Baseline Survey of TEACHER TRAINING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION in the Caribbean

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Executive Summary

This study sought to determine the training needs of teachers of children with special needs; the status of teacher training for Special Needs Education (SNE) using open and distance learning in the Caribbean; and prospects and recommendations for effective provision of teacher education for SNE using Open Distance Learning (ODL). In the early stage of data collection, it was discovered that the use of ODL to train teachers in SNE is limited to non-existent in most countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The limited opportunities for training in SNE are offered face-to-face. The focus was modified to examine the general status of teacher training for SNE.

The data revealed that there is a critical shortage of SNE trained teachers at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels in all 12 of the independent English speaking countries reviewed. Some teachers at the primary level often do SNE courses as electives. At the secondary level, however, teachers often do not take these courses and are therefore, unlikely to be prepared to handle the issues of SNE that might be present in a classroom. Policymakers, educators and practitioners highlighted the key challenges as limited numbers of qualified faculty to teach and train prospective SNE teachers; limited programme development to account for SNE training and development among pre-and in-service teachers; and inadequate SNE reflected in teaching and learning at the secondary school level.

Although there is limited training of SNE teachers across the region, training programmes offered by Colleges such as Sam Sharpe Teachers' College in Jamaica and the University of Trinidad and Tobago, offer prospective SNE teachers the option of a full Bachelor's degree. When compared to countries such as the USA and the UK, the programmes are comparable in terms of structure, content and methodology. However, given the wide range of learning difficulties, behavioural and emotional issues, and disabilities that students are likely to present with, the data is indicating that some SNE teachers might not be suitably trained in areas such as autism, assessment and diagnosing students' needs, managing negative behaviours, emotional disturbance, working with gifted and talented students, and special education for adolescents. In terms of teacher educators, the data shows that the skills required for professional training are also limited or absent in some cases. This negatively impacts the supply-side of training by restricting the specialist areas in which persons might be trained. Specific areas of training required for teacher trainers include: training in online delivery, assessment, and designing and delivery of online courses.

The concerns expressed by all participants in this study point to the need for coherence in the structure and delivery of SNE programmes. This is essential to the delivery of the programme in any modality. There is a recognised need for the delivery of programmes that offer pre- and in-service teachers hands-on experience with the kind of equipment required for use with a range of disabilities. Materials and learning resources should be customised to suit the diverse needs of leaners and reflective of national priorities. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism that allows for feedback about how teachers are applying what they learned in training is essential. This will ensure that there is alignment between the realities of classrooms and what is taught in training, as well as, to maintain a check on the quality of delivery offered by teachers trained in the programme.

The matter of inclusive education, to which all governments in the region have committed, remains a challenge as greater focus has been placed on the more moderate to severe types of disabilities usually found in special schools. With the exception of the Masters degree offered at The University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine Campus, the emphasis in other programmes remain with the more moderate to severe disabilities and to a much lesser extent on mild disabilities.

Recommendations include the introduction of the use of ODL on a wide scale to fast track the upgrading of SNE practitioners without the requisite qualifications, and to increase the number of pre-service SNE teachers being trained throughout the region. This is in keeping with the Caribbean Regional Policy for Open and Distance Learning which calls for the use of ODL as a way to foster collaboration and partnership across the region, attract funding and build institutional capacity to meet the learning and training needs of the populations.

Aim and Methodology of the Study

The aim of this study was to provide a status report on special education needs training for teachers in the Commonwealth Caribbean including the extent to which Open and Distance Learning modalities are being used to facilitate training and development. The study draws on the Caribbean Regional Policy for Open and Distance Learning (ODL). The policy calls for the use of ODL as a means to bridge the gap in access to formal education and foster the development of employability skills among the vast majority of the populations. In addition, the policy is seen as a way to foster collaboration and partnership across the region, attract funding and build institutional capacity to meet the learning and training needs of the populations. Since the crafting of the policy framework, The University of the West Indies Open Campus, previously Distance Teaching Programme, has expanded and become the premier ODL institution in the Region. Nevertheless, the training of special educators via this mode continues to lag behind. In light of this, the implementation of the policy by individual countries requires new impetus and thrust to emphasize the need for local institutions to re-consider their programme offerings and modalities in order to broaden access to training and ultimately to enhance or develop the potential of the child with special needs.

This study examines the availability of, access to, and the quality of special education training programmes for teachers. The methodology was initially premised on the notion that given the dearth of face-to-face programmes in special needs education, most of the practitioners were trained in an ODL environment. As such the methodological approach was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current status of the training of teachers for SNE using open and distance learning in the Caribbean?
2. What are the training needs of teachers of children with special needs?
3. What are the components of an effective training programme for SNE teachers using ODL, and to what extent are these evident in teacher training programmes throughout the Caribbean?

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods were included to collect data from principals, teachers, ministries of education, and teacher training institutions. Specifically, surveys and interviews along with a desk review were used to collect data to answer the questions.

The data collection phase of the study revealed that similar to the limited opportunities for training in the on-site/face-to-face mode, there is also few opportunities for ODL training in special education needs in the region. The outcome was that the consultant was unable to operationalise the initial design of the study. The survey instruments and the interview protocol were modified to reflect the shift in focus to assess the status of special education training in the region. However, this does not mean that the issue of ODL has become incidental to study. Indeed, preliminary analysis of the data highlights the gaps in current SNE training and the absolute need for the region to consider a coordinated ODL framework for offering training in SNE. Moreover, given the absence of these programmes, the sample was also modified to include twelve rather than six countries, with the view to capturing more information about special education training programmes on offer. As such, education professionals with knowledge of existing programmes in 12 countries (Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago) were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted between May and June 2015 with officials from ministries of education and senior personnel from teacher training institutions. In addition, a reduced number teachers (9 teachers from 3 countries[1]) practising SNE were involved in completing a modified survey instrument.

Based on the modified focus, the data gathered provided information on the following:

- General policies and approaches towards Special Education Needs;
- Status of the training of teachers for SNE in the Commonwealth Caribbean and the types of modalities used in their training;
- Training needs of teachers of children with special needs;
- Components of an effective training programme for SNE teachers and the extent to which these are evident in teacher training programmes throughout the Caribbean.

1. Jamaica, Grenada and St Lucia

The Challenge of Special Needs Education (SNE) Training in the Commonwealth Caribbean

The promise of quality education for all in the Commonwealth Caribbean is premised on the provision of opportunities to identify and explore the potential of students. Invariably this means that teachers and other educational professionals must have the skills needed to help students realise their potential. Addressing special needs education in any meaningful way necessitates concerted efforts to train and establish a cadre of education professionals with the requisite understanding and skills of SNE. Given the reported prevalence of SNE children (10–15%) in mainstream classrooms, most teachers are expected to teach students with special needs but are unlikely to be equipped to identify and deal with the difficulties some children experience with learning. The key challenge is to provide initial teacher training and continuing professional development that adequately equip teachers both as SNE specialists and for general education. This means that what teachers know, and are able to do in relation to SNE is the basis for meeting the needs of students.

Another key challenge in the Caribbean is the ad hoc way in which states have approached inclusive education as policy imperative for the delivery of quality education. Edwards-Kerr and Spencer-Ernandez in *Re-Imagining Education in the Caribbean* (2017, 57) describe both comprehensive reform and project–driven approaches as the ways in which governments in the region have attempted to implement inclusive education or aspects of it. In both scenarios, narrow conceptualisations of inclusive education as a means for developing appropriate structures and curricular for schools is fundamental to the absence of regular teacher training programmes providing SNE training.

This issue is universal and as pointed out by Florian (2014, 57) affects the quality of SNE teacher training, specifically a fundamental lack of competence among all levels of the school system to develop effective pre- and in-service programmes. This gap in training is very much present in the Caribbean. The implication here is that achieving quality education for all students depends on the extent to which prospective and current teachers can gain access to initial and continuing SNE teacher training programmes. Slow programme development in SNE by individual states and regional institutions has meant limited opportunities for access to courses and opportunities for placement in situations where teachers in training will meet students with special needs. Online and distance learning systems present a clear opportunity for this gap to be filled and the barriers to training removed. UNICEF ROSA (2009) states:

> The term ODL or open and distance learning is frequently used as an umbrella term to cover educational approaches that reach learners in places that are convenient or accessible to them, provide learning resources for them, or enable them to qualify without attending school or college in person, or open up new opportunities for keeping up to date no matter where or when they want to study (vii).

In other words ODL offers a viable option for training teachers across the Caribbean region and especially in remote areas of countries that are difficult to have face-to-face and on-site trainers. Importantly, ODL systems have been shown to be cost-effective and have the potential to remove barriers to learning. Singh and Agarwal (2013) point out that notwithstanding these obvious advantages of ODL, practices should rely on research as a guide to ensure that training is relevant to enable the development of practices that work with the diversity of difficulties some students face. Particularly, the design and development of the learning environment should reflect the ways in which teachers are expected to work with children with disabilities. However, the challenge is to make optimal use of the information and communication technology (ICT) so that trainees acquire the competencies for implementing the appropriate pedagogies in their classrooms. The question then is, what training programmes actually exist in the region that prepare teachers to meet the needs of the Student with Special Needs population?

To assess the adequacy of the number of teachers trained for SNE in the Caribbean region, an essential first step is to determine the prevalence of students with special needs, and to use this information to determine the need for further training programmes through a gap analysis. That is, the difference between the number of students with special needs identified and the number of practicing teachers of students with special needs in the school system.

Prevalence of Students with Special Education Needs in the Region

In the 2011 World Report on Disability, it was reported that about 15% of the world's population was estimated to be living with a disability. Using the suggested 15%, and the total enrolment of students for 2011–2012, Table 1 shows the estimated prevalence of students with special needs by country. Based on the reported number of students in special schools, it can be inferred that the difference represents the number of potential students with special needs who may either be in the regular school system, or may be at home and not attending school.

Table 1: Prevalence of Children with Special Needs in the Commonwealth Caribbean Public Schools from Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Schools (2011–2012)

Country	Number of Students in Early Childhood, Public Primary and Secondary schools	Students with Special Needs based on 15% of student population	Number of Students in Public Special Schools	Number Requiring Students with Special Needs Services
Antigua and Barbuda	20,701	3,105	104	3,001
The Bahamas	49,800	7,559	3,001	6,964
Barbados	56,100	8,415	595	7,885
Belize	96,112	14,417	530	14,214
Dominica	13,600	1,360	123	1,240
Grenada	13,600	3,561	120	3,332
Guyana	189,048	28,357	647	27,710
Jamaica	685,202	102,780	2,805	99,975
St. Kitts and Nevis	11,646	1,747	107	1,640
St. Lucia	35,140	5,271	361	4,910
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	26,874	4,031	200	3,831
Trinidad and Tobago	258,000	38,700	812	37,888

In the case of Jamaica, for example, of the estimated 90,053 potential students with special needs in early chilhdhood, primary and secondary schools requiring special services, 2,805 (3%) are accounted for in special schools. It therefore, means that 97% of students with special needs are included in regular education or they are not enroled in school. Given that Jamaica boasts universal primary and secondary education with 95% and 91% enrolled at the primary and secondary levels respectively, one can conclude that the vast majority of students with special needs unaccounted for in special schools are included in the regualar school population. The Ministry of Jamaica (MOE) Jamaica reported:

> In the area of special education there were 425 teachers employed, 64 percent of whom are teaching in government owned and aided schools, 8 percent in special education units and 29 percent in independent special schools. Some, 307 or 72 percent of these teachers are trained (MOE 2013, 37).

Based on this information, there are 310 teachers in government schools and of this number, 255 are trained SNE teachers and 55 are untrained. If the population of students with special needs who are enrolled within regular pre-primary, primary and secondary schools (100,000) are to receive special education services in an inclusive

education setting, Jamaica would need to employ an additional 2,857 SNE teachers. This is premised on a ratio of 1 teacher to 35 students with special needs which is the official teacher/pupil ratio for regualar education classes at the primary level. Ideally, the ratio should be lower.

The problem was highlighted by the Director of SNE in the Education System Transformation Prorgamme, who indicated a need for 167 trained SNE teachers for Secondary schools to be trained as Pathway Coaches under the new Alternative Pathways for Secondary Education (APSE). Currently only 47 have been identified.

