

Inclusive Education Setting in Southwestern Nigeria: Myth or Reality?

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Abstract

Inclusion can be interpreted as the philosophy and practice for educating students with disabilities in general education settings. Researches from developed and developing countries found that there were problems affecting the inclusive education in Nigeria. Hence, there is need to determine the challenges facing the schools where inclusive education is being implemented, and what could be done to improve the programme. This study identified the facilities that were available to students with special educational needs in mainstreamed public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria; it investigated the difference in the attitude of special and regular teachers to students with special educational needs in integrated public secondary schools; it determined the influence of types of exceptionality in the self-perception of students with special needs; and also examined the difference between the academic performance of male and female students with special educational needs. The results showed that essential facilities and materials like hand railings, hearing aids, Braille, instructional materials, and lower toilets were not available, although the few that were available (typewriters, resource rooms, wheel chairs) were in poor condition. The difference between the attitude of special and regular teachers to students with special educational needs was significant with a t-test value of 1.91 ($P < 0.05$). The influence of students with special educational needs exceptionality types in their self-perception was significant with a Chi-square analysis of 39.75 ($P < 0.05$). However, the difference between the academic performance of male and female students with special educational needs was not significant with a t-test value of 1.19 ($P > 0.05$). The study concluded that inclusive education was a reality in Nigeria because it became an educational policy since 1977 that all the states should have inclusive schools for students with special educational needs; and this has been in operation in Nigeria (National Policy of Education, 1997). Nevertheless, students with special educational needs were yet to be fully integrated into regular classroom setting. This was due to problems affecting inclusion; which could negatively affect their social and academic performance. The school curriculum should be modified to meet specific needs and purpose of educating students with special educational needs. Efforts should be made by government and other stakeholders of education to frequently expose teachers in mainstreamed setting to workshop and seminars on education of students with special educational needs.

Keywords: Inclusive education; integrated schools; mainstreamed schools; students with disabilities; students with special educational needs; inclusion..

Introduction

Children are gifts from God and they are unique, different from one another physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Most children can learn in regular classes without the need for special service teachers. There is, however, a group of individuals in our communities and schools, whose conditions of life are at the extreme that they find it difficult to benefit from the general regular educational programme, and therefore require special education programmes to cope with circumstances of life. In literature, such individuals are referred to as children with special educational needs. According to Vendan and Peter (2004), children with special educational needs are exceptional children or differently challenged, who might be physically, socially or intellectually different, either below or above average, who require individually planned and systematically monitored arrangements of physical settings.

Olukotun (2004) stated that the education of children with special educational needs started with segregation, however; segregation system has its disadvantages, because it fails to recognize the fact that children with special educational needs are part of the community and the society at large. This implies that segregation places more restriction and social handicap on the social needs of youths and adults in their later years. The goal of education is to introduce measures that would benefit the child maximally in the learning environment. The nature of students with special educational needs precludes access to learning conditions; it becomes imperative to design alternative strategies for assisting students with special educational needs. One such strategy is mainstreaming which is an educational arrangement that brings both students with special educational needs and regular students together under one learning environment. By this school programme, students with special educational needs lived with their parents or guardians and attend school in the neighbourhood.

Inclusion or inclusive education can be interpreted as the philosophy and practice for educating students with disabilities in general education settings (Bryant, Smith, & Bryant, 2008; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997;

Salend, 2001). Inclusive refers to the “full-time placement of children with mild, moderate and severe disabilities in regular classrooms”. According to Garuba (2003), inclusion is a step further in mainstreaming, as it presents a means “by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals, by reconsidering and structuring its curricular organization and provision, and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity. Smith (2007) defined inclusion as the commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent appropriate; in the school and classroom he/she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the ancillary services to the child, and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students). This is salient aspect of inclusion, and requires a commitment to move essential resources to the child with a disability rather than placing the child in an isolated setting where services are located. Ajuwon (2008) opined that for the child with a disability to benefit optimally from inclusion, it is imperative for general education teachers to be able to teach a wider array of children, including those with varying disabilities and to collaborate and plan effectively with special education.

