

**ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN
MAINSTREAM CLASSES: THE CASE OF TEACHERS IN SOME SELECTED
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ZIMBABWE**

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ABSTRACT

Attitudes about inclusion are extremely complex and vary from teacher to teacher and school to school. This article explores how the teachers' attitudes can influence academic performance of students with disabilities in secondary schools of Zimbabwe. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, with 50 secondary school teachers as participants from ten purposefully selected secondary schools in Umguza district. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that teachers' favourable and unfavourable feelings towards their students with disabilities had a significant effect on their educational attainment. The results also showed that some teachers' frustration and negative attitudes influenced the students' academic performance. Labeling or classification of students, teachers' definition of students and low expectation can significantly affect the academic performance of students with disabilities. The study recommended that an effective teacher must have high expectations on all students without discriminating the less intelligent students or those with disabilities. It was further recommended that teachers should attend seminars and conferences to improve their knowledge about ways of practicing and accepting students with disabilities.

Keywords: Teacher Attitude, Teacher Expectations, Academic Performance, Students.