

**AN EXPLORATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES USED BY
REGULAR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN INCLUSIVE
CLASSROOMS**

M.Ed. (PRIMARY-EDUCATION FOUNDATION STUDIES) THESIS

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis/dissertation is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used, acknowledgements have been made.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

To my husband, grandmother, children: Mphatso, Priscilla, Mwai and Yamikani for their perseverance during my study.

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ABSTRACT

After the establishment of Special Needs Education department in the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, learners with special educational needs doubled in number in primary schools. However, instructional strategies to effectively meet the needs of all learners in the inclusive classrooms by regular primary school teachers were not known. The purpose of this study was to explore instructional strategies regular primary school teachers use in inclusive classrooms in Lilongwe urban district. The study adopted case study research design and Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the population of interest and the research site. The sample size was 19 regular primary school teachers, and 16 primary school learners. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observation were used to generate data, and data were analysed thematically. The study found that most teachers consider factors such as: teaching and learning resources, content, questions and time when planning for instruction. Question and answer, whole class discussion and partial group work were strategies mostly used by the regular teachers. The findings revealed that teachers made few adaptations on content, teaching and learning materials that meet the needs of all learners in classrooms. However, lack of knowledge and skills, inadequate teaching and learning materials, large classes, and inadequate time for planning hindered teachers from using instructional strategies in an inclusive classroom effectively. It was suggested that pre-service teachers should major in SNE and regular workshops on delivery of lessons in an inclusive classroom for both regular primary school teachers and specialist teachers should be enforced.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HI	Hearing Impairment
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
LD	Learning Difficulties
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RIEIC	Research for Inclusive Education in International Cooperation
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SNE	Special Needs Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
VI	Visual Impairment
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents an introduction of the study on an exploration of instructional strategies used by regular primary school teachers in inclusive classrooms. It describes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, the significance of the study and its limitations.

1.1 Background to the study

Research shows that the number of inclusive classrooms globally has increased greatly in the past two decades and will continue to do so. According to the 26th Annual Report to Congress on IDEA, “roughly 96% of general education teachers have students with learning disabilities in their classrooms,” (Rock, Greg, Ellis & Gable., 2008, p. 32). Other reports show similar information, and according to EMIS (2011), there are 110, 300 learners in South Africa with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in ordinary public schools. Another recent report in Malawi on inclusive education indicated that “Malawi government has mainstreamed about 90000 children in schools” (Nkawire, 2015, p. 1). The central issue now is what instructional strategies regular primary school teachers are using in these classes which contain learners with SEN and those without in order to meet needs of all.

Lipsky and Gartner (1996), assert that among these students “there are a wider range of disabilities and levels of severity” (p.779). Thus the needs and abilities of learners within the general education classroom are more diverse than ever before, making it essential that teachers know and understand the complex differences among learners so that all can reach their full potential in education. Hallahan (2005) states that teachers should apply effective teaching strategies and techniques, pay attention to selection of materials, adapt the curriculum task design, and classroom management skills in order to cater as effectively as possible to the diverse learning needs of the learners.

1.2 Historical overview of special needs education in Malawi

Globally, the provision of Special Needs Education (SNE) began with residential schools for the blind and deaf students in the eighteenth century in Europe (Peters, 2003). Charitable and religious organisations played a major role during these early years in the provision of services (Peters, 2003). Thus, education of children with disabilities by that time was viewed as a charitable means. In Malawi, the provision of SNE followed the same path. It also started with residential schools namely Lulwe School for the Blind in Nsanje, Chilanga School for the Blind in Kasungu and Montfort school for the Deaf in Chiradzulu in 1950s (Chavuta, Itimu-Phiri, Chiwaya, Sikero & Alindiamao, 2008). The provision of services in the named schools was also done by charitable and religious organisations (Itimu & Kopetz, 2008). Later around 1980s resource centre system followed whereby rooms in which learners with SNE receive special needs services. In this system, regular teachers are supported by specialist teachers who teach special skills to learners with SEN. Therefore, the main

concern here is how do regular class teachers teach in order to meet diverse needs of all learners in their classrooms.

1.3 Key international declarations on issues of special needs education and inclusive education

There are several key international declarations that address issues of SNE. One of them is the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) endorsed by 92 governments including Malawi. One of the statements under Salamanca is that “every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs” (UNESCO 1994, p. viii). The children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) therefore, “must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them with a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting those needs” (UNESCO, 1994: para 2.).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007) also recommend that within the education system, persons with disabilities should receive the support required “to facilitate their effective education” (paragraph 10). Furthermore, Article 24 of the Convention also stipulates that no one must be excluded on the basis of disability but necessary measures to facilitate access should be undertaken (UN, 2015). This means that reasonable accommodation which takes into account the individual requirements of the learners should be provided. Hence, the concept of reasonable accommodation entails “the right of individual persons with disabilities to benefit from adjustments and modifications of any nature in order to attain education, or other rights, on an equal basis with others” (Article 24(2) (c).

1.4 Policy and provision of education for children with disabilities in Malawi

In line with the world trends towards inclusion, Malawi has signed and ratified several international conventions that enshrine the rights of children with disabilities to education (Banks & Zuurmond, 2015). These include the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), which protects the right of all children to education and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which stipulates that persons with disabilities should not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, but receive the support required, within the education system to facilitate their education (Banks & Zuurmond 2015). The principles of these conventions are further codified within Malawian national laws and policies. For example, the Disability Act (GoM, 2012) recognises the duty to ensure the non-exclusion of learners with disabilities from education system as a means of implementing inclusive education.

The National Policy Guidelines on Special Needs Education (MoE, 2007) under its strategies recognises some approaches towards inclusive education such as through the introduction of an SNE module in all teacher training courses. Furthermore, this policy also focuses on the establishment of resource centres which can support approaches of inclusion in schools; the National Education Strategic Plan 2008-2017 NESP (MoE, 2008) which provides policies that promote the accessibility and equity in education for those with SEN; and the National Policy on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons' with Disabilities (MoE, 2006) which also promote equal access and inclusion of persons with disabilities in education and training programmes. This policy support and encourages inclusive education under a strategy on provision of free appropriate technology, equipment and resources to assist boys,

girls, men and women with disabilities with their learning needs. Thus they reaffirm a commitment towards equal access and inclusion in education for children with disabilities (Banks & Zuurmond, 2015).

1.5 Current situation of inclusive education in Malawi

In Malawi, like other countries, children with disabilities are still taught in a general class alongside learners without disabilities and receive this additional instruction outside of normal class hours in the resource rooms. Currently there are 126 resource centres (16 residential and 110 day schools) out of Malawi's 447 educational zones (Banks & Zuurmond, 2015). Given the limited availability of resource centres and special schools, many children with SEN attend their primary education in mainstream schools. Malawi government has managed to mainstream about 90, 000 children in schools under the inclusive education programme (Nkawire, 2015). This figure has doubled over the years since the establishment of Department of SNE in the Ministry of Education in 2005. Schools in Malawi have started modifying their structures such as ramps and disability friendly toilets for those with SEN. However, Namanja in Nkawire (2015, p. 1) notes that "there is not enough progress on inclusive education and that there is still a long way to go to build up knowledge and skills on how to mainstream inclusive education".

1.6 Some conditions for successful inclusion

In order for inclusion to be successful, a number of conditions need to be met. Staff development needs to take place to prepare staff to support the learners, and good working relationships need to be established with the special educators in the school (Muijs & Reynolds, 2011). The diverse learning characteristics displayed by learners

in schools make it necessary for teachers to implement a wide variety of activities in their classes (Bender, 2012) and differentiate instruction (Cox, 2008). Teachers also need to have a sound knowledge of instructional strategies to use as a means of addressing needs of all learners in their classrooms. In addition to this, teachers must plan their instruction to respond to learners of varying needs by adjusting what to teach and how to teach it (Tomlinson, 2003). Friend and Bursuck (1996, 2002), Mastropieri and Scruggs (2000), OECD (1995), Salend (2001), and Tomlinson (1995) have also emphasised the role of instructional adaptation in inclusive settings as an indispensable means for accommodating the needs of learners with disabilities.

However, in many studies, it appears that inclusion is attempted without providing this level of professional development, a state which may be very disadvantageous to those learners who are included (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). Furthermore, many general education classroom teachers do not feel they have adequate knowledge or skills to plan appropriately for or instruct students with learning disabilities (Kosko & Wilkins, 2009; Schumm, Vaughn & Gordon, 1994; and Zulu, 2014). Individualised instruction typically does not occur in the general education classroom (Chisamba 2014; Ford, 2013; Peterson, 2011) and many teachers make few or no adaptations for learners with SEN (Kuyini & Desai, 2014; Mabena, 2011; Peterson, 2011). Teachers who are equipped with instructional choices are less frustrated and more productive in the classroom (Baker, 2005). This means that teachers need to have a wide knowledge and skills on how to plan and instruct all learners including those with SEN.

Studies conducted by Makoko and Chimutu, (2007) and Chavuta et al, (2008) reveal that regular schools in Malawi lack trained teachers in special education. Montfort

Special Needs Education College in Chiradzulu is the only institution that train specialist teachers for learners with Visual Impairments (VI), Hearing Impairments (HI) and Learning Difficulties (LD). However, the number of teachers trained is not sufficient to cater for all primary schools in Malawi. This is therefore, an indication that most primary school teachers employ instructional strategies without the knowledge about Special Needs Education and Inclusive education.

1.7 Statement of problem

After the inception of resource centre systems in 1980s in Malawi, most primary schools experienced an increase of learners with SEN. Such learners spend much of their education with peers without SEN in the regular classroom (RIEIC, 2015). This means that teachers need to plan and teach their lessons with the aim of targeting all the learners. MoEST (2013) indicated that there are 90,089 learners with SEN in Malawian schools. This figure has almost doubled from 43, 532 learners since the establishment of Department of SNE in the Ministry of Education in 2005 (Nkawire, 2015). Suka (2006) points out that the previous teacher training institutions did not include the aspects of SNE and inclusive education in the teacher training programmes. This is an indication that some teachers serving in regular primary schools are not equipped with skills and knowledge of inclusive teaching to meet needs of diverse learners in their classrooms.

Most studies on inclusive education in Malawi have focused on challenges faced in implementation of inclusive education and policy (Banks & Zuurmond 2015; Munthali, Tsoka, Milner, & Mvula 2012, Chilemba 2011, & Chimwaza 2015). Few studies focussed on instructional strategies used in inclusive classrooms. Mbukwa

(2009) investigated how regular primary school teachers teach children with visual impairment in ordinary classrooms while Chisamba (2014) explored how regular primary school teachers teach comprehension in inclusive classrooms. Very little is known in Malawi on how regular primary school teachers plan their instruction and teach when learners with special educational needs are in inclusive classrooms. There is a gap in knowledge on the instructional strategies regular primary school teachers use in inclusive classrooms in order to meet needs of all learners. It is therefore, against this background that this study was conducted to uncover instructional strategies that regular primary school teachers use in inclusive classrooms to meet the diverse needs of learners.

1.8 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore instructional strategies regular primary school teachers use in inclusive classrooms in order to meet needs of all learners.

1.9 Research questions

The study was guided by the following main and sub research questions:

1.9.1 Main research question

The main research question that was employed was:

- What instructional strategies do regular primary school teachers use in an inclusive classroom?

1.9.2 Sub-questions

The study was guided by the following sub research questions:

- How do regular primary school teachers plan their instruction to meet needs of all learners?

- What specific instructional strategies do regular primary school teachers use as their means of addressing needs of learners in their classrooms?
- What adaptations or accommodations do teachers use to effectively meet the diverse learners' needs?
- What are the challenges faced by teachers in planning their instructional strategies?
- How do teachers address the challenges faced when planning their instructional strategies?

1.10 Significance of the study

The findings from this study have contributed to the knowledge base of available literature on the instructional strategies regular primary school teachers can use in Malawi. It is envisaged that from the findings of the study teachers would have information on instructional strategies, accommodations/ adaptations that can assist children with SEN in their classes. Such information would make the teachers more effective in the execution of their duties as this would enable the children with SEN to develop their potential to the maximum. The findings from this study would also contribute knowledge for policy makers that whenever they are formulating policies issues of inclusive education strategies should be incorporated.

1.11 Definition of inclusion, inclusive classrooms, special needs education, special educational needs, disability and resource center

Inclusion: There are several definitions of inclusion. Farrell & Ainscow, (2002 p. 3) describe it “as a process in which schools, communities, local authorities and

government strive to reduce barriers to participation and learning for all citizens”. Mittler (2000, p.10) states that, “inclusion implies a radical reform of the school in terms of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and grouping of pupils”. The researcher adopted Farrell and Ainscow’s definition as it recognises the need to transform the cultures, policies and practices in a school to accommodate the differing needs of individual learners, and an obligation to remove the barriers that impede that possibility. Inclusion is thus seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, and reducing and eliminating exclusion.

Inclusive classroom: The inclusive classroom can be defined as having students with and without disabilities “primarily in the general education classroom, under the responsibility of the general classroom teacher” (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010, p. 7). This means that in such classes teachers should plan and teach using instructional strategies that meet needs of all learners, since inclusion is not just putting learners with SEN in the classrooms but responding to the needs of each learner.

Special Needs Education: Education that “provides appropriate modifications in order to meet the diverse needs of learners” (MIE, 2008, p. 26). SNE is also defined by the Malawian Government as education of learners with sensory impairments, learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties and physical or health impairments, all of whom require special measures to ensure their inclusion within schools (Itimu and Kopetz, 2008). For the purpose of this study, Malawi government definition was adopted because it covers all the categories of SNE which understands that “learners

with SEN require special service and support in order to access education and maximise the learning process” (MoE, 2007, p. 6).