Since the launching of the first National Policy on Education (1977) by the federal government of Nigeria, there has been a plethora of activities aimed at improving special education services for children, including: the establishment of additional residential primary schools for children with disabilities in most states of the federation, the increased attendance of students with disabilities in secondary and higher institutions, and the preparation of special education teachers in select tertiary institutions in the country. There has also been a rise in the number of advocacy organizations of and for people with disabilities. These initiatives have however been met with mixed outcomes, with dually-trained special educators (i.e. those holding certification in an area of special education and a subject-matter discipline) not properly deployed to work with students with disabilities. Other persistent problems over the years include: lack of up-to-date teaching devices, and organizational and leadership crises that have militated against reform of the special education sector.

Interestingly enough, Section 7 of the revised National Policy on Education (2008) explicitly recognizes that children and youth with special needs shall be provided with inclusive education services. The commitment is made to equalize educational opportunities for all children, irrespective of their physical, sensory, mental, psychological or emotional disabilities. Undoubtedly, these are lofty goals intended to improve the quality of special education services, but much more is needed to translate the goals into concrete action. However, inclusive education has not been without its attendant problems. Fabunmi (1997) found that educational facilities were differently allocated across secondary schools in Edo State. Nwazuoke (2000) and Mittler, (2000) observed that many teachers who were in inclusive schools appeared to know little or nothing with children with special needs. Bevan-Brown (2000) reported that she had “a whole truck load” of stories about poor attitude and expectations of teachers to students with disabilities. She found that many teachers demonstrated negative attitude to students with special educational needs in secondary schools. Sadly, this situation negatively affected the education and performance of children with special needs. This was also found to affect these learners’ self-esteem.

As cited above, researches from developed and developing countries found that there were problems affecting the inclusive education in Nigeria. There is need to determine the challenges facing the schools where inclusive education is being implemented, and what could be done to improve the programme. To achieve this purpose, one research question and three research hypotheses were postulated and tested.

Research Question

What are the facilities that are available to students with special educational needs in mainstreamed public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of special and regular teachers to students with special educational needs in integrated public secondary schools.
2. Types of exceptionality do not significantly influence the self-perception of students with special educational needs.

Methodology

The population for this study comprised 1,371 students with special educational needs, 53,789 regular students and 2,701 teachers in the 35 public secondary schools where mainstreaming of students with special educational needs is being implemented in Southwestern Nigeria. Five out of the six (Ogun, Oyo, Lagos, Ondo and Ekiti) States in Southwestern Nigeria were selected for the study with the exception of Osun State, which was used for test of reliability. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 out of the 35 mainstreamed public secondary schools, based on the number of students with special educational needs in the schools. From the selected schools, the 910 students with special educational needs and 200 teachers were selected for the study. Two hundred teachers were selected by stratified sampling technique. From each school, 15 regular teachers and

5 special teachers teaching Junior School 1-Senior School 2 were selected by simple random sampling technique. The total number of teachers from each school was 12 females and 8 males. The reason for selecting greater number of female teachers than male counterparts was due to the fact that female teachers' population in schools was more than male. Purposive sampling technique was used to administer questionnaires to all the 910 students with special educational needs in the ten mainstreamed public school selected for the study. The reason was the small number of students with special educational needs in schools.

Four research instruments named Self Perception of Students with Special Educational Needs (SPSSEN),; Teachers Attitude to Students with Special Educational Needs (TASSEN); School Observation Checklist(SOC); and Examination Record (ER) were used for the study.

