

## **INCLUSIVE DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES: PRIMARY TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES**

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### **Abstract**

Teachers play an important role in enhancing Inclusive Education (IE). This study explored primary teachers' perceptions of inclusive dimensions of quality educational processes and examined how these perceptions informed their classroom practices. Semi-structured interviews in a qualitative approach were conducted to understand how teachers enacted IE implementation, pedagogy, and assessment. Thematic analysis revealed four themes: (w)holistic purpose teaching, thematic teaching, blended instructional methods, and localised and contextualised assessment. Teachers demonstrated a strong awareness of inclusive principles and applied them consistently, focusing on learners' cognitive, physical, and spiritual development. The use of contextualised blended learning assessment contributed to high academic performance in Grade Seven. These findings show the potential of teacher-driven inclusive practices in promoting equitable learning outcomes which aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4.

*Keywords: perceptions, localised, Inclusive Education, blended teaching, learning, academic performance*

### **1. Introduction**

Teachers in educational institutions are central to achieving quality Inclusive Education (IE) for all learners, including learners with disabilities (LWDs). Teachers' actions significantly determine whether IE becomes a lived reality in classrooms. Since teachers directly shape learning experiences, their perspectives on the challenges, benefits, and strategies for enhancing inclusion provide a crucial lens for understanding the success of inclusive initiatives (Ali et al., 2024). IE requires that all learners receive equitable treatment in mainstream settings regardless of their physical, mental, or social abilities (McAuliffe, 2018). This expectation aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which underscores inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all (UN, 2015). Positioned as a global aspiration, IE serves as a driver of human development, equipping individuals with essential knowledge, skills, and values needed to live productive and fulfilling lives (Ravet & Mtika, 2024). Considering these imperatives, understanding how teachers perceive and enact inclusive, quality educational processes become fundamental.

Inclusive quality educational processes refer to the full range of actions teachers undertake to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Biggs' (1993) 3P Model-Presage, Process, and Product -provides a multidimensional framework for analysing these actions. First, presage constitutes conditions existing prior to instruction, such as institutional infrastructure, learning materials, faculty competencies, and student characteristics that shape instructional potential. Second, within the classroom, processes such as class size, learning exchanges, and feedback practices influence the quality of teaching and learning. Third and finally, the product comprises outcomes such as academic performance, students' knowledge retention, and competencies relevant for employability (Brussino, 2021). This model demonstrates that teachers occupy a pivotal position, mediating institutional inputs and shaping learning trajectories. It also reinforces that integrating SDG 4 principles into everyday classroom practices is essential for ensuring equitable participation and learning.

Learner-centred teaching (LCT) has emerged as a pedagogical approach strongly aligned with inclusive principles. Although rooted in nineteenth-century educational reform and developed systematically in the 1970s (Darsih, 2018; Kumar, 2020), LCT continues to be widely recognised for its contribution to accommodating learner diversity. Through its focus on student participation, responsiveness to learner needs, and active engagement with real-world problems, LCT enhances both motivation and learning outcomes. Teachers using LCT adapt their strategies to students' learning styles, speed, abilities, and goals, thereby addressing variability in the classroom (Kumar, 2020; Tzenios, 2022). The approach promotes deep learning by involving students in the critical, often challenging work of learning (Matmuratova, 2020), cultivating skills such as reasoning, critical thinking, analysis of evidence, and hypothesis formulation. By granting students some control over their learning, students share

decision-making skills in assignments, timelines, and assessment criteria. Thus, LCT strengthens intrinsic motivation and fosters a collaborative learning community.

The cultivation of soft skills, essential for employability, also forms a key responsibility of teachers. Drawing on the classical concept of *paideia*, which emphasises holistic human development encompassing moral, physical, and intellectual growth (Zovko & Dillon, 2018; Richard, 2021), the Paideia Program offers a blueprint for inclusive, holistic education for all, including LWDs. Its three modalities: didactic instruction, coaching, and Socratic questioning, together support knowledge acquisition, intellectual skill development, and deeper conceptual understanding (Adler, 1982; Roberts & Billings, 1999; Lopes & Mendes, 2023). Effective implementation requires that didactic teaching remains minimal, coaching strengthens learning-to-learn skills, and Socratic dialogue cultivates critical reflection and integration of ideas (Adler, 1995; Woods, 2019).