Special Educational Needs: A child has special educational needs “if he or she has a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her” (Westwood, 2003, p 23). Learners with special educational needs are “Learners who require special service provision and support in order to access education and maximise the learning process. Learners with special educational needs as defined in this document refer to “those children who fall into any of the following categories: sensory impairment which covers vision, hearing, deaf-blind; cognitive difficulties which include intellectual, specific disabilities and gifted and talented; socio-emotional and behavioural difficulties which includes autism, hyperactivity and other vulnerable children; physical and health impairments which include spina bifida, hydrocephalus, asthma and epilepsy” (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2007, p. 6).

Disability: According to Colin and Shelia (2001), “there is no single commonly accepted, straightforward definition of disability”. Burden (2000, p.29) defines the term “disability” as “the social restrictions and constraints (barriers) imposed on persons with impairments in their pursuit of full and equal participation” (Burden, 2000 p. 29). However, this study adopted WHO’s definition (2001, p.1) that a disability is “an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an *activity limitation* is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a *participation restriction* is a problem experienced by an individual in

involvement in life situations”. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives. This definition recognises that people with disabilities have the same needs as those without disabilities hence intervention is required.

Resource centres: “are special education units within some mainstream schools where children with disabilities can receive specialised instruction and extra resources to support their learning” (MIE, 2008, p. 88)

1.11 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide the necessary background information about the present study. The areas that were covered included the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the significance of the study and definitions of some key terms. The next chapter will review literature relevant to the various concepts which are in line with the topic and discuss the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the literature and studies that were reviewed in relation to the study and identifies gaps and main emerging issues from the literature. It will further discusses the theoretical framework that guided the study. This theory is Tomlinson's differentiation instruction model and it guided in answering the research sub question through the key principles underlined in the model. Such principles include; knowing the learner before planning for instruction, understanding what the curriculum, providing multiple pathways to learning and sharing responsibility with learners.

2.2 Inclusion/Inclusive education

The term inclusion has different interpretations in various countries. An examination of literature and practice shows that there is no agreed upon universal definition. The concept varies from country to country and is associated with various perspectives which indicate the concern of each country. In the, 'Guidelines for Inclusion' (UNESCO, 2005, p. 13) defines inclusion as a process by referring to various aspects, which incorporate its essence as clearly seen in the following:

Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content,

approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children”.

This definition clearly recognises the need for teachers to have a sound knowledge and skills on instructional strategies such as adjustment of content, and teaching strategies that can meet needs of all learners in the inclusive classroom.

Malawi Disability Act (GoM, 2012) defines inclusive education “as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion from and within education” (section 10). There is a need to understand that inclusion requires not only physical presence but also active participation and achievement of all children; and gives special emphasis on children who are “at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 15).

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for action focuses on inclusive education “as a strategy to include children with special educational needs in mainstream education by responding to the needs of individual learners” (UNESCO, 1994, p. 11). Inclusion “implies a radical reform of the school in terms of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and grouping of students. It is based on a value system that welcomes and celebrates diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language of origin, social background, level of educational achievement or disability” (Mittler, 2000, p. 12). The underlying premise of inclusion is one that stems from a human rights perspective for those with disabilities

2.3 Strategies for inclusion

Several educators have suggested that student centred approaches to learning have most to offer children with SEN (Goddard, 1995; MacInnis & Hemming, 1995). However, research evidence suggests that students with disabilities and learning problems most frequently do best in structured programmes where direct teaching methods are employed (Chard, Gersten & Vaughn, 2000; Kavale & Forness, 1999; Swanson, 2000). There is some evidence to suggest that these student centred process approaches do not necessarily meet the needs of all learners, and in particular are not the most effective way of developing basic academic skills for students with learning problems (Harris & Graham, 1996; Mastropieri, Scruggs & Butcher, 1997; Swanson, 2000).

2.3 1 Direct Instruction

Direct instruction is “a method of teaching academics, especially reading and math and it emphasises drill and practice” (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2003, p.27). Magilaro, Lockee and Bu1ton (2005 p. 41) define direct instruction as “an instructional model that focuses on the interaction between teachers and students”. Key components of direct instruction include modelling, reinforcement, feedback and successive approximation. Direct instruction also emphasises immediate feedback, and task analysis whereby academic problems are broken down into smaller teachable units. Differentiation instruction model also acknowledges immediate feedback in order to check for learners’ appropriate instruction. Under direct instruction, a teacher usually demonstrate the task students are expected to complete on their own through a process known as modelling which is an example of scaffolding in Vygotsky’s cognitive theory. Tomlinson’s differentiation model of instruction recognises the uniqueness of

each learner that that some learners grasp concepts fast while others slowly (Tomlinson, 2000). Hence direct instruction helps learners who are slow at gaining knowledge through modelling of the tasks.

A meta-analysis of research on pupils with learning disabilities of average intelligence looking at studies conducted over a 30 year period found that the most effective strategy for teaching these pupils combined elements of direct instruction with the components focusing on the teaching of learning and mnemonic strategy, peer tutoring, cooperative and learning (Muijs & Reynolds, 2011). Rosenberg, Westling and McLesky (2008) also contend that the direct or explicit instruction approach has the strongest research to support its effectiveness and is the most widely used classroom intervention (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui & Tarver, 2004; Coyne, Kame'enui, & Carnine, 2007). Flores and Kaylor (2007), in their study observed a classroom in which the teacher used direct instruction and the findings revealed that the teacher used modelling, guided practice, independent practice, and cumulative review. It was further revealed that “the students who participated in direct instruction outperformed their peers on the informal and formal measures” (Flores & Kaylor, 2007, p. 86).

According to the literature, direct instruction has the greatest influence on students with special needs. Grossen (2002) states that during the last two decades, research and development efforts in education have focused on the goal of closing the gap between students with disabilities and general education students. Flores and Kaylor (2007) used direct instruction on the premise that all students can learn with appropriate instructional design and implementation. They indicated that the

efficiency of this methodology is particularly beneficial for students with disabilities, who have many learning needs but little time to address them. For students with emotional disturbances and learning disabilities the constant support, also known as scaffolding, monitoring and positive feedback is essential in keeping students focused on work that has not yielded much success in the past (Maccini, Gagnon, Mulcalt, & Leon, 2006). At the conclusion of the lesson, independent practice is given out so students may continue practicing. This repetition of skills is crucial for students with difficulty retaining information and a great model for direct instruction.

When educating students with special needs, at risk students, and novice learners, direct instruction has led to great academic gains for these groups of students (Flores & Kaylor, 2007; Grossen, 2004; Heward, 2000; Magliaro, et al., 2005; Maccini, et al., 2006). In general, direct instruction is an active, reflective approach to instruction that breaks learning into smaller steps with scaffolding, leading towards students' independence and mastery (Rosenshine, 2008 & Rupley, 2009). Direct instruction, compared to other approaches to instruction, has been shown to be extremely beneficial for students with exceptionalities (Marchand, Kinder & Kubina, n.d.). Though direct instruction approaches are effective for all students, they are particularly effective in increasing the rate of learning for students with specific learning disabilities. Baker, Santoro, Chard, Fien, Park and Otterstedt (2013) describe the "compelling evidence indicating that explicit or direct instruction has a positive impact on a range of student academic outcomes, particularly for students who are at risk for academic difficulties" (p. 334).

2.3.2 Whole-class instruction

Whole class instruction is a sound pedagogical practice that teachers are likely to be undertaking in their daily teaching already and is a manifestation of direct instruction and is one way of differentiating instruction (Tomlinson, 2003). During this type of instruction teachers sometimes ask learners questions randomly while explaining some concepts. However, this mode of instruction is not suitable for learners with hearing impairments as they find it difficult to lip read what the teacher might be explaining. Tomlinson differentiation model suggests that teachers use flexible grouping in order to meet needs of all learners. As Florian and Black (2011) argue, it is not the choice of strategy but its implementation that is key to embodying inclusive pedagogical practices in the classroom.

By definition, whole-class instruction is “an illustration of an inclusive pedagogy as no learner is excluded from the lesson” (Florian & Black 2011, p 289). Florian and Rouse (2005) link whole-class instruction with teachers who are skilled at teaching inclusively. This means that in an inclusive classroom teachers who use this strategy need to have knowledge and skills of accommodating needs of all learners in the classroom. Thus those with hearing impairment (hard of hearing) should be taken on board while employing this strategy. During whole-class instruction, all learners are participants of the general classroom activities. This approach ensures that all learners are paid equal attention without the marginalisation that often accompanies pre-determined separation of learners before the lesson begins (Florian & Black, 2011).

However, Tomlinson (2003) cautions that sole reliance on whole-class instruction does not allow flexibility for teachers in the way that small group settings would, with

the latter making it easier for teachers to address learner variance more suitably. Whole-class instruction can also be successfully combined with audio-visual presentations or take the form of an information-rich presentation in content-based subjects such as Geography or Natural Science. Depending on the subject content of the lesson, whole-class instruction can also be combined with direct instruction for the initial introductory lesson.

2.3.3 Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning has been defined differently by various researchers. Landmark researchers in cooperative learning such as Johnson & Johnson (1999) define it as “children are linked interdependently and must work together to resolve a problem, promote each other’s learning, contribute to the group’s discussion, share both personal and material resources, resolve conflicts democratically, and accept responsibility for any group decisions” (cited in Gillies & Boyle, 2006, p. 430). Hallahan and Kauffman (2003, p. 27) define it “as an instructional strategy that many proponents of inclusion stress in an effective way of integrating students with disabilities into groups of those without disabilities”. One of differentiation principles is flexible grouping which might be random at times, self-chosen, or students might work individually. When used purposefully, flexible grouping affords the teacher targeted teaching opportunities and the students the chance to work with a variety of different learners in diverse contexts (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000).

Learners who are engaged in cooperative learning develop a strong sense of community and tend to scaffold each other (Gillies & Boyle, 2006). In cooperative learning students work together in heterogeneous small groups to solve problems or

practice responses. Tomlinson (2000), states that “whenever a teacher reaches to an individual or small group to vary his or her teaching in order to create the best learning experience possible, that teacher is differentiating instruction” (p. 1). Cooperative learning has roots in constructivist theory and the perspective that cognitive change takes place as students actively work on problems and discover their own solutions (Muijs & Reynolds, 2011). Under cooperative learning, learners scaffold each other in learning rather than competition. Evidence of the importance of cooperative learning is cited by (Bos & Vaughn, 2002) who suggest that students who participated in the co-operative teams performed better in mathematics and received higher grades than those who did not.

2.3.4 Peer-mediated instruction

This refers to peer tutoring, the use of peer confederates in managing behaviour problems, or any other arrangements in which peers deliberately recruited and trained to help teach an academic or social skill to a classmate (Falk & Wehby, 2001). Peer tutoring is recommended as a method of including students with disabilities into the mainstream (Fuchs, Fuchs & Karns, 2001; Gardner, 2001; Maheady, Harper, & Mallette, 2001). Professionals have advocated using children with disabilities as tutors or tutees such as gifted learners who out-stand their peers during teaching and learning process. According to Vygotsky’ ZPD, there are two levels of learning, first is real level whereby learners tackle problems without any assistance. The second level is called potential level, whereby learners need guidance from more knowledgeable one such as peers, or adults in order to tackle the tasks (Mujis & Reynolds, 2011). This is done through scaffolding and the teacher may assign some learners to be tutors.

Differentiating instruction allows teachers to teach to each student's ZPD. In classrooms where teachers do not differentiate instruction or only include minor modifications to vary the instruction at different readiness levels, it is likely that the instruction will fall short for many of the students because it is outside of their ZPD (Tomlinson, 1995). Since inclusive classrooms contain individual learners with diverse learning needs it is very important to provide support according to needs of each and every learner. Some learners who grasp concepts fast may require enrichment while those who are slow at mastering concepts may require teachers to offer remedial activities until their real level is reached.

2.3.5 Individualized instruction

Children have diverse learning styles, learn at different rates, have varying socioeconomic backgrounds, and have diverse intellectual strengths. Individualized instruction is especially effective in working with at-risk students (Hamby, 1989). Within inclusive classrooms there such learners who might require individualised instruction. The two major facets of this teaching method are learning and motivation. Both of these facets recognize and build on the uniqueness of each child. If teachers do not recognize the unique learning needs of students, these students do not have the opportunity to achieve their potential (Pugach & Warger, 1996). Because they do not learn like everyone else, they often see themselves, as failures.

Individualised instruction provides the opportunity for students to learn at their own pace, in their own way, and be successful. Teachers can adapt instruction to the learner using six general modes of individualisation (Heathers 1977). These modes help in achieving a high level of attention to the needs, readiness, and learning style of

each learner. The modes include; working on different learning tasks towards different goals, studying a given task in different settings such as individual or group settings. Different learners can work on a given task with different methods of teaching and learning. Moreover, different learners can also be allowed different amount of time as needed to complete a learning task. Individual instruction permits every learner to achieve mastery of tasks undertaken. However, the central problem of individualisation is that a teacher cannot give individual attention to more than one learner at a time. Hence most teachers opt for whole class teaching when teacher-pupil ratio is high (Heathers 1977).

