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5 **Abstract**

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7 *Index terms—*

8 **1 I. INTRODUCTION**

9 Inclusive education (IE) has become the buzz word of the 21 st century where many countries including Samoa,
10 scrambled to develop and implement inclusive policy within their education system. Inclusive education suggests
11 that all 'students regardless, of disability status, benefit from and should have access to grade level standards
12 and opportunities in the general education classroom, (Courtade, Spooner, Browder, & Jimenez, 2012). Inclusive
13 education however comes with a lot of challenges in terms of available facilities and trained teachers. Hence, for
14 inclusive education to work, necessary preparation is crucial not only in physical facilities but of the utmost import
15 in teacher preparation. According to Forlin (2010) 'a reconsideration of teacher training practices and programs is
16 a significant priority in teacher education research to warrant that future teachers are ready to practice inclusive
17 teaching.' The concern for researchers of this paper is that only one course on inclusive education is offered by
18 the faculty of education (FOE) in their teacher preparation program. It begs the question, how adequate is this
19 one course to fully prepare teachers to teach in an IE classroom?

20 **2 II. STUDY CONTEXT**

21 When the concept of special education was first coined in the mid 1990's in Samoa, it was a new concept to
22 many individuals, however Samoa indicated its commitment to this new phenomenon by including it as one of its
23 policy goals in its Education Policies 1995-2006. Samoa's educational policies and planning today are influenced
24 by global mandates such as the Education For All (EFA), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural
25 Organisation

26 Examining Pre and In-Service Teachers Views of their Preparation for Inclusive Education (UNESCO), the
27 Education for Sustainable Development strategies (ESD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as
28 well as regional commitments such as the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP), the Pacific Region
29 Initiative for the Delivery of Basic education (PRIDE) and the Pacific Plan (Government of Samoa, 2006,
30 p. 11). As such, national policy goals in relation to special education, emphasised the importance of training
31 teachers in the area of special education (Samoa Education Policies 1995 Policies -2006)) which resulted in
32 the Western Samoa Teachers College (WSTC) developing a diploma program in special education in 1995. The
33 diploma program consisted of one general introductory course plus four specialized courses in Special education.
34 In the mid 2000, the introduction of the inclusive education phenomenon at the global level was a paradigm
35 shift from specialization to inclusion of children with special needs into the regular classrooms. National and
36 educational policies were redirected towards a more inclusive type of teaching and learning environment, which
37 resulted in the modification of the introductory special education course to be more inclusive in nature. In 2014,
38 program restructuring within the faculty of education (FOE) led to the discontinuation of the diploma program
39 in special education. When the diploma program was discontinued, so too were the 4 special education courses
40 with the exception of the introductory course (aka 'inclusive education') which was retained and modified to be
41 offered as a compulsory course for all individuals who wished to pursue the teaching the profession. This one
42 inclusive course is the only course that is currently offered as a compulsory course for teachers in the bachelor
43 and graduate diploma programs. The rationale was for every teacher to have at least some knowledge of IE. This
44 begs the question, "Is the single introductory course on IE sufficient to prepare preservice teachers to teach in an
45 inclusive classroom? With the many criticism from the public arena concerning teacher quality, the researchers
46 are seriously concern that the single course that FOE currently offers is far from adequate in preparing teachers

4 IV. PURPOSE

47 for IE. This study was aimed at examining teachers' views on their teacher preparation program with regards to
48 preparing them to teach in an IE environment. The main question that guided the study was:
49 ? What are teachers' perceptions concerning their preparations to teach in an inclusive education environment?