Bergsma (2000) in a study of the options of SNE in the Commonwealth Caribbean reported a need for the provision of 1,747 teachers at the primary school level (Grades 1–6). According to Bergsma:

> There is a great need for trained special needs education teachers at all levels of the system. If a country's policy is that profound special needs children should receive education in a special education setting, then more than 200 teachers are needed. If all the schools in the Commonwealth Caribbean are to implement a support system with, for example, itinerant and resource services based on 1 support teacher to 480 students, then at least 1,700 teachers are necessary for this purpose.

In light of the findings by Bergsma, several recommendations were made to include the following:

> With the existing output of teacher education programmes in the Commonwealth Caribbean, and in light of the quantitative need for these teachers, different modalities should be explored in order to achieve the number of trained special needs and support teachers necessary for the possible implementation of educational services to special needs children. In terms of the qualitative need for these special needs programmes, it is clear that a reform in teacher education programmes is necessary, especially with regard to serving the mild to moderate special needs students in the regular mainstream system, many of whom now leave the primary mainstream system with insufficient or no literacy and numeracy skills (Bergsma 2000, 14).

Grenada presents with a similar problem in terms of the provision of special education for its students with special needs. The MOE reported that there were 21,255 students across primary and secondary schools. Further they reported that 135 students were in special schools, thus indicating that of the 15% (3,188) of the student population with potential special needs, 3,053 were placed within regular education schools. To effectively cater to their needs with a teacher:student ratio of 1:15, approximately 130 additional SNE teachers would be required.

The data for all countries indicate that there is an overwhelming need for the provision of additional SNE teachers to provide the services necessary for students to maximize their potential in an inclusive education setting.

General Policies and Approaches Toward Special Education Needs

In keeping with the provisions of the 'Education for All' (1990) and the 'Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action for Special Needs Educaton' (1994), the countries of the region, which are signatories to these agreements, have enacted legislation, policies, and laws to protect the rights of the SNE population and to provide an appropriate education to meet their needs, thus guranteeing access, equity and quality. Table 2 shows a sample of six of the 12 countries and the legislation in place for SNE. Provisions have been made for various service delivery models to ensure the least restrictive environment. Inclusive education is being advocated along with special school and special class placement for those students deemed to be in need of such placements. Parents now have a right to demand special services for their children and there is a deliberate attempt to identify students with special needs.

In an effort to ensure that the laws are put into effect, all countries in the region have begun to transform the education system, hence the need for qualified SNE teachers. Barbados, for example, established the Special Needs Education Services within the MOE with the following mandate:

> To ensure that provision is made for students experiencing any of the following challenges: autism, visual impairment, speech and language impairment, learning difficulties, mental challenges and giftedness. The Special Needs Education Services focus on the identification of students for placement through multidisciplinary evaluation. Special needs education is addressed in three ways: in the regular classroom, in the special classroom in the regular school, and in the special unit or special education school. Children who are mainstreamed in the regular classroom are given the necessary support through an Individual Education Plan, which assists the teachers to meet the needs of the student (UNESCO 2010, 6).

Table 2: Special Education Legislation in the Commonwealth Caribbean

Country	Laws Governing Special Needs Education
Barbados Education Act 1997	53. (1) The Minister may, for the purposes of ascertaining which children of compulsory school age require special educational treatment, carry out such investigations as he considers necessary, and after the investigations the Minister may provide for the education of any child requiring special educational treatment. The Minister may, where practicable, provide special schools appropriate for the education of children requiring special educational treatment; but where it is not practicable to do so the Minister may provide facilities for special education at any school.
Belize Education Act Chapter 36 Revised Edition 2000	25. (1) The education system shall ensure equitable access for both genders to education at all levels, shall be sensitive to the particular needs of the female gender, and shall cater to the special needs of challenged pupils.
Dominica Education Act of 1997	81. (1) The Chief Education Officer is responsible for providing special education programmes for students of compulsory school age who by virtue of intellectual, communicative, behavioural, physical or multiple exceptionalities are in need of special education. (2) A student who is entitled to a special education programme shall have the programme delivered in the least restrictive and most enabling environment to the extent that resources permit and it is considered practicable by the Chief Education Officer in consultation with professional staff of the school and the Ministry and the parents, having due regard for the educational needs and rights of all students.
Guyana Education Bill 2014	93.(1) The Chief Education Officer shall provide a special education programme for any student of compulsory school age and may provide education for a student beyond that age, who by virtue of intellectual, communicative, behavioral, physical or multiple attributes or other conditions is in need of special education. (2) A student who is entitled to a special education programme shall have the programme delivered in the least restrictive and most enabling environment that resources permit, and that is considered practicable by the Chief Education Officer in consultation with the principal and professional staff of the school and the student's parents, having regard to the educational needs and rights of other students. (3) A special education programme may take the form of an individual education plan tailored to the specific or individual needs of the student. (4) If it is determined that a student will require an individual education plan, the cost of developing, providing and maintaining the plan shall be apportioned between the parents and the Ministry, in the manner prescribed by the regulations.

Table 2: Special Education Legislation in the Commonwealth Caribbean (cont'd)

Country	Laws Governing Special Needs Education
Jamaica Disability Act 2014	PART V. Education and Training 26.-(1) An educational or training institution shall not deny a person with a disability from being enrolled at, or, attending, the institution, by reason of their disability (2) An educational or training institution shall provide the support necessary to ensure that, in relation to the institution, a person with a disability (a) has the most reasonable access to the education or training provided; (b) has access to facilities in the least restrictive environment and best suited to his individual needs; (c) being a student of the institution, is not, in relation to student services provided, placed at a disadvantage; and (d) is provided with reasonable arrangement and receives the support required, to effectively facilitate his education
Trinidad and Tobago Education Act of 1996 Amended 2005	9. (1) The Minister may— (a) cause to be established any special school; (b) cause to be established or authorise the establishment of, any special school, class, clinic or service, either as a separate unit or in connection with any public institution approved for the purpose by him; (c) make provision for special educational facilities to be provided by instruction by correspondence. 40. In addition to the establishment of special schools, classes, clinics and services as provided for under section 39 the Minister may recognise for purposes of financial assistance such other classes or services providing special education or facilities supplementing special education as may from time to time be prescribed. (8) The Minister may also make Regulations for all or any of the following purposes: (a) defining the categories of children requiring special education, providing for the mode of determining which children come within any category and for the examination of children who come within that category; and prescribing the general type of special education appropriate to children who come within any category.

In 2007, the MOE Trinidad and Tobago commissioned the 'Miske Witt study' to determine the status of inclusive education in the twin island republic. This was part of an effort of the MOE to develop a seamless education system that provides inclusive education for all students. The findings of the study included the following:

- Existence of few programmes for special needs students in regular schools;
- Lack of training for teachers to deal with special needs;

- Absence of pre-service training for teachers;
- Weak system for in-service training;
- Poor integration of technology into teaching strategies;
- A centralized management system;
- Weak communications network among the various levels of central, district and school activities;
- Weak articulation among the various levels of the education system.

The MOE responded by drawing up plans to focus on:

- Physically upgrading public schools to adapt to the new inclusive policy;
- Teacher training;
- Creating diverse schemes and incentives to increase the supply of qualified specialists;
- Management and administration training;
- Provision of didactic materials and equipment, including those required for the introduction of ICT;
- Development of a multi-pronged communication strategy for sensitization;
- Strengthening mechanism for inter-ministerial coordination;
- Parent education and empowerment;
- Streamlining curriculum and adaptation of testing instruments;
- Support for early diagnosis of children with special needs.

These initiatives are typical throughout the region as each state attempts to transform its education system to improve, or to establish appropriate education for its population of students with special education needs. The rate of transformation varies and the main challenge is that of human and financial resources.

Status of the Training of Teachers for SNE in the Commonwealth Caribbean

Teacher training colleges and universities in the region were surveyed to identify the types of SNE training programmes offered and the mode in which they are delivered. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and the review of documents presented and retrieved online.

Table 3 presents an overview of the findings which indicates that five universities and 1 teachers' college in the region offer a face-to-face degree in SNE and two offer a master's degree. The mode of course delivery did not include online or distance education and the cohort graduating each year was usually fewer than 20 students which was deemed to be inadequate. The University of Trininidad and Tobago, Erdiston Teachers' College in Barbados and Cyril Potter Teachers' College in Guyana offer a certificate course in SNE. At Erdiston, the course is face-to-face and approximately 20 students graduate each year. At Cyril Potter, mixed modalities were used in the course delivery. Blair (2015) reported that 'due to the terrain, distance modality is employed in the delivery of the certificate in SNE.' Further, she reported that up to 100 persons have received training in SNE at the certificate level. Other colleges, such as the T. A. Marryshow Community College in Grenada, and the St. Joseph's Teachers' College in Jamaica have required courses that are offered as part of a regular education programme. Antigua and Barbuda, in an effort to increase the number of SNE teachers in the schools, signed an MOU with the University of the Southern Caribbean to provide a diploma in SNE. Currently 41 teachers are engaged.

Most colleges reported that they offer SNE as an elective. This indicates that if a student did not choose that course, then it is possible for that student to graduate without a basic understanding of the nature and needs of the student with special needs whom they will face in the regular classroom. The reality is that the vast majority of students identified with special needs, and those not identified, will spend most of their time in a regular classroom setting (Starko, 1986).

Ministries of Education have taken the initiative to fund the training of teachers as they move closer to full inclusion. For example, the Barbados Ministry of Education invested heavily in the training of SNE teachers by providing over BDS$2M to collaborate with the Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax Canada to provide the training. Through this initiative, just over 83 teachers gained degrees at the Masters levels in Inclusionary Practices

and Curriculum Development, nine teachers at the Bachelors level in Special Education and 14 teachers achieved a Masters in Educational Psychology in deaf or hard of hearing/blind or visually impaired education.

The University of the West Indies at both the Cave Hill and St. Augustine campuses are currently offering degrees in special education. The St. Agustine campus offers a Masters degree in inclusive and special education and the Cave Hill campus offers special needs education with a major in either Social Work or Sociology, or, Language Arts/Literacy Studies. In Trinidad and Tobago, the University of Trinidad and Tobago offers a Bachelors degree in Special Education. The Mico University College and Sam Sharpe Teachers' College in Jamaica, are the only other teacher training institutions offering degrees in Special Education. Mico offers both the Bachelors and Masters.

The Miske Witt (2007) study reported that in Trinidad, for example, the efforts by both universities will not provide the number of SNE teachers and other specialists to meet the needs of the projected SNE population of students at all levels. The report stated:

> At the current rate of enrolment, the special needs education and special education course of study being offered at UT&T[2] and USC[3] respectively will prepare approximately 35 teachers per year for the system. If a minimum of one special education teacher is to be available to each school, it will take over a decade for a sufficient number of graduates to be available. It will be important to consider implementing relatively soon alternate route programmes, in particular, web-based in- service training for teachers, which can be introduced throughout the system more quickly and consistently, together with school-based professional development (Miske Witt 2007, 42–43).

