The Instructional Decisions of Teachers in Inclusive Education: From a Curriculum Standpoint

KIBINKIRI Eric LEN (PhD)
Department of Science of Education, Higher Teacher Training College Yaounde (E.N.S), University of Yaounde I, Cameroon.

Abstract
This study was planned to investigate “the extent to which teachers’ instructional decisions can influence inclusive practices in secondary schools”. The increase in the number of students with exceptionalities or difficulties in both public and private secondary schools in Cameroon motivated the researcher to carry out the study. The main research question was “To what extent can teachers’ pedagogic decisions influence inclusive education in secondary schools? Related literature was reviewed on teachers’ pedagogic decisions and inclusive education. The theory of instruction and the theory of multiple intelligences were used to give meaning to the problem of study. The qualitative approach was applied to carry out the investigation. Observation and Interview research methods were used. Data was collected using an observation guide and interview guide. The population of the study was made up of teachers of Government Bilingual High School Mendong-Yaounde. From this population, four teachers were selected for the study through non probability sampling technique. The data collected was analysed thematically following the objectives of the study. The results of the study revealed that teachers’ instructional decisions contribute to inclusive practices in schools. This study offer new insights as well that inclusive practices can be applied in school life to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities. Recommendations are made to teachers to create favourable learning environments for all the students.

Keywords: Instructional decisions, Inclusive Education, planning decisions, delivery decisions, assessment decisions, Curriculum.

1. INTRODUCTION
Over the past decades, the education for all and must especially learners with exceptionalities is increasingly drawing the attention of governments, education stakeholders, national and international organisations across the world. Besides the recurrent problems in education such as insufficient infrastructure, inadequate resources in developing countries, the education of learners with exceptionalities necessitates added attention from all the stakeholders. Learners with special needs are human beings in difficulties and therefore have rights which are all enshrined in national and international treaties. In Cameroon, the citizen's right to education is embodied in the 2008 reviewed constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, the United Nations charter and the United Nations Organisation Convention on the Rights of the child which the country ratified. According to the preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, “the state shall guarantee the child’s right to education; primary education shall be compulsory; the organization and supervision of education at all levels shall be the bounded duty of the state” (Law No. 96-06 of 18 January 1996). The government of Cameroon committed itself, officially to promoting inclusion in schools by signing the UNESCO Salamanca statement, which had the purpose of furthering the objectives of inclusive education (UNESCO 1994). Secondary school students in Cameroon are children above 11 years. They fall within Jean Piaget’s formal stage of cognitive development (Ginsberg and Opper, 1988). According to Piaget, children between 11-15 years are in the formal stage of cognitive development. At this developmental stage, Piaget explains that children’s cognition is fully developed. They are able to consider multiple points of view when solving a problem.

The struggle to meet national and international expectations for education has created a tremendous demand for education at all levels. The number of learners with exceptionalities keeps growing in classrooms in Cameroon (SEEPD, 2011). The levels of disabilities have increased over the years ranging from minor learning disabilities, psychological, socio-economic to physical. Thus, it is imperative for teachers to understand the different categories of learners in the classroom in order to take accurate and rational instructional decisions. Considering the fact that teachers are the ones who are directly concerned with the education of all the learners in school, it is important that they possess specialized knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to assist the different kinds of learners in their classrooms. The success of learners with special needs depends on the professional competences and consciousness of the teachers. The need for this study to investigate the Instructional decisions of teachers in inclusive education becomes imperative considering that the success of all the learners in the classroom to a larger extent depends on the decisions and actions of the classroom teacher.

