

A Case Study: Accessing Inclusive Education at Bulawayo Polytechnic in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

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The study addressed the philosophy of inclusivity as promulgated by the democratic dispensation on education in Zimbabwe which focuses on equality and equity regardless of ability or disability. Therefore, its purpose was to examine the accessibility of Technical and Vocational education by Special Educational Needs (SEN) learners at Bulawayo Polytechnic. A qualitative approach of a transformative paradigm utilising a case study design was employed. Data was gathered involving individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews with eight purposefully selected informants who were in groups of twos, representing Heads of Departments, lecturers, SEN and regular learners. Interview data was authenticated and triangulated through member-checking, participative observation and document analysis respectively. Thereafter, it was transcribed and categorised into emergent themes which premised the discussion. The major finding was that Bulawayo Polytechnic is ill- resourced for inclusivity and lecturers lacked crucial pedagogical skills. Recruitment of specialist lecturers as change agents and massive resource mobilisation were suggested.

KEYWORDS: *Special Educational Needs learners, segregation, integration, fundamental right, mainstream, marginalisation, respect, human dignity.*

INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe at independence made education a fundamental right and declared it free in the primary to enable the Black majority who were marginalised by the colonial education system which favoured Whites to access it (Education Act, 1987). This perception was in fulfilment of the major promises it made to the electorate as pronounced in the Zimbabwe African National Union [Patriotic Front] (ZANU PF) Election Manifesto of 1980 which became the blueprint for

all the education policies which followed. The phenomenal expansions in education which were triggered by the social demand for education have made Zimbabwe achieve the “literacy rate of between 92%” (Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation [Zim-Asset], 2013-2018, p. 21). While the Zimbabwean government needs to be applauded for the giant steps it has made in the education of its citizens, the philosophical argument which is

raging on of late is that, while the new democratic dispensation of education is all inclusive, on the ground Special Educational Needs (SEN) learners have been marginalised and discriminated due to their disabilities. Separate and culturally oriented institutions based on one's ability or disability still exist which is in violation of the Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe (CoRZ, 2013), the ZANU PF Election Manifesto (1980), the Education Act (1987) and the Salamanca statement and Framework of Action (1994) on inclusive education. To the first three documents the indigenous policy makers are the architects, while to the latter; the Republic of Zimbabwe (RoZ) is a signatory to it. Although cosmetic attempts have been initiated here and there through 'integration' and 'mainstreaming', it is inclusivity of all learners regardless of abilities or disabilities (Dixon, 2005) which RoZ yearns for. It is in that light that the article sought to investigate the concept of inclusivity in Zimbabwean Polytechnics in general and Bulawayo Polytechnic in particular, through a case study of a qualitative approach.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The philosophy of inclusive education is premised on pedagogical practices that allow all students to feel respected, confident and safe so that they can learn and develop to their full potential (Bauer, 1994; Inclusive Education, 2009). This view is corroborated by Mafa (2012) who views inclusive education as the process of integrating SEN learners into least restrictive environments. This philosophical orientation is further buttressed by the CoRZ which further stresses that specific adjustments should be made to the infrastructure and amenities available so that they are user-friendly to persons with disabilities (CoRZ, 2013). Although this constitutional mandate gives legitimacy to the policy of inclusivity to all institutions in society which are accessed by disabled persons in particular, its implementation

is determined by the availability of resources, which the Zimbabwean government is struggling to avail, let alone, with the recent economic challenges it is confronted with.

Despite the odds, the Zimbabwean government demonstrated its serious commitment towards addressing the anomalies which were caused by the colonial regime's discriminatory educational policies (Education Act, 1979) by declaring education at independence a fundamental right for all and sundry (Education Act, 1987). The education for all (EFA) policy triggered the quantitative consumption of education by the populous regardless of their social background, age, religion, creed and status (Education Act, 1987). Although in letter and spirit, it was meant to abolish all forms of discrimination, as attempts were being made to uplift the standard of life of all the marginalised Zimbabweans, SEN learners appear to have been left out of this gravy train. Their being continuously housed in separate institutions of learning instead of regular schools is the opposite of what the policy propounds. Snow (2001) condemns such a practice as he views it as a removal of SEN learners from their natural environments of childhood, through diagnoses then labelled and whisked into segregated settings where experts work on their brains to the detriment of their hearts and souls. In the process, they are dehumanised and reduced to defective parts (Snow, 2001) which contravenes the supreme laws of the country as enshrined in the CoRZ (2013).