Within this broader pedagogical positioning, cooperative learning has been widely recognised as an inclusive instructional strategy that enhances participation and supports learners with diverse educational needs (Martiniello et al., 2023). Similarly, recent empirical studies led by Capellini and colleagues emphasise that inclusive education requires structured pedagogical adaptation, collaborative practices, and responsive teaching environments (Capellini et al., 2024). Moreover, the effectiveness of these modalities depends substantially on teachers' understanding of inclusive classroom pedagogy and their responsiveness to contextual realities (Mwaruta, 2025). Applied to contemporary post-COVID-19 classrooms, this model highlights the importance of raising learners who are not merely academically competent but socially responsible, reflective, and adaptable. Overall, these perspectives position teachers as central agents in determining whether inclusive pedagogical ideals are translated into meaningful classroom practices.

However, translating such inclusive ideals into practice remains complex and uneven across many school contexts. Evidence shows that teachers often demonstrate resistance to inclusive reforms due to limited resources (Mwanguzi & Naluwemba, 2021), inadequate training (Torres-Madroñero et al., 2022; D'Angelo & Singal, 2024), persistent structural challenges (Ravet & Mtika, 2024), and increasing learner diversity (Begum & Mamin, 2019). Implementation of international commitments, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) Article 27, also remains uneven and difficult to operationalise in practice (Sadiki & Kibirige, 2022). These realities suggest that teachers' perspectives (Wickenden, 2024) and self-efficacy (Ning & Jang, 2025) strongly shape the quality of interactions and significantly influence how inclusive processes for LWDs unfold in schools. Despite ongoing reforms, there remains limited empirical understanding of how teachers in primary schools perceive the inclusiveness and quality of the educational processes they engage in daily. Consequently, examining teachers' lived experiences and perceptions becomes essential for understanding how inclusive education is enacted in everyday primary school settings.

Therefore, this paper examines teachers' perspectives on inclusive dimensions of the quality educational process in primary schools. By analysing their views within the broader context of inclusion, pedagogical reform, and global educational commitments, the discussion contributes to a deeper understanding of how inclusive quality education can be strengthened, sustained, and meaningfully enacted in diverse learning environments.

The theory of social constructivism (SCT) purports effective teaching and learning as greatly dependent or based on social interactions and discussions, with the fundamental core centred on the learners' understanding of the discourse or conversation (Prawat, 1992). This theory allows discourse among individuals and ultimately leads to self-introspection (Prawat, 1991). Hence, SCT was used as a lens to understand teachers' perspectives and how they enact inclusivity in the classroom. How they interacted with learners and how they viewed themselves in the classroom. Since the learner as the less knower interacts with the more knowledgeable one, it was deemed fit to use the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). ZPD is a region where a learner in a classroom can perform a task with the scaffolding of the teacher. It is grounded on Vygotsky's SCT scaffolding of learners and is linked to the concept of ZPD. It is the difference between what a student can accomplish on their own and what they can accomplish with the support and encouragement of an experienced partner, which is known as the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The learners should receive the most sensitive instruction or direction in this area so they can acquire abilities they can utilise independently. This instruction should include tasks that are beyond the learner's current capabilities, but they are doable with the more knowledgeable other's (MKO) assistance and direction. The range of things that a person can achieve with assistance but not on their own is known as the ZPD. As a result, "proximal" describes abilities that a student is "close" to mastering. Thus, it is during the application of MKO that the learner is mentored by the more knowledgeable person as an apprentice. The mentor eases the effort slowly to allow

learners under apprenticeship to gain control of the task. After that, learners complete the tasks independently. Three research questions guided the study: 1) What are the teachers' perspectives of inclusive quality education?; 2) What are the teachers' perspectives regarding inclusive dimensions of the quality of educational processes?; 3) How do teachers enact quality inclusive dimensions in their classrooms

## **2. Method**

A qualitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was used to investigate primary school teachers' perceptions regarding inclusive dimensions of quality educational processes and how they enacted inclusivity in their classrooms. This approach was vital because the researcher wanted to explore the teachers lived experience regarding quality inclusive dimensions of education. All teachers responded using their everyday experiences to explain concepts in their practice using everyday language (Cropley, 2023).