2.4 Instructional accommodations and adaptations

Instructional accommodations and adaptations may be the most important area that regular teachers need to address in inclusive classrooms. Instructional accommodations are typically defined “as services or supports provided to help students gain full access to class content and instruction, and to demonstrate accurately what they know (Friend & Bursuck, 2006). Learners with disabilities may not perform at the same levels of other learners in the classroom, the regular classroom teacher needs to be prepared to make accommodations and adaptations to his or her lesson plans so that each learner has an opportunity to learn the material. Piaget posits that children who experience cognitive disabilities or developmental delays may suffer from multiple conditions, which impact their ability to access general curriculum (Slavin, 2005). It is therefore important that the content of instruction to be consistent with the developmental level of the learner or what Tomlinson calls readiness or ability level. All children do not learn the same way, therefore, regular classroom teachers need to be aware of methods they can use to

alter lesson plans to benefit learners with special needs. Lowery (2003) found that teacher adaptations and accommodations appeared to keep students engaged in the learning process.

One of the recent investigations on instructional adaptation for children with SEN in the regular classroom is that of Kuyini and Desai (2008) in Ghana. The researchers investigated teachers' instructional adaptation in the regular classroom using 37 teachers. The results of their study show that teachers make limited instructional adaptation, and in some cases, they make no adaptation at all to support children with SEN found in the regular classroom. Likewise, Agbenyega and Deku, (2011) investigated the current Ghanaian teachers' pedagogical practices in the regular classroom. The data for the study were generated from a focus group discussion with 21 teachers. The findings revealed that the current teaching practices in the regular classroom in Ghana are prescriptive, inflexible, mechanistic, and do not value variety of learning styles of pupils. In practice, this result may lead one to imply that the current teachers do not have the required or adequate competence to effectively address the needs of pupils with LDs in the regular classroom. Therefore, it is likely that when teachers' lack competence in adapting instruction, the needs of majority of pupils' with learning difficulties cannot be addressed in the regular classroom.

2.5 Teacher preparation for inclusion

According to Jung (2007) college courses prepare future teachers for positive attitudes towards students with disabilities and appropriate teaching skills. Different scholars identified the issue of training, or lack thereof, as a hindrance to inclusive classrooms. Roberts and Teigland (2008) state that training of both special and general education

teachers needs to be ongoing and individualized for the unique needs of specific students in classrooms. Causton and Theoharis (2008) cited in Williams, 2012, p. 23), “felt that school leaders must provide explicit training to teachers and staff to build the capacity to support all students in inclusive setting”. The training must also include ways to differentiate instruction and learn collaboration techniques. Kosko and Wilkins’s study (2009), on how training and experiences affected general education teachers’ perceptions, on their skills at modifying instruction were based on a special education student’s IEP. It was found that participants were relatively confident in adapting their instruction to students with disabilities (Wilkins, 2009). Along with this, there was a positive correlation between the amount of professional development the participants received and their views on their ability to adapt instruction. Kosko and Wilkins (2009) concluded that training had provided an impact on perceived ability of adapting instruction, and the more training one received the greater the impact it may have on their confidence to teach students with disabilities.

This proved that professional training is very important for preparing teachers to be positive and confident towards students with disabilities and to develop skills in instructional adaptation to meet these students’ needs. Austin (2001) states that the inclusion model seems to be gaining more acceptance and teacher education programs need to provide the training and supports to prepare teachers to serve in inclusive classrooms. Both general and special educators feel that knowledge barriers exist in inclusive classroom whereas a number of general educators do not feel equipped to work with students having special needs.

According to Read, McLaughlin and Walther (2002, p.47) “practicing professionals need ongoing professional development opportunities to enhance their skills related to effective classroom instruction, management within the classroom, communication, and collaboration with colleagues”. However, research reveals that general education teachers frequently do not feel prepared to meet the academic and behavioural needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms and request professional development opportunities to support their teaching situations (Schumm & Vaughn, 1992; Semmel, Abemathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991). The professional development “may include but is not limited to school-based workshops, university courses, opportunities to visit other teachers' classrooms, teacher-to-teacher mentor programs, teacher study groups that allow teachers to work collaboratively to find solutions, studying a book by a professional in the field, and trying out a new teaching method” (Gould & Vaughn 2000, p.372).

2.6 Planning for instruction

A classroom is a “community of learners each with unique learning preferences, interests, strengths, needs and potential” (Judith, 2005, p.15). Planning instruction that acknowledges and honours these differences means providing each learner with opportunities to learn in different ways so that each can reach his or her potential (Judith, 2005). It means thoughtfully selecting learning and teaching strategies, materials and supports that will maximise learner achievement. Learner profile which is one of students differences according to differentiation instruction model, offers a starting point for this planning Judith, 2005). Research supports the idea that when teachers incorporate various levels of instruction for many different students into unit or lesson planning, students can work toward individual objectives within the context

of large group instruction (Schumm, Vaughn, & Leavell, 1994; Stainback & Stainback, 1996).

Preparation of various levels of instruction is one of the tenets of differentiation instruction model in order to cater for the abilities of every learner in the inclusive classroom. Gardner (1999) also asserts the importance for teachers to take students' intelligences into account when planning instruction, and teach in a way that attends to all intelligences, to ensure that each student is able to learn in a way that capitalizes on his or her strengths. However, studies by (Vaughn & Schumm, 1997, 1998, 2000, & 2001) reveal that many teachers report that time for planning activities for both mainstream and general education teachers is virtually non-existent.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Tomlinson's differentiation model of instruction. Tomlinson's model of differentiation instruction is grounded in the educational theory and research, which advocates for responsive teaching that attends to students' variance in readiness, interests and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2000). According to Gartin, Murdick, Imbeau and Perner (2002 p. 12) differentiated instruction is, "the planning of curriculum and instruction using strategies that address student strengths, interests, skills, and readiness in flexible learning environments." Tomlinson (2001 p. 10) defines differentiation instruction as a "flexible approach to teaching in which the teacher plans and carries out varied approaches to content, the process, and /or the product in anticipation of and in response to student differences in readiness, interests, and learning needs".

Tomlinson draws the works of social constructivists such as Vygotsky and Gardner who believe that each learner is a unique individual with own unique needs and background. According to Tomlinson (2003) this differentiation instruction model is based on the premise that all learners are different, thus in terms of readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Therefore, learning requires a connection of a student's own abilities and interests, and that lesson planning requires providing learners with the type of instruction that can address their needs and the educational objectives simultaneously.

2.7.1 Key elements of differentiation instruction

There are several elements of differentiation instruction but for the purpose of this study, five elements will be discussed.

2.7.1.1 Knowing the learner

Differentiation instruction begins with truly knowing of the learners, both as individual learners and as a community of learners. Teachers need to create opportunities to learn about students' strengths, needs, interests, preferences and ways of learning. Knowing learner profiles can provide essential information for planning instruction that goes beyond general student needs to address the specific identified needs of your students. A student's learning profile is the manner in which that student learns best or most efficiently (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). A comprehensive learner profile includes information on students' interests, learning preferences, styles, and differences. Edmonton (2006), posits that the teachers planning approach should consist of the levels of difficulty at which curriculum outcomes can be interpreted, the materials, resources and tasks needed to support

varied interests, aptitudes and abilities, the scaffolding or supports required to facilitate student learning, how to include varied approaches to assessment and evaluation, and time requirements.

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences supports the importance of considering learners' learning profiles. In his theory, Gardner (1999) proposes that all individuals vary in strengths and weakness, according to eight intelligences: verbal-linguistic, visual-spatial, logical-mathematical, musical-rhythmic, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. (Gardner, 1999) also asserts the importance for teachers to take students' intelligences into account when planning instruction, and teach in a way that attends to all intelligences, to ensure that each student is able to learn in a way that capitalizes on his or her strengths. Edmonton (2006), states that the goal of a learning profile is to find out as much as possible about how an individual learns. The goal is not to label students as certain kinds of learners but rather to help them develop multiple pathways for learning.

2.7.1.2 Understanding the curriculum

Differentiation instruction is built on a recognition that learners learn at different rates and in different ways. For activities and assessment to be useful and fair, they must sometimes be different for different learners. Similarly in an inclusive classroom, there are learners who learn at different rates, some are fast while others are slow and some struggle while others do not (MIE, 2008). Teachers need to adapt the curriculum in terms of content, materials, and the environment in order to meet needs of all learners.

2.7.1.3 Providing multiple pathways to learning

Differentiation depends on knowing and using a variety of teaching methods so that learners have opportunities to learn and demonstrate their learning in multiple ways. For example, this may involve teaching to different intelligences or to different learning styles. Teachers can address differing levels of readiness and ability by building open-endedness, choice and the potential for simple to complex responses into activities. In this way, the teacher not only creates opportunities for learners to show their learning in different ways, but also make it possible for learners with differing degree of readiness or skills to respond.

While teachers respond to each learner's needs by providing respectful tasks, they can also respond efficiently through flexible grouping strategies. Attending to this principle can afford learners a variety of learning opportunities in multiple different settings (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). To use this strategy effectively, teachers must plan a variety of grouping arrangements for each student. Differentiated classrooms following this technique include whole-class, small-group, and individualized instruction arrangements. Teachers can move learners in and out of these different arrangements, allowing learners to work with peers having similar needs, interests, or learning profiles, as well as learners varying in their needs and abilities, to allow learners to draw on the strengths of others in the group. Grouping might be random at times, self-chosen, or students might work individually.

When used purposefully, flexible grouping affords the teacher targeted teaching opportunities and the students the chance to work with a variety of different learners in diverse contexts (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). Learners also need opportunities to work in a variety of context including independently, with partners or small groups,

with larger groups and as a whole class. The contexts and ways in which these groups are organised is an essential component of differentiation instruction. Differentiation instruction recommends that learning groups should change over the course of the day and be based on a variety of differing factors including student interests, readiness level or learning needs (Tomlinson, et. al., 2000).

2.7.1.4 Sharing responsibility with students

One of the ultimate goals of education is to gradually transfer responsibility for learning to learners so that they become capable and motivated lifelong learners. In differentiation instruction, teachers actively work towards this goal by scaffolding instruction so that all learners can experience success. Scaffolding is a key component of a differentiated instruction approach and is especially important for students with learning difficulties. Vygotsky (1986) asserts that teachers should provide modelling, scaffolding instruction and constant support to help students progress in their learning, which are also tenets of Tomlinson's differentiation instruction model. Teachers can differentiate instruction based on student readiness in a variety of ways and one way is through scaffolding (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000).

Effective scaffolding instruction considers student strengths, needs and current level of knowledge and skill (as identified in individual learner profiles and other in-class assessment strategies). For many students with learning difficulties, scaffolding will be adjustable but ongoing. To maintain a reasonable level of competence, many students with learning difficulties will require scaffolding for the long term. The degree of scaffolding needed may change across subject areas, types of learning task and contexts and environments for learning.

2.7.1.5 Readiness

Responding to a learner's readiness level is rooted in the social constructivist learning theories of Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky proved that individuals learn best in accordance with their readiness to do so (Allan & Tomlinson, 2008). This theoretical influence provides a concrete foundation for differentiated instruction. The readiness of the individual should match what a student learns, how they learn it and how the student demonstrates what they learned when using differentiated instruction. Learners in inclusive classrooms differ in ways of understanding the concepts. Some are fast learners while others are slow learners. Vygotsky called this a learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), describing it as the point in the learning process at which an individual can no longer function successfully without scaffolding and support. It is at this point in which new learning will take place, and it is the teacher's goal to lead a student to this point while extending the student's level of independent work. If the work is above or below a student's ZPD there will be no growth in learning. Differentiating instruction allows teachers to teach to each student's ZPD. In classrooms where teachers do not differentiate instruction or only include minor modifications to vary the instruction at different readiness levels, it is likely that the instruction will fall short for many of the students because it is outside of their ZPD (Tomlinson, et al., 2000).

2.7.1.6 Interest

Student interests vary and can become effective tools to support learning in the differentiated classroom (Tomlinson, 2001a). Tomlinson (2001a) views students' interests as a powerful motivator, which wise teachers could take advantage of within the differentiated classroom. Teachers should find ways to engage students, by

tapping into what interests' students and by involving students in the daily running of the classroom (MacGillivray & Rueda, 2001). Activities and discussions that are built around students' concerns and their life experiences allows the curriculum to become more meaningful to students (Bosch, 2001; MacGillivray & Rueda, 2001; McBride, 2004; Tomlinson, 2000b & 2001a). Allowing for student interests within the learning community ensures that even marginalised students especially those with SEN find a place (Lawrence, 2004). Most learners, even struggling learners, have aptitudes and passions, providing an opportunity within the classroom for them to explore and express these interests, mitigates against the sense of failure previously experienced by these learners (Lawrence, 2004).

2.8 Strengths and weaknesses of Tomlinson's differentiation instruction model

Despite the limited empirical research, Tomlinson's work has many strengths that made her to be highly regarded among educators as the 'voice' of differentiation (Bafile, 2009; Knowles, 2009). First, Tomlinson's model of differentiation is based on her experiences as an educator and program administrator of special services for struggling and advanced learners. As Tomlinson has garnered over 20 years of classroom practice and experience working with students of varying ages and abilities, she has developed a keen understanding of students' learning needs (Bafile, 2009). Tomlinson's model of differentiation instruction is also rooted in educational theory and research, such as social constructivism and multiple intelligences. The numerous educational theories and research that Tomlinson cites in her work, including the work of (Vygotsky, 1986; Bandura, 1977 & Gardner, 1999) support Tomlinson's position that differentiation is a beneficial form of instruction that

recognizes and responds to the many differences in students' readiness, interests and learning profiles.

