

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA:
THE CHALLENGES POSED TO THE TEACHER
OF THE CHILD WITH A HEARING LOSS**

by

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Inclusive education in South Africa: the challenges posed to the teacher of the child with a hearing loss.

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The entire context of South African education is undergoing a slow, yet definite metamorphosis, and inclusion is now nationally both a constitutional imperative and an unequivocal reality. Teachers are the key role-players in determining the quality of implementation of this new policy. They are expected to embrace the new philosophy, to think and to work in a new frame of reference. Unfortunately, too often change in education has failed because insufficient attention has been paid to the challenges posed to those who are expected to put the change into effect.

Against this background the aim of this study is to determine the challenges posed to the teacher of the child with a hearing loss in inclusive education. In order to attain this aim, the study was divided into two sections: a literature study and an empirical study.

The literature study offers a review of the development of the inclusive philosophy, with specific reference to the educational inclusion of the child with a hearing loss. The knowledge and attitude of teachers towards inclusive education as well the responsibilities of the teachers of a child with a hearing loss within the South African education system are critically discussed.

During the empirical research a descriptive design was followed comprising of questionnaire surveys followed by focus group discussions. The questionnaire surveys explored the knowledge, attitudes and training needs of 220 teachers and 81 student teachers. Focus group discussions were conducted with four parents, five speech

therapist/audiologist and four teachers (all actively involved in inclusion programmes) and these results were used to substantiate findings from the questionnaire survey.

The results of this study indicate that the teachers in regular education as well as the student teachers had sufficient knowledge about the theoretical aspects of inclusion but they lack knowledge regarding the child with a hearing loss. Aspects that were significantly related to the teachers' lack of knowledge were their unwillingness to include a child with hearing loss and to a lesser extent their years of teaching experience. It was clear that both the teachers and student teachers appear to have negative attitudes towards the inclusion of children with hearing loss. The negative attitudes of the teachers were, as in the case of knowledge, significantly related to their unwillingness to include a child with a hearing loss and their years of teaching experience, but also to their personal experience with hearing loss. The teachers and student teachers indicated specific needs in terms of further training and the content of training. A wide variety of demands that are posed to teachers with regard to the unique South African context were identified, for example lack of support, lack of training, high teacher/child ratios etc.

The implications of this study, which amongst other factors include the motivation for the promotion of educational audiology in order to support and train the teachers of children with a hearing loss in inclusive education, are discussed. The education system is challenged to address the needs of teachers in order to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education for children with hearing loss.

Key words: inclusive education, children with hearing loss, teachers of children with hearing loss, educational audiology, educational audiologist, inclusion, challenges in inclusive education, teacher training, teacher support, inclusion of the child with a hearing loss, teachers knowledge, teachers attitudes.

OPSOMMING

TITEL: Inklusiewe onderrig in Suid Afrika: die uitdagings gerig tot die onderwyser van die kind met 'n gehoorverlies.

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Die Suid Afrikaanse opvoedkundige stelsel ondergaan tans 'n stadige, tog definitiewe gedaanteverandering. Insluitende onderwys het op nasionale vlak 'n konstitusionele imperatief en 'n onomwonde werklikheid geword. Onderwysers is die sleutelrolspelers in die suksesvolle implementering van hierdie nuwe wetgewing. Daar word van hulle verwag om die nuwe filosofie te aanvaar en te funksioneer in 'n nuwe verwysingsraamwerk. Ongelukkig het die positiewe veranderinge in onderwysstelsels dikwels reeds gefaal op grond van die feit dat onvoldoende aandag geskenk is aan die uitdagings wat gerig word aan diegene wat 'n beslissende rol speel in die suksesvolle implementering van hierdie filosofie.

Teen hierdie agtergrond is die doel van die studie om te bepaal watter uitdagings aan die onderwyser van die kind met 'n gehoorverlies gerig word in insluitende onderwys in Suid Afrika. Ten einde die doel te bereik, is die studie in twee verdeel: 'n literatuurstudie en 'n empiriese studie.

Die literatuurstudie bied 'n oorsig oor die ontwikkeling van die insluitende filosofie, met spesifieke verwysing na die opvoedkundige insluiting van die kind met 'n gehoorverlies. Die kennis en houdings van onderwysers jeens insluitende onderwys asook die verantwoordelikhede van die onderwyser van die kind met 'n gehoorverlies in insluitende onderwys teen die raamwerk van die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks is krities bespreek.

Tydens die empiriese ondersoek is 'n beskrywende navorsingsontwerp gevolg wat uit 'n vraelysopname en fokusgroepbesprekings bestaan het. Die vraelysopname het die kennis, houdings en opleidingsbehoefte van 220 onderwysers en 81 onderwysstudente

bepaal. Fokusgroepbesprekings is met vier ouers, vyf spraak- en taalterapeute/oudioloë en vier onderwyser (almal aktiewe deelnemers aan insluitingsprogramme) gevoer en die resultate is gebruik om die bevindinge van die vraelysopname te bevestig.

Die resultate van die studie het getoon dat die onderwysers en onderwysstudente oor voldoende kennis rakende die teoretiese aspekte van insluitende onderwys beskik, maar nie ten opsigte van die kind met 'n gehoorverlies nie. Die onderwysers se onbereidwilligheid om 'n kind met 'n gehoorverlies in te sluit en tot 'n mindere mate hul jare onderrigervaring staan in 'n betekenisvolle verband met hierdie beperkte kennis. Die onderwysers en onderwysstudente het negatiewe houdings jeens die insluiting van die kind met 'n gehoorverlies getoon. Soos in die geval van hul kennis, is 'n betekenisvolle verband tussen die onderwysers en onderwysstudente se houdings en hul onbereidwilligheid om 'n kind met 'n gehoorverlies in te sluit verkry, asook persoonlike ervaring met gehoorverlies. Verskeie behoeftes rakende verdere opleiding en die inhoud daarvan is aangetoon. Eise wat aan die onderwyser gestel word in die unieke SA konteks is geïdentifiseer soos onvoldoende ondersteuning, onvoldoende opleiding, hoë onderwyser/kind ratio ens.

Die implikasies van hierdie studie, onder andere die bevordering van opvoedkundige oudiologie in die SA-konteks ten einde die onderwyser van die kind met 'n gehoorverlies te ondersteun en op te lei, is bespreek. Direkte uitdagings word aan die onderwysstelsel gerig ten einde die behoeftes van onderwysers aan te spreek om sodoende die suksesvolle implementering van insluitende onderwys van die kind met 'n gehoorverlies te verseker.

Sleutelwoorde: insluitende onderwys, kind met gehoorverlies, onderwysers van kinders met gehoorverlies, opvoedkundige oudiologie, opvoedkundige oudioloog, uitdagings in insluitende onderwys, onderwysopleiding, onderwyssteun, insluiting van die kind met 'n gehoorverlies, kennis van onderwyser, houdings van onderwysers.

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