### **2.2 Research Design**

A case study design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was used because the focus of the study was to gain contextual and in-depth knowledge regarding a specific real-world subject. In our study, the case was the quality-inclusive dimensions of education. The case study design allowed the researcher to explore important features, meanings, and implications of quality inclusive dimensions of education in school settings. Case studies are useful because they provide new insights, challenges, and realistic and new approaches for further study. In this paper, it was a single case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018) concerning quality inclusive dimensions of education. According to Yin (2018), a single case study is where one phenomenon, in our case it is the quality inclusive dimensional processes.

### **2.3 Instruments**

A researcher-designed semi-structured interview schedule was used because it is flexible (Neergaard & Leitch, 2015) and probe questions (Gorden, 1987) can be framed during the interview to provide extra information or clarification (Given, 2008). For face validity, two experts checked the questions in the interview schedule (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) before they were administered to participants. For qualitative study trustworthiness is very crucial, which includes credibility, confirmability, transferability, dependability, and authenticity. Credibility refers to how a researcher interacts with participants (Bazeley, 2013; Cresswell, 2018) and it was achieved through a cordial and prolonged interaction (Cresswell, 2018). Also, credibility was ascertained through constant notetaking during the interview, documenting many steps and procedures, and careful reporting (Yin, 2009). Confirmability is the extent of dealing with study bias. In this case, the researcher used an audit trail by checking closely each step of the study (Patton, 2014). Transferability is the application to a new context (Sefotho & Onyishi, 2021), and in this paper, all four teachers used inclusivity in their different classroom contexts, suggesting that the inclusive dimensions of educational studies can be applied to different stages of schooling and the information is published for a wide readership (Sefotho & Onyishi, 2021). Authenticity is the extent to which a researcher carefully shows the varied realities in the study. In this paper, to address the authenticity, the researcher consulted pertinent references to link the findings to the original data collected from the participants (Kyngas et al., 2020). The final piece that contributed to the quality of qualitative data collected was a reflexive journal (Dado et al., 2023). For each participant, name, age, educational background, and teaching experience were entered in the reflexive journal (Table 1). The reflexive journal included all events that occurred during the data collection process and aided the researcher in reflecting on all activities (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). During data analysis, the reflexive journal assisted the researcher in cross-checking the data collected (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). Hence, processes like prolonged engagement, constant observations and notetaking, peer debriefing, authenticity of data and member checking to ascertain what the recorded information reflected their lived experience, which increased credibility of the data.

### **2.4 Participants**

Four teachers were purposively selected from a private church-sponsored, well-resourced primary school from urban areas of Kampala in Uganda using criterion sampling (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). The criterion was participant practice of IE, where no learner was discriminated against based on physical, mental, and spiritual differences. In addition, teachers were selected based on the primary school phase they teach. In Uganda, there are three phases: lower primary (Grades 1-2), intermediate (Grades 3-4), which constitute lower primary and upper primary (Grades 5-7). In Uganda, Colleges of Education offer lower primary teacher education Early Childhood (Grades 1-3) and Upper Primary Teacher Education (Grades 4-7). Bearing these in mind, the researcher selected four teachers (one female, three males): two from the lower primary (one male, one female) and two from the upper primary (two males) categories (Table 1).

*Table 1. Demographics of participants*

| Category<br>Primary | Participant | Age | Gender | Class | Subject               | Teaching<br>experience | Education                   |
|---------------------|-------------|-----|--------|-------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Lower               | A           | 43  | F      | 1 & 2 | All                   | 15                     | Certificate                 |
| Intermediate        | B           | 53  | M      | 3     | All                   | 20                     | Diploma                     |
| Upper               | C           | 45  | M      | 5     | Integrated<br>Science | 22                     | Certificate<br>(Grade<br>3) |
|                     | D           | 27  | M      | 7     | Social<br>Sciences    | 8                      | Certificate<br>(Grade<br>3) |

Table 1 shows that teachers' age ranged between 27 and 53 years, their teaching experiences ranged from 8 to 22 years, and three of them were certificate holders while one was a diploma holder.