50 3 III. LITERATURE REVIEW

51 The importance of preparing teachers so they become effective in supporting learning needs of students within an
52 inclusive environment cannot be overemphasized. Amongst factors that were found to impede inclusive education
53 (IE) is limited knowledge in IE, which seemed to affect teachers' attitude towards IE. It has been argued that
54 teachers' attitudes can determine the day-to-day practices of classroom teachers and according to Alieto (2018)
55 attitude can act as either a facilitating or debilitating factor. A number of studies that investigated school
56 educators' attitudes toward inclusive education (e.g., Forlin, 2004; ??003; Forlin, Jobling & Caroll, 2001; Loreman,
57 2002; ??ubban & Sharma, 2006) indicated that teachers in general appear to be more supportive of IE rhetorically
58 but have misgivings in the actual implementation. Factors that seem to influence teachers' attitudes were related
59 to the educational environment (support services, classroom layout, class size, curriculum, funding and time);
60 the student (severity of disability, lack of time to teach student with disability); as well as the teacher training
61 (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Bradshaw & Lawrence, 2006).

62 A meta-analysis which involved 28 survey reports was executed by ??hruggs and Mastropieri (1996) between
63 1958 and 1995 which concerned with teacher attitudes towards mainstreaming in USA, Canada and Australia,
64 found that although two thirds of teachers were generally supportive of the integration concept, one third or less
65 believed that they had insufficient time, skills, training and resources necessary to address the needs of students
66 with disabilities. Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher & Saumell (1996) also identified high class numbers, funds,
67 teachers' overload and issues related to standardized evaluation to affect

68 Examining Pre and In-Service Teachers Views of their Preparation for Inclusive Education teachers' attitude
69 towards IE. Moreover, factors related to teachers' workload (Brennan, 2002), class size, limited resources
70 and teacher training (Lifshitz, Glaubman & Issawi, 2004) were also indicated to inhibit successful inclusion
71 of all students. Furthermore, challenges related to time plus acquiring appropriate resources to support
72 certain disabilities in the classroom (Harris & Stephenson, 2003; Jahnukainen & Korhonen, 2003; Jenkins, 2002;
73 ??estwood, 2003) were also found as barriers to IE. As reported by Sutherland (2000) the high school teachers
74 expressed feelings of helplessness as they felt that they did not have the time or the expertise to deal with the
75 high needs of these students. This notion of teacher helplessness was also reported by ??atson (2004) in a study
76 of secondary teachers. He stated that teachers feel, 'isolated, frustrated, and overburdened' (p. 11), in trying to
77 meet the needs of students with learning difficulties in the mainstream.

78 With regards to severity of student's disability as impacting on attitude, Campbell, Gilmore, and Cuskelly
79 (2003) argued that teachers have a certain attitude towards and treatment of specific students in their class due
80 to factors such as severity of the student's disability, the challenges posed by the student behaviour and the lack
81 of time to teach these group of students. In the same vein, Hastings and Oakford (2003) argued that irrespective
82 of teaching experience, the severity of disability showed an inverse relationship with positive attitudes in that,
83 the increase in severity the decrease in positivity in teachers' attitudes. Idol (1997) suggested makes a lot of
84 sense if teachers are to be able to survive within an IE setting. He submitted that teachers need additional
85 tools and skills to cope with the social and emotional problems that accompany inclusive schooling ??1997). A
86 UNESCO study that was focused on school improvements was conducted on teacher education in 14 countries in
87 1980. The study targeted teaching strategies for inclusion and found that the majority of teachers were willing
88 to accept learners with special needs in their classes but they lacked the confidence due to limited training. Lack
89 of training preparation and experience in dealing with students with special needs can greatly affect teachers'
90 attitude towards IE as also noted by Chhabra, Srivastava, & Srivastava (2010). They indicated that the teachers'
91 negativity towards IE, stem from a sense of unpreparedness which led to a feeling of dread and additional stress
92 as they were already coping with a diverse set of student needs.

93 Training is something that is crucial for teachers as it helps them with the strategies to deal with learners who
94 have special needs (Salend, 1984). By the same token, Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden ??2000) Examining Pre
95 and In-Service Teachers Views of their Preparation for Inclusive Education manage an inclusive classroom cannot
96 be overstated. The limited IE courses that are available to prepare teacher trainees at FOE is a great concern for
97 lecturers involved in this study; hence the need to find out from the currently trained teachers their own views
98 concerning their preparations for an IE classroom environment. Previous research that were undertaken on IE
99 in Samoa were based on the perspective of policy makers, and practitioners' (Tufue-Dolgov, 2010) however, no
100 research had been conducted on views of pre and in-service teachers with regards to their training preparations
101 for IE, hence the impetus for the current study.