Inclusion of learners regardless of abilities or disabilities according to its advocates is not a privilege to be earned neither is it a right which is given to an individual (Snow, 2001), but one's birthright. For Zimbabweans to embrace this noble philosophy, it must start off with the proper mind set. The feeling of belonging for both able-bodied and disabled learners must be cultivated at a tender age through inclusive education (Dixon,

2005). In that way, learners will appreciate each other as equals and contribute equally in a reciprocal manner without despising each other based on ability or disability (Snow, 2001). This philosophical orientation is contrary to the body of knowledge which argues that SEN educators are experts in specialised education which caters for individualised attention, and has thus been used, to justify the relegation of such learners to specialised institutions (Dixon, 2005). However, the recent thought is that, traditional educational institutions may be adjusted to accommodate SEN learners and the specialised teachers who used to man such institutions may be utilised as resource persons in inclusive institutions (Dixon, 2005). Of course, such a mammoth task needs funding, which the Zimbabwean government has not yet fully committed itself to due to the economic meltdown coupled with the lack of political will to a certain extent. Despite such challenges, attempts have been made though to include SEN learners in all schools in general, and Polytechnics in particular through Technical and Vocational (Tec-Voc) education. Discouraging though to note is that the Education policy does not explicitly acknowledge the presence of SEN learners in institutions of learning and consequently fails to cater for appropriate and conducive environments for them (Education Act, 1987). However, the equation is balanced by allowing equal access to educational institutions regardless of ability or disability (Education Act, 1987).

The Zimbabwean government through its democratic dispensation of 1980 is a signatory to major treaties which advocate for inclusive education and the dignity of the individual. The Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [CRoPD] (2015) advocates that SEN learners must have equal access to education without discrimination. In the same vein, the UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) declares that policy makers,

education managers and teachers must have an inclusive mind set which would enable them to cultivate an inclusive philosophy that embraces all learners as attempts are being made to eliminate all forms of discrimination in institutions of learning (Peter, 2003; De Boer, 2012). In that view, SEN learners in such a set up must not be viewed as recipients of charity, guests or thieves, but as equal partners in a reciprocal manner (Snow, 2001). Chawafambira (2010) corroborates this assertion when she points out that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 is against the disrespecting of a human being regardless of ability or disability and the violation of human rights, liberties which are also enshrined in the CoRZ (2013). It is against this background of events that schools and institutions have adopted the philosophy of inclusivity, more so, Tec-Voc education in Polytechnics. Polytechnics in Zimbabwe have thus developed classes with inclusive settings where all learners regardless of their abilities or disabilities attend lessons together. However, this study sought to establish the extent to which the SEN learners have been effectively integrated into Tec-Voc classes at Bulawayo Polytechnic.

Current educational trends in Zimbabwe have shown direct attempts although half-hearted to include learners with different learning abilities and physical or mental challenges in the regular classroom setup at Polytechnics. While this is commendable, a lot still has to be done to adequately embrace the goals of inclusive education in Tec-Voc education. In most schools in general and tertiary institutions in particular, teaching and learning facilities and equipment are not tailor-made to suit the physical or mental challenges of SEN learners (Chawafambira, 2010). On the other hand learners with physical challenges cannot easily access educational facilities due to distance, given that they have to travel or walk to schools or colleges (Mafa, 2012).

Mafa (2012) further posits that very few SEN learners have been included in the mainstream public schools as a result of such factors. This therefore, clearly indicates that a lot has to be done in order to achieve equity and equality of educational opportunities for SEN learners in Tec-Voc education.

The educational treaties, policies, conventions and the CoRZ reported above on their own are not enough to fully achieve inclusivity in Tec-Voc education and empower the physically and mentally challenged. Attainment of inclusivity in education requires a paradigm shift by educational managers and SEN lecturers and all those who have a stake in education. This study therefore, sought to also establish the level of involvement by regular learners, lecturers and heads of departments (HoDs) in promoting effective learning patterns of SEN learners at Bulawayo Polytechnic.