Research Instruments

i. Teachers' Attitude to Students with Special Educational Needs (TASSEN)

Teachers' Attitude to Students with Special Educational Needs (TASSEN) was a primary data designed to measure the attitude of teachers to students with special educational needs. It was a self-developed instrument. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A was designed to elicit information on personal details like sex, name of school, state, class taught and qualification. Section B of the instrument consisted of 20 question items, which was designed to elicit information on attitude of teachers to students with special educational needs. Each of the items was on a five point Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Undecided. The instrument was scored 0 for "Undecided"; 1 for "Strongly Disagree"; 2 for "Disagree"; 3 for "Agree" and 4 for "Strongly Agree". With this procedure, the minimum and maximum scores obtainable were 0 and 80 respectively in Section B

Teachers Attitude to Students with Special Educational Needs Questionnaire (TASSEN)

NO	ITEMS	A	B	C	D	E
1.	I like helping students with special needs when there is need.					
2.	I love teaching students with special needs though it demands extra effort.					
3.	I don't like calling children with special needs bad names (labeling)					
4.	Problems and new challenges of teaching children with special needs are often sources of excitement and inspiration to me.					
5.	I feel depressed when I see parents neglecting their wards due to their disabilities.					
6.	I like teaching children with special needs if necessary support and educational resources are available.					
7.	I feel reluctant to teach children with special needs due to my lack of knowledge about them.					
8.	I prefer talking to children with special needs at a distance so that I'm not affected by their conditions.					
9.	I don't understand why I don't always call on special needs children to answer questions in the classroom.					
10.	My morale is usually higher to teach children with special needs after a refresher course.					
11.	I feel that working with students with special needs is not gratifying as working with regular students.					
12.	I would rather prefer teaching in public secondary schools to mainstreamed schools.					
13.	I feel children with special needs cannot cope academically in mainstreamed schools.					
14.	I feel I cannot convince regular students to interact with students with special needs.					
15.	I love to continue teaching in mainstreamed school if my wages is regularly increased.					
16.	Having students with special needs is a punishment from God.					
17.	Students with special need always cause set backs to regular students in class. I don't think this programme would work.					
18.	Students with special needs demonstrate disruptive behaviour, so; I am always tough with them.					
19.	Students with special needs are not tolerant at all. I always ignore them when they bombard me with complaints.					
20.	Students with special needs do pretend a lot, in that they use their disabilities to dodge responsibilities.					

ii. Self- Perception of Students with Special Educational Needs (SPSSEN)

Self-Perception of Students with Special Educational Needs (SPSSEN) was designed by the researcher to

measure the self perception of students with special educational needs. This questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A elicited information on such personal details like sex, age, name of school, class, state, types of exceptionality, and other personal information that were relevant to the testing of the hypotheses. Section B of the instrument consisted of 20 question items which was designed to elicit information on self perception of students with educational special needs. The respondents were required to respond to each of the item of “SPSSN” on a five point Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Undecided. The instrument was scored 0 for “Undecided”, 1 “Strongly Disagree”, 2 for “Disagree”, 3 for “Agree”, and 4 for “Strongly Agree”. With this procedure, the minimum and maximum scores obtainable was 0 and 80 respectively in Section B.

Self-Perception of Students with Special Educational Needs Questionnaire (SPSSEN)

NO	ITEMS	A	B	C	D	E
1	I have a number of good qualities					
2	I am secured with my mates					
3	I don't know the essence of coming to school, since there will be no job for me after my education.					
4	I am ashamed to move around with regular students.					
5	I keep quiet when other students are discussing.					
6	I cannot compete academically with regular students.					
7	I am unhappy about my disability.					
8	My education will not be limited to secondary school alone.					
9	No matter the amount of frustration and discouragement I receive from others, I have to go forward.					
10	I will make it in life because others have made it.					
11	I am always happy that God has granted me the privilege to attend school					
12	The love that I receive from teacher and regular students is what is motivating me to come to school.					
13	The label I am attached with is always giving me a setback.					
14	My disability does not make me handicapped because I can do what regular peers are doing successfully.					
15	I have got my mind made up to succeed academically.					
16	Why should people be laughing at me, I don't think anyone is perfect.					
17	The school life is so boring to me, how I wish I could just stay at home.					
18	I don't like coming to school, my parents are the ones forcing it on me.					
19	I always regret being part of my family.					
20	I can't recognize any good thing in me					

iii. School Observation Checklist (SOC)

