UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EXAMINING PRE-SERVICE TEACHER

PREPARATION FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA

ISAAC OPOKU-NKOOM

2010

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BY

ISAAC OPOKU–NKOOM

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, IN
PARTIAL FUFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD
OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE, IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

JANUARY 2010

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:………………. ……   Date: ……………………

Name: Isaac Opoku-Nkoom

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: ……… ……… Date: …………………

Name: Mr. Prosper Deku

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ABSTRACT

The study examined pre-service Teacher Preparation in terms of theoretical knowledge and practical experience towards Inclusive Education in Ghana. This was premised on the argument that teacher preparation should be a key consideration in the implementation of inclusive education.

A descriptive survey research design was adopted using a sample of 300 student-teachers randomly selected from 3 Colleges of Education in Ghana. A questionnaire was used to gather the data. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the reliability of the instrument was 0.82. Percentages and frequencies were used as statistical indexes to analyse the result.

The findings revealed that prospective teachers in the Colleges of Education in Ghana knew about the concept of inclusive education and were also knowledgeable about some inclusion issues such as parental involvement. They also had the skill to identify some pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in their classrooms during their teaching practice and also adapted the regular school curriculum to meet their needs.

The researcher however, recommended that the Special Education Division should ensure that trainee teachers are adequately prepared in simple approaches to identify, support and assist children with special educational needs in regular schools. Additionally, student-teachers should be assisted to identify children with special educational needs (SEN) in their classrooms during their practical teaching and be able to provide the needed support to meet their needs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my profound gratitude to a number of people who in diverse ways contributed to the success of this thesis. In particular, special thanks are due to my principal supervisor, Mr. Prosper Deku, and my co- supervisor Dr. Emmanuel Kofi Gyimah, both of the Department of Educational Foundations who devoted their precious time, energy and resources towards the successful completion of this work. God richly bless you.

My sincere thanks also go my family members, particularly my mother, Theresa Nyarko, my wife, Dina, my daughters, Vivian and Ursula for their unflinching support, sacrifices and encouragement throughout this study. I am also grateful to the authorities of the Colleges of Education who granted me permission for the studies to be carried out. I also appreciate the vital role of all participants who supplied the information for the study.

To all my colleagues and friends who in diverse ways contributed to the success of this work, especially Kwame Mantey Larbi, Baba Hardy Mustapha, Awudi Emmanuel, Gladys Abena Amuaful and Francisca Abakah, I say thank you.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Theresa Nyarko and my daughters, Vivian, Ursula and Katherine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content   Page

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

In recent decades, educational systems across the world are experiencing major changes. One of these changes is related to the increase in the diversity of school populations (Romi & Leyser, 2006). This means that the educational system is increasingly becoming responsible for including a large diversity of pupils and for providing a differentiated and appropriate education for everyone (UNESCO, 1994). As educational systems become more inclusive, UNESCO (2001) emphasised the fact that professional development is particularly important because of the major and new challenges that face both ordinary school teachers who have to respond to a greater diversity of students' needs, and special educators who find the context and focus of their work changing in major ways. Mittler (2000, p.137) reaffirms this fact by stating that "Ensuring that newly qualified teachers have a basic understanding of inclusive teaching in inclusive schools is the best investment that can be made".

Obi, Mamah and Mensah (2005) argued that, the adoption of the inclusive ideology apparently means regular classroom teacher must be prepared to teach children with disabilities. This implies that if teachers are to be trained in

inclusive approaches, then their training programmes also have to be organised on inclusive lines. Some of the inclusive requirements relative to teacher education are;

1. Historical and theoretical knowledge of inclusion

2. Practical experience on inclusive education

Obi et al (2005) also suggested that pre-service training programmes should be provided to all student teachers, primary and secondary alike and should also be given a positive orientation toward disability issues thereby developing an understanding of what can be achieved in schools with locally available support services.

According to (UNESCO, 1994), in Teacher Training Colleges, specific attention should be given to preparing all teachers to exercise their autonomy and apply their skills in adapting curricular and instruction to meet pupils' needs regardless of their disabilities. Teaching in inclusive environment must actually attend to the intellectual quality, relevance, social support and recognition of difference. UNESCO (2001) reported that in England, planning for the professional development of the teacher workforce is currently the responsibility of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and in Brazil; the Ministry of Education has proposed a restructuring of all teacher training courses for all educational levels to make them consistent with inclusive education policies. It is indeed an undisputed fact that teachers' support for inclusion is critical to the success of inclusive school programmes since it will influence the effort they extend in its implementation.

In Ghana, there is no clear cut policy on the education of children with SEN and disabilities (Avoke, 2004) in spite of special education starting as far back as 1936. Nonetheless, Ghana has shown interest in inclusion through the ratification and support for the Salamanca Statement on Inclusive Education (UNESCO, 1994), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, and the Jomtien Declaration (1990) World Conference on Education for All (Kwawu, 1998). It is on record, for instance, that the country was among the first countries to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In recognition of this Convention, Ghana decided to run free and Compulsory Education for all children of school going-age. This provision was captured in the Education Act of 1961, the 1992 Constitution, the 1987 and the 2007 Educational Reforms. The Education Act of 1961, for example, provided for free and Compulsory Education for all children of school going age, which included children with SEN (Okyere & Adams, 2003).

Also, with issues concerning persons with disabilities, the Article 29 of the 1992 Constitution categorically mandates the legislature to enact appropriate laws to ensure that Rights of Persons with Disabilities are not trampled upon. Based on that, a Bill was passed into law by Parliament in June 2006, and has currently become the Persons with Disability Act 2006. Through these steps, it will mean that Ghana is taking bold steps towards the education and training of children with SEN. However, it is not known whether similar steps have been taken by the government to prepare teachers to handle children with SEN.

Statement of the Problem

Inclusive education makes it imperative for all teachers to be adequately trained for that purpose. According to Pearson (2005), for inclusive education to be effective, all pre-service teacher training students need to be aware of the expectations of the new paradigm shift. They need the knowledge and the skill to attend to atypical pupil. Beyond that the teachers need positive attitudes to the inclusion in general and specifically to the pupils with whom they interact. Also the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Inclusive Education spelt out clearly on pages 27 and 28 that appropriate preparation of all educational personnel stands out as a key factor in promoting progress towards inclusive schools.

Since Ghana government in the 2007 Educational Reforms has demonstrated its commitment and support for the inclusive education programme, it is expected that it will implement policies and practices of inclusion to the latter. This includes preparation of teachers. It is important for general education teachers in Ghana to begin to receive adequate preparation for dealing with SEN children in inclusive setting (Obi & Mensah, 2005). However, it appears that in Ghana teachers are not adequately prepared to meet the challenges of inclusive education. Though this may be challenging agenda as Pearson (2005) has observed, pre-service teachers need information on how to efficiently include the child with SEN. Teacher preparation is paramount for the successful implementation of inclusive education in the country as emphasised by UNESCO (1994). So far, studies on teacher preparation in Ghana are scant and literature on

the state of teachers' preparedness for inclusive education is lacking. The study therefore seeks to examine the extent of teacher preparation for inclusive education in Ghana.

Purpose of the Study

Generally, the purpose of this study was to find out whether regular school teachers are equipped during their training to cope with the demands of inclusive education. The specific purpose of the study was to examine:

1. Teacher knowledge of inclusive education.

2. The practical experience of pre-service teachers relative to curricular adaptation in inclusive classroom.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent are pre-service teachers in Ghana knowledgeable about the concept of inclusive education?

2. What is the pre-service teachers' knowledge on the core issues of inclusive education?

3. What practical experience have the prospective teachers in Ghana received?

Significance of the Study

The study was primarily geared towards the promotion of an educational ideology hinged on creating a society of equal rights and opportunities and mutual

interaction of individuals irrespective of disabilities. To promote inclusive education in Ghana as a government policy, pre-service teacher preparation is one of the critical issues that can guide policy framework. It is therefore expected that the results of this work will sensitise and prompt the government and policy makers about the importance of teacher education in relation to effective implementation of inclusive education.

Furthermore, this study will bring to the fore the knowledge base of the prospective teachers in Ghana on inclusion in terms of theory and practical experience. This information will help the Teacher Education in collaboration with Special Education Division to restructure and modify the teacher education programmes to make it more inclusive oriented. Finally, the study will add to knowledge on teacher preparation towards inclusive education in Ghana as it will reveal the strengths and weaknesses in terms of methodology and content as far as teacher preparation and inclusive education in Ghana is concerned.

Delimitation of the Study

Teaching, and for that matter teacher preparation, encompasses many areas such as methodology, content and structure. For the purpose of this study, the focus was on the content aspect of teacher preparation which basically includes both the theoretical and practical knowledge of inclusive education. The interest was on whether the content of special education offered to pre-service teachers actually equipped them with the expected knowledge and skills to meet the needs of children with SEN and disabilities in regular classroom.

6

In terms of population, the study was restricted to the final year students of the Colleges of Education (mentees) in Ghana other than using all the students. The reason was that presumably, the final year students might have been introduced to special education since they have completed their course work. In terms of study area, it was restricted to two Colleges of Education in Ashanti region namely, Wesley and Akrokeri Colleges of Education and one in the Central region of Ghana namely, Fosu College of Education, though there are many Teacher Education Colleges in Ghana. The reason for choosing these regions was that basically the researcher has stayed in these regions for quite a long time and is therefore familiar with the environment. Secondly, since the participants were out for their practical teaching the researcher obviously needed to select areas he was familiar with for easy access to the participants. It was therefore believed that it could be easier for effective data collection and for authentic results.

Limitations of the Study

The use of Likert scale may affect the generalisation of the results due to its limitations. There is no assumption of equal intervals between the categories, hence a rating of four indicates neither that it is twice as powerful as two nor that it is twice as strongly felt. Also the researcher could check on whether the respondents were telling the truth since some respondents might be deliberately falsifying their replies. Also in using a Likert scale, the researcher has no way of knowing if the respondents might have wished to add any other comments about

the issue under investigation. Secondly, in selecting the colleges whose participants were involved in the study, purposive sampling technique was used. While this may satisfy researcher's needs to take this type of sample, it does not pretend to represent the wider population. It may therefore be biased.

Definition of Terms

1. **Inclusion:** This is a process of educating all children in regular school regardless of disability. In inclusion, the environment is expected to adapt to the child.

2. **Integration**: This is where the child with disabilities is located in a regular classroom. However, in integration, the child is expected to adapt to the environment to enable him to achieve.

3. **Mentees:** This term refers to trainee teachers on out-segment for their teaching practice.

4. **Pre-service Teachers**: These refer to the trainee teachers at the initial college of education.

Organisation of the Study

The focus of the study is to primarily examine the pre-service teacher preparation for inclusive education in Ghana. The study was developed under five chapters. The first chapter was on introduction. The chapter considered the following: background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the

study, research questions, and significance of the study. It also included the delimitations, limitations and definition of terms.

The second chapter is on review of literature. It provides theoretical and empirical evidences on teacher preparation and inclusive education in Ghana. The issues reviewed are broken down into sub sections to cover salient aspects of the study.

Chapter three deals with the methodology adopted for the study. It highlights how the study was conducted and is made up of sub-topics such as the research design, the target population, and sample and sampling procedures. It also describes how the instrument was developed and administered as well as the procedure adopted to analyse the data. The fourth chapter is concerned with the results and discussion of the data. Finally, the fifth chapter covers the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter focuses on review of the related literature of the study. These include the historical basis of inclusion, the concept of inclusion, theory and practice of inclusive education, traditional education teacher, theories of teacher education, and inclusion and teacher education.

Historical Basis of Inclusive Education

In almost every country, children and adults are being excluded from formal education altogether; some of those who go to school do not complete. They are gradually and deliberately pushed out of the school system because schools are not sensitive to their learning styles and backgrounds (Kisanji, 1999). Additionally, in a gesture of sympathy, some children are sorted out into categories and placed in separate special schools, away from their peers. This has led to the development of two separate systems of education within countries, regular and special education.

However, in recent years the rationale for having two parallel national systems of education has been questioned and the foundations of 'special

education' have begun to crumble due to several educational problems it introduced. Six of these problems have been identified. Firstly, children who qualify for special education have something wrong with them that make it difficult for them to participate in the regular school curriculum; they thus receive a curriculum that is different from that of their peers (Kisanji, 1999).

Secondly, children with disabilities and other conditions are labelled and excluded from the mainstream of society. Assessment procedures tend to categorise students and this has damaging effects on teacher and parent expectations and on the students' self-concept (Ainscow, 1991).

Thirdly, unfair methods of identification and assessment have led to a disproportionate number of students from ethnic minority groups. For example, in both Europe and North America black, Asian and Latino-American students are overrepresented in special schools and programmes; thus special education is being accused of legalising racial segregation (Kisanji (1999).

Fourthly, the presence of specialists in special education encourages regular classroom teachers to pass on to others responsibility for children they regard as special. Resources that might otherwise be used to provide more flexible and responsive forms of schooling are channelled into separate provision (Ainscow, 1991). Last but not the least the emphasis on Individualised Educational Plans and task analysis in special education tends to lower teacher expectations of the students. In addition, task analysis and the associated behavioural teaching strategies introduce disjointed knowledge and skills thus making learning less meaningful to students. The thinking that has developed

during the last 50 years in the disability field has had significant influences not only on special education but also, on practice in regular education. Current thinking and knowledge demands that, the responsibility for all learners should remain with the regular classroom teacher.

Internationally, the concept of "special educational needs" is being revised in order to respond to these apparent weaknesses. The model which understands special needs as entirely in terms of the characteristics of the "disabled" individual has been replaced by a new paradigm (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000). This new paradigm, while acknowledging differences between individual children, does not view these differences alone as adequately accounting for the educational failure of children. Central to this change is the way that people view special educational needs (SEN), and deal with children deemed to experience SEN, has been the recognition that it is the circumstances in which the individuals are placed that determine whether or not their individual characteristics are a cause of difficulty. Consequently, the recent past has seen a strong movement away from placement in segregated settings for children with SEN towards greater integration in regular classes.