The problem envisaged by this study is how to increase inclusive practices in secondary schools by helping teachers to take rational and meaningful instructional decisions. The increase in the number of students with exceptionalities or difficulties in both public and private secondary schools in Cameroon motivated the
researcher to carry out this study. According to World Bank (2018), many countries are failing to provide learning for all. Individuals already disadvantaged in society whether because of poverty, location, ethnicity, gender, or disability often learn the least.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Framework

The main concepts that form the basis of the theoretical framework in this study include instructional decisions of teachers and inclusive education in secondary schools. Instructional decisions in the work refer to teachers’ planning decisions, teachers’ delivery decisions and teachers’ assessment decisions. Inclusive education refers to the provision of learning experiences and services to students with disabilities in the general education classroom under the instruction and guidance of the regular education teacher (Wolfe and Hall, 2003). Teachers’ planning decision in the study refers to teaching considerations which have as principle that teaching is an activity that is well planned in advanced. For all the students in the class to construct their knowledge, skills and competences, teaching must be planned. The role of the teacher is to identify and choose the most appropriate instructional resources and lesson plans to use with the learners. Curriculum accommodation and adaptation can significantly impact teachers’ attitude toward inclusive education (Tanyi, 2016). When students with disabilities are included in general education classes, general education teachers need to adapt the curriculum to fit their ability levels, individualized education program goals, and other requirements unique to the individual student (Voltz, 2001). Teachers can help build a classroom community by creating a safe learning environment for all students and planning opportunities for social interaction, nurturing friendships and supportive behavior, and above all provide a positive role model. (Wilson et al., 2011, Stainback and stainback1996, Hittle, 2000). Integration which is the same as mainstreaming in the Cameroonian context, was officially embraced following the enactment of the 1983 and 1994 laws, stipulating the inclusion of students with special educational needs in the general education classrooms (UNESCO, 1994). Integration of students into the general education classroom curriculum is the main goal for most students with disabilities. The integration of students with disabilities comprises three components: Physical integration, part or full day social inclusion (relationship with peers) and curricular and instructional integration.

Teachers’ delivery decisions in the study denote teaching thoughts which are based on the belief that teaching consists of methods and techniques which can facilitate interactions between the teacher, the student and the content. Communication is very important during the lesson delivery or presentation. Teachers can use their language competences to direct, inform, facilitate and guide the learners during the teaching learning process. The teachers need to use their own problem-solving abilities to identify and choose the most appropriate delivery approaches to use with the learner. The delivery methods and procedures selected by the teacher can determine the effectiveness of the teaching learning process. The teaching delivery concerns studied include classroom organization and management, teaching methods, teaching experiences and communication. Teachers must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of learners, accommodating different learning styles and rates of learning, ensuring quality education for all through appropriate curriculum plans, delivery methods, instructional resources and relationship with the society. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of needs in the classroom (UNESCO, 1994). Teachers’ assessment decisions denote those teaching considerations in the classroom which are based on the principle that teaching consists of processes and procedures aimed at verifying actual teaching and learning. The teachers have to use their own competences to identify and choose the most appropriate assessment methods to use with the learners in the classroom. The assessment methods and procedures selected by the teacher can determined the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The assessment methods studied include oral or practical assessment and written assessment. Students with disabilities included in the general education classroom “need to feel they are part of the class and to be challenged academically at their level” (Wilson et al., 2011:10)

2.2. Theoretical Framework

Theory of Instruction by Jerome Bruner

According to Crook (2001), cognitive psychology has come to be the force to shape modern accounts of learning. Jerome Bruner’s theory (Cognitive theory of instruction) can be applied in inclusive education. Bruner (1956) cited in Santrock (2004) emphasized the concept of discovery learning by encouraging teachers to give learners more opportunities to learn on their own. Teachers can facilitate discovery learning by providing students with disabilities stimulating activities that activate their natural curiosity. The design of the learning content can also influence the motivation of students with disabilities. Content that is well structured, interactive and integrated with visuals and audio attracts the attention of learners. Mosston and Ashworth (1990) postulate that guided discovery teaching style indicates a continuous and reciprocal relationship between the teacher and the learner. Teachers can equally facilitate guided discovery learning with the assistance of teacher guided questions and directions. Also, students with disability can get help from their peers and mentors in the classroom.
Theory of Multiple Intelligences

