"New Dimensions Toward Education, Advocacy and Collaboration for Individuals with Special Needs"

PROCEEDINGS OF THE

14TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

WROCLAW, POLAND, JUNE 21–25, 2015

Editors

Morgan Chitiyo
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Greg Prater
Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, Arizona, USA

Lynn Aylward
Acadia University
Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada

George Chitiyo
Tennessee Technological University
Cookeville, Tennessee, USA

Elizabeth Dalton
TechACCESS of Rhode Island
Warwick, Rhode Island

Priti Haria
The Richard Stockton College of NJ
Galloway, New Jersey, USA

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- To encourage international cooperation and collaborative international research.
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Editors
Morgan Chitiyo
Greg Prater
Lynn Aylward
George Chitiyo
Elizabeth Dalton
Priti Haria

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PREFACE

Welcome to the proceedings of the 14th biennial conferences of the International Association of Special Education (IASE). The theme of the 2015 IASE biennial conference is *"New Dimensions Toward Education, Advocacy and Collaboration for Individuals with Special Needs."* As in the past, this IASE biennial conference is designed with the intent of bringing special educators, families, and other interested professionals and individuals together to share ideas and experiences, celebrate acomplishments, and of course create and renew friendships. We hope that you will take this opportunity to learn about new developments from around the world designed to promote education, advocacy, and collaboration with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

A big thanks to everyone who participated in the conference, all the presenters who submitted their abstracts for inclusion in the conference proceedings, and all those who contributed to making the conference a success.

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Morgan Chitiyo
Greg Prater
Lynn Aylward
George Chitiyo
Elizabeth Dalton
Priti Haria

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DESIGNING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN UNDERSERVED REGIONS

John J. Wheeler, Ph.D.
Stacy L. Carter, Ph.D., NCSP, BCBA-D

Designing Effective School-Based Interventions for Children with Autism in Underserved Regions

Given the global increase in children being identified with autism, many fear there is a public health crisis looming especially in the delivery of educational and behavioral supports to children and families affected by autism. This is especially the case in rural and underdeveloped areas of the world where formal professional development and service delivery systems are limited. The need for an increase in qualified educational and related services professionals to address the growing numbers of persons with ASD and the increasing demand for services is a serious concern (Wise et al., 2010).

Wise and colleagues (2010) examined the need for expanded services in the United States alone with respect to statewide early intervention programs and revealed that most states reported an increase in demand for ASD-related evaluations (65%) and services (58%) since 2007. In many developing countries, service delivery is non-existent or inadequate (Elsabbagh, 2012). Given these gaps in service systems, Elsabbagh (2012) indicated a need to have a better understanding of service delivery questions and more research conducted in this area to promote a greater understanding. Elsabbagh (2012) further points out that the majority of research dollars for autism are aimed at funding studies on causation rather than on service delivery and capacity building. Many questions need to be addressed towards promoting a better understanding of how to meet these growing service delivery questions. For example, how can we impart the use of research-grounded or evidence-based practices in regions where professionals and formal systems of service delivery do not exist? Additional research must be undertaken to provide a better understanding of how to transcend the gap between research and practice and make evidence-based practices more portable for use within less than optimal environments. There are several reasons to explain why the gap between research and practice continues to persist. The difficulties we experience in merging research-based practices into practice can often be as a result of (a) insufficient professional knowledge and experience on the part of teachers and or caregivers, (b) this is often as a result of limited professional training and or experience, and (c) given the heterogeneity on the part of learners with autism, inexperienced and or insufficiently trained professionals may experience difficulties in using differentially based interventions given the individual needs displayed by learners.

Central to designing effective educational interventions for learners with autism is the necessity to ensure that the educational team has the professional knowledge and skills to design and implement an effective intervention. Professional development is an essential element of building the capacity to effectively provide for the educational needs of students with autism.

Professional development, which includes in-service and pre-service training and on-going professional training in the area of autism can greatly assist in building the capacity of professionals, schools, and systems to meet the educational and behavioral support needs of youngsters with autism. One model that has been highly successful in addressing the capacity-building needs in rural and underserved regions has been a consultative technical assistance model developed by Wheeler (2015). The model relied on the provision of targeted technical assistance faded over time, (a) team-based problem solving, (b) family-professional partnerships, and (c) professional development paired with modeling, feedback, and systematic fading with long-term access to on-going technical assistance as needed through site-based management and the use of applied technology. Results of this 16-year project pointed to expanded capacity through professional development in this rural and underserved area, and documented the efficacy of school-based interventions and enhanced learning and behavioral outcomes across children by age and level of severity on the autism spectrum.

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Contact Information:
John J. Wheeler, Ph.D.
Director and Professor
Center of Excellence in Early Childhood Learning & Development
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, TN 37614
423-439-7555 | Fax 423-439-7561
wheelerjj@etsu.edu

About the Authors:

Dr. John Wheeler is Director of the Center of Excellence in EC and Professor of Special Education at ETSU. He has been in the field of special education for over 30-years and specializes as a researcher and clinician in the areas of autism, applied behavior analysis, and positive behavior supports.

Dr. Stacy Carter is Associate Professor of Special Education at Texas Tech University. He is a licensed school psychologist and board certified behavior analyst. His research and clinical experience is in the areas of autism, applied behavior analysis, and positive behavior supports.

HEARING MAPS: CHILDREN WITH GLUE EAR COMMUNICATE THEIR NEEDS

Carmel Capewell
Sue Ralph

Conceptual Framework and Background

Glue Ear is a common condition, throughout the world, affecting about 80% of children up to the age of seven years old (Bluestone & Klein, 2007). Its name comes from describing a build-up of fluid in the middle ear which results in the child hearing sound as though there were underwater. Most educational professionals perceive it as a 'medical' problem, therefore, outside their training, experience or expertise. Because the hearing loss is temporary, it is not seen as a special need with a belief that the child will catch up with their peers once their hearing returns to normal levels. However, such a view neither takes into account that children can have recurring episodes of hearing loss for periods of six to ten weeks at a time nor that it is most frequent when a child is learning to speak, develop social skills and starting school. Wilson (2009) identified that about a third of children under the age of nine years old will spend about a third of their life with some degree of hearing impairment. There has been very limited investigation of its impact in the classroom. Encouraging young people to express and identify the way it affects their hearing is generally absent from the literature.

In the UK, as in many other countries, there is an increasing commitment to proactively minimising any potential learning difficulties a child could have and to involve both the parents and the student in identifying their support requirements (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2014). There is an intention to develop more collaborative working between healthcare and education professionals and parents/carers. This is to minimise the potential educational and psychological implications of medical conditions which have too often relied upon parents or young people being the main channel of communication (Mukherjee, Lightfoot & Sloper, 2002). However, Shevlin & Rose (2008) concluded that policy and practice do not always align and that young people need to be supported in developing the skills required to express their needs. This can sometimes prove to be a threatening experience for educational professionals who are not always trained in discussing with students their individual special needs. It has been twenty-five years since the UN Convention on the rights of the child but progress in actively involving young people in their health and educational needs has been dominated by discussions around their competence and the effectiveness of their contribution (Shevlin & Rose, 2008). This research is based on the belief that young people are the experts in how Glue Ear impacts their daily lives and that they do have the capacity to contribute, when provided with appropriate means. The aim was to develop a tool, engaging to young children, so that they could communicate the way in which the environment impacts upon their ability to understand speech.

Research

The information derived from this research aims to inform healthcare and educational professionals, along with parents and carers, that different environments change how a child with Glue Ear participates in the classroom, during leisure activities and at home. This was a pilot study to develop and test a tool through which children could explain the impact of different environments on their understanding of speech.

There is limited understanding of how Glue Ear impacts young people's in their day- to-day environment. For the most part, previous research into the impact of the condition has been gathered through parents/carers responding on behalf of the young person. The researchers, therefore, wanted to gather data from naturally occurring situations and be led by the young people themselves. As their hearing loss is intermittent and changeable, it was important to involve those children who actually had an episode at the time of data gathering.

A starting point in the design of the method was to consult the Young Person's Advisory Group (YPAG) based at a large hospital in the Midlands in the UK. The group have a breadth of experience in working with researchers who wish to involve young people in research. Group members were asked to suggest ways in which children with Glue Ear could communicate how their intermittent hearing loss impacts them on a daily basis. The YPAG group suggested a sticker book approach for young children (aged 2-7 years) as being a popular and engaging activity.

In developing the task, it become apparent that there needed to be a very narrow focus on what the child was to do and exactly what question they were to answer. The research question became: How does the environment impact on a child's ability to hear

when they have Glue Ear? As some of the participants may not have well-developed verbal skills, a three point Likert scale was

developed, in combination with emoticon stickers, for them to indicate their response to different situations. For each environment the child selected they were given the choice of: I can clearly understand what others are saying ☺; I can understand some of what is said 😐; I can not understand what other people are saying ☹. Participants were provided with a scrap book and the three types of stickers. They recorded the date, place and a description of the environment (sometimes with adult support) and used the appropriate sticker to indicate their response. In addition they made a 10-20 second video recording using an i-Pad (or directed an adult) to provide visual and auditory information of the environment.

Ethical issues of informed consent, privacy and confidentiality were considered and discussed with parents and young people prior to commencing the research. Ethical approval was gained from the university. Current legislation requires parental consent to the research is obtained prior to approaching the young people themselves. However, the researchers wanted the young people to understand what was being asked and that they wanted to participate. The task was designed so that their participation was essential. They were required to initiate and inform the adults around them when they wished to record a situation. The recordings were analysed for recurring patterns for an individual child and to identify similar experiences between participants. Recordings were of naturally occurring situations during the child's daily routine.

Results

Children were enthusiastic about participation taking ownership of their scrapbook. They were willing to share their responses to different environments on their understanding.

Suggestions for Future Research

The next step in this research is to review the extent to which educational and healthcare professionals could apply the tool to support children with Glue Ear. The intention is to extend the number of participants to gain additional data as to what are some of the barriers and enablers to young people with Glue Ear in their daily environments. The aim is to develop more evidence-based educational support strategies and treatment options.

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Contact Information
Carmel Capewell
The University of Northampton
School of Education
Boughton Green Road, Northampton, United Kingdom, NN2 7AL
carmel.capewell@northampton.ac.uk

About the Authors:
Carmel Capewell is an Associate Lecturer/Researcher at The University of Northampton. Her PhD thesis was on the lived experience of young people with ongoing Glue Ear. Her research interests are supporting young people with Glue Ear in education, Photovoice and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. She has over twenty years teaching experience.

Sue Ralph is Visiting Professor at The University of Northampton and Editor of the Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs. She is very experienced in visual research methods. Her research interests include disability rights and hate crime. She has a keen interest in ethical research and including participant voice.

THE JOURNEY TOWARD VISIBILITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN HONDURAS

Christine M. Croyle

Conceptual Framework and Background

Children with disabilities in the rural areas of Honduras are a marginalized segment of the population and are not always afforded

the opportunity to attend school. The contributing factors of this situation include the condition of the schools, the perceived negative stigma attached to families with disabilities, high student to teacher ratio, and the availability and preparedness of teachers to teach students with disabilities. These factors, combined with a high level of corruption in the centralized government encompassed in an environment of violence and drug trafficking, create additional obstacles, beyond their disability, for children with disabilities in the rural areas as they traverse their already difficult road in their education journey.

This study provided a voice to those who have been silenced. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006), article eight, requires participating member states "To raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding persons with disabilities, and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities" (p.7). Through the process of interviewing members of the education community, teachers and administrators were given opportunities to reflect on their own perceptions about students with disabilities. Family members and students had an opportunity to share their stories. Freire (2000) proposed that the method for revolutionary leadership is grounded in dialogue which "unveils the reality" (p. 69). This unveiling process may highlight the gap between espoused values and enacted values. Espoused values are those values that are stated as beliefs while enacted values are those that are acted upon. When there is a gap between the espoused or enacted values within a group, it hinders the progress that can be made. These values are socially constructed by the group, or groups, of people interacting together. It is when the gap is recognized and acted upon by the oppressed that true transformation can begin for both the oppressed and the oppressor. Freire (2000) proposed that the power for transformation must come from the oppressed; "Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both" (p. 44).

Research

This study used an emergent design that consisted of a collective multi-site case study conducted in the rural community of Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Cortes, Honduras. The study took place over the course of three years. The participants included a local government official, eight community members, one local business owner, one school administrator, 26 parents in a single focus group, interviews with 2 parents and 1 grandparent, 96 teachers in two separate focus groups from 15 different schools, and 12 children. The data were collected through classroom observations, focus groups, interviews, and children's drawings. An interview protocol was used for individual interviews and a child oral explanation was used for children's drawings. Materials were translated by a native Honduran interpreter and a North American volunteer for Schools for Children of the World (SCW). Analysis was conducted through open and axial coding. The children's drawing were reviewed by a team of educational specialists and SCW volunteers using a modified Looking at Student Thinking (LAST) protocol. Categories were identified and discussed in an open format.

Results

The findings address the perceptions of children, teachers, parents, community members, and administrators of Honduran students with disabilities and how these perceptions impact the education of Honduran children with disabilities. The three sub questions used for this study related to three areas of perceived impact: (a) cultural beliefs, (b) governance of the education process, and (c) availability of resources. Cultural aspects that were identified as impacting the education of students with disabilities were: an environment of violence and drugs, disintegrated family structure, religious belief and superstitions, intermarrying of close relatives, isolation and social stigma. The perceptions identified in the governance category were: (a) lack of trust due to the high level of corruption within the government, (b) apathy regarding education of students with disabilities, and (c) lack of support. The governance of the education process was perceived as corrupt, inefficient and inequitable. Participants perceived that the resources for all students were limited in the rural areas as a result of the high poverty. This is in alignment with UNESCO (2009) report that identified the disparity of resources between rural and urban areas.

Recommendations

The community members, parents, and staff of the Centro Integral Para La Inclusion Escolar (CIPIE) will need to continue to engage in policy and enforcement discussions at the local and national level. Having conversations with those who make decisions is valuable in that it provides a voice to this marginalized population and allows those in Honduras to use their voice to act on the children's behalf. Freire (2000) suggested that it is only when the oppressed seek liberation that the oppressed and the oppressor can gain liberation.

Suggestions for Future Research

Although poverty in Honduras seems to be an overwhelming challenge to the availability of resources and the education process, participants in this study have indicated that education and shared leadership are key strategies for moving forward to provide education for the marginalized in rural villages. Questions that may be helpful in guiding future research and interventions include: How can we establish advocates with and for families of children with disabilities in the rural areas? A missing piece is a link of services. How can we connect the agencies and organizations already working in the area to maximize the potential impact? As teachers realize their voices, how can we encourage them to learn from one another?

Education for parents, training in instructional strategies for teachers, collaboration among parents, teachers and community members, and advocacy in the political arena are entry points for intervention that have the potential to provide access and equity in education for students with disabilities. These strategies are a step on the journey toward visibility. The ultimate goal is to provide the opportunity for dialogue that gives voice to the children and families with disabilities in the rural areas of Santa Cruz de Yojoa.

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Contact Information:
Christine M. Croyle
Pickaway County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Educational Service Center
Educational Administrator
Columbus, Ohio
ccroyle@pickawaydd.org

About the Author:
Christine Croyle is an educational administrator in central Ohio. Previous experience includes twelve years as a speech language pathologist. She has volunteered with Schools for Children of the World since 2003, where she co-founded the Center for Inclusive Education in Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Honduras. Credentials: M.A., CCC-SLP; Ed.D.

AM I LOSING MY MIND? TEACHERS' RESPONSE TO MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

Brad Walkenhorst,
Amrita Chaturvedi
Nikki L. Murdick
Barbara C. Gartin

In the 1970s the term *burnout* entered the professional lexicon as a word that reflected the physical problems impacting workers when the stress overcomes the ability to cope. In an article synthesizing the special education teacher burnout from 1979 to 2013 (Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane, 2014), researchers found that teacher burnout associates with "physical symptoms, such as chronic fatigue and colds, recurrent flu, and musculoskeletal pain" (Armon, Melamed, Shirom, & Shapira, 2010; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Researchers also reported that teachers with burnout exhibit eight out of nine symptoms associated with depression (Bianchi, Boffy, Hingray, Truchot, & Laurent, 2013). Teacher burnout not only affects the teacher, it has a negative effect on the students they teach (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Mindfulness Training Literature

Mindfulness Training (MT) is an emerging practice that has the potential to address teacher burnout. Mindfulness as intervention was first introduced by Jon Kabat-Zinn in the field of pain management. He defines mindfulness as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience" (Kabat- Zinn, 2003, p. 145). Bishop et al. (2004) have operationally defined Mindfulness as consisting of two components: self-regulation of attention and an attitude characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance of one's experience. Even though research on the efficacy of MT is still in nascent stages, existing body of research does show that MT has a positive effect on the emotional and mental health of individuals. Studies have shown a decrease in stress levels, increased ability to regulate emotions and an increase in the general level of wellbeing of individuals practicing mindfulness (Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek & Finkel, 2008; Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004; Shapiro, Oman, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2007).

Procedure

According to Jennings, Frank, Snowberg, Coccia & Greenberg (2013), "mindfulness practice involves deliberate training of attention to cultivate present moment awareness of experience and to promote insight, reflection, and concentration" (p.5). Specifically, MT is the practice of directing and maintaining one's attention on a specific object or target, such as breathing. The purpose of the proposed research is to investigate the efficacy of MT on the physical, emotional and mental states of teachers

teaching special needs students. More specifically, the aim of this research is to investigate if a four week mindfulness training intervention will have positive effects on the ability of teachers to:

1.   Self-regulate their emotions,
2.   Decrease their level of stress,
3.   Increase their physical well-being

The proposed MT will be administered and structured by the researchers using the following sequence.

1. Introduction to the training session (2 minutes)
2. Physical stretches with a focus on breathing – paying attention to inhaling and exhaling of air while stretching (8 minutes)
3. Breathing exercises – paying attention to inhaling and exhaling of air through the nostrils (7 minutes).
5. Body scans – paying attention to body parts that feel tense and stressed (3 minutes)
5. Discussions – talking about awareness, acceptance and letting of emotions and thoughts (5 minutes)

Each MT sessions will be 25 minutes long. For the first week, MT will be implemented every day of the week, second week it will be implemented three times a week and for last two weeks it will be given twice a week.

Methodology

A mixed method methodology will be implemented for the purpose of this research. Participants for the proposed study will include ten teachers teaching special needs students. Pre/post t-tests will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of a four week MT intervention on the stress levels of participants and their ability to regulate emotions. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) will be administered to participants a week before and after intervention is implemented. PSS is a 10 item scale that measures the degree to which an individual perceives his/her life to be unpredictable, uncontrollable and overwhelming. FFMQ is a 39 item questionnaire that assesses five dimensions of mindfulness: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judgment of inner experience and non-reactivity to inner experience. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with participants to uncover and explore the effects of mindfulness training on their ability to regulate their emotions and their general level of well-being. All interviews will be audio taped and will be no more than one-hour long. It is expected that those participating in the training will have lower scores indicating perceptions their lives are less unpredictable, uncontrollable and overwhelming and an increased feeling of general well-being.

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Contact Information:
Brad Walkenhorst
Saint Louis Special School District
1520 Derhake
Florissant, Missouri 63033
bwalkenhorst@ssdmo.org

About the Authors:
Brad Walkenhorst received his PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from St. Louis University in 2014. He currently works as a special educator with SSD of St. Louis County, Mo and an adjunct lecturer at Fontbonne University. A published author, Brad has presented at international conferences in Belgrade, Braga, and Riga.

Amrita Chaturvedi is an Assistant Professor at the Saint Louis University. Her research interests include Mindfulness Training for students with disabilities and teachers teaching students with disabilities. Her other area of research interest is International special education.

Dr. Nikki Murdick is professor of Special Education at Saint Louis University. She is a Fellow in the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and active in the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities. Her research interests include inclusion issues, intellectual disability, international special education, and special education law.

Dr. Barbara C. Gartin is a University Professor of Special Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Arkansas. She is a former President of the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities of CEC and former President of the Education Division of AAIDD.

EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: NIGERIA PERSPECTIVE

Eni-Olorunda J. Tolulope

Background

Early intervention is a system of coordinated services that promotes the child's age-appropriate growth and development and supports the families during the critical early years. In the United States for example, some early intervention services to eligible children and families are federally mandated through the individuals with disabilities education act (IDEA).The Centre for Excellence for Children Outcome (2001) defined early intervention as, intervening early, and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families, or with population most at-risk of developing intellectual disabilities. The first five years of a child are so critical, whether the child has a disability or not, because this is when development takes place very rapidly hence, every effort must be put in place to identify and intervene early especially for children with disabilities. Kazaure (2014) affirm that early intervention has great impact on the overall well-being of the child and their family because early assessment enables the professionals to plan a program early which would be of great benefit for the future development of the child. As crucial and important early intervention program is to children with intellectual disabilities, Nigeria is still far from operating early intervention programs. The National Policy on Education Document (2004), defined early intervention/early childhood education, as the education provided in an educational institution to children prior to their entering the primary school. This includes crèche, nursery and kindergarten.

Onu *et al* (2010) believe that the earliest years of a child's life are very crucial, because this has influence on how the rest of childhood and adolescence unfolds. Unfortunately in most developing countries including Nigeria, the policies, programs and budget of the nations have not reflected the seriousness with which the matter ought to be addressed. By implication, children with intellectual disabilities are also left out in issues that relate to early intervention, especially at federal and state levels. Most of the nursery schools in Nigeria are owned by private individuals despite the government promises (Onu et al., 2010).

Alade and Eni-Olorunda (2005) reported that there were 38,400 persons with disabilities in Oyo State according to the 1991 census. This appears to be on a very high side and if early intervention program is instituted, many children would be identified much earlier, and the family would experience meaningful results from intervention. Based on the above, attempts were made to provide answers to the research questions raised in this study: a) Is early intervention program for children with intellectual disabilities in place in Oyo State, Nigeria? b) Do special educators in Oyo State have the knowledge of the need for early intervention for children with intellectual disabilities? c) What is the position of Nigerian government on early intervention program for children with intellectual disabilities? and, d) What are the factors militating against early the intervention program for children with intellectual disabilities in Oyo State?

Research

The study was a survey research design. A total of 122 special educators, 50 from Oyo (special) Federal College of Education and 72 from other five selected special schools in Ibadan that were purposively selected participated in the study. Questionnaire tagged Need for Early Intervention Program (NEIP) was the instrument used in collecting data. The reliability coefficient of instrument was 0.68. Four postgraduate students from the University of Ibadan were employed as research assistants in administering the questionnaire which was carried out within five days. The data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Responses from participants indicated that they were not sure of the existence of early intervention in the state, although they have

adequate knowledge of the need for early intervention for children with intellectual disabilities, as revealed in the study. Onu et al. (2010) in agreement with the above believed that the earliest years of a child's life are very crucial because of their effect on later years.

On the position of Nigerian government on early intervention program for children with intellectual disabilities, results showed that the government had a policy for early intervention, but implementation was the problem. From literature, it was discovered that the Nigerian government had a policy on early intervention but non-implementation of the policy is the problem. Factors such as non-commitment of the government to the program, stakeholders considering the care of children with intellectual disabilities as a waste of time, shortage of special educators, poor remuneration of teachers and ignorance on the part of parents were identified as problems that could militate against the practice of early intervention in Nigeria.

In conclusion, special educators agreed that early intervention program for children with intellectual disabilities are essential.

Recommendations

The Government should consider the early intervention program important for children with intellectual disabilities as such should implement the policy and be committed to it. They should also ensure that education budget allocation is designed to accommodate children with intellectual disabilities. Special educators should be well-motivated by being well-remunerated. Parents should also be enlightened on the need for early intervention.

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Contact Information:
Eni-Olorunda J. Tolulope Ph.D.
Department of Home Science and Management, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria
toluenny@yahoo.com

About the Author:
Dr. Eni-Olorunda holds a B.Sc. (Nursing) degree, M.Ed. and Ph.D degrees in Special Education, specializing in Intellectual disabilities. She is a Lecturer and an Associate Professor in Child Development and Family Studies Unit, Home Science and Management, FUNAAB. Her research interests include autism and Down syndrome.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN CHINA

Huiping (Hope) Tian
Kathleen Puckett

Providing education for children with autism poses a serious challenge in China. Due to lack of government-sponsored programs and non-existent educational policy or network for the thousands of children with autism, privately sponsored parent centers have been the primary educational force for their education. These private centers provide information to parents about autism and techniques for teaching their children at home. The Beijing Stars & Rain Education Institute for Autism (北京星星雨教育研究所), is the first parent-training center in China. The staff at Stars and Rain have been working with parents of children with autism since 1993. Although there are currently few educational professionals working with students with autism in China, this situation is slowly improving. Teachers and other professionals working in this area are just beginning to learn what autism is, and how to support students with autism.

Stars and Rain has been instrumental in raising the general public awareness of autism among Chinese citizens by assisting with two important films. *Children of the Stars* (星星的孩子), is a 2007 documentary that focused on journey of one family of a child

with autism, and the parent training available at Stars and Rain. *Ocean Heaven* (海洋天堂), is a 2010 film written and directed by Xue Xiaolu, a teacher at the Beijing Film Academy who has done extensive volunteer work with Stars and Rain. In this film, Jet Li portrayed a single father with a terminal illness who was seeking appropriate care and arrangements for his son with autism. Wen Zhang, the actor who portrayed the son, Dafu, visited students at Stars and Rain and other centers in order to better understand his character.

As general public awareness of autism increased, more doctors have learned to diagnose autism, and more schools are being developed with the purpose of working specifically with students with autism. With this increase in awareness, Stars and Rain has responded to the challenges, adding teacher training to their established parent training services.

Stars and Rain launched its first teacher-training project in 2005, two years after the start of the Heart-Alliance Network with the purpose of enhancing the capacity of schools. Stars and Rain was instrumental in establishing the Heart Alliance Network Autism Network, which is a group of non-profit training centers in China devoted to evidence based practices and transparency of finances. These initial classes introduced teachers to the basic principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), an evidence based practice with strong literature support, through a 12-week program of lecture and hands on teaching experiences. The Stars and Rain teacher-training team received ongoing assistance from "sister schools" and professionals in the United States as well as intensive interactions with other international resources. Training was geared towards three types of participants, (1) teachers in schools enrolling students with autism, (2) private home-tutors hired by parents, and (3) parents who are educating a child with autism, where there is no school to attend. As this service grew, Stars & Rain staff recognized the need to offer advanced evidence-based autism training for teachers who had been through initial training.

The Advanced Teacher-Training Project

The advanced training project started in 2010. Participants are those teachers or other professionals who have attended the initial ABA classes. Most of the participants are teachers or other staff from Heart Alliance Network organizations from all parts of China. The advanced training is a five-week course limited to 20 attendees with follow-up sessions. Stars and Rain offers five to six advanced training course per year. The goals of the training are to develop a comprehensive educational plan for a student with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) based on ABA and other comprehensive treatment models (such as TEACCH). Participants also receive advanced training in implementing Functional Behavioral Assessments.

Unfortunately, there is no Chinese governmental funding for this training, or for the centers where these children are taught, or the parents are served. Most schools for children with ASD are private not-profit organizations. The development office of Stars & Rain has an ongoing initiative to raise funds so that the cost to attendees can be lowered.

China's national laws are continuing to evolve, revising the regulations on education for children with disabilities (National Human Rights Action Plan of China, 2012-2015) and moving slowly towards models of support for children with autism and other developmental disabilities. Articulation of national intent to provinces, cities, and villages, however, is underdeveloped. For now, local schools still have the autonomy to admit whomever they wish (or not), and parents and teachers remain with limited access to services (Cook, Gerber, Hong, Mannan, & Zhang, 2012). Although non-profit autism training centers provide support to teachers, their ongoing needs and concerns point to issues that cannot be solved through short-term training alone. China still needs a national-level policy that will provide long-term educational services to all students, regardless of disability or location.

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Contact Information:
Kathleen Puckett
Arizona State University
7001 W. Williams Field Road
Mesa, AZ, USA 85215
kathleen.puckett@asu.edu

About the Authors:
Haiping (Hope) Tian is the founder and Chairwoman of the Board of Beijing Stars & Rain Education Institute for Autism.

Kathleen Puckett, Ph. D. is an associate professor of Special Education at Arizona State University. Her research interests include international special education services, assistive technology, and teacher preparation. She holds graduate degrees in special education and administration.

METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS FOR SMALL SAMPLES: NONPARAMETRIC TESTS

George Chitiyo
Morgan Chitiyo

The purpose of this presentation is to highlight the options that are available to researchers and practitioners regarding the analysis of data for small samples often used when studying populations of learners with special needs.

When to Use Nonparametric Tests

When faced with small populations and samples, it is often difficult to ascertain the assumptions that are necessary in order to conduct more powerful parametric tests (e.g. Z tests, t tests, and analysis of variance, etc.). Secondly, small sample sizes limit the degrees of freedom necessary for more rigorous statistical tests. In situations like these, one would have to use nonparametric statistical tests. Most nonparametric tests overcome the problem of the shape of the distribution (nonnormal distributions) by ranking the data. Analyses are therefore, performed on the ranks of scores instead of the actual data. This eliminates the problem of outliers which is often encountered when using actual data. When using nonparametric tests, "one has to realize though that non-parametric tests have less statistical power (and hence a higher probability of committing a type II error) compared to parametric tests (Chitiyo, Chitiyo & Musiyarira, 2011). We need to state clearly though that parametric tests are more powerful only if the conditions necessary for them to be conducted are met.

What Test Should I Run?

A list is given below of some nonparametric tests that one can use given specific instances when their parametric counterparts (also given) cannot be used.

Test	Parametric	Nonparametric test
Correlation	Pearson's r (computed when one has interval level data)	Spearman's rho (computed when one has ordinal data)
		Cramer's phi (nominal by nominal—dichotomous)
		Cramer's V (nominal by nominal)
Comparing two independent groups	Independent samples t test	Mann-Whitney test
Comparing two dependent groups	Paired samples t test	Wilcoxon T test
Comparing three or more groups	One way analysis of variance	Kruskal-Wallis test
Repeated measures for three or more groups	Repeated measures analysis of variance	Friedman's test

How Do I Run the Test?

In this era, it is uncommon to do statistical computations by hand. Spreadsheet applications, statistical packages, and the internet are able to handle any statistical techniques including parametric tests. One can easily find an online calculator that can handle most basic statistical computations. It is crucial though that one be able to tell which test they can use to best address the research questions at hand, and how to interpret the results from such analyses.