According to Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, (2000), over the last two decades, several countries have led in the effort to implement policies which foster "integration" of special needs children. 'Integration' therefore has become a key topic in special education. The term "integration" was borrowed from the civil rights movement in the United States, which had challenged the forced segregation of individuals based on race. Until the late 1990s, the term integration

was generally used to describe the process of repositioning a child or groups of children in mainstream schools (Repp & Coutinho 2004; Stubbs, 2008). Integration recognises the existence of a continuum of services, from the special school, special class to the regular class with or without support. This implies that the desirability of a full placement of any particular child (Thomas, 1999) is dependent on the feasibility of such a placement (whether the child can be assimilated into the school environment).

Salisbury (1991) sees integration as 'push in' while Proctor and Baker (1995) see it as 'forcing' the child with special educational needs to participate in an existing structure. This implied the need for a student to adapt to the school, rather than the school transforming its own practices. With integration, the onus for change appeared to be on those seeking to enter regular schools rather than on regular schools adapting and changing themselves in order to include a greater diversity of pupils. Stubbs (2008) listed some characteristics of integration some of which are as follows:

1. It focuses on the individual child, not the system. The child is seen as the problem and must be made ready for integration rather than the school being made ready.

2. It often just refers to a geographical process (moving a child physically into a mainstream school. It ignores issues such as whether the child is really learning.

3. The majority of resources and methods are focused on the individual child,

not on the teacher's skills or the system.

4. Classroom assistants/itinerant teachers/personal assistants focus their attention on individual child rather than on the whole classroom environment. This can increase stigmatisation and also ignores any other children who may need support (p.43).

However, in recent years, education of children with disabilities has experienced a paradigm shift from 'integration' to 'inclusion,' a concept which differs significantly from integration. Although the terms 'inclusion' and 'integration' are sometimes used interchangeably and while their distinction is not so obvious, they still have difference. Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995) indicated that instead of an emphasis on the idea of integration, with its assumption that additional arrangements will be made to accommodate exceptional pupils within a system of schooling that remains largely unchanged, they see moves towards inclusive education, where the aim is to restructure schools in order to respond to the needs of all children.' In many countries such as Australia, the focus on educating children with disabilities has changed from placement in segregated special schools and integration to greater inclusion in regular classrooms according to Forlin, Tait, Carroll and Jobling (1999).

The Inclusion Concept

There has not been a universally accepted definition for the concept of inclusion according to Pearson (2005). Definitions of inclusive education keep evolving, as practice expands in more context and cultures and reflection on this practice deepens. Inclusive education is a highly visible yet contentious notion in contemporary education reform because of conceptual, historical, and pragmatic reasons. From a conceptual perspective, the definition of inclusion is still debated, ranging from physical systems. However, inclusive education according to Artiles, Kozieski, Dorn and Christensen (2006), is defined in many professional and popular contexts as the mere placement of students with special needs in mainstream programs alongside individuals who are not disabled. Yet even when inclusion is defined in such simplistic terms, the evidence suggests where a student with disabilities is educated has important correlates. For instance, a study of 11,000 students in the United States showed that students with disabilities who spend more time in general education classrooms are absent less, perform closer than their peers in pull-out settings, and have higher achievement test scores (Artiles, Kozieski, Dorn & Christensen, 2006).

On the other hand, Artiles et al reported that in the same study, students with disabilities generally perform more poorly than their same grade peers without disabilities. In particular, unlike students with learning and sensory disabilities, students with mental retardation and autism cluster around the low end of standardised achievement tests. Although some outcome differences were found between students with various kinds of disabilities, overall the study confirmed

that students with disabilities in general education settings academically out-performed their peers in separate settings when standards-based assessments were used (Artiles, Kozieski, Dorn & Christensen2006). According to Stubbs (2008) definitions must continue to evolve if inclusive education is to remain a real and valuable response to addressing educational rights challenges. He added that many people assume that inclusive education is just another version of special education or is related only to learners with disabilities. Yet the key concepts and assumptions that underpin inclusive education are in many ways, the opposite of those that underpin special education. Inclusion involves a different approach in identifying and attempting to resolve difficulties that arrive in schools.

Inclusive education implies a radical shift in attitudes and a willingness on the part of schools to transform practices in pupil grouping, assessment and curriculum. The notion of inclusion does not set boundaries around particular kinds of disability or learning difficulty, but instead focuses on the ability of the school itself to accommodate the diversity of needs. It implies a shift away from a 'deficit' model, where the assumption is that difficulties have their source within the child, to 'social' model, where barriers to learning are seen to exist in the structures of schools themselves and, more broadly, in the attitudes and structures of society.

In the views of Mittler (2000), underlying the 'inclusionary' approach is the assumption that individual children have a right to participate in the experience offered in the regular classroom. Kanu (2001), cited in Obi (2008) sees inclusive education as the provision of educational services for children with special needs

in regular schools attended by children without disabilities in appropriate regular classrooms directly supervised by general education teachers and with appropriate special education support and assistance. He added that with inclusion, the regular classroom will become a melting point for all children, their disabilities notwithstanding and with each child drawing strength and support from the other. According to Angelides, Stylianou and Gibbs (2006), inclusive education is related to participation and learning, to the acceptance of difference to the school as a whole, to democracy and to society in general. They further pointed out that inclusive education is about all children having the right to attend the school in their neighbourhood. This implies that inclusive education does not simply refer to the placement of children with special educational needs into mainstream schools but it is also concerned with the conditions under which all children can be educated effectively. Thus inclusive ideology basically means the adaptation of the school curriculum to respond to the uniqueness of individuals, increasing their presence, access, participation and achievement in learning society (Booth, Ainscow, & Kingston, 2006; Oppong, 2003). It is about increasing the participation of all in, and reducing all forms of exclusion from local educational opportunities. Inclusion is a never ending process of increasing participation and combating exclusion. It is about the participation of everyone; children and young people and their families and other adults involved in their education.

However, Booth, Ainscow, and Kingston (2006) argue that inclusion cannot be carried forward only by encouraging the participation of individuals but a consideration must be given to the obstacles within settings and systems that may

impede participation. For instance, participation in education settings cannot be encouraged for children if staff who work within them have no power over what or how they teach or the development of their own workplace. This implies that inclusion is about developing education settings and systems so that they are responsive to diversity in a way that values all children. This according to Booth et al (2006) is very essential since there are many ways in which societies and schools respond to diversity in ways that divide and separate children into hierarchies of worth. Among the most significant of these is the use of ability labelling often from a very young age which constrains thinking about what children will achieve.

However, that education should be concerned with participation is frequently disputed in practice if not in theory. Many schools do not seek the active participation of children and young people or indeed staff. Access to settings, being there, is only the start of the development of participation. Participation is about being with and collaborating with others. It implies active engagement and an involvement in making decisions. It builds on the experience that learners, their families and teachers bring with them to education settings including the languages that they speak. It involves the recognition and valuing of a variety of identities, so that people are accepted and valued for who they are (Booth et al, 2006).

In the view of Deiner (2005) inclusion basically involves reconceptualising and restructuring schools to accommodate the child with SEN in regular education. She further pointed out that through inclusion children without special educational

needs will become aware of individual differences and learn to respect these differences and also celebrate it. Respect for diversity involves recognition of the common humanity in difference. A response to diversity should go beyond respect to the celebration of it as a rich resource for learning and teaching outside as well as within formal education. Diversity is always there even within an apparently homogeneous classroom or group who are gathered on the basis of a common interest or characteristics. A concern to respect diversity according to Booth, et al (2006) also leads people to understand the damage that happens when children are rejected because of a perceived difference and are regarded as less important or even less human than others.

Mitchell (2005) emphasised the fact that, the child is entitled to full membership and also recognises that the placement in regular classroom should be based on age-appropriate. Inclusive education is basically seen as a right and not an issue of compulsory education for children with special educational needs (SEN). The concept of inclusion promotes acceptance of all students and willingness to restructure the school curriculum in response to their needs (Kavale, 2000; Sebba & Ainscow, 1996; Snyder, Garriot & Aylor, 2001). All these definitions point to the fact that inclusion is more concerned with the adaptation of the environment to meet the educational needs of the child.

Nonetheless, Ainscow (2004) viewed the definition of inclusive education as containing four fundamental elements, which are commended to those in any education system who are intending to review their own working definition. In the first place he saw inclusion as a 'process'. This primarily implies that inclusion has

to be seen as a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity. It is about learning how to live with difference, and learning how to learn from difference. In this way differences come to be seen more positively as a stimulus for fostering learning, amongst children and adults. Secondly, he saw inclusion as being concerned with the 'identification and removal of barriers'. Consequently, it involves collecting, collating and evaluating information from a wide variety of sources in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice. It is about using evidence of various kinds to stimulate creativity and problem-solving.

Thirdly, Ainscow (2004) saw inclusion to mean the 'presence, participation and achievement of all students'. The 'presence' is concerned with where children are educated, and how reliably and punctually they attend; 'Participation' on the other hand relates to the quality of their experiences whilst they are there and, therefore, incorporates the views of the learners themselves; and 'achievement' is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not merely test or examination results. The fourth element is that inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at-risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement in the education system. This indicates the moral responsibility to ensure that those groups that are statistically most 'at risk' are carefully monitored, and that, where necessary, steps are taken to ensure their presence, participation and achievement in the education system.

In the definition of the UNESCO (1994), inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through

20

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 that covers all children of the appropriate age range and a common conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. The Agra Seminar 1998, definition of inclusive education cited in Stubbs (2008) states that:

1. Inclusion is broader than formal schooling: it includes the home, the community, non formal and informal.

2. Inclusion acknowledges that all children can learn.

3. Inclusion enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children.

4. Inclusion acknowledges and respects differences in children; age, gender, ethnicity, language and disability status.

5. Inclusion is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving to the culture and context.

6. Inclusion is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society (p.38).

All these definitions refer to children's education, rather than learners of all ages, although the principles are widely applicable. Some definitions specifically refer to schools such as the definitions in the 'Index for Inclusion.' Again the principles and approaches within this definition could apply to education in a much broader sense. In the 'Index for Inclusion' the concept of both inclusion and exclusion are linked together because the process of increasing

the participation of students entails the reduction of pressures to exclusion. The 'Index for Inclusion' by Booth and Ainscow (2000), offers a number of definitions of inclusion in education, including increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools. It is basically a set of materials to help support inclusive school development of pupils. It is being used by the United Kingdom (UK) and some countries. Drawing on all of the definitions, the researcher agrees with a proposed broader definition of inclusive education by Stubbs (2008) which cuts across all life stages and goes beyond the school. This definition states that:

> Inclusive education refers to a wide range of strategies, activities and processes that seek to make a reality of the universal right to quality, relevant and appropriate education. It acknowledges that learning begins at birth and continues throughout life and includes learning in the home, the community, and in formal, informal and non-formal situations. It seeks to enable communities, systems and structures in all cultures and context to combat discrimination, celebrate diversity, promotes participation for all people. It is indeed a part of a wider strategy of promoting inclusive development, with the goal of creating a world where there is peace, tolerance, and sustainable use of resources, social justice, and where the basic needs and rights of all are met (p.40).

There are many debates about the definition of inclusive education due to

different understandings and interpretations which can affect whether or not outcomes are successful and sustainable. In the paper presented by Kisanji on "Inclusive Education in Namibia: The Challenge for Teacher Education" on March 25th, 1999, he reiterated the fact that inclusive education has attracted much attention worldwide in recent years, however, an examination of literature and practice shows that the term has come to mean different things to different people. For instance, Avoke (2004) sees the discourse on inclusion as intricate since it lends itself to different meanings for deferent people. This situation appears to present problems of communication between researchers and practitioners, he added. Even though the ideology seems arguable, the underlying principle is the removal of all elements and practices of segregation and discrimination in educating individuals with Special Educational Needs.

The significant ambiguities in the concept of inclusive education have motivated Dyson (1999) to maintain that it may be more appropriate to talk about different inclusion. His argument was that the differences arise from alternative discourses at work in the field through which different theoretical definitions are contested. A crucial reason for proposing such a position is that Dyson is concerned that particular conceptions may have an impact in terms of stifling debate and ossifying values and beliefs. Nonetheless, Barton (2003) argued that inclusive education is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It is about contributing to the realisation of an inclusive society with the demand for a rights approach as a central component of policy-making. The position of Barton has been informed by insights and ideas derived from disability studies.

23

In actual fact, this perspective raises some important issues with regard to inclusive education. In the first place, it encourages the issue of change to be fore-grounded. Unlike integration, the change process is not about assimilation but transformation of those deep structural barriers to change including the social base of dominant definitions of 'success', failure and ability within schools (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Whitty, 2002). Secondly, Corbett and Slee (2000) contend that inclusive education is a distinctly political activity which involves a political critique of social values, priorities and the structures and institutions which they support. Barton (2003) views this as a disturbing and challenging activity which is an essential feature of the struggle for change. Lastly, inclusive education is about how people understand and engage with difference in constructive and valued ways.

To do justice to the differences and to approach such factors as a resource, an opportunity for learning and not a problem to be fixed or excluded, thus becomes a crucial dimension of an approach that is working towards inclusive education (Ainscow, 1999). Since Salamanca, the term inclusive education has taken on multiple meanings across the globe. It is sometimes used in England to describe practices within special schools (Spurgeon, 2007). In some UK contexts (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006) inclusive education is no longer associated with disability or special needs but rather with school attendance or behaviour.

Theory and Practice of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education has developed from the belief that education is a basic human right and that it provides foundation for a more just society. All learners have a right to education, regardless of their individual characteristics and difficulty. It is also based on the philosophy of social model by the disability movement. In recent years, the disability movement has advocated a different way of looking at disability, which they call the social model. Persons with disabilities and their organisations are increasingly involved in providing alternative, empowering conceptions in contrast to those that have supported and legitimised disabling barriers in policy and development, practice and everyday interactions.

This starts from the standpoint of the rights of all adults and children with disabilities to belong and to be valued in their local community. In this sense disability is seen as the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers according to Persons with disabilities International (1981) cited in the Open University (2003). The social model approach suggests that the disadvantage of persons with disabilities is due to a complex form of institutional discrimination. They believe that the cure to the problem of disability lies in changing society.