While Tomlinson's DI model possesses many strengths that will be later explored in further detail, it does have some limitations and areas of weakness that should be considered as well. First, as asserted by Subban (2006), there currently exists little empirical evidence to support the effectiveness of differentiation as a whole model. Though there is much research to support the efficacy of responding to students' differences through instruction based on their readiness, interests or learning profiles as separate elements, few studies examine the effectiveness of differentiation instruction as articulated by Tomlinson's model. It should also be investigated if varying the individual elements of differentiation (readiness, interest and learning profiles) affects the overall learning outcomes for students. In addition, further research is needed to establish which models of instruction best help learners with a variety of needs (Tomlinson, 2003).

2.9 Chapter summary

In this chapter, review of related literature on instructional strategies for inclusive classrooms was discussed. There seem to be a lot of strategies which teachers can use in meeting needs of all learners in an inclusive classroom. These include direct instruction, whole group instruction, and class wide peer mediated instruction. The chapter has also reviewed impact of accommodations/adaptations, teacher training, and planning for instruction in meeting needs of all learners in the inclusive classroom. From the literature, gaps on adaptation of instruction in regular classrooms have been identified such as limited instructional adaptations, and in adequate

competency to effectively address the needs of all learners in the inclusive classroom. The literature further revealed variations of effective instructional strategies to be used in an inclusive classroom. Different scholars highlighted different instructional strategies for inclusive classrooms. Hence the study was conducted in order to explore how do regular primary school teachers plan and teach in order to meet needs of all learners in the inclusive classrooms. The next chapter will discuss the research design, methodology, data generation instruments and analysis method in used in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the research design, the methodology, data generation instruments, analysis method used in the study and limitations of the study. The issues of ethics and trustworthiness are also taken into consideration. Finally, it presents the chapter summary.

3.2 Research design

The study adopted a qualitative case study research design as suitable because the intent of this study was to search for in depth information on what instructional strategies regular primary school teachers use in inclusive classrooms. Simons (2009 p. 21) defines a case study as “an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a ‘real life’”. From this point of view, in this study, the cases studied were the two primary schools A and B and, the phenomenon studied was the instructional strategies regular primary school teachers use in inclusive classrooms. However, Amerson (2011) and Crowe et al (2011) contends the weakness of case study approach that there is the lack of scientific rigor and the issues of generalization. Nevertheless, since qualitative research does not focus much on generalisation of results, the researcher still opted for it, as the best suited for providing an in-depth understanding of case and a bedrock of scientific investigation.

The researcher adopted an exploratory case study. This type of case study is used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2014). In this study, the instructional strategies used by regular primary school teachers in inclusive classrooms

3.3 Sample and Sampling procedure

According to Kumar (2011) a sample comprises elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study, or it can be a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which the researcher is interested. There are different types of sampling strategies namely, random, systematic, stratified and purposeful. Purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics representative of typical attributes of the population (Kumar, 2011). The researcher's intent was not to generalize from the sample to a population, but to explain, describe, and interpret this phenomenon (Maxwell, 2013).

The researcher purposefully selected two primary schools which had a resource centre attached to them and both having learners with SEN and some specialist teachers. The presence of learners with different types of impairments in the two sites attracted the researcher as she thought of gaining in depth knowledge from the teachers on the instructional strategies they use in order to meet needs of all the learners in the classrooms. Hence nineteen teachers were selected, five males and fourteen females. These teachers were selected because they had all undergone training and their teaching experiences varied. Some were fresh from college whilst others had been teaching for some time. The regular primary teachers represented all the grades in the

school. Sixteen learners were also selected for the focus group discussion. These learners were composed of eight having SEN and eight without SEN.

3.4 Data generation procedures

Observation, interviews and focus group discussion were methods used to generate data in this study

3.4.1 Observations

There are two possible roles that researchers can assume when carrying out observations in case studies: they can either be participant-observers or non-participant observers (Cohen et al., 2011 and Creswell, 2012). The researcher used non-participant observation on which she did not get involved in the activities of the group but remained a passive observer, watching and listening to the activities being done in the classrooms and drawing conclusions from this. The focus of the observation was on: (i) teacher learner support, (ii) learner-learner support and, (iii) various strategies employed by the teachers and the challenges encountered in meeting needs of all learners.

One of the main drawbacks of the observation is the reactivity problem. That is, the students react differently because of the researcher's presence in the classroom. To overcome this problem, at the first session the researcher did not take notes. That is, she only sat and observed and let the learners become accustomed to her presence (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Later the researcher observed the second sessions while recording notes as by this time the learners had become accustomed to the researcher's presence in the classroom. One more problem in the observation process

is the observer bias. The researcher, tried to be non-judge-mental on whatever was being observed as a way of mitigating this problem.

3.4.2 Interviews

According to Fraenkel et al. (2012) interviews are used to explore what people think or how they feel about a situation. It is this aspect of interviewing, namely, the opportunity to probe peoples' thoughts, which warranted the use of interviews in this study. There are three common types of interviews namely; structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer uses a schedule of open ended questions, but has the flexibility to probe more deeply and deviate from the interview schedule where needed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher used semi-structured interviews in this study, because this structure allowed the flexibility to probe teachers' answers from the planned interview schedule. The interview schedule for the interviews conducted during the study is included as Appendix D.

The researcher interviewed eighteen regular primary school teachers and one specialist teacher, to gain a deeper insight into instructional strategies regular teachers use when they are teaching in inclusive classrooms which could not readily evident from the observations and the data generation from focus group discussions. With the interviewees' permission, the interviews were tape-recorded so as to capture all that was said and brief notes were also written. (Fraenkel et al, 2012, p. 457) regard a recording device as "*indispensable*" when conducting interviews. Audio-recording the interviews eliminates the problems associated with note-taking interfering with the continuity of interviews and can allow the speedy compilation of complete, accurate

and objective records of interviews, providing recordings are clear and accurately transcribed (Cohen et al., 2011). Data transcribed from clear recordings can also be analysed more thoroughly than hastily scribbled interviewers' notes (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). The interviews were not conducted in the classrooms but special arrangements were made so that they did not disturb teaching and learning time.

3.4.3 Focus group discussions

The researcher also conducted focus group discussion with sixteen learners, eight from each school respectively in order to explore the experiences of the group with regard to the inclusive classroom strategies. Four learners from each school had SEN and the other four without SEN with the help of their teachers. This is where an interviewer, leads a discussion with a small group of people. The focus group discussions were conducted as a method of triangulation aiming at increasing the reliability of the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The researcher also opted for this method because it allows group dynamics and help the researcher capture shared lived experiences, accessing elements that other methods may not be able to reach (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This method permits researchers to uncover aspects of understanding that often remain hidden in the more conventional in-depth interviewing method.

3.5 Pilot study

The pilot study was conducted to test the data generation tools. Mason and Henningfield (2001, p. 84) define a pilot study as a “small version of the proposed study, with a restricted sample of subjects”. A pilot study can also be the pre-testing or 'trying out' of a particular research instrument (Baker, 1994, p. 182). In view of

this, the researcher conducted a pilot study to test the tools for data generation to be used in the study. This pilot study was done in one of the primary schools in Lilongwe having similar characteristics with the study sites (which have learners with SEN and some specialist teachers). The researcher used the interview guide and focus group discussion guide to collect data from a small sample than the one in this study. Results from the pilot study helped the researcher to iron out areas in the tools that were unclear through reformulation and rephrasing of some questions.

3.6 Data analysis

According to Merriam (2009) data analysis is “the process used to answer the research questions” (p. 176). There are many different ways to approach the analysis of qualitative data. But the researcher analysed the data through thematic analysis which “involves searching across a set of data, for example a number of interviews, to find repeated patterns of meaning” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 10). Quantitative methodology descriptively was also used in order to generate frequencies in terms of percentages using Microsoft excel. Then Data analysis followed (Braun & Clarke, 2013) seven phases of data analysis:

- In the first step, the researcher turned audio data into written text (or transcripts) by writing down what was said and how it was said so the data can be systematically coded and analysed.
- Second step, the researcher immersed herself in, and became intimately familiar with the data by reading and re-reading the data and noted patterns relevant to the research questions.

- Third step, the researcher coded the data using highlighters by identifying aspects of the data that relate to the research questions and then collated the codes and all the relevant data extracts together.
- Fourth step, the researcher searched for themes by reading the whole data and identifying clusters of similar meaning across the codes and formed larger patterns known as candidate themes. This process went on with reference to the research sub questions.
- Fifth, the researcher reviewed the themes with the research question in mind by determining whether candidate themes fit well with the coded data
- Sixth step, the researcher, defined and named themes by stating what is unique and specific about each one and selecting the data quotations to be presented in the write up.
- Finally, the researcher wrote the report by selecting compelling, vivid examples of data extracts, and relating them back to the research question and literature.

3.7 Limitations of the study

This section presents limitations of the study. One of the limitations inherent in this study was the teachers had never been trained in special needs education hence had difficulties to provide reliable information about strategies for inclusive classrooms due to lack of knowledge and skills of teaching inclusive classes. To mitigate this problem the researcher explained clearly what was required of the participants. Another limitation was that the learners with special needs had difficulties in providing information about inclusive education. The researcher addressed this

limitation by requesting the regular teachers to guide the learners in providing information through focus group discussion.

3.8 Ethical consideration and issues of trustworthiness

According to Johnson and Christensen (2011, p. 100), ethics are “the principles and guidelines that help people to uphold the things they value, whereas research ethics are a guiding set of principles that assist researchers in conducting ethical studies. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 15) point out that since educational research typically involves human subjects researchers are required to protect the “*rights and welfare of the subjects who participate in a study*”. Seeking informed consent “is probably the most common method in medical and social research” (Bailey, 1978 cited in Kumar 2011, p. 24).

3.8.1 Informed consent

Informed consent involves “voluntary participation by respondents” (Chireshe, 2006, p. 101). Each participant was informed about the purpose of the study, the risks, benefits, and the voluntary nature of their participation. The researcher also collected letters from the District Education manager, for head teachers to ask for permission to conduct the study (see Appendices A B & C for letters seeking permission). Creswell (2012) states that it is important to obtain such permission as a sign of respect for the site at which the research will be conducted. Informed consent from the teachers and learners were implied so that they “were made adequately aware of the type of information required from them as this reduces the possibility of misunderstandings arising later” (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 458).

Teachers were also informed about participation of their learners in the study. Informants must be “fully informed about the research and should give informed consent to participate (Henning, Gravett & Van Rensburg, 2005, p. 73) or have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without being penalised”. The respondents needed to be informed that their privacy and sensitivity were protected and that the information they would have imparted was used in the study. In this study, informing the participants was done in a way that encouraged voluntary participation.

3.8.2 Anonymity

Anonymity refers to the protection of the participant in a study, such that even the researcher cannot link the participant with the information provided (Babbie & Mouton, 2002, p. 526; Polit & Hungler, 2009). Participants’ confidences were protected from other persons in different settings where private information enabled identification. To ensure anonymity, alphabetical letters such as A B C and so forth were used to protect the identity of the individual by neither giving their name when presenting research results, nor including identifying details which may reveal their identity such as work place, personal characteristics and occupation.

3.9 Issues of trustworthiness

Creswell (2009), asserts that researchers should make sure that research findings are accurate and detailed as seen from the stand point of the researcher himself or herself, the participants and the readers. Research trustworthiness is very important in any study. Marshall and Rossman (2006), Trochim (2006) assert the importance research trustworthiness which requires one to employ the principle of credibility,

transferability, dependability, conformability and authenticity. In order to achieve the demands of trustworthiness in this study, the researcher made sure that she was balanced and fair in handling all the research tasks that were carried out. The gathered data were also read over and over in order to ascertain whether the captured constructs, explanations, categories and interpretations that were generated were making sense and really reflecting the nature of the phenomenon that was being studied.

3.9.1 Credibility

According to Yin (2011, p. 40) the term credibility refers to “the accurate identification and description of the phenomenon under study”. It involves a determination of whether the results of qualitative research are believable from the point of view of the participants in the research process being carried out (Trochim, 2006). In this research study, credibility was addressed through triangulation. Padgett (2008) defines triangulation as a concept adapted from navigational science involving the use of “two or more sources to achieve a comprehensive picture of a fixed point of reference” (p. 186). Hence, the researcher employed different data collection methods namely interviews, observation, and focus group discussion, and two different sites. The researcher also made use of various interviewing techniques during interviews e.g. nonverbal and verbal expressions, observation, restating and summarising in order to enhance the credibility of the study.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter described the design and methodology of the research study. The chapter began with description of the research design followed by the method which was a case study and data collection tools such as interviews, observation and focus group discussion. The chapter further presented a summary of how the data would be analysed. Ethical issues and trustworthiness as pertained to the data collection procedures were examined. Limitations of the study were also discussed in this chapter. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The study's aim was to investigate instructional strategies regular primary school teachers use in inclusive classrooms. In presenting the findings, some verbatim statements from the respondents are used to maintain the originality of the information collected. The findings are presented according to main themes from the research questions and the emerging themes from the analysed data which will form the sub titles under the main themes. The main themes are: planning of instructional materials to meet learners' needs, specific instructional strategies used to address learners' needs, adaptations or accommodations to effectively meet learners' needs, challenges faced in planning instructional strategies and means of addressing the challenges.

4.2 Demographic data of participants

Table 1 Demographic data of participants (teachers) by gender

Teachers	Male	Female	Total
	5	14	19

According to the data shown on Table 4.1, most of the regular primary school teachers were females as compared to males.

Table 2 Demographic data of teachers by general teaching experience

Years of experience	Number of teachers
0-5years	1
6-10 years	2
11-15 years	2
16- 20 years	6
21-30 years	8
Total	19

The general teaching experience of 19 teachers who participated in this study ranged from a minimum of 1 year to a maximum of 30 years with an average of 19years.

