

## Quality Art and Design Education among Physically Challenged Ordinary Level Learners at a Special Education Secondary School in Zimbabwe

\*Zibulo Sibanda<sup>1</sup> and Lwazi Sibanda<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Art, Design and Technology Education

<sup>2</sup>Department of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education

<sup>1,2</sup> National University of Science and Technology, Cnr Gwanda Road/Cecil Avenue,  
P O Box AC939, Ascot,  
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Email: [\\*zibulo.sibanda@nust.ac.zw](mailto:*zibulo.sibanda@nust.ac.zw) ; [lwazi.sibanda@nust.ac.zw](mailto:lwazi.sibanda@nust.ac.zw)

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**ABSTRACT:** *The twenty-first century Art and Design education for learners with disabilities has to swivel from just being a psychomotor remedy to assessable and skills oriented subject in special schools. This change is in sync with many educationists who view quality Art and Design education as a platform for helping learners to fully develop, including those with disabilities. Through quality Art and Design education, learners with disabilities are not only uplifted educationally but also socially, psychologically, intellectually and physically. Hence, this study assessed the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners in a Bulawayo Central District school in Zimbabwe. Interpretivist paradigm, qualitative approach and case study design were adopted. Thematically analysed data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. Purposively chosen sample comprised sixteen physically challenged Ordinary Level Art and Design learners, two Art and Design teachers, two school administrators, one subject inspector, one physio-occupational therapist and three School Development Committee members. Findings reveal that active learning methodologies, low teacher-learner ratio, assessment practices and adaptable environment enhanced quality Art and Design education to physically challenged learners at the school understudy. However, inadequacy of assistive devices, human and instructional resources, and lack of support from other stakeholders compromised the quality of Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners at the school. The study concluded that though the selected school encountered some constraints in providing quality Art and Design education to physically challenged learners there were noticeable good practices adopted.*

**KEYWORDS:** quality Art and Design education; physically challenged learners; special education school; inclusive education

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Learners with disabilities experience inequalities in their daily lives, and have fewer opportunities to access quality form of education (UNESCO, 2015). These learners require support at certain times or in certain areas of their life; usually informally or through educational and social services dimensions (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013). Lack of such support results in their under-education, least training, poverty and even high unemployment rates (UNESCO, 2015). Schools are expected to observe the right of learners to afford them an education that develops their individual abilities to the utmost degree or highest magnitude (Krstić, 2017). Physically challenged learners need to be afforded quality education with particular mention to Art and Design. Numerous studies reveal that learners who are physically challenged face infinite difficulties in learning and performing tasks in the work environment after leaving school, and more prone are those involved in technical subjects like Art and Design (The International Labour Organization (ILO), 2008; Mgonela, 2010; Reilly, 2003). It is therefore critical to interrogate how the selected special education secondary school in Bulawayo Central District provides quality Art and Design education to physically challenged Ordinary Level learners.

## **Background**

The world has adopted policies of inclusive education through the provisions of various global declarations which include the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989), Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development (United Nations, 1995) and the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000). This mandates that every child should attend school without any barriers and learn the subject of their choice (Marist International Solidarity Foundation, 2011). Through the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO,1994), schools should accommodate all learners regardless of their individual differences or capabilities, thus, to enhance quality education (Booth, Ainscow, Nes & Strømstad, 2001). Under the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development (CDSD) of 1995 (United Nations, 1995) societies are mandated to acknowledge and respond to disability consequences through securing individual legal rights and making sure that the social, learning and physical environments are accessible to all (Malone, 2006). The Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000) commits governments to achieving equal basic education for all, thus, providing good foundation for quality Art and Design education to physically challenged learners (Save the Children, 2010).

In the United States of America, learners with disabilities have equal access to the same quality Art and Design educational opportunities like their peers (Hossain, 2012). Mader (2017) states that there is need for Art and Design teachers to have knowledge and ability to teach special education learners. Mader adds that it has been observed

that no one explicitly shows teachers how to teach learners with diverse needs. Teacher-preparation programmes are trying to better prepare graduates to teach learners with physical disabilities, especially in inclusion classrooms. United Kingdom (UK) aims to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs in special schools, in units or resourced provision attached to mainstream schools (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017). Under the UK Education Act 2002 (as cited in European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017), all learners at state-funded schools have a right to access a broad and balanced curriculum and special schools are required to deliver the national curriculum, which is sufficiently flexible to accommodate different paces and styles of learning. Timetables can also be adjusted under the Equality Act (2010) to allow for the provision of quality Art and Design education to physical challenged learners (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017).