Social Model Approach

The social model sees disability as a significant means of social differentiation. Recognising the centrality of institutional, ideological, structural

and material disabling barriers within society is fundamental to a social model of disability. It is an unadaptive, unfriendly and hostile set of material conditions and social relations that cumulatively contribute to the marginalisation, disempowerment and exclusion of persons with disabilities (Barton, 2003). He argued that this is where the critical analysis has to focus and changes have to take place.

The definitional support for the social model is to be found in the statement on Fundamental Principles of Disability which resulted from a discussion between the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) and the Disability Alliance (1976) cited in Barton (2003, p.10). The position of UPIAS is quite clear. It states that "Disability is something imposed on top of our impairment by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Persons with disabilities are therefore the oppressed people in society." This statement as Barnes (1997) noted, has since been broadened to include all impairments, physical, sensory and intellectual. Thus Oliver (1990) contends all persons with disabilities experience disability as social restriction.

However, UNESCO (2001) makes it clear that the concept of social model implies that if someone has difficulty accessing public transport, or employment, or any other aspect of the social world which others take for granted, it is not simply because they have a physical or sensory or intellectual impairment. Rather, it is because public transport is not designed to be sufficiently accessible, or because people with disabilities are systematically denied opportunities in the

labour market. More generally, it is because societies are organised to meet the needs of the majority of people without disabilities rather than the minority of persons with disabilities. The social model in the view of Barton (2003) is the product of the struggles of persons with disabilities and their organisations against discrimination, exclusion and oppression and their desire for a better life based on alternative definitions and understandings relating to the issue of disability. Barton (2003) contends that the social model serves several purposes.

Firstly, it provides a framework and language through which persons with disabilities can describe their experiences whereby discrimination, exclusion and inequality can be challenged. Secondly, it offers a means through which the question of disability can be explained and understood in terms of wider socio-economic conditions and relations. Thirdly, it provides a basis for support and collective engagement of persons with disabilities. Finally, it is a means through which the world of persons without disabilities can be provided with an alternative and positive view of disability. This implies that the social model has a very important educative function. According to Equality Studies Centre (1994), the social model is basically about struggle for rights, social justice, citizenship and anti-discriminatory legislation. However, Barton (2003), argued that the definitions and interpretations of social model must not be viewed as natural or immutable. They are complex and contestable social creations. As such they need to be struggled over.

In presenting this brief overview of social model as one of the impetus for the justification of inclusion, the researcher is however, not oblivious of the

27

dangers of essentialism in relation to the notion of disability. People with disabilities as already alluded to are not homogeneous group. The difficulties and response to being a child with disability are influenced by class, race, gender, sexuality and age factors (Barton, 2003). These can cushion or compound the experience of discrimination and oppression. Literature, as indicated in Barton (2003) has it that some individuals experience simultaneous oppression, self-pride and collective identification.

It also recognises that the possible differences in terms of internal oppression that will be experienced between those who are born with particular impairments and those who experienced them at a later stage in life. This will include the extent to which individuals can view themselves with pride (MeeKosha, 2000). Their struggles basically include recognising differences whilst simultaneously pursuing solidarity and community. In the views of Barton (2003), this clearly reinforces the perspective that the meaning of difference is a terrain of political struggle in the pursuit of a society in which as Young (1990, p.163) indicated "there is equality among socially and culturally differentiated groups, who mutually respect one another and affirm one another in their difference."

The social model is actually not a fixed and unchangeable set of ideas. Various points of argument and critique exist between analysts of persons with disabilities and activists about the adequacy or validity of particular interpretations. For instance, there are those who locate the source of discriminatory and oppressive conditions and relations in the fundamental

28

workings of the capitalist system. Thus the emphasis is on the political economy of disablement (Thomas, 2002). Also, there are those who, whilst still committed to materialist perspective, are influenced by feminist ideas and are concerned to emphasise the psycho-emotional dimension of disabilism. This includes, as Thomas (1999, p.47) maintains, 'social barriers which erect "restrictions" within ourselves, and thus place limits on our psycho-emotional well-being.' The interest is thus focused on 'inside' experiences of oppression and discrimination in terms of 'being made to feel lesser value, worthless and unattractive' (Thomas, 2002, p.7). These actually do have significant impact on what people can be and possibly do.

Finally, according to Barton (2003), there are those influenced by postmodernism who maintain that the social model cannot adequately deal with the complexities of the global experience of the persons with disabilities or deal with the challenges which impairment presents to notions of embodiments. Therefore such a model needs to be revised, hence the importance of developing and reaping the benefits of what Corker and Shakespeare (2002) call a new theoretical toolbox which is seen by Barton (2003) as adequate, accessible and does not lose its radical edge.

In Ghana, it is common knowledge that the educational provision within the special education sector has been built around the medical model of segregation where children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities were educated in special schools located in the outskirts of towns, separated from society. This medical model contrasts with social model which encourages

learners with disabilities to be included in mainstream schools to become active members of their society (Hooker, 2007). This really presents a shift in thinking on education provision for students with SEN in Ghana and also presents the opportunity for those with special needs to benefit from and participate in mainstream education and to achieve meaningful outcomes in terms of their active participation in society. What is not apparent in the strategy (Hooker, 2007) is whether there is a clear understanding of the fundamental change involved in adopting social model and the challenging nature of the response which would be required from the Ministry of Education Science and Sports (MOESS) and the multiplicity of stakeholders in education, if the vision inherent in the strategy is to be operationalised. The envisaged social model will shift the focus from the difficulties of the learner to everything that happens in the classroom and school environment which can create barriers to learning.

According to Perner and Ahujah (2004) this social or curricular view is dependent on teachers being encouraged and trained to use "curriculum differentiation" to modify content, activities and assessments in order to respond more flexibly to the diverse learning needs of students. Evidence suggests that inclusive education provision can improve the performance of non-SEN students, in part because the increased attention on classroom practices with regard to pedagogy and curriculum adaptation (for SEN students) generalises teaching skills to all students.

In essence, according to the implementation of an Inclusive Education strategy could "raise the bar" for both special and mainstream education provision

in Ghana. Rather than being a marginal theme on how some learners can be separated from or integrated into the mainstream, inclusive education is an approach that seeks to transform teaching and learning for the benefit of all learners. Implementation will require fundamental cultural, attitudinal and societal change. The change agenda cannot solely be driven by the Ghana Education Service (GES) Special Education Division (SpED), but will require changes on the part of teachers, principals, parents, communities, administrators, representative bodies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders' interest (Hooker, 2007).

Inclusive education is increasingly promoted and supported, not just by a few passionate individuals and groups, but by United Nations agencies, other international organisations and governments globally. The inclusion of persons with barriers to learning and development in ordinary schools and classrooms is part of global human rights. Inclusive education has also grown from the conviction that education is a basic human right agenda and that it provides the foundation for a more just and democratic society. All children therefore have a right to education (Fobih, 2008).

International Policies on Inclusive Education

In 1945, the League of Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR). In the field of education, Stubbs (2008) indicated that Article 26 of the Declaration proclaims the right of every citizen to an appropriate education regardless of gender, race, colour and religion. It states that "Everyone

has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory." This right is also enshrined in the constitutions of all independent nations including Ghana. It is believed that a focus on rights is a way of asserting that everyone is equally human, and should therefore have an equal entitlement to having their needs met.

According to Stubbs (2008) Rights for children are also explicitly set out in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as a way of asserting that children are people too and because they are generally more vulnerable and may need special protection. The idea of special rights for children can also perpetuate the view that the rights of children, as the less powerful group should be given less attention. All children regardless of their disabilities have rights to 'quality' education, in their locality in which their dignity is respected. The UNCRC is the most ratified convention, only United States of America and Somalia have not signed according to Stubbs (2008). It consolidates and goes further than many previous conventions he indicated. The UNCRC breaks new ground by stating that children's views should be taken into account. The previous conventions only acknowledged the rights of parents to choose the children's education (Stubbs, 2008)

According to the Convention, States should encourage secondary and vocational education, offer financial assistance in case of need, and make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity. The notion of rights according to Booth, Ainscow and Kingston (2006) has become of vast symbolic importance in the last and present centuries and demands for rights have been used as a

rallying cry for those denied the common humanity, that all children are equally human. It expresses the idea that every life and every death is of equal value. Thus people do not have rights unless they all have them equally.

Speaking of rights, Booth, et al (2006) argued that it involves both the assertion of the fundamental significance of particular human needs and activities and the attempt to persuade others that these should be accessible to everyone. It is also an attempt to spread a belief that agreement about rights is beyond dispute. It is clear however, that despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, subsequent human rights instruments and their incorporation into national legal systems, the deep acceptance of human rights is circumscribed. Partly this is due to the limited degree of equality that some believe is implied by rights. In a book on Human Rights and Democracy, Beetham (1999, p.90) expresses a common view that 'human rights seek to guarantee the minimum necessary for pursuing a distinctively human life.' He believes that economic rights should ensure a minimum level for all.

Disability groups have lobbied to ensure that all human rights instruments specifically mention people with disabilities and emphasise their right to education, whatever the extent or nature of their impairments. But even when this right has been acknowledged, the type and location of education remains hotly debated as to whether it should be through segregated special schools, full inclusion in mainstream school or some sort of combination. The 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) breaks new ground as the first international legally binding instrument to specifically promote

inclusive education as a right (Stubbs, 2008).

Inclusion is also about Education for All in Schools for All (EFA). Stubbs (2008) indicated that, in decades following the Universal Declaration, there was clearly still a large gap between the ideal and the reality of achieving universal education. He added that in the 1980s, progress towards universal education did not just slow down, in many countries it reversed. The Education for All movement was launched at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The forum was convened by United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. The EFA represents an international commitment to ensure that every child and adult receives basic education of good quality. It aims to give all children, young people and adults the right to education. This commitment is based both on a human right perspective, and on the generally held belief that education is central to an individual well-being and national development, as was emphasised in the United Kingdom (UK) Department for International Development (DFID, 2006a), that education benefits not just children, but families, and communities and whole countries. It improves job chances and prosperity; promotes health and prevents diseases (Stubbs, 2008).

The Jomtien World Education Declaration (article 2.2) sets out the main components of an 'expanded vision' of basic education (UNESCO, 2003). These components are as follows:

1. give all children, young people and adults universal access to educational promoting equality- by, for instance, ensuring that girls and women and under-served groups have access to basic education.

2. focus on learning acquisition and outcome- rather than simply on enrolment.

3. broaden the means and scope of basic education, but also by calling upon families, communities, early childhood care, literacy programmes, non-formal education programmes, libraries, the media and a wide range of other 'delivery systems'.

4. enhance the environment for learning- by ensuring that learners receive the nutrition, health care and general physical and emotional support they need to benefit from education.

5. strengthen partnerships between all sub-sectors and forms of education, government departments, non-governmental organisations, private sector, religious groups, local communities and, above all, families and teachers (p.3).

The forum was basically meant to encourage the practical recognition of a human right to education through the promotion of universal educational provision, and to contribute to the basis on which aid for the development of education from economically rich countries, would be given to economically poor countries. Education for All thus expresses a commitment to greater equality in educational opportunities around the world but also contends with the effects of the vast disparities in power and wealth between richer and poorer nations on

communications and transactions between them (Ainscow, 1995). He added that the Education for All movement, in setting out internationally defined goals and targets, also embodies a centralising principle and pressure and is therefore linked to a particular view of the process of development.

Despite the rather token mention of special needs at the Jomtien Conference, there is now greater recognition that the special needs agenda should be viewed as a significant part of the drive for Education for All (Ainscow, 1995). A decade after the Jomtien Declaration, its vision was reaffirmed at the World Education Forum meeting in Dakar, held to review progress in achieving education for all (Hooker, 2007). The forum placed a great emphasis on promoting girls' access to schools. However, Hooker (2007) indicated that there was no specific mention of children with disabiliites although the term 'inclusive' does appear in the Framework for Action in which governments and other agencies pledged to: "Create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning with clearly defined levels of achievement for all" (article 8).

The forum highlighted the continuing barriers to education experienced by disadvantaged groups and called for positive action to overcome them. The 'Expanded Commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action' describes the broad vision of Education for All which needs to be adopted in order to achieve the goals, with a special emphasis on those learners who are most vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion. It thus clearly sets inclusive education as one of the main strategies to address the question of marginalisation and exclusion. The

Expanded Commentary on the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action, states that:

> ....In order to attract and retain children from marginalised and excluded groups, education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners (para 33).

The Dakar Framework for Action indeed acknowledges the major education conferences throughout 1990$_s$, such as the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994), and urges the international community to continue working on achieving the goals set.

The major impetus for inclusive education came from the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain. This inclusive orientation was a strong feature of the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education, agreed by representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations in June 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). The statement has a strong focus on the development of 'inclusive schools' in relation to the international goal of achieving education for all. Specifically the Statement spelt out five major clauses which justifies inclusion. These are:

1. every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning;

2. every child has unique characteristics, interests and learning needs;

3. education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these

characteristics and needs;

4. those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs;

5. regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO 1994, para 2).

Paragraph 2 of the Statement placed the onus on regular schools to combat discriminatory attitudes and welcoming communities. The Statement was also emphatic on this leaving exception to where there was 'compelling reasons for otherwise.' UNESCO (2001) re-echoes this with the argument that the paradigm shift implied by the Salamanca Statement was broadly a reform aimed at welcoming diversity amongst all learners. Thus, there was to be an increase in the capacity of local mainstream schools to support the participation and learning of increasingly diverse range of learners. Implicit in this orientation is, therefore, a fundamental shift with respect to ways of addressing educational difficulties. This shift in thinking is based on a belief that methodological and organisational changes made in response to pupils experiencing difficulties are likely to benefit all children (Ainscow, 1995). Indeed, those seen as having special needs come to be recognised as the stimulus that can encourage developments towards a much

richer overall environment for learning. However, advancing towards the implementation of this orientation is far from easy and, as a result, evidence of progress in this respect is limited in most countries.