According to De Boer (2012) the belief that special schools could provide the best education for SEN learners was questioned in the early '80s resulting in a discussion to integrate SEN learners in regular education. There were three distinct reasons that led to this development. Firstly, an increase in the number of SEN learners was apparent according to 1078 Warnock Committee Report (De Boer, 2012). This therefore, called for appropriate means of coping with this increase within the context of inclusive education. Secondly, special education led to a segregation of SEN learners from society which implied a violation of students' rights to be educated with typically developing peers according to Fisher, Roach and Frey (as cited in De Boer, 2012). Thirdly, a literature study carried out by Gartner and Lipsky proved that the academic achievements of students with relatively mild SEN in special and regular education did not differ significantly (De Boer, 2012). This study therefore, motivated advocates of inclusivity to

conclude that the creation of special education schools was unnecessary and consequently a waste of public resources as well (Richeson, 2012).

Similarly, Zimbabwe was emerging from a bitter and protracted liberation war where limbs were broken (Zvobgo, 2004). Some of these cadres fearlessly participated in the liberation struggle regardless of their disabilities. Definitely a new democratic dispensation had to be adopted to cater not only for those maimed by the war but those born with disabilities as equity and equality considerations were factored in, in the provision of education as attempts were being made to move towards inclusivity, hence, such attempts by Zimbabwean Polytechnics.

Equality of educational opportunities and inclusivity in education are fundamental principles of education in Zimbabwe (Education Act, 1987; CoRZ, 2013). In pursuant of that philosophy, Polytechnics offer Tec-Voc education to SEN learners, though there has not been any significant infrastructural development, modifications or staff development programmes meant to cater for the needs of such learners so as to adequately address the expectations of the education policies on inclusivity and equality of educational opportunities, hence, this study.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach utilising a case study was employed in examining the philosophy of inclusivity at Bulawayo Polytechnic as Zimbabwe democratises the accessibility of Tec-Voc education. A qualitative approach was found to be appropriate for this study as it sought to secure fuller, more and richer descriptions than could have been done using a quantitative approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) In that direction, a qualitative approach of a transformative design of inquiry was employed because evaluation was demanded as the study entailed an action agenda

for reform that would change the lives of participants, the institutions in which individuals worked and lived and the researchers' lives through an in-depth analysis of the programme (Creswell, 2014). Above all, it provided a voice for marginalised participants, raising their consciousness or advancing the agenda for change to improve their lives (Creswell).

To achieve that, a non-probability sampling technique was employed to purposively select the eight key informants (Denscombe, 2007) comprising: two SEN learners, two regular ones, two lecturers and two HoDs (who are directly in-charge of inclusive education). On one hand, the HoDs and lecturers were regarded as experts in their own right who would talk authoritatively on the subject due to their experience. On the other hand, the learners participated in the study because they were directly affected by the philosophy of inclusion. In that way as researchers we felt that, their testimonies would give a high degree of credibility to the study. Subsequently, time and money were saved, more so, that the intentions of the study were not meant to generalise the results to a larger population (Denscombe) but to Polytechnics operating within similar circumstances given the magnitude, uniqueness and complexities of the problem under investigation.

The case study adopted, involved a collection of detailed information using a pluralistic approach over a sustained period of time, namely: a face-to-face semi-structured interview, participative observation and document analysis (Yin, 2012). Eight participants were interviewed and data was captured by audio recordings backed up by written field notes (Denscombe, 2007). The latter catered for non-verbal clues which were observed in the process. As soon as the data was recorded, it was transcribed so as to bring the researchers closer to the data (Denscombe). Transcribed data was then subjected to checks for consistency and accuracy

by way of triangulation. It was member checked by the key informants, checked against field notes and official documents (policy guidelines and institutional annual reports) for validation and reliability. In addition to that, participative observation enabled the researchers to witness the type of infrastructure available, teaching-learning materials in place and social interactions of SEN learners and regular ones at first hand. Thereafter, generated data were put in chunks for codification and classification according to themes which were emerging. Through this case study inquiry, researchers were able to focus on inclusivity and gained insights on it which were benchmarked against related literature reviewed on the subject, the policy guidelines versus the experiences on the ground.

Findings

The findings were reported under the following themes: accessibility of Tec-Voc resources, teaching-learning approaches, staff development, attitudes and challenges and monitoring/evaluation mechanisms and strategies for inclusion.

Accessibility of Tec-Voc resources to SEN Learners

All the participants interrogated indicated that Bulawayo Polytechnic did not have any specialised resources to help lecturers integrate SEN learners into Tec-Voc education. In addition, they claimed that:

Some of the classrooms and computer laboratories were inaccessible to visually impaired and wheel chair bound Special Educational Needs learners as these classrooms and laboratories were located upstairs and there were no ramps to facilitate easy entrance by the latter.