African countries like Republic of South Africa, Tanzania and Kenya offer quality Art and Design education in their education systems including physically challenged learners (Mariga, McConkey & Myezwa, 2014). Tanzania Development Vision 2025 focuses on building a nation with high quality of education at all levels promoting creativity and problem solving as a means towards the utilisation of science and technology in all life of work even among the physically challenged learners (Tanzania Institute of Education, 2013). Positive as it is, there is no formal education for technical subjects such as Fashion and Fabrics and Art and Design for the physically challenged learners and this limits creative thinking and analysis of many issues (Sinha, Cockcroft & Carr, 2008). Furthermore, wherever Art and Design is offered it is just an optional subject with very limited study time of only two periods a week for providing menial skills (Tanzania Institute of Education, 2013).

Kenya has shown keen interest in the provision of quality Art and Design education to physically challenged learners. Art and Design is in group four made up technical subjects (home science, art and design, agriculture, woodwork, metalwork, etc.) of the country's secondary education (UNESCO, 2015). The most conscious effort by the Kenyan Government towards provision of education to learners with disabilities is the formulation of the National Special Needs Education Policy in 2009 (National Gender and Equality Commission, 2016). The country's special needs education in Art and Design is provided in special schools, integrated units and in inclusive settings in regular schools even though with low enrolments of learners with disabilities in schools (National Gender and Equality Commission, 2016). Furthermore, National Gender and Equality Commission (2016) shows that physically challenged Art and Design learners are subjected to the same examinations as regular learners although with extra time allowed during examinations but inadequate to compensate for the slower pace of learners with disabilities. The teachers on special needs education are educated at Kenya Institute of Special Education to upgrade their professional skills (National Gender and Equality Commission, 2016).

The Government of South Africa (1996) in the South African Schools Act states that where reasonably practicable, the State must provide education for learners with special needs at ordinary public schools, and provide relevant educational support services for such learners. The country has also adopted the policy of quality Art and Design education in an effort to address learning barriers in its education system especially to physically challenged learners (Dalton, McKenzie & Kahonde, 2012). South African education department has devised a policy on National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (Department of Education, 2008). Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support document provides a strategic policy framework for screening, identifying, assessing and supporting all learners who experience barriers to learning and development within the education system, including those who are currently enrolled in special schools studying subjects like Art and Design (Department of Education, 2014).

In Zimbabwe every child has the right to attend school nearest to their home which is in line with the Four-As, Available, Accessible, Acceptable, and Adaptable, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (Mapuva & Mapuva 2014). According to the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Report of July 2015, physically challenged learners perform poorly in schools especially in technical or vocational subjects such as Art and Design. Mamvuto (2004) has showed great concern over the Art and Design teacher education for secondary school teachers and how this education affects quality in the teaching of the subject, and this includes physically challenged learners. Mamvuto's study showed that poorly trained teachers lead to poor quality Art and Design teaching practice thus lowering learner performance. The physically challenged learners who learn the subject are poorly performing and manifest low quality results due to unclear reasons (Mandipa & Manyatera, 2014). Nyagura (2014) says learners with disabilities should be given an enabling environment in examinations in order for them to excel, as pass rates for these learners are still low, especially, in technical subjects like Art and Design.

It has been documented that physically challenged learners produce low results in Art and Design subject due to several factors (Ali, Haider, Munir, Khan, & Ahmed, 2013; Rao, 2005; Habib, Shah, & Khawaja, 2004). Nyakudya (2017) laments that there is low quality Art and Design education in secondary schools. Although MoPSE and other stakeholders have made efforts to provide guiding policies, it is not clear how the guidelines are implemented in special education secondary schools in terms of providing quality Art and Design education among physically challenged learners. It is, therefore, against this background that this study intended to assess the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners at a special education secondary school in Bulawayo Central District of Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. The research questions that guided the study are as follows:

1. What are the factors that enhance the provision of quality Art and Design education to physically challenged Ordinary Level learners in Bulawayo Central District Special Education Secondary School?

2. What are the challenges encountered by Bulawayo Central District Special Education Secondary School in providing quality Art and Design education to physically challenged Ordinary Level learners?

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study employed the interpretivist paradigm as it does not only look for the presence or absence of a causal relationship, but also the specific ways in which it is manifested and the context in which it occurs (Chowdhury, 2014; Creswell, 2017; Phelps, & Maddison, 2008; Simsek, 2012). The qualitative research approach adopted in this study helped the researchers to acquire in-depth information from the participants, in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, the problem under study in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin, 2008). A case study research design allowed the researchers to use multiple sources of data exploring issues pertaining to provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners at a selected special education secondary school in Bulawayo Central District.