Salamanca Statement could arguably be used to legitimise the exclusive concerns of some practitioners and international agencies with children with disabilities and those identified as having special needs. Yet Salamanca has been very influential in challenging attitudes within 'special needs and inclusion' circles that it is discussed and taken seriously, yet its focus is on all according to Miles and Singal (2008). A broader notion of all and a greater appreciation of difference in the education system could hold the key to improving the quality of education for all children (Ainscow, 1999).

Vislie (2003) sees the Salamanca Statement as a challenge to all exclusionary policies and practices in education. It is an urgent and inspiring appeal to encourage all countries to recognise the right of all children to avert discrimination and exclusion.

Potential Benefits of Inclusion

Ainscow (2000) noted that inclusion is concerned with fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities. In addition, inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society. He also indicated that inclusive education involves the process of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curriculum and communities of local schools. Peters (2003) clearly argued that inclusive education is cost efficient and

cost effective especially for the seemingly poor countries. Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education Guide (CSIE, 1996) raised a number of points in support of inclusion which are as follows. Inclusive education is a human right, it is good education, and it makes good social sense.

Human Rights:

1. All children have the right to learn together.

2. Children should not be devalued or sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty.

3. Persons with disabilities, describing themselves as special school survivors, are demanding an end to segregation.

4. There are no legitimate reasons to separate children for their education. Children belong together – with advantages and benefits for everyone. They do not need to be protected from each other.

Good Education:

1. Research shows children do better, academically and socially, in inclusive settings.

2. There is no teaching or care in a segregated school which cannot take place in an ordinary school.

3. Given commitment and support, inclusive education is a more efficient use of educational resources.

Social Sense:

1. Segregation teaches children to be fearful, ignorant and breeds prejudice.

2. All children need an education that will help them develop relationships and prepare them for life in the mainstream.

3. Only inclusion has the potential to reduce fear and to build friendship, respect and understanding (CSIE, 1996, P.1)

Challenges to Inclusion

In spite of numerous benefits that appear be derived from inclusion, some authorities vehemently oppose it. For instance, Florian (1998) also argued that much of the clamour for inclusion is not based on empirical evidence but on feelings that it is the right thing to do. According to Wedell (2005) inclusion is not practicable within the rigidities of the current school system. Similarly, Wilson (2000) argues that inclusion is unintelligent and mistaken. Warnock (2005), who led the Warnock Report of 1978 to introduce the term 'special educational needs' in the United Kingdom, also indicated that the ideal of inclusion is not working, and that inclusion can be carried too far, and that it composed of simplistic idea.

The Practice of Inclusive Education in Some Selected Countries

According to Thomas and Glenney (2002, p.345) "Inclusive education is all very well, and it engendered by the kindest of motives, but there is a central

problem; support for it springs from ideology rather than rational inquiry, and it is untested." However, some countries have over the years made conscious efforts with regards to the practice of inclusion. Until recently, inclusive education was the preserve of developed countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA). These countries have formulated policies and laws to support the education of individuals with SEN and disabilities (Frederickson, Osborne & Reed, 2004).

United Kingdom

In UK, for instance, inclusion has played a central role in the labour government policies since 1997 by increasing wider opportunities for the vulnerable in society. A number of initiatives such as the development of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and its toolkits (DFES, 2001b) and the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2000) have served to facilitate and improve the process of inclusive education.

Botswana

Botswana recently issued a revised policy on education though there is no clearly stated commitment to inclusive schooling. However, an earlier Ministry of Education draft policy, Kisanji (1999) indicated that there was no intention to open special schools in future. Children with special needs would learn alongside their peers in regular schools or, where necessary, in special classes. In attempt to provide support for inclusion at the school level, Botswana developed school intervention teams. The idea for the School

Intervention Teams evolved gradually. The Central Resource Centre (CRC) for special education was opened in 1990 for the purpose of carrying out assessment, parent guidance and counselling. In the course of their work the centre staff visited regular schools to raise their awareness of the need to refer children who experience difficulty in their learning to the centre for assessment and advice. They found that many children identified by teachers did not have special educational needs severe enough to warrant referral. The Ministry of Education, therefore, decided to set up teams within schools to work with teachers who express concern about individual children. The teams were given the responsibility to find ways in which the needs of those children can be met within their classrooms or schools before the decision to refer them to the Curriculum Resource Centre (CRC) could be made.

School Intervention Teams (SITs) are thus a school-based resource service for assisting and advising teachers who have children with special educational needs in their classes. Their membership varies from school to school. However, normally the head teacher, senior teachers, a social worker and the individual child's parents form the team. The Botswana model of within-school support has several advantages:

1. It provides a mechanism for responding to the learning and other needs of all learners as soon as they are suspected or identified.

2. It puts pressure on teachers to evaluate their teaching critically and to try different strategies when children experience difficulty in learning

(before and after consulting the SIT).

3. It utilises resources in and around the school

4. Only those difficulties beyond the ability of the school and community to handle will be referred to district and national resources such as the CRC, the proposed district resource centres, health and social services.

5. SITs have the potential to form the 'grassroots' of a national support network.

6. The model provides the opportunity for teachers to learn from one another and to work collaboratively.

7. The membership and deep involvement of the head teacher provides yet another way for him/her to monitor and provide support and leadership in teaching and learning as well as in the curriculum as a whole.

8. It provides an opportunity for assessing the short and long-term training needs of teachers and the possibility for school-based training workshops and seminars.

9. The Division of Special Education (DSE) can obtain useful data from the work of SITs, if records are properly kept and regular reports made, to formulate a national strategy for inclusive schooling and school improvement generally, including staff development, recognising the voices of pupils and their parents and influencing changes in the school and teacher training curricular. (Kisanji, 1999, p.7).

However, these advantages can only be gained if the teams are adequately supported through staff development activities, members of the

teams have shared vision and commitment and schools have a culture of co-operation and collaboration. In addition, for the programme to succeed, the head teachers should not only be committed to the SIT's work but also provide a strong democratic leadership and is capable of introducing innovation and managing it. The voices of students and their parents should also be listened to in order to gain greater understanding and adequately respond to their needs. Any new innovation benefits from regular evaluation and school based inquiry carried out to inform practice.

South Africa

Gyimah (2006) indicates that South Africa is one country in Africa that is gradually developing inclusive practice. The country actually saw the need and the importance of moving away from the dual system of education (regular and special) to a single system of education (Naicker, 2005). Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) cited in Gyimah (2006) indicated that the South African Constitution, the Bill of Rights, provides for all learners to have a right to basic education. This basically implies that the country has recognised how important it is to adhere to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Salamanca Statement, and the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. These principles do not only show the importance of valuing the right of children to education, but also indicate the need to educate the child in the mainstream school and classroom regardless of their disabilities (Gyimah, 2006).

Kenya

During the mid-1980s, Kenya began to develop itinerant services for children with visual and other impairments. This development was based on the recognition that existing special schools could not absorb all special needs children of school going age and that special schools were costly to run. On its part, the Kenya Society for the Blind (KSB) was keen to expand and further develop access for blind and visually impaired children to schooling. The best option open to them was 'open education', that is persuading regular schools to enrol blind and visually impaired children in their neighbourhood with in-school specialist support (Kisanji, 1999).

Ghana

In Ghana, initiatives around the inclusion of learners with special needs in ordinary schools were spread over a period of three years with the support of UNESCO. A national core team has been responsible for a programme of training and development at regional level involving peripatetic specialist teachers, ordinary school teachers, headteachers, teacher educators, district level administrators, regional co-ordinators and community-based rehabilitation managers. In regional workshops, opportunities were provided for constant reflection and review of new knowledge in the context of workplace realities. Co-operative learning approaches were encouraged and means of using existing resources for problem-solving were explored. Planning for and seeking support and collaboration in the workplace was integral to the programme in order to

secure transfer and institutionalisation of change. Participants planned and carried out action research to transfer and fine-tune new skills to the workplace setting. An important feature has been the high level of co-operation between professionals from different department working with external agencies (Stubbs, 2002).

As at 2002, three districts were involved in piloting inclusive education programmes through the support of Sight Savers, an International Non-governmental Organisation concern with the education of children with visual impairment. Casely-Hayford (2002) reported that 87 students were successfully included in different schools in three districts. Currently, the programme is being pilot tested in about 10 districts and in many other schools in the country. This involves itinerant teachers who visit children in the inclusive settings. Also, peripatetic officers working in each district visit these children on a regular basis. According to Obi and Mensah (2005), the programme is currently restricted to children with mild disabilities. They also revealed that there is much on the ground to suggest that inclusive education will be scaled up to involve more children by 2015 which is the target year for total inclusion in the country.

Additionally, The report by UNESCO, 1996 Survey on Special Needs Education indicated that one of the main points of a 1990 law in Spain is the attention to the diversity of interests, abilities and aptitudes of students, foreseeing measures to adjust the curriculum and organisation of ordinary schools to the needs of all students, special education only being authorised if the student's needs are not met in a regular school. The report makes it clear that various pronouncements by Spain over the years strongly favour the development of

integrated education for pupils with disabilities; the 1990 law 'emphasises the principles of normalisation and inclusion'. However, there are also a number of provisos in legislation and other declarations to keep a minority of such pupils in separate special schools. These provisos are common in most, if not all, of the countries reviewed in the report (UNESCO, 1996).

In a number of other countries inclusion is accomplished by a phased method of approach, according to the student's needs and disability. Chile achieves inclusion of children with mental, sensory or motor deficiencies either in special education courses in parallel to regular classes or by inclusion workshops, in each case with the assistance of special educators. Children with mild or moderate disabilities follow common courses at every level. In Chile, Law No. 19.284 established the conditions for the social inclusion of people with disabilities; Article 27 mentions the right of people with special needs to have access to education in regular schools (UNESCO, 1996).

In China regular primary and secondary schools must admit students with disabilities 'who are able to participate in the regular classes' and parents may appeal to the school authorities if their child is not admitted. France adopted a very similar approach to Chile in 1983 and then eight years later in 1991, France established 'classes of school inclusion' with the intention of allowing students with disabilities to transfer to mainstream classes. The UNESCO, 1996 survey reported that the circumstances for successful inclusion at a school level were best illustrated by a French Government Circular as far back as 1976 which said inclusion will be most successful if it is supported by the child, the teachers and

the administration (UNESCO, 1996).

A variation of that approach was found in the Philippines where the concept of a 'school within a school' has been developed; there, a special education centre can be part of a mainstream school preparing children with disabilities, physically and psychologically, to shift into the regular class on either a part-time of full-time basis. In 1987 the Philippine Government proclaimed: 'The ultimate goal of special education shall be the inclusion of learners with special needs into the regular school system and eventually in the community'. (UNESCO, 1996)

In the Canadian Province of New Brunswick the survey says Bill 85 prohibited local school boards from refusing to admit certain children to the school system. Bill 85 calls for special education to be based on a student's individual needs, rather than a categorisation of handicap. School boards are instructed to place exceptional pupils in the same classrooms as non-exceptional pupils as long as it is not detrimental to the needs of the child. A case must be made to remove an exceptional child from a regular class (UNESCO, 1996).

Denmark is reported as linking inclusion to the principles of normalisation and decentralisation' and that it believes integration cannot be promoted directly through legislation. 'Normalisation and decentralisation are embodied in (Danish) laws which pave the way for inclusion'. Former pieces of legislation which related to 'the handicapped' have been repealed as part of this process and a number of Ministries which previously catered for persons with disabilities have been transferred to general Ministries. Following the principle of progressive inclusion,

the report says there are now various degrees of inclusion in Denmark. The only political decision which mentions inclusion is a Danish Parliamentary resolution from 1969 which said: 'The primary and lower secondary school should be expanded so as to provide for the teaching of handicapped pupils, to the greatest possible extent, in an ordinary school environment' (Stainbach & Stainbach, 1996).

Over the last decade, significant moves have been made in Germany to include more and more children with disabilities in the mainstream. The UNESCO report indicated that the following factors are seen in Germany as a priority in order to achieve inclusive education:

1. a high standard of competence for teaching and training staff

2. comprehensive knowledge of all rehabilitation measures, and

3. co-ordinated collaboration between vocational training, regular schools, social, welfare and medical services (UNESCO, 1996, p. 4).

The above mentioned examples appear to give evidence that progress towards inclusive practice is possible. These examples among others have encouraged O'Donoghue and Chalmers (2000) to point out that there has been a growing emphasis on inclusion in most countries in recent times, hence making it assume an international dimension. It is however, argued whether laws and policies by themselves are sufficient to promote inclusive education since Moltto (2003) reported that in Spain teachers' commitment to inclusion was negating when laws on inclusion were imposed on them. Thomas and Loxley (2001) are also of the view that legislation alone is not a sufficient condition for reform if branding

practices continue. This implies that something more than legislation of SEN is required for the needs of all children to be met in the mainstream schools and for successful inclusion.

Gyimah, Sugden and Pearson (2008) also indicated that, in spite of UNESCO's 1994 call for all countries to include children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities in regular education programmes and welcome any measure that makes activities fruitful, there is evidence that not all pupils with SEN and disabilities are in the mainstream. The UK Audit Report (2002) cited in Gyimah et al (2008), for instance, pointed out that the trend towards inclusion has been gradual and that in England a significant proportion of children with SEN and disabilities continues to be educated in special schools funded by the Local Educational Authorities (LEAs).

Theories of Teacher preparation

Within the larger context of education, several pedagogic alternatives have been developed over the past decades. Most instructional strategies in the field of special education have been based on models of learning which included medical, behavioural, psychological processes, and metacognitive models (Stainback & Stainback, 1996). What is common among all these models is an underlying assumption that children with disabilities and SEN have discrete deficits that can be specifically and accurately diagnosed and remediated. Connected to this assumption, though often unstated according to Stainback and Stainback (1996), is the belief that this diagnosis and remediation of some specific deficits will

ultimately improve larger children's achievement goals. However, there are other learning theories or pedagogical alternatives with assumptions which are contrary to that of these models. These include the reductionist's assumptions, constructivist's assumptions, critical pedagogy and multicultural pedagogy.

Reductionist Approach

The reductionist learning principles believes that complex wholes such as human learning and behaviour can be broken down (reduced) into components parts such as social behaviours, cognitive skills, hypothetical and psychological processes and neural processing. These predetermined component parts are used to design what they believe will be more effectively practised in assessment and instruction (Poplin, 1987).