2. University of Trinidad and Tobago
3. University of the Southern Caribbean

Table 3: SNE teacher training programmes by country and type

College/ University	Country	Cert	Dip	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Modules	Electives	Required courses	Delivery Mode	Number Trained per annum	Adequacy for needs
Antigua State College	Antigua							√	√	Face-to-Face		Inadequate
The College of the Bahamas	The Bahamas				√					Face-to-Face	15	Inadequate
University of Belize	Belize				√			√		Face-to-Face		Inadequate
St. John's College	Belize				√		√			Face-to-Face		Inadequate
Dominica State College	Dominica				√			√		Face-to-Face		Inadequate
Erdiston Teachers' College	Barbados	√	√				√			Face-to-Face	20+	Inadequate
UWI Open Campus	Barbados							√	√	Online		
UWI Cave Hill	Barbados				√	√				Face-to-Face	20	Inadequate
T. A. Marryshow Community College	Grenada							√		Face-to-Face		Inadequate
Cyril Potter Teachers' College	Guyana	√					√		√	Face-To-Face and Distance	90+ (Special Project)	Inadequate
University of Guyana	Guyana				√					Face-to-Face		Inadequate
The University of the West Indies, Mona	Jamaica							√ undergrad and graduate levels)	√	Face-to-Face and Online		Inadequate
The Mico University College	Jamaica				√	√				Face-to-Face	20	Inadequate
Sam Sharpe Teachers' College	Jamaica				√					Face-to-Face	15-20	Inadequate

Table 3: SNE teacher training programmes by country and type (cont'd)

College/ University	Country	Cert	Dip	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Modules	Electives	Required courses	Delivery Mode	Number Trained per annum	Adequacy for needs
Bethlehem Moravian Teachers' College	Jamaica								√	Face-to-Face		Inadequate
St. Joseph's Teachers' College	Jamaica								√	Face-to-Face		Inadequate
College of Agriculture, Science and Education	Jamaica								√	Face-to-Face		Inadequate
Church Teachers' College	Jamaica								√	Face-to-Face		Inadequate
Shortwood Teachers' College	Jamaica								√	Face-to-Face		Inadequate
The Moneague College	Jamaica								√	Face-to-Face		Inadequate
Northern Caribbean University	Jamaica								√	Face-to-Face		Inadequate
Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College	St. Kitts and Nevis							√		Face-to-face		Inadequate
Sir Arthur Lewis Community College	St. Lucia							√		Face-to-face		Inadequate
St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College	St. Vincent and the Grenadines							√		Face-to-face		Inadequate
University of the West Indies, St. Agustine	Trinidad and Tobago					√				Face-to-Face		Inadequate
University of Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago				√					Face-to-Face	20	Inadequate
University of the Southern Caribbean	Trinidad and Tobago	√			√					Face-to-Face Some online		Inadequate

Table 4 shows projections for support personnel based on the Miske Witt study which indicates the need for increased opportunities for the training of SNE personnel to adequately support the MOE's SNE initiatives. Since this report, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine has added a Masters programme in Inculsive and Special Education. Although this means an additional number of trained SNE teachers, because it is at the Masters level, a minimal number of 20-24 teachers graduate each year. Often times, it is the same teachers who obtained an undergraduate degree from one of the other universities and are already working in the system who are in the Masters programme. If, approximately 50 SNE teachers are added to the system each year, over the 7 year period since the study, only about 350 trained SNE teachers would be available.

The projected need for Special Education, Remedial Education and Inclusive Education Specialists teachers is 3,395 (see Table 4). It therefore, means that Trinidad and Tobago would be short by some 3,045 teachers.

Table 4: Staffing projections for support personnel

Position	Phase I (2008-10) 24 model schools	Phase II (2011-14 60% of total schools	Phase III (2015-17) 40% of total schools	Total # Staff needed 100% of 625 schools
Special Ed Teacher II	24	360	241	625
Speech & Lang. Therapists (ECCE & primary schools)	12	160	100	272
Psychologists	8	10	8	26
Guidance Officers	4	60	40	104
Remedial Teachers (secondary schools)	8	85	57	150
Special Ed Teacher I 30/1 student/teacher ratio (20% of 400,000 students)	96	1868	632	2596
Social Workers	4	60	40	104
Diagnostician (ECCE)	5	105	70	180
Curriculum Specialist	8	16	0	24
Inclusive Ed Specialist	8	16	0	24

Source: Miske Witt (2007)

The situation is similar throughout the region. As mentioned earlier, Jamaica would need a total of 2,857 SNE teachers to cater to students who are included in the regular classroom setting. With Mico and Sam Sharpe graduating a total of approximately 35 to 40 SNE teachers per annum, it would take approximately 82 years to get the the required number. When migration, retirement and the exit of trained SNE teachers from Special Education are factored in, the situation becomes more critical. The MOE in its 'Vision 2030 Education Sector Plan (2009)' identified some key issues negatively impacting Special Education in Jamaica.

Key Issues Negatively Impacting Special Education (MOE, 2009):

- Inadequate number and distribution of institutions to support the variation in special needs across the island;
- Inadequate number of trained individuals to service the number of individuals with varying special needs;
- Inadequate equipment to support training for some special needs;
- Inadequate financing to support the varying needs;
- Inadequate support in the homes of individuals with special needs;
- Inadequate programmes to support the gifted.

Findings of Focused Discussions: Challenges in Pre – and In-service Training of SNE Teachers

In a meeting of participants representing the 12 independent English speaking Caribbean countries at the Regional Consultative Meeting on Teacher Education using Open and Distance Learning in the Caribbean (2015), the vast majority of the participants described the inadequacy of pre-service and in-service training opportunities for SNE teachers. The participants included two Chief Education Officers, Assistant Director of Education, Planning Services and Training, Head of Department of the School of Education, Director of Education Support Services, Principal of a Community High School, SNE Teacher Education Programme Manager, Principal of a Teachers' College, Dean of Teacher Education, Manager of the Joint Board in Teacher Education, Education Officer for Special Education, Coordinator of the M.Ed. Inclusive and Special Education and a Programme Leader for the Centre for Education Programmes.

Their comments on the issue of the challenges faced in the training of pre-service and in-service SNE teachers are presented thematically in Table 5.

Table 5: Challenges of Pre and In-Service SNE Training

Theme	Narrative Description
Limited qualified faculty/experts in SNE	"There is a lack of personnel with the necessary qualifications to deliver the pre-service programme." "No one in our department is currently trained in Special Needs Education." "Very limited Special Education teacher trainers….. "Very few local persons available to teach special education courses." "Ill prepared teacher educators
Limited Programme Development	"There is not a specific training programme for Special Needs Education." "Limited and inadequate input in teacher training programme." "SNE course is only an elective."
Inadequate SNE at the secondary school level (curriculum and teachers)	"There is no such requirement for teachers at the secondary level. Special Needs Education is included as a module in the regular education course. This needs to be changed if secondary teachers are to be prepared to meet the challenges of the secondary environment."

The participants were asked to make recommendations for the training of SNE teachers and other personnel who work in SNE such as Education Officers. Table 6 presents the responses made by the participants.

Table 6: Recommendations for Pre and In-Service Training

Recommendations	Narrative Description
Extend teacher education programmes	"Make the course in SNE mandatory in teacher education." "Make components of SNE compulsory in teacher training, and increase the volume of SNE emphasis." "SNE should be a specialization for all levels of the education system." "Build on the existing MOE Special Education support programme to include support by distance education and other self-instruction techniques." "Develop and use online learning to train."
Enhance professional development (general school system)	"Coach, supervise and monitor SNE teachers in schools." "Upskill already trained teachers by providing professional development and by running a summer module annually in SNE." "All staff members at the Department of Teacher Education engaged in ongoing professional development on Special Needs so that they remain on the cutting edge and remain relevant as they prepare teachers." "Engage SNE teachers in intensive training so they can become facilitators in selected areas such as ADHD, Dyslexia and Differentiation "In-service training and support for all teachers, administrators and other education partners should be an ongoing process." "Redeploy and retool Special Education teachers who are in the regular classroom." "Redeploy a cohort of teachers and train them to subsequently have them re-enter the systems as trained teachers in Special Needs."
SNE requirement for secondary school teachers	"Teachers at the secondary level should be required to take the Special Needs course taken by primary school teachers."
Increase collaboration with universities and colleges	"Further collaboration with universities to provide degree programmes in SNE." "Greater collaboration between MOE and teacher education institutions in addressing needs."

Participants expressed an urgency about the training of SNE teachers. To achieve this, some advocated the use of Online and Distance learning. There was a particular concern about SNE teachers in the secondary classroom. This was an area of deficit in the system as they expressed concern that students with special needs were not receiving an appropriate education at the secondary level due to teachers not being trained to meet their needs. The problem is also evident at the higher level, as it was reported that there are Education Officers with the responsibility for overseeing SNE who are not trained in SNE and therefore, would also need training.

Training Needs of Teachers of Children with Special Needs

Nine teachers responded and completed an online survey, which aimed at gathering information on their qualification, years of service, the mode of training and issues related to the content of their training programme, their current role as SNE teachers and their training needs. The data gathered presents a snapshot through the lens of these nine SNE teachers from Jamaica, Grenada and St. Lucia.

As seen in Table 7, eight females and one male completed the online questionnaire. Three were teaching the lower grades in primary (Grades 1–3) and six were teaching Grades 1–6. Eight of the ten were highly experienced as they had been teaching for more than 16 years. One teacher indicated that he had been teaching for less than 10 years. Four teachers indicated that their course of study was face-to-face. Two participated in an online programme and two were engaged in distance education and one blended programme (face-to-face and online). Most of the respondents reported that their course of study included coursework, examination, lectures and a practicum. Five teachers were exposed to seven or more courses in SNE in their training programme, while two had 3–4 and two had 5–6 courses. Eight were teachers of SNE classes and one described his primary function as a numeracy specialist.

Table 7: Results of The SNE Teacher Survey

Gender	School level you serve:	How long have you been working as a teacher	What is your level of education as a SNE teacher?	Which of the following did your training programme include?	Did your training programme include any other elements?	What were the OTHER elements, if any, included in your training?	Which of the following BEST describes the mode of your training?	How many Special Needs courses did you do as part of your training programme?	Are you currently employed as a teacher in a school?
Male	Primary (Grades 4 –6)	6–10 years	SNE training as part of a Bachelor's in Education	Coursework, Examinations, Internship, Practicum, Lectures	Yes	Just something else	Face-to-Face	Three to Four	Numeracy Specialist
Female	Primary (Grades 1 –3)	More than 20 years	presently doing Master's Degree in Special Education	Coursework, Examinations, Practicum	Yes	Literature reviews comparative analysis	Blended (face-to- face & online)	Seven or more	Yes
Female	Primary (Grades 4 –6)	More than 20 years	SNE training as part of a Masters in Education	Coursework, Examinations, Practicum, Lectures	No		Face-to- Face	Seven or more	Yes
Female	Primary (Grades 4 –6)	More than 20 years	I have no certification	Lectures	No		Face-to- Face	Five to Six	Yes
Female	Primary (Grades 4 –6)	16 – 20 years	Master's Degree in Special Education	Coursework, Examinations, Lectures	Yes	workshops research	Online	Seven or more	Yes
Female	Primary (Grades 4 –6)	16 – 20 years	Bachelor's Degree in Special Education	Coursework, Examinations, Practicum, Lectures	No		Face-to- Face	Five to Six	Yes
Female	Primary (Grades 1 –3)	More than 20 years	Master's Degree in Special Education	Coursework, Examinations, Practicum, Lectures	No		Distance	Seven or more	Yes
Female	Primary (Grades 1 –3)	More than 20 years	Master's Degree in Special Education	Coursework, Examinations, Practicum, Lectures	No		Online	Seven or more	Yes
Female	Primary (Grades 1 –3)	More than 20 years	SNE training as part of a Masters in Education	Coursework, Examinations, Lectures	No		Distance	Three to Four	Yes

Using a Likert type scale, teachers were asked to indicate whether they were trained in any of the SNE areas presented. Their responses as seen in Table 8 indicate that they rated the following as the areas where they either agreed or strongly agreed that these were areas in which they received training:

- Differentiating instruction for different groups of learners;
- Inclusive education;
- Teaching in the content areas;
- Teaching reading to struggling readers;
- Working with students struggling with numeracy skills;
- Helping students working in cooperative groups;
- Assessment of students' skills and knowledge.

The following areas received low ratings indicating that teachers felt that these are areas in which they were given little or no training :

- Working with students who have a Learning Disability;
- Working with students who are hearing impaired or deaf;
- Working with children with behavioural problems;
- Working with gifted and talented students;
- Social and emotional safety of students in the classroom;

It is interesting to note that the areas in which teachers reported that they receive very little training are the categories of special needs they are most likely to meet in the inclusive classroom. The two main areas being students with learning disabilities and students with behavioural problems.

Table 8: Teachers' Rating of SNE Components of their Training

SKILLS & CONTENT AREAS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NOT SURE
a) Assessment of students' skills and knowledge	44%	44%	0%	11%	0%
b) Modification of instructional strategies to meet individual student needs	56%	33%	0%	11%	0%
c) Designing or implementing a curriculum for struggling students	22%	22%	22%	11%	11%
d) Inclusive Education	44%	44%	11%	0%	
e) Helping students work in cooperative groups	22%	67%	0%	11%	0%
f) Social and emotional safety of children with disabilities in the classroom	11%	22%	11%	22%	33%
g) Communicating with school staff and parents about students' performance and behaviours	33%	44%	22%	0%	0%
h) Developing Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for students	22%	56%	11%	11%	0%
i) Teaching reading to struggling readers	22%	78%	0%	0%	0%
j) Teaching reading across the content areas	11%	78%	11%	0%	0%
k) Working with students struggling with numeracy skills	22%	67%	11%	0%	0%
l) Working with gifted and talented students	22%	22%	22%	11%	11%
m) Differentiating instruction for different groups of learners	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%
n) Working with children with behavioural problems	22%	22%	22%	11%	33%
o) Working with students with autism	22%	56%	0%	22%	0%
p) Working with students who are hearing impaired or deaf	11%	33%	33%	22%	2%
q) Working with students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	11%	56%	11%	11%	11%
r) Working with students with Learning Disabilities	11%	33%	0%	44%	11%
s) Working with students who are Slow learners/have learning difficulties	44%	11%	22%	0%	22%
(t) Working with students with physical/orthopedic impairment	11%	33%	0%	44%	11%
u) Using technology in the classroom to aid instruction	44%	11%	22%	0%	22%

Teachers were asked to rate their level of preparation as an SNE teacher on a number of SNE topics covered in their training. Their responses were comparable to those given to the previous question related to the areas in which they received training (See Table 9). Primarily they reported being very prepared or prepared on topics such as assessment, modification of instructional strategies, differentitating instruction and inclusive education. On the other hand, most teachers felt they were not at all prepared to teach the hearing impaired or deaf and students with physical/orthopedic impairment.