Thematically analysed data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. The purposively chosen sample comprised twenty-five participants from a special education secondary school in Bulawayo Central District. These were sixteen physically challenged Ordinary Level Art and Design learners, two Art and Design teachers, two school administrators, one district practical subject inspector, one physio-occupational therapist and three School Development Committee executive members representing parents. In order to enforce credibility and trustworthiness, aspects of dependability, confirmability and transferability were addressed in this study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). On ethical issues, the researchers sought permission from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and school head to carry out the study. Also issues of informed consent of participants, privacy, anonymity, well-being, honest, free to injury or embarrassment and confidentiality were considered when conducting the study (Roberts & Allen, 2015). To ensure that confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study, the following codes were used to conceal the identity of participants: FGDA and FGDB (Focus Group Discussions for learners); ADT1-2 (Art and Design Teachers); SH (School Head); DSH (Deputy School Head); PoT (Physio-occupational Therapist); DPSI (District Practical Subjects Inspector); SDC1-3 (School Development Committee members).

## **RESULTS**

This section presents data that were acquired regarding to the participants' views on how the selected special education secondary school in Bulawayo Central District provided quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners. The summary of diverse learners' forms of disabilities is provided first and then factors that enhance provision of quality Art and Design education among

physically challenged Ordinary Level learners. The participants' responses are presented under the sub-headings which include teacher related factors, learner related factors, administrative related factors, pedagogical related factors, and resource and environmental related factors.

The findings show that learner participants exhibit physical disabilities such as Hydrocephalus, Arthrogyriposis and Microcephalus, one learner had all these three forms of physical disabilities, two participants had Osteogenesis Imperfecta. Spina Bifida and Cerebral Palsy were at peak with five and six participants respectively. Thus, from the information given, it is clear that most of the physically challenged Ordinary Level Art and Design learners are having Spina Bifida and Cerebral Palsy forms of disabilities. These two forms of disabilities tend to have a bearing on the nervous and muscle control system of the learner. If the learner is given adequate support in terms of human assistant and/or assistive devices, they can perform even far much better than the non-disabled learner. Cerebral Palsy learners however may not perform to expectation in a situation where there is lack of resources and supportive environment.

### **Factors that enhance the provision of quality Art and Design education**

#### **Teacher related factors**

The participants' responses indicated that teacher related factors are at centre of enhancing the teaching and learning of Art and Design for the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners. The data revealed that most participants advocated for training of teachers in special needs education for teachers to teach effectively the Art and Design physically challenged Ordinary Level learners. Some of the participants expressed the following views:

*Special needs qualification is important for a teacher to be able to assist physically challenged learners during the teaching and learning process. One of the learners uses feet to draw whilst the other is using the mouth, with their kind of disability it is difficult to teach without special needs training (ADT2).*

*Teachers with expertise in special needs education tend to know what to expect and they know how best to deal with the different situations of their learners. I support a teacher with Art and special needs qualification in order to deal with special cases (FGDB).*

*Teachers need to be qualified in teaching special needs learners in Art and Design, not to just train for special needs in general as it is now. So they need to really know how to help learners within their special conditions or disabilities (DPSI).*

Concerning in-service training of teachers to capacitate them to teach Art and Design among physically challenged learners, the responses indicated that physiotherapy

department provided in-service training sessions to assist teachers on how to handle learners with disabilities. Examples of some of the responses are as follows:

*Physiotherapy department provides in-service training to help teachers on how to handle children with disabilities. They are very effective as they help you to understand how to treat the learner and some materials needed (ADT1).*

*We train teachers on how to handle learners with disabilities and why they use devices like head gear and pointer. By doing in-service training we are actually introducing the teacher, to the disability itself, so that they understand the strengths where they can capitalise on, as far as their learners are concerned (PoT).*

The data presented indicated that teachers who teach Art and Design to physically challenged learners should hold special needs qualification for them to teach effectively those classes. Additionally, in-service training sessions provided by physiotherapy department proved to enhance the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners at the selected school.

### **Learner related factors**

Regarding learner related factors that enrich the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners, responses showed that learner attitude towards the subject, concentration span and attention, and home background were some of the factors that impact on the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners. The participants gave the following responses:

*The attitude you have towards the subject affects you. Like in my case I have a negative attitude towards the subject because of the negative comments I get about my work as a result of my disability (FGDA).*

*Physically challenged learners usually have a negative attitude towards their disability as they compare themselves with deaf or non-disabled learners. They think their work is bad as they compare with others, they think they are not able to produce good work so they lose confidence in themselves (ADT2).*

*My disability does not have any effect on my work/ output because I know I can excel (FGDA).*

*Through the interactions I have with learners, I have realised that most of them have accepted their disabilities and it is quite a pity because actually they have higher ideals they wish to do more but at the end of the day they are limited by the disability (PoT).*

There is evidence from the presented data that negative comments from some teachers and other non-disabled learners result in development of negative attitude towards Art and Design subject by physically challenged learners. Nonetheless, it was established that some physically challenged learners were not affected by the negative comments as they fully understood and appreciated their disabilities.