According to Passer and Smith (2001) Gardner’s multiple intelligences is reshaping many current assessment practices and instruction. Teachers are now re-examining their methods of instruction and evaluation. For example, in evaluation, schools are now using descriptions to report student competences. According to Gardner, there are many specific types of intelligence or frames of mind and every student has the potential to develop strengths in one or more areas (Diessner, 2008). He further defines intelligence as “the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings.” Gardner maintains that if teachers give students the opportunities to use their bodies, imaginations and different senses, almost every student will find out that he or she is good at something. In the same light, Gardner believes that his theory of “multiple intelligences” accurately captures the diverse nature of human capability. He further identified eight kinds of intelligence, not all of which are commonly recognized in school settings. His eight intelligences are: Logical mathematical intelligence (as in a scientist, mathematician); Linguistic intelligence (as in a poet, journalist); Bodily – Kinaesthetic intelligence (as in an athlete or dancer); Musical intelligence (as in a composer, musician); Spatial intelligence (as in a sculptor, painter, engineer); Interpersonal intelligence (as in a salesman, teacher psychologist); Intrapersonal intelligence (exhibited by individuals with accurate views of themselves); Naturalist intelligence (as in an environmentalist, botanist). The theory of multiple intelligences goes a long way in explaining why the quality of an individual’s performance may vary greatly in different activities, rather than reflect a single standard of performance as indicated by an IQ score. Semenov (2005) comments that what is important is Gardner’s stress on the fact that a particular intelligence cannot be conceptualised independently of the particular context in which an individual happens to live, work and play, and the opportunities and values provided by that milieu. Diessner (2008) supports that as human beings, we all have a repertoire of skills for solving different kinds of problems. He argues that to better solve a problem; we should first take in to consideration the problem itself, the context and the cultural set up. A lot of research has been carried out on the potentials of pedagogic practices in the teaching learning process. But more is still needed to be known about teachers’ pedagogic decisions and inclusive education in secondary schools. In order to proceed, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

General Research Question
To what extent does teachers’ instructional decisions influences inclusive education in secondary schools?

Specific Research Questions
How do teachers’ planning decisions meet the expectations of inclusive education in secondary schools?  
How can teachers’ delivery decisions contribute to inclusive education in secondary schools?  
How can teachers’ assessment decisions stimulate the development of inclusive education in secondary schools?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Yaounde the capital city of the Republic of Cameroon. Specifically in Mfoundi Division, Yaounde VI Sub-Division with teachers of Government Bilingual High School Mendong. The school was created as a secondary school in 1990 and received its first pupils in 1991. It was later transformed to a Government High School in 1992 and in 2010 it became a bilingual school. The school accommodates two sub-systems of Education. The Anglophone Sub-system of Education and the Francophone Sub-system of Education. G.B.H.S Mendong has administrative personnel, teaching personnel, support staff and students. The principal of the school is assisted by 31 vice principals, 25 disciplinarians, 12 guidance counselors, 370 teachers, 21 support staff, a steward, 2 schooling personnel, an animation and youth counselor, 2 nurses, 2 accountants, a librarian, a computer scientist, a social assistant. The school has a student population of 6261 students. It has 64 classrooms. The population of the study was made up of four (4) teachers drawn from form two, form three, and form four. This was done under purposive sampling technique. Teachers are the main actors in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. They use a variety of teaching strategies, methods and techniques in their large class sizes. The table below presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the cases studied:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>Form Three</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>DIPES 1</td>
<td>8 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>Form Three</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>DIPES 2</td>
<td>7 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>Form Four</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>DIPES 2</td>
<td>15 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher D</td>
<td>Form Two</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>DIPES 2</td>
<td>17 Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen on Table 1, the participants were named Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C and Teacher D. Out of the four (4) teachers who took part in the study, three (3) were female and one (1) male. Their work experiences ranged from seven (7) years to seventeen (17) years. Their ages ranged from 38 years to 47 years. Teacher B, Teacher C and Teacher D are holders of DIPES 2 (Secondary/High School Teacher’s Diploma). Teacher A is a holder of DIPES 1 (Secondary School Teacher’s Diploma). Teacher A and Teacher B are teaching Form three students. Teacher C is a Form four teacher, while teacher D is a Form two teacher.
The methods used for data collection were observation and interview. A semi structured observation guide and semi structured interview guide were carefully constructed following the objectives of the study and applied respectively to collect data. The observation guide was adapted from Ned A. Flanders (1985) cited in Reed and Bergemann (1995). The data collection process began with a presentation of the project and the researchers to the participants. My student who was doing her internship at the school called Folefok Atem Nadia assisted in the data collection process. The observations in the classrooms were conducted from the 2nd of February to the 4th of April, 2017. Each observation in the classroom took a maximum of 40 minutes. The researchers sat on the back bench in order to have a complete view of the activities in the classroom during normal class lessons. The interviews were carried out from the 6th to the 9th of April, 2017 in the staffroom free from distractions like telephones. The maximum time for each interview was 25 minutes. Only the researcher’s telephone was used to record all the information. The different interviews were transcribed. The transcription was done by listening carefully to the recorded information in audio format and writing down every word that was used by the teachers. The transcribed interviews were presented in a table for verification of all the relevant information. Comments, remarks and questions which resulted from informal discussions were also taken into consideration. The data collected was categorized according to the themes and sub-themes that defined the study. This was to find out answers to our research question how teachers’ pedagogic decisions influence inclusive education.

