Chapter 9

Universal Design for Learning:
Preparing Pre–Service Teachers for Deaf Learners in Lesotho for the Achievement of Sustainability

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lesotho, like many other countries of the Sub-Saharan Africa is working assiduously towards achieving sustainable development goals by 2030 and to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education. However, despite the efforts of the government, the education of deaf learners in the country still suffers some setbacks, partly because education of the deaf has not been given the much-needed attention by training and preparing teachers for deaf learners. While education of teachers for deaf learners is unavailable in either of the two teacher training institutions in the country, this chapter advocates for the infusion of the principles of the universal design for learning in the teacher education curriculum. This chapter therefore examines the current situation of education for the deaf in Lesotho and how existing teacher training institutions, through the proposed UDL model, can improve education provisions for deaf learners in the country. Based on the foregoing, the chapter provides implications for policy, practice, and research.

INTRODUCTION

Lesotho is an independent country landlocked only by South Africa (See Figure 1). The population of the country is about 2.5 million (Ralejoe, 2021). Like many other sectors in Lesotho, education in the country has gone through various distinctive phases, particularly in the post-colonial era. In the last decades, various educational reforms have been undertaken by the government in an attempt to address the challenges observed in the past curricula (Chere-Masopha et al., 2021).

Figure 1. Lesotho, enveloped only by South Africa
(Source: BBC, 2020)

Specifically, the reforms instituted have led to a series of developments that inform the emergence of a new curriculum, especially in basic and secondary education, to address the socio-economic needs of citizens in line with the realities of the present day. Notable among the various educational reforms in Lesotho is that the education of persons with disabilities has undergone a metamorphosis, even going so far as to adopt the Salamanca Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994), with adoption and appreciation of the philosophies of inclusive education (Adigun, 2021).

Inclusive education is a broad concept that is based on the principles of equality, human rights, and social and epistemic justice. In other words, inclusive education is an act or practice that ensures non-discrimination of persons with special needs in any form or disguise (Adigun, 2021). This implies that the practice of inclusive

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