## 2.5 Data collection

Data were collected using Personal Interviews (PI) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) using an interview schedule to ascertain participants' experiences (Maphoke, 2017). Each participant was asked five questions, followed by follow-up or probe questions for clarity. The five questions were: 1) What do you focus on or aim at in teaching in the classroom?; 2) Can you describe the nature of the curriculum you implement in your class?; 3) Can you explain how you use inclusivity in your methods of teaching and how you deal with diverse learning challenges in your class?; 4) Describe how you assess and evaluate learners in the classroom and how you deal with learners with diverse needs?; and 5) Is there any question or comment regarding the quality inclusive educational dimensions or any other issue you would like to highlight? Interviews were audio-recorded for 30 minutes for each participant. The researcher took notes in all interviews as a backup to the audio-recorded information and for cross-checking during transcription. During interviews, participants asked questions for clarity (Letshwene, 2019). The researcher repeated questions and provided participants with detailed explanations. Thirty minutes were enough to deal with all five questions as no new information was collected. Hence, a saturation point was reached (Hennink et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

## 2.6 Data analysis

Reflective Thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2019) was used to analyse participants' responses. The researcher engaged with the data repetitively and read through the transcripts many times to identify new insights as codes. Codes were used to represent themes as they emerged through six steps: 1) familiarisation, 2) systematic coding, 3) generating initial themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) refining themes, and 6) the write-up (Braun & Clarke, 2020). Thus, the codes formed through reflective themes indicate the researcher's interpretations of the data. RTA highlights three researcher's criteria in 1) interpretation of data, 2) the theoretical presumptions, and 3) analytical abilities (Braun & Clarke, 2019). It is no wonder it is rare for two researchers to find the same intersections among these three criteria above. Therefore, while it is feasible, there should be no expectation that another will repeat codes or themes perceived by one researcher. It suggests that the findings from the RTA are the researcher's interpretation of the events from the participants' perspectives.

## 2.7 Ethical issues

Permission was granted from the Director of Education for the Uganda Union of the Seventh-Day Adventist Schools to conduct research in the primary school and its jurisdiction. Permission was granted by the headteacher of the school where the study was conducted. All ethics were observed, including informed consent and confidentiality, and the researcher carefully avoided any harm to participants in words or gestures (Bussu et al., 2021).

## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Main findings

The findings from the interviews with the participants show that teachers were aware of quality, inclusive educational dimensions. They used them daily in their practice, which was evident in their discourse. Their

educational dimensions were based on the purpose of teaching, the curriculum, the pedagogies they used, and how they assessed learning in school, which were linked to themes from the interviews (Table 2).

*Table 2. Participants' perspectives of quality dimensions of educational processes*

| Dimension                         | Participant A                                                                                   | Participant B                            | Participant C                                   | Participant D                                  | Theme                             |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Aim to develop</b>             | Understanding                                                                                   | Sharing<br>Whole child                   | Inquisitiveness                                 | Critical<br>Thinking                           | (W)holistic                       |
| <b>Curriculum<br/>Focus</b>       | Thematic<br>(Exploration/<br>Narration)                                                         | Thematic<br>(Narration/<br>Exploration)  | Exploration/<br>Inquiry                         | Exploration /<br>Inquiry                       | Thematic                          |
| <b>Methodology<br/>(main)</b>     | Demonstrate,<br>observation,<br>pair-share-<br>think,<br>Talk-Play & role-<br>play,<br>creating | Discussion<br>Experiment<br>ICT (Videos) | Experiment<br>Group &<br>discussion             | Experiment<br>Group &<br>discussion            | Blended<br>teaching &<br>learning |
| <b>Assessment<br/>/Evaluation</b> | Oral, pen &<br>paper tests                                                                      | Oral, pen &<br>paper tests               | Presentations,<br>Reports, pen &<br>paper tests | Presentations<br>Reports, pen<br>& paper tests | Localised/<br>contextualise<br>d  |

Table 2 shows that although the four teachers differed in each dimension, their enactments show that they used inclusivity in their practice. The responses from the four teachers regarding quality inclusive educational dimensions as they enacted them in practice are present in four tenets of quality inclusive educational dimensions: aim, curriculum, methods, and assessment and evaluation. Teachers' perceptions and their enactment of inclusivity were exhibited in the school's exceptional performance (Table 3).