Through observations, researchers noted that wheelchair bound SEN learners had to be lifted by

their classmates in order to attend computer lessons upstairs all the time. Disappointing though within this scenario was the fact that the wheelchair bound learners could not access the ablution facilities easily as the Bulawayo Polytechnic does not have special toilets meant for them.

In reaction to this phenomenon, one of the HoDs investigated had this to say: 'In terms of the resources that the poly should have it has none; even the sanitary system is dangerous as the toilets are unclean most of the times'.

This view was corroborated by the second HoD who said: 'The classmates of ...have to lift ...to the computer lab. I once talked to the mother who felt offended.... about it'. When probed further on how the concerned SEN learner accesses the departmental toilets in the event nature calls, the HoD further indicated that: 'The mother has trained him ... such that he will not use the toilets at the poly for the whole day ... but imagine a situation where the same student has diarrhoea'.

In view of the above assertions, the researchers concluded that the Bulawayo Polytechnic has not yet modified its existing infrastructure so as to cater for the learning needs of SEN learners hence, making them inaccessible. Where they are accessible, it is by accident not design.

Teaching - learning approaches for an Inclusive Setting

When the lecturers were interrogated on the instruction delivery modes used in their departments where inclusivity was a norm, the following were mentioned: 'lecturing', 'demonstration' and 'power point presentations' without any special regard for the individual needs of SEN learners. When probed further as to how they accommodated the SEN learners within their Tec-Voc pedagogic, one lecturer had this to say: 'We don't have specific teaching-learning

methodologies for those who are visually or physically challenged'.

A scenario which was confirmed by the second lecturer who said that lecturers used 'the ordinary teaching-learning methods' without having to care about the learners with special needs and the SEN learners had to silently bear the difficulties of learning in inclusive classes as the lecturers used 'non-participatory teaching methods' most of the time as observed in: 'There is this student whose hand is physically challenged and he uses that hand to write but lecturers just dictate notes at times without any regard about (sic) his slow pace'.

The modus operandi of the lecturers portrayed in their responses, who actually are the drivers of inclusivity in their institutions are a clear demonstration of the cosmetic approaches to inclusion which characterise Bulawayo Polytechnic and many other learning institutions with SEN learners.

Staff development for inclusive settings

The revelation to the above attribute painted a gloomy picture of the spirit and commitment of lecturers in the implementation of inclusive education as their capabilities and state of preparedness betrayed them. It was discovered that only one lecturer out of the four and the HoD interviewed had attended a staff development programme on adaptive technologies aimed at using computers for the visually impaired SEN learners. By the time this study was conducted, the other members of staff had not been inducted and there seemed to be no programme of action in place to address this anomaly in the near future.

The study therefore, revealed that the majority of lecturers teaching in inclusive settings at the Bulawayo Polytechnic did not undergo any staff development programmes aimed at equipping them with the relevant skills and knowledge for handling SEN learners, hence, the aimless drifting

of such learners in an inclusive setting as if their being there is by default.

Another predicament which was experienced by the lecturers as they went about their business of teaching was the lack of continuity in SEN learner admission in Tec-Voc education, perhaps, due to the haphazard manner in which inclusive education was being implemented at the Bulawayo Polytechnic as reported above or parents losing faith in the philosophy within the catchment area. One of the key informant had this to say: 'We have always been trying to integrate these learners but sometimes we go for four to five years without any students making it difficult to conduct any staff development programmes'.

The lack of skill and knowledge by the lecturers, key players in the implementation of inclusive education is non-compliant to the UNESCO (2005) report which points out that this is one of the obstacles to total achievement of inclusive education Polytechnics are confronted with. In that regard, Bulawayo Polytechnic is no exception.

Attitudes of Regular Learners and Lecturers towards SEN Learners

Inclusive education demands that participants be accepted as equals and contribute as equals in a reciprocal manner (Snow, 2001). When regular learners were questioned on this attribute, they both intimated that SEN learners were 'accepted as family members' of the Polytechnic institution and were even prepared to go 'an extra mile' in trying to alleviate the challenges they (SEN learners) were faced with. The carrying of the wheel-chairs of SEN learners by regular learners as they were being assisted to access the computer laboratory which is situated upstairs was a clear testimony of the symbiotic relationship which exists between the two parties (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). One of the regular learners who is in league with the above observation had this to say:

'Attending the same class with ... is quite exciting and we are the best of friends. ...assists me with challenging tasks. A view which is in consonant with what the other regular learner said: 'It's ok. We share resources and it shows that disability is not inability'.