In terms of how the concentration span of physically challenged learners impacted on the quality of Art and Design education, participants mentioned that the type of disability affects the concentration span of the learners and this hindered the quality provision in Art and Design education. For instance, they said:

*I prefer that the teacher gives me guidance for a short time and I spend more time doing it for myself (FGDA).*

*Some are affected in terms of concentration span as they are very slow. They need to take breaks because they easily get tired such that they end up not finishing their work, and this demotivates them (ADT2).*

*Concentration span, normally, with less severe type of cerebral palsy is a bit affected. However, if a child is athetoid or spastic it actually changes the concentration span, the body is constantly moving and the child concentrates on the body movements rather than concentrating on what is happening in class. Nevertheless, with physical challenges, concentration span is not affected unless if they have other challenges like mental or attention deficit. Muscular Dystrophy (MD), phocomelia and Osteogenesis imperfecta (OG) do not affect concentration span but hydrocephalus does affect (PoT).*

On learner background, the participants mentioned that the learners' backgrounds negatively affected most of the physically challenged learners. Thus, the participants responded as shown below:

*Our background affects us very much because you may be told by a relative that leave Art and do other subjects like Sciences and Maths, so one loses interest of doing Art (FGDB).*

*I think background affects them because most parents do not motivate them they do not show much of concern. Poor background negatively affects the child as they cannot afford to buy them materials and assistive devices hence the child may give up in asking for those materials. In some instances, however, rich families may choose not to support the physically challenged learner, like the case of one of the learners who got an A in Art and was very good but is at home doing nothing. It is the attitude of the parents, who say he is just disabled what more can he do with Art (ADT2).*



The information gathered in learner related factors revealed that negative comments from some teachers and other non-disabled learners have an adverse bearing on provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged learners. Thus, the negative comments resulted in physically challenged learners developing negative attitude in Art and Design. However, it came out that some physically challenged learners were confident in Art and Design work despite the negative comments. There is an indication that the type of disability affects the concentration span of the learners and this thwarted the provision of quality in Art and Design education. The provided data suggested that the physically challenged learners' backgrounds deterred quality attainment in Art and Design education.

#### **Administrative related factors**

On the issue of administrative related factors that include class size and its effect, learner grouping and the value of Art and Design subject in the curriculum, the participants' responses indicated that the smaller teacher to learner ratio helps to improve the quality provision of Art and Design education to physically challenged learners. The responses also revealed that heterogeneous learner grouping was favoured at the school understudy. The participants also applauded the inclusion of Art and Design subject to physically challenged learners' curriculum as it yielded numerous outputs. Examples of responses given:

*The class is small enough that the teacher can help us as individuals when we face challenges in the learning. We are getting much attention from the teacher as individuals. (FGDA & FGDB).*

*In my case my biggest class has 8 learners and this is an ideal number. It gives you time to provide one-on-one attention to each learner. You have more time with those whose disabilities make them to be slow. The worst situation must be a class with fifteen learners because you may end up disadvantaging other learners (ADT1).*

*It should be seven to ten so that the teacher concentrates. I feel fifteen as the ministry says is too much (DPSI).*

In response to the question related to the benefits of grouping physically challenged learners heterogeneously or homogeneously, the participants gave the following information:

*I go for the mixed one because if students are mixed there is no much of despising each other but if they are isolated it affects you socially. A mixed group helps one to have their confidence boosted, you feel if this one is able to do it, I can do it also (FGDB).*

*Heterogeneous grouping is better because the learners can help each other, identify the strengths and weaknesses of each other and cover up the gaps as they share ideas without any stigma (ADT2 & SH).*

Participants were further interrogated on the benefits of the inclusion of Art and Design in the curriculum to learners who are physically challenged in a special needs school, and they said:

*Art is therapy, it gives them freedom, also we have a record of excellent passes to these physically challenged learners. Most of them prefer to do Art work after school as it occupies them and as a source of income (entrepreneurship). Leads to many job opportunities like architecture, fashion design, visual artist, art historians (ADT1 & FGDA).*

*We have the record of Art being passed by the majority of the learners. We have some of our former students who majored in Art who are earning a living through Art, so to us this area is very critical (SH).*

As shown from the data above, there is evidence that participants strongly disregard the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's 1:15 teacher to learner ratio of physically challenged class size. It was revealed that the smaller teacher to learner ratio helps to improve the quality provision of Art and Design education to physically challenged learners. Concerning the issue of grouping learners, the information presented unveiled, that heterogeneous learner grouping is a factor that enhances quality Art and Design education to physically challenged learners. Heterogeneously grouped learners tend to complement each other unlike in a case where they are homogeneously grouped. As for the value of Art and Design subject in the curriculum, the participants applauded the inclusion of Art and Design subject to physically challenged learners' curriculum as it yielded numerous outputs. Provision of Art and Design as a compulsory subject at junior level has generally boosted interest in the subject.