102 4 IV. PURPOSE

103 The purpose of this study was to explore participants' views about their teacher preparation pertaining to
104 inclusive education and their preparedness to teach within an IE classroom. The objectives were two folds:
105 ? To explore novice and practicing teachers' experiences of their teacher preparation to teach in an inclusive
106 education environment;

107 ? To examine factors that may facilitate and/ or inhibit a teachers' practice within an inclusive education
108 setting;

109 The focus question that guided this study was:

110 ? What are pre service and practicing teachers' views with respect to their teacher preparation as it pertains
111 to inclusive education?

112 The following research questions were explored in this study:

113 ? How could educational preparation (training etc) be improved to more fully prepare teachers for an inclusive
114 classroom?

115 **5 V. METHODOLOGY**

116 The study utilized a qualitative phenomenological approach to gather information using open ended questions.
117 Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that targets the cohesiveness of a specific group's lived
118 experiences. It aims to describe the nature of the particular phenomenon ??Creswell, 2013). We employed this
119 design as it provided the opportunity for participants to describe the meaning of their lived experiences regarding
120 the phenomenon which in this case is their experience of their teaching preparation in IE. The hermeneutical
121 phenomenology was used in that it depends on the researcher's interpretations of what the individuals lived
122 experience means (ibid). The gathering and presentation of explanations and descriptions from teachers' responses
123 were classified into responses that show evidence of similarity or uniqueness. These were reclassified to enable
124 a manageable analysis of data. Purposive criterion sampling was used to identify 94 pre and in service teachers
125 who were undergoing teacher training in the bachelor of education program at FOE, NUS, in 2022. An open-
126 ended survey questionnaire comprising of 7 questions were distributed to the 94 participants. Participants were
127 approached during their course of study at the university and were given a cover letter and consent form explaining
128 their rights as participants. Written consent were obtained and each participant were assigned a pseudonym.
129 They were required to fill in the survey form and submit within a week. A phenomenological analysis of the
130 interview transcripts was conducted. The data was read and reread and discarded for like phrases and themes
131 that were then grouped to form clusters of meaning ??Creswell, 2013). Through this process the The result
132 of this study is significant as it will inform our program development and practices as teacher educators at the
133 National University of Samoa. Similarly, the results will assist policy makers at the MESC in relation to means
134 in which they could support teachers in inclusive education classrooms.

135 **6 VI. FINDINGS**

136 This research was aimed at examining pre and in service teachers' views of their teacher preparations in inclusive
137 education. After analysis of data, a number of categories emerged as they relate to questions pertaining to;
138 Training preparations, IE course relevance and Trainee preparedness, IE required support, Facilitating factors,
139 Inhibiting factors as well as Trainee concerns. These categories were further analyzed to arrive at minor themes
140 and ultimately mega themes as presented in Table 1 below.

141 **7 VIII. TEACHER TRAINING NEEDS**

142 Data indicated that the majority of participants have limited knowledge and skills in IE. Inherent in this view
143 is the notion that teachers are not adequately prepared to work in an IE classroom. Participants indicated their
144 need for more skills and knowledge to enable them to teach in an inclusive education setting as reflected in the
145 following comments:

146 **8 Teachers preparation for an IE should be sufficient in terms 147 of theories and philosophical beliefs in ways to better the 148 teaching for students (P11)**

149 As alluded to earlier, the need for the institution to develop more courses to give teachers a better understanding
150 of learners and their needs was a significant finding as it arose several times:

151 **9 The institution must have more courses that deal with han- 152 dling students with disabilities (P90)**