Table 3 Demographic data of teachers by teaching experience in inclusive classrooms

Years of experience	Number of teachers
0-5 years	6
6-10 years	10
11-15 years	1
16-20 years	1
21-30 years	1
Total	19

According to data shown on Table 4.3, most of the teachers had an experience of teaching in inclusive classrooms of not less than 10 years. This information reveals that most of teachers who took part in this study had acquired some professional

experience in the teaching of inclusive classrooms. Therefore the teachers who have teaching experience are at a better position to handle the issues of inclusion.

4.3 Planning of instruction to meet learners' needs

4.3.1 Factors considered when planning for instruction

Preparation of various levels of instruction is one of the tenets of differentiation instruction model in order to cater for the abilities of every learner in the inclusive classroom. The teachers were asked to explain how they plan their instruction in order to meet learners' needs. Their responses varied, most teachers from both schools A and B, explained that they consider several factors such time, content and teaching and learning resources.

4.3.1.1 Time

Time to be spent on learners with SEN was one of the factors the some of the regular primary school teachers from both schools consider when planning for their instruction. One teacher from School A stated that he indicates in the lesson activities the time to involve a learner with HI. For example, the teacher stated:

I normally indicate the time when to involve the learner with HI in my class. During this remind me the way to involve her. For example, when I am explaining some facts I look at her so that she can follow and write. (Interview, 16 Feb 2016)

4.3.1.2 Teaching and learning resources

The findings show that some of the teachers from both schools A and B consider teaching and learning materials in different angles. The common opinion was that teaching and learning materials such as charts, should be bold enough, thus in terms of size of letters. The other issue considered on teaching and learning materials was

that a teacher should prepare attractive drawings or take real objects in class in order to accommodate needs of all learners. When asked to explain more on this, a teacher from school B explained:

Sometimes I prepare real materials so that learners with SEN can easily follow by looking at or touching the objects. (Interview, 10 Feb 2016)

Similarly, a teacher from school A stated:

I always make sure that materials which I will use should accommodate needs of SEN. For example, preparing attractive drawings or look for real objects. (Interview, 16 Feb 2016).

4.3.1.3 Content

The findings show that some of the teachers from both schools also consider content when planning for their instruction. When probed to say more on this, one teacher from school A stated that:

I consider the activities planned, for example, if I am planning that learners should copy and complete sentences, learners with SEN will not copy the sentences but they will just write the answers only, (Interview Feb 13 2016).

Similarly another teacher from school B stated that the content to be covered according to the abilities of the learners was planned in advance. The teacher further explained that some of the concepts are translated in vernacular within the lesson plan in order to accommodate needs of learners with SEN.

4.3.1.4 Questions to be asked

One teacher from school A stated that questions to be asked during the lesson delivery are prepared in advance. The teacher explained that short and clear questions are prepared so that learners with SEN can easily understand and respond.

Although some teachers claimed to consider several factors when planning for their instruction, other teachers stated that they do not consider any factors due to lack of knowledge and skills. For example, one teacher from school A commented:

*I don't know how to consider learners with learning difficulties (LD).
Mwina ndikanaphunzitsidwa mmene ndingaphunzitsire ana a LD
(May be if I can be taught some ways of teaching learners with LD).
Most of these learners with learning difficulties are in class for just
socialisation. (Interview, 17 Feb 2016).*

Similarly three teachers from school B claimed to consider nothing when preparing for their instruction due to lack of knowledge and skills. One of the teachers in school B stated that he consider for the majority of the class. This was what the teacher stated:

*I only have two learners with SEN hence I consider nothing, I just
plan the work for the whole class. (Interview, 12 Feb 2016).*

4.3.1.5 Collaboration with specialist teachers

The regular primary school teachers were also asked on whether they plan their instruction with specialist teachers. All the teachers stated that they don't plan with specialist teachers. The teachers were then asked a follow up question on why they don't plan with specialist teachers. Therefore, one teacher from school A had this to state:

*I just feel that the specialist teachers are too occupied with their work
in the resource rooms hence meeting them it's like disturbing them.
(Interview, 17 Feb 2016)*

Similarly another teacher from school B commented:

*Iiii.... Aliyense amangopanga zake basi (everyone does whatever he
/she wants to do) (Interview, 12 Feb 2016)*

Another teacher from school B explained that she didn't know that it was necessary to plan with specialist teachers. Furthermore, a specialist teacher from school A explained that regular teachers are many than the specialist teachers, hence it was difficult to plan with all.

In summary, the findings indicate that most regular teachers take the following factors into consideration when planning for instruction: time, teaching and learning resources, content, methods, questions to be asked, and the planned activities in order to cater for the diverse needs of learners. It has also been revealed in this study that regular primary school teachers didn't plan their instruction with specialist teachers, and that some of the regular primary school teacher do not consider any factors due to lack of knowledge.

Judith (2005, p. 11) states that "a classroom is a community of learners each with unique learning preferences, interests, strengths, needs and potential". Hence, planning instruction that acknowledges and honours these differences means providing each learner with opportunities to learn in different ways so that each can reach his or her potential. It means thoughtfully selecting learning and teaching strategies, materials and supports that will maximise learner achievement. Learner profile which is one of learners' differences according to differentiation instruction model and as one of key principles of this model, offers a starting point for this planning.

Knowing learner profiles can provide essential information for planning instruction that goes beyond general student needs to address the specific identified needs of your students (Albert, 2006). In this study, most of the participants had a teaching

experience in inclusive classrooms which showed that they knew the learners whom they were teaching.

The regular primary teachers explained that they consider several factors when planning their instruction such as content, time, teaching and learning materials. This finding is in line with (Schumm, Vaughn, & Leavell, 1994; Stainback et al., 1996) who state that when teachers incorporate various levels of instruction for many different students into unit or lesson planning, students can work toward individual objectives within the context of large group instruction. Preparation of various levels of instruction is one of the tenets of differentiation instruction model in order to cater for the abilities of every learner in the inclusive classroom. Gardner (1999) also asserts the importance for teachers to take students' intelligences into account when planning instruction, and teach in a way that attends to all intelligences, to ensure that each student is able to learn in a way that capitalizes on his or her strengths.

Mastropieri and Scruggs (2010) also recommend that when teachers plan their lessons, they should consider the content that needs to be taught and the level of proficiency. This means knowing the different developmental levels or abilities of learners in the classrooms. However, the fact that some of the regular teachers in this study stated that they do not consider anything when planning for instructional strategies, could have numerous implications. Some of the explanations can be lack of time for preparation, or lack of knowledge and skills by the teacher to plan for an inclusive classroom. The findings of this study also revealed that teachers do not plan together with specialist teachers in terms of adjustments of content and other instructional strategies. This finding is inconsistent with Spungin (2002) who states

that teachers with knowledge of learners with SEN should be part of the teaching in inclusive classrooms.

Similarly Lypsky & Gartner (1997) contend that, collaboration is important because one teacher cannot have all the skills and competences needed to meet the diverse needs of all students in an inclusive classroom. This argument shows that, the role of special needs teacher, in inclusive classroom is paramount. The fact that the regular primary school teachers in this study did not plan with specialist teachers can have two implications. One is the lack of enough special needs teachers, as stated by all teachers during the interviews. This scarcity was alluded to Chavuta et al. (2008) that in Malawi there is lack of special needs teachers due to the fact that there is only one college which provide training in special needs education. However, the fact that classroom observation proved no practices of collaboration regardless of the presence of some specialist teachers at both schools under study, brings a question to whether the problem of scarcity of teachers stated above is really a reason for lack of collaboration practices. This may imply that there is a lack of commitment among teachers towards collaboration due to lack of motivation since the one of the specialist teachers stated that there are no incentives offered to them.

4.4 Specific instructional strategies regular primary school teachers use in inclusive classrooms

The researcher was also interested to find out if regular primary school teachers use specific strategies in order to meet diverse needs of learners in inclusive classrooms. Responding on what instructional strategies they use during teaching and learning process, all the regular primary teachers in both schools mentioned the following:

group work, question and answer, role play, individual work, excursion, whole class discussion, demonstration and practice. In addition to these, some of the teachers explained that they also use drama, songs, teaching and learning resources, reinforcement, games and storytelling. This showed that the teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and do not use specific instructional strategies.

However, findings from the lesson observations made in different classes, showed different variations. Some of the teachers in both schools mainly used three strategies namely; whole group discussion, question and answer, and group work rarely, contrary to what teachers mentioned during interviews while others use a variety of strategies. This implies that some of the regular primary school teachers lacked knowledge of inclusive classrooms which is composed of learners with different learning profiles and unique needs as stipulated by differentiation instruction model.

4.4.1 Teaching methods mostly used

4.4.1.1 Group work

During the interviews with the regular primary school teachers, it was found that group work was one of the methods mostly used in the inclusive classrooms by the teachers in both schools. When the teachers were asked to explain the major reasons why they mostly use group work, various reasons were mentioned. Some of the teachers explained that under group work, almost all learners participate fully including those with SEN. One teacher from school A elaborated by stating that:

Some learners are shy and cannot answer questions in class fearing of being laughed at if they give incorrect answers. But when in groups, they relax and contribute freely. Moreover, fast learners sometimes assist slow learners during the group work. (Interview, 17 Feb 2016).

Other teachers from school B stated that sometimes learners contribute new ideas during group discussions which help teachers to add knowledge base. Another teacher from school A explained that group work was also mostly used in order to accommodate fast and slow learners in large classes. Similarly, some learners during focus group discussions, stated that they like group work because it helps them in different ways. This was what learners at school B narrated:

During group work, everyone participate, we share ideas, we remind each other about previous work, and we also assist each other. (FGD, 12 Feb 2016).

However, some teachers from both school A and B explained that they rarely use group work because most learners play and make noise instead of participating. Other teachers stated that group work promotes laziness because some learners do not participate, but rely on gifted learners to contribute. This was also what learners from both schools stated during focus group discussion that they didn't like group work because of several reasons. One learner from school A commented:

I don't like group work because some learners make noise and play, therefore, I don't hear properly on what was being discussed and sometimes the group leader writes his own ideas and not what he or she has discussed with peers.(FDG, 10 Feb 2016)

Another learner stated:

Group work is not really good because we can discuss wrong ideas hence fail exams, moreover, everybody wants to say something which isn't right and some learners dominate, we also share little than what a teacher can deliver. (FDG, 12 Feb 2016).

Evidence from the lesson observations showed that though group work was used, most learners were making noise and playing. Moreover, learners with SEN were not involved in the activities. For example, in one class at school A, the teacher asked

learners to be in groups and discuss about the activity provided to them, but some learners who had SEN remained idle and were not organised by the teacher to be in groups. Hence, some of these learners were the ones maintaining order in the classroom by cautioning their friends to keep quiet. This was what a certain learner with LD said during teaching and learning when her peers were assigned to be in groups:

Inu takhalani chete bwanji kodi mumayelekedwa kukabwera alendo!
(Can you keep quiet! why do you misbehave in presence of visitors).
(Extract from lesson observation, 15 Feb 2016)

4.4.1.2 Whole group discussion

Some teachers from both schools mentioned that they use whole group discussion most in their classes. Several reasons emanated from the teachers on why they use this type of strategy. Ten teachers stated that whole group discussion make learners understand the content well and that learners learn from abstract to concrete concepts through explanations made from teachers. Other teachers explained that it saves time, and a teacher can teach a lot of content at a time. Similarly, results from the focus group discussions showed that learners like whole group discussion most because they explained that when a teacher stands in front explaining concepts and asks questions, every learner is alert and the teacher delivers a lot than what the learners could discuss in their groups. Two teachers explained that this strategy promote learners' alertness all the time. One teacher from school A commented:

When I am using whole group discussion, all learners pay attention because after explanation, I ask question hence every learner is alert ready for a question. (Interview, 12 Feb 2016)

Findings from the lesson observations also indicated that all the regular teachers used whole group discussion in their classes.

4.4.1.3 Question and answer

Another strategy which regular primary school teachers used was question and answer. When asked to explain reasons for use, the teachers' responses varied. Some teachers from school A, stated that question and answer helps to check understanding of content in learners, and check whether the learners have previous knowledge. Most teachers from school B mentioned that it gives feedback and promote critical thinking in learners. A certain teacher from school B explained:

Question and answer promotes full participation because the teacher can involve even non volunteers to contribute something. (Interview, 12 Feb 2016).

Classroom lesson observations also showed that most learners participate during teaching and learning. This was evidenced when learners raised their hands in order to respond to questions paused by their teachers in all the classes. However, for learners with HI there were just looking at their peers because they didn't know what was happening.

4.4.1.4 Role play

The other teachers also mentioned role play as another mostly used strategy. Responding to why they use role play, one teacher from school B commented:

Yah, because there are some topics which you cannot be explaining and explaining! Learners had to take part, the reality should stick into their mind. For example, the concept of peace in the community, we had the police live with us and thieves. So learners can role play catching a thief and take him/her to police. (Interview, 15 Feb 2016).

Other teachers from both schools explained that role play motivates learners because they learn in a real life situation. Furthermore it was explained that role play help learners to quickly retain what has been learnt. This strategy was also evidenced

during lesson observation in school A whereby learners were very motivated seeing their peers role playing catching a thief.