School Observation Checklist (SOC) was used to determine the conditions of facilities, equipment and learning environment in the selected schools. The instrument consisted of 10 facilities, and the researcher rated each item on the checklist on a five point Likert-type scale ranging from Very Good to Very Poor. The checklist was scored 1 for “Very Poor”; 2 for “Poor”; 3 for “Fair”; 4 for “Good”; and 5 for “Very Good”. With this procedure, the minimum and maximum scores obtainable were 10 or 50 respectively.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Validity

The validity of the two out of four instruments used in this study was thus described. The content and face validity of two instruments: Teachers Attitude to Students with Special Educational Needs “TASSEN” and Self Perception of Students with Special Educational Needs “SPSSEN”; were carried out by two experts in Test and Measurement, an expert in Psychology of Education; and an expert in Guidance and Counselling. Appropriate suggestions were made to improve the quality of the questionnaire by deleting the inappropriate question items, and by modifying some.

Reliability

The researcher used test-retest reliability method to determine the reliability -of the instruments. The retest was carried out three weeks after the first test. On each of the two instruments (Self Perception of Students Special Needs “SPSSEN” and Teachers Attitude to Students with Special Educational Needs “TASSEN” questionnaires

were administered on 30 students. The schools used for the test-retest reliability were: The Apostolic Grammar School, Modakeke-Ife with 30 copies of the questionnaires to 30 students. Seventh Day Adventist Grammar School, Ile-Ife with 30 copies of the questionnaires to 30 students, and Oduduwa College, Ile-Ife with 30 copies of the questionnaires to 30 students in Ife East and Central Local Government Areas of Osun State. The test-retest on "TASSEN" yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.82 while the test-retest on "SPSSEN" yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.84. Therefore, the questionnaires were deemed fit and reliable for the study.

Results

The results of the analyses are presented as follows:

Research Question: What are the facilities that are available to students with special educational needs in mainstreamed public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria? To answer the question, some available facilities were extracted from the data collected on "School Observation Checklist". The data are subjected to percentage analysis. The results are presented in Table 1

Table 1: Facilities Available for Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstreamed Public Secondary Schools in the Five States

Facilities	I		II		III		IV		V		All States	
	N=50	%	N=50	%	N=50	%	N=50	%	N=50	%	N=50	%
Hearing aids	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
School bus	35	70%	0	0.0 %	40	80%	45	90%	0	0.0 %	120	48%
Resource room	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	30	60%	20	40%	0	0.0 %	60	24%
Play ground	50	100%	20	40%	45	90%	50	100%	40	80%	205	82%
Instructional materials	0	0.0%	0	0.0 %	20	40%	20	40%	0	0.0 %	40	16%
Wheel chair	30	60%	0	0.0 %	20	40%	0	0.0 %	40	80%	90	36%
Lower toilets	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Walking stick	30	60%	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	30	12 %
Braille	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Type-writer	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	30	60 %	0	0.0 %	25	50%	85	34%
Special teachers	20	40%	15	30%	40	80%	30	60%	30	60%	135	54%
Counselling office	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	20	40%	20	40%	15	30%	55	22%
Building layout	25	50%	30	60%	40	80%	50	100%	35	70%	180	72%
Clear floor space	35	70%	30	60 %	42	84%	48	96%	38	76%	193	77.2%
Wider doors and corridors	32	64 %	35	70%	45	90%	47	94%	34	68%	196	78.4%

Key:-

N = Number of Scores

State I = Ekiti State

State II = Lagos State

State III = Ogun State

State IV = Ondo State

State V = Oyo State

From Table 1, the data indicated the conditions of the facilities available in each of the schools. Playground scored 50 (100%), school bus scored 35 (70%), wheel chair scored 30 (60%), special teachers scored 20 (40%), building layout scored 25 (50%), clear floor space scored 35 (70%) and wider doors and corridors scored 32 (64%). In State I, the materials and facilities that were not available include a counselling office, resource rooms, lower toilets, hearing aids, instructional materials, Braille typewriters and special textbooks.

In State II, the available facilities were playground, which scored 20 (40%), special teachers, 15 (30%), building layout, 30 (60%), clear floor space, 30 (60%) and wider doors 35 (70%). The materials and facilities not available in this state were a counselling office, resource room, lower toilets, hearing aids, instructional materials and special textbooks.