There are some principal assumptions of the reductionist theory of learning. According to Poplin (1987), a reductionist approach to learning seeks to discover deficits within the student. This view limits the degree to which other possible contributions to the problem can be taken into consideration. For instance, how do institutional racism, second language issues, poor instruction, and the previous experiences and interests of the child get factored in the understanding of what a student is experiencing in the school? There is also "diagnosis drives instruction". This means that whatever has been determined to be wrong, whether it be memory functions or pieces of academic skills or cognitive strategies, these become target for instruction.

Reductionist models segment learning into parts, either parts leading to an

academic or social behaviour, or parts of mental processes. This breaking down of skills is done outside the student and then delivered to the student in a logically ordered sequence, logical from the standpoint of adults without disabilities who designed the sequence based on their own experiences and knowledge. Reductionist models form a diagnosis around the hypothesised cause of disability. The theory regarding the cause of disabling condition drives the selection of the diagnostic instruments which further narrows the range of possible explanations and solutions. If one believes that the problem is caused by memory deficits, memory deficits will be measured.

This model also tightly controls instruction, leaving the learner in a basically passive, responsive role. The student's primary choice in instruction is whether or not to be complaint. Instruction also is deficit-driven. Because theory about cause drives diagnosis and assessments, and diagnosis drives instruction, the majority of students' time in school becomes focused on things that are difficult for them to do. Very little, if any, time is devoted to locating or supporting activities in which students have talents. Instruction is viewed as unidirectional. The teacher is to deliver instruction, the teacher knows, the student receives. This is often referred to as the banking system of education. There is also an assumption that reductionist assessment and instruction promotes almost exclusively school goals rather than life goals. This is because the view of the problem and context is so limited in reductionist instructional settings, goals for students become truncated and expectations lowered because of the constant focus on deficits.

Increasingly, serious questions are being raised about the reductionist

53

assumptions. These questions have permeated every aspect of special education from teacher education to research methods. Many articles according to Stainback and Stainback (1996) have been published on alternatives to reductionist theories and methods in educating children with disabilities and SEN. Serious examination of multitude of problems in transmitting behaviouristic practices from research to educational settings to teacher educational settings in the field of severely handicapped reflects the rising discontent with reductionist practices (Guess & Thompson 1990). They re-echoed that they do not doubt the viability of the reductionist methods to answer very specific questions or to teach very specific mechanical tasks, or its role in the evolution of such inventions. Rather what they do challenge is its ability to provide significant direction overall in the larger issues that plague inclusive teachers and their students. Several alternatives to reductionist teacher preparation theory have been developed over the years. This includes constructivists' theory.

Constructivism

Constructivism is the best known of the alternative pedagogies in teacher education. Constructivism emphasises that learning is the process of creating new meanings from experience. This is opposed to the reductionistic learning theories that presume the transmission of predetermined knowledge from one person to the next. For instance, from the teacher to the student. This primarily implies that in constructivism, the teacher is to develop experiences for students in classrooms that will spark their interests, connect to previous knowledge, and thus stimulate

students to become actively involved in constructing meanings for themselves. Constructivists such as Piaget pointed to the fact that this meaning making happens in a sequence that goes from whole to part to whole, or as Whitehead (1992) called it: romance, precision and wisdom.

Constructivists learning theory is primarily concerned with students' cognitive and academic development, especially development that centres on literacy, mathematical, and higher order analytic thinking skills. Historically, great educators who have exemplified the principles of constructivism include Montessori and Fernald (Stainback & Stainback, 1996).

Critical pedagogy is also an alternative learning theory. Critical pedagogy, sometimes referred to as Liberatory Pedagogy, was first brought to the attention of the world by Paulo Freire, who developed a literacy campaign in Brazil in the 1960s to teach peasants to read (Stainback & Stainback1996). These theorists believe that learners create meanings, but they are more interested in socio-political meanings than simply higher-order thinking skills. Critical theorists urge teachers to set up experiences in schools in which students can create meanings around larger social issues. So while the constructivists are happy with using nice texts that students like, critical theorists want schooling to lead to a life of action, not simply high-order cognition or passive responding. Beside the critical pedagogy there is another theory of learning known as multicultural pedagogy.

Multicultural Pedagogies

Multicultural pedagogies emphasise equity of access, expectations, and opportunities for students of colour, as well as issues of institutionalised racism, curriculum revision, increasing teachers of colour, linguistic diversity, and biculturalism. All of these issues are relevant for general education teachers. A fourth pedagogy that seeks to avoid the pitfalls of reductionism is feminine pedagogy. This pedagogy is a derivative of feminine theory which has as one of its purposes the study of feminine side of all. Belenky, Clinchy, Golberger, and Tarule (1986) present ideas for a feminine pedagogy of connection, positing that personal spurs learning. Other educators have drawn out other aspect of feminine pedagogy. Greene (1988) argued that passion for what one is learning is supremely important and that this passion brings into play the larger moral purposes for teaching. Noddings (1984) highlights intuition and caring as over-looked areas in education, areas that she often feels are too unsophisticated to bring into the academic discourse about schools and teaching. Feminine pedagogists also encourage greater involvement with caregivers, parents, and the larger community, in order to preserve the important relationships of students.

However, critiques of this theory also believe that, too much caring may lead to "doing for" students rather than allowing the students to learn to do things for themselves. They believe that this can be detrimental as it produces learned helplessness (Taylor, 1990). These four pedagogies, while sharing an attempt to circumvent reductionistic and behavioural assumptions about learners, differ in substantial ways. Changing educational agendas in the twenty-first century make

new and urgent demands on teacher education programs. The emphasis on the construction of robust intellectual knowledge and inquiring habits of mind in schools necessitate the implementation of innovative, inquiry-based teaching/learning relationships that have not been experienced by many pre-service teachers nor teacher educators. The question arises as to the role that teacher education might play in preparing teachers for these new ways of being an educator, of working with students in collaborative engagements where learners are authorised and encouraged to construct their own understandings in personally relevant and powerful ways.

Teacher Preparation in Ghana

Education is a condition for development and the teacher is the ultimate definer of its reality. The quality of teacher education is critical if education is to enhance development. Teacher preparation, mentoring and motivation are critical factors in enhancing quality education capable of facilitating meaningful development. It is not therefore surprising that teacher training is on the priority list of national educational programmes of Ghana and some other countries.

The vision of teacher education in Ghana is to prepare the grounds for quality teaching and learning outcomes through competency-based training of teachers. The mission is to provide a comprehensive Teacher Education Programme through pre-service and in-service training that would produce competent, committed and dedicated teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Ghanaian classrooms. However, Teacher training and preparation

in some of the universities and colleges in Ghana according to Avoke and Avoke (2004) were focused purely on methodologies and assessment practices that were not tailored to the needs of the children with disabilities in inclusive schools. They reiterated that methodologies at the pre-service teacher training programmes continue to be directed towards practices of regular schools. Consequently teachers do not teach towards differential learning outcomes since approaches adopted by many teachers in Ghana tend to be exam driven. The following are the details of the education and professional studies offered at the Colleges of Education in Ghana:

1. Teaching as Profession (2 credits)

2. Principles of Education (2 credits)

3. Child and Adolescent Development and Learning (2 credits)

4. Measurement and Evaluation at the basic level (2 credits)

5. Introduction to Special Education (2 credits)

6. School Management and Administration (2 credits)

7. Development of Education in Ghana (2 credits)

8. Principles of curriculum Development (2 credits)

9. The Primary school curriculum (2 credits)

10. The JSS curriculum (2 credits)

11. Principles and methods of Teaching at the Basic level (7 credits)

12. Educational Research Methods and Project work (3 credits)

13. On-Campus Teaching Practice (3 credits)

14. On-Campus Teaching Practice (6 credits)

Although pre-service teachers in Ghana offer special education, as part of their educational foundational course, the report by Casely-Hayford (2002) shows that the course content is said to "superficially" touch on issues of disability not allowing teachers to fully recognise simple approaches they could use to help children include and become more accepted. He however, hoped that once the disability policy is passed by parliament, inclusive education will become the education policy of the country and will be implemented to the latter.

The effectiveness of the curriculum depends in the long run on the skills and attitudes of classroom teachers. However, teachers may prefer to work with a traditional curriculum for a number of reasons. In the first place they may have little training or have been trained in the "frontal method" where they simply stand at the front of the class and pass on information. Secondly, they may have limited subject knowledge and feel more comfortable with a traditional curriculum which relies on the knowledge they have acquired through their pre-service training or which is contained in their text books. Thirdly, they may feel more confident with a traditional curriculum which requires the teacher to make

fewer decisions about how to respond to the diversity of their students. Also, they may gain real sense of professional satisfaction that their students are learning something tangible (UNESCO, 2001).

Teacher education has historically occurred as a loose collection of courses across number departments. The absence of programmatic coherence has been acknowledged repeatedly in the teacher education reform literature and continues to be cited as one of the major barriers to be overcome. In their description of how to make more inclusive education oriented at the level of teacher preparation, Stainback and Stainback (1989) suggested a possible professional core of courses appropriate for the basic preparation of all teachers. This was to ensure that such core courses will prepare teachers adequately for inclusive classroom setting.

Inclusion and Teacher Education

The concept of inclusion promotes acceptance of all students and willingness to restructure the school curriculum in response to their needs (Kavale, 2000; Sebba & Ainscow, 1996; Snyder, Garriot & Aylor, 2001). These changes have had considerable implications for education professionals, culminating in the government's view that 'all teachers are teachers of special educational needs children according to Department for Education and Skills [DFES] (2001b). Thus the role of teachers in the successful implementation of inclusive education cannot be overemphasised. The inclusive curricula make considerable demands on teachers. For instance, teachers have to become

involved in curriculum development at local level and skilled in curriculum adaptation in their own classrooms, they have to manage complex ranges of classroom activities, they have to be skilled in planning and preparing to allow the participation of all students, they have to know how to support their students' learning without simply giving them predetermined answers. They are also expected to go outside traditional subject boundaries and in culturally-sensitive ways (UNESCO, 2001).

In spite of constitutional provision and other provisions in the various international documents for access, participation and equal opportunity for all children including those with SEN and disabilities, Flem, Moen and Gudmundsdottir (2004) argued that what teachers do to facilitate a good learning environment and adaptive education for everyone is critical if inclusive education is to succeed. In a study Flem et al conducted, they found out that the teacher they studied created a positive atmosphere in the classroom and also had a good academic insight. Meijer and Stevens (1997) emphasised that teachers are key persons in facilitating adaptive education and determining the quality of the classroom environment. This implies that to deal with diversity among children in schools today, teacher education and systematic teacher development in terms of theory and practice is very critical, and it is therefore likely that teacher education is one of the first steps in the achievement of inclusive education. For all countries teachers are the most costly, most powerful resource that can be deployed in the education system. Thus appropriate preparation of all educational personnel stands out as key factor in promoting inclusive school (UNESCO, 1994).

Literature suggests that a major factor in whether inclusion will be successful or not, is the preparation of teachers and other support staff. Consequently, research by Kuester (2003) confirms earlier findings that teachers believe that quality training will enable them to more effectively teach all students. Professional development including field experiences with those with disabilities has been found to lead to acquisition of adequate knowledge and skills as well as greater perceived confidence (Lumpart & Webber, 2002; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Teachers need more than just subject knowledge. They also need to know how children learn, how to understand individual differences and how to match teaching to those differences. The management of the curriculum in an inclusive classroom is a major pedagogical and organizational challenge. Teachers need practical experience and knowledge together with on-going support to help them embed effective techniques into their daily practice.

It is reported that in many countries teachers are not adequately prepared to successfully implement, monitor and individualise curricular for children with special educational needs in inclusive setting. A case in point was the situation in Canada reported by Kuester (2003). She reported that in Canada, "The provincial education degree does not require the vast majority of teachers to take any special needs courses, only those majoring in physical education are required to take one course, while those who teach children with special needs undertake special education degree" (p. 80). She argued that, yet inclusion requires that all teachers be special educators in order to facilitate successful learning of all students. Thus Barton (2003) recommended that professional development is essential for all

teachers and must be ongoing and comprehensive as this will provide and maintain a qualified and motivated teaching force. As well as having expertise on particular disabilities, special education has developed an individualised curricula, instructional and assessment methods which need to be a part of all teachers' methodology (Lumpart &Webber, 2002; Winzer,1998).

As all teachers are now responsible for all students then all teachers as well as others need to be thoroughly prepared by ongoing professional development if inclusion of all is to be realised. Mittler (2000) contends that it is becoming increasingly crucial to evaluate pre-service teacher training (PTT) in order to improve continually the preparation of the teachers of tomorrow and today to help them feel equipped to meet the educational needs of all children. Pearson (2005) has indicated that, whilst, previously, involvement with pupils with special educational needs (SEN) was something that teachers could largely opt into, it is now an almost universal role. He argued that for inclusive education to be effective, all pre-service teachers need to be aware of the expectations of inclusive education. They should have started to develop the knowledge and skills to respond to atypical pupil. Beyond these the trainee teachers need positive attitudes to inclusion in general and particularly to the pupils with whom they interact.

An understanding of the ideological and historical background to SEN (Pearson, 2005) would provide the necessary contextual background. This is a challenging agenda and concerns have consistently been raised about the preparation of pre-service teachers during their courses (Jones, 2002; Thomas &

Loxley, 2001). Consequently, Ainscow (2005, p. 9) posed a question that: "Is there a properly funded Staff Development and Training Strategy that recognises the importance of continued professional development and ensures that all of its members of staff are provided with awareness raising and role-specific training opportunities on inclusive issues?" Connell (2002) in Barton (2003) maintains, teachers, are faced with educating a diverse student population.

Barton (2003), in his concluding remarks, contends that the position of teacher training in relation to its contribution to the development of inclusive thinking and practice on the part of student teachers is of fundamental importance. Garner (2001) is particularly worried over the ways in which pre-service teacher training does little to promote inclusive thinking on the part of newly qualified teachers. In publication concerned with issues of teacher education and inclusion and drawing on the experience of several societies Booth, Nes and Stromstad (2003) examined some crucial questions including, to what extent does the curriculum of teacher education encourage   the development of inclusion in schools?, what preparation and support do teachers need to implement inclusion?, how are barriers to learning and participation overcome in teacher education?