4.4.1.5 Demonstration

Some teachers also claimed to use demonstration strategy when teaching. When asked to shed light on this, the teachers explained differently. Some teachers from school B stated that demonstration helped in equipping learners with knowledge, teaching from known to unknown, and to enlighten the learners on where to start. Views from school A were that this strategy helps learners to understand the content well. It was also observed in different classes that indeed some teachers used demonstration strategy especially when introducing a mathematical lesson. Gregory and Hammerman (2008) assert that educational researchers generally concur that applying many methods for student engagement and success is the key to promoting student achievement.

Central to Tomlinson model of differentiation instruction is the flexibility to draw on different methods and techniques in order to acknowledge the needs of individual learners and different learning situations. Differentiation instruction model states that there is no single classroom in which all learners will be exactly the same or learn in the same way and at the same pace as a result, in applying teaching methods educators should bear this in mind. Therefore, teachers are required to be creative in the use of a variety of teaching methods to reach all the learners. The study has found that most teachers mostly use direct instructional strategies such as whole class instruction, question and answer, and demonstration.

This finding is affirmed by Florian and Black (2011) who state that these approaches ensure that all learners are paid equal attention without the marginalisation that often accompanies pre-determined separation of learners before the lesson begins. However, this finding is inconsistent with (Tomlinson, 2003), who cautions that sole reliance on whole-class instruction(direct instruction) does not allow flexibility for teachers in the way than small group settings would, with the latter making it easier for teachers to address learner variance more suitably. Children have different level of understanding and so by using mixed method while teaching helps the children to learn from one another.

Through the use of peer tutoring some of the children in the classroom feel more comfortable to ask their fellow student than to the teacher therefore makes it easy for them to learn from each other. The study revealed that most teachers incorporated direct instruction with minimal group work in which learners more knowledgeable learners and those with SEN are mixed so that they can assist each other. This corroborates with Vygotsky's ZPD who believes that students learn when they teach others, explain to others, or demonstrate a concept to others (Pelech & Pieper, 2010).

Furthermore Aincow and Sandill (2010) argue that methodology for developing inclusive practices must take into account of social processes of learning that go within specific contexts. Small group instruction is one of the cooperative instruction many proponents of inclusion stress as an effective way of integrating students with disabilities into groups of those without disabilities (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2003). Learners who are engaged in cooperative learning, develop a strong sense of community and tend to scaffold each other (Gillies & Boyle, 2006). Regular teachers

in this study claimed not using small group instruction frequently because of lack of knowledge in managing group work in large classes.

Mitchell (2008) suggests the use of small group discussions in inclusive classes, because of the large number of students. Group discussions, seems to be suitable for classes mostly found in developing countries, because it is like creating small classes within the big class and many teachers out of one teacher (Mitchell, 2008). The obstacle to the use of this method, as mentioned by teachers themselves, however, was not only the large number of students but also time limitation. Therefore, teachers avoided using group discussions frequently, and opted to use methods which did not allow full participation of learners in the lesson. An inclusive classroom requires the use of adaptive participatory methods to deliver the content to meet the needs of all learners.

Question and answer was mostly used by the regular teachers in this study. Mtunda and Safuli (2004) states that question and answer method helps to find out what pupils already know especially during the introduction of the lesson and to check whether learners are following the lesson. However, over use of this method can hinder those with hearing impairment as they cannot hear what the teacher is saying. Florian and Rouse (2005) link whole-class instruction in which question and answer is mostly used with teachers who are skilled at teaching inclusively. This means that in an inclusive classroom teachers who use this strategy need to have knowledge and skills of accommodating needs of all learners in the classroom. Thus those with hearing impairment (hard of hearing) should be taken on board while employing this strategy.

4.5 Adaptations or accommodations teachers use to effectively meet the diverse learners' needs

4.5 1 Adaptation of content

Responding on whether they make adjustments in selection of content, evidence from interviews with the teachers from both schools showed that most of the teachers adjusted (eleven), while some of the teachers did not (nine). When the researcher asked the regular primary school teachers individually to explain how they adjust the content, two ways were mentioned. Most of the teachers stated that they give less work to learners with SEN so that they can finish in time because most of them are slow writers. In addition, the teachers explained that they sometimes break the content into teachable units and another teacher from school A stated that success criteria for some learners with SEN is different from those without SEN. However, some of the teachers (nine), who claimed not to adjust the content, explained that they do not know how to adjust and one of the teachers from school B commented:

With the large number of learners in class I had a lot of work to do, therefore, I do not had time to adjust activities for only 2 learners with SEN what I consider is the majority. (Interview, 12 Feb 2016).

However, the findings from lesson observations in all classes, indeed showed that teachers didn't differentiate content of learners with SEN and those without. This was contrary to what the teachers said during the individual interviews. The researcher did not observe any teacher giving different activities or assignments to learners with SNE. These are some of the incidents transpired during the lesson observation: In one class at school A, the teacher asked learners to give the meanings of the following words; toy car, sugarcane, realized and price. Learners struggled to come up with

meanings. The teacher then tried to explain the meanings and then asked the learners to write sentences using the words

Learners with SNE were struggling but the researcher did not observe the teacher moving forward to such learners who sat on the same row. Observation from another class, showed a teacher giving the same homework assignment whereby learners were asked to make any animal they raise at home. In this class, there are some learners with physical disabilities who cannot make something using their hands. However, some teachers were able to break the content into small steps. This is in line with what they said during interviews that when planning, they break content into teachable units.

The researcher observed one teacher at school B teaching Chichewa, and the lesson was about “*Kuona mau ofotokoza za maina*” (*Adjectives*). In this lesson the teacher introduced it by telling learners a short story about a meeting of certain wild animals and their behaviour. In this story there were examples of adjectives which are words under the topic of the lesson to be taught. Then the teacher showed learners flash cards of adjectives, and asked learners to read. After that, the teacher asked the learners to complete sentences using some adjectives provided. All this suggest that the teacher really broke the content into small units so that learners can easily understand it.

4.5.2 Adaptation of teaching and learning materials

From the lesson observations done, results showed that most teachers did not adjust teaching and learning materials. Evidence from one lesson observation was the one

whereby a teacher from school B was teaching about animals kept in Malawi. This teacher relied upon pictures in the book to teach the difference between a fish and pig. Instead of bringing in a real fish in the class, the teacher drew it on a small chart and failed to indicate the scales on it. Therefore, it took time for her to explain the differences. Similarly, in another lesson a teacher from school A was teaching the concept of toy car. Instead of bringing in a model of a toy car, the teacher did not and taught without any material, hence she struggled to explain that concept.

Similarly, in another class at school B, a teacher was teaching about calculation of charges for sending money by telegram, whereby a chart of money figures was pasted on the chalkboard. However, this chart had small fonts and when the teacher asked a learner with Visual Impairment (VI) to read the figures, the learner struggled and failed to read. This was contrary to what the teachers said during interviews that they use bold charts or real objects to accommodate needs of all learners. Interestingly, in other lesson observations some teachers use real objects to clarify concepts. This was evidenced by a certain teacher who was teaching a topic about “fruits I like”. This teacher brought in different types of fruits in class. Another teacher from school A who was teaching learners about the district administrative structure, took learners to the school administrative block in order to clarify the concept of district administrative structure. This teacher explained to the learners that the school has the head teacher and the district administrative structure has also the head known as chairperson and so on and so forth.. This implies that this teacher has a sound knowledge of inclusive classrooms that learners are different hence have different styles of learning.

4.5.3 Adaptation of language

According to the observation done in all classes, most teachers used appropriate language according to the level of learners and size of the class. Variation of voice was also displayed by the teachers in most of the classrooms. This showed that most teachers know the learning profiles of learners in inclusive classrooms, such as learners with hard of hearing and others not, hence a need to vary the voice projection and use of language. However, in a certain class at school A in which there was a girl with hearing impairment (HI), the teacher's voice was too low to those with hearing problems throughout the lesson. At one point in time, the teacher asked the learners to write sentences in their note books using words written on the chalkboard, but this learner with HI, was just looking at friends not knowing what to do. After observing her peers writing, she looked at the chalkboard and then started writing. This implies that the teacher lacked communication skills.

Lowery (2003) found that teacher adaptations and accommodations appeared to keep students engaged in the learning process. Differentiation instruction is built on a recognition that learners learn at different rates and in different ways. For activities to be useful and fair, they must sometimes be different for different learners. The regular teachers in the study claimed to consider content, time, teaching and learning resources, when planning for instruction. This finding is consistent with Pauline, (2003) cited in Mwakyeja (2013) who claim that, adaptation of teaching materials to suit the needs of learners such as those with visual impairments in inclusive classroom, is very important. Bishop (1996); Mastropieri and Scruggs (2010) also argue that adaptation of teaching and learning materials by increasing the font sizes, or bolding the materials, is very important for learners with low vision.

The participants' opinion on use of real materials also corroborate with Sethosa's findings (2001, p. 47) cited in (Mpya, 2007) who indicates that "when real life examples are brought into the inclusive classroom or learners are taken to real life situations outside the classroom, where the subject matter is touched, seen and heard is very important". All this reflected that most of the teachers realised the presence of diverse needs of learners in their classes. Most of the teachers claimed to prepare less work for learners with SEN as one way of adapting the content. Differentiating instruction allows teachers to teach to each student's ZPD. In classrooms where teachers do not differentiate instruction or only include minor modifications to vary the instruction at different readiness levels, it is likely that the instruction will fall short for many of the students because it is outside of their ZPD (Tomlinson, 1995).

However, though theoretically, the regular primary teachers in this study knew several ways of adapting instruction, but did not put it effectively into practice. This suggests that regular teachers are unlikely to make any effective instructional adaptation to address the needs of learners with SEN in the inclusive classrooms. Teachers' lack of competence in those items may imply that majority of learners' needs are not addressed in the inclusive classrooms. This finding is consistent with the finding of (Peterson, 2011; Mabena, 2011 & Kuyini, 2014). Their findings revealed that majority of teachers were not making effective instructional adaptation for children with disabilities in the regular classroom. Similarly, Agbenyega and Deku (2011), reveal that teachers in their study were more particular about finishing or completing curricula and were reluctant to adapt instruction to address the needs of pupils in the inclusive classrooms. The results also resonates with (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Schumm, Vaughn, Haager, McDowell, Rothlein & Samuell, 1995) that many teachers

make few or no adaptations for students with disabilities. In practice, this result may lead one to imply that the current teachers do not have the required or adequate competence to effectively address the needs of pupils with SEN in the inclusive classrooms.

4.5.5 Scaffolding

Scaffolding was also another instructional strategy which teachers need to do in inclusive classrooms so that diversity needs are met. Most of the teachers claimed that they provide individual support during teaching and learning. However, findings from the lesson observations showed that this support varied. In one class from school B, the teacher supported a learner with speech problem to mention a certain animal in English. This teacher asked learners to give names of animals shown in the book, therefore, a cat was shown to the learner with speech problem who pronounced it “*mwau*” (*cat’s sound*). Then the teacher helped her to call it cat. Similarly, another teacher at school A assisted some learners with learning difficulties (LD) in her class to spell words correctly. Other teachers were moving around the groups helping learners accomplish their work but others fail to do so because of lack of space in their classes due to the large numbers of learners. However, in other lessons observed, some teachers did not assist learners with SEN. For example, in one class, the teacher did not come close to learners with SEN to assist them writing the activity in their note books.

Vygotsky (1986) asserts that teachers should provide modelling, scaffolding instruction and constant support to help students progress in their learning. Scaffolding is one way of differentiating instruction based on student readiness. Some

learners with SEN in this study were not supported during the teaching and learning process. Therefore the results were not consistent with what (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000) state that when teachers adjust the difficulty of a task to provide adequate challenge, supporting learners where they need extra support, or increasing or decreasing the learner's familiarity with a task based on the learner's proficiency level of the skills required for the task, all these are ways of differentiating instruction according to the learner's readiness.

4.6 Challenges teachers face in planning their instructional strategies

In response to the challenges the teachers face when planning for their instructional strategies, several challenges emanated.

4.6.1 Lack of knowledge and skills

The findings from the interviews with teachers showed that teachers really lacked knowledge on using some of instructional strategies. One teacher from school A stated that she doesn't know how to adjust content for learners with SEN. Another teacher who was a specialist elaborated by stating that:

Our special training is divided into 3 categories; HI, LD, and VI, but when we go into inclusive class, we meet all types of learners. For example, in my class I had a learner with HI but I specialised in LD hence to communicate with the learner is a challenge because I don't know sign language. (Interview, 16 Feb 2016).

This explanation was evidenced during lesson observation when the learner with HI in that class was not fully involved in the lesson due to the teacher's lack of knowledge on how to instruct her. Some teachers from school B stated that they did not have knowledge on how to use some teaching and learning resources indicated in teacher's guides such as feathers, mirror, raised diagrams and sign language interpreters.

Another teacher stated that she doesn't know how to communicate with the learner who has speech problems. This was what the teacher from school B stated:

Sometimes I fail to get what he says and even what he writes, sometimes I fail to see properly what he writes. (Interview, 12 Feb 2016).

Some teachers from both school A and B explained that they did not know how to handle large classes with learners having SEN. For instance one teacher from school B stated:

I don't have adequate skills on how best I can use group work and involve learners in an inclusive setting. (Interview, 11 Feb 2016).

This was evidenced through lesson observations whereby learners were making a lot noise and playing during group discussions. Other teachers from both schools stated that although they have taught in inclusive classrooms for so long, they did not have adequate skills in all the strategies for meeting needs of all learners especially those with SEN. Another teacher from school A stated that she doesn't know how to handle mobile and moody learners with LD. This was evidenced during lesson observation when such learners were too mobile to control. The teacher was just observing the learner moving in and out of the class. Some learners were busy paying attention to what these learners with LD were doing instead of paying attention to the lesson.