Among the important things to understand for any statistical test are (i) statistical significance, its usefulness and limitations, (ii) confidence intervals of the estimates from the statistics computed, and (iii) effect size (where applicable).

References and Resources

A guide to free statistical software: http://statpages.org/javasta2.html
Basics of research design and statistics: www.socialresearchmethods.net
Choosing between parametric and non-parametric tests: http://www.graphpad.com/www/book/choose.htm
Free statistical tools on the web: http://gsociology.icaap.org/methods/statontheweb.html

Contact Information:
George Chitiyo
Tennessee Tech University
gchitiyo@tntech.edu

About the Authors:

George Chitiyo is a Associate Professor of Educational Research at Tennessee Technological University, USA. Among his research interests are health economics (including HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa), economics of higher education, and research methodology.

Morgan Chitiyo is Associate Professor and Director of the Special Education Program at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. His research interests include autism, positive behavior supports, applied behavior analysis, and special education issues in Zimbabwe. Email: chitiyom@duq.edu

SPECIAL EDUCATION AT INTERNATONAL SCHOOLS: CURRENT SERVICES AND FUTURE NEEDS

Donna Marie Campbell

Quality education for children and youth with disabilities is an ongoing global effort. The last century brought significant changes to the educational futures and lives of individuals with disabilities. For example, the right to universal education for all children is now well-established, and most nations have adopted legal frameworks and policies to promote the inclusion of all children in education. However, there are many children whose families live beyond their native boundaries. In this mobile society, the international school network has thrived. At the same time, there is limited information about the availability of special education programs and services in the international school system, and in particular, services for students with developmental disorders that are on a spectrum, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Autism, a chronic, developmental disorder that impairs social communication and interferes with normal interpersonal interactions and relationships, has been documented across the globe. Prevalence of autism appears to be increasing, regardless of geography, nationality, ethnic or cultural membership, or socio-economic status (Elsabbaugh et. al., 2012).

Historically, international schools have been slow to develop special education programs for special needs students. The U. S. A. State Department Office of Overseas Schools (2011) recently developed a list of international schools providing special education services, by country. Few of the listed schools include services for autism. This suggests that there may be large gap between demand and availability of autism services on the international scene. In addition, little information exists among international educators regarding the knowledge base of evidence-based practices in autism (Sperandio & Klerks, 2007).

This paper reports data from a survey developed to assess the professional development needs of international schools located around the world, specifically relating to special education services. The research builds on an initiative begun several years ago to internationalize the graduate special education program at Webster University.

Method

Survey: The International Schools Special Education survey, constructed and delivered using Qualtrics, consists of twenty-two (22) questions, covering demand for services, types of students served, services and interventions for autism (using practices identified by the National Standards Report (Wilczynski, 2009) and the National Professional Development Project (Wong et.al, 2014)), personnel credentials and training requirements, and continuing education needs.

Survey Sample. Using a list of international schools compiled by The Office of Overseas Schools U.S.A. State Department, "Overseas Schools Offering Support to Children with Special Needs, (2012-2013)," a database of schools by six world regions was constructed. This paper reports on responses from European, North, and South American international schools.

Results

Response participation. Sixty-one (61) schools from the European panel, and 24 schools from both the North American and South American panels responded. Response rates were 22% for European international schools, and 24% for the North and South American schools. Due to the self-report biases of the sample, the results likely do not reflect the reality of special education services provided by international schools.

Demand for special needs services. Demand for services for students with disabilities has increased across both Europe and North/South America. Ninety-five percent (95%) of European respondents and ninety-two percent (92%) of North/South American schools reported an increase in demand, with "noticeable" increases being reported in about 40% of the schools. Similarly, demand for services for students with autism is growing, according to 71% of the European schools and 92% of North/South American schools.

Availability of special education services. A sizeable majority of responding schools from the Europe (89%) and North/South American (96%) panels reported that they offer special education services to students with disabilities. Similarly, a large number of the schools reported that they offer services to students with autism (96%, and 92% respectively). However, approximately one half of the respondents reported services to only those students with Autism who are "high functioning" and academically competent. The major barrier to providing special education services to students with disabilities and specifically autism is the

lack of qualified educational or therapeutic staff. Lack of academic, psychological and therapeutic materials, and lack of appropriate or physically accessible school facilities, are cited as the other barriers to services.

Familiarity and use of evidence-based practices for students with autism. There is remarkable consistency in the reports of the European and North/South American international schools in regards to types of practices and interventions identified by the schools as being used and on which the staff have been trained. The most commonly reported practices for students with Autism were positive reinforcement, visual supports, and modeling, with schedules, self-management running very close behind. From a previous survey (Campbell & Howard- Willms, 2013), positive reinforcement and visual supports were the most frequently used practices by teachers and intervention specialists in the mid-west USA. Finally, the survey results point to a need for more training in these practices for both European and North/American international schools. According to the survey results, only 42% of the international school respondents from the North/South American reported actual training in the use of positive reinforcement, the most frequently used practice for these schools. Among the responding European schools, 30% reported training in the same practice, again highly used. In comparison, 76% of mid-western U.S.A teachers reported that they had received training.

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Contact Information:
Donna Marie Campbell, Ph. D.
Webster University
School of Education
470 E. Lockwood Ave, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.
campbedm@webster.edu

About the author:
Dr. Campbell is Professor of Psychology and Special Education at Webster University, and program coordinator for the graduate Master of Arts in Special Education. Her research interests are inclusive education, human rights and disabilities, international special education, children's mental health, emotional & behavioral disorders, and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.

EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS ACCORDING TO INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES:A CASE STUDY

Mohamad madhi
Amir ghamarani
Ahmad sharifi

Conceptual Framework and Background

Accommodation refers to a set of activities and processes, which provide suitable facilities for the proper education and evaluation of students with special needs such as students with disabilities. It helps us get closer to the approach that emphasizes that all students should be provided with equal chances and opportunities for accessing educational standards and desirable performance. Accommodation is offered within formal frameworks such as individualized education programs to students who meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disability Education Act in the US. Of course, the importance of this kind of education has been emphasized by the lawmakers as well. For example, in the US the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, under section 504, emphasizes delivering a high-quality education. It can be said that throughout the history of educating children with special needs, accommodation has been an important subject in many aspects. For instance, in the case of career choices for people with disabilities, reasonable accommodation is a change or adaptation which enables a person to perform their activities, duties and responsibilities optimally. This kind of accommodation is divided into three groups: 1) changes or adaptations that help a person perform their job responsibilities, such as changes in executive sections by introducing, for instance, Braille or enlarged fonts; 2) changes or adaptations that help a person perform their essential career functions such as using sign language; and 3) changes or adaptations that help a person have equal access to career advantages such as removing physical obstacles in the workspace (FLETC Almanac, 2006).

Accommodating the needs of students with disabilities with educational conditions is a topic which has received considerable attention in the past two decades. Developments in the realm of technology, equipment and educational facilities also emerged that could facilitate the act of offering educational services to students with special needs (Bricout, 2001). For many students with special needs, a successful education can be achieved by accommodation of educational curriculum, and class/workshop activities. In some cases, accommodation is as easy as sitting a student in front of the class or keeping him away from the windows, but some cases include changing the educational syllabus, assessment methods, etc. Accommodation is done for each student individually and it is done according to his or her abilities and preferances (Afrouz, 2010).

In the following sections, we will discuss a few cases of educational accommodation conducted in Mehr-e Emam Pre-Professional Center designed for students with special needs in Qom, Iran. It is worth mentioning that the cases discussed here were students with not only special needs but also additional impairments such as physical and movement injuries caused mainly by cerebral palsy.

Case number 1: Sajjad S.

A 15-year old student who has trouble coordinating his movements especially his eyes and hands, and this was affecting all aspects of his education including classroom and workshop (theoretical and practical). One of his problems, for example, was that his hand was shaking from shoulder down and he could not have control over his educational instruments such as pen or pencil and in addition to bad handwriting, he needed more space in his notebook to write as he had to write things in a big scale. To solve this problem and overcome the limitations, two things were done simultaneously: first, for Sajjad to have a better hold of pens/pencils, we increased their size in diameter, and second, teachers were asked to dedicate more space for his assignments which was done by using A3 papers for his exams. These methods helped him to reach a better educational performance gradually.

Case number 2: Abolfazl M.

The second case involved a 16-year old student whose physical problems led to movement problems such as imbalance while walking or inability to perform symmetric movements. Such conditions influenced his education seriously. For instance, as his hand shakes when he is writing especially with a pencil, he rewrites the words to make them look better but the words become illegible. After a few observations, evaluations and interviews with him, it was revealed that not only movement problems but also psychological factors played a role in the problems he was having. More inspection revealed that while taking dictation exams in elementary school, he used to fall behind other students and had to rewrite the words causing the words to become illegible. Gradually, this became a habit for him and he rewrote his other writings as well. Therefore, to overcome this problem, first we talked to his Persian literature teacher and asked him to adapt his reading speed with Abolfazl's writing while taking a dictation test (to compensate for his physical and movement limitations), and then, in order to reduce his sensitivity to pen and pencil, we gave him a mechanical pencil to use instead. With the help of these measures, Abolfazl improved gradually.

Case number 3: Seyyed Mahdi L.

Seyyed was 15-year old student studying at the pre-professional center. Since he had physical and movement problems too, intervention in, and accommodation of, his educational conditions was necessary. Most interventions for him concerned workshop activities and some of them are as follows: in computer workshop, first in order to facilitate the movement and approaching or moving away from the computer, a wheelchair with an option to adjust the chair's height was used. Then, in order to have a better control over the mouse since his fingers could make small movements, a bigger mouse was used. In addition, to facilitate reading and typing, paper holders were used so that pieces of paper could be attached to the monitor.

Case number 4: accommodating written tests with students' psychological traits

The most important cognitive limitations for students with special needs are absence of concentration, lack of attention while doing homework, late learning and poor memory (Afrouz, 2010). These limitations seriously influence various aspects of the education process, from classroom learning to taking written tests. For example, students may fail to pay close attention to questions in a written test and therefore, they either give false/incomplete answers or they do not answer the questions at all. On the other hand, considering the fact that one of the best ways to assess learning in students with special needs, specifically in written tests, is providing clues to help them answer the questions easily, accommodating written test was conducted by highlighting keywords for each question. For instance, in this question from the science book for first grade pre-professional students that "What group of animals does the frog belong to?", the words *frog* and *animals* were highlighted so that students could quickly understand the question and answer it. Highlighting of keywords in questions, done with a darker background, caused the exam paper to be less banal and providing a white background with dark text background for the questions made the paper appealing (psychological accommodation).

Conclusion

In an education based on technology, accommodating the speed of teaching with the speed of learning is a very essential concept. It is crucial to take individual differences in teaching and learning into consideration. One way to do so is to accommodate the difficulty level of lessons with the mental conditions and learning experience of students (Cruiser, 1997; Riding & Grimly, 1999).

The key to success in reaching educational goals for students with special needs is accommodation, a process with the central goal of individualizing educational programs. If accommodation is in line with the needs and characteristics of students, it can provide ways for them to reach their goals faster than expected.

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Contact Information:
Mohamad Madhi
University of Isfahan, Iran
Mohamad_madhi @yahoo.com

About the Authors:
Mohamad Madhi, is a PhD student of special education at University of Isfahan. His research interests include issues in intelligence and intellectual disabilities.

Amir Ghamarani, PhD, is Assistant Professor in the Psychology Department of Special Education at University of Isfahan, Iran.

Ahmad sharifi is a PhD student of special education at the University of Isfahan. His research interests include issues in family and people with disabilities.

PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT BY YOUNGSTERS WITH DYSLEXIA AND MOTOR DISABILITY

Urszula Gosk
Monika Dominiak-Kochanek

Conceptual Framework and Background

The loss of superior values such as health and physical ability creates an extremely difficult situation in the life of people with motor disabilities (Parchomiuk & Byra, 2005). The fact that this situation is relatively persistent increases the risk of behavioral disorders and might limit the activities of any kind (Kirenko, 2002; Szczupał, 2009). As opposed to motor disability, developmental dyslexia is a disorder accompanied by invisible. Therefore, there is a greater risk of marginalizing dyslexia and perceiving it as a situation of low importance rather than an overwhelming one. As a consequence, others might not be so eager to support an individual with dyslexia as often as an individual with motor disability. However, previous research clearly shows, quite opposite to social beliefs, that the situation of people with developmental dyslexia is very difficult (Konicarova, 2014; Yildiz, Yildirim, Ates & Rasinski, 2012). This disorder makes a pupil experience early educational failure and a feeling of being different than their peers. Additionally, a competitive school environment, which focuses mostly on written word, is a great challenge and a source of negative emotions for pupils with dyslexia (Gindrich, 2002; Tsovili, 2004).

Taking into account the challenges and obstacles adolescents with special educational needs must face it is important to undertake research aimed at defining which social factors might reduce the risk of psychosocial problems among young people with dyslexia and motor disability. An adequate social support seems to be one of the important factors considerably improving the quality of life of students with special educational needs. However, it is reasonable to assume that the quantity and quality of the support strongly depends on the social perception of a given group which needs a support. Individuals with congenital motor disability may often be perceived by the social surrounding as people who are in a difficult life situation due to the external factors out of their control. Consequently, they might be perceived as those who deserve help more than individuals with dyslexia whose school failures are often explained by others with regard to low motivation or simply laziness. Thus, they might be judged by others as not deserving help as opposed to their counterparts with motor disability.

Research

Data for this study were collected from 100 students with dyslexia (57 boys and 43 girls), 98 student with motor disability of congenital origin (57 boys and 41 girls) and 97 students without disability who established the comparison sample (46 boys and

51 girls). The mean age of each group was comparable and equal (M=14.35 (SD=.87)) for students with dyslexia, (M=15.10 (SD=1.35)) for student with motor disability and M=15.08 (SD=1.34) for students without disability. All participants filled out the Social Support Scale developed by Kmiecik-Baran (1995). Participants rated on a 5-point scale to which extent they perceived support from the following social sources: mothers, fathers, peers and teachers. The Cronobach's alpha coefficients for perceived support from four social sources were sufficient and ranged from α=.82 for perceived social support from teachers to α=.84 for perceived social support from mothers.

Results

To compare the level of social support from mothers, fathers, peers and teachers perceived by the participants representing three groups univariate mixed-design repeated ANOVA was applied. Group membership as a between-subjects factor consisting of three levels (motor disability, dyslexia, non- disability) and source of social support was as a within subjects factor having 4 levels (mother, fathers, peers, teachers).The results showed the significant main effect of the source of social support $F(3,741)$=238,47; p<.001; η_p^2=.49. Using Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons, it was found that, according to adolescents, mothers supported them to a greater extent (M=39.76) than fathers (M=38.42). Then, perceived support from fathers was higher compared to the support from peers (M=32.80). Finally, peers provided greater support than teachers (M=26.74). Main effect of group membership was not significant $F(2,247)$=.64; p=ns. However, the interaction effect of group membership and the source of the social support appeared to be significant $F(6,741)$=18.27; p<0.001; η_p^2=.13. The Bonferroni pairwise comparisons showed no differences in the level of perceived support from mothers by youngsters with motor disability (M=39.72) and without disability (M=41.34) while adolescents with dyslexia reported a significantly lower level of maternal support (M=38.23) compared to non-disability group. No difference was found between participants with motor disability and with dyslexia with regard to social support from mothers. With respect to paternal support, the higher level was reported by adolescents without disability (M=40.55) followed by adolescents with motor disability (M=37.83) and dyslexia (M=36.88) who did not differ in this regard. Surprisingly, social support from peers was perceived to a greatest extent by adolescents with dyslexia (M=35.10) compared to adolescents with motor disability (M=31.53) and without disability (M=31.75) who reported the similar level of perceived support from peers. Finally, pairwise comparisons of teacher support showed that youngsters with motor disability perceived the support from teachers to a greater extent (M=30.70) than youth with dyslexia (M=26.47). However, adolescents with dyslexia indicated the higher level of support from teachers than adolescents without disability (M=23.03) who reported on the lowest level of teacher support of three groups included in this study.

Recommendations

A significant difference in the social support perceived by the youth with dyslexia and with congenital motor disability points out that social perception of people with dyslexia should be the important issue in educational programs aimed to form appropriate social attitudes towards individuals with dyslexia in order to change the unfair beliefs about them.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should focus at finding out the causes of low social support provided for youngsters with dyslexia. Hence, studies on dyslexia need to include not only individual characteristics of the participants with a certain disability or disorder but also ecological variables concerning the nature of social settings they are embedded.

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Contact Information:
Urszula Gosk
The Maria Grzegorzewska, Academy of Special Education,
Institute of Special Education
ul. Szczęśliwicka 40, Warsaw
ulagosk@aps.edu.pl; gosk13@wp.pl

About the Authors:

Urszula Gosk, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Institute of Special Education in the Academy of Special Education in Poland. Her interest focuses on the resources of young people with dyslexia and motor disability such as sense of coherence and social support, as well as social attitudes toward disability.

Monika Dominiak-Kochanek, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Institute of Applied Psychology in the Academy of Special Education in Warsaw. Her scientific interests are twofold: social perception and attitudes toward people with disability and family antecedents of violence and aggressive behaviors in adolescents and young adults.

ADULT SIBLINGS IN THE FACE OF THEIR BROTHER'S OR SISTER'S DISABILITY: CASE STUDY

Małgorzata Sekułowicz
Marcel Witkowski

Introduction

Researchers studying family functioning are devoting increasingly more attention to the siblings of people with disability. It turns out that the difficulties associated with adjusting to a family member's disability affect not only the parents, but others also–the siblings in particular.

Siblings of people with disabilities find themselves in a complex situation. On the one hand, they tend to idealise the brother or sister with disabilities. Forced to help him/her and, at the same time, to change their own lives, often giving up on their own needs, they go through accelerated social maturation. Importantly, the siblings are vulnerable to specific mental burdens: they experience such affective states as pity, shame, aversion and/or hate. Hackenberg underscores the costs of the siblings' self-realisation in the context of submission to the family's norms and values (Obuchowska, 2008). On the other hand, the siblings tend to feel abandoned and lonely since the parents devote nearly all of their time to the care for the child with disability (Pisula 2007). The siblings without disabilities have also been known to relinquish their social commitments relatively soon in order to fully engage in domestic life, thereby often adopting the "family hero" role. They get actively involved in helping both the sibling with disability and the parents, assuming responsibility for them and providing support (Wojciechowska, Cierpka 2007).

Another important facet of the functioning of the siblings of individuals with disabilities is their relation with the brother or sister with disability. The relation may be disturbed by unequal capacities, a lack of shared experiences, and/or divergent patterns of psycho-social conduct and functioning (Żyta 2010). Research shows that the kind of disability is a relevant factor in the siblings' functioning (Hodapp & Urbano, 2007). As compared with the siblings of people with autism, the siblings of people with Down syndrome display closer, warmer relations, better health status, and lower depression incidence. These issues provide just a starting point for the theoretical study of siblings of people with disability without in the least delineating their comprehensive image.

Method

The research aimed primarily to identify the problems which the adult siblings of people with disabilities face in life. The objective was also to explore the process of their adaptation and to establish the hardest past and current obstacles experienced by them.

Given this, the research problem was formulated as follows: What is the social situation of the adult siblings of people with disabilities? What problems do the respondents face up to in life? How did their process of adaptation unfold in the family with a member with disability?

To seek answers to these questions, the biographical case study method was applied while the research material was collected by means of the narrative interview. The narrative interview yielded descriptions of three life stories – of the sisters of people with disability. The stories concern experiences spanning between learning about (or realising) the brother's or sister's disability and the present moment.

Results

The respondents' narratives included information on the events and experiences that had proven particularly important to them. The subjects addressed first of all knowledge and awareness of the brother's/sister's disability, relations with the siblings, perceptions of the parents, roles assumed in family life, and the difficult issue of anticipating their own future.

The respondents' utterances concerning their knowledge of the brother's/sister's disability varied highly. How the information about the child's disability had reached them turned out to be an important factor in their perception of disability. This was acutely felt not only by the parents but also by the studied siblings. The realisation of the sibling's disability was directly related to the parents' reactions to the information. Identifying with their parents, the healthy siblings picked up and reproduced the parental emotions and responses. This was a basis for constructing their own visions of disability.

It transpired in the narratives that lacking support in the search for information about the brother's/sister's disorder some of the siblings had imitated their parents in denying the problem. Others, in turn, having been brought up in the spirit of toleration, had come to terms with the family situation at hand faster. Also, they tended to be more active in looking for information about the disability and the available help forms. At the same time, such attitudes were accompanied by increased expectations toward the environment. This, in turn, sometimes caused resignation, a sense of injustice and even anger when the diagnosis, rehabilitation, and support for the family seemed thwarted or inadequate.

The narratives indicate that interest in the sibling with disability may fade if the parents display such behaviors and attitudes. Two utterances made a lack of strong ties particularly visible. Disturbed communication between the sisters and their siblings with disability brought about dejection and serious difficulties in building mutual rapport. Also, jealousy surfaced in two subjects' narratives. The study showed that the care for the child with disability had thoroughly absorbed the parents' time and attention. In that case, the healthy siblings felt rejected and marginalized in the family. The subjects felt relegated to the periphery of family life. In one case, the conduct of one adult sister was characterized by the full acceptance of her brother with disability. As she said, he is truly her life companion and her inner sense of satisfaction meaningfully depends on him – his success gives her genuine joy.

The study also showed a father's rejection of a child with disability, which had detrimentally affected the family functioning. Other damaging predicaments included the degradation of mutual relationships between the parents and alcohol abuse as the parents' way of coping with the difficult situation in life.

The disrupted disability-related relationship between the parents triggered the respondent's traumatic experiences. She emphasized her attachment to and love for the parents, but she condemned their treatment of her brother with disability, whom they had placed in an institution. Another narrative, however, implied that the brother's disability had united the family and strengthened the relationship between the parents, which positively affected his siblings.

The respondents reported also the problem of their own future and the future of the sibling with disability. The distress is related to the upsetting realization that when parents pass away the respondents will have to fully take over the care for the brother/sister. The female respondents are fully aware that it will be an additional burden to be borne by themselves and their families. Given this, they refuse to consider that prospect in advance and are reluctant to talk about it.

Conclusion

The sketchy figures of the sisters of adult people with disability differ from each other. They epitomize both the positive and the negative influence of disability of the life of the entire family. Although their life histories seem quite convergent at moments, their narratives vary. Besides such factors as the respondents' emotional experiences, adoption of diverse roles in family, anxiety about their own future and confrontation with society briefly addressed above, there are many pertinent issues to be discussed in this context. The original narratives richly and comprehensively show how the able-bodied siblings function, yet the scope of this paper makes it impossible to cite them at length. Despite these limitations, the summarily noted problems doubtlessly indicate that it is urgent not only to view such individuals' situation with attention to a wealth of details (including the problems in adaptation and coping in difficult situations) but also to develop mechanisms of supporting and helping them with equal mindfulness as is the case with interventions for their parents.

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Contact Information:
Małgorzata Sekułowicz
Marcel Witkowski
Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa (University of Lower Silesia)
ul. Strzegomska 55
53-630 Wrocław

About the Authors:
Malgorzata (Gosia) Sekułowicz is a professor at University of Lower Silesia. She is a member of the Polish National Council for

Higher Education and Head of Department of Education and Rehabilitation of Children with Intellectual Disability. She is also the Director of Autism Research Center at the Institute of Special Education

Marcel Witkowski is a graduate of the University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław, Poland. In 2008, he obtained a degree in Special Education (majoring in Rehabilitation). Currently, he is a Ph.D. student at the ULS and a primary school teacher. His research concentrates on the functioning of families of people with disability.

THE IMPACT OF THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION

Ange Anderson

Conceptual Framework and Background

Since Aristotle in his Nicomachean ethics (350BC) used the term eudemonia, which today we refer to as well-being, academics continue to debate its definition often using objective measures that include social and economic conditions such as income, educational resources and health status whilst others have used subjective indicators including life satisfaction, anxiety and emotional well-being. Two of the most basic human needs are health and education and if we look at the UN convention on the rights of a child we see that the right to be educated and the right to be healthy are two of the key principles. Education and health are underlying basic and intermediate needs.

The governments in Great Britain have each laid out their own strategies for improving children's well-being and schools across Great Britain are inspected on how they manage pupil well-being. It can be difficult to measure well-being accurately. If we try to measure subjective well-being we come across the problem that feelings, like happiness, anger or enjoyment, are actually difficult to measure. In a special school where pupils have difficulty communicating all that we can do is study the behaviour of a person to gauge their well-being. Pupils in a special school often have health difficulties as well as learning difficulties and sometimes they have emotional difficulties. Before they can actually access an education they have to feel able to access it. Special schools throughout Great Britain provide various therapies to aid pupils' access to education.

Do these therapies have any impact on the pupils' educational progress and their health? Do these therapies have an impact on their well-being? In the data driven society that we have become evidence is needed to show whether any therapeutic intervention has any impact.

Research

Ysgol Pen Coch is currently researching the effectiveness of its therapeutic intervention. The school uses B Squared assessment software to assess pupil's progress in the curriculum. The school provides a number of therapies- physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, dark room therapy, hydrotherapy, reflexology, therapeutic music, TAC PAC, Sherborne therapy, Rebound therapy, Wii therapy, play therapy, therapeutic music, therapeutic art, therapeutic riding and vibroacoustic therapy. The therapies have also been linked to B Squared curriculum targets. A target has to be met three times before it can be assessed as being achieved. The class teacher is informed by the therapist once the target has been achieved and a new target has to be selected before the therapy can continue. The attainment of the target is added to B Squared. At the end of each school year the B Squared GAP analysis software uses the data recorded by teachers throughout the year and produces reports and graphs and allows progress tracking week by week, month by month or year by year.

To measure the impact that the therapy has had on the pupil the therapist gives the class teacher an evaluation sheet to complete at the end of each therapy session. A book is currently being produced by the staff at Ysgol Pen Coch about the therapies and their impact on the education and well-being of pupils and copies of some of these evaluations will appear in its appendix.
The most recent set of questionnaires on the use of therapies went out in November 2014 to all parents/carers and staff who were asked to comment through a different questionnaire. Pupil's views were sought. Individual interviews were held with key education and therapy staff and professionals. All therapies were observed at Ysgol Pen Coch. Current timetables for all therapies were reviewed and the booklets used by therapists and contributed to by class teachers were scrutinised. All of this information was analysed and a report produced.

Recommendations

Governments in Great Britain now recognise that special schools have a vital role to play. However, the governments tend to concentrate their recommendations on what the special schools can offer the mainstream schools in the way of training for mainstream colleagues on aspects of special needs. Whilst special schools are only too willing to share their expertise they exist to improve the educational success of their own pupils. The needs of these pupils can often best be met in a school that offers them an alternative to mainstream and which has the therapeutic resources and facilities that mainstream schools do not have and which afford children the opportunity to reach their potential. Recognition by governments of the role that special schools already play in educating pupils previously thought uneducable is long overdue.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is a need for a systematic study across special schools to focus on how they promote access to the curriculum for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties and children with severe learning difficulties and how this can improve their well-being. There is also a need to provide data analysis to show how effective this is.

Contact Information:
Ange Anderson
Ysgol Pen Coch
Prince of Wales Ave,
Flint.
Flintshire.
CH6 5NF
Angelique_Anderson@Flintshire.gov.uk

About the Author:
Ange Anderson is a head teacher/principal of a special school in North Wales. She has a Master's degree in learning difficulties with particular interest in the education of individuals with profound and multiple learning difficulties and also those with autism. She has given talks in relation to these learning difficulties.

EFFECTIVENESS OF ACT ON ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN STUDENTS WITH SOCIAL ANXIETY

Soheila Safary
Foroozan Irandoost

Conceptual Framework and Background

Social anxiety disorder (SAD) is a definite and constant fear of shame or of a negative evaluation in social environment and when doing an activity among others; (Dalrymple, et al., 2011). Increasing and constant fear of social environments, avoidance of these settings and fear of negative evaluation are the key features of SAD (Judith, Wilson, Rapee, 2006). SAD usually leads to a long-term disability and the sufferers face with different problems in the every-day affairs as well as their social and job relations. The disorder can be at the same tie with other sorts of psychiatric disorders (Bruce, et al., 2005) and is most often co-morbid with depression and other types of anxiety disorder (Kessler, et al., 2005).

Because of the high prevalence and its being chronic there has been a lot of effort in order for effective therapies to be achieved to stop or control it. Both chemotherapy and psychotherapy are used in the process of treating this disorder. Although some studies have been made to know which of them is working more, they have not achieved to a certain answer for this question (Rowa & Antony, 2005). Seeking for a development in new therapy approaches, researchers paid a growing attention to mindfulness and acceptance-based therapies as one of the Third- Generation therapies. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is, too, one of these methods which uses the mindfulness, cognitive diffusion and some other strategies so as to increasing psychological flexibility and to make a suitable change in behavior regarding to personal values of a given person (Hayes, et al., 1999). Psychological flexibility refers to improving the ability of contacting with the experiences at the moment and choosing one action among some other possible actions. This psychological flexibility achieves through six possible important processes including: acceptance, cognitive diffusion, mindful contact with the present experience, interpretation of non-positional self-construal, of values as well as of committed action (Hayes, et al., 1999; Hayes, 2004).

When ACT is used to treat SAD, there is a change in the effort which intends to change the shape and content of psychological fearful events and to change the methods of functioning which maintains the psychological pain cycle. Especially the key behavioral features of SAD and other types of psychological distress are in connection with experiential avoidance that refers to any action seeking for a change in shape, content, and the frequency or the duration of personal unpleasant personal events (Hayes, et al., 1999) and this action results in person's unwillingness to face with undesirability as such emotion, thought, tendencies, and fearful memories and getting away or avoidance of events and situation of such kind. Experiential avoidance emerges in two different shapes: one is when the person puts aside the bothering experience, and in the other shape the person gets away from mentioned situations (Hayes, 2004). This experiential avoidance brings about a temporary decrease in the person's anxiety and its symptoms. However, if continued for long time it will result in negative social, mental and even physical influences for longer time. In this approach, the patient should be encouraged to actively face with fearful mental experiences as well as to change the behavior and identifying a goal and to choose a more sociable life style (Ossman, et al., 2006).