153 One of the critical areas pertaining to teacher preparation relates to the importance of practicing learned ideas
154 in the IE classroom. For example, more than fifty percent indicated their need for a more practical aspect of IE
155 as this is where they put into practice the theories, ideas and concepts that they learn in IE. These participants
156 commented:

157 There needs to be a program where students go to the field for experience. The experience of being present
158 in the IE environment is crucial (P. 30) This notion of practicing IE ideas is well connected to the need to
159 observe and undertake research within an inclusive classroom or within a special school setting as voiced by some
160 participants:

16 PARENT SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL I.E. WE TEACHERS NEED TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH PARENTS SO THAT WE KNOW THE NEEDS AND WANTS OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS (P21)

161 10 I need to go out and observe schools like Loto Taumafai, where students with disabilities are (P41)

163 One other area in connection with teacher preparation that was highlighted in the findings relates to sufficient
164 and special resources such as; braille and sign language as well as the need for teachers to be knowledgeable in
165 using these resources. The sign language materials and brailled machines are available at FOE however they are
166 not utilized and practiced by teachers due to a lack of specialized or knowledgeable individuals who can effectively
167 use these resources as indicated by this comment:

168 There should be resources like braille to be used for the training. As well as sign language to improve, there
169 should also be specialized teachers for this area (P22)

170 11 Value of IE Specialist/Experts

171 The worth of being trained by specialized trainers with the expertise in specialized areas such as in the use of
172 sign language and braille was a very significant finding as indicated by more than half of the population. At the
173 moment the two inclusive education lecturers who hold some qualifications in inclusive education, have a good
174 ground in theoretical and philosophical understanding of inclusive education, but lack the specialized skills such
175 as the use of braille and sign language. These are the practical skills the participants seem to require in their IE
176 trainings and preparations. Limited access to this support can be one great obstacle in preparing teachers for
177 IE. The following comments seem to reflect this need: ©

178 12 Teacher Preparation Deficiency

179 With respect to teacher preparedness to teach in an IE classroom, the majority indicated their lack of readiness
180 to teach in an IE classroom. This deficiency seems to affect teachers' confidence to work in an IE setting as noted
181 by these comments:

182 No I do not have the skills to face students with disabilities so I don't think I can handle because I lack the
183 skills (P37).

184 As alluded to earlier, participants applauded the relevance of the one available IE course however it is not
185 sufficient to inform their understanding about teaching children with special needs and to address the challenges
186 that may arise. This participant has this to say:

187 ? at the moment there is only one course that teaches about inclusive education and I think it is not enough to
188 face challenges. Because we only take one inclusive course in one semester within 3 years so I lack the experience
189 and I need more time to spend on the course before working in the field (P90)

190 13 X. SUPPORT REQUIRED FOR INCLUSIVE CLASS- 191 ROOM

192 The question that dealt with the type of support required for IE came up with the following categories: Specialized
193 training in sign lang/braille, IE expert trainer, Experienced teachers, Collaboration-community / school, Funds
194 for Resources (Govt). Further analysis of these categories generated three themes namely: Training preparations,
195 Community/school collaboration and Financial support (Govt). which are presented below.

196 14 Training Preparations

197 As had been highlighted in previous themes; the importance of training as it relates to teacher preparation has
198 again emerged in connection to necessary support for IE. For example, the majority emphasized the importance
199 of having specialized training in sign language and braille in preparation for a child who could only communicate
200 using sign language or braille. The following comment reflects this need: I need to learn how to use sign language
201 and be able to understand other special needs such as visual impaired and ways to support these students (aside
202 from those with hearing problem) (P77)

203 15 Community/School Collaboration

204 Additionally the support from the community was also evident. For example, several participants pointed to the
205 vital support from parents via a community and school collaboration since parents have a better understanding
206 of their own child as noted here:

207 16 Parent support is crucial i.e. we teachers need to work 208 collaboratively with parents so that we know the needs and 209 wants of special needs students (P21)

210 There were also participants who acknowledged the support of other individuals from special schools and IE
211 contexts for shared knowledge and expertise. i.e., a close collaboration between the university and individuals