This kind of socialisation is highly commended by Peters (2003) who believes that it brings about the social cohesion needed to enable SEN learners penetrate all avenues of society and education unhindered.

However, in the same vein, the attitudes of lecturers towards SEN learners varied from acceptance to scepticism over the sustenance of the inclusive policy. While one of the participants felt that the inclusive policy was a 'noble idea' as it enhanced the total integration of SEN learners into society the other one felt that SEN learners were 'better off attending classes in special institutions specifically geared for that purpose'.

This therefore, is a clear testimony that some lecturers at such institutions have not yet embraced inclusivity in its totality as desired by the Zimbabwean government and directed by the various statutes alluded to earlier on, hence this study. Their resistance to such a change is explicitly expressed in the sentiments of one of them who seemed to be a strong advocate of 'separatist education' as he had this to say:

I am afraid this college was meant for the able bodied and spending resources on one or two students may not be wise. Such students are better off in special institutions ... as the lecturers do not seem to care and only observe and see those who are able bodied.

These are the reservations which need to be addressed (De Boer, 2012), if the philosophy of inclusivity is to bear fruition in Zimbabwean higher institutions of learning.

Challenges Faced by Polytechnics in integrating SEN learners

Over and above the challenges of infrastructure, specialised teaching-learning resources and lack of staff with the appropriate orientation when it comes to implementation of the inclusive policy as reported earlier on, the library environment was considered to be restrictive and inaccessible to SEN learners. These challenges which when benchmarked against regional and global trends are in contradiction of the philosophy of inclusivity, therefore, need immediate attention by the powers to be if commitment towards that direction is to be as pronounced in the statutes and treaties the Zimbabwean government subscribes to.

To make matters worse, researchers observed that wheelchair bound SEN learners in all departments were confined to using one specific entry and exit point as that was the only point that had a ramp on which the wheelchair could easily glide over. To further aggravate the plight of SEN learners, the Principal's and Vice Principal's offices are located upstairs and this makes it difficult for wheelchair bound learners to access them. This literally means that SEN learners with physical limitations may not be able to visit the Principal or Vice Principal's office for whatever reasons in the absence of the necessary modifications befitting inclusivity. Such barriers become counter productive to the policy of inclusivity (Kisanji, 1999).

Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms for Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a new kid on the block in Zimbabwe in general and Polytechnics in particular. In that regard researchers wanted to find out whether the parent Ministry had put mechanisms in place with the hope of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the inclusive policy in institutions (Stufflebeam, 2003), all

participants responded in the negative. One of them, a lecturer for that matter, had this to say:

As it were I don't think the poly has any monitoring system. The only support the poly puts is to register them. Otherwise there is no input as far as caring for them is concerned. ...there is no monitoring mechanism, we do not have them.

The absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for SEN learner participation at Bulawayo Polytechnic and the non-availability of official reports to that effect, is a serious impediment to effective policy implementation of inclusive education as demanded by global trends Holland (as cited by Stufflebeam, 2003).

Strategies for Inclusion at Polytechnic

When requested to suggest strategies which Bulawayo Polytechnic should adopt to enhance SEN learner participation in Tec-Voc education, their collective responses were: 'equal and unconditional participation by all learners', 'use of participatory methods', 'direct involvement of all parents and guardians in the learning of all SEN learners', 'use of specialist SEN lecturers as change agents and resource persons', 'provision of separate funding to cater for the needs of SEN learners' and 'use of inclusive technology in education.' These views can be weighed against one of the participant who advocates for inclusivity who had this to say:

We have always treated Special Educational Needs learners as able bodied so that they do not feel discriminated. ... lecturers need in-service training and induction, right now we are just drifting. ... the Government should avail the much needed financial resources for these learners.

Thus, confirming some of the implementation predicaments and impediments of inclusivity the Bulawayo Polytechnic is faced with as reported earlier on in this paper.