Table 9: Teachers' level of preparedness for teaching SNE related topics

SKILLS & CONTENT AREAS	VERY PREPARED	SOMEWHAT PREPARED	NOT AT ALL
a) Assessment of students' skills and knowledge	56%	44%	0%
b) Modification of instructional strategies to meet individual student needs	67%	33%	0%
c) Designing or implementing a curriculum for struggling students	22%	67%	11%
d) Inclusive Education	0%	100%	0%
e) Working with students who are hearing impaired or deaf	0%	33%	67%
f) Working with students with speech and Language Impairment	0%	44%	56%
g) Working with students who are visually impaired or blind	11%	56%	33%
h) Working with students who have intellectual disabilities	33%	33%	33%
i) Working with students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	22%	56%	22%
j) Working with students with Learning disabilities	56%	33%	11%
k) Working with students who are Slow learners/have learning difficulties	56%	44%	0%
l) Working with students with physical/orthopedic impairment	11%	22%	67%
m) Using technology in the classroom to aid instruction	56%	22%	22%

Teachers were asked to indicate how many professional development sessions in SNE they had attended in the previous 3 years. As seen in Table 10, 67% of the teachers attended up to eight or more sessions in assessing students and curriculum material. Forty-four per cent reported that they had no session on teaching methods, using technology in the classroom and classroom management. In the area of Differentiated Instruction, 89% of the teachers participated in up to seven sessions of professional development training.

Table 10: Number of professional development training sessions attended in the last 3 years.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS	None	1-2 Sessions	3-7 Sessions	8 or more Sessions
a) Assessing Students	33%	33%	33%	0%
b) Curriculum Materials	33%	11%	33%	11%
c) Teaching Methods	44%	11%	33%	11%
d) Using Technology in the classroom	44%	56%	0%	0%
e) Differentiated Instruction	11%	33%	56%	0%
f) Classroom management	44%	33%	11%	11%

When asked to state the frequency with which a number of SNE activities took place during the school year, as seen in Table 11, most teachers indicated that they never had an on the job opportunity to learn how to use teaching strategies specific to SNE. They did however, have some collaboration with other teachers who observed their class, or they had the opportunity to observe their colleagues' class and to provide feedback. In addition, 78% of the teachers reported that they were able to collaborate with another teacher to teach students requiring SNE as often as ten occasions. The development of IEPs was another area of strengfth as most teachers reported that they devleoped IEPs in collaboration with other members of staff.

Table 11: The Nature of Collaboration and Professional Development Activities

Area of Collaboration and Support	Never	1-2 Times	3-5 Times	6 - 10 Times	More than 10 Times
a) Clarify standards for student learning through discussion and analysis of students' work	44%	11%	33%	11%	0%
b) Develop IEP in collaboration with other Staff	11%	78%	11%	0%	0%
c) Examine and change the scope and sequence of what is taught to students with special needs	22%	44%	22%	11%	0%
d) Modify the curricular materials and assessment at this school to suit the needs of students with special needs	22%	44%	22%	11%	0%
e) Learn how to use teaching strategies specific to SNE	56%	11%	33%	0%	0%
f) I watched another teacher model teaching strategies	33%	1%	33%	22%	0%
g) Another teacher observed me teaching and gave me feedback	33%	11%	56%	0%	0%
h) I watched another teacher teach and gave him/her feedback	11%	33%	44%	11%	0%
i) The principal or HOD/Senior Teacher observed me teaching and gave feedback	22%	22%	44%	11%	0%
j) Attended meetings to discuss the progress of students	11%	44%	33%	0%	11%
k) Collaborated with another teacher to teach students with special needs	22%	44%	22%	0%	11%

Table 12 shows teachers' responses to their preferred mode of training. Most teachers preferred to receive further training via conference and workshops or on-line modules. Only 44% of the respondents definitely selected training via distance learning.

Table 12: Preferred Modes of Training

Modes of Training	Definitely	Maybe	Not at All
On-Line Modules (Available anytime via computers)	67%	22%	11%
Conference and Workshops	67%	33%	0%
Distance Learning (Available through course materials, manuals)	44%	33%	22%

Teachers were asked, 'In which of the areas do you need additional training and support?' As observed in Table 13, 67% of the teachers indicated that they definitely wanted support with behavioural problems and 56% definitely wanted additional support for communication with other professionals.

Table 13: Areas for Further Training

Area of Training	Definitely	Maybe	Not at All
a) Classroom Management	33%	33%	33%
b) Teaching Skills for gifted children and children with learning difficulties, and, disabilities	33%	56%	11%
c) Behavioural problems	67%	11%	22%
d) Differentiated Instruction	33%	22%	44%
e) Assessment of students' skills and knowledge	44%	44%	11%
f) Classroom Diversity	44%	44%	11%
g) Develop IEP for students	44%	22%	33%
h) Discussing intervention programmes with parents	44%	22%	33%

Further, teachers were asked how best the Principal and/or Head of Department/ Senior Teacher could support them in their teaching of students with special needs. Figure 1 presents a summary of the responses. Some of the areas in which they believe the administrative sfaff can assist with, include the following:

- A reduction of the pupil-teacher ratio
- The need to be observed and provided with feedback
- The need for more materials and equipment
- Being more understanding and accepting of the SNE child
- Sanctioning the modification of the curriculum to specifically suit students with special needs
- Assisting with assessment

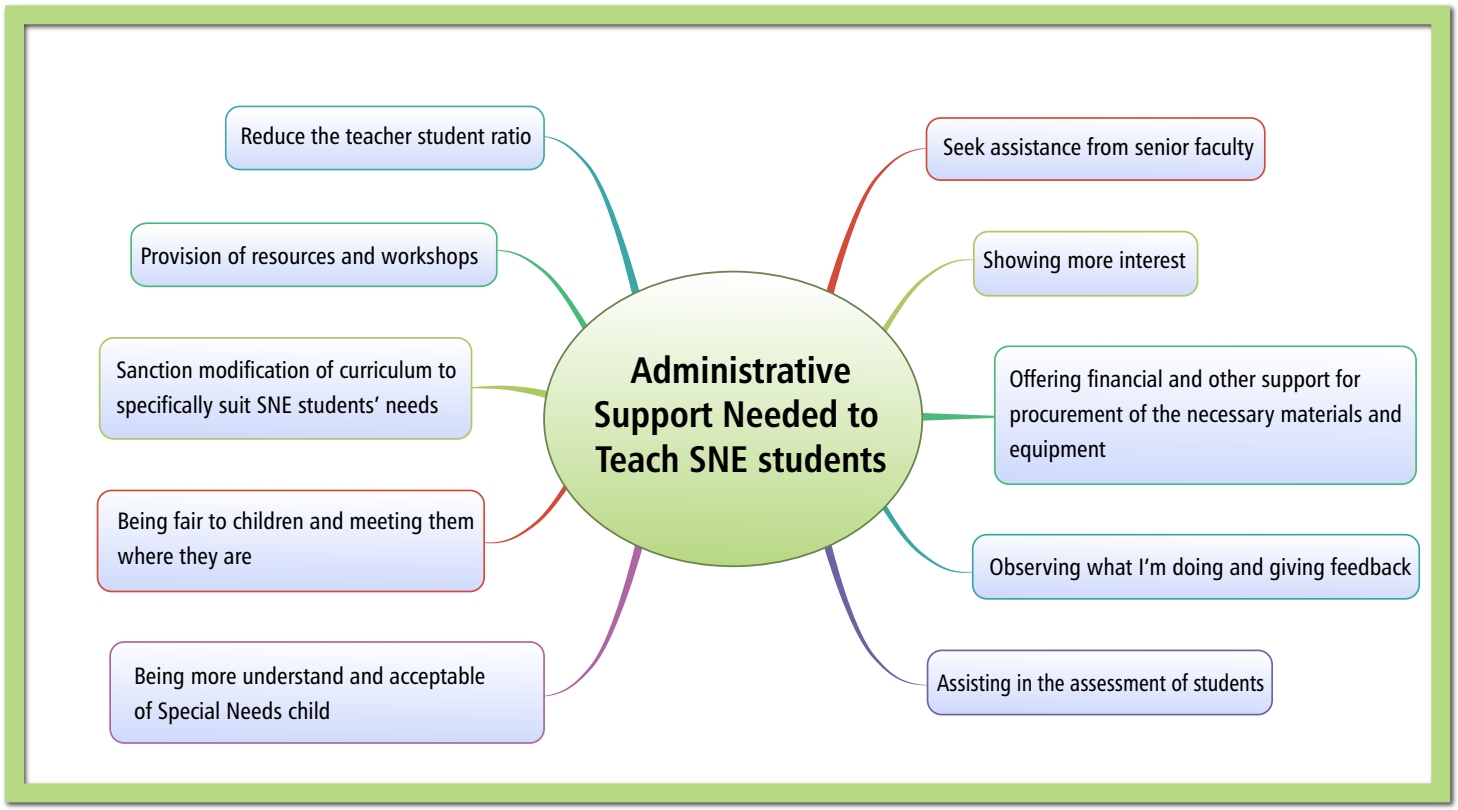

Figure 1: Teachers' perception of the administrative support needed to teach students with special needs

Figure 2 shows the responses of teachers to the question on how best the Ministry of Education can assist them to meet the needs of their students with special needs. The main points gleaned included the following:

- Provide the necessary accommodations for students sitting major examinations
- Conduct proper assessments of students so their needs can be efficiently met.
- Provide scholarships for SNE teachers
- Provide more resources
- Reduce the pupil-teacher ratio
- Make allowance for modifications to be done to the curriculum that suits individual students with special needs
- Equip the classroom with technology