### **Pedagogical related factors**

As for pedagogical related factors like instructional strategies and assessment practices, participants had this to say:

*Field trips and career guidance exhibitions help us to get encouraged to do Art. The resource persons especially professional artists coming as far as South Africa, Belgium coach us in different areas of Art and it really encourages us (FGDB).*

*We do discussions, demonstrations, peer teaching, critiquing of work although some are not comfortable with that, and production of artefacts. Learner-centred methods*

*prove to be very effective since Art is a practical subject, they have to do it for themselves (ADT1 & ADT2; SDH).*

*The teachers practice individual teaching in this school, hence, most methods are learner-centred to meet the individual needs of each learner. Teachers need some exposure to the latest methodologies; we need to link with colleges and universities who train the teachers of the subject (SH).*

Concerning assessment practices used and how these practices affect the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged learners, the participants said:

*Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) does not discriminate them but use same assessment tool with the non-disabled learners. Continuous Assessment is the best method to be used with these learners as we cover a lot in continuous assessment. (ADT2).*

*ZIMSEC should do like in Food and Nutrition where the marker comes to the school and observe the learners as they do their practical examination. The assessment should be more on the process rather than the end product of these learners. It is not fair to compare the art of those who draw with their feet, toes, mouth with those of non-disabled learners rather it should be appreciated according to an individual. A different assessment tool should be used for different learners (SDH).*

It is evident from the views of the participants that practical oriented strategies, which encourage active learning, were the preferred methods in enhancing the quality of Art and Design education among physically challenged learners. Such strategies included field trips, project based learning, portfolio building, collaboration, invitation of resource persons, exhibitions and exposure to Art and Design experts especially those who are physically challenged like them. The participants raised concern about the assessment criteria employed by ZIMSEC to assess the physically challenged learners at 'O' Level examinations. The same assessment tool that is used to assess non-disabled learners is used to assess physically challenged learners. Such a practice disadvantages the physically challenged learners. The participants also indicated that the physically challenged learners were not given adequate time for their examinations.

### **Resource and environmental factors**

Resource and environmental factors are critical in achievement of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners. The participants were asked to shade light on the state of instructional resources and assistive devices, and the adaptability of the teaching and learning environment. Participants' responses are shown below:

*The materials are not enough for our learning like the textbooks are very few, at times there is no book to read. Things like fabrics and dyes or paints are not adequate and usually very poor quality (FGDB).*

*You need ranges of good pencils not just HB, paints, charcoal, pastels, wet and dry materials, good paper, canvas so different drawing materials. But they are not there we end up asking learners to bring their own and they bring poor quality materials which compromise quality of Art and Design education. Parents like as said before are not forthcoming (ADT1).*

*We do not have adequate resources like in this 21<sup>st</sup> century you expect an art laboratory to have an interactive board so that the learners will understand all the concepts and for effective learning. The Art room needs serious redesigning and refurbishing because as of now it is just a humbling place. We are still miles away in terms of the resources that are needed for the learners in order to achieve the maximum benefits from the subject (SH).*

On the adequacy of assistive devices, the participants revealed that these were inadequate, hence lowering the learning capabilities of the physically challenged learners. Their responses are as follows:

*Learners need assistive devices to do their Art work effectively and should not be limited to manual Art. Learners who love Art and are able to use a computer should be allowed to use assistive devices not to be disadvantaged because of their disability. It makes things easier for the physically challenged learners. It is better than an assistant teacher, it helps you to do things for yourself (FGDB).*

*Those using the mouth need the mechanical assistive devices as they get tired and they are just providing comfort and strength (ADT1).*

*The assistive devices are needed to most of these physically challenged learners but they are not available thus derailing the quality trends in Art and Design education to physically challenged Ordinary Level learners (SDH & SH).*

*Assistive devices are quite valid; they help learners do much of the things on their own. This improves the quality of learning and eliminates the need for scarce teaching assistants (PoT & SDC1).*

As for the adaptability of the teaching and learning environment, participants highlighted that the environment needed renovations for it to suit the needs of the physically challenged learners. Participants said:

*It is not adaptive enough because some of the materials used for Art and Design lessons are not user friendly for the disabled learners. For example, the machine for cutting the papers is not user friendly, and some of the tables are too high for us. The room must have enough space for us to relax during Art and Design lessons (FGDA).*

*We need proper chairs and desks for the kind of learners we have. There are no stimulative aids. The Art room is spacious but is not good enough as it should be segmented with sections for pottery, weaving, sculpture, ICT so as to meet the needs of different learners (SH & PoT).*

*Physically challenged learners need a wider space as more of them use wheelchairs so as to ease congestion and not to crowd over a certain area. More light is needed when they are painting. More materials and better infrastructure should be provided for the subject (SDC2).*

The data presented reveal that there is gross inadequacy of instructional resources such as assistive devices which is the major obstruction in the provision of quality Art and Design education to physically challenged learners. Unavailability of the assistive devices results in learners lagging behind in their learning activities. There is an indication that the teaching and learning environment was not adaptive or specialised enough to cater for the various needs of the physically challenged learners. Furniture, Art studio and other equipment need to be adjusted to meet the requirements of the physically challenged learners.