In State III, the available materials and facilities were school bus, which scored 40 (80%), instructional materials, 20 (40%), wheel chair, 20 (40%), typewriter, 30 (60%), special teachers, 40 (80%), resource room, 30 (60%), playground, 45 (90%), clear floor space, 42 (84%), while wider doors and corridors scored 45 (90%). The items and facilities not available in State III were hearing aids, walking stick, lower toilets, Braille and special textbooks.

In State IV, the available materials and facilities were school bus, which scored 45 (90%), resource room, 20 (40%), playground, 50 (100%), instructional materials, 20 (40%), special teachers, 30 (60%), a

counselling office, 20 (40%), building layout, 50 (100%), clear floor space, 48 (96%) and wider doors and corridors, 47 (94%); but hearing aids, special textbooks and lower toilets were not available.

In State V, the available materials and facilities were wheel chair, which scored 40 (80%), typewriter, 25 (50%), special teachers, 30 (60%), playground, 40 (80%), a counselling office, 15 (30%), building layout, 35 (70%), clear floor space, 38 (76%) and wider doors and corridors, 34 (68%). Also in State V, hearing aids, walking stick, Braille and special textbooks, instructional materials, school bus, resource room and lower toilets were not available. in the five States.

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the attitude of special and regular teachers to students with special educational needs. To Test this hypothesis, data collected on special and regular teachers to students with special educational needs were

subjected to t-test analysis. The results are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Difference between the Attitude of Special and Regular Teachers to Students with Special Educational Needs.

Categories of teachers	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	P
Special teachers attitude	46	60.09	11.17	188	1.91	<.05
Regular teachers attitude	144	56.51	10.99			

* Significant (P< 0.05)

From Table 2, two hundred copies of the questionnaires were administered to special teachers and regular teachers. One hundred and ninety copies were collected. The mean of special teachers' attitude to students with special educational needs was 60.09, while the mean of regular teachers' attitude to students with special educational needs was 56.51. The difference between the attitude of special and regular teachers to students with special educational needs was found to be significant with a t-test value of 1.91 (P<0.05).

Research Hypothesis 2: Types of exceptionality do not significantly influence the self-perception of students with special educational needs. To test this hypothesis, data collected on types of exceptionality and self perceptions of students with special educational needs were subjected to chi-square analysis. The results are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Influence of Types of Exceptionality in Self Perception of Students with Special Educational Needs

Types of Exceptionality	Positive Self Perception	Negative Self Perception	χ^2	df	P
Count	351	322	39.75	2	<.05
Hearing impaired	52.2%	47.8%			
Count	41	8			
Physical impaired	83.7%	16.3%			
Count	51	9			
Visually impaired	85.0%	15.0%			
Count	443	339			
Total	56.6%	43.4%			

*Significant (P < 0.05)

From Table 3, three hundred and fifty one (52.2%) hearing impaired students were with positive self-perception, while three hundred and twenty two (47.8%) hearing impaired students were of negative self-perception. Forty one (83.7%) physically impaired students were of positive self-perception, while eight (16.3%) physically impaired students were of negative self-perception. Fifty one (85.0%) visually impaired students were of positive self-perception, while nine (15.0%) visually impaired students were of negative self-perception. Four hundred and forty three (56.6%) students with special educational needs were of positive self-perception, while three hundred and thirty nine (43.4%) students with special educational needs were of negative self-perception. Attempt was also made to determine the influence of students with special educational needs exceptionality types in their self-perception. Chi-square analysis was used. The result of the chi-square yielded 39.75, which was significant at 0 .05.