As it was mentioned, SAD causes several social and psychological problems in those suffering from it. These problems sometimes are very severe and disturb different dimensions of the patient's life. There have been very different approaches in order to treat this disorder. The main objective of the present study was the analysis of the effect of ACT on the degree of anxiety and depression in the college students suffering from SAD.

Research

Participants included 29 female college students studying their B.A in University of Isfahan in 2012 and 2013 academic year who were infected by SAD. Input parameters contained an age with range of 18-30 years old, owning the diagnostic signs for SAD according to DSM-IV as their major and primary disorder and the output criteria included suffering from other sorts of disorders such as psychotic disorders, bipolar disorders and the like, a score more than 29 in the Beck Depression inventory, suffering from substance abuse and also anxiety disorders generated from medical disease. Then, participants randomly assigned to two groups of treatment and wait-list control (15 and 14 respectively).

In order to select participants and evaluate their SAD and depression symptoms Structural Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Axis 1 Disorders (SCID), Social Phobia Inventory and Beck Depression Inventory- II was used. The participants in the treatment group took part in 10 sessions of ACT intervention was organized based on Fleming, & Kocovski (2013).

Results

According the Results of co-variance analysis, ACT meaningfully lowered the anxiety and depression of the infected college students by SAD, with a high level of efficiency. Considering these findings, it can be mentioned that the objective behind ACT is to lower the experiential avoidance, to increase the psychological flexibility, as well as to up-growing mindfulness in order for excessive struggle with recognitions to be frustrated and for personal values to be identified in relation to behavioral goals. ACT teaches one to accept and live the unpleasant anxiety symptoms rather than to eliminate and face with them (Hayes et al., 1999). Thus, ACT increases the tendency towards living together with the entire experiences and the psychological flexibility. When this is accomplished people are free to choose what more corresponds to their own values. Then they work to achieve their valuable goals and this will lead to their psychological distress to be lowered and their life quality to be improved.

On the other hand, since ACT lowers anxiety in those suffering from SA remarkably, and as the infected people by such kind of disorder get vulnerable to depression and also it has the most frequent comorbidity, so it seems that every therapeutic method would decrease the depression, if it lowers the anxiety, too. Also, according to Hayes et al. (1999), psychological distresses i.e. depression, to some extent, are generated from fusion of personal thoughts and emotions. When this fusion happens one sees the features of one's thoughts and emotions in his/her personality and so behaves in a way corresponding to them. Cognitive fusion in those suffering from depression is lowered through the cognitive diffusion and acceptance procedure. This is followed by cognitive malfunctions and illogical justifications decrease and as a result they get motivated to purchase their own desires, and finally this committed effort to achieve the goals leas them to development in function and decrease in psychological distress.

Recommendations

Therapeutic methods of such kinds, causes decrease in experiencing anxiety and depression of the sufferers, and give life a new and positive sense, and finally improve the life style, all of which together justify the efficiency of this method to be practiced in clinics especially for psychological services

Suggestions for future research

Since the subjects were female college students, who were between 18 and 30 and suffered from SAD, and also as it was predicted that the mechanisms of confronting anxiety in men and women to differ, there is a need to conduct similar studies on male students and other persons in different age levels. Besides, it is suggested that in future researches this therapeutic method be applied for other psychological and anxiety disorders and also on different clinical populations as well as consider periods of follow-up in order to identify the stability of the therapy's effect

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Contact Information:
Soheila Safary
Department of Psychology of Children with Special Needs
Faculty of Education, University of Isfahan
Hezarjarib St, Isfahan, Iran.
Email: s.safary@edu.ui.ac.ir

About the Authors:
Soheila Safary is a PhD student in Psychology of Children with Special Needs at the University of Isfahan. Her research interests include issues in learning disabilities, early intervention programs, and relevant issues to the psychological problems of children with special needs.

Foroozan Irandoost is MA in clinical psychology. She majored in third wave cognitive behavioral therapies at graduate level. She interested in research about psychological problems and their therapeutic methods especially in females in Iran.

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN ACTION: A PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH TO MULTIPLE MEANS OF DATA BASED CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Lora Lee Smith Canter
Kathi Wilhite
Laura King
Jennifer Williams
Debbie Metcalf

Conceptual Framework and Background

Currently in today's world there is a global shift from simply providing educational access for all to providing access to quality learning for all. This trend, focusing on quality learning, demands a stronger alignment between educational policies and practices, pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment systems. Within these demands, many countries are recognizing the utmost importance of improving curriculum quality and relevance while concomitantly cultivating more effective and efficient assessment systems (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2014). If all students are expected to receive a quality education, their teachers must first receive a quality education. To this end, teacher preparation programs need to engage in curriculum revision on an ongoing basis to address candidate learning outcomes (Tam, 2014). In similitude, curriculum revisions need to employ sound assessment systems rooted in appropriate and efficient assessment measures. One such sound assessment system is that provided by the principles of authentic assessment applied to program evaluation and curriculum development. Very basically, authentic assessment, also referred to as direct, alternative, responsive, or performance-based assessment, is based on the premise that assessment should take place within the context of an authentic activity with real world parameters promoting active learning and connected with multiple learning outcomes (Olfos & Zulantay, 2007). Because teaching is such a complex, interactive, dynamic, and responsive action, it requires teacher education programs to use assessment measures based in developmental active learning approaches not only in delivering instructional programs but evaluating instructional programs (Olfos & Zulantay, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). In regard to program development and evaluation, authentic assessment includes measures of learner outcomes in the products produced by the preparation programs' consumers but also informs program evaluation because this type of assessment evaluates the processes involved.

Authentic Assessment in Program Development: Program Description

As part of their preservice program, teacher education candidates in any teacher –preparation program participate in a variety of assessments. Common teacher assessments include observation checklists, peer review, electronic portfolios, standards for professional practice, and value-added modeling (Benedict, et al., 2013). To ensure an effective teacher preparation program and deal with state and professional organizations' credentialing decisions, the special education program at our university carefully aligns formative and summative assessment data from key teacher assessment assignments to course objectives and standards which in turn is used to inform program content and revisions. Further, attention is given to ensure that assessment data used in program development is rooted in an authentic assessment for teaching framework supported by research in the field. Specifically, our efforts to employ an authentic assessment framework for measuring teaching and supporting our candidates abilities to teach well include the four aspects of authentic assessment outlined by Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000):

Assessments sample the actual knowledge, dispositions, and skills required of teachers. That is, assessment tasks require the integration of knowledge and skills both indirectly and directly visible during the classroom portion of teaching.

1. Assessments require the integration of knowledge and skills that mirrors the integration that must occur in the practice of teaching.
2. Evidence from multiple sources are collected over time and in diverse contexts.
3. Assessment evidence is evaluated by knowledgeable individuals using performance criteria that are important in the field.

The strength of our program that operates from a framework of authentic assessment and contains the aforementioned 4 aspects is that candidates are asked to address a variety of complex real life situations or problems and complete multi-step projects, often in collaboration in others.

Recommendations

A teacher preparation program that measures students' knowledge and skills in applied settings and situations that emulate real life teaching not only informs candidate performance but addresses questions regarding programmatic strengths and areas of needs. As is the nature of authentic assessment, our teacher education program attempts to seamlessly combine instructional delivery, learning, student motivation and engagement, and higher order thinking (Eder, 2004) throughout all the stages of a candidate's development. An authentic assessment framework, supported by multiple and varied means of collecting assessment data, occurring concurrently with thoughtful deliberation of implications and data driven curriculum decisions within the context of discipline specific knowledge and skills creates an environment where the candidates growth and development is symbiotic with program growth and development.

Suggestions for Future Research

The experience of using an authentic assessment framework to promote candidate growth and achievement as well as using this framework to inform program development has proved to be promising. However despite this promise for improved program development, these curriculum and assessment practices in teacher education need to be quantified. There is very little formal research completed that addresses the question "Do teachers prepared through programs like ours working under a framework of authentic assessment actually teach better?" Embedding these curriculum and assessment practices into teacher preparation programs involves a great deal of time and effort, along with increased collaboration and resource demands (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). It is important that future research efforts illustrate the benefits of using this approach and demonstrate that the complex and demanding nature of the teaching profession deserves teacher preparations programs designed along these premises to promote higher order thinking skills.

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Contact Information:
East Carolina University College of Education
Special Education, Foundations, and Research Department Special Education Program
154 Speight Building
Mail Stop 54
College of Education
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27858 USA
MetcalfD@ecu.edu or smithcantetrl@ecu.edu

About the Authors:
Dr. Lora Lee Smith-Canter received her PhD from the University of South Carolina and is currently a faculty member at East Carolina University teaching special education graduate and undergraduate classes. Her research interests range across the field of

special education, focusing primarily upon social interaction interventions, multicultural issues, and technology.

Dr. Kathi Wilhite received her EdD from Ball State University. She is the Interim Chair for the Department of Special Education, Foundations and Research in the College of Education at East Carolina University. Dr. Wilhite has also served as a classroom teacher, a special education administrator, and an educational consultant.

Dr. Laura H. King is an associate professor at East Carolina University. She received her PhD from the University of Central Florida. She is currently the director of the Irene Howell Assistive Technology Center at ECU. Her research interests include assistive technology, assessment, action research, and disability in higher education.

Dr. Jennifer Williams is a faculty member at East Carolina University in the area of special education. She teaches undergraduate and graduate classes pertaining to assessment in special education and teaching in the inclusive classroom. Her research interests include Universal Design for Learning, assistive technology, and effective instruction and assessment.

Debbie Metcalf, MA.Ed., NBCT, recently retired as a public school special educator after forty years of service. She has also served as a Teacher-in-Residence at East Carolina University in the area of Special Education for 15 years and is currently working as an instructor with preservice teachers.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH CONGENITAL AND PROFOUND HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Gladys B. Babudoh

Conceptual Framework and Background

Children born with profound hearing impairment seem to be the most difficult to educate among the categories of children with hearing impairment because of the difficulty posed by their disability on speech and language development. The development of language skills requires a complete integration of the child into the family and the society. This is not common in the families with congenital deaf children because of the perception of disability in the community which constitute a lot of emotional problems for the parents resulting in parental frustration and neglect of the children. For example, it is a common superstitious belief that disability is a reward or punishment for an offense committed by the people (Ozoji, 1993). Where the offenders are seen as the direct parents, they are despised by the community members. If on the other hand the offenders are perceived to be the grandparents or any member of their lineage, the direct parents are still pitied by the neighbours. This situation often makes the parents to consider themselves and the children as inferior and abnormal.

According to Mba (1995), some communities label the children born deaf as immature, idiots, and deaf-mates. They are regarded as a source of shame to the families, so they are often locked up when visitors are around. As a result of the negative attitudes of parents and child neglect, many children born with deafness drop out of school, and are forced into trades like book binding, hair dressing, and basket weaving (Ozoji, 1993).

Those who remain in school suffer gross neglect and rejection from their parents. Many parents of deaf children in boarding schools during enrollment, give wrong (none existing) addresses to the school authority to avoid being traced. Such parents neither go back to see the children during visiting days nor go to pick them during holidays. Such abandoned children are left under the care of either the school matron or the head-teacher (Plateau School for the Deaf, 2012). It is common to see this category of children being sent away from school for none payment of school fees because their parents saw them as none productive with no future prospects and so used the money meant for their fees on other things such as buying of fertilizers for their farms. In most situations, the parents provide all the school needs of the hearing children before considering paying the fees of the deaf children. Where the family is not financially buoyant and they have many children in school, the children with deafness waited indefinitely (Babudoh, 2012).

It is against this background that this study was undertaken to assist parents having children who were born with profound hearing impairment since the major problem perceived to be experienced centered on communication.

Research

The participants were purposively selected from Plateau School for the Deaf and environs. Five primary two pupils born with profound hearing impairment and five family members for each of the pupils, (making a total of 30 people) constituted the participants of the study. The five pupils who were made up of two males and three females, were all at the verge of dropping out of school because of neglect and abandonment by their parents. Of the twenty-five family members, eighteen were females and seven were males, all of them participated voluntarily.

Group counseling was adopted for each of the families on the necessity to accept the child for who he/she is and the need to cater

for him/her. After which they were exposed to intensive sign language learning since the major concern of the families was their inability to interact with their deaf child. Simple stories were told and re-told, and reading exercises were conducted in sign language. This treatment exercise which was scheduled for twenty weeks will be rounded up at the end of January, 2015.

Suggestion for Further Research

It is suggested that a research be undertaken on the enlightenment of parents with deaf children on causes of deafness in order to reduce the impact of the superstitious beliefs

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Contact Information:
Gladys B. Babudoh
University of Jos
Department of Special Education & Rehabilitation Sciences
Faculty of Education
P.M.B 2084, Jos
Plateau State. Nigeria.
gladbabs@gmail.com, gasababs@yahoo.com

About the Author:
Gladys Babudoh is a special education lecturer at the University of Jos, Nigeria. She has a Bachelor's and Postgraduate Degrees in Special Needs Education with specialization in hearing handicaps. Her research interests include reading for children born with profound hearing impairment and issues in deaf education for primary school learners.

OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER AND THE CURRENT SITUATION OF CHILDREN WITH THIS DISORDER IN HO CHI MINH CITY

Le Thi Minh Ha, Ph.D.
Le Nguyet Trinh, M.A.

Issues Related to Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

Nowadays many parents and teachers often complain of some children who often express anger, or outbursts of anger, and disregard for the rules. These children often attempt to disturb other people and always blame others for their own mistakes; they can easily disrupt relationships with people around and also express extreme frustration when someone does things that they do not like. In addition, many children and adolescents may also have other behavioral problems such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, learning disabilities, anxiety disorder, depression and drug and alcohol abuse (Mash & Barkley, 1997). According to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition (DSM-IV, APA, 1994), such expression on the child's behavior in the form of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is one of the many phenomena encountered in children. ODD can occur in both boys and girls from 2-4 years old when they develop their motor skills and explore the environment, forming self-conscious and always wanting to assert itself. This is also the time when parents set limits on their young children, which inadvertently causes a "war" between parents and children (Chandler, n.d.). ODD is clearest expressed in 5-year-old children and strongly expressed in 7-year-old children and older (Dickstein, 2010). The children express opposition openly, directly challenging and disobedient and clearly demonstrate it in action.

Current Situation of Children with ODD in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC)

We used Conners Rating Scales (adapted by Nguyen, 2002), short version for teachers and parents for screening children with signs of ODD. According to Conners Scale, assessing the degree of ODD is as follows:
(1) On 70 points: Very high (the child has *a lot more of behavior problems* than typical children)
(2) 65-69 points: High (the child has *quite a lot more of behavior problems* than typical children)
(3) 60-64 points: Above average - Limited (the child has *some behavior problems more* than typical children)
(4) Less than 60 points: Average (the child has *similar behavior problem* like other children) (Conners, 2004).

ODD is characterized by early onset (before age 7) in the development process, particularly evident during elementary school age. On the basis of research findings on 821 children, with the aim of screening, we selected and analyzed children that were assessed by both teachers and parents as of 60 or higher (on Conners Rating Scales, Conners, 2004). That is, the children had at least some behavior problems more than typical children.

Results

Percentage of Elementary Students with ODD (Aged 8-11) in HCMC

There are 3.167% of children were at above average extent, or these children have some behavioral problems more than typical children and should be checked or screening for ODD, 2.436% of children show signs of ODD, or these children had a lot more behavioral problems than typical children and needed a diagnosis of or clinic visit for ODD.

Percentage of Children with ODD by Age

The number of children with ODD is most concentrated in children at 8 years of age (30.43%), and least concentrated in children at 12 years old (2.174%). Both teachers (T) and parents (P) evaluated ODD mean score at high and very high. Inspection showed that T assessed the ODD score as significant difference by age (F=4.440 Sig=0.04), in which children at 9 years of age had the highest mean score which was at the very high (78.75) and 11-year-old children had the lowest mean score (66.36) but also at a high level. No significant differences in ODD mean scores by age of the children were evaluated by P (F=0.555Sig=0.696).

Percentage of Children with ODD by Gender

Thus, the percentage of boys (69.6%) with ODD is higher than girls with ODD (30.4%). Both P and T assessed scores for male students with ODD in high and very high. Inspection shows *certain correlation and statistical significance between T's and and P's evaluation in scores of male students with ODD* (Cramer's V=0.426, Sig=0.02<0.05). Accordingly, if T/P's evaluation of male students were in the limit/high/very high, P/T also assessed them respectively. *There was no correlation in evaluation between T and P in ODD scores for female students* (Cramer's V = 0.479, Sig = 0.179> 0.05).

Information of the Samples' Development

The process of child development from birth to the present was learned through a parent questionnaire, including method of birth (natural birth/forceps/surgical), prematurity, birth weight, breastfeeding (yes/no), the order of birth, people the child lives with, parents' marital status, the milestones of motor and language development (flipping, crawling, sitting, walking and talking). We concluded the criterion "People the children live with" was associated with ODD. The ODD mean score in children living with mother only was the highest of 75.25 (high level), children living with father only at 71.25 (very high), children living with other people quite high at 74 points (very high) and children living with both parents at the lowest of 65.767 (high). Inspection showed a significant difference between the mean scores of ODD according to whom they live with (F = 9.861, Sig = 0.000). Accordingly, *ODD mean scores of children living with a parent only or with others tend to be higher*. In our study, no relationship was found between the child's score of ODD with other factors such as prematurity, breastfeeding, the birth order, parents' marital status, and milestones of motor (flipping, crawling, sitting) and language development.

ODD and Comorbidity

We studied children at risk of ODD may also have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) through evaluation of P and T. The distribution of ODD and ADHD scores evaluated by P is in a straight line and tend to increase significantly. There is a certain correlation between the mean ODD and ADHD scores (Peason=0.562, Sig=0.000<0.005). That is, some children who had ODD scores at very high level/high/limits also had ADHD scores at the same levels. The distribution of ODD and ADHD scores evaluated by T is in a straight line and tends to increase very significantly. There is a close correlation between the mean ODD and ADHD scores (Peason=0.740, Sig=0.000). That is, children who had ODD scores at very high level/high/limits also had ADHD scores at the same levels.

Conclusion

According to our research in HCMC, the percentage of children with signs of ODD is 2.436% and 3.167% are in the above average levels. Both T and P evaluated ODD mean score of children by age at high and very high. There are significant differences in ODD scores by age assessed by T, in which children at 9 years of age had the highest mean score (78.75) and at very high levels, children at 11 years of age had the lowest mean scores (66.36), but at high levels. No significant differences were found in ODD scores by age assessed by P.

The rate of ODD in boys is higher than that of girls. Both T and P evaluated ODD scores of boys in the high and very high levels. There is a certain correlation and statistical significance between T's and and P's evaluation in scores of male students with ODD. Accordingly, if T/P's evaluation of male students were in the limit/high/very high, P/T also assessed them respectively. There was no correlation between T's and P's evaluation in ODD scores for female students.

The ODD mean scores of children living with either mother or father or other people tend to be higher than those of children living with both parents. Both T and P evaluated children with ODD scores in high/ very high / above average levels and reported their ADHD scores in respective levels. Basing on the research results, we find it necessary to promote research, intervention, and education for children with ODD, so teachers and parents understand this disorder in children, and professionals and researchers are encouraged to work in ODD.

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Contact Information:
Le Thi Minh Ha, Ph.D.
Department of Special Education
Ho Chi Minh City University of Education
280 An Duong Vuong Street, Ward 4
District 5, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.
lethiminhha@yahoo.com

About the Authors:
Dr. Le Thi Minh Ha is a lecturer and senior researcher of the Department of Special Education, HCMC University of Education. She achieved her doctoral degree at Ha Noi University of Education, majoring in Psychology. Her research interests include assessment and intervention for children with developmental disorders.

Ms Le Nguyet Trinh, Master's from the University of Nottingham, is a special education lecturer at the HCMC University of Education. She is currently pursuing her second Master's degree in Early Intervention at the University of Oregon. Her interests include assessment and early intervention for infants and young children with emotional and behavioral problems.

PERCEPTION OF HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN OYO STATE

Emmanuel Olufemi Adeniyi

Conceptual Framework and Background

Until the 1960's most student with disabilities were educated in settings that were segregated from peers without disabilities for most or all of the school day. Those educated in regular school settings were typically isolated from other students in separate wings or in basements of the main school building. Others were educated in separate schools that served only students with disabilities (McLeskey, 2007 & McLeskey, Rosenberg, & Westling 2013). Many criticized these segregated settings as ineffective, stigmatizing and resulting in low expectations for those students (Deno, 1970; Dunn, 1968; Johnson, 1962). A disproportionate number of students who were identified with mild disabilities and educated in these settings were poor children from diverse backgrounds such findings led to a call to mainstream students with mild disabilities into general education classrooms for at least part of the school day (Dunn, 1968).

Mainstreaming addressed only students with mild disabilities not those with severe disabilities. Moreover, students with disabilities were assumed to belong to special education and were simply visiting the general education classroom, primarily to improve their social skills or improve academic skills while the responsibility for student outcomes remained with special education. At the same time, policies of normalization and deinstitutionalization were being implemented. Normalization requires agencies to provide persons with disabilities with living and learning experiences that were as normal as possible. Skills to be taught were those that would allow greater independence and life patterns that were parallel to those of people without disabilities. The instructional procedures for teaching these skills were to be as close to normal as possible. The policy of deinstitutionalization resulted in a decline in the number of persons living in large residential institutions and an increase in the number living with their families in smaller community based residences (Westling & Fox, 2009).

By the 1980's advocates and researchers were concerned about the effectiveness of mainstreaming (Reynolds, Wang & Walberg, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). In response to these concerns, the inclusion movement began in the mid-1980's resulting in major changes. Advocates of inclusion, consider the education of students with disabilities in general education classrooms to be a fundamental right for all students with disabilities and the instruction of these students to be the responsibility of every general education teacher. The proponents of inclusion assume that general and special educators will share the responsibility and accountability for educating students with disabilities and that student with disabilities will be as much a part of the educational community of the school as are other students who do not have disabilities. Finally, the collaboration between general and special educators is expected to ensure that students with disabilities receive appropriate supports, ensuring adequate progress academically and socially.

Increasing numbers of students with disabilities have been included in general education classrooms since the mid-1980s (McLeskey, Landers, Williamson & Hoppey, 2011; Williamson, McLeskey, Hoppy & Rentz, 2006) but controversy continues to surround the movement. The major concern relates to positions taken by some advocates regarding full inclusion (Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1994; Kauffman, 1993; McLeskey, 2007). Full inclusion suggests that all students with disabilities be educated for the entire school day in general education classrooms.

Services for students with hearing impairments may be provided in different types of settings. Most students with hearing impairment at infancy attend regular early childhood Programmes/Schools for most the day while few attend special schools. According to the US Department of Education, (2011), 54% of the students with hearing impairments are in general education classroom most of the day and another 33% are in these classrooms for at least part of the school day, about 8% are in special schools, and about 4% are in residential facilities. It should be noted that a sensory impairment does not necessarily mean that a student has reduced level of cognitive or academic ability, in fact many students with sensory impairment/hearing impairments are as academically gifted and talented as their peers without disabilities. Perhaps the most significantly affected academic areas for students with hearing impairments is the acquisition of literacy skills, which are based heavily on language development (Luckner, Sebald, Cooney, Young Muir 2006). Based on the foregoing this study aims at knowing the perceptions of students with hearing impairment towards inclusive education in Oyo State since most of the hearing impaired students attend regular schools at infancy.

Research

A descriptive survey research design was used to carry out the study. The population for the study comprised students with hearing impairment in Oyo State, Nigeria. One hundred and fifty students were randomly selected for the study. A questionnaire was used to collect data which contained 20-items on a five point likert scale to determine the perception of hearing impaired. Students towards inclusive education in Oyo State. The questionnaire was validated and 0.74 reliability coefficient was obtained after given it to the expert. The data gathered was analysed using percentage.

Result

From the analysis of data gathered, it was revealed that hearing impaired students have negative perception about inclusive education. Majority of the students with hearing impairment do not like the idea of inclusiveness. 80.5% of the students with hearing impairment prefer to be in separate schools than been educated alongside their hearing counterparts in the regular schools. 9.5% were willing to be in the regular schools as they believe that they tend to acquire more skills socially than when they are in the special school.

Recommendation

From the finding of this study, it may be concluded that hearing impaired students need to be see the importance of inclusive education. Based on this fact, this recommendation was made:

There is need for educational planners to organize seminar for hearing impaired students and their teachers, parent and caregivers to be able to see/understand the importance of inclusive education as the society itself is inclusive. The current trend in the education of persons with special needs is inclusive education hence persons/students with hearing impairment should not be left out of the universal trend.

Suggestion for future study

Based on the finding, there is need for further students to be extended to other states in Nigeria, to be able to determine other students with hearing impairment perception about inclusive education.

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Contact Information:
Emmanuel Olufemi Adeniyi
Federal College of Education (Special)
Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria
femifemi81@gmail.com
+2348060837811

About the author:
Emmanuel Olufemi Adeniyi is a seasoned Special Educator. He specializes in education and management of persons with hearing impairment. He is at present the Provost, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria. He has presented papers in local and international conferences.

POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: THE NEED FOR ADVOCACY AND TRANSITION EDUCATION

Heather Taylor Wizikowski

Civil rights legislation and social equity awareness, as well as advancements in assistive and informational technology, education and medicine have resulted in better outcomes for students with disabilities. The implementation of mainstreaming in US elementary and secondary schools has helped foster greater high school completion rates and expectations for postsecondary education for students with disabilities (Brinckerhoff, McGuire, & Shaw, 2002).

These positive outcomes create opportunities for better academic preparation for college and greater numbers of students with disabilities pursuing higher education (Burgstahler & Moore, 2009). The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, along with the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 increased the accessibility of postsecondary education for many students with disabilities (Crank & Deshler, 2001; National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Educational Supports [NCSPES], 2005). Within two decades, the percentage of full-time college freshmen with disabilities increased from 2.3% in 1978 to 9.8% in 1998 (Council for Learning Disabilities [CLD], n.d.). Current federal data place the number attending college at 11% (United States Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2009).

This quantitative study analyzed the relationships between student perceptions, self-advocacy awareness and confidence levels at two institutions of higher learning. One hundred and thirteen undergraduate students with disabilities completed an online survey. Descriptive and associative statistics were analyzed for knowledge and confidence of self-advocacy skills, and relationships between these variables and disclosure patterns. This study was student-centered, which departs from much of the current research that focuses on institutional practice and need. Two research questions guided this study:
1. What do postsecondary students with disabilities know about self-advocacy skills?
2. How confident are postsecondary students with disabilities using self-advocacy skills?

Students reported having an awareness of and confidence using self-advocacy skills, but have had little to no training in these skills. Students identified using self-advocacy skills confidently as going to the Disability Support Office to ask staff to intervene with instructors regarding accommodations and modifications. Students reported weak understanding of their legal rights, disability, and accommodations. Students also reported poor transition experiences from secondary to postsecondary education, a finding that matches current research. Overwhelmingly, students reported not being a part of transition planning at the secondary level and not having any information about what to expect at college in regards to their rights and responsibilities. Students who were diagnosed with a disability in college also reported having no self-advocacy or legal rights education available.

The results of this small-scale study suggest that transition planning at the secondary level must be purposeful in preparing students for four-year college settings when appropriate. Students need self-advocacy skills and disability awareness training before transitioning to postsecondary settings. Self-advocacy includes having a concept of purpose, thorough goal setting, plan development, being able to articulate personal learning needs, and persistence despite challenges. These concepts are crucial for

students with disabilities if they are to succeed in postsecondary education (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Current literature suggests that self-advocacy skills need to be explicitly taught to students, preferably at a young age. Too often, students with disabilities are supported using a dependency model in US elementary and high schools and don't develop the skills to advocate for their own learning needs (Brinckerhoff, McGuire, & Shaw, 2002). Then students transition to college where Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act require students to advocate for their own needs, a skill that most university students with disabilities are lacking.

Federal data show that 29% of students with disabilities who enroll in four-year colleges receive a degree compared with 42% of their typical peers (Sanford, et al., 2011). With the current graduation rate of students with disabilities, much more can be done to support the self-advocacy development of students with disabilities, both before and during their university years.

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Contact Information:
Heather Taylor Wizikowski
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
3083 Lakeview Court
Fullerton, CA 92835
hewizikowski@cpp.edu

About the Author:
Dr. Wizikowski is Assistant Professor of Special Education at California State University, Pomona. She earned her Ph.D from Claremont Graduate University and has 13 years experience as a special and general education teacher in US schools. Her research is focused on high incidence disabilities, transition, and teacher preparation in reading.

EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES TO CHILDREN WITH ATTENTION AND ACTIVITY DISORDERS ADHD, ADD AND LEARNING DISABILITIES

Hucik Jan
Hucikova Alena

Conceptual Framework and Background

School success of a pupil is affected not only by the extent of his/her disability, but it depends extremely on a teacher and how he/she acts while working with the pupil with disability and what the most appropriate methods of education he/she uses and how he/she evaluates the pupil.

The role of an educator, teacher, special education teacher and a parent of a child with ADHD, ADD and learning disabilities is an integral part of a comprehensive approach and it requires: to cooperate (concerted procedure); to anticipate problems that a pupil/child may have; to repeat instructions, to speak briefly and clearly; to praise a pupil/child for small successes frequently; to

focus on rewarding a pupil/child; to use immediate, frequent and adequate procedures for fixing required forms of behaviour, as well as for sanctions; to establish a system of rules (to rate and edit them, they should be closely followed by all parts); to divide tasks into smaller units which a pupil/child can handle, to focus on the possible success; to provide escape (a peaceful place) to a pupil; to maintain an adequate level of stimulation (Hucikova, Hucik, 2011).

It is usually required from the teacher of a pupil with specific, developmental learning disabilities to carry out regular consultations with parents, special education teachers, psychologists and other professionals. The acceptance of pupil's problems, arising from the specific learning and behaviour disabilities and respecting the specifics of his/her personality, lead to individualisation of teaching and learning methods, activities and pupil's assessment which cause the increase of the pupil's school success. Respecting and sensitive re-education of these pupils are, at the same time, forms of prevention of secondary inappropriate behaviours or a school failure.

The individualisation of education can include for example a fact that a new curriculum is presented to the pupil step by step and the sequence from simple to complex is kept; the pupil has sufficient time and opportunities to practice and learn the curriculum; the terms are explained in different contexts. When verifying knowledge, the teacher chooses which form is for the pupil more suitable (written, oral, practical) and during individual tasks assigned orally or in writing, the teacher always verifies if the pupil understands them (Hucikova, Hucik, 2011). If necessary, the teacher should consult the amount of the curriculum with a special education teacher, as well as to enable the pupil to create and use compensating aids and to teach him/her using them correctly.