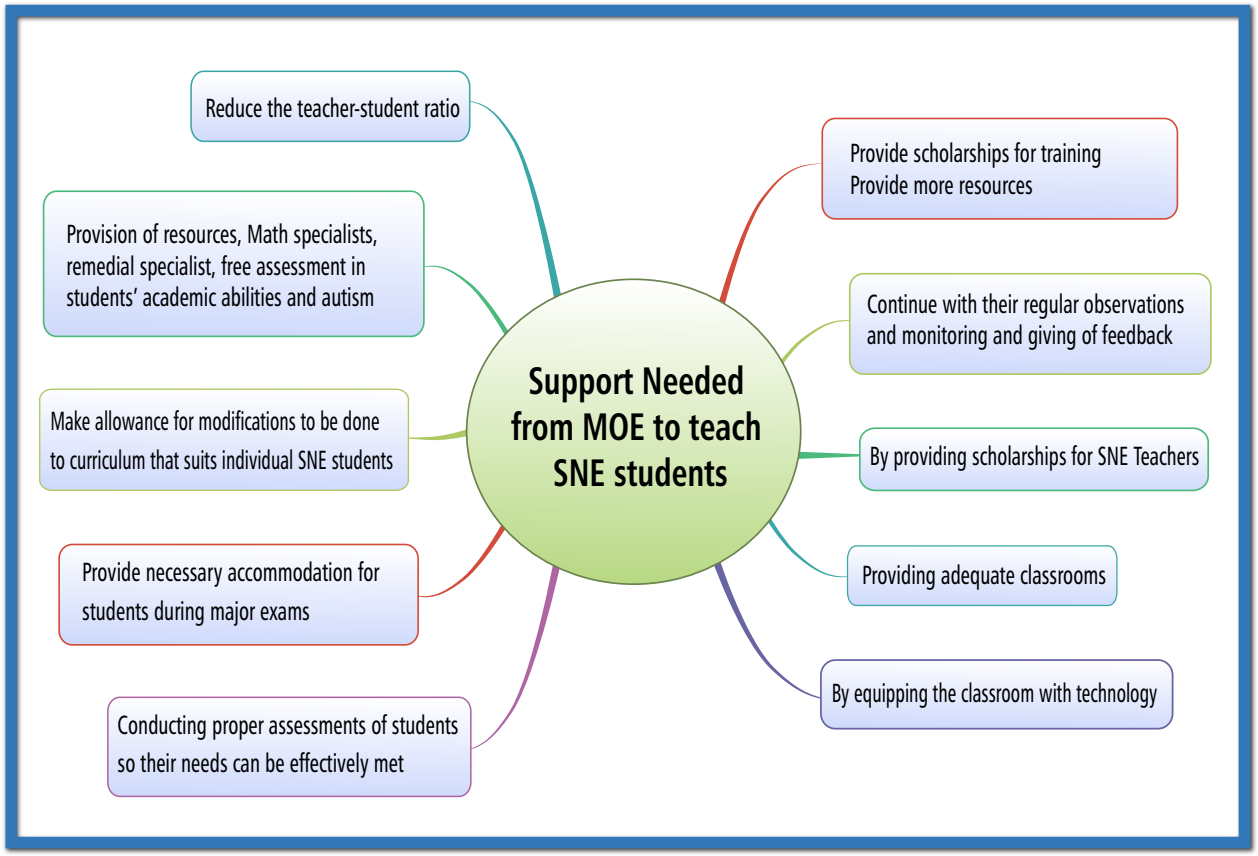

Figure 2: Required Support from the MOE for teaching students with special needs

Results of the Survey of SNE Provision in Schools

The survey was completed by school principals.[4] As indicated in table 14, there are two primary schools with special education programmes, that is, students with special education needs are likely to be integrated in the schools' programmes. In both cases the SNE pupil: teacher ratio appears favourable. However, in the cases of special schools the pupil-teacher ratio is much higher and likely to impact on the quality of educational provision to students in these schools.

Table 14: Profile of the Schools

Country	City	School Type	School Size	Number of teachers	Number of SNE teachers	Number of Students with Special Needs enrolled	Ratio of SNE teachers to Students with Special Needs
Jamaica	Kingston	Primary	1200	80	8	100	1:13
Sample country[4]	Sample City	Primary	200	40	8	30	1:4
St. Lucia	Castries	Special	101	16	3	101	1:34
Grenada	St. George	Special	197	23	9	197	1:21

The Students

Table 15 provides the range of special educational needs students accommodated in the four schools. The data shows that students' needs are diverse across both the primary and special schools. All four schools are in involved in delivery services to students with visual impairment including blindness.

It appears that while the primary schools are likely to provide a more diverse offering of SNE services to students, emotional disturbance and specific learning disabilities appear to be areas not likely to be covered in the provision of services. It would appear also that students with autism are unlikely to be placed in primary schools. Given the broad range of special educational needs as listed in table 15, it does appear that course and programme offerings for training SNE might need refining to reflect the reality of students' needs. In addition, courses that focus on multiple disabilities might not provide trainees with sufficient opportunities to understand the spectrum of disorders.

4. One respondent did not provide information about location and school type. In the table this is designated Sample Country.

Table 15: SNE Categories and Number of Students in the Four Schools

	Autism	Emotional Disturbance	Gifted and Talented	Hearing impairment including deafness	Intellectual Disability	Multiple disabilities	Orthopaedic impairment	Other health impairment	Specific learning disability	Speech language impairment	Traumatic brain injury	Visual impairment (including blindness)
Kingston Primary School				1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5	6 - 10	1 - 5	1 - 5	6 - 10	6 -10	11 - 15
Sample Primary School			1 - 5	1 - 5		1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5			1 -5	1 - 5
St Lucia Special School	6 - 10		1 - 5					1 - 5		1 - 5	21-30	21 - 30
Grenada Special School	6 - 10	1 - 5		41 - 50	more than 50	16 -20	16 -20					21 - 30

The Teachers

The data show that in both primary schools, five to six of the eight SNE teachers in each school are qualified at the level of Associate and Bachelor's degree (Table 16). On the other hand, in the special schools, SNE teachers are mostly qualified at the certificate level (six out of eight teachers, and, three out of eight). According to Goe (2007), there is overwhelming evidence that the level of teacher qualification is directly related to teaching quality and the likely outcomes for students. As shown in table 17, the majority of teachers in the primary schools were trained in asynchronous modalities, that is online and online related modalities, compared to seven out of eight SNE teachers in special schools trained through face-to-face modalities only.

The differences in training modalities are likely to be related to the particular geographical location and the availability of SNE training through online sources. For example, given the likelihood of limited internet technology in St Lucia and Grenada it is likely that persons opted to go overseas to be trained in programmes offered face-to-face. The ready availability of internet technology in locations such as Kingston, would provide prospective SNE teachers with the option of staying at home and completing their programmes through online modalities.

Table 16: The Distribution of SNE Teachers' Qualifications in the four Schools

School Type	Diploma	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Certificate
Kingston Primary School	3	3	2	0
Sample Primary School	1	1	5	1
St. Lucia Special School	1	1	0	6
Grenada Special School	1	3	1	3

Table 17: Training Modalities

	Face-to-face Only	Online Only	Distance Only	Face-to-face & Online
Kingston Primary School	1	5	2	0
Sample Primary School	0	3	0	5
St Lucia Special School	7	0	0	1
Grenada Special School	7	0	0	1

In respect of the quality of training received by SNE teachers through various modalities, school principals were asked: *In your opinion, are there any differences in competence between your teachers who were trained using Online/distance education and those who were trained using conventional (face-to-face) mode?* Only in one school did the principal believe that there was a difference between those persons trained in online and face-to-face modalities, and that this was due to the course taken not being extensive enough.

Table 18 shows that teachers in the Kingston primary school, although mostly qualified with Diplomas, Associate Degree and Bachelor's Degree in SNE, they appear to be least likely to demonstrate competences in key areas such as inclusive education, working with and developing curriculum for struggling students, working with students with language and visual impairments, intellectual disabilities, ADHD, using technology and learning disabilities.

Given the range of SNE categories presented in these schools, it does appear that there is a mismatch between teachers' qualifications and the needs of students. Notably, the *don't know/not sure* response points to the likelihood that in at least one school there is little monitoring or understanding of good practice in SNE teaching.

Table 18: SNE Teachers' Competencies

SKILLS & CONTENT AREAS	Kingston Primary School	Sample Primary School	St Lucia Special School	Grenada Special School
Assessment of students' skills and knowledge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Modification of instructional strategies to meet individual student needs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Designing or implementing a curriculum for struggling students	No	No	Yes	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Inclusive education	No	No	Yes	Yes
Helping students work in cooperative groups	No	Yes	Yes	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Social and emotional safety of children with disabilities in the classroom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communicating with school staff and parents about students' performance and behaviours	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Developing Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Teaching reading to struggling readers	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Teaching reading across the content areas	No	No	No	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Working with students struggling with numeracy skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Working with gifted students	Yes	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Differentiating instruction for different groups of learners	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Working with children with behavioural problems	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Working with students with autism	No	Yes	Yes	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Working with students who are hearing impaired or deaf	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Working with students with speech and Language Impairment	No	No	No	No
Working with students who are visually impaired or blind	No	No	Yes	Yes
Working with students who have intellectual disabilities	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 18: SNE Teachers' Competencies (con'd)

SKILLS & CONTENT AREAS	Kingston Primary School	Sample Primary School	St Lucia Special School	Grenada Special School
Working with students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	No	Yes	Yes	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Working with students with Learning disabilities	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Working with students who are Slow learners/have learning difficulties	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Working with students with physical/orthopedic impairment	No	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Using technology in the classroom to aid instruction	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 19 presents information about whether the training of SNE teachers have had a positive impact on their classroom practice. There is general agreement that SNE training has positively impacted classroom practice. However, at least two areas of concern are highlighted: the quality of teaching materials and aids, especially for teaching students at different ability levels, and, teachers' confidence to work with children with special educational needs. Except for the special school in St Lucia, all other school principals believe that there has been improvement in students' academic and behavioural outcomes since being taught by the SNE teacher. The area of students' attendance might be an area for further examination in special schools.

Table 19: Beliefs about the Impact of Training on the Classroom Practice of SNE teachers

CLASSROOM PRACTICE	Kingston Primary School	Sample Primary School	St Lucia Primary School	Grenada Primary School
Identifying students who might have special educational needs	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree
Assisting students to engage with their own learning	Agree	Agree	Agree	Don't Know
Personalizing learning to meet the needs of specific special educational needs	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree
Planning to meet the individualised needs of students with special educational needs	Disagree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Introducing new or different approaches to the curriculum and pedagogy	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Interacting with parents of students with special educational needs	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
Confidence in teaching students with special educational needs	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Agree
Materials/Teaching aids used by SNE teacher(s) are outdated and unhelpful	Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Don't Know
Managing a differentiated classroom	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Differentiating instruction and lesson planning	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Materials for training SNE teachers are useful for teaching how to teach students at different ability levels	Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Strongly Agree
The materials address gender related issues	Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Strongly Agree

Notwithstanding the general agreement that SNE teachers have a positive impact on students' outcomes, and demonstrate competency in key areas of teaching students with special education needs, the principals highlighted several areas for further professional development. These areas of concern fall into three categories: practice, pedagogy and assessment. This is illustrated in table 20.

Table 20: Areas for Professional Development

Practice	Pedagogy	Assessment
More opportunities to work with experienced practitioners and experts in relation to special educational needs and to observe good practice during practicum/ internship, More training in relation to managing behavioural problems More guidance on developing Individual Educational Plans, More opportunities to learn more about curriculum differentiation, Improved training in the development and use of teaching materials for students with special educational needs	More information on specific special educational needs,	More exposure to administering educational assessments to identify students' educational needs More information/guidance on monitoring the progress of students with special educational needs

Existing Teacher Training Programmes

This section presents description of special education programmes offered by two Teachers' Colleges in Jamaica and Barbados. The descriptions are based on responses provided by the Colleges to the survey, as well as, information gathered from various online sources.

Sam Sharpe Teachers' College – Montego Bay, Jamaica

Background

Sam Sharpe Teachers' College (SSTC) reported approximately 500 students registered in all the College's programmes. The Bachelors in Education (B.Ed.) is offered in the areas of: primary education, early childhood education, guidance and counselling, secondary education and special education. All programmes are offered and delivered through face-to-face, classroom–based and direct observation modalities.

Programme Focus – Special Education

The programme in Special Education is represented on the College's website as part of its standard offering for initial teacher training. Although no students were reported registered in the programme for the 2014/2015 academic year, the College's website announces that the special education programme is presented in two streams: deaf and hard of hearing, and, mild or multiple disabilities. The College's brochure advertises a range of courses including sign language, introduction to audiology, mild mental retardation, learning disabilities and mild behavioural disorders. Table 21 illustrates the coverage of special education skills that are developed under these various headings. The wide coverage of these areas underscores the structure of the programme and the extent to which students are expected to graduate as highly qualified special educators. Sam Sharpe requires students to complete a minimum of twenty-four (24) credit hours in these specialised areas in order to have attained a specialisation in special education.

Erdiston Teacher Training College

Background

Since its new mandate in 1996 (Steward and Thomas, 1996) Erdiston College has sought to diversify its programme offering to the education sector. Their programmes include – language arts and communication; certificate in education, diploma in education, primary; development and training courses; business courses and diploma in education, secondary.

Programme Focus

Advertisements on various websites soliciting students enrolment indicate that training courses in special education are offered in the Colleges' Division of Continuing Education at the certificate level. Courses on offer are in Advanced Sign Language, Introduction to Special Needs and Special Needs Provision. Table 21 shows that although not all the skills and content areas are covered at Erdistion, there is adequate coverage of critical elements to ensure that graduates complete with the relevant skills and knowledge and habits of mind required for special educators.