Peters (2003), contends that teaching learners with SEN in inclusive classroom is not easy, it is a challenge since teaching needs to be more specific aiming at meeting the needs of each student. Teachers must be both competent and confident in their teaching ability (NCSE, 2010). Lack of knowledge of teaching in inclusive classrooms was one of the challenges the teachers face when planning and using the instructional strategies. This finding resonates with (Florian & Rouse, 2010) who

argue that most mainstream teachers in developing countries, such as Botswana, do not believe that they have the skills or knowledge to teach learners with learning disabilities because they have not taken a specialist course. Research by (Fakudze, 2012) has also revealed that the majority of the interviewed teachers in South Africa had not been trained in inclusive education whilst undergoing their initial teacher training. This explained their lack of clear and precise knowledge and understanding of inclusive education.

Studies done in Temeke, in Tanzania proved that teachers do not have enough knowledge of teaching in inclusive classrooms (Lewis & Little, 2007; Miles, 2003; Mmbaga, 2002). However, lack of knowledge among teachers seems to be a global problem, since the study done in Turkey and Spain, also showed lack of knowledge among teachers who are teaching students with visual impairments (Kesiktaş & Akcamete, 2011). However, inclusive education does not merely mean put learners in schools, it involves making appropriate adjustments such as learning strategies to meet the needs of all learners. Hence teachers need to have adequate knowledge and skills on planning, and adaptation of instructional strategies to meet needs of all learners in the inclusive classroom. Therefore, this lack of knowledge and skills could have some implications. One may imply that needs of majority of the learners with SEN in inclusive classrooms are not effectively met.

4.6.2 Inadequate teaching and learning materials

Learners learn differently, some learn by feeling, touching and smelling while others learn by hearing seeing or doing. In order for these modes of learning to be fulfilled, teachers need to use different teaching and learning resources. However, during the

interviews with teachers, the findings showed that most teachers lack resources to use the instructional strategies appropriately. Almost all the regular primary school teachers stated that they lacked resources for both learners with SEN and those without. One teacher from school A commented:

Mabuku oti mwina mwana wa special ukhoza kumuthandiza chonchi tilibe. (We do not have reference materials such as books for assisting learners with SEN). (Interview 16th Feb 2016).

Similarly another teacher from school B stated:

Since learners have unique needs I face problems to produce resources for each and every learner. (Interview 10 Feb 2016).

4.6.3 Large classes

Another common challenge mentioned by the regular teachers at school B was large classes. Most teachers explained that large classes hinder them to assist learners with SEN because it consumes a lot of time. Other teachers stated that because of large classes, monitoring of learners activities was also a problem. For example, another teacher from school B stated:

Since most learners are not supervised due to large class, class management in terms of noise most of the times it is difficult to control. (Interview 10 Feb 2016).

Similarly another teacher from school the same school B explained:

Zimavuta kuti uthandize mwana aliyense malinga ndi mavuto ake chifukwa anawa alipo ambiri mkalasimu 100 plus. (It is difficult to assist every learner according to his or her needs because of large number of learners. (Interview 10 Feb 2016)

This finding of inadequate material resources and large classes concur with (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007) in South Africa, who revealed that South African teachers noted that large classes and insufficient resources were challenges to inclusive education. The

findings are also consistent with (Dart, 2007) in Botswana who concluded that the implementation of inclusive education for children with disabilities was hampered by a lack of resources. In Zimbabwe, the shortage of resources has also been found as an impediment to the implementation of inclusive education for children with SEN (Chireshe, 2011; Mavundukure & Nyamande, 2012; Musengi & Chireshe, 2012).

Adequate provision of resources for the inclusion of children with SEN in the regular primary schools needs to be available for teachers to effectively meet needs of all learners. The finding of large classes is also affirmed by the findings of a study in Lesotho that revealed that large class sizes tend to take a toll on the social and intellectual growth of learners with and without disabilities (Johnstone & Chapman, 2009). At school B the class sizes were larger for example all the classes observed had 100 learners and above hence teacher interactions with learners were limited. Large class sizes also were thought to diminish the adaptation of learning materials, use of differentiated instructions, and peer-assisted learning.

4.6.4 Time

Some teachers mentioned time as another challenge when planning instructional strategies. One teacher from school A explained that English subject has a number of activities to be covered in one lesson, hence time isn't enough to teach everything. Most teachers from both schools under study also explained that it takes time to assist learners with SEN during teaching and learning hence failure to finish teaching the planned work. Planning time was also another challenge mentioned by some of the teachers. For example, one teacher from school A stated:

I teach up to 3pm hence then prepare for tomorrow's work, however, during this time am always tired hence fail to plan properly. (Interview, 16 Feb 2016.)

Similarly another teacher from school B explained that:

Timaphunzitsa 35 minutes ndiye ndimaona kuti ndi yochepa kufikira mwana aliyense ngakhale ndichepetse nthito ija. (It is difficult to teach in 35 minutes and accommodate needs of every learner.) (Interview 12 Feb 2016)

Lack of time for planning and assisting learners with SEN in inclusive classrooms in this study is consistent with (Gwala, 2006; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007) in South Africa who concluded that teachers were frustrated by the unavailability of time for planning together with other teachers such as specialists. (Abosi, Mukhopadhyay, & Nenty, 2012) concluded that teachers involved in inclusive education feel that there is insufficient time available for collaboration and consultation with other teachers, to meet the needs of learners with SEN. They believe that learners with SEN cannot receive quality support from their teachers because there is no time for teachers to sit down as a team to design strategies that can best serve the needs of the learners. The lack of time compromised the implementation of inclusive education of for children with SEN in schools. Teachers were likely to have limited time to deal with the problems of learners with SEN as they would have to complete the syllabus with other learners in the same class. The shortage of time for planning in this study, was likely to have a serious implication for learners with SEN in the classrooms. The implication here is that learners' needs are compromised and they can't be identified or supported because teachers do not have the time to design their support programmes.

4.6.5 Content in teachers guides

Findings from interviews with regular teachers from both school A and B also indicated that there is lack of information in Religious Education teachers' guides. For instance, one teacher from school A, explained

“Zimativuta kuti tifotokozere ana chifukwa mabukuwo alibe fundo zambiri” (It is difficult to elaborate certain concepts to learners when there is shallow information in books). (Interview 15 Feb 2016)

Another teacher from school B stated that:

Religious Education has very shallow information. Sometimes I try to ask a resource person but it does not work due to lack of understanding among learners. (Interview 12 Feb 2016).

4.7 Means of addressing challenges faced when using the instructional strategies

Teachers were asked to explain strategies they follow in order to overcome the challenges face in using the instructional strategies. Therefore, different strategies were contributed.

4.7.1 Lack of knowledge and skills

Responding on ways of overcoming lack of knowledge and skills, teachers stated different ways. Those having learners with speech problems explained that they use gestures or facial expressions. However, one specialist from school A explained:

We engage parents, in terms of assessment...there are some gestures which only parents are conversant with and not us, therefore, when it is time for an exercise, parents are invited to assist.(Interview, 16 Feb 2016).

Other teachers from school B stated that they consult peers who are used to the learners with speech problem to elaborate what has been said, or sometimes they consult the specialist teachers. On dealing with moody or mobile learners, the findings

showed that most teachers from both schools under study try to show rapport in order to retain them in class or keep them busy with some activities. Moreover, on the resources which are indicated in teachers' guides, most teachers explained that they just include them in their lesson plans but don't use them during teaching and learning process.

4.7.2 Inadequate teaching and learning materials

Responding to the issue of inadequate resources, the teachers vary on strategies of overcoming it. Some teachers from both schools explained that they involve learners in bringing some resources. Other teachers stated that they improvise or buy some of the materials if they have money. One teacher from school B explained:

I arrange the seating plan in that learners with SEN should sit close to the teacher in order to benefit from the available at that particular time. (Interview 12 Feb 2016).

This was also what was observed in most of the classes that learners with SEN were on one side closer to the teacher. However, this was what one teacher from school A explained

I just teach without the resources if they are not available. (Interview 15 Feb 2016).

Similarly another teacher from school B explained that she also just teach without resources if they are not available. This was observed in one class whereby a teacher taught the concept of toy car without any teaching resource.

4.7.3 Time

Findings on how do a challenge of time was addressed, most teachers explained that they vary methods of teaching. For instance, one teacher from school B explained:

I vary methods of teaching such as; group work. Those with SEN are given ample time to finish their work. (Interview 10 Feb 2016)

Similarly another teacher from school A stated:

Ndimangowasiya kuti alembe pomwe amalizirepo andipatsa. (I just let them write until they finish because I know that they are slow writers). (Interview 16 Feb 2016).

Others stated that they use whole group discussion to cover the work planned because group work takes a lot of time to supervise and consolidate. Some teachers from both schools explained that they provide homework so that the learners can be assisted by their relatives at home.

4.7.4 Content

Responding to how they address the challenge of lack of information in some teachers guides, a variety of ways raised. Most teachers explained that they teach using the same information which is in the books. One teacher from school B stated:

I think creativity matters. I design a lesson according to my own understanding and sometimes I consult my colleagues. (Interview, 12 Feb, 2016).

One teacher said that he consults experts on the subject to have more information. Another teacher from school A elaborated that she vary methods of teaching in order to assist the slow learners in understanding the content easily. This was what the teacher commented:

I divide slow learners according to their problems may be others had problems in reading Chichewa, we had taken right away the book of Sosa and paired them with those who are able and not so during break time the group leaders take their friends and teach them how to read (Interview, 16 Feb 2016).

4.7.5 Large classes

Answering the questions on how they handle the large classes, most teachers stated that they use whole group discussions to maintain order in the classroom activities.

One teacher from school B explained:

I use groups although they are difficult to manage because most learners make noise and play. (Interview 12 Feb 2016).

Another teacher from school A, elaborated:

I pause jokes or songs frequently in order to arouse learners' interest hence reducing noise in the class. (Interview 16 Feb 2016).

Although the teachers mentioned some challenges encountered during planning and using of the instructional strategies, several strategies are employed in order to overcome such challenges. The most common strategy used by the teachers was use of varied teaching methods when overcoming challenges such as; lack of resources, time, content and large classes. The study also found that some teachers use pause jokes or use songs to attract learners' attention in the large classes. This is consistent with O'Sullivan (2006)'s findings that several teachers possessed generic teaching skills, and managed to keep their classes warm and alive in general.

4.8 Chapter summary

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study. The findings have been presented according to the main themes from the research questions and the emerging themes from the analysed data. The demographic information of the respondents has been presented to give a mental picture on the characteristics of the respondents. The first sub research question was sought to explore how regular primary school teachers plan their instructional strategies to meet learners' needs in inclusive classrooms. It was explored that most of the regular primary school teachers

theoretically consider several factors when planning for their instructional strategies such as content, teaching and learning resources, and time, but practically the factors considered were not effectively implemented during the teaching and learning process. The second research sub question sought to explore the specific instructional strategies the regular primary school teachers use in inclusive classrooms.

The study established that there were no specific instructional strategies used in inclusive classrooms. Most of the teachers mentioned several strategies to effectively meet learners' needs such as; group work, demonstration, question and answer, role play, songs and games, excursion, and whole class discussion. The third sub research question sought to explore adaptations /accommodations regular primary school teachers use to effectively meet learners needs. The study found that the teachers adapt content, and teaching and learning materials though not effectively. The fourth sub research question sought to explore challenges the regular primary school teachers face when planning their instructional strategies. The study found lack of knowledge, lack of teaching and learning resources, time, and content in some teacher's guides to be some of the challenges. The fifth sub research question was how the challenges faced are addressed. The study found use of varied methods as one of the common strategy of overcoming the challenges the teachers faced.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions, implication and recommendations and ends with suggestions for further study.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This study sought to explore instructional strategies regular primary school teachers use in inclusive classrooms in Lilongwe district, Malawi.

5.2.1 Planning of instruction to meet needs of all learners

There were a lot of factors which the regular primary school teachers consider when planning for their instructional strategies to meet learners' needs. The teachers revealed that teaching and learning materials be considered when planning for instructional strategies. Thus charts be bold in terms of size of letters, attractive drawings be prepared or take real objects in class in order to accommodate needs of all learners. Time to be spent on learners with SEN, clear and short questions to be asked, and content upon the abilities of learners were other factors the regular primary school teachers consider when planning for their instruction.

5.2.2 Specific instructional strategies used to address needs of all learners

It is apparent from the findings that the regular primary school teachers theoretically know different strategies to be used in an inclusive classroom. Strategies such as group work, question and answer, role play, individual work, excursion, whole class discussion, demonstration and practice, drama, songs, reinforcement, games and storytelling were mentioned during interviews. This showed that the teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and do not use specific instructional strategies. However, practically, strategies such as question and answer, whole class discussion and partial group work were frequently used. This implies that some of the regular primary school teachers lack knowledge of inclusive classrooms which is composed of learners with different learning profiles and unique needs as stipulated by differentiation instruction model.

5.2.3 Adaptations or accommodations do teachers use to effectively meet the diverse learners' needs

Regarding this theme, findings show that some teachers fairly make few adaptations in order to meet needs of all learners in their classrooms. Such adaptations include; content in terms of work to be completed by learners with SEN, teaching and learning materials such as real objects and bold charts, and variation of language. The findings also showed that other regular primary school teachers failing to modify their teaching so that learners' needs can be met. However, the findings suggest that, the regular teachers have insufficient knowledge on how the methods content and teaching resources should be adapted to suit the needs of learners with SEN.