4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS
4.1. Results of Observation

Table 2 presents the overall results of observation on teachers’ pedagogic decisions and inclusive education in secondary schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Activity Observed</th>
<th>Teacher A</th>
<th>Teacher B</th>
<th>Teacher C</th>
<th>Teacher D</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ planning</td>
<td>Instructional Resources</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>12.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ delivery</td>
<td>Lesson Plans</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>12.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ assessment</td>
<td>Classroom organisation and</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>15.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>management</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>15.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching experience and</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>17.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communication</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>17.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ assessment</td>
<td>Oral/practical assessment</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>15.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written assessment</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>10.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>39.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>25.64</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>28.21</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown on Table 2 and on Figure 1, the general analysis of observed elements which constituted teachers’ instructional decisions and inclusive education in secondary schools presented varying results. Findings show that teachers’ delivery decisions had the highest score (48.72%). This was followed by teachers’ assessment decisions with a score of (25.64%). Teachers’ planning decisions recorded the least score with (25.64%)
Figure 2 shows that Teacher D scored the highest percentage (28.21%) as concern observed elements. Teacher B recorded a percentage of (25.64%). Teacher A and Teacher C had the least score with a percentage of 23.08 respectively.

![Results per Teacher](image)

Figure 2: Results of the study per Teacher

4.2. Results obtained from Interview
Concerning teachers’ planning decisions, Teacher A pointed out clearly that, “inclusive education is including the physically challenged children for example the dumb, deaf, and blind to study with other normal children in one class”. When asked about the different types of students in her class, the response was “I have a dumb student who is always willing to answer questions but is unable to write what he has to say on the board, the other students are normal. I plan my lessons based on the program that was given to us and the time. I consider the different learners in my class and the topic before choosing my teaching methods. Teacher B was in consensus with Teacher A on the question of inclusive education. She responded that “it is an educational system which involves no distinction based on those with disabilities and the normal students. They are all students and they all belong to the same class and as such their needs should be taken care of as individuals and as a class”. As concerns the characteristics of her students, she answered that ‘In my form three class, I have a dumb student studying in the same class with the normal students in an ordinary school. The ages of my students ranged from 12 to 17 years. They come from different cultural backgrounds. I know my students very well. When planning my lessons, I take into consideration the needs of the dumb student in class. I take a good look of the type of students in class. I always use different types of methods to endeavor that all of them learn. Teacher C affirmed that she has been teaching children with disabilities in her class but had no idea of a practice being called inclusive education. To her, “inclusive education is a new concept. In my class, I have a blind student, a dumb and deaf student and the normal students. I plan my lessons normally as I was taught in school. My training had nothing to do with learners with physical disabilities. I was not trained on how to handle students with disabilities. I have observed that my students like interactive learning, so I mostly use the discussion method.” Teacher D acknowledge that “inclusive education is an adapted education which include those who are normal and those suffering from a disability. It follows a specific program for all the students in a single class and addresses the needs of each student. Students in my class are between the age range eleven (11) and fifteen (15) years old. I have a visually impaired student and normal students in my class. I take time to plan my lessons with didactic materials for example charts to assist my students especially those with special needs. I apply the competency based approach to teach in my class”.