Table 21: Programme Content offered (Sam Sharpe & Erdiston)

SKILLS & CONTENT AREAS	Sam Sharpe Teachers College	Erdiston College
Assessment of students' current skills and knowledge	√	x
Modification of instructional strategies to meet individual student needs	√	√
Working with students with mental health and physical issues	√	√
Incorporating students cultural background and life experiences into teaching strategies	√	x
Designing or implementing a curriculum for struggling students, including problem solving	√	√
Designing out of class assignments and activities	√	x
Helping students work independently	√	x
Helping students work in cooperative groups	√	x
Social and emotional safety of children with disabilities in the classroom	√	x
Social and emotional safety of gifted children	√	x
Managing negative behaviours	√	x

SKILLS & CONTENT AREAS	Sam Sharpe Teachers College	Erdiston College
Communicating with school staff and parents about students' performance and behaviours	√	√
Developing Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for students	√	√
Teaching reading to struggling readers	√	√
Teaching reading across the content areas	√	√
Working with students struggling with numeracy skills	√	√
Working with gifted students	√	√
Differentiating instruction	√	√
Working with children with moderate to chronic behavioural problems	√	√
Autism	√	√
Deafness/Hearing Impaired	√	√
Literacy	√	√
Numeracy	√	√
Speech and Language Impairment	√	√
Blindness/Visual Impairment	√	√
Early Childhood/early intervention	√	√
Behavioural and emotional disorders	√	√
Mild to moderate intellectual disabilities	√	√
Severe intellectual disabilities	√	√
Learning disabilities	√	√
Slow learners/learning difficulties	√	√
Physical/orthopedic impairment	√	√
Using technology in the classroom	√	√
Special education for adolescents	√	x

Comparison of Admission Requirements for Bachelor's Degree in Special Education

At Sam Sharpe the entry qualifications for the programme are standard across all the College's B.Ed. programmes, that is, five CXC/CSEC subjects inclusive of mathematics, English Language, a social science subject, a physical science and one other. This reflects the minimum expectation for students exiting secondary school at year 11.

Table 22 shows a comparative overview of admissions requirements for face-to-face and online Bachelor's degree programmes in special education.

Table 22: Entry Requirements for Selected Programmes

Country	School	Modality	Admission Requirements
Australia	Flinders University & University of Southern Queensland	Face-to-Face	Year 12 entry – secondary school certificate inclusive of Mathematics, English and Science A – C passes
United Kingdom	University of East London	Face-to-Face and Online	At least grade C in GCSE Mathematics and English; A 'levels with at least one subject at an A2 pass, minimum 280 UCAS points; International Baccalaureate with at least 24 points, a minimum of 15 points at the higher level
United Kingdom	University of Plymouth	Face to face	GCSE Mathematics, English and Science at grade c' Minimum 280 UCAS points; A 'Levels with grade B in the subject related specialisation; At least two weeks minimum experience observing mainstream classrooms
United States	Vanderbilt University	Face to face	Students should be in the top 10% of the graduating class; minimum 1310 SAT score
	Grand Canyon University	Face to face and Online	Students of all backgrounds welcome; no SAT scores or entrance examinations
	University of Georgia	Online	At least 3.0 GPA from secondary school
	Western Governors University	Online	Mandatory interview; high school diploma; pass in basic skills test
	University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign	Face to Face	Minimum of a 2.5 GPA and ate least 50 hours of experience with individuals with disabilities

Generally, it appears that the minimum admission requirements for undergraduate special education programmes include completion of high school with successful performance in mathematics, English Language and a science subject. Interviews and prior experience are also additional requirements which check for the suitability of candidates. The admission requirements at Sam Sharpe Teachers' College are in line with the matriculation requirements elsewhere in the rest of the world.

The pattern of the responses in table 23 indicates that resources for training SEN teachers are inadequate, although they are useful for teaching how to use different methods and for teaching students with different ability levels. Nevertheless, it appears that available resources and instructional materials are not suitable for preparing teachers to handle the issues related to special learning needs. Table 24 shows that there are likely to be three areas of concern regarding the effectiveness of the programmes in these two colleges: preparation to provide counselling support to students, functional ICT equipment, and feedback about trainees' use of the teaching methods. Other aspects of the structure of the programmes appear to be working relatively well to allow for reasonable development of skills related to working with students with special education needs.

Table 23: The Nature of Instructional Materials and Resources Used for Training SEN Teachers

The Nature of Instructional Materials and Resources	Sam Sharpe	Erdiston
Materials for training SNE teachers are adequate in quantity	Disagree	Disagree
Materials for training SNE teachers are adequate in quality	Agree	Agree
Materials for training SNE teachers are useful for teaching how to use different teaching methods	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
Materials for training SNE teachers are useful for teaching how to teach students at different ability levels	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
The materials address gender related issues	Disagree	Disagree
The materials are helpful for teaching students about good citizenship	Disagree	Disagree
The materials are useful for teaching students with special learning needs	Disagree	Disagree

Table 24: Effectiveness of the SNE Programme at Sam Sharpe and Erdiston

How effective is the SNE programme at your institution?	Sam Sharpe	Erdiston
SNE printed materials achieve course objectives	Agree	Agree
The content and practice of tutors encourage collaborative learning	Strongly Agree	Agree
Peer support is built into the SNE programme	Strongly Agree	Agree
Learner support is an integral part of the design of the programme	Agree	Agree
Time is earmarked for tutors and students to have one-to-one interaction	Agree	Agree
Tutors are adequately prepared to provide counselling support to students	Disagree	Disagree
The ICT equipment works well	Disagree	Agree
There are adequate opportunities for students to provide feedback on courses	Strongly Agree	Agree
The policy and practice framework of the programme allows for monitoring and evaluation of the programme activities	Agree	Agree
The SNE teacher training programme has positively impacted the teaching of students with special educational needs	Strongly Agree	Agree
Feedback to the College about the SNE teachers trained in the programme are applying what they learned in their classrooms	Strongly Agree	Disagree

Table 25 indicates that although there is general agreement that the existing programmes in both colleges are mostly effective, the broader institutional and policy frameworks at the national and regional levels expected to support SNE training are insufficient. For example, while colleges agree that they have the capacity to meet current training demands, there is insufficient collaboration and partnership within the countries and at the regional level. Key gaps in the delivery of SNE training include the availability of funding and resources for training, physical facilities and human resources, research, customised materials, and ongoing training for staff.

For example when asked, what were the main challenges they faced, the responses from the colleges were as follows:

Sam Sharpe: Availability of resources; opportunities for hands-on learning
Erdiston: Limited Technology

Table 25: Issues in the Training of SNE Teachers

The Nature of Instructional Materials and Resources	Sam Sharpe	Erdiston
There is sufficient collaboration, partnership and networking within countries and across the region in promoting and leveraging the training of SNE teachers.	Disagree	Disagree
There is adequate funding and resource mobilisation to prepare SNE teachers in the Caribbean region.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
There is a demand for programmes and services for SNE teacher training.	Strongly Agree	Agree
We are able to meet the demand for programmes and services for SNE teacher training.	Strongly Agree	Agree
There is need for assistance in the development/enhancement of the physical facilities and human resources for delivery of the SNE programme.	Strongly Agree	Agree
The staff needs further training to be able to effectively deliver the SNE teacher training programmes	Agree	Disagree
Improved partnership is necessary with the governments of Caribbean states to ensure that appropriate and relevant learner support systems are established and maintained for SNE teacher training programmes	Agree	Agree
There is a strong culture of research adequately supported by funding and dissemination of findings on preparing SNE teachers.	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Materials used in preparing SNE teachers are customized and are appropriate and relevant to the diverse needs of learners and reflective of national priorities.	Strongly Disagree	Agree

As shown in table 26, professional development in both colleges rely on Faculty's participation and attendance at conferences. This likely points to very little structure to support direct professional development in the area of SNE training. Specifically, gaps in professional development include assessment of teaching and learning, and, the development and delivery of online courses.

Table 26: Professional Development for Faculty

Questions	Sam Sharpe	Erdiston
What professional development support do you offer to faculty teaching Special Education?	- Grants to attend/participate/present papers at local, regional and international conferences. -Facilitate attendance and participation in workshops	-Mentoring, Grants to attend/participate/present papers at local, regional and international conferences. -Facilitate attendance and participation in workshops
What other knowledge or skills do you think your Faculty need to improve as SNE teacher educators to deliver the programme?	- Designing and Delivering on-line courses -Assessment	Training in online delivery

Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

In this section, the key findings of the study are presented based on the three objectives outlined in the introduction. The findings are based on the conclusions drawn from the documentary analysis (online and hard-copy), and the surveys of practising teachers, principals and colleges These data have been synthesised to respond to the three questions of the status of SNE training, the training needs of teachers , and, the effective components of a SNE training programme.

What is the current status of the training of teachers for SNE in the Caribbean?

The limited opportunities for training in SNE throughout the region are offered face-to-face. The use of online and distance learning modalities to train teachers in SNE in the Commonwealth Caribbean is limited to non-existent. Most persons who have been trained through these means have done so privately through offshore programmes.

There is a critical shortage of SNE trained teachers at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. Although some teachers at the primary level often do SNE courses as electives, teachers trained in secondary education often do not take these courses and are therefore unlikely to be prepared to handle the issues of SNE that might be presented in a classroom. This was identified as a critical area for consideration and development.

Policymakers, educators and practitioners highlighted the key challenges as limited numbers of qualified faculty to teach and train prospective SNE teachers; limited programme development to account for SNE training and development among pre- and in-service teachers; and inadequate SNE reflected in teaching and learning at the secondary school level.

Although there is limited training of SNE teachers across the region, training programmes offered by Colleges such as Sam Sharpe Teachers' College in Jamaica, offer prospective SNE teachers the option of a full Bachelor's degree. The programme is comparable in terms of structure, content and methodology, to programmes at a similar level elsewhere. However, given the wide range of learning difficulties, behavioural and emotional issues, and disabilities that students are likely to present with, the data is indicating that some SNE teachers might not be suitably trained in areas such as autism, assessment and diagnosing

students' needs, managing negative behaviours, emotional disturbance, working with gifted and talented students, and special education for adolescents.

Recommendations

In relation to these challenges the following are recommended:

- Governments in the region should identify funding and potential local and international partners to embark on a wide scale teacher training programme for SNE as a matter of priority;
- Include Open and Distance Learning in the training of SNE teachers as a priority especially in countries such as Belize and Guyana with difficult terrain. With the inclusion of this modality, a wider coverage of in-service training can be attained without the disruption of removing teachers from the classroom for face-to-face training;
- SNE training, in addition to offering specialized courses such as those designed for the visually or hearing impaired, should offer varying exceptionalities to enable teachers to deal with the wide spectrum of disabilities they may encounter in an inclusive educational setting;
- Extend the teacher education programmes to include SNE and enhance professional development for in-service teachers, education officers and all personnel involved in the education of children presenting with special education needs.
- There is a need for greater collaboration among the teacher training institutions in the region in order to rationalise what is being offered at each campus.

What are the training needs of teachers of children with special needs?

Data from the survey of teachers, school principals and the two college in Jamaica and Barbados show that while there is preparation for teaching students with special needs in some generic areas such as differentiated instruction, inclusive education, assessment and working with struggling students, specialist areas involved with dealing with specific forms of disabilities such as hearing impairment and deafness, physical/orthopaedic impairment, emotional and behavioural difficulties are often areas in which little or no training is provided.

Six of the nine SNE teachers responding to the survey indicated that they would need additional training and support to deal with behavioural issues and support for communication with other professionals. Four teachers also said that they would need training in developing IEP's for students, discussing interventions programmes

with parents, managing classroom diversity, and, assessment. Sixty-seven percent of the SNE teachers indicated that they would prefer to access training programmes through conferences and workshops, and/or through online modalities.

The principals in four countries highlighted that the weakest areas of competence among SNE teachers are as follows:

- Designing and implementing curriculum for struggling students
- Inclusive education
- Teaching reading across the content areas
- Working with gifted and talented students
- Working with students with autism
- Working with students with speech and language impairment
- Working with students who are visually impaired or blind
- Working with students with physical/orthopedic impairment
- Working with students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

The general conclusion from this identified gap in competency is that broad SNE training programmes that cover multiple disabilities might not be sufficient to help teachers develop expertise in these specialist areas. Better outcomes might actually be obtained from allowing pre-service teachers to specialise. Courses offered over a single semester might not be enough to deepen teachers understanding and competency in the area. In addition, greater use of practical methods such as internships might offer trainees the opportunity to hone their skills in particular areas. The bottom line is that the structure and content of current Bachelor's programmes might need to be reviewed to ensure that the required competencies are built into the delivery of the programmes.