5.2.4 Challenges faced by teachers in planning their instructional strategies

The constraints faced by teachers in planning their instructional strategies in the two schools were lack of knowledge and skills, inadequate teaching and learning materials, large class enrolment resulting to teachers' inability to attend to each learner's needs inadequate time for planning and assisting learners with SEN. The shortage of time for planning was likely to have a serious implication for learners with SEN in the classrooms. The implication here is that learners' needs are compromised and they can't be identified or supported because teachers do not have the time to design their support programs.

5.2.5 Means of addressing the challenges

To overcome constraints such as lack of resources, time, content and large classes, the participants suggested variation of teaching methods, improvisation, and consultations. The findings also reveal that some teachers pause jokes or use songs to attract learners' attention in the large classes. For the lack of knowledge and skills constraint, the findings is apparent that the teachers in school A involve parents to assist in terms of communicating with those with speech problems. Moreover, the participants also revealed they involve peers to assist learners with SEN.

5.3 Conclusions and implications

From the findings of the study it can be concluded that some of the regular primary school teachers theoretically know several factors to consider when planning for instructional strategies. However, practically, the teachers made a few or no adaptations during teaching and learning in the inclusive classrooms which is contrary to differentiation instructional model which states that learners do not learn at the

same rate and with same content. But teachers need to make some adaptations to suit learners' needs. Most regular primary school teachers mentioned several instructional strategies which they use in the inclusive classrooms. This showed that they were aware of the unique needs of learners in their classrooms. However, strategies such as question and answer, whole class discussion and partial group work were observed to be used mostly. Most teachers claimed to lack knowledge and skills on use of other methods in inclusive classrooms. Inadequate teaching and learning resources, inadequate time for planning and assisting learners with SEN, lack of information in some teacher's guides and large classes were also some of the constraints faced by the regular primary school teachers in this study. This called for the Government and all stakeholders to effect the recommendations of this study.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Ministry of education to train of all regular primary school teachers in SNE so that they can be well equipped with knowledge and skills on use of instructional strategies for inclusive classrooms, because specialist teachers are few.
- Ministry of education through the Directorate of SNE to provide adequate teaching and learning resources which can promote concentration of learners with SEN especially those with short attention span.
- Ministry of education to ensure that pre-service teachers major in SNE in TTCs for inclusive education to be successful,
- The Ministry of education through the Directorate of SNE to plan and organize regular seminars/workshops for both regular primary school teachers

and specialist teachers to keep them abreast with effective instructional strategies for inclusive classrooms

- Malawi institute of education to develop a teacher's manual on inclusive strategies, so that teachers can use it as a reference material when teaching in inclusive classrooms
- Parent teachers' associations to introduce teacher assistants for learners who struggle on writing and speaking.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research Based on the findings:

The researcher suggested the following studies:

- i. A similar study to be carried out with a larger sample in some of the educational zones of Lilongwe district.
- ii. A study on adaptations and accommodations effective in implementation of inclusive classrooms in public primary schools in some of the educational zones of Lilongwe district.
- iii. A study on class management in large inclusive classrooms using a larger sample in the district.
- iv. A study to be carried out on impact of teacher preparation on inclusive classrooms in any educational zone of all the districts to have a general picture that will inform policy and practice.

All these studies have been suggested because there is lack in knowledge on research studies conducted in Malawi about such areas.

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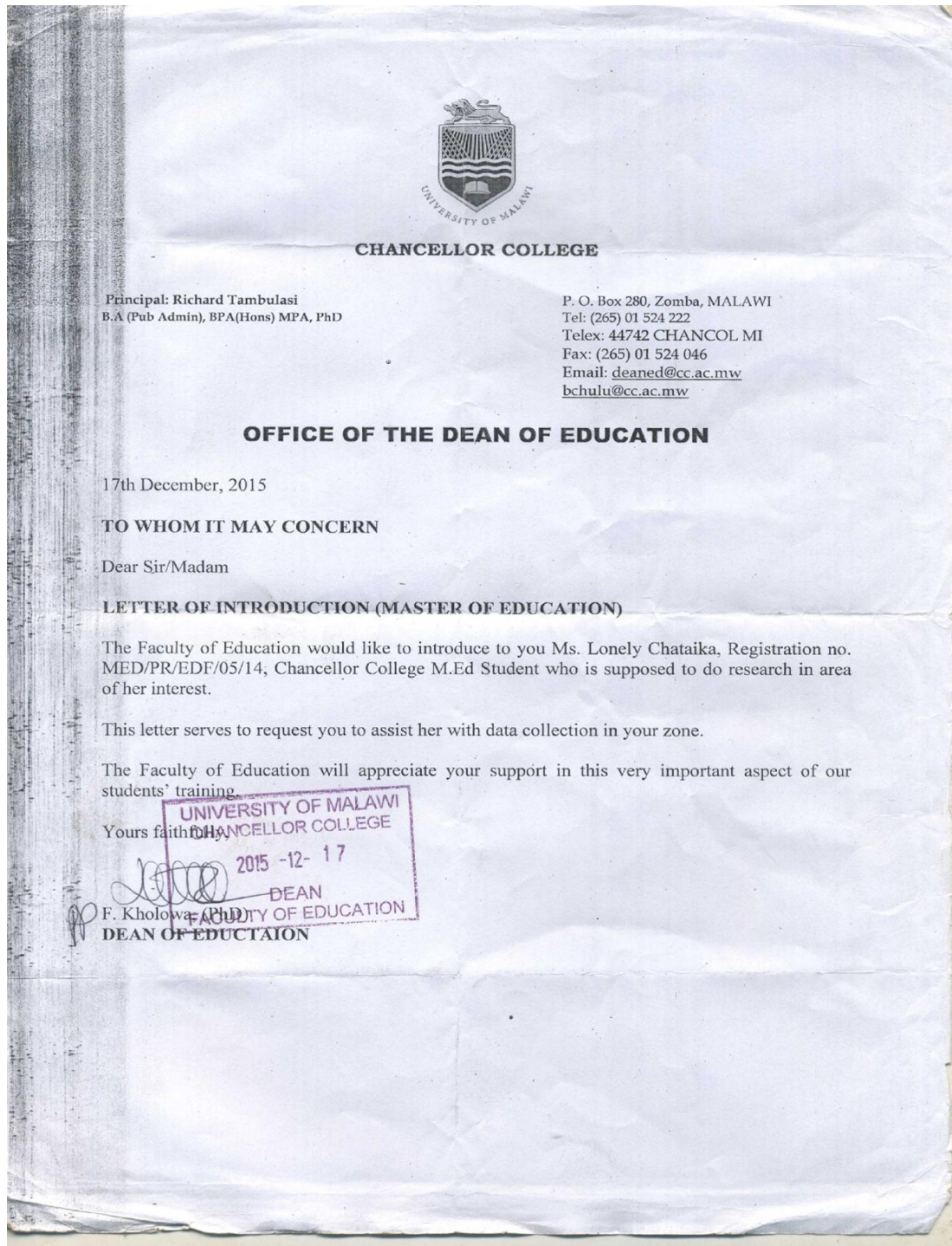
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of permission from the Dean of Education



Appendix B: Request letter to headteachers Lilongwe urban primary school

FROM: Lonely M Chataika, (MED/PR/EDF/05/14), Chancellor College, University of Malawi, P.O BOX 280, Zomba

TO: The Head teacher, Lilongwe Demonstration Primary School, P.O Box..., Lilongwe.

DATE: 27th January, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT AT YOUR SCHOOL

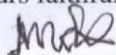
I hereby request permission to conduct a research study in your school. I am studying for Masters in Primary Education at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. The topic of my study is: An Exploration on instructional strategies regular teachers use in inclusive classrooms. The purpose of this research is to explore the instructional strategies used in inclusive classrooms to address diversity needs of all learners. I have purposefully selected your school for this study because it is one of the schools that is comprised of learners having a wide range of learners with special educational needs.

The findings of the study will help to provide information that will facilitate in the implementation of Inclusive Education to all schools. Participants responses will be recorded anonymously and their identity will not be revealed. The methods that will be used to collect data will be semi-structured interviews with teachers teaching in inclusive classrooms, observation, and focus group interviews with learners.

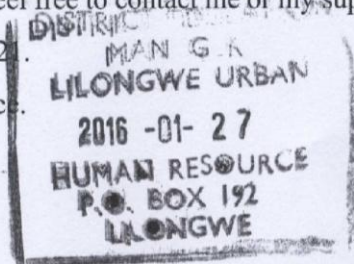
For more information feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the below contact details:
0888339720/0888918221.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully,



Lonely M Chataika.



Appendix C: Request letter to headteachers Lilongwe urban primary school

FROM: Lonely M Chataika, (MED/PR/EDF/05/14), Chancellor College, University of Malawi, P.O BOX 280, Zomba

TO: The Head teacher, SOS Primary School, P.O Box..., Lilongwe.

DATE: 27th January, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT AT YOUR SCHOOL

I hereby request permission to conduct a research study in your school. I am studying for Masters in Primary Education at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. The topic of my study is: An Exploration on instructional strategies regular teachers use in inclusive classrooms. The purpose of this research is to explore the instructional strategies used in inclusive classrooms to address diversity needs of all learners. I have purposefully selected your school for this study because it is one of the schools that is comprised of learners having a wide range of learners with special educational needs.

The findings of the study will help to provide information that will facilitate in the implementation of Inclusive Education to all schools. Participants responses will be recorded anonymously and their identity will not be revealed. The methods that will be used to collect data will be semi-structured interviews with teachers teaching in inclusive classrooms, observation, and focus group interviews with learners.

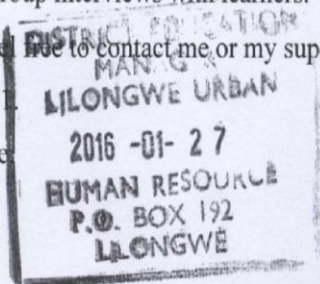
For more information feel free to contact me, or my supervisor on the below contact details:
0888339720/0888918221

Thanking you in advance

Yours faithfully,



Lonely M Chataika.



Appendix D: Interview guide

- 1 Which factors do you take into consideration when you're planning your lessons considering the fact that you have children with SEN in an inclusive classroom?
- 2 Do you plan with specialist teachers in designing adjustments and instructional delivery of content? 1=Yes 2=No
- 3 Do you adjust some of the activities in the general lesson plan to meet needs of all learners? 1=Yes 2=No
- 4 Explain your answer in B13 above.
- 5 What challenges do you encounter when planning for instructional strategies?
- 6 How do you address the challenges encountered when planning for the instructional strategies?
- 7 What challenges do you encounter when delivering instructional strategies?
- 8 What strategies do you use to address such challenges?
- 9 Do you make any adjustments in the selection of content to accommodate those with SEN? 1=Yes 2=No
- 10 If yes, explain how you adjust?
- 11 What are the other ways you use to address diversity in your classrooms to accommodate all the learners?
- 12 What are the instructional strategies do you use when teaching in the inclusive classrooms
- 13 Which instructional strategies do you use most when teaching?
- 14 Which instructional strategies cause learners to fully participate?
- 15 Which instruction strategies do you think make learners to understand the content well?

16 Which instruction strategies do you need technical help or training to use?

17 Are there any extra individualized explanations offered to SEN learners?

1=Yes 2=No

18 Explain your answer?

19 Do think you have adequate skills in devising strategies aimed at helping individual learners with SEN?

1=Yes 2=No

20 If the answer in is No, what are the specific strategies you would wish to be trained in?

Appendix E: Observation guide

A. GENERAL	
Class	
Subject	
Number of learners in the class	
Number of SNE learners	
B. LESSON PRESENTATION	
Clearly defined content objectives for students	
Supplementary materials used such as guided notes/printed notes	
Provide visual aids/graphics	
Write key points on board	
Model/demonstrate concepts	
Allow extra time to complete tasks without penalty	
Adaptation of language	
C. INSTRUCTION	
Concepts explicitly linked to students background experiences	
Use of varied instructional strategies throughout the lesson	
Provide ample opportunities for SEN	
Use of scaffolding techniques throughout lesson	

Appendix F: Focus group discussion

1. What kind of instructional strategies do your teacher use when teaching?
2. Do you understand when the teacher uses such instructional strategies?
3. Explain your answer in 2
4. Which instructional strategy do you like most and why?
5. Which instructional strategies don't you like and why?
6. Which method do you prefer between working in groups and working as a whole class? Explain your answer.
7. What does your teacher do to help learners when the topic is difficult?
8. What do you do when you don't understand what the teacher is teaching?

Appendix G: Generation of themes

RESEARCH QUESTION	THEMES	DATA SOURCE	INSTRUMENTS
1. How do regular primary school teachers plan their instruction to meet needs of all learners?	Planning of instruction	Regular primary school teachers	Interview guide
2. What specific instructional strategies do regular primary school teachers use as their means of addressing needs of learners in their classroom	Specific instructional strategies Mostly used strategies	Teachers Learners	Interview guide Focus group discussion Observation
3. What adaptations or accommodations do teachers use to effectively meet the diverse learners?	Adaptation of content Adaptation of language Adaptation of	Learners Teachers	Focus group discussion Interviews Observation

needs?	teaching and learning resources Scaffolding		
4. What are the challenges faced by teachers in using their instructional strategies?	Challenges faced when planning for instructional strategies	Teachers	Interviews Observation
5. How do teachers address the challenges faced when planning their instructional strategies?	Means of addressing the challenges faced during planning of instructional strategies	Teachers	Interviews Observation