*Table 3: School's Primary Examination performance in 10 years.*

| Year | Candidates                                | DIV 1 | DIV 2 | DIV 3 | DIV 4 | % DIV 1   | Total % Pass |
|------|-------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|--------------|
| 2013 | 84                                        | 55    | 29    | 0     | 0     | 77        | 100%         |
| 2014 | 96                                        | 68    | 28    | 0     | 0     | 47        | 100%         |
| 2015 | 97                                        | 51    | 46    | 0     | 0     | 65        | 100%         |
| 2016 | 99                                        | 71    | 28    | 1     | 0     | 71        | 100%         |
| 2017 | 102                                       | 68    | 34    | 0     | 0     | 66        | 100%         |
| 2018 | 103                                       | 24    | 79    | 0     | 0     | 23        | 100%         |
| 2019 | 118                                       | 72    | 46    | 0     | 0     | 61        | 100%         |
| 2020 | 119                                       | 68    | 51    | 0     | 0     | 57        | 100%         |
| 2021 | NO EXAMINATIONS DUE TO COVID 19 LOCK DOWN |       |       |       |       |           |              |
| 2022 | 102                                       | 63    | 39    | 0     | 0     | 61        | 100%         |
| 2023 | 110                                       | 76    | 34    | 0     | 0     | 69        | 100%         |
|      | <b>Average Division I (one) % Pass</b>    |       |       |       |       | <b>60</b> |              |
|      |                                           |       |       |       |       |           |              |

Table 3 shows that no learners failed Primary Leaving Examinations in ten consecutive years, with 60% average pass in Grade I.

### **3,2 Theme 1: (W)holistic purpose teaching**

The verbatim statements from the four teachers illustrate the teachers' perceptions when asked to describe what they focused on during teaching in their various classrooms.

*"In teaching I aim to develop understanding of content and develop the learner's character."* [Participant A, lower primary].

*"Oh, my focus is to educate a whole learner to grow intellectually, physically, and spiritually and these are qualities of life. They cover all spheres of life. I can say it is a range of activities I focus on developing a whole person."* [Participant B, lower primary]

*"At the end of my lesson, learners need to understand the content. I go close to learners with different understanding and repeat the content and if that method fails, I change the method to see that all learners follow."*

*If one method fails, I invite those learners at a different time to meet them to try to assist them to understand."* [Participant C].

*"I focus on causing a change in the learner's understanding and way of seeing things."* [Participant, upper primary].

### **3.3 Theme 2: Thematic teaching**

The respondents described the nature of the curriculum they implement in their classrooms ranging from lower primary to upper primary levels and how it is related to quality IE.

*"The curriculum allows learners to do free activities like Physical Education. Also, to learn Literacy 1 (combined science), Social Studies (SST), reading, and music, Numeracy, and Literacy 2 (English is used here since we have learners from diverse languages and cultures). In addition, we let learners state a few words in their mother tongue if they do not know those words in English. In other schools around they use vernacular."* [Participant A, lower primary]

*"The curriculum I implement in my class includes 1) Environment, 2) Weather, 3) Living things, 4) Resources and keeping peace in our environment, 5) Culture and gender. Also, Man-Made environment (artificial): electricity, computers, and desks."* [Participant B, lower primary]

*"The curriculum is divided into two sections. Section one includes English, Integrated Science, Local Language, Mathematics and Religious Education, while section two is about Creative Arts and Physical Education."* [Participant C, upper primary].

*The curriculum is about from home to school and beyond, classroom context, man and his surrounding, humanity: male and female. Components of environment include soil, trees, rocks, air, water. As you can see these topics are all encompassing, I mean they do not exclude anyone. So, in my classroom I assist all learners to reach their potentials."* Participant D, upper primary]

### **3.4 Theme 3: Blended teaching methods**

Participants elaborated various teaching methods they used in their classrooms.