212 who teach in special schools similarly individuals who work in special schools was considered essential based on
213 this comment:

214 **17 It is great to have the support from other persons who work
215 in special school so we will have an understanding of all types
216 of disabilities and how to teach the blind and deaf students
217 (P31)**

218 **18 Financial support (Govt)**

219 Although not many participants mentioned this aspect however it is worth noting for it can impact on IE. It was
220 suggested for the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MESC) to provide support via educational tools
221 and facilities e.g., building ramps. We can very well relate to the importance of appropriate facilities for success
222 of IE. We could use our own institution as an example of a non-inclusive environment. For example, although
223 some ramps are put in place however lack of lifts and ramps for upstairs rooms can greatly inhibit mobility of a
224 leaner who is wheel chair bound.

225 **19 XI. FACILITATING AND INHIBITING FACTORS FOR
226 IE SUCCESS**

227 The two questions which asked participants regarding factors that could enhance and or debilitate IE were
228 collapsed into one and the following categories emerged: Teacher knowledge/skills, Teacher disposition, Positive
229 attitude, Teacher aide, Specialized resources e.g. braille, sign language, Good leadership, Teachers & parents
230 collaboration. These categories were further analyzed and generated the following 5 themes: Teacher Training
231 preparation, Resource -human /physical, Attitude, Student personality and School / Community collaboration.
232 Narrative based on these themes are presented below.

233 **20 Teacher Training Preparation**

234 Again as noted in other themes, the notion of training has also emerged as a top theme under this category. One
235 of the outstanding factors that can either facilitate or inhibit IE concerns with the knowledge and skills to deal
236 with children who have special needs. This knowledge and skill however comes from effective training which can
237 then be transferred by teachers to the IE classroom. This participant commented on the importance of teacher
238 knowledge in enhancing IE:

239 **21 Factors to facilitate IE practice in the classroom, are the
240 skills that a teacher must have to juggle teaching special
241 students and normal students in the same room. Normal
242 students will obviously catch up faster than special needs
243 student (P30).**

244 On the other hand, limited knowledge in IE can greatly affect one's understanding of IE. The majority of
245 participants reported they have very limited teacher knowledge and skills in dealing with various needs of children
246 which makes it very challenging for them:

247 **22 For me it is really hard for myself to teach these students as
248 I don't know anything about**

249 **23 Resource -Human /Physical Resource**

250 Other factors that can affect IE, relates to human resource in this case teachers to support IE. For example,
251 findings highlighted the importance of having teacher aides to support the child who may have a special need in
252 the classroom as this will allow the classroom teacher access to other students:

253 **24 Inclusive education can be facilitated by having two teachers
254 in the classroom, one to work with special needs and the
255 other to work with non special needs children (P74)**

256 Additionally, the availability of specialized resources such as brailed machine and personnel who can use sign
257 language was also considered as an important consideration for IE.

32 TEACHER TRAINING PREPARATION

258 There should be resources like braille and sign language to be used for the training ?there should also be
259 specialized teachers for this area (P22).

25 Attitude

261 Attitude plays a major role for success or failure of IE i.e., positive attitude breeds success while a negative hints
262 at failure. The participants alluded to the importance of having a positive attitude from classmates, the school
263 community and parents as this facilitates IE:

26 Students mingle around with students who have special 265 needs, they should also encourage to treat these students 266 as their own brother because some students look down on 267 these students and make fun of students with disabilities in 268 the classroom (P26)

269 Negative attitude on the other hand can be an obstacle towards IE. For example, the participants indicated that
270 negative behavior towards the child who may have a special needs can hinder IE practices.