In terms of teacher educators, the data shows that the skills required for professional training are also limited or absent in some cases. This negatively impacts the supply-side of training by restricting the specialist areas in which persons might be trained. Specific areas of training required for teacher trainers include: training in online delivery, assessment, and designing and delivery of online courses. Principals agreed that the critical areas of professional development are: the use of concrete methods and real-time experience, the pedagogy of SNE, and, assessment of students with special education needs.

Recommendations

- Review the diploma, associate degree and degree (undergraduate and graduate) programmes to ensure coverage of varying exceptionalities for inclusive education, and extensive coverage for specialists areas such as the hearing, visually and intellectually impaired.
- Via ODL, introduce a certificate/diploma course for teachers who are currently practicing in SNE without the requisite qualifications.
- Make electives in SNE required courses for both primary and secondary education pre-service teachers pursuing a regular education diploma or degree.

What are the components of an effective training programme for SNE teachers and to what extent are these evident in teacher training programmes throughout the Caribbean?

The concerns expressed by all participants in this study point to the need for coherence in the structure and delivery of SNE programmes. This is essential to the delivery of the programme in any modality. Of critical importance for an effective SNE programme delivery is the presence of, and access to resources and equipment. There is a recognised need for the delivery of programmes that offer pre and in-service teachers hands-on experience with the kind of equipment required for use with a range of disabilities. Materials and learning resources should be customised to suit the diverse needs of leaners and reflective of national priorities.

A monitoring and evaluation mechanism that allows for feedback about how teachers are applying what they learned in training is essential. This will ensure that there is alignment between the realities of classrooms and what is taught in training, as well as, to maintain a check on the quality of delivery offered by teachers trained in the programme.

The integration of learning support in the design of the programme will allow teachers in training to be mentored as they develop key competencies required for practice. Along with this, there should be a greater use of internship rather than the regularly used practicum. While the practicum would offer students some experience, it's often limited in scope and purpose due to time constraints, and often does not give students enough time to experience the range of issues in a real world setting. The internship would allow them to spend longer periods of time in the school setting to apply what they have learnt under supervision and guidance, as well as collaborating with other professionals in the field.

The matter of inclusive education, to which all governments in the region have committed, remains a challenge as greater focus has been placed on the more moderate to severe types of disabilities usually found in special schools. With the exception of the Masters degree offered at UWI, St. Augustine, the emphasis in other programmes remain with the more moderate to severe disabilities and to a much lesser extent on mild disabilities.

Recommendations

- Establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure quality training and the delivery of SNE in inclusive and specialized settings.
- For pre-service teachers, include an internship period for SNE teachers where they can be mentored by a qualified teacher and hone their craft under supervision.
- For in-service teachers, establish a mentorship programme using qualified teachers to mentor those teachers in the classroom without the requisite SNE qualifications.
- Establish a maximum period of service of about 3 years, where a SNE teacher can remain as a classroom teacher without the requisite qualification.
- Improve access to modern resources and equipment in the preparation of SNE teachers.
- Customise materials and learning resources to meet the needs of Caribbean students with special education needs.
- Greater emphasis needs to be placed on inclusive education in both pre-service and in-service SNE teacher training programmes. The data show conclusively, that the vast majority of students with special education needs are to be found in regular education classrooms.

Appendices

Appendix 1: SNE Teacher Questionnaire

Community of Learning (COL) Baseline Survey of Teacher Training for Special Needs Education

Welcome to the Commonwealth of Learning Baseline Survey of Teacher Training for Special Needs Education. COL has contracted Mrs. Joan Spencer-Ernandez to conduct a survey of teacher training for special needs education (SNE) using open and distance learning (ODL) in the Caribbean. The baseline will determine:

- training needs of teachers of children with special needs;
- status of teacher training for SNE using open and distance learning (ODL) in the
- Caribbean;
- and prospects and recommendations for effective provision of teacher education for SNE using ODL

As you are a SNE teacher who was trained using ODL, we would appreciate your assistance in completing this questionnaire, which will help us to determine the needs of the sector. Thank you for your help, time and effort.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender

- O Male
- O Female

2. School level you serve:

- O Primary (Grades 1 – 3)
- O Primary (Grades 4 – 6)
- O Secondary (Grades 7 – 9)
- O Secondary (Grades 10 – 11)

3. How long have you been working as a teacher

- O This is my first year
- O 1 – 2 years
- O 3 – 5 years
- O 6–10 years
- O 11 – 15 years
- O 16 – 20 years
- O More than 20 years

4. How long have you been working as a Special Needs Educator?

- O This is my first year
- O 1 – 2 years
- O 3 – 5 years
- O 6–10 years
- O 11 – 15 years
- O 16 – 20 years
- O More than 20 years

5. What is your level of education as a SNE teacher?

- O Bachelor's Degree in Special Education
- O SNE training as part of a Bachelor's in Education
- O Master's Degree in Special Education
- O SNE training as part of a Masters in Education
- O Diploma in Special Education

- O Certificate in Special Education
- O Associate Degree in Special Education
- O Other. Please specify_____

6. Which of the following did your training programme include? Tick aall that apply

- O Coursework
- O Examinations
- O Internship
- O Practicum
- O Lectures
- O Any others (please list)_____

_____

_____

7. Which of the following BEST describes the mode of your training?

- O Face-to-Face
- O Online
- O Distance
- O Blended (face-to-face & online)
- O Other, please specify _____

8. How many Special Needs courses did you do as part of your training programme?

- O Two or less
- O Three to Four
- O Five to Six
- O Seven or more

9. What is your role in this school? Tick only the ONE that is most appropriate or your main assignment.

- O I teach all core subjects (mathematics, science, language arts, social studies)
- O Literacy Specialist
- O Special Education teacher
- O Numeracy Specialist
- O Guidance
- O Resource Teacher
- O Teach Core subjects at Grades 7 – 9, **Please specify the subject** _____
- O Teach CSEC subjects at Grades 10 – 11, **Please specify the subject** _____
- O Other: **Please specify** _____

10. How were you employed to your current position?

- O Applied and interviewed for an advertised position
- O Ministry of Education assignment to the School
- O The Principal assigned you to this role
- O Volunteered to be assigned to this role
- O Other: **Please specify** _____

SECTION B – PROGRAMME CONTENT

11. Please indicate whether you were trained in any of the following areas:

SKILLS & CONTENT AREAS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NOT SURE
a) Assessment of students' skills and knowledge					
b) Modification of instructional strategies to meet individual student needs					
c) Designing or implementing a curriculum for struggling students					
d) Inclusive education					
e) Helping students work in cooperative groups					
f) Social and emotional safety of children with disabilities in the classroom					
g) Communicating with school staff and parents about students' performance and behaviours					
h) Developing Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for students					
i) Teaching reading to struggling readers					
j) Teaching reading across the content areas					
k) Working with students struggling with numeracy skills					
l) Working with gifted students					
m) Differentiating instruction for different groups of learners					
n) Working with children with behavioural problems					
o) Working with students with autism					
p) Working with students who are hearing impaired or deaf					
q) Working with students with speech and Language Impairment					
r) Working with students who are visually impaired or blind					
s) Working with students who have intellectual disabilities					
t) Working with students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)					
u) Working with students with Learning disabilities					
v) Working with students who are Slow learners/have learning difficulties					
w) Working with students with physical/orthopedic impairment					
x) Using technology in the classroom to aid instruction					
Other :					

12. Please rate your level of preparation as a SNE teacher in the following areas:

SKILLS & CONTENT AREAS	VERY PREPARED	SOMEWHAT PREPARED	NOT AT ALL
a) Assessment of students' skills and knowledge			
b) Modification of instructional strategies to meet individual student needs			
c) Designing or implementing a curriculum for struggling students			
d) Inclusive education			
e) Helping students work in cooperative groups			
f) Social and emotional safety of children with disabilities in the classroom			
g) Communicating with school staff and parents about students' performance and behaviours			
h) Developing Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for students			
i) Teaching reading to struggling readers			
j) Teaching reading across the content areas			
k) Working with students struggling with numeracy skills			
l) Working with gifted students			
m) Differentiating instruction for different groups of learners			
n) Working with children with behavioural problems			
o) Working with students with autism			
p) Working with students who are hearing impaired or deaf			
q) Working with students with speech and Language Impairment			
r) Working with students who are visually impaired or blind			
s) Working with students who have intellectual disabilities			
t) Working with students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)			
u) Working with students with Learning disabilities			
v) Working with students who are Slow learners/have learning difficulties			
w) Working with students with physical/orthopedic impairment			
x) Using technology in the classroom to aid instruction			
Other:			

Section C: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

13. Please indicate how many professional development sessions you participated in over the past 3 years that focus on any of the following topics related to SNE.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS	None	1-2 Sessions	3-7 Sessions	8 or more Sessions
a) Assessing Students				
b) Curriculum Materials				
c) Teaching Methods				
d) Using Technology in the Classroom				
f) Differentiate Instruction				
h) Classroom Management				

14. During this school year, how often did any of the following occur:

AREAS OF COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT	Never	1-2 Times	3-5 Times	6-10 Times	More than 10 times
a) Clarify standards for student learning through discussion and analysis of students' work					
b) Develop IEP in collaboration with otherStaff					
c) Examine and change the scope and sequence of what is taught to students with special needs					
d) Modify the curricular materials and assessment at this school to suit the needs of students with special needs					
e) Learn how to use teaching strategies specific to SNE					
f) I watched another teacher model teaching strategies					
g) Another teacher observed me teaching and gave me feedback					
h) I watched another teacher teach and gave him/her feedback					
i) The principal or HOD/Senior Teacher observed me teaching and gave feedback					
j) Attended meetings to discuss the progress of students					
k) Collaborated with another teacher to teach students with special needs					

15. In which of the following areas do you need additional training and support?

Area of Training	Definitely	Maybe	Not at All
a) Classroom Management			
b) Teaching Skills for gifted children and children with learning difficulties, and, disabilities			
c) Behavioural problems			
d) Differentiated Instruction			
e) Assessment of students' skills and knowledge			
f) Classroom Diversity			
g) Communication with other professionals, parents and caregivers			
h) Develop IEP for students			
i) Discussing intervention programmes with parents			

16. If you are interested in professional development training, which of the following modes of training would you prefer?

MODES OF TRAINING	Definitely	Maybe	Not at All
On-Line Modules (Available anytime via computers)			
Conference and Workshops			
Distance Learning (Available through course materials, manuals)			
Other: Please specify:			

SECTION D: Challenges and Support

17. What are some of the challenges you face in your role as a SNE teacher?

_____ -

_____

_____

18. How well did your course of study prepare you to meet these challenges?

_____

_____

_____

19. While studying, were you working as a classroom teacher?

O YES O NO

20. If yes, how did it affect your on the job performance?

_____

_____

_____

21. Were you on scholarship (tuition paid) while studying to become a SNE teacher?_____

22. If yes, who provided the scholarship?

_____

_____

23. How long did it take you to qualify as a trained SNE teacher?

_____

24. How best can the Principal and/or Head of Department/ Senior Teacher support you in your teaching of students with special needs?

_____

_____

_____

25. How best can the Ministry of Education assist you to meet the needs of your students?

26. How best can parents support you in your role?

27. Which areas of SNE would you like to pursue for a higher degree or certification?

Appendix 2: Principals' Questionnaire

Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Baseline Survey of Teacher Training for Special Needs Education

Welcome to the Commonwealth of Learning Baseline Survey of Teacher Training for Special Needs Education. COL has contracted Mrs. Joan Spencer-Ernandez to conduct a survey of teacher training for special needs education (SNE) using open and distance learning (ODL) in the Caribbean. The baseline will determine:

- training needs of teachers of children with special needs;
- status of teacher training for SNE using open and distance learning (ODL) in the Caribbean;
- and prospects and recommendations for effective provision of teacher education for SNE using ODL

As you are involved in supervising teachers on staff at your school who were trained using ODL, we would appreciate your assistance in completing this questionnaire, which will help us to determine the needs of the sector. Thank you for your help, time and effort.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND & PROGRAMME INFORMATION

1. Name of School:_____

2. Country: _____ **3. City:**_____

4. School Type: Primary _____ **High** _____ **Special** _____

5. School Size:_____ **(number of students)** **6. Number of Teachers: (All)**_____

7. Number of SNE teachers: _____ **8. Number of students with special needs enrolled:**_____

9. Use the table below to tell us about each SNE teacher on staff at your school.

Level of Qualification (Certificate/Diploma/Associates Degree/Bachelors/Masters)	Mode of Delivery (Face-to Face/ Online/ Distance/ Online & Face-to- Face)	Number of years qualified as SNE teacher	Number of years on staff at your school
a)			
b)			
c)			
d)			
e)			
Other:			

10. a) In your opinion, are there any differences in competence between your teachers who were trained using Online/distance education and those who were trained using conventional (face to face) mode?