Based on the analysis of educational documents, the aim of the article is to create a set of recommendations for teachers and parents, which could help them to connect the objectives and procedures in the education of pupils with specific learning and behavioural difficulties.

Research

Our recommendations for educational practice of special education teachers stem from the documents used by teachers experienced in education of children with ADHD – educational programmes ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 for pupils with communication impairment, for pupils with developmental attention disorders and developmental learning disorders as well as the Internal methodical material for school integration of pupils with special educational needs (Zaborska, 2014). We had to take into consideration the organic determinants of a child with ADHD (Train, 1997; Muller, 2001) while creating the recommendations.

Results

Based on the analyses, useful pieces of advice for a parent of a pupil with attention and activity disorders (ADD, ADHD) can be summarized as follows:

- to seek actively an expert assistance when solving difficulties of one's child and to cooperate with the teacher, the school as well as other professionals (psychologists, special education teachers, doctors, social workers) according to the needs of the pupil in the process of re-education, therapy, treatment, etc.
- not to see the teachers, psychologists, special education teachers, physicians and other experts as enemies, but to create a relationship of trust and understanding with them, based on the mutual respect of opinions, the performance of mutual conventions, acceptance recommendations and the active approach in the methods of treatment, re-education, compensation, therapy, etc.
- to try to perceive abilities, interests and needs of one's child in reality (not to satisfy parent's own unfulfilled interests through the child), always provide a child with sufficient time, adequate assistance and support to handle all learning tasks; to assign activities of the daily routine and abide them; to lay down appropriate rules, rewards and sanctions together with the child, respect them and be consistent, not to forget and change them and not to be formal; never ignore the difficulties and problems of the child; to deal with learning and behaviour difficulties as well as with lies, hurting, destroying things, verbal and physical aggressive behaviours towards other children or adults.

Recommendations

For a special education teacher practice when working with a child with ADHD, ADD and learning disabilities, it is necessary to check the gathered information about the child and not to make conclusions fast about the teachers, classmates and experts. Upbringing the child to become responsible for own performance in learning, behaviour and accepting the resulting consequences, and meantime honest, fair and rational performance towards the child is an important part of a teamwork of special education teachers and parents.

In the context of daily living activities, for the parent is the challenge to find time daily on what is the most important in the life of a parent, that is his/her own children – i.e. to help the children overcome learning difficulties adequately and encourage them to create an environment of trust and support.

Suggestions for Future Research

We recommend focusing on the creation of a wide range of standardised procedures for the education of pupils with

developmental learning and behaviours difficulties in the future research. The need for their experimental verification and continuous innovation to meet the current needs of education of these pupils is also linked to this issue.

This paper was supported by the *Slovak Research and Development Agency under contract No. APVV-0851-12.*

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Contact information:
Assoc. Prof. Jan Hucik, PhD.
Department of Social Work VSZaSP sv. Alzbety in Bratislava
Institute of Social Sciences and Health
Bl. Petra Gojdica in Presov
Jilemnickeho 1/A
080 01 Presov, Slovak Republic
e-mail: jan.hucik@gmail.com

About the Authors:
Assoc. Prof. Hucik Jan, Ph.D. is a lecturer, currently working at the *St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social* Sciences in Bratislava. He worked at the Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, University of Presov in Presov for ten years. As a part of the professional development, he has almost gone through all working positions while working with people with intellectual disabilities.

PhDr. Hucikova Alena is a professional member of staff – a special education teacher of the Centre of educational and psychological guidance and prevention in Liptovsky Mikulas. For twenty-four years, she worked as a speech therapist, a teacher, a deputy director of the compound institution for upbringing and education of children with intellectual disabilities from the age of three to the end of their professional training.

ADVOCATING FOR POLICY CHANGE

Laura W. Alexander, Ed.D.

Betty Wilson is a recipient of numerous awards and citations for her dedicated work as an active advocate relevant to change for people with physical and developmental disabilities in the United States and the International community. In 1990 Betty was honored with an appointment as the Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Mayor's Office on Disability by the Mayor of Los Angeles and currently serves as commissioner for people with disabilities for Los Angeles and the state of California. She is a participating member of the California State Civil Rights Committee Advisory Board to the US Civil Rights Committee.

Betty learned about advocating for policy change in her youth. Disabled with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis at the age of nine, she soon realized that she must advocate for herself. Her first advocacy began at the end of junior high school when she determined to access education as other children her age. She would not accept the school district's policy to attend the segregated school for students with physical disabilities. Betty assertively told the assistant principal that her physical disability should not be a cause for her to not attend her area high school. After the assistant principal presented her determination to the school board, the policy was changed. Betty learned at a young age that it is critical for people with disabilities to advocate for new policies or to initiate a change in policy.

Betty continued to advocate through high school and participated in regular physical education classes with her classmates. Her school building did not have provisions for persons with physical handicaps; however, she was allowed to take her time to walk the stairs to class and was given accommodations for isles seats. Betty was proficient academically and graduated from high school with straight As. Continuing her advanced education, Betty received a Bachelor of Arts and a Master's of Arts in Psychology from the University of California at Los Angeles and California State University, Los Angeles, respectively. As Betty states, "I was able to affect policy changed because I took charge of my life."

Becoming an adult, Betty began to see changes in the acceptance of people with disabilities. Silverstein (2000) notes, new paradigms of disability are emerging to "eliminate attitudes and institutional barriers that preclude persons with disabilities from participating fully in society's mainstream."

After completing her formal education Betty became active in the community. Harris, Owen, and De Ruiter (2012) state, "When people with disabilities engage in civic groups, this brings awareness to all aspects of disabilities and helps to promote change and integration into society." Barriers such as inaccessible buildings lack of assistive devices, providing safe environments plague the disabled environment. Betty has advocated and accomplished policy changes in her effort to eliminate obstructions for people with disabilities.

As Meleske (2014) captures, "What people with disabilities want people to know is, who I really am is a woman looking to make a difference and show people that the only limits there really are, are the ones we put on ourselves."

This also has been Betty's determination and focus. Some of her accomplishments are:
- Consultation to international governments and private industry relevant to civil rights protections, program and architectural access, and cultural diversity.
- Establishment of the first Department of Disability in any municipal government.
- Developed public-private partnerships to underwrite innovative programs for Barrier-Free Environments conference.
- Represented Los Angels City at international, national, and local government meetings on policies and issues.

Betty's involvement with local and state government has resulted with awards for:
- UN Distinguished Service Award – Medallion de Excellence, 1998
- Carol Schiller Award, 2001 – for outstanding contributions to the protection of civil rights presented by State of Department of Fair Employment and Housing and Employment Roundtable of Southern California.

Betty's presentations for policy change include:
- City of Seoul, Korea, Plenary Session Speaker, 2nd World Assembly for Women with Disabilities
- City of Moscow, Russia, Plenary Session Speaker and Panel Moderator, Third International Conference on Equal Rights - Equal Possibilities

Betty's research includes writing for journals and manuals.
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Betty Wilson, a remarkable woman, advocate, consultant, executive director, recipient of awards and honors, has not set limits on herself, but rather seeks to fulfill a life long commitment and goal to make a difference and enhance the lives of people with disabilities as she advocates for their needs.

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Contact Information :
Betty R. Wilson, M.A., Commissioner
City Of Los Angeles Commission On Disability
201 North Figueroa Street, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90012
(213) 202-2764 (Main)
www.Disability.LACity.org

About the Author:
Laura W. Alexander, Ed.D. is an educator with speech language therapy, teaching, and administrative expertise in K-12 and higher education. Her research interests include issues in education that affect learning for students with disabilities.

TEACHER AND FACULTY COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: A CASE STUDY

Shelly Meyers

Conceptual Framework and Background

The demands of high stakes testing and teacher accountability promote school districts to find high quality professional development and high quality research-based methodology help teachers and students move toward mastery of curricular standards. In school districts where students perform below proficiency, administrators and teachers recognize the importance of enhanced instruction in literacy and mathematics, with an emphasis on closing the achievement gap (Morgan, Williams, Clark, Hattenberg, Haupman, Kozel & Paris, 2013; Hornoff, 2008). The majority of students with disabilities included in general education classrooms fall into the non-proficient category when tested. Teachers seek educational alternatives, which according to studies on best instructional practices; include research-based programs and approaches (Campbell & Sweiss, 2010). The goals of the current study are based on three instructional theories and practices and include the following: (1) An educational mentoring partnerships with college faculty supports classroom teachers and results in improving teachers' practice; (2) The implementation of research based instructional strategies lead to improve students' academic performance in literacy and mathematics; and (3) Using varied formative assessment measures to monitor progress, provide direction for ongoing lesson design and leads to closing the achievement gap of low performing students.

The collaborative mentoring model used in this study provides school-wide job embedded professional development for teachers while increasing students' with disabilities competencies in literacy and math (Blamey, Meyer & Walpole, 2008). The value of the mentor in the classroom as an instructional resource reflects the growing need for experts to work side by side with teachers because of the accountability mandates in meeting the proficiency levels set by the state (Hirsh, 2012). Faculty mentors bring expertise in the use of student data to design instruction based on their specific areas of deficit (Reilly, 2005).

Research based teaching correlates highly with students' achievement in literacy and mathematics (Pufpaff & Yssel, 2010). The faculty and teachers assist students in their phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and comprehension through the incorporation of strategies that are proven effective for students of all attainment levels (Seo, Brownell, Bishop & Dingle, 2008). Teachers deliver the content explicitly; using directed and scripted resources, followed by cooperative learning groups and independent practice (Denton, Swanson & Mathes, 2007).

The role of formative assessment is the way in which the researchers document the influence of mentor partnerships and the effectiveness of research based strategies on students' achievement. As faculty and teachers are continually reminded of the role of high states testing and its relation to teacher accountability and student progress, the use of formative assessment as benchmarks guide teachers in designing particular instructional practice to move students toward mastery (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2008). In addition, formative assessment is beneficial to students because they receive feedback that enables them to reflect on their performance and respond with an understanding of what improvements they must demonstrate (Jenkins, 2010).

Research

The research question is as follows: Will collaboration between college faculty and teachers improve teachers' practice and students' literacy and math performance through the implementation of research-based instructional strategies? The participant sample includes four public school teachers in a southern region of New Jersey and their students who have disabilities. The student participants spend part of the school day in the general education classroom and are in a self-contained class for specialized instruction. Grade levels range from early elementary to early middle school.

College faculty targeted school districts whose students did not meet minimum proficiency levels in literacy and math and approached the school administrators offering to mentor teachers in the use of research-based programs. After teachers self-selected to participate in the study, faculty met with them to explain the rationale for the proposal. Then, teachers completed a survey on their own teaching practice and identified difficulties in addressing the skill deficits of their students, especially those with disabilities included in their classrooms. Next, faculty and teachers administered a universal screening instrument to the participating students that provided a baseline or starting point for instruction. Once the data was analyzed, the program began with weekly planning that led to faculty working side by side with teachers in the classroom to deliver instruction.

Results

The study is ongoing but there are preliminary data available. Thus far, faculty and teachers triangulated different data; teacher input from the surveys, pre-assessment data for the baseline and all informal formative assessments that were curricular based and included portfolio samples and projects as well as paper and pencil tests. The teacher responses indicated they had insufficient understanding of differences between strategies and skills. They were also unfamiliar with research-based methods and the usefulness of assessment data to drive instructional planning. After spending time with college faculty in their classrooms, teachers reported being better prepared to implement research-based strategies and using student data to inform instructional

decisions. Students showed progress in literacy however not so in math. Results suggested that students improved in general literacy skills such as identifying main idea, vocabulary usage and comprehension. The results in mathematics did not show significant improvement in computation or problem solving, which suggests to researchers the need for more intensive mathematics intervention.

Recommendations

College faculty and classroom teacher partnerships are effective in providing job embedded professional development. Teachers learn to use research-based strategies as well as assessment data as a means of instructional design. The planning and collaboration between college and school personnel presents opportunities for students who struggle with literacy and mathematics to receive high quality instruction that supports them in closing the gap on their missing skills (Roberts, Torgensen, Boardman & Scammacca, 2008).

Suggestions for Future Research

The study is ongoing and researchers, having considered the results of the data conclude that the use of research-based approaches to teaching are effective and will continue. The improvement in literacy indicates the needs of students are being met, however, must remain in place with the same intensity as in the past. Further emphasis on mathematics instruction is planned for the next phase of the study with even more attention paid to data analysis and individualized planning and implementation of lessons. Faculty and teachers have also discussed the challenge of being flexible and "thinking out of the box". Teacher accountability issues eliminate the willingness of many teachers to take risks in the classroom for fear of deviating from district- mandated curricula guides. Included in the next part of the study is working to facilitate teachers' confidence in incorporating non-traditional methods with the traditional as student progress is on the rise.

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Contact Information:
Shelly Meyers
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
Associate Professor of Education
School of Education
101 Vera King Farris Drive, Galloway, New Jersey 08205
shelly.meyers@stockton.edu

About the Author:
Shelly Meyers is an associate professor of education at Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. Teaching responsibilities include graduate level special education courses and research focuses on access to the general education curricula for students with disabilities and engagement with community partners in the education of students with disabilities.

ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS FOR QUALITATIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

John Oyundoyin, Ph.D.

Conceptual Framework and Background

Education is a basic right of all human being, and is the fundamental responsibility of any people-inclined government. Qualitative education in essence, is education geared towards meeting societal needs. It is education offered in its most appropriate forms, irrespective of the area of the individual's special need.

Intellectual Disability (ID) is a disability arising from delay in brain development during the developmental period and resulting in significant limitations in intellectual, social, emotional and behavioral adjustment of the individual so affected (Oyundoyin, 2013). Children with ID manifest language problems, poor memorization and formation processing, poor attraction, deficient emotional and social maturity, unusual and unwanted disruptive behavior, poor attention span; all coupled with poor intellectual functioning and below average intelligence (Smith, 2007).

Assessment of Individuals with Intellectual Disability

As the distinct category of each intellectual disability may not be guessed at first sight, assessment is a critical component for their classification and placement. The heterogeneous nature of this category of special needs makes it more imperative that assessment be done so as to determine the appropriate placement program for each category. Assessment in educational settings is a multifaceted process that involves far more than the administration of a test.

Reynolds, Zupanick, and Dombeck (2015), submitted that various types of standardized psychological tests are used during the assessment of I.D. Assessment of children with intellectual disability includes the use of appropriate tests such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Revised Fourth Edition (WISC- IV) to test for intellectual functioning of the child, and the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales to measure an individual's adaptive skills. According to Mangal (2007), intelligence test scores in terms of I. Q. are used not only for identifying or segregating individuals with subnormal intellectual capacities, but also for classifying the severity of their intellectual disability into various categories. Thereafter, a measure of adaptive behavior of the individuals should be carried out to measure how well the individual could live independent of support. Previously, an I.Q score of 70 or below was the recommended cut off score, however, the DSM5 (APA, 2013) has de-emphasized specified I.Q score. The intelligence quotient scores would yield a classification of intellectual disability into four distinct categories of mild (50-55 to approximately 70), moderate (35 -40 to 50-55), severe (20-25 to 35-40) and profound (below 20 -25).

Peculiarities of Intellectual Disability

For clarity of purpose, it is necessary to distinguish the characteristics behaviors of different categories of intellectual disability accordingly: children with mild intellectual disability show signs of delayed development early in life, and learn to walk, talk, feed, and toilet themselves one year later than the average. They usually have speech disturbances, and may be identified in schools as slow learners. As grown-ups they attain intellectual levels comparable to those of the average ten year old child.

Individuals with moderate I.D. usually appear clumsy, and suffer from motor in-coordination. Though they manage to speak, their rate of learning is too slow, and they are unable to do any work that requires memory or consistent attention, and cannot be expected to acquire the basic skills of reading and writing.
Individuals with severe I.D. never attain an intellectual level greater than that of the average four year old child, while individuals with profound I.D. cannot live independent of support.

Assessment and Qualitative Education for Children with Intellectual Disability

As most students with intellectual disabilities have mild disabilities (Smith, 2007), their learning goals are often similar to those of their peers without special needs, teachers would have to adapt their techniques and adjust the curriculum somewhat to accommodate their special learning needs. These students could be helped by having their worksheets modified, provided with more detailed instructions about how assignments are to be completed and have students' evaluate themselves / actively participate on the evaluation process. Making accommodations to the general education curriculum is not sufficient, as many students with intellectual disability will require a different curriculum that includes daily living skills, so that living term goal of independent living can be met.

Persons with moderate intellectual disability may not profit from regular instruction/education, but would profit from instructions based on improving their functional ability. They can benefit from sustained appropriate training and education in special schools in functional levels of reading, writing, arithmetic, self help and vocational skills.

Persons with severe intellectual disability may be able to learn a few self-help skills such as feeding and toileting. They may also

be able to learn a few 'sign words' such as "gents", "ladies", "wait", etc. The severely intellectual disability may be brought to an awareness of common dangers. They are however largely dependent and may require life-long supervision.

For persons with profound intellectual disability, the condition is so serious physically and intellectually that self awareness or any measure of independent living is unimaginable. They require lifelong care in intellectual disability deficiency hospitals and homes.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, non-assessment would imply assumption that all intellectual disability cases are the same, and should be lumped together, probably in restricted homes for continued support. This would translate to wrong placement and improper education as persons with mild intellectual disability who could profit from remedial and general educations with continued support will not be able to live up to their functional abilities.

Recommendations

Since students with intellectual disability can only be identified by assessing their intellectual functioning and adaptive skills therefore, an assessment that individual's need for support should be conducted to determine the interventions and the intensity of services required.

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Contact Information:
John Oyundoyin, Ph.D.
Department of Special Education
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
P.M.B.1(001) University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
johnoyundoyin@gmail.com/ or john.oyundoyin@mail.ui.edu.ng

About the Author
Dr. John O. Oyundoyin is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Special Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He majors in the education of individuals with intellectual disability, and is interested in rehabilitation and interventions among children and adolescents with intellectual disability, both singly and as a co-morbid disorder.

TEACHERS' VIEWS ON INCLUSION IN REGULAR SCHOOLS IN ILORIN WEST, KWARA, NIGERIA

Jonathan Omoniyi Olukotun

Conceptual Framework and Background

For two decades, children and youth with disabilities learned in Special schools that typically segregated them from other students who were not disabled. This provision was entrenched in the National Policy on Education (1977). The blue print on education was revised to allow for integration (FRN, 1988), where learners with disabilities were mainstreamed into the general education school, but in a separate class or a special unit. This educational program continued in Nigeria until 2004 when the Federal Government of Nigeria in her National Policy on education (2004) adopted inclusion of children and youth with disabilities into the general education schools. The adoption of inclusive education for children and youth living with disabilities, emotional/behavior disorders and health related problems in Nigeria is sequel to the following:

- United Nations declaration on Education for All (EFA, 1990), Jomtien, Thailand
- United Nations declaration on Standard Rules on the Equalization of opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and
- The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994).

As laudable as inclusive educational program appears, some classroom teachers in the general education schools of study were

skeptical in their opinions. Such teachers perceived inclusive education with mixed feelings. Many of the teachers wondered if general education school setting would be conducive for pupils with disabilities and emotional/behavior disorders. Some were of the opinion that learners with special needs in the general education school would face diversely unprecedented difficulties of physical environmental variables. Physical environment of the general education school includes the physical surrounding, terrain and landscape of the school compound, infrastructures including buildings and other architectural structures. Some claimed that students without disabilities might be indifferent in their interpersonal relationship with those living with disabilities. Other variables considered as impediment within learning environment in the general education school are population density, extraneous noise, ventilation, physical space and play ground for recreation and relaxation. The federal government of Nigeria in her commitment to funding education did not help matters either. For instance, less that 20% of her total annual budget was allocated to education in recent years against UNESCO recommendation.

Results

Results of the findings were expressed in percentage scores. It was found out from the first three research questions/statements that majority of the teachers favored inclusion of pupils with disabilities into the general education school system. Eighty four percent were against segregation. Ninety four percent agreed that inclusive school system will enhance social interaction among pupils with disabilities and their counterparts without disabilities. 95% agreed to total adoption of inclusive education for learners with disabilities. This study however discovered that teachers in the general education classes were not trained to teach and render services to children with disabilities in and outside the classroom (questions 4-6). Only 52 respondents representing 31.70% out of a total 164 respondents have idea of high incidence disabilities. Hundred respondents (60.98%) attested to the fact that they were not trained to teach children with disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders. One hundred and twenty one teachers (73.79%) claimed that they were not skilled to render services to children with EBD. On the issue of physical environment of the general education schools, 96 teachers (58.54) were of the opinion that the existing general education inclusive classrooms were not friendly to learner with special needs. One hundred and forty five teachers (88.42%) confessed that they could not cope with the challenges of disabilities and EBD. Eighty nine respondents (54.27) believed that in-service training is necessary for them. Whereas majority of the respondents wanted full inclusion of learners with disabilities into the general education classroom, 98 teachers (59.75) were of the opinion that the program was not feasible because of non-implementation of the blue-print on the program.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the federal and state governments of Nigeria fully implement the National policy on education (2008) to make inclusive education more meaningful and realizable. Teachers in the general education schools should be given in-service training to acquire teaching methodologies and coping strategies for working with children with special needs in the classroom. Owners of schools for inclusion of children with disabilities must ensure safety of the pupils while in school. Good access road and landscape, good infrastructures including ramps within the environment must be ensured.

Suggestion for Future Research

The present research study found out that most general education schools do not support persons with special needs to learn effectively. Future research could look at environmental predisposing factors for effective learning in inclusive general education schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

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Contact Information:
Jonathan Omoniyi Olukotun
Department of Special Education
College of Education, Kwara State University, Malete.
PMB 1530, Ilorin. Nigeria.
E-mail: olukotunniyi@yahoo.com
Tel: +2348036270680

About the Author:
Dr. Jonathan Omoniyi Olukotun has 25 years University teaching experience. He has published many scholarly researched papers

in local and international journals. He has attended and presented papers in several international conferences on Special needs education. Dr. Olukotun's research interest focuses on "high incidence disabilities in inclusive general education classroom.

THE SOLUTION FOCUSED APPROACH AS THE WAY OF DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SKILLS OF PUPILS (NOT ONLY) IN TERMS OF SCHOOL INCLUSION

Anna Semanova
Ladislav Hornak

Conceptual Framework and Background

Currently, within the scope of special and inclusive education, it is preferred the need of unconditional acceptance of a pupil and his/her behaviour, whereby the solution of his/her educational or pedagogical problems and difficulties should be based on esteem and cooperation for change (Hornakova, 2010, In: Lechta Ed.). In terms of these tendencies, working with children and adolescents is based on the tools of the Solution focused brief therapy, which was developed and described by Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg, along with their colleagues in Milwakee (1988, 1990) as a new treatment model (Berg, 2013).

A key basis of this approach is a holistic perspective towards the pupil, which is based on the premise that the pupil is more than just a group of problems, which are the reason for his/her special education care. The main focus is not on the examination of the problem causes, but rather on searching for solutions. To achieve that the pupil would be successful in solving his/her educational problems and difficulties, it is important to rely on his/her own sources, resources and ideas. Educator as a guide and an assistant in the process of solution only activates and stimulates the pupil's areas (strengths), which the pupil is not currently aware of. They were already proven in the past while overcoming difficulties, so the pupil is also competent in the mentioned areas (strengths). On that basis, it is also possible to formulate the ways of addressing the current problem or difficulty. This approach supports more equal communication with the pupil and eliminates expert and mandatory teacher position, or other professional. In the educational process, it is possible to apply the tools to the Solution focused approach, and also as a way of preventing negative phenomena in classrooms or educational groups of pupils at the age of 10-12, where the upper age level is not limited.

Research

In the next section we present, according to Berg and Shilts (2004), basic tools to deal with the solution focused approach that can be used by educators and other professionals in educational process daily.

Compliments and evaluation are fundamental principles of the Solution focused approach. It is always possible to find small or big successes each pupil can be appreciated for. They represent a useful instrument in redefining the pupil's personality, which he/she is becoming. Moreover, these are variables indicating the first changes in the resolution process. At the same time, thanks to them a positive and collaborative relationship with the teacher is built. For an appropriate tool of praise and assessment we consider not only word appraisal in the educational process, but also a form of personal letters addressed to pupils or letters and phone calls addressed to their parents. The letter should describe good things you have heard or experienced during your work with the child, and what is worth remembering. An interview with parents, whether personal or telephone, should always start with a few compliments and appraisals of their child, by which we also express merits in their care and education, and encourage them to engage actively and gladly in school activities and in the development of their children's competences.

The Scale of class/personal success is one of the ways how to measure and quantify success. We can also use it effectively both individually and collectively in the classroom. To keep the scale simple and clear, it is recommended to range from 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest level and 10 the level of the solution achievement. It is an ideal auxiliary tool also used to express feelings of children, especially of those pupils, who use concrete thinking, and whose language skills are not well developed. The Scale can take different forms depending on the age of the pupil. It may be a piece of string placed on the ground, a tower of success built of blocks or balloons. At the beginning of working with the Scale, it is important to define endpoints of the Scale, namely 1 and 10. It is also suitable to use so-called circular questions by which we ask the pupil how other people judge him/her (e.g. Imagine that I would ask your best friend or mom to assess you. On which number from the Scale would they locate you?). If the pupil chooses a low number on the Scale (1, 2) then we ask him/her about the reason why he/she is not located on a lower number (1, 0, -1) on the Scale.

Negotiating good targets. To solve a problem or difficulty the pupil should know what he/she wants to achieve or what he/she seeks what is represented by the number 10 on the Scale. The correct formulation which fulfils several conditions, is an important prerequisite for achieving it. The aim should be *simple, small and achievable*, what means that it should be based on the real possibilities and conditions. The aim should be *formulated positively*, what means that we never formulate the aim as the absence of something (e.g. unwanted behaviour) but always as a positive alternative of any behaviour. We reach the aim by defining the question: "So what will you do instead?" The more specific and precise the expressed alternative is, the easier the pupil will be able to apply it to the particular moment.

The aim should be *significant to the pupil as well as to the teacher*. The aim should represent something what will be good and beneficial for his/her interaction with peers and teachers, what he/she will be willing to expand his/her energy and efforts on. This

stems from the above mentioned assumptions about the pupil. The aim should be *measurable and concrete*. The path to reach the aim should be possible to crotch so that we would be able to record any change towards the aim. It is, therefore, important to ground the aim on behaviour (What will you do?), in a particular situation ("Where, in what situations will you do that?") and it should have a social character ("How will other people behave?"; "How will other people recognize it?"). At the same time, every change should be adequately appreciated and visualized on the Scale.

Conclusion

It is not difficult to learn the above mentioned tools of the Solution focused approach, nor apply them subsequently to the special education practice. Moreover, they are significantly effective in the educational process, not only in preventing and solving problems or difficulties of pupils, but also in developing their social and communication skills, which are one of the most important prerequisites for successful adaptation and socialisation.

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Contact information:
Anna Semanova
Ladislav Hornak
University of Presov in Presov
Faculty of Education
17. novembra 15
080 01 Presov
Slovakia
anna.semanova@pf.unipo.sk
ladislav.hornak@pf.unipo.sk

About the Authors:
Anna Semanova – she is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Special Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Presov in Presov. She gained her Master´s degree in elementary education and education of the psychosocially disturbed. She focuses on the research related to the problems of education, re-education and social reintegration of individuals with behavioral and psychosocial disturbances in terms of inclusive and segregated education.

Ladislav Hornak – he is an associate professor at the Department of Special Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Presov in Presov. He deals with the issue of education of Roma pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, sexuality, partnership and sexual education of people with intellectual disabilities, the basic pedagogy of mentally handicapped people, the theory of teaching and research methods in special education.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELF-CONCEPT OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Shahida Sajjad

Conceptual Framework and Background

Self-concept is value that an individual places on his or her own characteristics, qualities, abilities, and actions (Woolfolk, 2001). Individuals with high self-concept have confidence to make decisions, expectations for successful outcomes, and relationships that are characterized by respect and dignity (Tuttle and Tuttle, 2004).

The self-concept is developed from different sources including bu not confined to; self image, self-confidence, social interaction, and family life. Self-image is the way we look at the image of ourselves that others reveal e.g. how friendly or how assertive we are especially to those with whom we interact more like our parents, teachers, friends, partners, colleagues at work etc. Social image is developed through social interaction. Self-confidence is the inner feeling about our worth and value. Developing self

confidence is important for everyone. When students with disabilities learn to self-manage, they are more likely to rely on themselves than others for decision-making (Margaret**,** 2006). This study will provide awareness in parents, teacher and community and most importantly among hearing impaired persons about the importance of positive self-concept for a successful and happy life.

Research

This study was conducted to investigate the self concept of 15 male and 15 female students with hearing impairments selected through purposive sampling. The data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire having twelve closed ended questions and the results were analyzed through percentage method on a three point scale. The self concept of these students was measured through such domains as; their self image, self-confidence, social interaction and family life.

The *self-image* was reflected through their willingness for grooming when they are going outside, occasions when they were admired by the people when they were well groomed, and their willingness to be appreciated by others. The *Self-confidence* was reflected through their decision making ability, their feelings of happiness when in different gatherings, their hesitation in taking initiative to talk to other people specially while interacting with opposite sex. The *social interaction* was measured through their hesitation in taking initiative to talk to other people and talking to people of opposite sex. The *family life* was indicated by their expectations to live in future with their parents and siblings, helping their parents financially, advice given by them to their family members when their family faced a difficult situation and providing help to their parents in their routine tasks.

Results

Researchers always tend to find out the effects of deafness on self-concept and self-esteem (Bat-Chava, 2000; Ruiz, 2000). Our study concludes that female students were taking more care about their grooming as compared to male students but there was no significant difference between male and female students about having sense of appreciation and they both had a willingness to be admired by people but they were only sometimes admired by the people when they were well groomed. Cambra (2009) stated that during the building of self-concept, one's self-perception is influenced by attitudes and levels of acceptance by other people.

Self-confidence

Our study reveals that mostly females were dependent on their parents showing their lack of self confidence where as majority of the males were more confident than females as the majority of them make their decision on their own. Margaret (2006) also found that students with disabilities can learn to self-manage, when they are making decisions on their own.