Research indicates that in many countries considerable effort is put into the training of teachers and other professionals in the early stages of the move towards inclusive education. For instance, in Uganda, although the government had the goodwill to support the training of personnel in this field it lacked the necessary resources to do it on its own. International and local Non-Governmental Organisations gradually supported the training of a few Ugandan

teachers by sponsoring their training abroad. Initially, the government of Uganda did not have an effective policy for the training of teachers in special education. In 1991the governments of Uganda and the Kingdom of Denmark signed an agreement and the Danish government gave technical and financial support to develop special needs education and related services in Uganda. It was in 1992 that the government established a policy entitled "Education for National Integration and Development. In this policy the government pledged to support special education by providing funding and teacher training.

Today, the Ugandan Teacher Education Colleges offer academic programmes which target teachers, medical workers, social workers and community development personnel to enable them implement inclusive education and rehabilitation. These programmes offer opportunities for teachers to acquire knowledge, skills and experience necessary to teach persons with disabilities and those with other barriers to learning and development (Government of Uganda 1992).

In Brazil, the Ministry of Education's Special Needs Education Secretariat (1998) cited in Stubbs (2002) has proposed a restructuring of all training courses for all educational level to make them consistent with inclusive education policies. The proposition was that pre-service school, primary and secondary address knowledge in respect of diversity and special educational needs. This implies that both mainstream teachers' training programmes and courses will include a topic on special needs education and on teaching approaches to meet children's special educational needs.

In England, teacher education is a key aspect of the teacher educational system that has been on the receiving end of a raft of government directives and interventions over the past two decades in particular. The major intention has been to redefine and reconstruct the purpose, process, content and outcome of all programmes and procedures. The changes have been supported by the introduction of new legislation, new funding arrangements, the closure and amalgamation of institutions and the development of new routes into teaching outside higher education. The motivation for such action includes a desire on the part of government for greater central control and the assumption that the most effective way of controlling schools and teachers in the long term is to control their professional preparation (Barton, 2003).

Furthermore, as indicated by Stubbs (2002), planning for the professional development of the teacher workforce in England is currently the responsibility of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). This body identifies national priorities, sets detailed standards for training, funds training providers and inspects the quality of provision. As the country moves towards more inclusive provision, TTA is able to specify the knowledge and skills that must be taught to all teachers in their pre-service training (Stubbs, 2002).

Dell (1998) reported that in New Jersey, the teacher education colleges have developed a model teacher education curriculum designed to prepare pre-service teachers and general classroom teachers in inclusive settings. Besides, they have also developed a plan to impact certification requirements so that all teachers will be better prepared to teach in inclusive settings. Dell indicated that

these are ambitious plans, but it is hoped that ultimately, New Jersey's children with disabilities will have better opportunities for quality inclusive educational experiences as a result of this kind of teacher education reform.

In Ghana, Avoke (2004) indicated that elements of special education were introduced in the country's Colleges of Education for all teacher trainees. The essence according to Obi and Mensah (2005) was to prepare teachers to effectively function in mainstreamed and inclusive education settings. Fobih (2008) also pointed out that the educational system in the country is equipped with enhanced and flexible curriculum programmes at all levels. The College of Education curriculum has also been enriched and expanded to cater for the needs of persons with disabilities and those with Special Educational Needs (SENs). There are also massive capacity-building programmes for teachers and officers in mainstream schools. This is to prepare and equip the pre-service teachers and all regular school teachers with knowledge about special needs children and how to adapt the regular education curriculum to benefit children with special educational needs (SEN).

The question of the position and the function of teacher education institutions is a central concern of Sachs (2003) in her argument for the development of an 'activist teaching profession', one in which teachers can be viewed as change agents. Drawing on research findings from several societies as well as Australia, she maintains, that teachers in the modern world will need to respond to and manage change in creative and responsive ways. This according to Barton (2003) implies that teacher educators will need to reconceptualise that task

and restructure how they undertake their work including the establishment of vibrant relationships with schools, trade unions and other interested groups.

Summary of Literature Review

According to the various explanations and definitions seen so far in the literature review, it is obvious that inclusive education which is the new paradigm shift for educating children with disabilities and SEN means educating all children in the community schools regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This trend has resulted from a paradigm shift regarding how people think about and view the education of children with disabilities.

Educational provision within the special education sector has been built around the medical model of segregation where the visually impaired, hearing impaired or intellectually handicapped were educated in special boarding schools located in the outskirts of towns, separated from society. This medical model contrasts with the social model which encourages learners with disabilities to be included in mainstream schools to become active members of their society. The strategy represents a shift in thinking on educational provision for students with SEN in Ghana and presents the opportunity for those with special needs to benefit from and participate in mainstream education and to achieve meaningful outcomes in terms of their active participation in society.

The literature suggests that a major factor in whether inclusion will be successful is the preparation of teachers which of course teacher preparation in Ghana cannot be excluded since Ghana is also a signatory to the Salamanca

statement. Consequently, research confirms the teachers' belief that quality training particularly in terms of curriculum adaptation will enable them to more effectively teach all children. Professional development including field experiences with children with disabilities has been found to lead to more positive attitudes as well as greater perceived teacher confidence.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This section covers the range of approaches (techniques and procedures) which were employed by the researcher in the process of data gathering. It is categorised into areas such as research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation and procedure for data collection, pilot testing and data analysis.

Research Design

The choice of research design for a particular study is based on the purpose of the study according to the views of Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2004). Basically, survey is used to scan a wide field of issues, populations and programmes in order to measure or describe any generalised features (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2004). It actually provides a relatively simple and straight forward approach to the study of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives. Other survey studies attempt to find relationships between the characteristics of the respondents and their reported behaviors and opinions. For example, a survey could examine whether there is a relationship between gender and people's attitudes about some social issue. When surveys are conducted to determine relationships, they are referred to as correlational studies (Marczyk, DeMatteo &

festinger, 2005). In this study descriptive survey was thus considered the most appropriate design by the researcher since the ultimate goal of the study was to learn about issues relative to teacher preparation and inclusive education in Ghana by surveying a sample of that population and describing the situation.

Population

Population refers to the aggregate of cases about which a researcher would like to make generalisations. Cohen et al (2004) explain a target population as a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to who the researcher intends to generalise the study. In this study, the target population were all third year students of the thirty-eight Colleges of Education in Ghana. The reason was that it was presumed that the third years might have been taken through special education course as part of their preparation to meet the needs of all children including those with SEN in general education classroom.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size according to Cohen et al (2004) can be determined in two ways, either by the researcher exercising prudence and ensuring that the sample represents the wider features of the population or by using a table which forms a mathematical formula. On the basis of that a total of 300 third year pre-service teachers formed the sample size of the study. This was arrived at after the researcher had exercised prudence and ensured that the sample represented the

wider features of the population.

On the basis of familiarity and ease of access, the researcher purposively sampled Colleges of Education in Central and Ashanti regions for the study. Purposive sampling technique is a non-probability technique used when the researcher builds up a sample likely to satisfy certain specific needs (Cohen et al., 2004). The study involved the final year students of Colleges of Education who were on out-segment programme. This implied that the researcher in order to access the sampled population without difficulty must be very familiar with the regions selected and the communities where these colleges are located. The researcher hailed from these regions and as a result was extremely familiar with the environment. This made the administration of the instrument very easy. Simple ratio and proportion were used to arrive at the number of Colleges selected from each of the selected regions. Simple ratio was used by the researcher because that was the only mathematical formula to arrive at the sample size from each selected college. Ashanti region has seven Colleges of Education while Central region has three. This gives an approximate ratio of two is to one (2:1). Thus 2 Colleges selected from Ashanti region and 1 from Central region.

The researcher also purposively selected mixed Colleges from both regions to satisfy gender equity. In so doing Wesley and Akrokeri Colleges of Education were selected from Ashanti region while Fosu College of Education was selected from the Central region. Simple ratio and proportion was applied to arrive at the number of students to be taken from each selected College to form the sample size. In so doing, the researcher divided the population of each of the

three Colleges by the sum total and multiplied it by the total sample size of 300. For instance, Wesley College had 381 as number on role for the third-year students and as a result 120 students were selected as sample size. Similarly, the number on role for Akrokeri College of Education was 267 and such 84 was selected as sample size, while Fosu College of Education had 305 as number on role which resulted in the sample size of 96. Simple random sampling technique was adopted by the researcher to pick students who formed the sample size from each College.

Research Instrument

Data for this study were gathered through the use of questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to gather information on the level of pre-service teachers' theoretical knowledge as well as practical experience on inclusive education. The researcher considered the use of questionnaire appropriate to collect the data for the study since the participants could read and decode, even though the researcher was not oblivious of its drawbacks. Typically there may be a low return rate which will mean that the people who do return them may not be necessarily the representative of the originally selected sample for effective analysis. However, questionnaire can be extremely efficient at providing large amounts of data, at relatively low cost, in a short period of time. Participants can also be assured of anonymity and so they may be more truthful in responding to the questions than they will be in for instance, a personal interview, particularly when it involves sensitive or controversial issues. The researcher did not adopt already existing

questionnaire but had to develop his own. This was due to the fact that as already indicated; studies on teacher preparation are scant. The final items contained in the questionnaire were arrived at after series of consultations and discussions with the researcher's supervisors and colleagues in similar field of study.

Questionnaire for respondents were in four sections. Section A was on personal data of respondents such as age and gender, section B was on theoretical knowledge of the respondents on inclusive education, section C was to find out the knowledge of respondents on the core concept of inclusive education while section D demanded information on the practical experience of respondents and how to adapt the regular school curriculum to meet the needs of children with disabilities and SEN in an inclusive setting. Basically, they were closed-ended type of questionnaires and were designed to capture a range of responses in a rating scale and comparatively few dichotomous and multiple choice questions.

The Likert scale consisted of a five point type which involved using "Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree or Strongly Disagree". Likert scale was considered by the researcher because it has the added advantage of being relatively easy to develop. It also builds in a degree of sensitivity and differentiation of response while still generating numbers (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2004). It provides a range of responses to a given statement. For example: All students should have access to free higher education" 1. Strongly Disagree (SD) 2. Disagree (D) 3. Undecided (UD) 4. Agree (A) 5. Strongly Agree (SA). Items in a Likert scale can look very interesting to respondents, and people often enjoy completing a scale of this kind (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2004).

Though Likert scales are powerful and useful in research, the researcher is not oblivious of its limitations. For instance, there is no assumption of equal intervals between the categories, hence a rating of four indicates neither that it is twice as powerful as two nor that it is twice as strongly felt. Also the researcher cannot check on whether the respondents are telling the truth since some respondents may be deliberately falsifying their replies. Also in using a Likert scale, the researcher has no way of knowing if the respondents might have wished to add any other comments about the issue under investigation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2004).

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

It is important to note that research instruments in themselves do not have validity, but validity is rather the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the inferences or conclusions that may be drawn from the findings as a result of using a particular instrument (Cohen et al., 2004).

In this study the researcher put in measures to ensure validity particularly, face validity, external validity, internal validity and content validity. Face validity is basically concerned with whether a test superficially appears to measure what it is supposed to measure whereas external validity is concerned with the degree to which the results can be generalised to the wider population, cases or situations. Internal validity seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data. This basically means that the findings of a particular research must

accurately describe the phenomenon being researched (Cohen et al., 2004). To deal with internal validity the researcher made sure that the instrument contained the 'right' items solicited for expected information. Secondly, the researcher ensured that the interpretation of the findings was in line with the information provided by the participants. To demonstrate content validity, the instrument must show that it fairly and comprehensively covers the domain or items that it purports to cover (Cohen et al., 2004). However, it is unlikely that each issue would be addressed in its entirety simply because of the time available or respondents' motivation to complete the questionnaire. Thus the researcher made sure that the elements of the main issue were covered in the questionnaire. Also to ensure validity of the questionnaire, the researcher gave clear directions, constructed simple and short questions; avoided the use of difficult vocabularies and all forms of ambiguities.

To ensure reliability of the research instrument the researcher was concerned about the consistencies of the respondents on the questionnaire. Firstly, the instrument was subjected to scrutiny by lecturers and friends (Jury validity or peer review). Secondly, the features of the questionnaire such as ease of completion, time to be spent, sensitivity of the questionnaire were all considered. The importance and benefits of the instrument was also stressed. The questionnaire was also taken through pilot-testing. There were also multiple rounds of follow-up to request returns. These were all measures put in place by the researcher to ensure reliability of the instrument.

Pilot -testing of Research Instrument

The wording of questionnaire is of paramount importance and that pretesting is crucial to its success. A pilot-test has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire (Morrison, 1993). Thus pilot test checks the clarity of the questionnaire items, instructions and layout. It is also used to gain feedback on the validity of the questionnaire items. It is also used to eliminate ambiguities or difficulties in wording of the questionnaire among others (Morrison, 1993). The research instrument was personally designed. There was therefore the need for a pilot testing of the instrument to establish validity and reliability of the items. There was also the need to find out if the instructions accompanying the items were clear enough and would, therefore aid the respondents to complete the questionnaires as accurately as possible.

The researcher set out to pilot-test the instrument on 12th January, 2009. The researcher chose Komenda College of Education for the pilot testing basically because of proximity. Twenty mentee teachers were involved in the pilot as already mentioned. Questionnaires were administered and collected on the same day. The pilot test was very essential because it actually helped the researcher to know the internal consistency of the instrument and also helped to reshape and restructure the items. For instance, it enabled the researcher to identify and correct few ambiguities like clarity of expression and overloaded questions. The pilot testing also helped the researcher to check the data analysis procedure. It also enabled the researcher to identify and correct some research

77

questions that were wrongly formulated and could have given some unintended results.