On the part of teachers’ delivery decisions, Teacher A stated that “as far as classroom organization is concern, I always try to work with the students so that they do not feel isolated. I try to move to their seating positions to check how they are working. I do not use specific methods in my class because I do not spend much time with them. The disable student is stubborn full of trucancy behavior and has never settled in class. He rejoices when being punished and does not do assignments, which always provoke me to let go some students for crime committed with him. For Teacher B, when managing the class, you have to consider students with disabilities. However they do not disturb in class because of their conditions. When asked about teaching methods, the response was “I normally use mixed methods since the special need students get tired very fast. I use songs, games and change activities, teaching aids in class. I always apply a
one-on-one teaching strategy in my class. Attending to disable students slows down the lesson. Sometimes it is preferable to give them assignments and do the corrections during break time. When asked the question of classroom organisation, Teacher C responded that: “my class is well organized but very large. Students with disabilities occupy the first benches in class, so that they could easily be attended to. They seat together with normal students who also give them assistance. I use frequently the discussion method of teaching in which all the students participate. I give my students enough time to think and present their contributions to the class. For the case of the dumb and deaf I only bring life objects to class on the subject matter so that they visualize the lesson. However I was not trained on how to manage them. I usually have a complicated teaching experience with my students as one need to slow down; spell words attend to a blind student in class without braille. Teacher D’s response was in harmony with Teacher C “in my class, those with disabilities are put on the front benches and mixed with the normal students so that they can be motivated. As for methods used in class, I place my students at the centre of the lessons. I make sure I ask my students questions before introducing a new topic and at the end of the lesson. Concerning teaching experience, students with disabilities are always attached to me. They follow me to the office after each class.”

Concerning teachers’ assessment decisions, Teacher A admitted that “when it comes to oral assessment, the normal student will attempt an answer, but the handicapped student cannot, so what I usually do is to give him marks for punctuation and discipline in class.” When administering a test to my students, I give them the same time to complete. Still on the question of assessment, Teacher B acknowledged that she uses the oral test to assess the visually impaired students in her class. “The blind student cannot manipulate objects but is good in speaking about what he has retained from the lesson. With the case of the dumb children, practical assessment is carried out since they cannot speak. For written assessments, since the blind cannot see and read the normal writing, their exams questions are transcribed and they write together with the normal students.” Teacher C asserted that assessing students with disabilities is difficult as she is never objective and that the blind are always very good in oral test. He made it clear that since he cannot read braille, he solicit the assistance of friends to do transcription and also give them help where necessary. Teacher D affirmed that “I ask questions to know what the students have learned. When planning for written assessments, I make sure that I consider the disable students.”

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teachers’ Planning Decisions

The investigation on teachers’ planning decisions in the study was based on the different considerations teachers make in planning instructional resources and lesson plans. The findings obtained from observation revealed that teachers’ planning decisions has the least influence on inclusive practices in secondary schools. Teachers’ planning decisions with respect to inclusive education following the results of the observation had a low tally scoring (25.64%). As seen on Table two, analysis of instructional resources and lesson plans both recorded (12.82%) and (12.82%) respectively. These percentages comparatively are not good. This shows that some of the teachers have difficulties in making proper decisions when planning for their instructions. The findings of observation were in slight contrast with the results of the interview. The responses obtained on the question of teachers’ planning decisions showed that teachers have a good understanding of inclusive education. Out of the four (4) teachers who took part in the study, three (3) affirmed that they take into consideration the needs of the learners in class before planning their instructional materials and lesson plans.