27 Children [with special needs) may go through bullying and 272 discrimination in class and this can affect their desire to be 273 in class (P40)

274 Some participants indicated that the characteristics of the teacher can also be a facilitating or debilitating factor.
275 For instance a teacher who is innovative, caring, patient and loving was deemed critical for IE success:
276 The teacher should be compassionate, have love, patience and must have enough time to connect to the child
277 with a special needs (P20)

28 Student Personality

279 Child related factors were also highlighted to affect IE success for instance, some participants commented that
280 the attitude of the child with special needs can be a facilitator or hindrance to IE.
281 Some students with special needs require more time to learn and speak since they have low self esteem. Some
282 of them do not seem to care whether they learn something or not and some get easily distracted (P4)

29 School / Community Collaboration

284 Participants also stressed the importance of a collaborative relationship between the community and school for
285 IE success. For example some parents can be utilized as a resource person to support the classroom teacher. The
286 parent of the child who may have a special condition can be allowed into the classroom to offer the necessary
287 support for the child while the teacher concentrates on other learners. This support can filter into the homes
288 where parents can be encouraged to support their children in their home study.

289 30 I think teachers should work together with parents?they 290 can provide them with some basic skills and knowledge to 291 support their children (P80)

292 ©

293 31 XII. TEACHER CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES 294 TEACHING IN AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

295 The question which dealt with concerns and challenges that teachers may have with respect to teaching in an
296 inclusive setting came up with these categories: Teacher limited knowledge, Time factor impacting the syllabus,
297 Unfavorable attitude, insufficient resources to support disabled students, poor learning environment. These
298 categories were further analyzed and generated 4 themes;

299 Teacher training preparation, Classroom management, Attitude and Learning environment which are presented
300 below.

301 32 Teacher Training Preparation

302 The category pertaining to teacher challenges and concerns regarding IE saw participants being very much
303 perplexed by their limited knowledge in IE. This insufficient knowledge make them feel very vulnerable to practice

304 within an IE environment. Again the concept of limited knowledge as a result of inadequate training preparations
305 has been viewed as a major concern in this section:

306 One thing which really worries me as a future teacher is my limited knowledge of various disabilities and
307 strategies to support them. e.g., visual impairment students need a braille machine but I don't have much
308 experience in using such resources'. (P21)

309 **33 Classroom Management**

310 A number of participants were quite concern with time factor in relation to their daily work plan. For example,
311 participants indicated that teachers may not have ample time to help other students if s/he would have to
312 concentrate on children with special needs. Consequently this will affect syllabus coverage i.e., other aspect of
313 the teacher's daily plan may not be effectively fulfilled if extra time is to be spent in supporting learners who
314 may learn at a very slow pace: Some of the challenges that concerns me is time management while teaching. It
315 is obvious that I must make sure the special student is on track and is able to understand at the same time not
316 to neglect students who do not have special needs (P30)

317 **34 Attitude**

318 One of the participants' concerns was associated to unreceptive attitude from students, teachers (school
319 community) and parents towards the student with special needs. An example of a student unfavorable attitude
320 is reflected by this comment:

321 I believe the student with a disability may not understand of may not have the ability to learn because the
322 student who are considered normal may disagree or discourage the student with disability (P5)

323 Similarly the teacher's prejudiced attitude has been viewed as a concern as it can affect IE as reflected by this
324 comment:

325 Avoid giving all attention to the poor student with disability because it will make the others feel jealous and
326 think that I am bias. This may lead to other problems (P.49)

327 **35 Learning Environment**

328 A further concern for IE in relation to IE practice was connected to limited resource and poor learning environment
329 to support students with special needs within the classrooms. Physical resource has always been one of the
330 common global issues concerning IE mainly in low socioeconomic contexts. The prevalent high teacher student
331 ratio issue within the Samoan context can be challenging for IE. For example, how would a learner who is wheel
332 chair bound maneuver his way around a room full of students? This will definitely defeat the purpose of IE as
333 reflected by this comment:

334 There should be enough teachers to teach in this area. The environment should be perfect example, school
335 building resources to support children and of course cleanliness. If these areas are well prepared, the children
336 will be successful in the future (P.6) ©

337 **36 XIII. DISCUSSION**

338 This study was driven by the assumption that the training institution may not be adequately preparing teachers
339 for an IE classroom given that only one course on IE is currently available to teachers within this study context.
340 Teachers were examined concerning their views about their preparations in IE. After an in-depth analysis of data,
341 four major themes emerged which forms the basis of the discussion. These include: Teacher Preparations and
342 Training requirements, Human resource, Attitude, and School/ Community collaboration.