Social Interaction

The feeling of belonging to social communities is an important resource for one's own life project (Sen, 2006). Social relationships that work very well can contribute to a health-promoting lifestyle (Cohen, Underwood, & Gottlieb, 2000). Both male and female students felt happy when they were in the gathering of students with hearing impairment. Stinson and Whitmore (2000) also reported the same results.

The majority of the female students sometimes felt hesitation in taking initiative to talk to other people in contrast to most of the male students who never felt hesitation in taking initiative to talk to other people. Both feel hesitation during interaction with opposite sex either able bodied or hearing impaired but the percentage of male was low as compared to female.

Family Life

A study by Desselle (1994) revealed a positive connection between the form of communication used by the parents with their child and the level of the child's self-esteem. Our study found that majority of the female and male students thought that; they should live in future with their parents and siblings, and they should financially help their parents but the percentage of male was higher as compared to female. The majority of the male students were giving advice to their family members when their family faced difficult situation where as majority of the females was not doing so. The majority of the male and female students were helping their parents in their routine task but the percentage of female was higher as compared to male reflecting more sense of responsibility at the end of female.

Recommendations

Students with hearing impairments need to learn to use a total communication approach to interact with peers, family members, and co-workers etc. The adolescents with hearing impairment should be taught about manners and forming friendships as early as possible. Parents need counseling sessions to develop and enhance self-confidence in their children with disability.

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Contact Information:
Prof. Dr. Shahida Sajjad
Dean Faculty of Education
Department of Education
Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science &Technology, Karachi, Pakistan
shahida_sajjad75270@yahoo.com

About the Author:
Shahida Sajjad is a teacher and supervisor of M.Phil and PhD students in Education, Teachers' Education and Special Education. She is writer of books "Audiology" and "Vocational training programs for the persons with disabilities". She is an inspirational speaker, trained thousands of professionals, and presented research papers in many countries that are published in National and International research journals.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN EU INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Anna Zamkowska

Introduction

The inclusion movement is not one clear concept, but rather a set of different, sometimes contradictory, ideas on how inclusive education should be organized and students with special educational needs (SEN) supported. The proponents of the concept of inclusion as a "moral imperative" stand against providing extra support. They hold that there are more similarities between SEN students and others than there are differences. Therefore, no special teaching is needed by any, and good teachers can use the same basic techniques to meet the needs of all students, making only some adjustments for individual needs. Identifying students' special needs and providing them with special support leads to their labeling and segregation. On the contrary, supporters of necessary evaluation of inclusion effects approach believe that special needs should be clearly identified and met by special educational approaches to ensure quality instruction appropriate for these needs (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). In order to include every student in the nearby school, adequate adjustments have to be made in the school environment upon careful analysis of the support already available and that which is needed in addition. Following this option, researchers propose different classifications and models of supporting SEN students in inclusive settings (Westwood, 2002; Zamkowska, 2009). The model proposed in this paper is based on U. Bronfenbrenner's (Berger, 2012) Human Ecology Theory, A. Zamkowska's (2009) model of educational support for students with intellectual disabilities and the latest Report on Special Education Needs Provision within Mainstream Education (Eurypedia, 2013). A deductive approach to the analysis has been applied, starting from analyzing the macrosystem and gradually moving to the microsystem. It should be noted that both the systems as well as their elements do not exist independently; they are interdependent. Furthermore, it is not possible to precisely attribute each element to only one system.

Systematic approach to special educational support in EU countries

The approach presented below consists of four out of five systems, described by U. Bronfenbrenner. Various forms of support ascribed to each system have been illustrated by the examples from different EU countries provided in the Eurypedia Report.

The macrosystem is based on social and cultural conventions, which have been changing in the process of historical development. It concerns the wider context of social support and consists of a system of beliefs and social attitudes regarding

individuals with disabilities, traditional and contemporary views on the education of persons with disabilities, special education tradition and the current political and legal system of education and services available for persons with disabilities. The macrosystem influences the place of each country in the process towards inclusion. Most EU countries are developing a continuum of services between special schools and mainstream (e.g., Austria, Belgium), while only a few are focused mainly on educating children within the mainstream (e.g., Italy, Spain, Greece).

The egzosystem of educational support includes the level of cooperation between the school and other schools, supporting institutions and local authorities. Inter-institutional cooperation enables the development of a support network. Cooperation between schools is usually informal, but may also be formal, based on mutual agreements, especially in those countries where it is recommended by the educational law (i.e., England, Ireland and the Netherlands) (Westwood, 2002).

Positive results of introducing collaboration networks are reported in England, Ireland and the Netherlands. Since 1 August 2014 mainstream schools and special schools in the Netherlands have formed regional consortia to ensure that all children can be placed in the school that best meets their needs. Groups of cooperative school boards decide on the sort of guidance that will be available. Resources will be allocated to the regional consortia, responsible for deploying the funds to support special needs students in mainstream education.

In some EU countries (e.g. in Austria, Portugal, Sweden, Bulgaria, Greece, Malta) the coordination of support has been ascribed to former special schools transformed into resource centers for inclusion. In Austria, special educational centers, usually located at special schools, and the district school board have to share responsibility for regional coordination of special educational measures. Special educational centers are obliged to provide: expert opinions related to SEN, which form the basis for identifying special educational needs by the district school board; special educational competence transfer; safeguarding of special educational support quality; advice and support of teachers and parents; and the provision of material and staff resources to assist compulsory schools in their support of children with SEN.

The mezosystem can be described as a school system including the following elements: school support network, a model of support, school work program for students with SEN and school climate focused on their social integration. The school support network is usually coordinated by support teams and/or Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). The support teams are developed to provide a suitable organizational structure to enhance cooperation between mainstream teachers and other professionals mainly for making a multidisciplinary assessment of SEN students' needs and abilities, developing and monitoring the Individual Educational Plans. In the UK mainstream schools must designate a member of the teaching staff to act as the SENCO. The SENCO is responsible for a whole set of different activities concerning mainly operation of the school's SEN policy, liaising with different partners, advising fellow teachers and coordinating provision for students with SEN.

The microsystem concerns the class level with particular emphasis on teacher-student and student-student relationships. The main source of support at this level is a competent teacher, special education teacher, teaching assistant, parents and volunteers. Support may be provided in different ways: in or outside the classroom, during a lesson in class or during class taking place outside of the classroom (resource room model), directly by the professional or indirectly by a teacher consulting a specialist. The most common form of support on the class level is developing the Individual Educational Plan (IEP). In some countries the extra person may assist the mainstream teacher. It is usually a qualified support teacher (Italy, Poland), personal assistant (Czech Republic) or Learning Support Assistant (LSA). While a support teacher has received initial training in special education and participates in all the educational activities concerning planning and assessment, the personal assistant is not a professional (provides pupils with social services, e.g. with caring of themselves, with travelling to a school, etc.). The LSA, employed in the UK and Malta, plays a more educational role assisting students with SEN in the classroom on a one-to-one basis or on a shared basis depending on the students' needs. They provide additional support to enhance SEN students' learning experience and maintain their motivation. In the UK, a higher level teaching assistant, who has to meet national standards, may cover planned absences and allow teachers time to plan and mark.

Conclusion

The system of educational support is well developed in EU countries offering different models of support available at all levels. The main similarities between countries concern two aspects: 1) developing systematic approach ("a whole school approach", continuum of services), and 2) developing cooperation at all levels (consortia, support team, mainstream teacher- support teacher/teaching assistant). The system varies across the countries, e.g. SENCO, teacher and teaching assistant are the main source of support in the UK, while in Poland a support team, and a teacher-special educator duet play this role.

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Contact Information:
Anna Zamkowska
University of Technology and Humanities in Radom, Poland
Faculty of Philology and Pedagogy
Department of Pedagogy and Psychology
Malczewskiego 22, 26-600 Radom
a.zamkowska@uthrad.pl

About the Author:
Anna Zamkowska is a professor at the University of Technology and Humanities in Radom, and head of Department of Pedagogy and Psychology. Her interest concerns systems of educating students with SEN in the European Union, educational support provided in various educational settings and cooperation of partners supporting students with SEN.

A SURVEY OF DEAF CULTURE AWARENESS IN CHINA

Lijiao Huang

Background and Literature Review

The first school for the Deaf in China was set up by an American priest in Shandong Province in 1887. In the year of 1949, the PRC government took over those schools and included them in the public education system. Most people got used to saying "deaf and dumb"; Just in recent years, the language surrounding deafness started to change to, "people with hearing impairment," "people who are deaf," or "people who are hard of hearing." Since 1954, most schools for the Deaf in mainland China used the oral teaching method. With huge influence of the oral approach, sign supported Chinese is the main instructional language (except in a few bilingual and bicultural experimental schools). In most schools for the deaf in China, teachers' instruction language is sign supported Chinese and oral Chinese because natural sign language and deaf culture have not been recognized by the whole society, including teachers who teach students with hearing impairments. Meanwhile, Sign language has not been recognized as a real sign language in the whole nation yet, even people who are deaf and teachers in deaf schools do not recognize sign language and deaf culture. This kind of perspective negatively affects education for the Deaf in China and also has strong connotations on deaf students' identity.

Only a few researchers' studied Chinese sign language as a real language. A linguist, Qunhu Gong, issued several articles which confirmed Chinese Sign language was a real language and summarized some characteristics of it with the linguistic approach. Gong's (2009) paper tried to clarify some questions concerning deaf bilingualism with linguistic analysis of Chinese and Chinese both as target language of acquisition and as language of instruction in deaf education.

This paper discusses the importance and necessity of carrying out research on deaf culture in Chinese mainland through reviewing how to define deaf culture and major process in deaf culture research in the world. Huang (2014) also confirmed Sign language is the first language for the deaf and their spoken and written language is acquired as a second language based on theories on second language acquisition. Respecting deaf people's language and culture，and understanding theories about their first language and their acquisition of second language are to be heeded by educators who work with deaf students. Following the rules of second language acquisition is the inherent need for language teaching in schools for the deaf as well as a reflection of differentiated teaching.

Research

A questionnaire titled *Survey of Instruction in School For the Deaf* was sent to 257 deaf students at colleges and 235 hearing teachers at deaf schools in the mainland of China. To ensure that the survey had content validity, there was pretest processed by two teachers at a school for the Deaf in Dalian, Liaoning Province. They reviewed the questionnaire and recommended changes. Besides, a senior professor of Deaf education reviewed and gave suggestions. The survey consisted of 22 questions relating to recognition of sign language, recognition of oral teaching at deaf school, identity to deaf culture and efficiency of communication between students and teachers at schools for the deaf. All the data was analyzed by SPSS.

Results

1. Most teachers and deaf students have no idea or not sure what the differences are about real sign language and sign supported Chinese. Only 7.6% deaf college students and 9.3% of hearing teachers stated they knew the difference between natural sign language and sign supported Chinese.

2. Low recognition to Deaf culture. Only 7% hearing teachers got higher score on Deaf culture, which means most teachers do not take sign language and other aspects of it as culture. Meanwhile, higher score group consider sign language play more important role in teaching.

3. Level of teachers' recognition on Deaf culture lower than deaf students. Hearing teachers have higher recognition than deaf students do. It is interesting that Deaf students give more credit to oral teaching. That means many Deaf students support oral language as instructional method in the classroom. Both level of significance of difference are less than .01. Besides, Teachers and students admit communication is not as effective as expected and agree on that sign language play essential role at deaf schools' instruction.

4. "Lower score" and "higher score" on identity in deaf students are both low in frequency. Higher score only 14 among 239, approximately 6%. Lower score is 26 among 239, almost 11%. It means most deaf students are vague about Deaf culture. However, the higher score group kind of deny the oral approach in deaf school instruction and their expectation on communication between hearing teachers and deaf students is higher. The higher score group and lower score group both agree on essential role of sign language at deaf schools.

Summary

This philosophy of oral approach seems to reduce the inequality between deaf people with hearing people, actually it enhances gap in two groups. This research doubts current compulsory deaf school education by criticizing the medical view of deafness in school field: isolating deaf students from normal human beings by putting oral teaching on the top target list, which devotes to make deaf students become hearing people or near to be hearing through learning spoken language. However, few people care about deaf students' feelings and experience on what is happening in school for the deaf.

The second major finding is that the Oral approach is associated with lower self-esteem and cultural identity to deaf students. Lastly, Sign language is the most essential factor of deaf culture, which combines deaf people in the whole society, connecting deaf people and hearing people as communicating tool meanwhile. Recognizing sign language's linguistic and social status somehow means recognizing cultural identity of deaf people that is where social inequality between deaf people and hearing people in Concept field roots in.

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Contact Information:
Lijiao Huang
Liaoning Normal University, Faculty of Education
Department of Special Education
Dalian City, Liaoning Province, 116029
P.R China
lqhuang@163.com

About the Author
Huang is an assistant professor in the department of Special Education, school of Education, Liaoning Normal University , Dalian, China. 116029

POSSIBILITIES TO SUPPORT THE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF WITH DISABILITIES

Bernadeta Szczupał

Students with various degrees of disability have been undertaking studies at the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw (Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej – APS in the Polish abbreviation). In the academic year 2004/2005 the

Office for the Disabled (Biuro ds. Osób Niepełnosprawnych) was established in the APS, with the task of carrying out the actions aimed at equalization of educational opportunities of students with disability (appropriate adaptation of forms of studying and exams without lowering substantive requirements), and assisting them in the job market. The main objective of the Office is providing aid to the disabled and chronically ill candidates, students and graduates through ensuring the possibility of their full and active participation in didactic courses (particularly the access to information and literature), acting in favor of liquidation of architectonic barriers and transport co-ordination, as well as consulting in making decision relating to their professional development issues (Wojtasiak, 2008).

Due to the introduction of the integration education system principles the number of youth deciding to undertake studies at APS grows on regular basis, though unfortunately, not all graduates are successful to find employment in their fields of training. The multitude of the barriers faced in educator's profession by people with disabilities determines to a large extent, their professional passivity and reluctance to undertake new attempts of employment. This situation is caused by non-availability of a good system of monitoring the disabled graduate's career, long-term system of their support in undertaking professional decision and appropriate conditions for employment by environmental services, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and governmental agencies (Gorczycka & Kanasz, 2014).

We should underline in this place the importance of competence in finding jobs and—first of all—proper professional guidance (both in the stage of choosing the profession, during the studies, and upon leaving higher education). In the absence of such guidance, mistakes can be made in choosing majors of the studies, specialization and professional future vision (e.g. selecting a profession in spite of dysfunction, excluding a given type of work). The belief in exceptional importance of university education as the way for solving the life problems is equally delusive (the effect of defensive attitudes of the parents, often omitting the importance of disability consequences) (Rzedzicka, 2006).

It is obvious that the possibilities of employment and significance of educator activity shall grow in the coming years; therefore, there is demand for professionals with high qualifications. We should, however, ask a question whether all candidates to this profession have the necessary attributes, corresponding to special educator personality paradigms: humanity, responsibility, self-education, and authority. In addition to necessary features of personality (such as empathy, creativity, tolerance, patience, appropriate knowledge and expertise), the educator should be oriented to constant deepening of his/her knowledge and gathering professional experience, he/she should also choose his/her profession in harmony with herself/himself, with his/her own nature (Szczupał, 2012).

The most valuable type of potential student of pedagogy is a person, who has already been acquainted with special educator job when he/she was supporting persons with disability (e.g., being a volunteer), has necessary knowledge as regards conditions and hinders occurring in this profession. Unfortunately, the recruitment procedure prevents eliminating the candidates not suitable for this profession. The solution would be an obligatory exam on basic knowledge in special education, mandatory professional knowledge tests (based on personality features of special educator) and an interview.

Many people with disability, who graduate from educational studies, take up any offered job; the persons who succeed to obtain the work corresponding to their education are the real exception. Unfortunately, detailed data on the careers of graduates with disability are unavailable. The Academy of Special Education did not carry out any scientific research as regards the careers of its graduates with disabilities; hence, there is no information about the number of employees and about the barriers that they faced in their professional life (Szczupał, 2006).

Preparing graduates with disabilities for employment includes, among others, shaping the students' readiness for permanent professional improvement, stimulating their creativity and ability to adapt to changes in the job market through training, (including the problems of job market audits), creative use of their competencies in professional life, building a brand in the job market and professional preparation to effective presentation during the interview. Great importance is also assigned to co-operation with students' families, shaping their proper attitudes, making them aware of the threats resulting from an overprotective attitude (Wojtasiak, 2008).

In addition to the occupational advisory system existing in the Academy of Special Education, combined with extensive support of persons with disability, another important factor is running scientific research in the different areas of professional competence (including monitoring of the graduate career), introducing new forms of work in professions relating to education (flexible forms of employment, probations, tele-work etc.), as well as promotion of employing the educators with disability (both in the country and at the local environment levels).

The way to liquidate social barriers lies in changing the stereotypes and negative attitudes: wide education of society should be based on perceiving the persons with disability within the context of their potential, abilities and predispositions. The education system, adapted to changes in the labor market, has to enable the persons with disability equalizing their life chances in regional, national and European dimension, and the studies in education—in addition to fulfilling autotelic functions, raising the status and creating chances for social contacts – should lead to getting a job in a knowingly selected profession, corresponding to given person predispositions and potential.

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Contact Information:
Bernadeta Szczupał
Academy of Special Education in Warsaw
40 Szczęśliwicka Str.
02-353 Warszawa, Poland
e- mail: b.szczupal@wp.pl

About the Author:
Bernadeta Szczupał is academic teacher (associate professor), employed at the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw, Poland. Her scientific and research activity relates mainly to psychological and social functioning of youth with motor disability - their interest, value system, feeling of loneliness and social and professional rehabilitation.

ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT TOWARDS COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE IN IBADAN, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

Adebomi M. Oyewumi

Background to the Study

Computers are one of the technologies used in conveying, manipulation and storage of data by electronic means, they provide an array of powerful tools that may help in transforming the present teacher-centered and text-bound classrooms into rich, student-focused, interactive knowledge environments. In this age of computer revolution, computer literacy forms the basis for effective teaching and learning process for both students with hearing impairment and their hearing peers. Hearing loss is the greatest handicap which revolves around the development of communication skills and hearing loss poses the biggest challenge when children with hearing impairment participate in regular classroom programs (Oyewumi, 2013). Children with hearing loss who are language delayed and are inept in language processing may suffer from social isolation due to their lack of linguistic proficiency. Therefore, the educational outcomes for students with hearing impairment suffer a great deal and have not been parallel to those of their hearing peers (Ademokoya & Oyewumi, 2001).

Computer interaction is an integral part of most academic activities. In other words, attitude towards computer use also remain an important issue that must not be neglected by stakeholders in the education of persons with hearing impairment. The learner attitude towards computer measures a person's capabilities in effective learning and could have a significant influence on the cognitive development and application in psychosocial well-being of persons with hearing loss. A person's attitude toward a computer is influenced by a variety of factors such as computer confidence (Teo, 2008), computer anxiety or comfort, age and gender (Kutluca, 2010), subject area and years of computer usage, Cavas et al. (2010), gender, age, computer ownership at home, and computer experience.

Perceiving the usefulness of computer and feeling confident in using it will lead to more positive attitudes. Garland and Noyes (2005) found that confidence correlate positively with computer attitude, whereas perceived usefulness is positively correlated with computer attitude. Computer use has been associated largely with males than females in recent times. There is a significant body of evidence supporting the notion that gender plays a vital role in actual computer integration. Teo (2008) did not find statistically significant gender differences. There is a paucity of research on the attitude of students with disabilities towards computer and internet usage in Nigeria. Therefore, this study will determine the attitude of students with hearing impairment towards computers.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research method was employed for this study. The participants for the study were students with hearing loss who were purposively selected from three integrated schools and one segregated school in Ibadan, Oyo State. Three research

questions were raised and answered in this study. The Computer Attitude scale for Secondary School Students (CASS) was revalidated and used for data collection in this study. Data generated through the research instrument were analyzed with Pearson Moment Product Correlation and Multiple regression.

Results

The study found no significant relationship between age, gender, and computer and internet use among students with hearing loss. The finding is contrary to Kutluca (2010) and Cava et al.'s (2010) who reported that age and gender are related to people's attitude towards computer and internet usage. However, there was a significant joint contribution of both the affective and behavioral attitude on cognitive attitude towards computer and Internet among students with hearing loss. This finding corroborates Teo (2008) as well as Abedalaziz, Jamaluddin and Leng (2013) whose study revealed that perceived usefulness, confident level as well as experience influence the use and attitude towards computer and internet use.

Recommendations

Education of students with hearing loss should be fortified with computer technologies. More educational instructions should be given to the students on how to use the computer. Further, students with hearing loss should be encouraged to interact with friends through internet activities so as to develop positive attitude towards computer and internet use.

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Contact Information
Adebomi M. Oyewumi
University of Ibadan,
Faculty of Education
Department of Special Education
oyedebomi@yahoo.com

About the Author
Oyewumi Adebomi is a senior lecturer and the current Head of Department of Special Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. Her research interest is in psychosocial development of students with hearing loss and general education of students with special needs. She has a Ph.D. in Special Education (2004), Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education (1997) and Bachelors Degree in Special Education (1989).

PREVALENCE OF ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVE DISORDER AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN MORO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KWARA STATE

Olubukola Christianah Dada

Conceptual Framework and Background

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) primarily refers to deficits in attention and behavior characterized by impulsivity and hyperactivity. Students may also exhibit over-activity, underactivity, inattention, distractibility and noncompliance; some advocates are unhappy with the use of the term disorder because it suggests something is wrong with the brains of individuals with ADHD (Silverstein, Silverstein & Nunn, 2008). ADHD is not hard to spot in the classroom for teachers who are very observant and might have acquired training in identification of differently able students. For some students, their inattention is the clue because they do not seem to listen; their minds seem to be somewhere else, they may turn in messy work with careless errors, they may not finish the work or may finish but never turn it in (Polloway & Dowdy, 2004). Work can be found months later crammed into a clustered desk. These children may have trouble organizing and might start one task and shift to another before

completing the first. They are not defiant or oppositional; they simply do not perform as expected based on their ability. Others can be noted quick as they talk excessively, jump out of their seat or interrupt the teacher at inappropriate time. They may even be referred to as the class clown.

All these characteristics mentioned above may be misunderstood and misinterpreted and the students may be labeled as lazy, unmotivated, and even disrespectful. ADHD is an invisible, hidden disability in that no unique physical characteristics and no definite psychological or physiological tests can differentiate these children from others. The condition can be recognized only through specific behavioral manifestations that may occur during academic and non academic activities such as those found in social and employment settings (Schuck & Crinella, 2005). It seems that ADHD is so interesting to many people because persons who are given this label are so much like the rest of us. As a special educator once noted that students with ADHD are just like everybody else, only more so; this perhaps is the essence of the ADHD category. These are students who bring much strength into the classroom; however, certain aspects of their behavior such as inattention, impulsivity and activity level are so extreme that they interfere with everyday life activities such as school (McLeskey, Roseiberg & Westling, 2013).

ADHD is widely recognized as one of the most frequent reasons, if not the most frequent reason, children are referred for behavioral problems to guidance clinics. Most authorities estimate that from 3% to 7% of the school age population have ADHD (Barkley, 2010). ADHD occurs much more frequently in boys than girls, with estimates of about 3 to 1 in community-based samples (Barkley, 2010). Some critics have also suggested that African American children, especially boys, are diagnosed disproportionately as having ADHD. Unfortunately, there are no definitive, large-scale epidemiological studies on this topic. What scanty evidence does exist suggests that they are no more likely to be formally identified as ADHD than their white peers (Rowland, Umbach, Catoe, Stallone, Long, & Rabiner et al, 2001). For example, in one study, white teachers were more likely than African American teachers to rate African American students as highly inattentive and hyperactive (Reid, Casat, Norton, Anastopoulos & Temple, 2001).

The focus of this study is on the prevalence of ADHD among school children in Moro Local Government area of Kwara State. The study seeks to know how common ADHD is among school children and prevalence among boys and girls in the selected schools.

Study Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used to carry out the study. The population for the study comprised teachers in primary schools in Moro Local Government area, Kwara state. One hundred and twenty respondents were randomly selected from all the teachers in Moro local government area, Kwara state. The teachers are expected to rate the pupils in their classrooms with the use of a questionnaire to determine the prevalence of ADHD among primary school pupils. The questionnaire contains five sections and consists 32 items on a four-point likert scale to determine that prevalence of ADHD among primary school pupils. The data gathered were analyzed using percentages.

Result

From the analysis of data gathered, it was revealed that ADHD is prevalent among primary school pupils in Moro Local Government Kwara State. Two thirds (39.5%) of the pupils acted impulsively. They got easily excited, frustrated, think before acting, did not plan well, constantly moved from one activity to another, disliked group activities, were disorganized, got easily into trouble for forgetting to do things, required supervision, and interrupted and talked out of turn. About 30.5% of the pupils had activity level of problems (underactivity). They could be sluggish, day dreaming, inattentive, had poor leadership ability, and had trouble getting started. Almost a fifth (18.9%) of the pupils were inattentive. They had short attention span, especially in low interest activities, easily distracted, forgetful and started many things but finished a few of them. Few of the pupils were non-compliant, repeatedly disobeyed, argued a lot, ignored socially accepted standard of behavior, did not do what was asked and deliberately annoyed others. The study also revealed that ADHD is more prevalent among boys than girls.

From the foregoing, most students with attention deficit hyperactive disorder were impulsive, underactive, inattention, non-compliant and hyperactive. About 40% of the pupils exhibited impulsivity which is the highest.

Recommendation

There is need for educational planners (government, school administration, special educators, school proprietor/proprietress, and so on) to organize regular workshops for teachers in primary school on how to identify and manage pupils with ADHD in the classroom and how to address their challenging behaviors.

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Contact Information:
Olubukola Christianah DADA,
Department of Special Education,
College of Education,
Kwara State University, Malete,
P M B 1530, Ilorin, Nigeria.
bukkyyemmi@yahoo.com
+2348034468438

About the Author:
Dr. Olubukola Christianah Dada is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Special Education, College of Education, Kwara State University. Her major area of research is High Incidence Disabilities. She has attended many conferences both locally and internationally.

PARTIAL COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS AFFECTING READING TECHNIQUES OF PUPILS WITH MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Jana Dordovicova (Sopkova)
Bibiana Hlebova
Veronika Palkova

Conceptual Framework and Background

This study deals with the targeted cognitive stimulation of reading competence of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities. *Reading competence* as a gradual acquisition of letters, syllables, words and sentences, leads to the development of reading skills, content perception of a reading text, its reproduction and reading with comprehension (Jarmarova, In: Valenta, Michalik, Lecbych et al., 2012).

Cognitive processes of these pupils develop unevenly and limitedly because of functional weakening of the central nervous system. However, they do not operate in isolation, but are strongly interconnected and they can be seen externally as *partial functions* (basal, basic functions) in the *cognitive area*. Sindelarova (2007, p. 8) defines them as "basic skills that enable differentiation and development of higher mental functions, such as language and thinking." If their development is uneven, i.e., they are immature and less developed than others, there arise so-called *deficits in sub-functions* (German Teilleistungsschwächen). Graichen (1973, In: Pokorna 2010, p. 95) defines them as "degraded performance of individual factors or elements within a larger functional system, which is essential to managing of specific complex processes of adaptation." These functions include: 1. visual and auditory classification (differentiation of figure and background); 2. visual and acoustic differentiation; 3. intermodal relations; 4. visual and auditory memory; 5. perception of chronology and time (seriality); 6. tactile-kineasthetic perception, body schema and spatial orientation (Sindelarova 2007).

Research

The aim of the research was to analyse the relationship between the observed level of the reading competence (errors in reading techniques) and the level of sub-cognitive functions of these pupils. We assumed that *the level of the reading competence in the part—errors in reading techniques of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities educated in individual school integration in the 4th grade of primary school, was significantly affected by the level of sub-cognitive functions, according to statistics*.

When evaluating the *independent variable* in the part: reading techniques, we monitored the area of *substitution of shape similar letters*. While assessing the *dependent variable*, we measured the number of errors in the *partial cognitive functions*, i.e. visual classification (differentiation of background and figure), visual differentiation of shapes, auditory classification (differentiation of figure and background) and spatial orientation. The research sample (N = 46) was formed by the pupils with mild intellectual disabilities educated in the form of individual school integration in the 4th year of primary school, in the age of 10-12, from a basic

set of N = 155. We used a research tool called *Pedagogical Diagnostic of young readers* (Cizmarovic, Kalna 1991). To obtain data about the level of sub-cognitive functions, we used a research tool T-254 Deficits of partial functions (Sindelarova, adapted by Cerny, 2008).

Results

According to the educational program for pupils with mild intellectual disabilities ISCED 1 - primary education (2009), the pupils in the 4th grade in the sphere of *reading techniques* should be able to read short texts correctly and with comprehension. However, by more detailed analysis of the selected part: errors in reading techniques (Sopkova, Hlebova, Palkova, 2014) we have come to conclusions that only 67.4% of the pupils confuse dissimilar letters, shape similar letters are confused by 32.6% and 8.7% of pupils confuse sound similar letters what means that these pupils make reading errors significantly, and they do not read correctly.

In terms of the independent variable, substitution of shape similar letters and a calculated p-value, it can be stated that pupils who confuse shape similar letters while reading (32.6% of pupils), according to statistics, achieve significantly more errors in the sphere related to the visual field, namely in *visual classification* ($p < 0.021$) as the ability to focus on the most important part from the whole and to break away from the other parts that are seen as only peripheral. It can be also stated in the part: *visual differentiation of shapes* ($p < 0.029$) which means the ability to distinguish shapes that are similar but not identical. We have also confirmed a relationship with *auditory classification* ($p < 0.013$) as the ability to analyse a complex assembly of phonemes; with *acoustic speech differentiation* ($p < 0.036$) i.e. the ability to distinguish between similar phonemes; including *spatial orientation* ($p < 0.010$) i.e. the perception of position in space and relations in space; than pupils (67.39% of pupils) who did not substitute the shape similar letters.

Recommendations

Based on our findings, we agree with the authors Blachmann (1991) and Pokorna (2010) who state that reading skills are not primarily dependent on the intellect, but on the development of cognitive functions. For targeted stimulation of reading competence, it is, therefore, necessary to develop found deficient partial cognitive functions in parallel. Thus, the relation to the confusion of shape similar letters is simply stimulation in the sphere of visual classification (differentiation of figure and background), visual differentiation of shapes, auditory classification, and acoustic speech differentiation including spatial orientation.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings, it can be assumed that if we stimulate purposefully identified primarily deficit areas of sub-cognitive functions, we will not only improve function of these areas, but we assume that reading competence could be increased as well. At the same time, it is also necessary to take into consideration other variables which affect the level of reading competence of these pupils, especially social factors, whereby we must not forget the spontaneous development of pupils.

