

Chapter 4

Education



Reflection – Chapter 4 Reflection – Chapter 4 Throughout the fourth chapter, we learnt that communication between the teacher and the family of a child with special needs is crucial. The modes of communication between these parties have evolved throughout time where in the past, the teachers made all decisions regarding the services to be given to the child. A collaborative approach was then established where the family and the teacher discuss the best ways of offering services to the child and make decisions together. Professionals support this mode of communication since the parents can provide important information such as cultural practices to the teacher who should then ensure that the child learns them. For this to succeed, communication must be present as it facilitates identification of goals, request making, and problem solving. Collaboration allows mutual support as well as the ability to share knowledge appropriately. The chapter maintains that the most important aspects of collaboration include parity, trust, respect, and establishment of common goals. We also learnt that there are several communication styles that can be used and incorporate unilateral, directional, and transactional where transactional method is preferred since it favors a two way mode of communication.

However, there are several barriers that affect communication and collaboration. These include cultural background, gender, age, interests and experiences. To eliminate these barriers, both the teacher and the family need to exercise strong communication skills. It is more helpful to ensure that both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication are exercised appropriately so as to eliminate the barriers. The barriers are responsible for miscommunication. Specifically, the teacher should ensure that they avoid quick fixes to certain problems, avoid minimizing feelings by using false

reassurances, and ask the most appropriate questions. When barriers emerge, problem solving strategies are used to retaliate. Such strategies include avoiding emotional responses and relying on a step to step procedure. This process incorporates identification of the problem, generation of potential solutions, evaluation of those solutions, implementation of the selected solution, and evaluation of the solution. These steps also ensure that a conflict is resolved in a constructive manner. There are several myths thought to reduce miscommunication that include more communication being better, communication being a natural ability, and open communication being effective in solving problems. We also learnt that negotiation is a strategy that can be used to resolve problems. In addition, this chapter stresses that conflicts are not avoidable. Conflicts are also neither good nor bad. When negotiating the main attention should be awarded towards preservation of relationships, usage of objective criteria in evaluating decisions, focusing on realization of a win-win situation, and focusing on interests. This implies that negotiations should not oppose positions. Since communication is important in negotiation, we also learnt that there are several styles that can be used in negotiation. These styles include competitive style, accommodating style, avoidance style, compromising style, and collaborating style. Throughout this chapter I have had the opportunity to learn that communication is one of the most important concepts when attempting to provide services to a family with a child that requires special attention. In addition, since conflicts happen frequently, it is appropriate to ensure that the correct strategies are applied to resolve the conflicts. However, the most important lesson that I learnt

from this chapter is that conflicts are inevitable and the solution is possible strategically.