Analysis of Pilot-test

Cronbach's Alpha was used by the researcher to analyse the reliability of the instrument after the pilot test. According to Pavet, Deiner, Colvin, and Sandvik (1991), in terms of reliability, the most important figure is the Alpha value which is Cronbach's alpha co-efficient. They reported that the Satisfaction with Life scale has good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient reported of 0.85. In this study the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.82. Any scale with Cronbach's alpha of less than 0.7 cannot be considered reliable (Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger, 2005; Pavet et al., 1991). On the basis of this the value of 0.82 is above 0.7, so the scale can be considered reliable.

Procedure for Data Collection

With a letter of introduction from the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Cape Coast, permission was sought from heads of the Basic Schools where the mentees were assigned to for their teaching practice. The researcher made attempt to establish rapport in order to win the confidence of the participants to accept and complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires were personally administered to the participants. The participants were given four days to complete questionnaires. This was to give them enough space and time to complete the questionnaires, to avoid putting pressure on them considering their

busy schedule. The lead mentees were asked to supervise and collect the completed questionnaires from their colleagues and made it ready for the researcher. This made the data collection easier. In all, it took the researcher six weeks to collect the data.

Analysis of Return Rate

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to three hundred pre-service teachers (mentees) in three of the thirty-eight (38) Colleges of Education in the country. Out of this number, 287 were retrieved which gives the total return rate of 95.7%. This has been summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

Return Rates for Pre-Service Teachers from the Selected Colleges of Education (N-287)

Colleges of Education	Questionnaires Administered	Questionnaires Retrieved	% Returned
Wesley College of Education	120	114	95%
Akrokeri College of Education	84	81	96.4%
Fosu College of Education	96	92	95.8%
Total	300	287	95.7%

Source: Field Data, April, 2009

Analysis of Data

In analysing the data, codes developed for the various responses   imputed into the Statistical Product for Solutions and Suggestions (SPSS) software against each respondent. Percentages and frequencies were employed as statistical indexes to analyse the data for the research questions through the SPSS software although the researcher was aware of other statistical indexes. The reason for choosing percentages and frequencies was for everybody especially those who are not inclined in statistics to read the results of the study with understanding. Ideas were clarified through the use of tables where necessary.

Personal Data

The researcher was interested in the gender of those who participated in the study. Summary of gender distribution is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents by Gender (N-287)

Gender	Number	%
Male	180	62.7
Female	107	37.3
Total	287	100.0

Source: Field Data, April, 2009

Table 2 indicates that 180 males and 107 females which represent 62.7%

and 37.3%, respectively, answered the questionnaires. This probably means that there were more male pre-service teachers than females in the Colleges of Education in Ghana. Nonetheless, in recent years, interest in the role of women in the development process has been a major concern of research and policy. Currently in Ghana, considerable efforts are being made through policy to restore gender balance in teacher education. A host of underlying cultural, economic and academic restrictions in most communities have been identified to limit women's enrolment in teacher education in Ghana over the years.

The researcher was also concerned with the age distribution of the participants of the study. The reason for this data was to provide enough information about the participants and to help describe trends and changes in the age distribution of the population over time. Summary of the age of the participants of the study is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Distribution of Age of participants (N-287)

Age	Number	%
18-22	54	18.8
23-27	205	71.4
28-32	23	8.0
above 32	5	1.7
Total	287	100.0

Source: Field Data, April, 2009

The ages of the pre-service teachers were determined by four categories: 18-22; 23-27; 28-32; above 32. The frequency of the ages of the respondents ranged from 1.7% to 71.4%. Clearly the Table indicates that majority of the respondents (71.4%) were between the ages of 23 to 27 while only 1.7% of them were above 32 years. This may suggest that majority of the pre-service teachers in the country were between the ages of 23 and 27 while only a few of them were below the age of 23 and above 32 years.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter basically deals with the analysis and discussion of data from the three selected Colleges of Education in the country. This involves theoretical knowledge and practical experience of participants about inclusive education.

Analysis of Results and Discussion of Research Questions

Research Question One: To what extent are pre-service teachers in Ghana knowledgeable about issues of inclusive education?

In the first place, it was found out whether the participants were familiar with the term 'inclusive education'. Out of the 287 questionnaire retrieved, 284 participants responded to this item. See Table 4 for the summary of responses.

Table 4

Participants' Knowledge of Inclusive Education (N-284)

Response	Number	%
Yes	250	88.0
No	34	12.0
Total	284	100.0

Source: Field data, April, 2009

Out of the 284 respondents, 250 (88%) indicated 'Yes', meaning that they had knowledge about inclusive education whilst 12% responded 'No', meaning that they had no knowledge about inclusion. Could it be that these 12% used different curriculum other than that of the 88% participants? The questionnaire did not elicit responses on why a section of the participants had no knowledge about inclusion. As already indicated, majority of the participants had knowledge about inclusive education. Perhaps, it was introduced to prepare the pre-service teachers to face the challenges of inclusion in the regular education classroom.

This finding is consistent with what Fobih (2008) indicated in the literature. As Minister for Education, he pointed out that the Curriculum of Colleges of Education has been enriched and expanded to cater for the needs of Persons with Disabilities and those with Special Educational Needs (SENs). He further disclosed that there were also massive capacity-building programmes for teachers and officers in mainstream schools. This is to prepare and equip the pre-service teachers and all regular school teachers with knowledge about special needs children and how to offer special education services to them in the regular education classroom.

The researcher was also interested in finding the pre-service teachers' understanding of the term "inclusive education". Table 5 summarises the responses.

Table 5

Participants' Understanding of Inclusive Education

Items	SA		A		UN		D		SD	
1. Inclusion is the process of bringing Children with Disabilities into the mainstream	126	48.3	107	40.9	14	5.4	10	3.5	4	1.5
2. Inclusion involves educating all children in regular school regardless of their disabilities	118	43.9	99	36.9	27	10.1	20	7.4	5	1.7
3. Inclusion defines the whole child on the basis of his or her impairment.	17	6.8	61	24.6	38	15.4	91	36.7	41	16.5

Source: Field Data, April, 2009

On "inclusion is the process of bringing Children with Disabilities (CWD) into the mainstream", 89.2% agreed, 5% disagreed while 5.4% were undecided. This means that majority of the participants understood inclusion to mean the process of bringing children with disabilities (CWDs) into the mainstream school. On "inclusion involves educating all children in regular school regardless of their

disabilities", 81% indicated agree, about 9% indicated disagree while 47% were undecided. However, 31.4% of the respondents defined inclusive education on the basis of a child's impairment.

This finding may imply that majority of the respondents did not have an in-depth knowledge about the meaning of inclusion and therefore thought just locating the children with SEN in the community schools implies inclusion or inclusion supports the "within-child" model. This will imply that steps should be taken to help trainee teachers understand what the concept of inclusion means. Without the knowledge, they are likely to have misconceptions about the inclusive ideology.

Considering the role of Salamanca in inclusive education, it was also important to find out if respondents knew that the Salamanca Statement is a key policy on inclusive education in relation to other international policies. Out of the 287 return rates of the questionnaire, 248 participants, however, there was no item to answer why some participants refuse to respond to the item. The summary of this analysis is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Key Document on the Principles and Practice of Inclusive Education (N-248)

Response	Number	%
1948UDHR	40	16.2
1989 UNCRC	48	19.3
1990 WDEA	38	15.3
1993 SREOPD	38	15.3
1994 Salamanca Statement	84	33.9
Total	248	100.0

Source: Field Data, April, 2009

 Key:

UNDHR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNCRC - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

WDEA   - World Declaration on Education for All

SREOPD - Standard Rules on the Equalization of the Opportunities for Persons
            with Disabilities

The findings revealed that out of 248 participants, only 33.9% indicated that Salamanca Statement remains the key international policy on inclusive education. Similarly, 16.2% indicated "1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)" while 19.2% indicated "1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)". About 15.3% indicated "1990 World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien". Another 15.3% also indicated "The 1993 Standard

Rules on the Equalization of the Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities". This means that though prospective teachers in the Colleges of Education in Ghana knew about the issues of inclusive education since they had an introduction course on it, it also appears that most of them did not know much about Salamanca Statement as a key policy in the inclusive agenda. This finding does not fully support what fobih (2008) indicated that new programmes have been introduced in the College of Education curriculum to equip the prospective teachers with needed knowledge and skills to cater for the educational needs of SEN children It implies that the course content of the pre-service teachers should include comprehensive information about Salamanca Statement.

Literature makes it clear that the Salamanca Statement is a major impetus for inclusive education. According to Stubbs (2008), inclusion was actually a strong feature of the Salamanca Statement, principles, policy and practice in Special Needs Education. In fact, it actually represents a worldwide consensus on future directions for special needs education. However, it appears that participants who probably had no idea about the role of Salamanca Statement in the whole inclusive agenda are quite significant. This implies that pre-service teachers still need more information on the role of Salamanca Statement in inclusive education. This will deepen their knowledge on inclusive education and also the role of Salamanca in inclusive agenda. Again, there is the need for the policy-makers in the country also to have sufficient knowledge about Salamanca Statement. It is expected that this will guide them to make educational policies in line with Salamanca Statement.

Research Question Two: What is the pre-service teachers' knowledge on the core issues of inclusive education?

In an attempt to finding out more on participants understanding of inclusion, responses from the participants on some items that border on some core issues of inclusion were elicited. Table 7 gives the summary of responses.

Table 7

Participants' Responses on Core Issues of Inclusion

Items	SA		A		UN		D		SD	
1. Parental involvement is essential in	123	46.1	112	41.9	18	6.7	12	4.6	2	.7
2. Inclusion is essential to human dignity	106	38.8	136	49.8	18	6.6	10	3.7	3	1.1
3. Inclusion creates enabling	84	30.9	137	50.5	29	10.7	19	7.2	2	.7
4. Inclusion recognises the fact that children have a	85	30.9	145	52.7	18	6.6	25	9.1	2	.7
5. Community participation is	70	26.5	120	45.5	34	12.9	15	5.7	25	9.4

Source: Field Data, April, 2009

Eighty-eight percent of the participants agreed that parental involvement is crucial to inclusive education while 5.3% disagreed. Those who were undecided constituted about 7% of the number of respondents. This may be a reflection that pre-service teachers had knowledge about the importance of 'parental involvement' in inclusive education. Also, 88.6% which is quite a significant number of the participants agreed that inclusion is essential to human dignity while 4.5% disagreed. Those who were undecided constituted about 7% of the number of respondents. This finding is in line with what is indicated in the literature. Booth, Ainscow and Kingston (2006) indicated that the notion of right has become of vast symbolic importance in the last and present centuries and demands for rights have been used as a rallying cry for those denied the common humanity, that all children are equally human. This finding therefore appears that pre-service teachers have acquired the knowledge that inclusion is essential to human dignity.

About eighty-one percent of the respondents agreed that inclusion creates enabling environment for children with different categories of disabilities while 9.9% disagreed. On inclusion and diversity, 83.6% agreed that inclusion recognises the fact that children have a wide diversity of characteristics while 11.8% disagreed. Also, 72% of the participants agreed that community participation is essential to inclusion while about 15% disagreed. This result actually meant that basically majority of the participants had knowledge about some core issues of inclusive education. According to Stainback and Stainback (1996), Inclusive schools believe in "All children belong". In these schools no

students, including those with disabilities, are relegated to the fringes of the school by placement in segregated wings, trailers, or special classes. Inclusive schools also believe in a sense of community, diversity is valued, resources are combined, curriculum is adapted where necessary and also support collaborating teachers. This knowledge about the nature and characteristics of inclusive schools will go a long way to help successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana.

Research Question Three: What practical experience has prospective teachers in Ghana received towards Children with Disabilities?

Besides investigating the theoretical knowledge of the participants of the study on inclusion, it was also necessary to focus on the practical aspect of the preparation which is very essential as expressed by Pearson (2005). This idea was to find out whether the mentees (participants) had any practical interaction with any category of children with disabilities (CWDs) and SEN during their teaching practice. Pearson indicated that there is a distinction between 'training about inclusion' and 'training inclusively'. That was why Booth, Nes and Sromstad (2003) suggested the development of 'Index for inclusion' for teacher education with a view to bringing about cultural changes. It is believed that actual experience in inclusive classrooms facilitates attitude change and allows teachers to move forward in accommodating and meeting the needs of all their students in inclusive setting.

Apparently, teaching practice is part of initial teacher preparation

91

programme in Ghana. This is consistent with the views of Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000), who called for early and continuous exposure of teachers to students with special educational needs, preferably in inclusive settings. They contend that practical preparation will affect teacher performance in inclusive classrooms and successful implementation of inclusion. With regards to that the researcher saw the need to find out whether participants were effectively supervised during their teaching practice particularly, where participants stayed outside school campuses and lived in various communities where their practising schools were located. Out of 287 questionnaires retrieved, 283 responded to this item. There was no item to solicit why the remaining 4 participants did not complete this item. Summary of the results on effective supervision is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Teachers' Response on Effective Supervision during Teaching Practice (N-283)

Response	Number	%
Yes	254	89.7
No	29	10.3
Total	283	100.0

Source: Field Data, April 2009

About 90% of 283 respondents indicated that they were effectively supervised during their teaching practice. About 10% also indicated that they did

92

not receive any effective supervision. This finding appears to suggest that the pre-service teachers were effectively supervised during their teaching practice. If they really were, then it implies that the teaching practice co-ordinators are really doing their work as well as the tutors of the Colleges of Education in the country in terms of teacher preparation. They should therefore be encouraged to continue the good works by being given adequate allowances and other incentives for effective supervision by the Ghana education service. This will help them improve upon this performance or maintain it.

A response on whether participants did identify children with SEN in their classrooms during teaching practice was also solicited from the participants. Out of 287 questionnaires retrieved, 282 responded to this item. Summary of these responses is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Teachers' Response on Identification of SEN Children in Class (N-282)

Response	Number	%
Yes	204	72.3
No	78	27.7
Total	282	100.0

Source: Field Data, April 2009

Out of the total respondents of 282, 72.3% indicated that they identified some pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in their classrooms during their

teaching practice. About 28% indicated that they did not identify any pupil with special educational needs in their classrooms at the time of their teaching practice. This may mean that there are lots of children with special educational needs in regular education classrooms in the country. It is not known whether these children have been identified by regular teachers in these schools and also whether their needs are being met.