*"I use group work, demonstrations, pair-share-think (it is under mathematics where they group items and share with others from other groups), observation (brainstorm first, think and then display objects move around them and touch to determine sharpness or smoothness, compare the length. ... and these young ones like to feel. There is role play and learners like playing and do not consider slow and fast but share as their abilities are."*

*"We make sure the slow learners are in group A, not C, so that they do not think that they are inferior."*

*"In mathematics they count numbers, construct, or build structures using objects where learners are free to decide what they want to build with the objects provided. Some can construct a model of a house or a castle. Observation in my class involves counting, measuring by checking if an object is heavy or light, thickness, texture where learners touch and feel, identifying the shapes and colours of objects. I encourage storytelling to develop competency in speech among themselves."* [Participant A, lower primary]

*"I use group work and class discussions. Learners are asked to do investigations of specific phenomenon. For example, this term teachers requested learners to plant beans and observe the changes that take place during germination. They were given twelve plastic bags to plant 2 seeds of each type of cabbage and beans. The children were to record the observed changes and provide nutrients. Learners were allowed to use videos to record the changes which they would present in class. Next term we will teach plants. We expect them to bring the mature plant to class because this allows them to learn all the processes of gardening like mulching. I for one, I use songs to make learners remember. I assist learners to compose songs of specific content. You know some learners compose their own songs to remember the content. I only help them here and there to finalise their songs which assist them to remember and master the content. During plant germination learners observe by counting the number of new features that develop on the seedlings. They note the shape and touch to feel the texture of the leaves."*

*"For inclusivity, learners are grouped in three groups based on their abilities. The low ability group is labelled group A, the middle as B and the third one is C. These learners work with me in class to accomplish activities. If some learners improve in group C, they are shifted to group B or A. Although I have no disabled learners in my class, there are diverse learning abilities: low, middle, and high, and I endeavour to cater for everyone in my class. It means no one is left behind."* [Participant B, lower primary]

*"The method, aah, one, I use objects to explain what is expected. If experiment, I first demonstrate how to do the activities. For instance, I bring to class compound and simple leaves. When I am teaching, I explain the characteristics of simple and compound leaves and show those structures. After those explanations, I call any learner to put all simple leaves in one group and compound leaves in another group. I ask learners to Predict, Observe, and Explain (POE) to their fellow learners. Since there are different learners, I ask learners to tell me what*

they call them in their local languages. For the terminology we can break down the terms. For example, photosynthesis as (photo -represent light, synthesis -to make). I explain that light breaks water to release O and H, which is combined with CO<sub>2</sub> to make simple food for plants and animals. I normally want every learner to follow what is taking place behind the science process.” [Participant C, upper primary]

“I use different methods to teach. Discussions, observations, experiments, and group work. During observations, learners are expected to record types of objects, count numbers, identify the shape of the object, structure and texture, and measure to determine the size of the object. For inclusivity, those learners with challenges are assisted. For example, last year I had a learner with a spinal column challenge. He needed to leave the class and stretch outside and come back later. I could repeat for him what was discussed during his stretching sessions. Others have academic challenges, and I address them individually to meet their needs.” [Participant D, upper primary]

### **3.5 Theme 4: Localized and contextualized assessment**

Participants described how they assess and evaluate learners in their classrooms and how they deal with learners with diverse needs.

“Daily, after the lesson learners do two or three questions. Assessment is done before, during and at the end of the lesson. It is oral at the beginning, during teaching and at the end of the lesson. Other assessments are written weekly, monthly, mid-term and end term.

There are two types of activities the learning activity- where the teacher takes charge of what to be learned, and the free activity where children do what they want to do, and what they observe. Finally, I take them to a round table to discuss how they feel about the different activities.

In primary three, we have three streams, and I assess them in their groups. For instance, in the case of planted seeds learners will bring the seedlings to class to prove that they did the work, and they will plant them in their garden portion at school. It will assist them to learn how to raise the seedlings to maturity.” [Participant B lower primary]

“Assessment is from the teachers and those needed by the administration. I assess three times before teaching to get what learners already know, during the teaching to ascertain that they are following and, after the end of the lesson. In addition, learners do the mid-term and end of term examinations.” [Participant D, upper primary]

At the end of interviews participants added a few comments and asked questions regarding quality inclusive educational dimensions and the interview process.

“I determine the quality when learners can do the tasks set before them. Ahh! When you are in lower classes, these learners can explain and tell others, which means skills have been learnt.” [Participant A, lower primary]

“Yes! Our school compound is a talking one as you have seen there are posts in the garden, plants and ‘talking walls’ to meet all different types of learners.” [Participant C, upper primary]

“Yes! I appreciated your visit, and I have learnt a few ideas from our interactions. Also, I hope we shall get a copy of the outcome of the research.” [Participant D, upper primary].

