Chapter 1
Pre–Service Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Teaching in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive teaching should seek to promote teacher adaptation of their attitudes, teaching methods, and assessment approaches to respond to the needs of all their students in the classroom. Teacher support may ensure the success of all students in their learning process. Therefore, pre-service teacher training should ensure the enhancement of pre-service teacher skills such that pre-service teachers are able to deal with barriers to learning and support vulnerable students such as those with special educational needs and disability. This chapter gives an overview of teacher education in Africa and South Africa, conceptualises pre-service teacher preparation for inclusion, discusses various approaches used to prepare pre-service teachers. The challenges of pre-service teacher transition to inclusive teaching are highlighted. The role of the practicum in relation to teacher preparation for inclusive teaching is illuminated. Based on the critical analysis of the literature, lessons are drawn regarding pre-service teacher preparation and recommendations are made.

INTRODUCTION

United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) has continually agitated member states to consider the extent to which their education systems are inclusive and cater for the needs of all children and learners (UNESCO, 2019, 2015, 2009, 1994). In article 7 of the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, UNESCO emphasises that "Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all" (UNESCO, 2015). As a signatory to all UN agreements, South Africa has put a concerted effort into developing policies and guidelines towards creating education that aim to eradicate exclusion in its multiple expressions. The many expressions of exclusion imply that it is not good enough to facilitate physical access into classroom if is not buttressed by quality teaching-learning practices (UNESCO, 2009).

In response to the UN mandate on Education for All, South Africa has developed a series of policies that emphasise principles of inclusive, equitable and quality as education for all. Through one of these policies, Education White Paper 6 (2001), the teacher training institutions incorporate inclusive education courses in their teacher education curriculum. The adoption of inclusive education philosophy in the South African schooling system has increased the need to prepare pre-service teachers adequately for inclusive teaching. However, pre-service teacher preparation is important, as Pasha et al (2018) postulate inclusion in schools does not necessarily result in inclusive learning. Furthermore, poor quality of teacher training has been cited as one of the main barriers to inclusion (Walton & Engelbrecht, 2022). In realisation of this status of affairs, a number of interventions have been developed. In 2017 British Council, Department of Basic Education (DBE), Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), University of South Africa (UNISA) and MIET Africa initiated an inclusive education programme called Teaching for All (T4All) in which they were later joined by other ten universities in South Africa. T4All produced a curriculum intended to provide student teachers with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to teach inclusively in diverse classrooms in diverse communities, thus contributing to a prevention and reduction of children being excluded from education (British Council South Africa, 2022; Mosito, Dysel & Nissen, 2022).

Inclusive teaching should seek to promote teacher adaptation of their attitudes, teaching methods and assessment approaches to respond to the needs of all their learners in the classroom (UNESCO, 2019). Learning support, and by extension support of teachers, may ensure the success of all learners in their learning process. Therefore, pre-service teacher training should ensure the enhancement of pre-service

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