Teachers’ Delivery Decisions

The inquiry on teachers’ delivery decisions was centred on classroom organization and management, teaching methods and techniques, teaching experiences and communication. The findings obtained from both observation and interview revealed that teachers’ delivery decisions had the highest influence on inclusive practices in secondary schools. Teachers’ delivery decisions following the results of the observation had the highest tally scoring (48.72%). Taking a critically look at this results, Table 2 clearly shows that ‘teacher experience and communication’ a determinant of teacher delivery decisions in the study recorded the highest percentage (17.95%). This shows that most teachers pay a lot of attention on their learning experiences and communication in the classroom. Still in the same vein, classroom organization and teaching methods had (15.38%) and (15.38%) respectively. These findings reveal that teachers are very conscious about classroom organization and the use of teaching methods in their classrooms. From all the observations, findings indicated that the methods used by teachers were helpful as the students were very active, showing a lot of interest in the lesson. The results obtained from observation were letter buttressed by the results of the interview where all the teachers demonstrated a good mastery on the question of teachers’ delivery decisions and inclusive education. Teachers have the responsibility to take decisions concerning the methodology to be used during the teaching and learning process. The methods selected for a particular lesson, determines the kinds of interactions that will take place in the classroom. Lesson delivery decisions also determine the means. That is the instructional resources to be used, and must especially the kinds of competences that can be developed in that particular lesson.

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Teachers’ Assessment Decisions

As for teachers’ assessment decisions, the researcher sought to find out the different assessments used by teachers during their teaching in class. The findings obtained from both observation and interview revealed that teachers’ assessment decisions have an influence on inclusive education in secondary schools. Teachers’ assessment decisions with respect to inclusive education following the results of the observation had a low tally of 10 scoring (25.64%). Table 2 show that ‘orals/practical assessments’, a quality of teachers’ assessment decisions in the study had the highest percentage under this construct. This is indicative that teachers use flexible assessments like orals and practical assessments more often in their classrooms. The Table also shows that written assessment, a determinant of teachers’ assessment decisions in the study had a percentage of (10.26%). This percentage is revealing that teachers do not only carry out orals and practical assessments in their classrooms but also written assessments. However, overall findings of observation show that some teachers have difficulties in making assessments decisions. These results were in contrast with the findings obtained from interview where all the four (4) participants had a positive response on the question of teacher’s assessment decisions and inclusive education. From the different discussions, teachers made it clear that they use different methods to meet the needs of the learners in the classroom. Teacher B for example said that “I normally use mixed methods since the special need students get tired too early. For example I normally teach them by songs, sports, and games. Otherwise they won’t be able to concentrate so changing activities even if the target is to teach them the same thing is important.” Evaluation is a vital component in the teaching learning process. Assessment is a prerequisite to evaluation in measurement and evaluation in education. Assessment determines the effectiveness of the instructional processes and procedures. Teachers are expected to vary their methods of assessments and evaluation of students. They have to choose the type of assessment they want for their students: oral/practical assessments and written assessments amongst others. Bottino (2004) suggests that a strong need exists for exploring other contextual forms of assessment, such as those afforded by the use of portfolios, problem-based assignments, peer refereeing and evaluation, and other emerging ways of looking at the challenges of assessment.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, findings of this study have revealed that teachers’ instructional decisions influence inclusive education. The results have shown that teachers’ planning decisions, teachers’ delivery decisions and teachers assessment decisions contributes to inclusive education with differing scores. Results have also shown that teachers pay more attention to delivery decisions and less on planning and assessment decisions. This study offers new evidence as well that inclusive practices are carried out in schools to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities. Based on the findings of this study and given that inclusive education is still a new phenomenon in the educational system in Cameroon and Africa as a whole, recommendations are made to teachers to create favourable learning environments for all the students including those with disabilities. Teachers should be trained on special or inclusive didactic skills while in teacher training schools in order for them to be able to carry out their job effectively. For example how to identify and respond to diverse needs of the learners, accommodate different learning styles and rates of learning, produce appropriate curriculum plans. Teachers as well as counselors should develop individualized education programs for all the students with special need. Schools should be equipped with adequate and relevant facilities such as self-contained classrooms, resource rooms. Schools should get into partnership with community organisations, and international organisations working in the area of inclusive education. In-service training programs on inclusive education should be organized regularly for all the teachers. The study was limited in its scope and methodological dimensions dominated by the qualitative approach which was however relevant for the study. The researcher suggests that a similar study should be carried out with a larger scope and sample. Immense thanks go to all the teachers and students who took part in the study. Sincere thanks also go to all the authors whose works were consulted to realise the findings of this study.

REFERENCES