According to Stakes and Hornby (2001), most pupils in mainstream schools are subject to a statement of special educational needs. This number of students with SEN varies widely from school to school. The United Kingdom Audit Report of 1992, cited in Stakes and Hornby (2001), highlighted the considerable variation between the number of students with SEN in different mainstream schools. They indicated figures reported in the Warnock 1978 Report which revealed that around 20% of pupils in schools would need, at some time during their schooling, some form of extra provision to meet their special educational needs. However, in the views of Stakes and Hornby (2001), the most important role of teachers at the primary school level is to identify children who experience difficulties at school. They added, identification of such difficulties is the vital first step to finding out whether there is a SEN or not.

Research also reveals that some pupils with physical or sensory difficulties, the nature of the problem is clearly recognisable. A difficulty with movement is an example of this, as is a child who comes to school wearing glasses or another who wears a hearing aid. However, this will not always be the case and it may not be obvious to the teacher that the child has a disability. Learning disability is

typically not as easy to recognise as physical disabilities. Often there are no outward signs to alert the teacher. This implies that with the introduction of inclusive education regular school teachers need special skills and knowledge in order to be able to identify some of these children especially those with learning disabilities so that their needs could be met.

Responses on various categories of SEN identified by participants in their classrooms during practical teaching were also elicited. Out of 287 questionnaires retrieved, 282 of the participants responded to this item. Table 10 captures the summary of the results.

Table 10

Categories of SEN Identified in Class (N-284)

SEN Categories	Number	%
Visually Impaired	66	23.2
Hearing Impaired	56	19.7
Intellectual Difficulties	86	30.3
Speech and Communication Disorders (SCD)	40	14.1
Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorders (ADHD)	19	6.7
Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD)	17	6.0
Total	284	100.0

Source: Field Data, April, 2009

Table 10 shows that, 23.2% of the respondents did indicate that they identified Visually Impaired children in their classrooms. About 20% indicated Hearing Impairment. Similarly, 30.3% indicated that they identified children with Intellectual Difficulties in their classrooms. 14.1% indicated Speech and Communication Disorders. Those who indicated Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorders (ADHD) were 6.7% while 6.0% indicated Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (EBD). This result may probably mean that children with intellectual difficulties form the majority of the categories of SEN children found in Basic schools in Ghana in accordance with the SEN categories listed in Table 11. Even though there is no existing literature to support this finding of high prevalence rate of the intellectually challenged children in regular schools in Ghana, it implies that prospective teachers in Ghana will need adequate knowledge and skills to attend to the educational needs of various categories of children with disabilities particularly those who appear to form the majority (Intellectual Difficulties) in the regular schools in the country.

It was also necessary to elicit responses on the kind of pedagogical skills employed by the participants to meet the varied educational needs of the SEN children identified. According to UNESCO, 1994, curricular should be adapted to meet children's needs. Schools should therefore provide curricular opportunities to suit children with different abilities and interest including those with disabilities. It is therefore expected that prospective teachers will be equipped with adequate skills to adapt the regular school curricular in meeting the needs of all children regardless of their disabilities. Table 11 presents the summary of this

result.

Table 11

Pedagogical Skills Employed to meet the needs of SEN Categories Identified (N-237)

Response	Number	%
1. Using instructions to explain how to perform a task.	48	16.5
2. Demonstrating the skill and having the student model it.	28	9.3
3. Provide drill activities and have the student practice it.	37	12.4
4. Giving prompts and cues during students' performances.	33	11.5
5. Provide feedback during instruction of new skills.	27	9.4
6. Provide reinforcement for correct responses.	14	4.9
7. Using task analysis.	23	7.5
8. Peer tutoring.	17	5.1
9. Changing the position of the child in class.	10	2.3

Source: Field data, April, 2009

Out of the287 questionnaires retrieved, 237 of the participants responded to this item. The questionnaire did not solicit for why the rest did not respond to the item. In analysing the responses, 16.5% indicated that they used instructions to explain how to perform a task. Again, 9.3% indicated that they demonstrated the skill and had the students model it. Furthermore, 12.4% also indicated that they provided drill activities and had the students practice it. About 11.5% indicated they gave prompts and cues during students' performances while 9.4% provided feedback during instruction of new skills. Also 4.9% of the respondents provided

97

feedback for correct responses as a pedagogical skill. On task analysis, 7.5% indicated using task analysis to meet the needs of SEN children they identified while 5.1% indicated that they used peer tutoring method. Finally, 2.3% indicated that they met the needs of SEN children identified in their classrooms by simply changing the sitting positions of the SEN children.

This finding appears that the "use of instructions to explain how to perform a task" dominated among the rest of the pedagogical skills mentioned. It may also mean that these teachers have little knowledge on the use of the other pedagogical skills. If this is true, then it will mean that pre-service teachers would need more information on the use of other kinds of teaching methods such as "task analysis" in meeting the needs of children with SEN in regular classroom.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with the summary, conclusions and the recommendations of the study:

Summary

Teacher education is a key aspect of the educational system. This therefore, suggests that teachers' knowledge and experiences including the skill to adapt the curriculum in the teaching and learning process are influential factors in the success of inclusive classrooms. On the basis of this, the researcher examined the extent to which pre-service teachers in Ghana are being prepared in terms of knowledge and experience to meet the challenges of inclusive education in the country. The main questions posed were:

1. To what extent are pre-service teachers in Ghana knowledgeable about the concept of inclusive education?

2. What is the pre-service teachers' knowledge of the core issues of inclusive education?

3. What practical experience have prospective teachers acquired in the practice of inclusive education in Ghana?

In order to answer these questions, the researcher analysed the research

data of 300 prospective teachers selected from 3 of the 38 public Colleges of Education in Ghana using frequencies and percentages.

Findings

The main findings of the study are:

Prospective teachers in the Colleges of Education in Ghana knew about the concept of inclusive education for they had an introduction course on it even though only 33.9% regarded the Salamanca Statement as a key policy in the inclusive agenda.

Most of the prospective teachers understood inclusive education to mean either the process of bringing children with disabilities (CWDs) into the mainstream school or educating all children in regular school regardless of their disabilities. However, about a quarter of the respondents defined inclusive education on the basis of a child's impairment. Most of the respondents regarded the core issues in inclusion to be parental involvement, human dignity, creation of enabling environment for all children and bearing in mind the wide diversity of children's characteristics.

The participants also had the chance to identify and interact with some pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in their classrooms during their practical teaching. Though the finding shows more than one category of SEN children were identified, majority of the participants indicated that they identified children with intellectual difficulties in their classrooms.

Additionally, It was also shown that the participants adapted the regular

school curriculum to meet the needs of the various categories of SEN children identified during their practical teaching. This was done by employing various pedagogical skills. Majority of the participants (16.5%) used instructions to explain how to perform a task. Pedagogical skills such as changing the sitting position of the child, task analysis, providing feedback during instruction of new skills, peer tutoring and providing feedback for correct responses were also employed.

Conclusions

Teachers are said to be the key to the successful implementation of an inclusive system, hence any move the country is making towards inclusive education must start with effective planning. This can be achieved through equipping pre-service teachers with adequate practical skills and knowledge to meet the needs of all children in the regular classroom including those with disabilities and special educational needs. Although the findings revealed that Colleges of Education in the country have infused special education content into teacher training programmes for general education as in Israel and in other countries reported in literature, evidence suggests that the addition of some content in a single course may not be effective. Preparation of general educators to work in inclusive settings therefore requires a more extensive infusion of special education content in the curriculum and also more intensive and varied field experiences in settings with children both with and without disabilities.

Apparently, from the number of findings listed above, the prospective

teachers in the various colleges of education in the country are being equipped in terms of knowledge and practical experience to provide the educational needs of children with SEN in regular education classroom to satisfy the demands of inclusive education.

Recommendations

The researcher hereby makes these recommendations:

1. The authorities of the Colleges of Education in collaboration with Special Education Division should ensure that students acquire an in-depth knowledge about the meaning of the concept inclusion. This recommendation is due to the result of the study which indicated that some participants had no idea about inclusive education and also where some defined inclusion on the basis of the child's impairment.

2. The findings revealed that only 33.9% of the 284 participants knew Salamanca Statement to be the key policy on inclusive education in relation to other policies on inclusion. On the basis of these findings, the researcher recommends that the Ministry of Education through the Special Education Division should ensure that all prospective teachers in the country are educated on the clauses inherent in the Salamanca Statement.

3. The Special Education Division in collaboration with Ministry of Education should ensure that trainee teachers are adequately prepared in simple approaches to identify, support and assist children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. Additionally, student-teachers

should be assisted to identify children with special educational needs (SEN) in their classrooms during their practical teaching and be able to provide the needed support to meet their needs.

4. The Universities in collaboration with Teacher Education Division of the Ministry of Education should make Special Needs Education and most importantly inclusive education core courses in the school curriculum.

Areas for Further Research

This study primarily focused on examining pre-service teacher preparation for inclusive education in Ghana. The study was limited to the students' knowledge as well as their practical experience on inclusive education. Obviously students may receive adequate and holistic preparation, however, if they are not ready to accept and teach the Children with Disabilities in a regular classroom, the purpose of inclusive education will be defeated. Teachers' readiness for inclusive education is therefore a suggested area for further research. Another area suggested for further research is the level of knowledge of tutors in Colleges of Education other than education tutors on inclusive education and other disability issues.

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Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS AT TEACHER EDUCATION
COLLEGES**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Master of philosophy student of University of Cape Coast (UCC)
researching into the topic 'Examining Pre-service Teacher Preparation for
Inclusive Education in Ghana,' with the view to examining the kind of pre-service
training offered to students at the Teacher Education Colleges in relation to
Inclusive Education. This is for academic purpose and you have been selected to
participate in it. I am not unaware of your busy schedule and yet I do believe your
contribution can assist in gathering the data for the study. It is not a test so feel
free to provide genuine responses. Thank you.

....

Isaac Opoku-Nkoom

Personal Data

Please, respond to each of the items in this section by ticking [v] in the box
provided the response that is appropriate for you.

1. Gender:

   Male [   ]   Female   [   ]

2. Age:

   18-22 [   ]   23-27 [   ]   28-32 [   ]   above 32 [   ]

B. Theoretical Knowledge

1. Have you been introduced to Special Education as part of your   education course?

        Yes [   ]   No [   ]

2. If your answer is 'yes,' how many semesters were allocated to Special Education?

One semester [   ]   Two semesters [   ]   Three semesters [   ]   Four semesters [   ]

3. Have you been introduced to inclusive education?

        Yes [   ]   No [   ]

4. What do you understand by the term ''inclusive education''? Please tick [v] in the box corresponding to the item that best suits your understanding of inclusive education.

ITEMS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I. Inclusion is the process of bringing children with disabilities into the mainstream schools.					
II. Inclusion involves educating all children in regular school regardless of their disabilities.					
III. Inclusion defines the whole child on the basis of his or her impairment and segregates them on this basis.					

Core Issues of Inclusive Education

Please tick [v] in the box corresponding to the item that best suits your understanding   of inclusive education

ISSUES	SA	A	UN	D	SD
I. Inclusion recognises the fact that children have a wide diversity of characteristics and needs.					
II. Inclusion sees the individual child as the problem and not the educational system.					
III. With inclusion schools need to accommodate all children.					
IV. Inclusion implies that children with disabilities should attend special education schools.					
V. Community participation is essential to inclusion.					
VI. Child-centred pedagogy is not central to inclusion.					
VII. Inclusion is essential to human dignity and the full enjoyment of human rights.					
VIII. Inclusive schools benefit ALL children because they help create an inclusive society.					
IX. Inclusion improves the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the education system.					
X. Parental involvement is essential in inclusive education.					
XI. The concepts 'integration' and 'inclusion' mean the same thing.					
XII. Inclusion aims at promoting discrimination and exclusionary pressures in educating children with disabilities.					
XIII. Inclusion involves creating enabling and welcoming environment**.**					
XIV. With inclusion the children in the regular schools will become aware of individual differences.					
XV. Inclusive education represents a shift from being pre-occupied with a particular group to a focus on overcoming barriers to learning and participation.					
XVI. Inclusive education simply refers to the placement of children with special needs into mainstream schools.					

5. Which of the following international documents is still the KEY document on the principles and practices of inclusive education?

1948   Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1989   UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

1990   The world declaration on education for All, Jomtien

1993   The Standard Rules on the Equalisation of the Opportunities

1994 The Salamanca and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education

C. Practical Knowledge

1. In the course of your training, did you do any form of teaching practice?

    Yes [ ]   No [ ]

2. If yes, how many semesters were allocated to the teaching practice?

    One semester [ ]   Two semesters [ ]   Three semesters [ ]   Four semesters [ ]

3. Which of the following schools were you assigned to during your teaching practice?

    Regular school [ ]   Special school [ ]

4. Were you effectively supervised?

    Yes [ ]   No [ ]

5. If you did your practical teaching in a regular school, did you identify any pupil(s) with special educational needs in your class?

    Yes [ ]   No [ ]

6. If yes, which of these categories? Please tick [v] in the boxes provided.

   [ ] visually impaired

   [ ] hearing impaired

   [ ] intellectually handicapped

   [ ] speech and communication disorders

   [ ] attention deficit hyperactive disorders

   [ ] emotional and behavioural disorders

   Others (specify)..

7. Which of the following pedagogical skills did you employ to meet the needs of the SEN categories you identified in your class? Please tick [v] as many as you employed.

   [ ] Using instructions to explain how to perform a task.

   [ ] Demonstrating the skill and having the student model it.

   [ ] Provide drill activities and have the student practice the task to a specified criterion.

   [ ] Giving prompts and cues during student performances.

   [ ] Provide feedback during instruction of new skills.

   [ ] Provide reinforcement for correct responses

   [ ] Breaking tasks into small steps and allowing adequate time for completion

   [ ] Using peer tutoring and cooperative learning within class.

   [ ] Changing the position of the child in class.

Others (specify ....

Thank you for supplying the information

APPENDIX B

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
.82	.826	20

APPENDIX C

Introductory Letter from the Head of Department