they tend to prefer to focus on learners who are fluent readers and excellent writers. Two participants said:

- T10: *It is usual for teachers to show negative attitudes to learners with dyslexia because those individuals are poor readers and they are perceived to contribute immensely to the lowering of the pass rates in schools.*
- T3: *These learners need serious attention. When you teach them, you have to use different reading and writing methods that can suit their conditions. You have to repeat your content several times so that they can understand.*

Learners that are taught in the same class with dyslexic individuals also tend to develop negative attitudes towards them. Affected learners are sometimes mocked and ridiculed, particularly owing to their not-so-palatable behaviours, such as tilting their heads while reading, finger tracing words, slow reading speed and confusion about letters. Their introverted characteristic makes them susceptible to dominance and bullying by others. In this regard, a participant said:

- T17: *Dyslexic learners are usually shunned by their colleagues because they are normally subjects of remediation sessions, read badly and are slow to complete assigned tasks.*

It also emerged that some parents have a negative attitude towards the school. This leads to some learners manifesting poor school attendance behaviours as a resistance towards the school in general and mastery of concepts. Parents that lack interest in school activities fail to supervise the work of their children and do not attend school meetings that centre on the progress of learners. In some instances, parents develop negative attitudes towards the education of their children with dyslexia because they wrongly associate disability with inability. They survive in the covert belief that such learners should be allowed to attend school to grow up together with their age mates rather than to gain academic ascendancy. On this note, one participant said:

- T15: *Some parents of learners with dyslexia exhibit negative attitudes towards the schooling of their children. They literally dampen them at school once they are enrolled and expect teachers to work alone in improving their reading and writing capabilities.*

4.2.3. Sub-theme 3: Limited Resources

Lack of material resources in schools also impedes the successful academic achievement of some learners with dyslexia. Human, material and financial resources need to be allocated to the education of learners with disabilities to meet their special educational needs to promote equity in curriculum access and outcomes. Inadequate teaching resources are a serious impediment in mitigating the challenges caused by this learning disability. Teaching resources, in this case, include teaching modules and guides, amongst others. While current education systems have adopted *e-learning* as a measure to improve efficiency in content acquisition, there is a feeling that people involved in the development and implementation of *e-learning* tools have continued to overlook the needs of learners with dyslexia. As such, these learners have limited access to the resources that may be offered to their counterparts without this disability and this leads to a disability divide or a certain form of exclusion. This calls on teachers to improvise or use locally available resources to enhance the learning of individuals with dyslexia. Two participants said:

- T14: *Learners with dyslexia are severely disadvantaged in terms of the availability of suitable resources for use in classrooms.*

This was buttressed by the views of a participant who stated that:

- T9: *Teachers that teach inclusive classes should complement the few resources which are used in schools through improvisation. They need to rely on Indigenous Knowledge Systems to offset the shortage of teaching resources for learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools.*

4.2.4. Sub-theme 4: Large Class Sizes

Participants indicated that learners with dyslexia naturally require more attention and assistance. It is essential for the traditionally large size of the classes to be reduced considerably for learners with dyslexia to obtain individualised attention. Teachers are generally convinced that to cope with the normal day-to-day problems in large classes is an insurmountable burden. The concern arises from the understanding that an impaired learner demands more attention from teachers, yet no additional allowance is provided by the system for those teachers who adhere to the prescribed class sizes. The growth of enrolment in mainstream primary schools suggests a huge possibility of having more learners with dyslexia in schools, thereby overstressing the utilisation of teaching staff and compromising on quality. Two participants said:

- T15: *Large teacher-pupil ratios in schools compromise quality teaching for learners with dyslexia.*
- T16: *Blotted class enrolments prevent close attention from being given to dyslexic learners, which naturally requires teachers to understand the educational deficits of learners and to provide teaching instruction that is tailor-made for the established reading and writing limitations.*

4.2.5. Sub-theme 5: Limited Time Allocation

Participants revealed that learners with dyslexia are not afforded adequate time to master certain reading skills due to the use of rigid timetables. Such learners are not allocated adequate time to complete their reading assignments and this has a negative impact on their overall performance. Apart from their daily tasks, learners with dyslexia should be provided with personally-appropriate additional time in test situations. Other concerns for learners with dyslexia include providing them with tasks that are shorter and achievable. It is particularly necessary also that deadlines for the submission of assignments be made more flexible to cater to the abilities of this group of learners. One participant said:

- T15: *Learners with dyslexia can hardly concentrate for long periods of time and, as such, need to be given 'brain breaks.' These are instances where they can move about and stretch their bodies as a strategy to maintain concentration.*

4.3. Theme 3: Support Services Needed in Teaching Learners with Dyslexia

The responses of participants on the support services needed in teaching dyslexic learners suggested the provision of teaching and learning resources, the establishment of remedial programmes, the conduction of counselling programmes, continuous professional development training and effective collaboration with parents.

4.3.1. Sub-theme 1: Provision of Teaching and Learning Resources

Participants indicated that different resource materials are significant in the teaching and learning of individuals with dyslexia. These materials encompass furniture, stationery, concrete and abstract media. Furniture like chairs and tables helps learners to do reading and writing activities comfortably. Stationery which includes exercise books and pens, also helps them to write, read and master learning activities. Concrete media like clay and water can be used to assist especially young learners in producing letters of the alphabet through moulding. They can further do tracing activities on paper before being exposed to more complicated reading and writing activities. Teachers may also make use of pictures and posters to aid the understanding and grasping of taught content. Furthermore, it emerged that more specialised or technical devices like computers further offer reading activities like games and puzzles, which are significant in learning reading. In view of this, participants suggested that:

- T22: *The best way to assist them is to always expose them to print and to always ask them to read anything written on the board. Teachers should source and master the use of modern technology such as radios, overhead projectors, films and computers to improve the reading levels of learners.*
- T14: *I highly consider the availability of adequate and relevant human and material resources. Material resources that are crucial include books, pens, pencils, charts, libraries, computers and good infrastructure.*

4.3.2. Sub-theme 2: Establishment of Remedial Programmes

Most participants further felt that the nature of the problems faced by most learners with dyslexia demands more than the normal classroom teaching and learning process. In this regard, the significance of remedial programmes was not over-emphasised. Learners need to be thoroughly assessed and then the results be used as a guide to place them in suitable remedial programmes. Through such programmes, learners are exposed to academic instruction that is sensitive to their unique needs and this gradually helps them to master the taught concepts effectively. In view of this, one participant said:

- T9: *There is a need for schools to offer remedial services to learners with dyslexia. These can be administered during the normal teaching periods or during study periods.*

4.3.3. Sub-theme 3: Conduction of Counselling Programmes

The study also revealed that, for learners with dyslexia to cope with the challenges presented by their conditions, there is a vital need for them to be exposed to guidance and counselling services. When dyslexia is identified, the psychologist may need to recommend a course of action and intervention strategies that will assist the individual in realising their full potential. Counselling also helps to counter problems with self-esteem, anxiety, and depression that build in the wake of associated conditions. In relation to counselling services, learners with dyslexia should be motivated throughout their acquisition of knowledge. It was then suggested that teachers might motivate dyslexic learners by acknowledging their individual styles, encouraging creativity, encouraging self-assessment, developing student responsibility, rewarding achievement, providing immediate feedback about their progress and assisting them to believe in their own abilities. In view of this, one participant said:

- T16: *...learners with dyslexia need to be counselled so that they can understand their condition and maybe manage to deal with stigmatisation, discrimination and labelling, which might be prevalent in regular schools.*

4.3.4. Sub-theme 4: Continuous Professional Development Training

Participants indicated that continuous professional development training should be availed to educators that are engaged in the teaching of learners with dyslexia. This has the capacity to tool and re-tool them in various skills of implementing relevant activities and programmes. It further emerged that continuous training helps teachers to collaborate with colleagues and, in the process, share experiences and ideas that may improve service delivery. One participant said:

- T19: *I also feel that teacher expertise is important while teaching learners with reading problems.... and considering the changing systems in education, regular staff development programmes become a crucial factor.*