Discussion

The findings of the research question on available facilities in mainstreamed public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria, showed that there were unavailability of essential facilities and materials like hand railings, hearing aids, instructional materials, Braille and lower toilets, while the few materials and facilities (type writer, resource rooms, textbooks) available were in poor condition. This finding showed that lack of adequate facilities and materials were obstacles to effective learning. This finding supported the findings of Ohuche (1978), and Ale (1989) which showed that poor facilities, equipment and instructional materials were adduced for poor academic performance of students. The finding also corroborated the evidence of Anumonye, 1991, Fabunmi (2000); and Nwazuo (2000), that mainstreaming of students with special educational needs

into public secondary schools in Nigeria was faced with the problems of lack of relevant facilities and materials.

Another major finding showed that there was a significant difference between the attitude of special teachers and regular teachers to students with special to needs. The difference in the attitude of the two categories of teachers might be due to the training and exposure to special education courses, which enabled the special teachers to develop more positive attitude to students with special educational needs. This study was in line with Okeke (2000); Fakolade, Adeniyi & Tella (2009) who observed those special teachers' exposures to special education courses enable them in identification and management of students with special educational needs. However, safer and Agard (1975) findings showed that the training programme did not influence the attitudes of teachers toward students with special educational needs.

Another major finding of this study showed that types of exceptionality had a significance influence on the self perception of students with special educational needs. The positive self perception of visually impaired students was the highest (85.0%), while their negative self perception was 15%. The physically impaired students were the second on the list with 83.7% positive self perception, while their negative self perception was 16.3%. Hearing impaired students had the least positive self perception of 52.2% while their negative self perception was 47.8 %. This finding showed that students with special educational needs had positive self perception of themselves. The positive self perception would make students with special educational needs to socially accept themselves that they were able to do effectively what other peers could do successfully. They had the right to live normal lives like other human being, even though their conditions bring about some limitations and difficulties. This finding was contrary to Johnson and Morasky (1980). Who remarked that working with students with special educational needs demands that one should know that these individuals are often susceptible to low self-confidence, loss of self esteem, high frustration level, anxiety, depression and despair.

Conclusion

The study concluded that inclusive education was a reality in Nigeria because it became an educational policy that all the states should have inclusive schools for students with special educational needs, and this has been in operation in all the 36 states in Nigeria. Nevertheless, students with special educational needs were yet to be fully integrated into regular classroom setting due to problems affecting inclusion..

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for the government, the counsellors, the psychologists, the teachers, and other stakeholders. It is obvious that education is capital intensive, but educating the students with special educational needs is more capital intensive. The government should fund education, while mainstreamed schools should be "specially funded". Adequate funding would help to overcome the problem of provision and maintenance of special equipment and materials for the use of students with special educational needs.

Counselling services for students with special educational needs is a necessary service that should be rendered by counsellors, psychologists and special teachers working with students with special educational needs in mainstreamed public school system. In the light of the fore going considerations, it is recommended to all school system to initiate seminars, workshops and conferences for parents of students with special educational needs; so that awareness could be brought about on needs of families.

Most mainstreamed schools lack resource room services. This is a room specially equipped with modern teaching equipment and materials that one or more specialist teachers can use to offer assistance to students with special educational needs who require help in the respective subjects. A resource room should be established and equipped with modern teaching equipment. A specialist teacher should be made available to assist the classroom teacher in protecting the interest of the students with special educational needs in mainstreamed school.

Efforts should be made by government and other stakeholders of education to frequently expose teachers in mainstreamed setting to workshop and seminars on education of students with special educational needs.

Government should provide incentives, promotions, and regular payments of salaries to teachers in mainstreamed public secondary schools in order to enhance quality teaching, and positive attitude to implementation of mainstreaming of students with special educational needs in public school system.

The school curriculum should be modified to meet specific needs and purpose of educating students with special educational needs. The regular school curriculum cannot be followed in working with students with special educational needs. There must be a special curriculum, specifically designed by educators to meet the need of these students with special educational needs. It is then and only then that we can meaningfully measure their capabilities and achievements.

Counselling rooms/offices should be created by the school authorities, where effective counselling services should be handled by well trained and qualified counsellors.

Nigerians must do away with the cultural beliefs that do not allow them to readily accept these children, their acceptance would foster good social integration of able-bodied and children with special needs.
Large classes should be discouraged, as this would not allow for individual attention by the teachers.

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