## **4. Discussion**

The paper explored teachers’ perspectives regarding inclusive dimensions of the quality of educational processes. The educational processes included four dimensions: purpose, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Four themes emerged from the interview: (W)holistic teaching, thematic teaching, blended activities, and localisation and contextualisation of education.

All the participants claimed to teach for the development of the body, mind, and spirit, which encompasses what makes a whole person’s life. This means that the teachers in this school espouse methods like blended learning, which prepares learners to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is in line with SDG 4, which encourages inclusive education (Nedungadi et al., 2024).

Learners in different classes are taught how to use their bodies. They have out-of-class activities which are taken as individuals at the school garden or home. It has been evidenced by one participant, C, who explained that learners were given plant beans and cabbage seeds to plant in plastic bags during the holidays. On return from holidays, all learners will be required to plant the germinated seedlings in their allocated piece of land on the school compound. They will use their mental faculties to decide on nutrients and to do mulching to prevent water loss during the dry season. It means, in this case, the holistic lessons are contextualised (Almeda, 2023) because most learners in the school come from families that depend on agriculture. In fact, in Uganda and most of the African countries most learners come from communities that depend on subsistence farming. In this scenario, the teacher-school-community (Okoye, 2023) link is improved. Many class tasks transverse into the complex dimensions of other developmental areas to enhance the entire learners’ lives. It is commendable

because it agrees with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), which emphasises inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all, which has fostered a myriad of educational interventions globally. Also, the methods teachers used agree with SCT (Vygotsky, 1978), where teachers and learners worked as a team in the classroom. The teachers acted as the more knowledgeable others (MKO) to mentor the apprenticed learners (McLeod, 2019). Thus, learners' knowledge distance between teachers and learners decreased through mentoring and apprenticeship, which agrees with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). One can conclude that the teachers' positive perspectives guide them to focus on the whole person when teaching, which is wholistic education. In addition, studies in Finland and Germany highlighting that beliefs, experience, and self-efficacy strongly shape inclusive classroom practices (Saloviita, 2020; Selisko et al., 2024).

All teachers stated that they use the thematic curriculum. The curriculum is about learners' homes, classroom contexts, schools, man, and his surroundings (Chumdari & Budiyo, 2018; Natano, 2023). The thematic approach used in schools suggests that teachers have mastered content and pedagogy (Zin et al., 2019). Participants explained how they enact IE in class and out of class. They use ICT as stated by Participant B, suggesting that they use blended teaching (Min & Yu, 2023; Purnama et al., 2023) and a form of flipped classes (Ma et al., 2024). Teachers used blended learning, which is an innovative educational approach that integrates both traditional face-to-face and online learning modalities through ICT, as depicted by Participant B. This pedagogical strategy is tailored to cater for diverse learning styles, enabling personalised educational pathways while upholding social interaction within classroom settings. This social interaction in the classroom agrees with SCT of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). It also adeptly incorporates technology, enhancing the learning process and equipping students for a digitally driven world (Devaki, 2024). Blended learning hinges upon the integration of face-to-face instruction with technologically mediated activities, providing a more flexible approach for learners to engage with the curriculum (Stahl, 2021).

Teachers scaffold learners so that they succeed, which suggests that teachers have a positive perspective of reaching everyone in different contexts (Brown et al., 2022; Agustina, 2024). It also means that teachers used the 10 steps as stated by Wolfinger 1997: "1) More comprehensive learning and active student involvement, (2) Elimination of boundaries between subject matters, (3) Authentic materials adjusted to the child's development, (4) Emphasis on the conceptualisation rather than memorisation, (5) Student independence to select topics according to their interests and learning projects, (6) Freedom of learning time according to the ability of each student, (7) Emphasis towards problem-solving, (8) Development of interpersonal skills through group activities, (9) Diverse learning styles, classical learning, large groups, small groups or individual based on students' interest, and (10) More various assessment techniques according to the characteristics of material, instead of only by the common testing." (Wolfinger, 1997, p. 11). It is no wonder that in the school in the last 10 years, the percentage pass in Division 1 was 60%, with no one learner in Divisions 3 and 4 and no failure (Table 3). This remarkable performance of the school in grade 7 (Primary 7), suggests that teachers use inclusive methods, among others, to reach all learners with their diversities.