### **The role of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education**

Participants provided the following responses on the key role of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education on the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged learners.

*The MoPSE's main role is to look at the policy, to revisit the policy and invite the stakeholders on the grass roots to give input instead of just inviting the top leadership who just do desktop thing. To involve teachers as the practitioners and even the interviews with the learners themselves will make our Art and Design education policy rich. The current policy on the physically challenged learners is not much clear, a new policy should be made and clarify issues of inclusivity in all schools (SH; ADT1 & DPSI).*

The participants revealed that the role of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is not very clear, particularly, in the provision of quality Art and Design education to physically challenged learners. Though MoPSE has a policy on inclusivity,

the disability policy on the education of the physically challenged learners lacked clarity, hence, there is need to revise the policy.

### **Role of Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Division**

Concerning the role of Schools Psychological Services (SPS) and Special Needs Education Division (SNED), the participants had this to say:

*The SPS and SNED supervise the Physio and Occupational Therapy department in the service provision like independent living. They conduct workshops with learners, teachers and parents in order to help learners accept their disability (ADT2).*

*The SPS and SNED do monitoring and evaluation of implementation of special needs education in the school but not in Art and Design. In conjunction with the social welfare, they should provide our learners with assistive devices (SDH).*

*At least they assist through guidance and counselling to the children and assessment for their placement. They also support in terms of staff development to teachers (SH).*

The SPS and SNED conduct workshops with learners, teachers and parents in order to help learners accept their disability. SPS and SNED also monitor and evaluate the implementation of special needs education in the school but not in Art and Design. It also came out that SPS and SNED provide guidance and counselling, assessment, assistive devices and placement services to the physically challenged learners. It was revealed that SPS and SNED support the school understudy in providing staff development to teachers.

### **Challenges encountered by special education school**

An enquiry was made with participants on the challenges encountered by the special education school in the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners. It emerged that the special education institution had varied challenges such as lack Art and Design Studio, inadequate teaching and learning resources, financial constraints, shortage of teaching assistants and lack of ICT tools to support Art and Design instructional delivery to physically challenged learners. The participants mentioned that:

*There is shortage of assistive devices. Some of us love Art and Design but because our disability does not allow us to do a lot of things, we may end up leaving Art. Assistive devices may make life easy for us because we will be able to perform all the activities during the lessons without any problems. There is no enough space in the Art room and this limits the movements especially for those using wheelchairs (FGDA & FGDB).*

*Lack of parental involvement, since we are to extend learning to home but some parents do not support their children. Some parents do not understand the careers because they do not see the importance of Art and Design as a subject. The government in the new curriculum left out Art and Design as a core subject so it is taken as a less important optional subject (ADT1 & ADT2).*

School administrators expressed dissatisfaction on the teaching and learning environment; problems of timetabling; non-payment of fees by most parents and lack of resources of varied types. Participants said:

*Lack of ICT and e-learning resources is another challenge. As a special school we need specialised equipment for these learners but it is not so. Even the Art and Design room needs a lot of renovations to meet the anticipated quality standards of Art and Design to these learners (SDH).*

*Time-tabling is a great challenge to learners as they do not get adequate time for more practice in Art and Design since there are many subjects and activities. Lack of financial resources makes it difficult to buy good quality materials to produce quality work. Furniture is not adequate especially of different heights and designs (SH).*

Parents in harmony with school administrators raised concern on the teaching and learning environment and lack of funds buttered by non-payment of fees and levies by some parents. They said:

*Lack of funding which leads to a number of items being side lined, like the learning facilities, equipment such as aids, which are so helpful for these special needs learners. This major challenge leads to shortage of learning infrastructure and human resources like the assistants as well as teachers (SDC1).*

*Most of the parents are not supportive in the education of their children, they do not attend meetings, some do not pay fees while others do not help Art and Design learners with their homework (SDC2).*