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Contact Information:
Mgr. Jana Dordovicova (Sopkova)
University of Presov in Presov, Faculty of Education, Department of Special Education
17. novembra 15, 080 01 Presov, Slovakia
E-mail: jana.dordovicova@pf.unipo.sk

About the Authors:
Jana Dordovicova is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Special Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Presov under the supervision of the associate professor Dr. Bibiana Hlebova, PhD. Her research focuses on various aspects of cognitive stimulation of a reading competence of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities in school integration.

Bibiana Hlebova is a head of the Department of Special Education at Faculty of Education, University of Presov. In her research she focuses on various aspects of special didactics of Slovak language and literature, Roma literature for children and youth, and its use in multicultural and emotional education of pupils in terms of primary and special primary schools.

Veronika Palkova is a member of the Department of Mathematic Education, Faculty of Education, University of Presov. Her research is focused on the issue of the development of mathematical competencies of ordinary pupils and pupils with intellectual disabilities, the use of ICT in the mathematics education, test preparation matherial in mathematics and she dedicates to statistical processing of research data.

INVESTIGATION OF EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT SYNDROME AMONG GIFTED LEARNERS IN NIGERIA

Fakolade Olufemi Aremu, Ph.D.

Background

The conceptual and operational definitions of underachievement are complicated and problematic. Essentially, most people agree on the commonplace general definition of underachievers as it applies to education: "the underachiever is a young person who performs more poorly in school than one would expect on the basis of his mental abilities" (McCall, Evalin & Kratzer, 1992).

Underachievement occurs when children's habits, efforts and skills cause them to lose their sense of control over school outcomes. Teachers are less likely to identify these children as gifted because their intelligence or creativity may no longer be evidence in the classroom. The underachieving gifted child continues to underachieve because the home, school or peer group unintentionally reinforces underachievement.

The student is no longer motivated to achieve, and there may be deficiencies in skills necessary for achievement. Working below one's abilities affects both immediate educational success and essential career achievement. Thus, underachievement can be identified in the earliest years of school, in which case it seems obvious that prevention of underachievement should begin prior to this—namely, in the preschool years, when children's attitudes to learning are more malleable (Karnes & Johnson 1991; Karnes, Shwedel & Kemp, 1985).

Causes of Underdevelopment

Underachievement can have at least four causes (Baum, 1994; Butler-Por, 1993; Diaz, 1998). These include:
- emotional difficulties such as low self-esteem, family difficulties and perfectionism,
- an unstimulating curriculum, where success is possible without effort or perseverance, or where conformity is encouraged over creativity;
- undiagnosed learning disabilities, poor self-regulation strategies or ineffective coping strategies, such as withdrawal and procrastination which surface once school work finally becomes challenging
- social and behavioral factors, such as peer group pressure, lack of behavioral controls and social skills

Recommendation of Trifocal Model in the Reversal of Underachievement among Gifted Learners

It is certainly difficult to reverse long-standing patterns of underachievement especially among gifted learners, but Rimm's Trifocal Model has proven successful in approximately 80% of clinic cases (Rimm, 1995). She has found that the treatment of underachievement involves the collaboration of school and family in the implementation of six major steps:
1. Assessment
2. Communication
3. Changing the expectation of important others
4. Role-model identification
5. Correcting skill deficiencies; and
6. Modifications of reinforcements at home and school.

Conclusion

The 'underachieving' label for the gifted students is quite unfortunate because it focuses the blame on 'troublesome' gifted children and burdens them with the 'troublesome' gifted children and burdens them with the sole responsibility of reversing their 'academic neglect'. It is therefore difficult to raise and teach gifted underachievers, but within these students is the potential and usually the wish to achieve importance. When the defense mechanisms of underachievement are cut away, underachievers can become superachievers. Thus, educators, parents, and mentors are significant in these frustrating underachieving patterns.

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Contact Information:
Fakolade Olufemi Aremu
Department of Special Education,
Faculty of Education,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
Email: fakolade1@yahoo.com
Phone No: +2348023504549

About the Author:
Fakolade Olufemi Aremu is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Special Education and with a teaching experience of over 10 years. His qualifications include a B.Ed, M.Ed and Ph.D. in Special Education (Gifted and talented education). He is presently a lecturer and researcher, and is also involved in community services for all learners with special needs.

SCAFFOLDING LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR PUPILS WITH READING DISABILITIES IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

Kelechi Uchemadu Lazarus, Ph.D.

Introduction

Literacy is the ability to use language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, speak, view, represent, and think critically about ideas (The Ministry of Education of Ontario, 2006). However, many pupils in regular education classrooms in Nigeria experience substantial underachievement in learning particularly in reading despite possessing normal intelligence. Their reading difficulties place them at a disadvantageous position and affect their optimal performance within and outside the school setting (Lazarus, 2009). Hopefully, effective literacy instruction (specifically, in the reading element of literacy) through teacher scaffolds would ameliorate the reading problems encountered by pupils with reading disabilities in regular education classrooms instruction.

Theoretical Framework that Underpin this Study

Teachers' use of scaffolding instruction refers to process of temporarily providing support to a learner and then gradually

withdrawing this support as the learner becomes capable of independence in performing tasks (Wood, Bruner, & Ross as cited in Pentimonti & Justice, 2009). From a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theoretical perspective (Vygotsky, 1987), what children can do with the assistance of others is more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone. This study focused on four ways to scaffold reading instruction namely, read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading.

Read-Aloud

Read aloud represents the greatest amount of support offered to pupils with reading disabilities as they read and write. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2003), the read aloud strategy, requires teachers to use three types of scaffolding or support: (a) before-reading activities that arouse children's interest and curiosity in the book about to be read; and (b) during-reading prompts and questions that keep children actively engaged with the text being read; and (c) after-reading questions and activities that give children an opportunity to discuss and respond to the books that have been read. Based on children's literacy learning needs such as development of new vocabulary and concepts, promotion of phonological awareness, instruction can be easily integrated into any of these three phases of story reading.

Shared Reading

With this strategy, teachers support pupils' reading by decoding the words for them while they look at the print and read along. Whilst pupils participate in reading (e.g. read a new and familiar story), learn critical concepts of how print works, get the feel of learning and begin to perceive themselves as readers, teachers intentionally encourage and support pupils' engagement and participation in reading activities. Moreover, Burkins and Croft (2010) stated that shared reading is usually instructionally dense because it is the step in the usually instructional continuum just before guided reading.

Guided Reading

This is a strategy of teaching reading to small groups of children who read texts at pupils' instructional level. The teacher demonstrates reading strategies and thereby helps pupils learn how to use them. With this strategy, pupils' problem-solving, comprehension, and decoding skills are reinforced and they get to learn effective strategies they need to become independent. The goal of guided reading is to help pupils build their reading power—to build a network of strategic actions for processing texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Independent Reading

Independent reading represents the highest level of teacher scaffold in reading. It entails that pupils interact with the text in the gradual release of responsibility. It allows pupils with reading disabilities to practice the strategies and skills they learned during the other instructional contexts (that is, read aloud, shared reading and guided reading lessons (Burkins & Croft, 2010). The goal is to help pupils improve their reading and learning and develop a greater level of independence. It helps to build pupils' confidence and strengthens the use of reading strategies pupils will need for new and more complex texts.

Research

Two hundred and eight (281) primary school teachers from 21 schools in Ibadan region (with eleven local government areas), Oyo State were purposively selected. Sixty four (64) of them were males while one hundred and forty–four (144) were females. They all participated voluntarily. The Scaffolding Reading Instruction Questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to test teachers' perspectives of their use of scaffolding strategies in their reading classrooms for pupils with reading disabilities.

Results

The responses on the four point Likert scale were graded and the criterion mean weight was set at 2.00, therefore, any responses below 2.00 was regarded as not significant while those above 2.00 were significant. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to analyze the data. Generally, respondents' perspectives were favorable in regards to their use of the four strategies (read aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading) to scaffold reading instruction for pupils with reading disabilities in the regular classroom. This means that all the respondents agreed that they apply scaffolds or supports when teaching pupils with reading disabilities. The results agree with the research literature, and also imply that all teachers should apply instructional scaffolds when teaching pupils with reading disabilities for improved performance.

Recommendations

Workshops, seminars and in–service training becomes imperative in the enterprise of updating the teaching skills of regular classroom teachers as far as scaffolding strategies are concerned. With collaboration and support from all stake holders in education in this direction, pupils with reading disabilities in the regular classrooms will overcome their challenges so as to learn since learning is life.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is the need to investigate the perception of teachers in other classroom settings such as inclusive classrooms, towards their exposure with regards to the use of scaffolding instructional strategies.

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Contact Information:
Kelechi Uchemadu Lazarus, Ph.D.
Learning Disabilities Unit
Department of Special Education,
University of Ibadan
E-Mail: ppadaeze@yahoo.com
Phone: +234(0)8032322859

About the Author:
Dr. Lazarus teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the Department of Special Education (Learning Disabilities Unit), University of Ibadan. Her research interests include reading disabilities, intervention for students with learning disabilities, counselling needs of students with disabilities and inclusive education.

INCLUSION/COLLABORATION WITH PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (PRACTICES AND TRENDS)

Madalen Sugrue, Ed.D.

Greater integration of students who have special needs into schools and classrooms nation-wide is obvious. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) places the students who have a disability to have access to the general education curriculum. All students need a warm and welcoming atmosphere and successful inclusion can only occur when the general and special education teacher share possession of the skills necessary to meet the needs of students with special needs (disabilities) in the general education classrooms (Klinger & Vaughn, 2002).

Focus on individual planning, curriculum alignment and cooperative learning must be part of the initial preparation. Access to the general education curriculum is the educational motto of the INCLUSIVE MOVEMENT. Adaptations, accommodations and modifications are part of the program.

Teachers must also develop strategies to, facilitate the successful inclusion of students of special needs in general education classrooms. School personnel must work on effective, cooperative methods to provide appropriate programs to all students. Part of the special education mandate asks teachers to understand what normal child development looks like so they can accurately recognize developmental delays. For ease of presentation, material has evolved in a PEPSI model. These areas of development provide a frame of reference for looking at an individual and a sense of continuity about normal and predictable changes in children over time (McCoy 2009). The letters of PEPSI stand for:

1. Physical
2. Emotional
3. Philosophical or moral
4. Social
5. Intellectual or cognitive. (McCoy 2009)

Modifying lessons, involving teachers and creating a school environment that fosters self-esteem and readiness for the outside

world are all suggestions for "creating a learning community" (Friend & Bursick, 2004). Some suggestions are:

   a. Promote curriculum integration
   b. Foster more collaboration among teachers
   c. Focus on individual learning needs of students
   d. Engaging students in projects and activities, working in teams, working effectively with small groups to meet a wide range of developmental needs.
   e. Developing learning centers and activity-manuals that involve all students in exploring multiple content areas (Friend & Bursick, 2004).

Best practices in the inclusion program are those of classroom "tested" curriculum materials. Primary/elementary teachers are excited to learn of and to use these materials. They want to see acceptable classroom activities to enhance the inclusion process. They seek suggestions for working with young children who are included in the regular classroom curriculum. Active involvement in learning as well as the amount of time students are on tasks are two of the most critical variables to contributing to academic achievement.

The objective of my presentation is to focus on the needs of the student, having classroom curriculum tested activities and guiding the student to the next step through successful learning experiences by allowing him/her to use a variety of activities and materials to support the basic-needs skills - thus reinforcing a program so very important to inclusion.

Mini-units in SCIENCE can be fun as well as science experiences in making a Crystal Garden or actually doing the activity after the story of The Little Red House. Other science activities can include Hairy Potato Head, Shapeless Plastics, Floating Liquids, Bubbles and Fizzes, and making a weather windsock - all examples of suggestions for use in the regular classroom in the inclusion process. Market Math, Circus Math, Animal Math and Monster Multiplication are examples of quick and effective Math curriculum ideas.

Language Arts and phonics are interesting and fun when Rainbow Phonics, Seasonal Phonics, Reading Mysteries, Hidden,Pictures, Mystery Letters and Reading Dinosaurs are used. Art-fun Activities may include Hand Shaped Art, Crayon Mosaic, Stained Glass Fish, Blossom Bunny, Scary-Cary Cat and Shake-My PawPuppy while incorporating social skills in doing a My Love Keeps Growing and An Armload of Gifts Project, making birthday cards, calendars, thank you notes and get well cards for absent class members and adults. Candy airplanes are fascinating and great art and gift projects.

All the above-mentioned experiences are useful and the more we provide for children in the inclusive/inclusion of society, the better we are preparing them for inclusion, later in life. Lastly, the teacher must always remember that inclusion and working together along with commitment and attitude, teamwork, flexibility and collaboration are the most, important factors in the special education-general education program.

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Contact Information:
Madalen Sugrue Ed.D.
Teacher and Special Education Consultant U.S.A.
W.K. Dwyer School 1200 West Third Street
Anaconda, MT 59711
sugruem@sd10.org

About the Author:
Madalen Sugrue, an experienced classroom teacher, special education teacher, and adjunct University Professor has a wealth of experience in working with special needs students and teacher preparation. A membership in IASE since its inception and life member of CEC, she has presented at many conferences, national and international.

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO IMPROVE AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS IN TANZANIA

Amanda A. Martinage

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is evident in countries around the world. Kanner first identified ASD in Africa in 1943. Thirty years later, Longe and Asuni (1972) and Lotter (1978, 1980) initiated research related to the prevalence of the neurodevelopmental disorder in Africa. Points of research highlighted by Lotter continue to permeate current literature, including the increased prevalence of boys compared to girls diagnosed with ASD. This statistic continues to be comparable with Western data (Mohammadi, 2011). Second, Lotter's data indicated an overrepresentation of ASD in upper class families in Africa. The study concluded further research was required, as it was unclear if the increase in prevalence was due to a correlation between upper class families living in cities with greater access to diagnostic facilities such as hospitals and schools. Finally, Lotter (1978) found that certain stereotypical behaviors that are common in the West, such as hand flapping, self aggression, and rocking, were uncommon in the African ASD population (Ametepee & Chitiyo, 2009).

Further research identifies factors that impact onset and presentation specific to ASD in Africa. In Western cultures, the age of onset of ASD is typically sited as 18 to 30 months. Bello-Mojeed et al. (2013) found the onset of ASD symptoms in African children to be 5 years of age or younger. This age overlaps with African children's vulnerability to physical illness and infectious disease resulting in neurological consequences. In 2006, Mankoski et al. exposed the vulnerability of children to cerebral malaria infection in Tanzania citing cases in which children emerged from such an illness meeting the criteria of ASD (Mohammadi, 2011). Bello-Mojeed et al. also cited Mankoski et al.'s (2006) research that identified an "over-representation of non-verbal cases" of ASD in traditional diagnostic facilities. Possible rationale for this finding was due to delayed intervention resulting in greater severity of symptoms, as children who demonstrated greater challenges were more likely to be referred for medical care (Mohammadi, 2011) compared to less severe forms of ASD. Furthermore, Bello-Mojeed et al. (2013) identified a gap between the onset of symptoms and the diagnosis of ASD. The authors presented possible factors identified from the literature that may contribute to the gap including poor knowledge/awareness regarding ASD, non-specific pattern of clinical presentation, a delay in presentation, inadequate number of trained personnel and inadequate healthcare facilities.

The need for continued research in this area is discussed throughout the literature. Further research will not only allow for greater diagnostic capability but also allow for improved treatment outcomes. Facilities that provide ASD interventions are developing in Tanzania, but are still considered limited. Bello-Mojeed (2013) states that the few available services offered are very expensive and the burden of the cost falls on the parents of children with ASD. In Tanzania, autism units are forming in schools largely due to the support of the Ministry of Education, special educators, and parents of students with ASD. There are very few colleges that train teachers for special needs education, and training specific to ASD is minimal at best. Teachers develop skills to teach students with ASD through self-directed study and trial and error techniques when working directly with students.

In 2011 the Organization of Medical and Psychological Assistance for Children Overseas (OMPACO) and the Tanzanian Ministry of Education began collaborating to develop formal teacher trainings pertaining to ASD, in the city of Dar Es Salaam. Trainings included lecture-based workshops regarding diagnostic criteria, etiology, teaching, communication, behavioral and sensory-based strategies as well as social, vocational and independent living skill training and advocacy. As the teachers' knowledge of ASD developed, trainings evolved to lesson observations and feedback, with trouble-shooting sessions to problem solve specific areas of challenge. Anecdotally, these trainings were consistently well received. In 2014 trainings were expanded to the Arusha area per Tanzanian teacher request. Pre- and post-training tests were administered to assess learning. Of 26 complete tests, increased knowledge was evident in 23 individuals, two remained stable and one was unable to be assessed.

In addition to the school-based trainings, lectures were provided at Muhimbili Hospital for doctors, residents, social workers, nurses and therapists that targeted diagnosis, etiology and treatment of ASD. Training both the medial and educational communities, two populations of adults who frequently interact with children professionally, targeted improving the early identification of individuals with ASD.

Tanzanian special educators are increasing their knowledge related to ASD. Now these educators must share their knowledge with new special educators. These trainings should evolve to "training the trainers" so Tanzanian educators are able to not only sustain their level of competency, but increase the number of facilities that diagnose, provide treatment and research ASD. Funding such trainings and advocacy efforts for ASD proves to be the greatest challenge for the Tanzanian society. However there are small areas that could be targeted to raise awareness of ASD that would require minimal cost for a potentially significant impact. Improved attention to ASD in the special education curriculum at the teacher's colleges would begin to address the lack of formal teacher education. Creating groups, such as the National Association of People with Autism – Tanzania (NAPA-T), that are committed to developing community awareness, and increasing such groups' membership, requires more time and effort than financial resources. Further research is warranted pertaining to the diagnostic characteristics of ASD specific to Tanzania, and it is essential to incorporate such information into educational materials. Highlighting such information will allow for improved identification of students with ASD, which in turn will result in earlier treatment opportunities. Finally, establishing a method of communication and collaboration between ASD advocacy groups that spans the whole of Tanzania would be ideal.

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Contact Information:
Amanda A. Martinage
Organization for Medical and Psychological Assistance for Children Overseas
100 Summer Street Unit 1-1
Watertown, MA 02472, USA
amandamartinage@yahoo.com

About the Author:
Amanda Martinage OTR/L, M.Ed is a school based occupational therapist working with students varying in age and disability. She became involved with OMPACO in 2011 assisting in planning the group's first formal teacher training in Tanzania. Amanda is interested in autism spectrum disorders, sensory processing, and professional and international collaboration.

TEACHERS' AWARENESS Of THE USE OF CONCRETE REPRESENTATIONAL ABSTRACT IN TEACHING MATHEMATICS TO STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

Adesokan Adedayo

Conceptual Framework and Background

Learning disability is a term used to explain the struggle that a student of average intelligence faces with basic academic or functional skills (Pullen, Lane, Ashwoth & Lovelace, 2011). This can affect a person's ability to understand or use spoken or written language, do mathematics, coordinate movements or direct attention   (Pullen et al., 2011). Students with learning disabilities encounter numerous problems in the area of Mathematics, which include problem solving skill, number concept etc.

Students with learning disabilities generally are expected to reach some certain level of proficiency in order to cope with educational demands based on Mathematics to pass mathematics in school, the reason for this is not far-fetched—Mathematics is a subject that is relevant to all fields including engineering, medicine, natural science and social sciences. Due to this, educators are seeking various methods to instruct students with learning disabilities in Mathematics. Researchers have found that the current trends of educating students with learning disabilities in the general classroom using traditional methods is simply not working (Scheuermann, Deshler and Schumaker, 2009). In light of this, numerous strategies have been discovered to teach Mathematics to students with learning disabilities.

Among those strategies ormethods is concrete representational abstract. Concrete Representational Abstract is an intervention for Mathematics instruction that research suggests can enhance the mathematics ability of students with learning disabilities. It is a three-stage learning process where students learning through physical manipulation of concrete objects, followed by learning through pictorial representation   of the concrete manipulations,   and ending with solving problems using   abstract notation (Witzel, 2005). Researchers have consistently documented the effectiveness of concrete representational abstract in teaching Mathematics to students with learning disabilities.

In a study conducted by Flores (2010) using concrete representational abstract to teach computation to students with learning disabilities, the finding revealed that students' performance   in   Mathematics   increased   positively. Similarly, Mancl, Miller and Kennedy (2012) reported that students with learning disabilities met performance criteria when taught Mathematics using concrete representational abstract method. Therefore, this study investigating the teachers' awareness on the use of concrete representational abstract method in teaching Mathematics to students with learning disabilities.

Research

The descriptive survey research design was used to carry out this study. The population for the study comprised teachers teaching Mathematics in secondary school in Ilorin metropolis, Nigeria. One hundred respondents were randomly selected from 290 public secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis, Nigeria. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of 15-items on a five-point likert scale to determine the teachers' awareness of the use of concrete representational abstract. The data gathered were analysed using percentages.

Result

From the analysis of data gathered, it was revealed that 84.5% of the respondents were not aware of concrete representational abstract as a method that can be used to teach Mathematics to students with learning disabilities, while 15.5% respondents knew the process involved in using concrete representational abstract as a strategy but do not know the name as concrete representational abstract. This implies that concrete representational abstract as a teaching strategy for teaching mathematics to students with learning disabilities is not utilized by mathematics teachers.

Recommendation

From the finding of this study, it may be concluded that Mathematics teachers' need to be aware of various new methods of teaching Mathematics to students with learning disabilities. Based on this fact, a recommendation was made that there is need for educational planners (government, school administration, school proprietor, school proprietress) to organize regular training for teachers to equip them on new strategies/methods that can be used to teach students with learning disabilities in Mathematics.

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Contact Information
Adesokan Adedayo
Kwara State University, Malete, Ilorin Nigeria
College of Education
Department of Special Education
duduskydayo1@yahoo.com

About the Author
Adesokan Adedayo is an assistant lecturer from department of Special Education, Kwara State University, Malete, Ilorin Nigeria. I am a master's degree holder in Special Education and currently am a PhD student at the University of Ibadan studying Special Education. My area of specialization is learning disabilities and my area of research work is on methodology.

IMPROVING THE MOOC: DEVELOPING THE SHORT (AND SUPPORTIVE) OPEN ONLINE COURSE MODEL

Elizabeth M. Dalton
Kendra Grant
Luis Perez

Conceptual Framework and Background

Concerns have emerged in using Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in professional development (PD), specifically peer assessment (Watters, 2012) and MOOC completion rates (Watters, 2012; Parr, 2013). The MOOC Research Initiative (2014) identifies low retention rates, lack of student engagement, lack of student persistence, and passive participant behavior as problematic issues confronting MOOCs. Online PD faces challenges. A 2014 EdSurge Report found extrinsic and intrinsic barriers impacting teachers' attitudes and preferences for online PD (Corcoran & Quarttrocci, 2014). Technology in schools is

expected to transform teaching and learning, but studies reveal its use is often dull, boring, and much less transformative (Murray & Olcese, 2011). Some positive qualities of networked PD are identified; specifically, "schools must focus on pedagogy, and provide training and support to help teachers incorporate technologies into all elements of the curriculum in ways that facilitate individualized learning (Steeves, 2012, p. 22). Effective technology use requires pedagogical changes, "a shift in focus from technology integration to technology-enabled learning…focused on helping teachers engage students in authentic technology-enabled learning environments…" (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013, p. 175).

With the benefits and concerns about MOOCs in mind, the authors designed an alternative model for online PD called a SOOC – Short & Supported Open Online Course.

SOOC Course Design

To ensure course accessibility for all participants, the SOOC was designed using and modeling Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and curriculum design framework (CAST, 2014). To effectively implement UDL, the SOOC focused on three different components: 1) a course website, where topics for each week were introduced, 2) a Community of Practice (CoP), to facilitate communication and collaboration among course participants, and 3) digital badges as a tool for promoting the learners' motivation and engagement in the course.

WordPress was used for website development due to its high level of accessibility support and flexibility, housing course syllabus, videos, images, website links and other resources. The course was modeled on best practices of accessible learning, including UDL principles and web accessibility principles designing the website and its resources. All images received descriptive text equivalents, and webinar videos were closed captioned. Over four weeks, the course included a UDL overview first, and a different UDL principle each week. Format included introduction to weekly goals, video summarizing relevant UDL content, and choice of learner activities on the week's key concepts. Products submitted by participants were posted. Seeing the variety of ways activities could be completed and apps could be used added to learners' self-efficacy as UDL practitioners (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014).

Google+ was used to develop a personal learning network, where students submitted responses to weekly tasks and collaborated with each other. The small SOOC size allowed extensive instructor and peer feedback for each learner. Learners chatted with instructors during "office hours" using the Hangouts video chat feature of Google+.

Instructors incorporated a digital badge system. Working with Achievery https://achievery.com/ (based on Mozilla's Open Badge System), Separate badges were designed for the four weeks of the SOOC, and a final badge to award upon completion. Students posted evidence for weekly tasks completed to the SOOC Google community and appropriate badges were connected to this evidence, and were awarded of badges through a digital link.

Results

Of the 50 students who enrolled in the Google+ community, 30 actively participated in the course (completing at least one week's task). Of this group, 53% completed the SOOC. While most participants began with a low to moderate knowledge of UDL, the vast majority of participants felt they had achieved high or extremely high knowledge of UDL upon completion. Students discovered new apps and resources, developed deeper understanding of UDL and accessibility for all, and recognized need for UDL principles in their practice(s). Areas cited for improvement include technical issues, pacing or length, hangouts & webinars. When surveyed, 94% of the respondents would recommend this course to other colleagues. Overall, this SOOC format for an online course was a productive learning experience for both instructors and learners. The learners' noted the SOOC's flexibility in meeting their unique professional needs. Unlike traditional MOOCS, students had extensive and interactions with the instructors, which could possibly explain the high levels of participation and satisfaction reported by participants.

Conclusion

While initial enthusiasm for MOOCs has cooled in recent years, this experience suggests that the open online format still has promise to promote learning, with a few modifications. Focus on developing a community of practice through frequent and varied interactions, as well as modeling UDL (exemplifying the type of technology-enabled learning recommended by Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich) appear to be components leading to the effectiveness of this new SOOC model for online professional learning. Further study is needed to confirm and expand understanding of the SOOC model.

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Contact Information:
Elizabeth M. Dalton
Director, Development & Research
TechACCESS of Rhode Island
United States
edalton@techaccess-ri.org

About the Authors:
Elizabeth Dalton is Director, Development and Research at TechACCESS of RI and an independent education consultant. She holds a PhD in Education and post-doc in Universal Design for Learning. She presents on UDL, technology, and diversity, edits several professional journals, and is past-president of the Inclusive Learning Network of ISTE.

Kendra Grant's varied career includes educator (teacher, library-media specialist, SpEd coordinator), co-founder and Chief Education Officer of a professional learning company, online course creator and large-scale technology implementation consultant. She is an adviser for EdTech start-ups at MaRS in Toronto, Canada and is completing her master's in educational technology at UBC.

Luis Pérez received his doctorate in special education and a Master's in instructional technology from the University of South Florida. He is an Apple Distinguished Educator (ADE) as well as a Google Certified Teacher, and he is the author of Mobile Learning for All: Supporting Accessibility with the iPad.

THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF FATHERS OF CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Dorota Tomczyszyn, Ph.D.

Introduction

The term "quality of life" can be defined as the sense of life satisfaction, understood as the possibility of personal growth, self-fulfillment, in accordance with the accepted system of values, and taking into account the material aspect of social status (Derbis, 2000). High quality of life points to the harmony of man's personal business and social expectations. This is an objective aspect of quality of life. In the subjective aspect, the higher level of satisfaction and self-fulfillment of a person the higher their quality of life.

The fathers of children with intellectual disabilities suffer trauma caused by having a child with a disability. In most cases the dream of having a "normal" child would have fallen apart. The everyday existence and sense of life has to be based on new criteria and challenges. The fathers in this study had been looking after their children with moderate and considerable intellectual deficit. Are they, despite the experiences, capable of looking at life positively? Did their struggle against the adversities and suffering caused by the children's illness help them notice a deeper sense of life due to the disability, open new prospects for life, and become a factor stimulating personality change and relationships with other people?

Research

The research was conducted in 2013 in the Lubelskie Region in Poland. In the research, 111 fathers of children with moderate and considerable level of intellectual disability took part. The Quality of Life Questionnaire (QLQ) developed by Schalock & Keith (1993) was used. This author applied the version designed by Juros (1997). The instrument contains 40 questions concerning quality of life, which are grouped on four scales forming the total quality of life, i.e., satisfaction, ability/productivity, independence, and social participation.

Depending on the number of points on the scale, the fathers were placed into four groups, namely, low, medium, high, and very high level of quality of life in particular scales and the whole test.

Results

Despite the difficulties resulting from looking after a child with intellectual disabilities, the fathers featured high level of quality of life. It turned out that 4.6% of the fathers had very high quality of life, 70% of the fathers had assessed their quality of life as high, 22.7 – medium, and the remaining 2.7% as low. In order to expand on the results, the quality of life shall be presented on four scales.

The quality of life of the fathers in the scale of satisfaction has been on a high level. Over 46% of the fathers had attained high level, and 43.3% were at medium. A very high level has been featured by 0.9% of the respondents and low—by 9%. This shows a high level of the sense of satisfaction with the present home and life situation, success and material status, mental comfort in social situations, and sense of importance and family affiliation.

On the scale: ability, the quality of life of the fathers was on high level. More than half of the fathers (50.5%), had assessed their quality of life as high 9% very high, 31.5% medium, and 9% of the fathers indicated a low level of quality of life. This shows job and competence satisfaction, possibility of gaining other competence, the sense of independence, and ability to cope with problems.

The quality of life of the fathers on the scale: possibility of action has been on a very high level. The fathers attained the highest results on the scale. Over 71% attained a very high level, 21.6% as high, 6.3% medium, and 0.9% low.

The scale: possibility of action/independence concerns the sense of self-reliance and independence in everyday life, possibility of taking decisions and tasks, use of services, as well as the sense of responsibility and self-control. The fathers indicated that the quality of life on this scale is very high.