343 The overall findings indicated that teachers have limited knowledge and skills to teach in an IE environment.
344 This limited teacher knowledge and skills were attributed to the limited number of courses that are offered by
345 the training institution. As alluded to earlier, there is only one IE course that is currently offered in IE which
346 implies a lack of an available IE program. The lack of a program in IE can also imply that whatever knowledge
347 or skills in IE that teachers may have had are unlikely to be practiced within a real IE classroom and may have
348 further affected teachers preparations for IE. According to the findings, the majority of participants indicated
349 their desire to have an opportunity to observe and practise within an IE classroom. We argue that one of the
350 major factors which seemed to have affected teacher IE preparation was the lack of opportunity provided for
351 teachers to practise their learned ideas within an inclusive classroom setting. The current situation at FOE is
352 that preservice teachers do not have the privilege to practise their learned ideas within an inclusive education
353 classroom setting. The last time trained teachers practiced their teaching within a special or inclusive education
354 context was more than a decade ago; a time when the diploma in special education was made available for
355 preservice teachers who specialized for special education. When the program was dismantled in 2014, teachers
356 lost the opportunity to carry out their practice within these settings. The discontinuation of teaching practice
357 within the IE classrooms has greater implications for teacher preparations, and as the study shows, it implies an
358 inadequacy on the part of FOE (NUS) in providing the teachers with the professional training they require. This
359 we argue has further impaired teachers' preparation for an IE classroom-a view that is in line with the literature,
360 (Forlin, Earle, Loreman, & Sharma, 2011) which emphasized the importance of teachers being effectively trained
361 for this will effectively prepare them to efficiently practice within an IE setting.

37 XIV. CONCLUSION

362 Findings also indicated a great need for human resource or individuals with the expertise to train teachers
363 especially in the more specialized areas like sign language and braille. In the current state of affairs, there is no
364 specialized trainer within the faculty of education who can effectively use sign language and braille. The lecturers
365 who are currently involved in the teaching of IE, did not receive the requisite training in these very specialized
366 areas thus would normally have difficulty sharing this vital knowledge with teachers. On some occasions and
367 through special arrangements, some guest speakers (from outside the university) with the expertise in sign
368 language or braille would be invited to share their knowledge with trainees through a lecture. Although these
369 individuals are well applauded for sharing their expertise, however there is still a great need to have a full time
370 lecturer onsite with such expertise to work together with teacher trainees within the training institution. One
371 can argue and as confirmed by these findings, that this type of support is crucial for enhancement of educational
372 preparation for teachers in IE. As indicated by Sutherland (2000) lack of expertise to address special needs
373 of students can affect teachers' emotional state which in turn affect their practice. Hence the importance of
374 recruiting experts to support teachers in their preparations cannot be over stated. Findings also highlighted the
375 notion of support as an important factor for success of IE. This support can be from various individuals such
376 as the trainer with considerable expertise in IE. Similarly the support can come from the school environment in
377 the likes of the teacher aides, experienced teachers and school principals. For example, the concept of using a
378 teacher aide to support the classroom teacher within the classroom was highly recommended by participants in
379 this study. One can very well relate to such sentiments given the challenges such as over crowded classrooms
380 that seem to be the norm in most Samoan classrooms. The ratio of 40 or 50 students to one teacher simply
381 defeats the purpose for inclusive education. Tufue-Dolgoy, (2010) arguing from a similar position, argued that
382 the manner in which inclusive education operates in Samoa seemed to have led to more exclusion for a number
383 of students i.e., the idea of effectively including a student with a special need in a classroom with a high teacher
384 student ration is very unrealistic. Therefore having an extra teacher in this type of context would be the most
385 sensible action to take. The idea of using teacher aides to support IE was initiated by the Ministry of Education
386 in collaboration with one inclusive service provider which clearly indicates government support towards IE. The
387 service provider provides teacher aides to support students with special needs within some regular classrooms.
388 The support of parents of the child with special needs has also been seen as vital in the sense that they can be
389 allowed in the classroom to support the child while the teacher focuses on other students.