There is evidence that the school understudy experienced numerous challenges that impede the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged learners. The stated challenges include inadequate space in the Art room limiting movements especially for those using wheelchairs and lack of financial resources makes it difficult to buy good quality materials to produce quality work. Time-tabling also came out as a challenge to learners as they did not get adequate time for more practice in Art and Design since they are learning many subjects and doing a lot of activities. Lack of ICT and e-learning resources is another challenge, which hampers the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged learners. Shortage of learning infrastructure and human resources like the assistants as well as teachers, and lack of parental involvement have been pointed out as obstructions to

provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners at the school understudy.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of the study revealed that to enhance provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners, a number of factors in the teaching and learning situation need to be taken into consideration. These encompass teacher, learner, administrative, pedagogical, resource and environmental related factors. The study found that teachers who teach Art and Design to physically challenged learners should hold special needs qualification for them to teach effectively those classes. These findings are similar to literature observation that teachers' academic and professional qualifications have a significant effect on physically challenged learner achievement (Habib, Shah & Khawaja, 2004; Khan & Shah, 2002). It emerged from the study that in-service training sessions provided by physiotherapy department proved to enhance the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged learners at the selected school.

The results of this study indicated that negative comments from some teachers and other non-disabled learners adversely affected the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged learners. It was revealed that the adverse comments resulted in physically challenged learners developing negative attitude towards Art and Design. The findings are consistent with the results of the study carried out in Zimbabwe by Dube, Ncube, Mapuvire, Ndlovu, Ncube and Mlotshwa, (2021) that deleterious attitudes and stereotypes towards learners with disabilities hinder their access to quality education. However, it came out that some physically challenged learners were confident in Art and Design work despite the negative comments. The findings of the study also showed that the type of disability affects the concentration span of the learners and this thwarted the provision of quality in Art and Design education. The study found that the physically challenged learners' backgrounds deterred quality attainment in Art and Design education.

It came out from the study that teachers at the selected school were not happy with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's 1:15 teacher to learner ratio of physically challenged class size. It was revealed that the smaller teacher to learner ratio helps to improve the quality of Art and Design education provided to physically challenged learners. This is in line with Finn, Gerber, Achilles, and Boyd-Zaharias' (2001) assertion that a class with less than fifteen learners has the potential to significantly increase learner achievement, provided that suitable changes are made in teacher practices which take advantage of fewer learners. The finding is also commensurate with Solheima and Opheimb's (2019) results of their study conducted in Norway that smaller classes are often perceived as allowing teachers to focus more on the needs of individual learners and reducing the amount of class time needed to deal with disruptions.



The results also revealed that heterogeneous learner grouping is a factor that enhances quality Art and Design education to physically challenged learners. It was found that heterogeneously grouped learners tend to complement each other unlike in a case where they are homogeneously grouped. The finding is in consensus with literature observation that learners having difficulty at school, especially those disadvantaged by their physical disability and socioeconomic backgrounds, learn more when they are working in heterogeneous rather than in homogeneous ability groups (Yonezawa, Wells, & Serna, 2002). The finding is also in agreement with what was found by Fritsche (2021) in Sweden that teachers were in favour of heterogeneous ability groups, because it allowed learners to develop in their own pace and from their individual preferences and also experienced more satisfaction in finding the right structure and strategies for each learner.

The study established that the inclusion of Art and Design subject to physically challenged learners' curriculum was a positive move, which yielded numerous outputs. It came out that the decision for Art and Design subject to be compulsory at junior level has generally boosted interest in the subject.

It is evident from the study that practical oriented strategies, which encourage active learning, were the preferred methods in enhancing the quality of Art and Design education among physically challenged learners. These strategies comprised field trips, project based learning, portfolio building, collaboration, invitation of resource persons, exhibitions and exposure to Art and Design experts especially those who are physically challenged like learners. These findings are consistent with Adedayo's (2008) views that these methods are suitable for the teaching and learning context and provided a 'hands-on' approach in a practical learning environment. The findings are also in line with the observation that these strategies build on learners' strengths and advance an inclusive approach, which enhances the quality of delivery, and are an advantage to all learners, especially those with a physical disability (PWDA, 2015; Titchkosky, 2003).

The study further revealed that the assessment system employed by ZIMSEC to the physically challenged learners at Ordinary Level was not fair. It came out that ZIMSEC assessment system does not consider the disability of the learners as it puts the physically challenged learners at the same level with the non-disabled learners. The study also indicated that the physically challenged learners were not given adequate time during examinations. This finding is dissimilar to the United Kingdom education system, which emphasises that schools must ensure that curriculum arrangements, such as policies for homework, assessment and school trips, do not discriminate against learners with disabilities (EASN & IE, 2017). The finding is also inconsistent with Sibanda and Mathwasa's (2020) observation that quality assessment should be equitable and this could be achieved by designing the aspects of teaching and learning in conjunction with assessment activities that are communally and ethnically responsive and inclusive. Sibanda and Mathwasa (2020) further indicate that all learners in schools, with or without disability, are entitled to an education that is responsive to their needs

and also prepares them to actively participate in the formation of a socially impartial, equitable, and democratic universal society.