The social participation/integration with the society – that sphere comprises the sense of affiliation with a social group, the sense of bond with other people and active participation in social life. The fathers attained the lowest results on this scale. On the basis of the classification of the results, it can be stated that quality of life of the fathers on the scale of social participation has been on a medium and high level. Over half (54.1%) of the parents attained a medium level on the scale, and 6.3% attained a low level. A high level was attained by 37.8% of the studied fathers, and only 1.8% of the fathers obtained a very high level. This shows a medium sense of satisfaction with the functioning in the local environment and relations among neighbors and friends.

Conclusions

It turned out that 70% of the fathers assessed their quality of life as high. The results from three categories are within medium and high values (scales: satisfaction, abilities and social participation), on the scale: possibility of action, the results obtained were on a very high level. The fathers perceived themselves as people independent in action. The independence concerned their everyday life, the possibility of taking decisions and tasks, use of services, as well as the sense of responsibility and self-control, which means the sense of responsible fatherhood.

The remaining categories, i.e., satisfaction, ability/productivity, social participation/ integration with the society display most often a medium or a high result obtained by the fathers. The fathers admittedly had the feeling of satisfaction with their jobs, with the possessed competence, and with the way they are treated by others, yet they negatively responded about their earnings.

On the scale: social participation, the fathers seldom belonged to, and actively participated in any organizations, few of them adjusted to other people's expectations, most of them had friends and kept company with them and had good relationships with their neighbors but very rarely did they actively participate in cultural life.

Therefore, it can be stated that despite having a child with a moderate or considerable level of intellectual disability, the fathers displayed a medium or high sense of quality of life. It indicates that fatherhood, marked with many specific difficulties, can be perceived positively by the men. Their struggle against adversities, difficulties connected with the child's illness, and a deeper sense of life linked with the disability has become a stimulating factor of personality change and relationships with other people.

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Contact Information:
Dorota Tomczyszyn
PSW Biala Podlaska
Sociology Unit
Sidorska 102

21-500 Biała Podlaska
Poland
tomczyszyn@o2.pl

About the author:
Dorota Tomczyszyn, PhD – has an MA in special pedagogy doctor of family and upbringing sociology. She is a scientific worker at the Sociology Unit at the School of Higher Education in Biala Podlaska, Poland. Her scientific interests are focused on the issues related to families with children with intellectual disabilities.

EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN NIGERIA: PARENT AND FAMILY PERSPECTIVES

Temitope A. Ayorinde
Dr.Tolu Eni-Olorunda

Background

The importance of early intervention (services for children zero-three years) for young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has been well documented in the literature (National Research Council, 2001; Rogers, 1996, 1999). The need for early intervention for young Children with ASD has been highlighted as a priority according to the National Research Council. However, the Nigerian situation is precarious. The word 'autism' is taboo, Parents and families would rather keep their children at home than worry about early intervention. The National Institutes for Health Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) developed a research roadmap and matrix that encompasses goals and activities for autism research across the next 10 years. Research exploring and confirming the successful elements of early intervention is a critical component of the plan (IACC, 2003). No parent is ever prepared to hear that a child is anything other than happy and healthy, and a diagnosis of autism can be particularly frightening. To guide this study, three research questions were raised. Do parents have knowledge about the need for early intervention programme for children with ASD? What is the perception of parents and families about early intervention for their children living with ASD? What is mitigating against the need for early intervention for children with ASD?

In many parts of the world including some underdeveloped and developing societies, there seems to be an increasing concern and outcry over the rise in cases of ASD. Parents' participation is vital to the child's success in that their involvement in the child's therapy programs would enhance the success that would be recorded in early intervention. Caring for a child with an ASD can demand a lot of energy and time, because parents most often report being overwhelmed, stressed, or discouraged. Some other parents are burdened with the financial implication of managing children with ASD. The low level of knowledge and awareness about early intervention for ASD children as documented by recent studies from Africa is a call for engaging in activities that can improve the level of knowledge and awareness about ASD among parents, families and the general population in Nigeria. This would help early recognition of cases and intervention which have been shown to improve prognosis. It would also help in changing popular perceptions among parents and families in Nigeria that there is a spiritual explanation for ASD. In a study conducted by Bakare et al. (2012) on the prevalence of ASD among children with intellectual disabilities, out of the 44 children involved in the study, five (11.4%) met the criteria for autism according to the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Edition (ICD-10) Diagnostic Criteria for Research.

Some Nigerian people believe that ASD is a form of nemesis or punishment for the parents or the individual and some believe it is a result of some voodoo sacrifices done in exchange for acquiring wealth. Coupled with this inaccurate information about ASD and other forms of neuro-disabilities is the pervasive issue of stigma which is highly prominent among members of the public and influences attitudes and inevitably services to persons living with a disability. In cities like Lagos where there is now a bit of autism literacy, the major problem is finance. Eighty percent of families cannot afford or sustain the support services, and there is no welfare program in Nigeria in terms of Government Funding for the educational and professional services needed by these children. The financial burden is on parents only.

Methodology

A survey research design was adopted and three research questions were raised. Seventy six participants (23 parents, 41 siblings and 12 other relations of the ASD children) were purposively selected from organisations and homes of parents and families of children with ASD in Lagos and Ogun states because they were the ones that were willing and readily available to provide information regarding their children's challenges. The fact is that in Nigeria, parents are reluctant to discuss their children with any form of disabilities with anybody, as this is regarded as a stigma in their community and the nation at large. The parents, families and relations that participated in the study did so voluntarily. A four-point Likert scale questionnaire was used by the researchers for the study. A questionnaire was used to collect data from participants and an analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Chi square test was used to analyse the data.

Results and Discussion

Results revealed most parents had a good knowledge about early intervention programmes followed by the siblings and other relations, this is in line with the study of Wehman,(1998) that Parent training for those receiving EI services has been recognized to positively affect the knowledge and attitudes of parents, as well as reduce stress and increase confidence. The high percentage of families that agreed that parent participation was necessary indicated that family involvement was a priority with most EI programs. This is aligned with current evidence-based literature which acknowledges the importance of family-centred service delivery (Hurth, Shaw, Izeman, Whaley, & Rogers, 1999).

Also, acceptance in schools of children with ASD as perceived was higher in siblings than parents, as they believe that this would foster the interaction between the child, parents and other family members, which would in turn help the child to overcome fear and fright. There was a significance difference in the agreement level of parents, siblings and other relations in addressing the barriers militating against early intervention: factors such as lack of parental involvement, lack of funds, lack of governmental support and funding, socio-economic status of the parents and their families, and parental beliefs in the efficacy of early intervention program.

Conclusion

There still remains a great deal of effort to be made in the field of awareness, sensitization and education about ASD in Nigeria. These efforts will in turn provide accurate information, dispel myths and misconceptions, and influence attitudinal change and service provisions.

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Contact Information:
Temitope A. Ayorinde
Therapy Initiative
PO Box 629 Yaba Lagos, Nigeria.
ayodeji507@yahoo.com

About the Authors:
Temitope Ayorinde is a Behavioural and Speech Consultant, who his currently working with Parents and families of Children with autism spectrum disorders. He has worked with several Autism Centres in Nigeria and South Africa. His area of interest is autism, and has used his experience in helping many families with children with autism.

Dr.Tolu Eni-Olorunda is an associate professor and immediate past Head of Department of Home Science and Management, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. Her area of interest is intellectual disabilities, she is the current IASE national chair for Nigeria.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AS A FACTOR STRENGTHENING THE SPEECH THERAPY EFFECTS IN CHILDREN

Dorota Bełtkiewicz

Conceptual Framework and Background

Children's speech defects and difficulties require early, intensive, and specialized help. Speech therapy is often focused on instruction and regular exercises while neglecting the child's emotional sphere. Difficulties with speaking are often associated with negative emotions. It is safe to say that speech problems cause negative emotions at three stages of the child's life:
1. **Diagnosing a speech difficulty or speech defect** often occurs when the child formally enters the peer environment (preschool or school). At home, problems related to verbal communication are often tolerated or ignored (Bełtkewicz, 2013). Frequently, speech therapy is stopped because the family assumes that if the child blends into the peer environment, which requires conforming to a specific language pattern, his or her speech difficulty will disappear. The

result is often the opposite – sudden verification of a speech defect is a big surprise to a child and triggers a sense of helplessness and fear.

2. For a child, **the situation of professional diagnosis**, which can be part of the educational screening process or a personal initiative of parents/guardians worried about the child's problem, is something unfamiliar. The situations in which one's skills are tested always trigger tension. The child wants to obtain a high score so as not to disappoint his or her parents/guardians. He or she also wants to make a good impression on a new person. The results of the diagnosis and treatment recommendations may reduce the child's self-esteem. He or she might start to think they are inferior to others and need to be, in a way, "repaired."

3. **Speech therapy** usually takes place in an environment unfamiliar to the child (a speech therapist's office or a clinic) with an unfamiliar person (likely to trigger distrust or withdrawal) who asks the child to do new tasks, which are often associated with discomfort, tremendous effort, and even pain. In this situation, the child often shows rebellion manifested by aggression, hyperactivity or withdrawal and isolation.

At all the above stages, the child experiences three categories of fear, which vary in intensity:

1. **Existential fear**, which, as pointed out by Stefan Konrad and Claudia Hendl, is a mental conflict seen as an individual's reaction to what their life entails (Konrad & Hendl, 2005). Attending kindergarten, school or speech therapy is necessary and recommended by adults. New circumstances, although they provide opportunities, are more difficult than the previous safe home environment.

2. **Fear of failure**, i.e. anxiety and nervousness when faced with high demands (Konrad & Hendl, 2005), which may appear during discussions or public performances at kindergarten or school in connection with teacher requirements, but also during speech therapy when the child attempts to perform difficult and uncomfortable exercises.

3. **Fear of rejection** appears when one's self-esteem is threatened (Konrad & Hendl, 2005), for example, when the child compares himself or herself with peers and notices his or her own shortcomings. It may also arise during diagnosis and speech therapy. If communicated inappropriately, assessment and therapy recommendations may affect the child's self-esteem.

When observing the emotional reactions of children with language disorders, it is clear that the impact of speech therapy should not be limited to instruction, exercises and result evaluation. When the child is anxious and tense, it is more difficult to achieve positive speech therapy outcomes. Goleman (2007) claims that anxiety reduces our intellectual capabilities and affects the performance in each job and learning task. Also, the usual physiological reactions to stress such as muscle tension or stiffness, trembling voice and distraction make it impossible for a child to carry out exercises correctly. When about to perform speech therapy tasks, the child needs to feel relaxed, calm and motivated.

This can be done by complementing the traditional speech therapy with other methods, mainly with various forms of bibliotherapy like poetry therapy (Pawłowska-Jaron, 2011) and fairy tale therapy. Based on the latter, I have developed a method called "**speech therapeutic story**." It is based on a mix of exercises required to eradicate specific speech problems and a fairy-tale plot (Bełtkiewicz, 2013). In a speech therapeutic story, the emotional problem and the speech problem is experienced by both the main character (typically a child, or a different young creature like a little tree or a little flower) and its integral part – an organic character (usually the tongue presented as an egg-shaped creature, e.g. a dragon, a bird or a bug), which is not only animated but even personified (Bełtkiewicz, 2013).

There are two versions of speech therapeutic stories:

▪ A story with 1st degree analogy, "Purpurowy Dzwoneczek" ("Purple Bellflower") by Dorota Bełtkiewicz. Example: The child is compared to a little animated Bellflower, and the tongue in the mouth is compared to Trzmielik (a little animated Bumblebee) which resides at bottom of the calyx (single analogy plane).

▪ A story with 2nd degree analogy, "Rrromek i Rrradek" ("Rrromek and Rrradek") by Dorota Bełtkiewicz. Example: The child is compared to a little girl named Rózia, who also struggles with a speech impediment and imagines that her tongue is a dinosaur named GADajek, which lives in a cave (the mouth) (double analogy plane).

Selecting the appropriate story depends on the stage of child's development and a particular speech disorder.

Research

Individual and group speech therapy with speech therapeutic stories was conducted with preschool and early primary school children (age 3 to 9/10). Depending on specific children needs, the stories used focused on rhotacism and lisp.

Results

Children perfectly identified themselves with a small, childlike fairy tale character, and their speech organ (the tongue) – with the "organic character." They eagerly participated in the training, wanted to repeat exercises and continued to exercise at home, thanks to which the therapy results were fast and long-lasting.

Recommendations

The implementation of a speech therapeutic story into a traditional speech therapy is recommended especially for children aged from 3 to 9-10. Younger children are unable to detect the analogy between the fairytale world and the real world, while older children consider fairy tale plots as too naive. The tool is recommended for children within the intellectual norm, because complex developmental disorders may make it difficult for children to notice parallels between the plot and reality, and thus make it impossible for them to imitate the characters in doing their therapeutic exercises.

Suggestions for Future Research

A speech therapeutic story is the author's own new tool so far applied only in the Polish language. It is recommended to consider attempting to use this tool to remedy speech problems in children speaking in other languages.

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Contact information
Dorota Bełtkiewicz
Faculty of Philology / Pedagogical University of Cracow
Podchorążych 2, Cracow 30-084, Poland
kontakt@dorotabeltkiewicz.pl

About the Author:
Dorota Bełtkiewicz is an M.A. degree holder in Polish Philology and a speech therapist actively working with kindergarten and early elementary school children in the scope of speech therapy and verbal communication disorders. She is also a biblio- and fairy-tale therapist, member of the Polish Bibliotherapy Society, and conducts workshops for teachers, librarians, and parents, as well as fairy-tale therapeutic sessions for kindergarten children.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING: INTEGRATION MODELS IN PRESERVICE AND INSERVICE INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

Elizabeth M. Dalton
Britt Tatman Ferguson
Kendra Grant
Luis Perez

Conceptual Framework and Background

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a flexible structure of curriculum development that addresses learner variability (Hitchcock, Meyer, Rose, & Jackson, 2002; Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2013). Developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) in the early 1990s (CAST, 1999), UDL is based upon Vygotsky's concepts of how people learn (Vygotsky, 1962) through the recognition, strategic, and affective neural networks (Rose & Strangman, 2007). The 3 core UDL principles are: a) multiple means of representation, b) multiple means of action and expression, and c) multiple means of engagement. When these principles are applied in the construction of curriculum and determination of instructional approaches, the natural variation of learner strength and needs can be addressed proactively.

UDL in Pre-service Training

Concerns about online instruction include poor evaluations, non-working links (Sull, 2013), inaccessible features, instructional quality, ineffective chat rooms, cheating (Brink, 2001), disconnection from candidates, and perception that "Online education is a one-size-fits-all endeavor" (Edmundson, 2012). The 3 principles of UDL can aid in addressing concerns.

Planning with UDL principles makes online education flexible and individualized. Modeling multiple means of representation,

courses use traditional reading assignments, PowerPoint Lectures (with audio), and online video links. Use of ClassLive Pro or Collaborate eliminates "one-size-fits-all" thinking. Candidates see and hear the instructor. Candidates ask questions, share opinions, and chat. Candidates not attending synchronous sessions view recorded sessions. Field experiences support application of content in authentic situations.

Candidates use technology including smart phones, tablets, or computers - with assistive devices as needed. Captioning is provided for deaf candidates and audio for visually impaired. Chat features, microphones and web-cams ensure multiple means of expression through online quizzes/tests, presentations (live or recorded), and threaded discussions.

Interactions with teachers and peers are structured using virtual office, threaded discussions and collaborative assignments. Candidates develop online trust, provide and receive support, and demonstrate necessary dispositions. Constant availability of content ensures varied and equitable access. Flexible task and grading schedules ensure meaningful feedback. Online instruction's technological innovations support universal design to meet the needs of all learners.

UDL in In-service Training

Fullan (2012) notes, "The history of education innovations has generated a 'this too shall pass' mindset". Combining UDL with practical application of technology supports transformational instructional practices (Puentedura, 2014) however, technology implementation is often not transforming, reinforced by "point and click" training that fails to address teachers' learning needs (Steeves, 2012). The San Diego Unified School District used a 3-year model of teacher PD, implemented in 5 phases: 1) Planning for District Success - needs assessment, district review of current initiatives & previous PD, long-term goals, criterion for success; 2) Knowledge and Capacity Building - presentations for common framework of understanding, institutes, webinar series, co-designed classroom resources, UDL/technology learning sessions; 3) Classroom Learning Sessions - lessons modeling UDL supported by technology. Sessions recorded and edited into instructional videos; 4) Student Empowerment - students as school ambassadors of UDL and technology builds self-advocacy and supports learning by staff and students; 5) Ongoing Professional Learning - "Just-in-time" video resources (eTeachables™) via an online portal, downloadable templates on UDL & technology implementation. By implementing this model, the district successfully embedded UDL principles, enhanced by technology - both instructional and assistive, systemically in district-wide instruction.

The nABLE framework merges UDL principles and Puentedura's (2006) SAMR model of technology integration, preparing educators to implement new technologies through co-creation of knowledge with learners who have disabilities. Implementation steps of nABLE include a) needs assessment and resource mapping (as with SETT by Joy Zabala, 2005); b) selection of appropriate technologies for access to information, applying multiple means of representation (Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2013); c) built-in supports and scaffolds for learner variability (i.e. text to speech, word prediction, highlighting, etc.); d) learners' voices valued as co-creators of knowledge; and e) students engaged as co-creators of content. With nABLE, educators develop their own skills with technology and transfer those skills to their learners.

To increase adult digital literacy, the RI Digital Literacy (DL) Program established a 1) digital literacy curriculum, and 2) DL instructor training course (BroadbandRI, 2012), accommodating varied learner needs by integrating UDL in 6 steps: 1. Curriculum manual integrates visuals, highlighting, and more visually-accessible formats; 2. UDL content & principles integrated in Workshops; 3. Scenarios exemplify varied learners' needs; 4. Exemplary models for scenarios apply UDL core principles; 5. Varied instructional methods exemplify UDL integration; 6. UDL Resources shared on BBRI DL Portal http://literacy.broadband.ri.gov/.

All DL instructors complete the one-day training workshop on the DL curriculum, learner variability and UDL, introduction to assistive technology, and guided practice. 221 instructors completed the training, with self-assessments showing overall 30.0% in curriculum areas. UDL showed the highest increase in learning at 55.1%. Overall, success was demonstrated in training adult DL instructors to understand UDL and how it supports DL instruction and learning.

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About the Authors:

Elizabeth Dalton is Director, Development and Research at TechACCESS of RI and an independent education consultant. She holds a PhD in Education and post-doc in Universal Design for Learning. She presents on UDL, technology, and diversity, edits several professional journals, and is past-president of the Inclusive Learning Network of ISTE.

Britt Tatman Ferguson holds a BA in Psychology, MA in Special Education and Counseling, and Ph. D. in Psychological Foundations of Education. She has worked as special ed teacher, staff developer, therapist, and university faculty. Her interests are Cooperative Learning, Behavior Management, Bibliotherapeutic Interventions and Online Instruction.

Kendra Grant's varied career includes educator (teacher, library-media specialist, SpEd coordinator), co-founder and Chief Education Officer of a professional learning company, online course creator and large-scale technology implementation consultant. She is an adviser for EdTech start-ups at MaRS in Toronto, Canada and is completing her master's in educational technology at UBC.

Luis Pérez received his doctorate in special education and a Master's in instructional technology from the University of South Florida. He is an Apple Distinguished Educator (ADE) as well as a Google Certified Teacher, and he is the author of Mobile Learning for All: Supporting Accessibility with the iPad.

SCHOOL SUCCESS SCALE : ITS DEVELOPMENT AND USE IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Tatiana Dubayova
Tatiana Cekanova
Veronika Palkova

Conceptual Framework and Background

Slovakia increased the number of pupils with special educational needs educated in inclusive settings after signing the Salamanca statement in 1994 from 3.451(1996) to 26.024 (2012) (mostly with mild intellectual disability, sensory or physical disabilities or pupils with communication problems). Twenty years after signing the Salamanca statement, which endorses the approach of inclusive schools by implementing practical and strategic changes (UNESCO, 1994), the feedback from pupils with special educational needs about their feelings and their self-assessment of the benefits from the inclusion is still missing.

A key concept of the educational benefits of pupils with special educational needs in inclusive settings is school success. Teachers often perceive school achievement as school success. However, school success is a larger concept which can be explained as the absence of problems in achieving educational goals (Giavrimis, Papanis, 2008). The broader definition also includes the rate of utilization and promotion of individual skills and competencies of pupils, their relationship to the school and the school subject, motivation for learning, exam anxiety, ability to cooperate and communicate, etc. School success is also linked to the concept of the quality of school life and the development of the pupil's individual potential (Holubkova &Glasova, 2011). The second reason for missing this data is that there do not exist any appropriate tools for assessing pupils' involvement in the educational process.

We assume that pupils can perceive their own abilities and efforts differently from the teachers and other adults. Pupils themselves should be an important source of information about their involvement in the educational process.

However, there is no valid instrument for examining the pupils' opinions. This tool could be used also for assessing pupils with special educational needs and for comparing them with standard pupil population. The aim of the paper is to propose the basic

characteristics of a new tool based on self-reports of pupils – School Success Scale.

Research

In previous research six basic domains of school success have been identified: *Activity of pupil*, *Coping with school stress*, *Self-regulation*, *Ability to cooperate*, *Motivation for learning* and *Autonomy* (Dubayova et al., 2014). Based on advanced analyses of the characteristics of the next four dimensions closely associated with school success, they have been added: *School anxiety*, *Relation to the school*, *Self-esteem* and *Social support*. Each dimension is represented by at least 4 statements which are evaluated by the pupil on a 5-point scale from number 1 "I strongly agree with the statement" to number 5 "I strongly disagree with the statement". The lowest score in each dimension means higher connectivity with a certain dimension, e. g. in the dimension *Activity of pupil* there is a statement "*I think I am hardworking*". The proposal of the Scale, which was examined in the pilot study, contained 50 statements: each of 10 final dimensions contained from 4 to 7 statements. A research sample of pupils in the pilot study consisted of 55 girls and 50 boys of standard population, at a mean age of 10 and 11 years (SD = 0.70).

Results

Six of ten examined dimensions reached Cronbach's alpha (CA) the level of 0.600: *Motivation for learning* (CA = 0.841), *Relation to the school* (CA = 0.815), *Social support* (CA = 0.713), *School anxiety* (CA = 0.686), *Coping with school stress* (CA = 0.667) and *Activity of pupil* (CA = 0.627) which means good internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha for the dimensions *Ability to cooperate* (CA = 0.576), *Self-esteem* (CA = 0.548) and *Self-regulation* (CA = 0.499) lies on the boundaries of statistical significance. Preliminary correlations between items in each dimension show some polyvalence in their content so they need to be reformulated in the further version of the Scale. The dimension *Autonomy* as the only dimension showed the lowest and statistically insignificant Cronbach's alpha (CA = 0.186). However, the dimension *Autonomy* as a concept is determined by the age of the pupil and is influenced by several external factors, such as family educational style or personal traits of the pupil. We assume that for children at the age of ten the dimension *Autonomy* could be a less important factor of school success compared to older pupils who are less under control of adult persons in their environment and who are able to make decisions by themselves more often.

Recommendations

The School Success Scale is a new tool for researchers and teachers, which enables them to describe the self-image of pupils with special educational needs in inclusion settings. The Scale, after further improvement, will estimate the degree of difficulty in achieving optimal school performance among pupils and help teachers in the assessment of pupils' level of involvement in the learning process.

Although mostly students with mild forms of disabilities are placed in inclusive settings; several Slovak authors agree that it is also possible to educate in inclusion settings children with severe and profound intellectual disabilities and pupils with conduct disorders, in cases where the school has a fully developed special educational support system. The numbers of pupils with the above named disabilities in schools has increased in previous years (Hrebenarova, 2013; Zolnova, 2013; Chovanova, 2013). Items in the School Success Scale will be adopted also for these groups of pupils in the future.

Suggestions for Future Research

In future research, a team of experts at the Department of Special Education at the University of Presov in Presov will focus on the improvement of the characteristics of the School Success Scale and will try to increase its internal validity. The next step will be the construction of a similar scale for assessing the same characteristics for teachers and parents. This triangulated assessment of the pupil will help us to understand the pupil's problem in the school and this comparison could also help in searching for new methods and strategies in education of pupils with special educational needs in inclusive settings.

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Contact Information:
Mgr. Tatiana Dubayova, Ph.D.
University of Presov in Presov, Faculty of Education, Department of Special Education
Ul.17. novembra 15, 080 01 Presov, Slovakia
e-mail: tatiana.dubayova@pf.unipo.sk

About the Authors:
Tatiana Dubayova is a psychologist at the Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, University of Presov. In her research she focuses on personal traits of patients with Parkinson disease and she has also examined determinants of development of pupils with conduct disorders and their school success for seven years.

Tatiana Cekanova is a special education lecturer at the Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, University of Presov. She focuses on the education of pupils with intellectual disabilities and she also works as a coordinator of students' practice teaching in initial teacher training of special education teachers.

Veronika Palkova is a member of the Department of Mathematic Education, Faculty of Education, University of Presov. Her research is focused on the issue of the development of mathematical competencies of ordinary pupils and pupils with intellectual disabilities, the use of ICT in the mathematics education, and test preparation materials in mathematics.

PARENTAL FEEDING PRACTICES IN TURKISH CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER: FACTORIAL VALIDATION OF THE FEEDING STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Bekir Fatih Meral

Conceptual Framework and Background

Parents play a determinative role in providing food and feeding practices to infants and young children (Birch, 2006), and research has examined the association between parental feeding practices and feeding problems of children with ASD (Ledford & Gast, 2006; Matson & Fodstad, 2009). Furthermore, there is very little current knowledge about feeding practices and strategies of parents of children with ASD. Although current diagnostic criteria for ASD do not include unusual eating habits and feeding problems, feeding problems are historically associated with the early diagnostic indicators of ASD (Ahearn, Castrne, Nault, & Green, 2001). Children with ASD have a significantly higher prevalence of feeding and mealtime problems derived from the nature of the diagnosis and the social environment than do their typically developing peers (Schreck, Williams, & Smith, 2004). Although some tools have been used in the ASD population to assess parental feeding practices/strategies, The Feeding Strategies Questionnaire (FSQ) was not adapted to assess the parental feeding practices of the ASD population. This study has focused on investigating parental feeding practices in Turkish children with ASD and on revealing the factorial validation of the FSQ. Additionally, associations between parental feeding practices and child variables were analyzed.

Research

The sample consisted of 368 parents of children with ASD who received educational services from fourteen institutions in eight different cities in Turkey. In order to assess the parental feeding practices/strategies of the sample of Turkish children with ASD, The Feeding Strategies Questionnaire (FSQ) was used. The FSQ as a 5-point Liker-type scale, developed and validated by Berlin and colleagues (2005), is a valid and reliable 27-item proxy report to measure the feeding strategies of parents and their children. The FSQ includes six sub-scales: (1) child control of intake, (2) schedule structure, (3) setting structure, (4) parent control of intake, (5) laissez time, and (6) coercive interactions. Four items (18, 20, 26, and 30) of the FSQ are reverse-scored (Berlin, Davies, Woods, Silverman, & Fischer, 2005).

Results

The Cronbach's alpha (α) was calculated as 0.80 for the FSQ total, the internal consistencies for subscales of the FSQ ranged from 0.34 to 0.78, and the split-half reliability of the FSQ was 0.28 (p<0.01), suggesting that the scale is a reliable measure for the Turkish sample with ASD. Additionally, the significant correlations (ranged from .23 to .74; p < .01) between FSQ and its factors were medium to strong, whereas Laissez faire had no significant relationships with Schedule structure and Parent control of intake. The factor structure of FSQ was validated in parents of children with ASD using confirmatory factor analyses (CFA). Accordingly, the FSQ model had an acceptable goodness of fit (the chi-square test x^2/df = 3.3; RMSEA = 0.08; SRMR = 0.08; NNFI or TLI = 0.80; CFI = 0.82), even though CFI was lower than recommended fit values. Factor loads varied between 0.14 and 0.82. The study's results indicated that the coercive interactions factor of FSQ was inversely correlated with children's BMI, which was a just significant association between child variables and FSQ factors. One possible interpretation is that any decrease

in relation to BMI scores can stimulate the parents to employ coercive feeding practices, because parents may have different feeding practices, including pressure to eat as well as restriction of food intake (Blissett & Bennett, 2013). There may be differences between scientifically measured children's anthropometrics and parental perceptions of their children's anthropometrics (Maynard, Galuska, & Serdula, 2003; Farrow & Blissett, 2006), which indicates that parents may not be convinced to adequately feed their children, even though those children have healthy BMI.

Recommendations

In consideration of the results of the current study, a couple of recommendations, can be made ,especially with respect to how coercive strategies often used by parents and the obesity risk of Turkish children with ASD, should be aligned: (a) parental education programs should be conducted in order to prevent coercive feeding practices, and to establish a balance between parental perceptions of their children's anthropometrics and a healthy child's anthropometrics, (b) parents should be encouraged to implement exercise programs or play-based activities to prevent childhood adiposity or obesity for their own children, (c) a specific program or sub-program that is compatible with characteristics of children with ASD and sensitive to experiences of parents of those children should be added to the national action plan against obesity, (d) parents should have a mealtime routine (Berlin et al., 2009) including some tips such as not eating anything (e.g., snack or junk food) before scheduled mealtime, enjoyable meals without distractions (e.g., TV or toys), a certain time for meal lengths (for example 30 min), and (e) empirically validated implementations (Kodak & Piazza, 2008; Ledford & Gast, 2006) and approaches (Berlin et al., 2009) aimed to treat feeding problems and inappropriate feeding strategies should be taught to parents of children with ASD.

Based on: Meral, B. F. (in press). Parental feeding practices in Turkish children with autism spectrum disorder: Factorial validation of the Feeding Strategies Questionnaire. Children's Health Care Manuscript ID: HCHC-2014-059 (accepted manuscript for press).