4.3.5. Sub-theme 5: Collaboration with Parents

Participants viewed parents as playing a role in the continuous education and remedial development of dyslexic learners. Some parents develop an observable interest in the education of their children by becoming voluntary teacher aids. In this case, they assist teachers in classroom activities or producing teaching materials. This demands teachers to avail themselves of this valuable presence and to regularly invite parents to play a part in the academic progress of their children. A vibrant teacher-parent relationship helps parents to understand the learning deficits of their children and to collaborate with teachers in seeking redress to established gaps. The absence of parents in the education of learners creates and sustains the disjuncture between what happens at school and home. One participant said:

- T13: *Parents should be fully involved in the education of their children because any perceived disinterest in school activities dampens the commitment and effort of learners in academic work.*

5. Discussion

Reading competence is crucial for all learners as it permeates all facets of life, including areas outside of school settings. Learners must be able to read with understanding in order to engage in appropriate responses. Snowing and Hulme (2005) aver that acquiring literacy skills enhances personal development and participation in the wider social context. This implies that reading difficulties contribute to creating serious lifelong challenges which preclude the ability to cope or respond to the complex literacy demands of an academic nature. Dyslexic learners experience not just oral and written language deficits but also encounter perceptual problems as well as memory disorders (Rowcliffe, 2002). A hindrance to acquiring effective reading and writing skills by dyslexic individuals may further lead to the development of emotional and behavioural problems, which include low self-esteem, negative self-perception, disruptiveness and withdrawal (Alexander-Passe, 2007).

Several factors militate against the effective teaching of learners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools (Rodrick, 2008). One of these is the teachers' limited knowledge of dyslexia. Most of them are trained to handle learners without or with very mild reading challenges, therefore, are incapacitated to meet the needs of exceptional learners. Furthermore, negative attitudes of some relevant stakeholders, which include teachers, the school leadership, other learners without disabilities and parents, also affect the teaching of learners with dyslexia. Lack of teaching resources, high teaching workload, inadequate time allocation and constant changes in the curriculum are other factors that inhibit the academic progress of individuals affected. In relation to curriculum challenges, the study substantiated that it is difficult to switch the mindsets of learners to new teaching and learning methodologies, even if those that they are used to are proving to be ineffective.

In order to meet the needs of learners with dyslexia, teachers must be well-equipped to provide needed services. Such learners should be assisted in mastering how letters, numbers, words and phrases are formed and arranged so that they can discriminate them in the process of reading and writing. It may also be prudent for them to gain exposure to large font sizes, bold letters and well-spaced-out formats. The teacher must also adopt systematic teaching methods wherein learners are given an opportunity to learn concepts at their own pace. The provision of adequate and suitable learning materials is also important as this enhances understanding and mastery of taught concepts. In-service workshops for teachers are also needed to keep them abreast of the current trends in the education of learners with special needs (Robinson, 2002).

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded that effective teaching of learners with dyslexia requires an approach that values the perspectives of teachers who are normally at the centre of the education system. These should shape the adopted curriculum, methodological and administrative orientations to the teaching of learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools. Some teachers experience deficits in noticing the signs and symptoms of learners with dyslexia, such as those with poor visual processing, auditory processing and automatic reading and writing skills. This implies that teachers require professional training to develop competency skills to provide informed instruction and guidance to such learners. There are the challenges that hinder teachers from delivering effective teaching to learners with dyslexia, including a shortage of resources, limited time and large classes in most schools. We conclude that to enhance the teaching of learners with dyslexia, there should be an effective collaboration amongst all relevant stakeholders to constitute a shared vision. There is also a need for efforts to be expended in providing remedial and counseling services to learners with dyslexia to provide them the latitude to obtain the needed readiness to learn. It may also be desirable for teachers to conduct community awareness programmes and be exposed to professional development services to develop the right mentality for supporting the education of learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools.

7. Recommendations

The study recommends that teachers should be exposed to a training programme that provides them with expert knowledge, the attitude to accept and willfully teach dyslexic learners. Teachers must also be encouraged to use different methods, such as multi-sensory teaching and differentiated instruction, to help affected learners master academic concepts. School administrators, in liaison with the Ministry of Basic Education, should strive to equip schools with relevant resources in the form of classrooms and learning resources. Schools should regularly conduct community awareness workshops on dyslexia so that its causes, indicators and intervention strategies are understood not only in schools but also by the members of the larger community. Schools also need to facilitate collaboration between dyslexic learners, teachers and parents to inculcate the spirit of joint ownership of the learning discourse.

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