390 Findings also stressed that attitude of teachers, classroom learners and the community can affect IE either in
391 a positive or negative manner. The majority of teachers in this study are novice and they claimed having very
392 limited knowledge of IE which seemed to have affected their sense of confidence in practicing IE. They claimed
393 that having sufficient information will help them develop a better understanding of IE. This findings is consistent
394 with years of research indicating that limited teacher preparation led to teachers feelings of trepidation to practice
395 in an IE classroom (Chhabra, Srivastava, & Srivastava (2010)). Success of IE can also be affected by attitude
396 of classroom learners i.e. if children without special needs are not accepting of their peers with special needs
397 then IE would suffer. The attitude of parents was also deemed important for IE success as several participants
398 indicated that some parents have an adverse attitude towards including a child with a special needs together with
399 their children in the same classroom. This type of attitude is not healthy for IE hence it is important to educate
400 parents so they will develop a better understanding of IE; as education can effect change. In this light, some
401 participants highlighted the idea of an effective school principal in influencing attitude which seems to suggest
402 the principal as an ideal person to organize parents' and teachers' meetings to address the attitude issue.

403 As has been argued throughout the paper, the limited number of IE courses that are currently available for
404 teachers may not be sufficient to prepare them for IE. The findings seemed to have affirmed this assumption. We
405 maintain that teachers are far from being prepared for an IE classroom hence we strongly suggest that the training
406 institution (FOE) acknowledges the importance of developing an IE program so teachers are adequately prepared
407 to teach in an IE classroom. The literature in relation to professional development of teachers (Avramidis, Bayliss,
408 Burden, 2000 & Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007) stressed the value of developing relevant courses and seminars for it
409 helps reduces teacher stress and any opposed attitude to IE.

410 37 XIV. CONCLUSION

411 Despite some progress made in IE since its inception in the Samoan context in the early twenty first century,
412 a lot of challenges are still evident in several ways. One such problem lies in the preparation of teachers in IE
413 as noted in the findings of the current study. Findings indicated that the training institution is not adequately
414 preparing teachers for an IE classroom. This is clearly evident in the lack of an IE program that is made available
415 for teachers. The one IE introductory course that is currently made accessible to teachers although seemingly
416 relevant, however is far from adequate in meeting the teachers' needs. The majority of participants in the current
417 study exhibited a great interest in IE unfortunately they claimed not having sufficient knowledge and skills to
418 confidently practise in an IE classroom. It appears that this limited knowledge due to poor teacher preparation
419 has affected teachers motivation and confidence to teach within IE environment. We can argue that this lack of
420 knowledge could have also been exacerbated by the unavailability of a fulltime expert in sign language and braille
421 to further support teachers in their preparation. Moreover is the issue of attitude which has been an ongoing
422 obstacle for success of IE. We have reason to argue that perhaps issues noted above could have stemmed from an
423 adverse attitude towards IE. For example, a lack of IE program could be attributed to an unfavorable attitude

424 towards IE i.e., if policy makers and the training institution value IE, then this attitude would be reflected by
425 the availability of an IE program for teachers. It is highly likely that the same unfavorable attitude could have
426 been instrumental in decisions to eliminate special education courses that were initially offered for teachers as
427 mentioned at the outset. These issues suggest implications for the training institution and teacher preparation
428 programs as will be noted in recommendations below.

429 **38 RECOMMENDATIONS**



Figure 1:



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Figure 2: 14 |

38 RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 3:



Figure 4:

38 RECOMMENDATIONS

1

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Figure 6:

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