

DECLARATION

I, Musonda Nonde, do hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work. I further certify that the work has not previously been submitted for a degree to the University of Zambia or any other University.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by Musonda Nonde is approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Special Education of the University of Zambia

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: the Andera's, the Nonde's and Kaluba Chime who have been a pillar of strength, happiness, inspiration and positive energy.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EQUIP – Educational Quality Improvement Programme

H.I – Hearing Impairment

HoD – Head of Department

MoESVTEE – Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education

SESO – Special Education Standards Officer

T.C –Total Communication

WHO – World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the impact of classroom communication on the academic performance of learners with hearing impairments at Solwezi and Munali Secondary Schools. The objectives of the study were as follows: To identify classroom communication techniques that were used in classrooms for learners with hearing impairments; to find out whether there was adequate learning materials for learners with hearing impairments; to establish whether the classroom environment was supportive of effective classroom communication and to determine how classroom communication affected on the academic performance of learners with hearing impairments. A case study design was employed. The study sample consisted of a hundred respondents of which eighty were learners with hearing impairments, fourteen class teachers, two Heads of Department, two Head teachers and two Special Education Standards Officers. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. Thematic analysis and SPSS were used to analyze the data.

Findings of the study revealed that the types of classroom communication techniques that were used included verbal, lip-reading, writing, body language, gestures and sign language. As regards to availability of learning materials, there was inadequate teaching and learning materials. The classroom environment did not support classroom communication. Concerning the impact of classroom communication, it was found that it negatively impacted on the academic performance of learners with hearing impairments. Findings revealed that there was a discrepancy between the classroom communication needs of learners with hearing impairments and what their teachers commonly used. Teachers commonly used verbal communication and writing on the board. To the contrary, learners were more comfortable with sign language. Due to poor classroom communication, sixty three percent of the learners' academic performance was below the forty percent pass mark.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: teachers should engage as many classroom communications techniques as possible and the Government should allocate more resources to schools to address the problem of inadequate learning materials.