Discussion

Generally, most Polytechnics in Zimbabwe and Bulawayo Polytechnic in particular, do not have appropriate infrastructure for SEN learners as these institutions were built for regular learners only. Similarly during the same era, the former were housed in specialised institutions where they received individualised instruction under the tutelage of their highly skilled personnel (Dixon, 2005). In addition to that, it appears no infrastructural modifications have been done to the existing institution neither have additional provisions been catered as required by the statutes on inclusivity (UNESCO, 2005). To make matters worse, the current breed of lecturers in inclusive set ups at Bulawayo Polytechnic either lack the skills required due to their nature of training or they have not been armed with the appropriate orientation through staff development sessions or capacity building programmes manned for this purpose (Nguyet & Ha, 2010). This made the researchers conclude that, whatever was happening at Bulawayo Polytechnic was through trial and error to the detriment of the SEN learners.

Lecturers too, perhaps already overburdened by their workloads and overwhelmed by the resource and methodological requirements of inclusivity in terms of class size when SEN learners are brought on board, seemed not to accommodate SEN learners in their teaching-learning enterprise. Surprisingly, the institution continues to enrol such students although in small numbers in their regular classes, without proper ablution blocks specially designed for them. Training them to abstain from responding to the call of nature during the time spent at the Polytechnic is not the answer. What this study sought were permanent solutions to such practices not piece-meal ones. The Bulawayo Polytechnic in its state is not ready for inclusivity as it lacks the basic requirements of inclusivity as recommended by various

statutes. This type of cosmetic inclusion from the researchers' point of views seemed to imply that Bulawayo Polytechnic is merely paying lip-service to the philosophy of inclusivity at the expense of the SEN learner; yet whatever is obtaining on the ground is perhaps, meant to hoodwink the powers to be or fulfil a statutory requirement or policy directive. This scenario is made worse by the absence of a deliberate, systematic and significant monitoring or evaluation mechanism (Stufflebeam, 2003). Such a thrust would enable policy makers as well as implementers to either implement the programme with modifications or put systems in place while it is operational to prevent errors from recurring or terminate it (Holland, as cited in Stufflebeam, 2003).

Since in Zimbabwe, the philosophy of inclusivity is still at its infancy, its critics argue that the resources needed for its total implementation have a crippling effect on the already strangled budget. They view inclusivity as an expensive luxury which the current government can ill afford, let alone with International financiers calling upon government to reduce public funding. The RoZ is being called upon to reduce its "wage bill and grant- aided institutions to 50% from its current fiscal consumption of 82% of all revenue" (Masvora, 2016, p.1). In the same vein "employment and salaries remain frozen until 2019" (Masvora). For this dream to come true against this background of scarce resources and financial constraints, the researchers are convinced that politicians and other influential members of society should be lobbied so that they would convince government to allocate adequate resources for the total implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwean institutions of learning and the emancipation of SEN learners. In the process, various stakeholders such as the private sector and donor community could be resource mobilised for such purposes at a macro level.

Failure of which, the proliferation of the half-hearted measures observed above which are unacceptable and intolerable in this progressive and civilised society of this time and age will continue to be the order of the day.

Based on the views of the participants, researchers concluded that the current inclusive education in place is straining SEN learners as they are being pressured up to learn like typical learners and to function in accordance with the standards of a dominant system (Snow, 2001), a mindset which needs to be overhauled if the dream of inclusivity is to be achieved in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. However, inclusivity in its present state at Bulawayo Polytechnic, justifies the recruitment of specialist teachers in such institutions for specialist services meant to benefit SEN learners and enable them design their own destiny not to be enrolled as guest learners as is the case at the moment. Such teachers by virtue of the wide knowledge base they have on the subject would automatically become either change agents or resource persons in these institutions. This must be so because the use of effective and appropriate instructional methods in Tech-Voc is pivotal to effective acquisition and development of knowledge and skills by SEN learners.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that successful inclusion in education requires changes and modifications specifically tailor-made to suit the needs of SEN learners and other marginalised groups so as to enhance their access and participation in Tec-Voc education. Individualised instructional modes of teaching-learning need to be adopted with adaptation to match the diverse nature evident among SEN learners and equipping lecturers of such pedagogical skills must be a prerequisite. Weighed against this view are the positive attitudes of some regular learners towards the SEN learners and the symbiotic relationships between the two parties which have been fostered

by the spirit of inclusivity which no doubt are adequate fertile ground on which this philosophy should gain momentum. However, the negative attitudes of some lecturers against inclusive education, lack of monitoring/evaluation mechanisms and the lack of appropriate human and material resources at Bulawayo Polytechnic are some of the factors which militate against total implementation of inclusivity in Zimbabwean institutions of learning.

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