The school compound was labelled with various information (Signposts) enhancing learning or alternative learning environments-outside the classroom, which is called 'talking compound'. In the classrooms the inclusion teaching used involved using localised and contextualised tasks and treatments. Contextualisation creates a more motivating environment. When the content is relevant to the real-life learners' experiences, their confidence in the content is enhanced (Wang et al., 2017). In all the subjects, teachers engaged and motivated students, which is in line with Bello et al. (2023), who suggest that a range of educational resources are needed to present courses more successfully, particularly when learners are participating in interactive exercise in a classroom. To motivate learners to participate in class actively, teachers should explicitly enhance their course materials (Suprpti et al., 2018). At times, there are not enough high-quality learning resources to satisfy every learner's need, particularly for biology learners. When learning materials are absent in the classroom, the teacher resorts to explanations of abstract ideas. Teacher explanations should be motivating to learners. The literature on teacher explanations is extensive. The important role that teacher explanations play in helping students acquire, retain, and comprehend knowledge is typically highlighted by empirical evidence from the domains of cognitive science, educational research, and linguistics (Tharby, 2018). Careful pre-assessment, planning, preparation, and presentation of teacher explanations can achieve affective functions by minimising decreased anxiety and changes in attitude. In addition to the primary cognitive function, teacher explanations clarify ambiguities and improve understanding (Brown & Armstrong, 1984). Research in this field has led to the proposal that teaching professionals should learn a set of strategies, as well as techniques, key principles, and characteristics of using teacher explanations effectively, and these include clarity, fluency, emphasis, interest, the use of examples, and

summaries (Brown & Edmunds, 2019). Learners fail to visualise and see the relevance of such abstract ideas. In this case, the learners' lack of enthusiasm, interest, and academic success is due to poor instructional learning tools. It might seriously hinder the learners' capacity to advance their cognitive abilities (Saro et al., 2022; Hindarto et al., 2017). Thus, teachers need to consider the learners' perspective of the classroom environment and how it enhances their academic success (Saro et al., 2022).

While the sampled teachers exhibited positive perspectives and enactment of IE, it is possible that other schools in the geographical area and possibly Central Uganda Conference do not share such perspectives and pedagogies that promote IE. The author recommends that the Department of Education at the Church and Local Government levels organise for teachers from this school to share the good practices with other teachers considering the resultant positive academic performance. In fact, these good practices from this school need to be emulated by other schools on the African continent. While there are positive findings from this study, there are limitations. First, the study sample was small to generalise to a large population. Second, the study relied on personal reports of what takes place in the classroom and did not do class observations to ascertain these teachers' perceptions. Third there was no quantitative data to capture statistical nuances that characterize quantitative data analyses. Fourth, the study was limited to an urban and well-resourced school, whose findings may not represent rural and semi-urban schools. Hence, further studies are recommended to address these limitations

## **5. Conclusions**

This paper examined primary teachers' perceptions of the inclusive dimensions of quality educational processes and how these perceptions shaped their day-to-day classroom practices. The findings demonstrate that teachers not only understood the core principles of inclusive education but also consistently enacted them through purposeful, context-responsive teaching. Their emphasis on (w)holistic purpose teaching, thematic curriculum implementation, blended instructional methods, and localised and contextualised assessment illustrates a deeply rooted commitment to meeting the diverse needs of all learners.

The sampled primary school teachers' practices reflected an appreciation of learners' cognitive, physical, social, and spiritual development, enabling them to cultivate learning environments that were equitable, culturally relevant, and academically enriching. The integration of blended learning and community-based knowledge positioned teachers as adaptive and innovative agents of inclusion. Moreover, the positive academic performance observed in Grade Seven suggests that inclusive pedagogical practices can directly contribute to improved learning outcomes, affirming the transformative potential of teacher-led initiatives.

Overall, the study highlights the central role of teachers in advancing inclusive and equitable education in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4. It emphasizes the need for continuous professional development, supportive school leadership, and policy frameworks that recognise and amplify teacher-driven inclusive practices. Strengthening these dimensions will not only enhance the quality of educational processes but also ensure that all learners regardless of background or ability or disabilities, experience meaningful and successful learning

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