O YES O NO

b) If your answer is YES there are differences, what are the differences?

_____

_____

_____

11. Do you have students diagnosed with any of the following SNE categroies?

	Yes	No	# of students
autism			
deaf-blindness			
deafness			
emotional disturbance			
gifed and talented			
hearing impairment			
intellectual disability			
multiple disabilities			
orthopedic impairment			
other health impairment			
specific learning disability			
speech or language impairment			
traumatic brain injury			
visual impairment (including blindness)			
Other			

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the SNE training provided has had a positive impact on the following aspects of the teachers' classroom practice. Tick √ only one for each item.

CLASSROOM PRACTICE	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
a) Identifying students who might have special educational needs					
b) Assisting students to engage with their own learning					
c) Personalising learning to meet the needs of specific students					
d) Planning to meet the individualised needs of students with special educational needs					
e) Introducing new or different approaches to the curriculum and pedagogy					
f) Interacting with parents of students with special educational needs					
g) Confidence in teaching students with special educational needs					

CLASSROOM PRACTICE	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
h) Materials/Teaching aids used by SNE teacher(s) are outdated and unhelpful					
l) Managing a differentiated classroom					
j) Differentiating instruction and lesson planning					
k) Materials for training SNE teachers are useful for teaching how to teach students at different ability levels					
l) The materials address gender related issues					

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about special needs students taught by the SNE teachers?

CLASSROOM PRACTICE	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
a) Students' literacy skills have improved					
b) Students' numeracy skills have improved					
c) Students' overall academic performance has improved					
d) Students' behaviour has improved					
e) Students are more enthusiastic about learning					
f) Students' attendance has improved					
g) Students have become more accepted by their peers					

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the contribution of the SNE teachers in school?

SNE TEACHERS' CONTRIBUTION TO STAFF/SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
a) The knowledge and understanding of special educational needs issues amongst teachers in my school has improved					
b) Teaching practice in my school has become more focused on meeting a range of student needs					
c) My school is more inclusive as a result of the SNE teachers' support					
d) There is evidence that differentiated instruction is being practiced in more classrooms					
e) Teachers are now more confident in teaching a range of student needs					
f) Teachers are now more confident in their relationships with parents of students with special educational needs					
g) Teachers and students have become more welcoming of students with special needs.					
h) There is improved collaboration among the teachers in my school					

15. Are there any specific areas in relation to teaching students with special educational needs that your SNE teachers could benefit from improved training and or, exposure during training? Please tick all that apply.

	Tick All that Apply
More information on specific special educational needs	1
More opportunities to work with experienced practitioners and experts in relation to special educational needs and to observe good practice during practicum/internship	2
More opportunities to learn more about curriculum differentiation	3
More training in relation to managing behavioural problems	4
More guidance on developing Individual Educational Plans	5
More exposure to administering educational assessments to identify students' educational needs	6
Improved training in the development and use of teaching materials for students with special educational needs	7
More information/guidance on monitoring the progress of studentswith special educational needs	8
Other (please specify)	9

16. Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the support and services provided by the SNE teacher(s) Please tick one box only.

	Tick one box
Very Satisfied	5
Quite Satisfied	4
Satisfied	3
Not Very Satisfied	2
Not At All Satisfied	1

17. How else can training of SNE teachers using ODL be improved?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 3: Teachers' College Faculty Questionnaire

Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Baseline Survey of Teacher Training for Special Needs Education

Welcome to the Commonwealth of Learning Baseline Survey of Teacher Training for Special Needs Education. COL has contracted Mrs. Joan Spencer-Ernandez to conduct a survey of teacher training for special needs education (SNE) using open and distance learning (ODL) in the Caribbean. The baseline will determine:

- training needs of teachers of children with special needs;
- status of teacher training for SNE using open and distance learning (ODL) in the Caribbean;
- and prospects and recommendations for effective provision of teacher education for SNE using ODL

As you are involved in the preparation of teachers using ODL, we would appreciate your assistance in completing this questionnaire, which will help us to determine the needs of the sector. Thank you for your help, time and effort.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND & PROGRAMME INFORMATION

1. Name of College/Institution:_____

2. Country: _____ **3. City:** _____

4. No. of students registered in *all* Education programmes _____

5. Use the table below to tell us about your Special Needs Education (SNE) programmes:

Programme (Certificate/Diploma/Associate Degree/Bachelors/Masters)	Mode of Delivery (face-to- face/Online/Distance/ Online& face-to-face)	Number of Students Registered	Number graduated over the last 3 years
a)			
b)			
c)			
d)			
e)			
Other:			

6. Please indicate the number of students for each Caribbean country participating in the ODL SNE programmes.

Country	Number of Students
Antigua and Barbuda	
Bahamas	
Barbados	
Belize	
Dominica	
Grenada	
Guyana	
Jamaica	
St. Kitts and Nevis	
St. Lucia	
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	
Trinidad and Tobago	
Other (Please list)	

7. Does your programme provide training in any of the following SNE Skills and Content?

SKILLS & CONTENT AREAS	YES	NO
a) Assessment of students' current skills and knowledge		
b) Modification of instructional strategies to meet individual student needs		
c) Working with students with mental health and physical issues		
d) Incorporating students cultural background and life experiences into teaching strategies		
e) Designing or implementing a curriculum for struggling students, including problem solving		
f) Designing out of class assignments and activities		
g) Helping students work independently		
h) Helping students work in cooperative groups		
i) Social and emotional safety of children with disabilities in the classroom		
j) Social and emotional safety of gifted children		
k) Managing negative behaviours		
l) Communicating with school staff and parents about students' performance and behaviours		
m) Developing Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for students		
n) Teaching reading to struggling readers		
o) Teaching reading across the content areas		
p) Working with students struggling with numeracy skills		
q) Working with gifted students		
r) Differentiating instruction		
s) Working with children with moderate to chronic behavioural problems		
t) Autism		
u) Deafness/Hearing Impaired		
v) Literacy		
w) Numeracy		
x) Speech and Language Impairment		
y) Blindness/Visual Impairment		
z) Early Childhood/early intervention		
aa) Behavioural and emotional disorders		
bb) Mild to moderate intellectual disabilities		

cc) Severe intellectual disabilities		
dd) Learning disabilities		
ee) Slow learners/learning difficulties		
ff) Physical/orthopedic impairment		
gg) Using technology in the classroom		
hh) Special education for adolescents		
Other :		

8a. What is the minimum number of credit hours of special education courses required for a specialisation in SNE? _____

8b. What is the minimum number of credit hours of special education courses required for a specialisation in Special Education in the different modes of delivery? _____

Number of Credit Hours	Online	Distance	Face-to-Face	Blended
3 to 6 credit hours				
9 credit hours				
12 to 15 credit hours				
18 to 21 credit hours				
24 credit hour or more				

9a. Which of the following are offered to persons being trained in SNE via Online and Distance Learning: Tick √ all that applies.

- O Coursework only
- O Coursework and Examinations
- O Internship
- O Practicum
- O Coursework and Internship
- O Lectures and End of Course Examinations only

9b. If the course has a practicum or internship, please state the number of hours required to complete the practicum or internship.___

10. Indicate how effective each of the resource/material is for training SNE teachers. Tick √ only one (Very Effective, Sometimes Effective, Not at all Effective, Not Sure) for each resources/material.

Resources/Materials used in SNE Programmes	Very Effective	Sometimes Effective	Not at all Effective	Not Sure
a) Text books				
b) Workbooks or worksheets				
c) Labs (visual and auditory)				
d) Web resources				
e) Hand-outs				
f) Past Papers				
g) Wiki's				
h) Resource Persons				
i) Assessment Instruments				
j) Multi-media				
k) Open source curriculum & materials				
l) Computer/IT lab and equipment				
m) Other				

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the resources and instructional materials for teaching the subject you teach? Tick √ only one for each item.

Resources/Materials	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
a) Materials for training SNE teachers are adequate in quantity					
b) Materials for training SNE teachers are adequate in quality					
c) Materials for training SNE teachers are useful for teaching how to use different teaching methods					
d) Materials for training SNE teachers are useful for teaching how to teach students at different ability levels					
e) The materials address gender related issues					
f) The materials are helpful for teaching students about good citizenship					
g) The materials are useful for teaching students with special learning needs					

2. How effective is the SNE programme at your institution? Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements below:

Statements about the SNE programme(s) at your institution	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
a) SNE printed materials achieve course objectives					
b) The content and practice of tutors encourage collaborative learning					
c) Peer support is built into the SNE programme					
d) Learner support is an integral part of the design of the programme					
e) Time is earmarked for tutors and students to have one-to-one interaction					
f) Tutors are adequately prepared to provide counselling support to students					
g) The ICT equipment works well					
h) There are adequate opportunities for students to provide feedback on courses					
i) The policy and practice framework of the programme allows for monitoring and evaluation of the programme activities					
j) The SNE teacher training programme has positively impacted the teaching of students with special educational needs					
k. Internet connectivity is good across participating countries					
l) Feedback to the College about the SNE teachers trained in the programme are applying what they learned in their classrooms					

SECTION B: SPECIAL EDUCATION FACULTY

13. Please indicate the number of tutors teaching SNE Courses

Full-Time	Part-Time

14. What are the qualifications of faculty teaching Special Education? For each category below tick √ in the second column if faculty are qualified in this area, then say the number (#) of your staff who are so qualified.

Qualifications	Tick √ for YES	Number of Staff Qualified
Bachelor's degree in Special Education		
Bachelor's degree with special education courses		
Master's degree in Special Education		
Master's degree with special education courses		
PhD in Special Education		
PhD with courses in Special Education		
Diploma in Special Education		
Associates degree in Special Education		
Certificate in Special Education		
Other, please specify:		

15. On average how long does it take to fill a Special Education faculty position once advertised?

- O Less than 6 months
- O 6 to 9 months
- O 10 to 12 months
- O 13 to 18 months
- O 19 to 24 months
- O More than 2 years

16. What professional development support do you offer to faculty teaching Special Education?

- O Mentoring
- O Grants to attend/participate/present papers at local, regional and international conferences
- O Grants/Funding to conduct research in special education
- O Facilitate attendance and participation in workshops
- O Other, please describe here:

17. How are the students majoring in SNE funded?

- O students self-finance
- O Ministry of Education financed
- O International Agency _____(Name)
- O Other. Please specificy_____

18. On the average, what percentage of students majoring in SNE graduate each year?

_____

_____

_____

19. What other knowledge or skills do you think your Faculty need to improve as SNE teacher educators?

_____

_____

_____

20. What are some of the challenges you face in delivering the SNE programme?

_____

_____

_____

21. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements relating to the training of SNE teachers.

Statements about the SNE programme(s) at your institution	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
a) The outcomes/certification of the SNE training administered through ODL is equivalent to those achieved through the conventional system.					
b) The outcome/certification of the SNE training administered through ODL is superior to those achieved through the conventional system.					
c) The outcomes/certification of the SNE training administered through ODL is inferior to those achieved through the conventional system.					
d) ODL SNE programmes meet the standards established for recognized regulatory framework in the Caribbean.					
e) There is sufficient collaboration, partnership and networking within countries and across the region in promoting and leveraging ODL for the training of SNE teachers.					
f) There is adequate funding and resource mobilization for the use of ODL to prepare SNE teachers in the Caribbean region.					

Statements about the ODL SNE programme(s) at your institution	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
g) There is a demand for ODL programmes and services for SNE teacher training.					
h) We are able to meet the demand for ODL programmes and services for SNE teacher training.					
i) There is need for assistance in the development/ enhancement of the physical facilities and human resources for delivery of the SNE programme through ODL.					
j) The staff needs further training to be able to use ODL effectively for delivery of the SNE teacher training programmes					
k) Improved partnership is necessary with the governments of Caribbean states to ensure that appropriate and relevant learner support systems are established and maintained for SNE teacher training programmes through ODL.					
l) There is a strong culture of research adequately supported by funding and dissemination of findings on the use of ODL for preparing SNE teachers.					
m) Materials used in ODL for preparing SNE teachers are customized and are appropriate and relevant to the diverse needs of learners and reflective of national priorities.					

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