The findings of the study revealed that there is gross inadequacy of instructional resources, which is the major obstruction in the provision of quality Art and Design education to physically challenged learners. The results of the study showed that there is insufficiency of assistive devices in the school, thus deterring provision of quality Art and Design education. It came out that unavailability of the assistive devices results in learners lagging behind in their learning activities. The study further indicated that the teaching and learning environment was not adaptive or specialised enough to cater for the needs of the physically challenged learners. It was found that furniture, Art studio and other equipment need to be adjusted to meet the requirements of the physically challenged learners. The finding confirms Muranda's (2015) assertion that special education schools fail to follow rules to ensure accessibility of the facilities which allow learners with disabilities to move on their own from point one to point two.

The findings of the study revealed that the role of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is not very clear, particularly, in the provision of quality Art and Design education to physically challenged learners. It was revealed that though MoPSE has a policy on inclusivity, the disability policy on the education of the physically challenged learners lacked clarity.

The study found that the role of Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Division is to conduct workshops with learners, teachers and parents in order to help learners accept their disability. It was indicated that SPS and SNED monitor and evaluate the implementation of special needs education in the school but not in Art and Design. The findings also revealed that SPS and SNED provided guidance and counselling, assessment, assistive devices and placement services to the physically challenged learners. The results further revealed that SPS and SNED supported the school understudy in conducting staff development sessions for teachers. The finding is in agreement with Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) that there is a positive relationship between teachers' in-service training and learner achievement.

The findings of the study revealed that the school understudy encountered copious challenges that impede the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged learners. The study found that inadequate space in the Art room limited movement of learners during the lessons, especially those using wheelchairs and lack of financial resources made it difficult to buy good quality materials to produce quality work. The finding resembles what was found in studies done in Namibia by Mowes and Engelbrecht (2004), Lesotho by Johnstone (2007) and South Africa by Eloff and Kgwete (2007). These studies revealed that Art and Design materials are expensive as a result; parents and schools end up resorting to cheaper materials that compromise the provision of quality standards in Art and Design. The results of this

study also indicated that timetabling was a challenge to learners as they did not get adequate time for more practice in Art and Design since they are learning many subjects and doing a lot of activities. It came out that lack of ICT and e-learning resources was another challenge which hampered the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged learners. The study further showed that shortage of learning infrastructure and human resources like the assistants as well as teachers, and lack of parental involvement have been pointed out as obstructions to provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners at the school understudy. The findings are consistent with the results of the study conducted by Mazuruse, Nyagadza and Makoni (2022) in Mashonaland East Province in Zimbabwe which revealed that incapacitation of schools and inadequate physical resources that would assist in the implementation of inclusive education were the major challenges.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study assessed the provision of quality Art and Design education among physically challenged Ordinary Level learners in one special education secondary school in Bulawayo Central District. The study concluded that factors related to teacher, learner, administration, pedagogy, resources and environment were to be considered in the provision of quality Art and Design education to physically challenged Ordinary Level learners. For quality Art and Design education to be provided to physically challenged learners, the teachers should be continuously equipped with expertise on how to teach such classes. Practical oriented strategies, which encourage active learning, were the preferred methods in enhancing the quality of Art and Design education among physically challenged learners. The selected school involved stakeholders such as Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education that monitors instructional delivery and physio-occupational therapist providing in-service training for teachers on how to assist physically challenged learners as they teach them. Stakeholders which comprise Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Division which provide guidance and counselling, assessment, assistive devices and placement services to the physically challenged learners and, staff development to teachers, and parents were also involved in enhancing quality Art and Design education to physically challenged Ordinary Level learners. Though the selected school experienced some challenges in provision of quality Art and Design education to physically challenged Ordinary Level learners, there were noticeable good practices adopted.

The study recommended that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should engage other stakeholders in sourcing required resources to support provision of quality Art and Design education in special education secondary schools. It is also recommended that the special education schools should provide responsive environment that meets the needs of physically challenged learners.

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### **Notes on contributors**

**Zibulo Sibanda** works as an Applied Art and Design lecturer in the Faculty of Science and Technology Education at the National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe. His research interest is in special needs and inclusive education at all levels, and technical and vocational education.

**Lwazi Sibanda**, PhD, is an Associate Professor and Executive Dean in the Faculty of Science and Technology Education at the National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe. Her research interest is on education management, leadership and supervision, inclusive education, teacher education, curriculum design, assessment, quality and equity in education, guidance and counselling, positive discipline and improving instructional delivery in all levels of education.

### **ORCID**

Zibulo Sibanda <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4549-0408>

Lwazi Sibanda <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4523-6549>

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