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Contact Information:
Bekir Fatih Meral, Ph.D.,
Sakarya University
Faculty of Education
Department of Special Education
54300 Hendek/Sakarya/Turkey
bfmeral@gmail.com - bfmeral@sakarya.edu.tr

About the Author:
Bekir Fatih Meral is an assistant professor doctor at Sakarya University. He received his PhD in Family Quality of Life from Anadolu University. He worked on health-related quality of life, feeding and sleeping problems as a post doc student at University of Kansas, Beach Center on Disability, Lawrence, USA.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN A DEVELOPING SOCIETY: FORGING NEW AVENUES

Sudipta Ghose

Conceptual Framework and Background

India is projected to be the third largest economy in the world in the coming years, yet it remains a developing country where a large proportion of the population lives below the poverty line. The reciprocity of poverty producing disability, and disability resulting in poverty, leads to challenges to meeting the goal of education for all. Lack of access to education and skills development, especially for the differently abled prevails, though efforts towards creating a more equitable society is relentless. India is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992); has participated in the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien (1990) and the Salamanca Conference (UNESCO, 1994); adopted the Dakar Frame of Action, (2000) and reaffirmed the vision of Education for All by 2015. Honoring its commitment to providing education to children with special needs, the Indian 'Equal Opportunities and Rights of Persons with Disabilities ACT, (1995, rule 26), assures the 'education of children with disabilities up to age of 18 years in an appropriate environment'. There is perceptible shift in the need and demand of education for persons with disabilities from charity to a matter of right. International commitments and favorable laws and policies of the government notwithstanding, the gap between intentions and the on-the- ground realities of education of children with special needs, especially in inclusive contexts is wide.

The estimated population of India is 1.67 billion, of which, the percentage of disabled persons of all ages is 2.21 (2.41% malesand 2.01% females; Census of India, 2011). It is estimated that 38 percent of Children with Disabilities aged 6 to 13 years are out of school (Survey, Ed.CiL, 2005) and almost three quarters of children with severe disabilities (75%) are illiterate and do not attend school. Close to one third of children with mild disabilities (30%) are out of school. Historically, children with special needs went to schools, (mostly run by either individuals or charitable organizations) catering to their disability. The first school for the visually impaired was set up in Amritsar in 1887 and the first school for the hearing impaired was founded in 1885 in Mumbai. There are an estimated 2,500 special schools in India and until the 1970s these have been the dominant mode of schooling for children with special needs. In 1974, the Integrated Education for Disabled Children, (IEDC) and the Project Integrated Education of Disabled Children (PIED), launched the Five Year Plan (1985-1989), and laid the foundation for inclusive education. These programs were progressive in that they preceded the Salamanca Conference (1994) which laid the ground work of inclusive education for the world to follow.

Challenges

Though India has progressive rules and policies for inclusive education, their implementation is far from satisfactory. School preparedness in terms of infrastructural requirements like ramps, toilets, accessibility to playgrounds, laboratories and adapted teaching aids, is nowhere near what it should be. Neither are teachers adequately prepared, either in terms of the spirit of inclusion or in expertise in adapted teaching methodologies. "Many schools have a large number of children in each classroom and few teachers. As a consequence of this, many teachers are reluctant to work with children with disabilities. They consider it an additional workload (UNCF 2003).
Das, Kuyini and Desai (2013) found in their study that "…..nearly 70% of the regular school teachers had neither received training in special education nor had any experience teaching students with disabilities. Further, 87% of the teachers did not have access to support services in their classrooms…… although both primary and secondary school teachers rated themselves as having limited or low competence for working with students with disabilities, there was no statistically significant difference between their perceived skill levels".

India is still reeling as implementing the tremendous goal of placing the ever growing numbers of all children, able or impaired, in schools and achieving the lofty goals of inclusive education remains a massive challenge. "Central and State governments and local authorities are legally bound to provide access to free education to all the disabled children till the age of 18 years and also promote integration of disabled children in normal schools under the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995,"(Zachariah, 2000).

Forging New Avenues

While the government is still striving to bridge the huge gap between goals and implementation of provision of quality education for children with special needs, many voluntary agencies and individuals have made inroads in offering educational services in special schools and merging into inclusive schools. Some exemplars of successful efforts are narrated here.

The Spastics Society of India, founded in 1972 and now renamed as 'Able Disable All People Together (ADAPT)' is a voluntary agency that has holistic programs offering education and treatment services to spastics as well as to those with autism, mental retardation, and multiple disabilities. The focus of ADAPT has been to move from segregation to inclusion. Its special needs students have pursued careers in accounting, journalism, and finance and computing.

Since 2000, inclusive education for children with disabilities has been implemented by the International Human Resource Development Center (IHRDC) for the Disabled, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya in collaboration with Action Aid in

Karamadai Block of Coimbatore District. About 245 children with special needs have been identified, and 127 of them are attending regular schools; an additional 43have been integrated (UNICEF 2003).

Delhi Public School, Rohini, New Delhi, a non-government school has been including children with autism, visual, hearing and orthopedic impairments and the mentally challenged in their mainstream educational classes. These students have gone on to pursue higher education in colleges and universities. In the case of a visually challenged student who was given a computer to work on, instead of learning Braille, when the time came for the Board examinations, the school had to go through a lengthy series of meetings to convince the authorities to allow the student to use her computer for writing her papers instead of taking aid from a writer.

Closing Remarks

With sound and progressive rules and policies in place, India is battling with the massive goal of including every school going child, able and disabled in the same inclusive schools. Special schools for different impairments are still functional, but they will no doubt open their doors to able children soon. Attitudes of the able students and that of their parents are also changing favorably. In time, every school should be audited and certified inclusiveness compliant.

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Contact Information:
Ms. Sudipta Ghose, M.Sc(Physics), M.Ed., Ph.D.
Department of Education, S.P.M.College, (Delhi University),
Punjabi Bagh (West), New Delhi 110026
sghosespm@gmail.com

About the Author:
Sudipta Ghose is Associate Professor in the Department of Education, S.P.M.College (Delhi University). She was Visiting Professor to Utica College, Utica, NY State, USA where she taught Masters Course papers in Inclusive Education. Her research interests include Science Education and Human Rights Education.

PREDICTORS OF SCHOOL SUCCESS IN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

Jana Kozarova
Maria Podhajecka
Jarmila Zolnova

Theoretical Background

Usually, school success is associated with the stereotype of a successful pupil (perfect academic achievement, class valedictorian). A successful pupil is considered to be an individual, who at a high pace perfectly and reliably handles challenges (Helus, 1982). However, the definition of school success may be rigid and insufficiently open to differences among pupils, as well as to the variables that affect the final attitude towards the pupils (Holubkova, 2010). A wider definition of the school success concept, moves beyond school achievement and represents relative success (Cap, 1993) that is, the utilization rate of the child's individual potential. Moreover, it reflects the factors that determine success as such, the key ones are defined as: child, child's family environment, school environment and the teacher's influence (Kucharska, 2000).

However, it is questionable whether the theoretical definition of school success correspondss with its understanding in practice, for example among teachers. Connotative meaning of school success is one of the important components of teachers' attitudes towards children. Comprehensive concepts of school success are related to the specific characteristics of the school environment and the teacher's experience with children with various kinds of talents or disabilities.

In terms of problem behavior in pre-school children, we will use the definition from Smith and Fox (2003) who consider the problem behavior as any pattern of repetitive behavior, or a perception of behavior that interferes or is at risk of interference with optimal social learning or engaging in pro-social interactions with peers and adults.

Methodology of Research

For examining possible predictors of school success in pre-schoolers with challenging behavior we used the Child Behavior CheckList (CBCL) and Caregiver/teacher Reported Form (C-TFR) (Achenbach et al., 2001) to determine the most problematic area of the behavior; semi-structured interview with parents and teachers of observed children, and structured observation in the natural environment of the child – kindergarten. CBCL and CTR-F were filled out by the parents of the examined child and his/her kindergarten teacher. According to the highest score, we determined the most problematic area of behaviour and started with interventions. Observations in the kindergarten lasted for seven weeks, during which we noted symptoms of problem behaviour of the child on the prepared observation forms every two minutes.

Results

Daniel, a boy, 5 years and 2 months

Daniel is a cheerful and very communicative boy, but not very popular among peers in the classroom. Due to his impulsivity and over-activity, children do not like to play with him. Daniel has also a speech problem – dysarthria, and sometimes it is complicated to understand him. Daniel's grandmother works as a teacher's assistant at the same school which he is attending. According to the interview with his mother, grandmother's "will" to help with education and upbringing of her children, is often the reason for fights with her husband. The analysis of the CBCL and C-TFR completed by the both parents, a kindergarten teacher and one of the authors has shown that the most problematic area of Daniel´s behavior is the problem with attention. At the beginning of our intervention the score for attention problems was 48, by the end (after seven weeks) it was 22. The most helpful strategy was to discuss the problematic situations with Daniel and the possibility of spending more time as a family together (mother, father and two sons).

Tamara, a girl, 4 years and 10 months

Tamara is a very shy and quiet girl. During our first visit in the kindergarten, she was sitting alone at the table and other children were playing together. According to her teacher, Tamara did not talk to anyone in kindergarten during the first year of her attendance. At the teacher's urging, her parents visited the speech therapist. However, parents found the visit ineffective and claimed that Tamara was very communicative at home. They agreed with cooperation, but did not cooperate much with us. The analysis of the CBCL and C-TFR completed by the both parents, the kindergarten teacher and one of the authors has shown that the most problematic area of Tamara´s behaviour was the problem with her anxiety. At the beginning of our observation the score for anxiety symptoms was 40, by the end it was 25. The most effective strategy, that encouraged Tamara to join her peers, was secret eye contact with her teacher and the opportunity to choose a game by herself. Moreover, we noticed, during the observations, that the most positive change occurred when her father found a new job and spent 3 weeks away from the family.

Discussion

To understand early behavioral problems, and to prevent more serious conduct problems later in life, we cannot start analyzing these childhood challenges later than in the pre-school period (Egger & Arnold, 2006). It was found out that the amount of family and environmental factors which are associated with the formation and development of problem behavior can later become problems in the regulation of emotions of children in pre-school age (e.g., mental illness of a parent, substance abuse, low socioeconomic status, strict upbringing, exposure to domestic violence, etc.) (Gorman-Smith, 2003). Despite the fact that any of these factors alone is not a "red flag" (i.e., the presence of one of the factors does not present an increased risk of occurrence of problem behavior), aggregation, and accumulation of the risk factors are more likely associated with the onset and development of clinically significant problems in childrens' behavior (Gorman-Smith, 2003).

Conclusion

School success is an area that is still not well understood. Therefore, we believe that knowledge of the predictors which potentially may indicate the direction of the child's performance in a school environment is important at the pre-school age. Especially for those groups of children who are vulnerable in the peer group and in the wider environment.

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Contact Information:
Mgr. Jana Kozarova, Ph.D.
University of Presov
Faculty of Education
Department of Special Education
17. novembra 15, 080 01 Presov
Slovak Republic
jana.kozarova@unipo.sk

About the Authors:
Jana Kozarova is an assistant professor at the Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, University of Presov in Presov, Slovakia. At the graduate level she majored in Education of pupils with intellectual disabilities and Education of children with problem behaviour. Her research interests include Special education and Early childhood education.

Maria Podhajecka is a professor at the Department of Pre-school and Elementary Education and Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Presov in Presov, Slovakia. In her research activities she focuses on Early childhood education, Special Education and Education of deaf-blind pupils.

Jarmila Zolnova is an assistant professor at the Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, University of Presov in Presov, Slovakia. Her research interests include Special education with the focus on education of children with problem behaviour and young adults with conduct disorders.

ENHANCING ADOLESCENTS' ACQUISITION OF CONTENT USING COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURES IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS

Barbara Mallette

Conceptual Framework and Background

The High Stakes Assessment Movement has shifted focus to validation of instructional practices on improving student performance, particularly in critical content areas (i.e., literacy, mathematics, sciences, social studies). As a result, teachers within inclusive settings must be able to determine the effectiveness of strategies used with their students with diverse learning needs. However, many content area teachers feel ill equipped to handle the diverse instructional needs of their students while simultaneously covering required content and keeping students engaged.

Adolescent students face content areas that require reading increasing amounts of material simultaneous with learning complex concepts. Comprehension of these concepts is significantly affected by student literacy skills, particularly student aptitude for content vocabulary and key concepts. Students without necessary independent reading skills confuse key vocabulary with other information offered in textbooks. Therefore, the teacher's instructional task focuses on getting students to understand critical concepts in order to identify the "big picture" (Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, 2013).

Spencer Kagan (2005), international expert on cooperative learning, offers structures that focus on increasing student engagement in class, on equalizing response opportunities among students, and on improving student learning that are appropriate for all students, including adolescents. One of his structures, Numbered Heads Together (NHT), is an alternative *question-answering strategy* that teachers can use at almost any grade level. Initially, students are placed in small heterogeneous learning teams of four members. Within each group, they number themselves 1 to 4. Teachers pose academic-related questions or problems to the entire class. Instead of having students raise their hands to volunteer responses, teachers instruct the class to (a) *think and write* their responses on paper or white boards/response boards; (b) *stand up* when their responses are written; (c) *show and discuss* written responses within groups, and (d) *sit down* when discussions are complete; (e) teachers pick numbers (1 to 4) randomly; all students with that number answer simultaneously using Response Cards. Class members recognize students who respond with brief applause.

Research

A single subject A-B-A-B withdrawal of treatment design was employed and built on the previous work of the author and her colleagues (e.g., Maheady, Michielli-Pendl, Harper, & Mallette, 2006; Maheady, Michielli-Pendl, Mallette, & Harper, 2002). A twenty-six year veteran teacher utilized NHT with her diverse 9th grade biology class (23 students). The teacher posed biology questions or problems to the class on the SmartBoard. Instead of having students raise their hands to volunteer responses, the teacher instructed the class to use NHT to generate responses. Weekly biology quizzes of 5-6 items were generated through Castle Learning Systems (2009, http://corp.castlelearning.com) and served as a measure of student learning. Castle is an instructional supplement that provides materials for review, testing, and assessment in content areas at all grade levels. In addition, students completed a twenty-three item social validation survey at the conclusion of the study to assess their perceptions concerning the use of NHT and its impact on their learning and peer relationships.

Results

An accelerating trend was observed during use of NHT. Average student performance on curriculum-based weekly biology quizzes increased from 50% in baseline to 74% during implementation of NHT. When NHT was removed, the quiz average of the class dropped to 58% with a range of 56% to 60%. The reintroduction of NHT resulted in average quiz scores of 70% (range 69% to 73%). Visual inspection of these final two phases revealed immediate and noticeable changes in magnitude again. Social validity indicated that 75% of the class reported that NHT helped them to learn science content and to answer questions better during class. Whereas 80% of students stated that NHT helped them to get along better with peers. Fidelity of implementation was determined by direct observation of teacher use of NHT ($\bar{x}$ = 95%).

Recommendations

Teachers are being held accountable for student performance. Students with disabilities need instructional strategies that are effective in increasing learning, that can be maintained in included diverse settings, and that are easy for teachers to implement. Kagan structures, particularly Numbered Heads Together, can be implemented with relative ease with students with disabilities in a variety of classroom settings and in various content areas. NHT embraces principles set forth by Unrau (2004) and others, including the National Reading Panel, who argue for use of implicit and explicit teaching, the importance of active engagement of students in the learning process, and repeated exposure to words and key concepts.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research efforts should extend the literature base on the systematic investigation of collaborative instructional strategies, such as NHT, in diverse classrooms. In addition, direct observation of student discussions while implementing NHT would provide insight into the academic conversations taking place and note each student's contribution. Performance of students with disabilities in cooperative structures is of particular interest.

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Contact Information:
Barbara Mallette
State University of New York at Fredonia
Project MAST[2]ER
43 High Street
PO Box 328
Cassadaga, NY 14718 USA
Barbara.Mallette@fredonia.edu

About the Author:
Barbara Mallette is professor emeritus in the College of Education at State University of New York at Fredonia and Co-Principal

EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF HEARING AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AT KOKILABEN DHIRUBHAI AMBANI HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER, MUMBAI: A WORKING MODEL

Anirban Dasgupta
Zenia Irani
Sanjiv Badhwar
Savio Pereira
Niren Dongre

Conceptual Framework and Background

Hearing loss in children is a silent, hidden handicap; it is hidden because children especially infants and toddlers cannot tell us that they're not hearing well; it is a handicap because, if undetected and untreated hearing and vision loss in children can lead to delayed speech and language development, social and emotional problems, and academic failure. By detecting hearing and vision loss as early as possible, even as young as the newborn period, effective treatment that significantly reduces the handicap can be applied. Often, however, identification of a child's hearing loss is delayed because parents are unaware that any child, even a newborn infant can receive an accurate hearing and vision test. The longer a child's handicap remains undetected, the worse the outcome is likely to be.

Hearing impairment: 1 child in 1000 born with a profound deafness. Infants, who need intensive medical care during the newborn period are at special risk for hearing loss resulting in 1 child in 50 being impaired. Initiating a High Risk Screening Program can identify up to 75% of infants who are born deaf or with a hearing impairment. Therefore, all the children born at the hospital or high risk infants who are referred from other hospitals are made to undergo a mandatory hearing screening test.

Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) is a disorder of the developing retina of low birth weight preterm infants that potentially leads to blindness in a small but significant percentage of those infants. In almost all term infants, the retina and retinal vasculature is fully developed, and ROP cannot occur. However, in preterm infants, the development of the retina, which proceeds from the optic nerve head anteriorly during the course of gestation, is incomplete, with the extent of the immaturity of the retina depending on the degree of prematurity at birth. The incidence of ROP is related to gestational age (GA) and birth weight (bw). ROP is rare in birth weight greater than 2000 grams. However, there is a 70% incidence of ROP in birth weights less than 1250grams.

Methodology

Hearing Screening

All Infants older than 48 hours of age are referred to the Audiology Department for screening.
1) The Infants are positioned in a cradle and testing is carried out in deep sleep.
2) Visual examination of the ear canal is done superficially to check for wax or debris and canal atresia.
3) Appropriate probe size is chosen and fitted into the baby's ear canal by pulling the pinna posteriorly.
4) Once the seal is obtained the test is started. The screener automatically measures the response amplitude of the DPOAE across four frequencies (500, 1000, 2000 & 4000) and analyses the responses to gave a pass or fail results.
5) If the baby passes the hearing screening it indicates Normal hearing in both ears up to the level of the cochlea.
6) If the baby obtains a referal in one or both ears the baby is made to under go a rescreening within one week of the initial screening.
7) If the rescreening is again negative then other electrophysiological tests should be done to confirm the presence of hearing loss no later than three months of age.
8) All Infants with confirmed permanent hearing loss should receive early intervention services as soon as possible after diagnosis but not later than six months of age.
9) The screening program is family centered with infants and family rights and privacy guaranteed through informed choice, shared decision – making, and parental concerns are considered.
10) The program ensures that the child and family have immediate access to high quality technology for rehabilitations.
11) We ensure that all infants and children are monitored for hearing loss in our hospital.

Appropriate interdisciplinary intervention programs for infants with hearing loss and their families are provided professional services by our interdisciplinary team. Information systems in our hospital are designed and implemented with electronic health charts and are used to measure outcomes and report the effectiveness of EHDI services using the American Standards recommended by JCIH 2007.

Retinopathy of Prematurity Screening

All Infants are referred to the Opthalmology Department for screening.
1) Infants with a birth weight of ≤1500 g or gestational age of 30 weeks or less and selected infants with a birth weight between 1500 and 2000 g or gestational age of >30 weeks with an unstable clinical course, including those requiring cardiorespiratory support
2) The Infants are positioned in a cradle. The pupils are dilated. Screening of ROP involves indirect ophthalmoscopy using 20 D or 28/30 D lens by an experienced ophthalmologist. Sterile instruments are used to examine each infant to avoid possible cross-contamination of infectious agents.
3) Ophthalmological notes are made after each ROP examination, detailing zone, stage and extent in terms of any ROP.
4) Recommendations regarding the need for any further screening are made and kept in babies record.
5) If no ROP is observed then baby is discharged from screening protocol.

If the initial screening shows sufficient vascularisation, screening is terminated. If vascularisation is not adequate, then follow-up examinations should be recommended by the examining ophthalmologist on the basis of retinal findings classified according to the international classification.

Discussion

A combined hearing and vision screening program is of special importance to the multiple impaired population, especially for deaf-blind children. It is also crucial that children suffering from congenital syndromes such as Waardenburg syndrome, Trachea Collins syndrome, and Down syndrome, , should be screened as early as possible. Special importance should be given for screening in cases of suspected or diagnosed Rubella syndrome, since it is known to affect both hearing and vision.

If there are initial hearing and vision screening reports, they can be used as a baseline to compare hearing and vision levels at later ages in consideration of any acquired disabilities including syndromes.

There were a few challenges faced during the implementation of the protocol; too many children are lost between the failed screening and the rescreening, and between the failed rescreening and diagnostic evaluation. There are no national standard exits for the calibration of instrumentation and there is a lack of uniform performance standards.

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Contact Information:
Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital & Medical Research Institute
Four Bungalows, Andheri West,
Mumbai 400053, Maharashtra, India
www.kokilabenhospital.com
Phone: 91-22-3066 6666 / 3099 9999 Toll Free Number: 1800 3000 3333

About the Authors:
Dr Anirban Dasgupta is an Associate Professor & Voice Coach at Kokilaben Hospital. He has majored in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology at Graduate, Post graduate & Doctorate levels. He has worked in Australia, India and Singapore as an Audiologist and Speech therapist. Email: anirban.dasgupta@relianceada.com

Ms. Zenia J. Irani is a Clinical Audiologist at Kokilaben Hospital. She has majored in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology at Graduate and Post graduate level.

Dr Sanjiv Badhwar is Professor & Head in Department of ENT at Kokilaben Hospital. He has majored ENT surgery at Post graduate. Email: sanjiv.badhwar@relianceada.com

Dr Savio Pereira is Clinical Associate, Dept of Opthalmology, at Kokilaben Hospital. He has majored in Opthalmology during post graduate level.

Dr Niren Dongre is a Professor & Head, Dept of Opthalmology at Kokilaben Hospital. He has majored in Opthalmological surgery and Micro surgery during postgraduate level.
niren.dongre@relianceada.com

MAKING EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT INCLUSIVE FOR LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN ZAMBIA

Kenneth Kapalu Muzata

Learning Disabilities: The Concept

Learning Disabilities (LDs) is a category of disabilities that is difficulty to notice early in a child's life until in later years. Sharyn Neuwirth (1993) describes LDs as a hidden disability, saying it doesn't disfigure or leave visible signs that would invite others to be understanding or offer support. Though considered life-long, other schools of thought believe, depending on the cause, some LDs can be corrected. Brown (2008) says LDs is a group of Central Nervous System disorders that affect a broad range of academic and functional skills. They exhibit under-achievement in academic areas. In reading (dyslexia), learners confuse words and have difficulties with phonic use and combining syllables. The reading speed worries most educators and comprehension levels require serious considerations for them to learn. Writing problems (dysgraphia) are equally exhibited through word omissions, spelling problems and mirror writing as well as poor handwriting among many. Other learners have expressive and receptive language difficulties requiring different strategies if assessment has to be meaningful for them. Further, children with LDs have math (dyscalculia) problems involving failure to solve simple math problems and using math for daily living. Others with specific learning difficulties have memory related difficulties, social problems and study skills difficulties, all difficulties that social psychologists (behaviorists) find easy to rehabilitate. They also face problems in non-academic areas. LDs can affect the person's daily routines, family life and sometimes relationships and play. They require unusually higher levels of effort and support, modified teaching methods and some bit of modifications to classroom settings for them to learn. Scholars say LDs are caused by lesion to the brain, especially to parts responsible for language, memory and motor control. Others suggest that LDs can as well be caused by environmental pollutants such as zinc and lead. A lack of stimulating learning environment and poor teaching methods can as well lead to LDs.

Educational Assessment: Purposes and Prevailing Weaknesses against Learners with Learning Disabilities

Educational assessment can be formative or summative. The purposes of assessment include selection, placement, certification, rehabilitation, obtaining scholarships and employment (McLoughlins and Lewis 1981). If assessment is discriminatory, persons with disabilities would be disadvantaged and purpose of special education would be defeated. The public Law 94 -142 banishes assessment that promotes cultural and racial bias and advances assessment in a language one understands. The dyslexics may not understand written language. Therefore assessment should be tailored to favor them in areas of their strength. DRA (2001) observed that many tests are not properly developed or implemented, leading to high failure rates, increased numbers of students dropping out of school, and loss of self-esteem and educational advancement. In Oregon, approximately 95 percent of disabled students failed a recent round of testing. This is because tests are devised without due considerations of various needs for various learners. Though the Zambian Government has made some progress in issues of special education through the main acts and policy documents, the area of LDs seems to have received a raw deal. First, LDs is not among the disability categories reflected in the main documents as is in other countries such as the United States of America and Canada where LDs have been defined and enshrined into law. Further, in Zambia, educational assessment is done through written exams. Learners are not allowed to use computers to type their answers to exam questions. All learners regardless of disabilities take the same exam though a few adjustments have been made to favor the visually impaired by writing in braille and extending time. Despite such trends, there are still a number of questions which need answers. It should be noted; "not all good readers are better writers and not all better writers are good readers," and therefore educational assessment should not be used to discriminate learners with LDs. There are several available alternatives to educational assessment that learners with LDs can benefit from. For sure we should wonder why one fail because of poor spellings or handwriting when the test is intended to measure skills which can be measured by oral questioning and when software are available to aid educational assessment.

The Need for Inclusive Assessment

Inclusive assessment is embracive. It recognizes how differently abled learners are. Learners differ in many abilities. Lili Ji (2013) quoting the European Conference (2008) on "Assessment in Inclusive Settings" says inclusive assessment is "an approach to assessment in all educational settings where policy and practice are designed to promote the learning of all pupils as far as possible". It "aims to prevent segregation by avoiding labeling and by focusing on learning and teaching practice that promotes inclusion". Realizing inclusive assessment requires appropriate policies and policy frameworks, support for positive attitude change towards inclusion and some sort of reorganization of the school systems. Inclusive assessment should focus on improving an individual's unique qualities and making that individual a positive contributor to society. There is a lot the education sector and stakeholders can do to foster the reality for 'real inclusion' of learners with different disabilities. There is need for legislation to capture the different disabilities and define them appropriately in order to attract specialized attention. While nations endeavor to improve access to education for the disabled by trying to improve infrastructure, addressing negative attitudes, providing assistive technology and embracing technology among others, our fight for 'real inclusion' will not be complete when assessment is used to discriminate them.

Recommendations

With the trend towards embracing competency based curriculum, assessment should focus on competences. Thus learners with LDs can learn at their own pace until they become competent in the areas that give them problems while making steady progress in areas where they have strengths. Learners should be allowed to retake examinations as many times as possible. Time limitations in taking examinations should be shelved for learners who are legally learning disabled. They should decide when to take an examination. Competency based assessment should allow learners graduate in the competencies they have acquired and be able to find jobs using the same competencies. In a world of computers, software and related ICT tools, learners with LDs should find it easier to take assessments without much ado. Using several other localized assessment approaches in the case of countries behind in technology, e.g. someone writing for the learner while the learner gives answers, recording answers in audio cassettes, examiner to learner face to face oral assessment and computer/video facilitated examinations. Under competence based curriculum, assessment should not be used to compare learners. Alternative examinations would be of help to learners with varying special education needs. Adequate legislation should be in place to realize such recommendations.

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Contact Information
Kenneth Kapalu Muzata
The University of Zambia,
Department of Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education,
P.O. Box 32379,
Lusaka.
muzatakenneth@gmail.com

About the Author:
Kenneth Kapalu Muzata is a lecturer and researcher in the Department of Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education at the University of Zambia. He holds a Master Degree in Special Education and a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Education. Research interests include Special Education, Teacher Education, and Religious Education among others.

ECO-BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS OF A BASIC SCHOOL THAT INCLUDED PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES

Seth Amponsah Kwarteng

Conceptual Framework and Background

The quest to provide education for all children received global emphasis in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and since then other official declarations have reaffirmed this. For example, the millennium Development Goals (MDG) has it that "by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete primary schooling" (UNESCO, 2010). Also, the second goal in respect of the Education for All Conference held in Dakar states that "by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to complete, free compulsory primary education of quality" (United Nations, 2006). With such global declarations starting from 1990, and the adoption of Universal Primary Education, there have been attempts by majority of African countries to shift from the conventional approaches in the education of children with disabilities.

According to Panda (1997) studies on what deprives children socially have implicated factors within their environment rather than their intrinsic factors as reflected in their educational progress. This informed the Head Start program in the United States of America (USA) and "the educational priority area" program in Britain. Therefore, integrated education was regarded as essential to enable an individual with disability to become an accepted member of society. Mainstreaming children with disabilities places premium on integration and remains the contrasting proposition of the earlier institutionalization movement which for the sake of mainly pedagogical convenience emphasized the warehousing of such children in segregated settings. All persons with disabilities can be educated with their peers without disabilities whenever possible. This is premised among others, on the essence of promoting social normalization (Stephens, Blackhurt, & Magliocia, 1983).

Mainstreaming children with disabilities to foster integration is no longer a fad or slogan with the passage of Act 715 by the Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana. The Act aimed at ensuring that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) also enjoy the

rights enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana (The Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, 2006). Again, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, in conjunction with the Government of Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (ESP,2003-2015)gave the support to Education For All(EFA) and directed that all schools within Ghana should have inclusive environments for children with "no severe" disabilities by the year 2015(Anthony,2009).

This is in tune with the least restrictive environment term in special education that indicates that, to the greatest extent appropriate, children with disabilities should receive instruction in an educational setting with children who do not have disabilities (Lerner & Kline, 2006). The basic argument is that successful adults with disabilities have learned to function comfortably in an unrestricted environment composed of all people. Hence, this aims to ensure that students with disabilities have experiences in school with students who do not have disabilities and this will give them the opportunity to gain appropriate socialization skills, promote normalization and experiences to function in the greater society (Lerner & Kline, 2006).

Mainstreaming is a workable process yet it needs a comprehensive support system of which the behavior of all the stakeholders within the school compound ecology remains paramount for its success. One of the delivery models is special classes for the children with disabilities on the same school compound however, with such special children taking part in some co-curricular and other activities of the school. Therefore, to what extent are the regular school teachers, children without disabilities and food vendors ready to interact and socialize with pupils with disabilities in a school compound ecology that houses a unit for such pupils?

Research

A total of eighty three (83) participants were part of the study. No randomization in the selection of the 12 regular classroom teachers working in the cluster of schools. Nine (9) food vendors on the school compound were purposively selected for the study. Due to numbers there was randomization in the selection of pupils without disabilities. The stratified sampling technique was used to randomly select five pupils from each class (primary 1-6 of the two streams) irrespective of gender. A total of 60 pupils were used as targets of observation.

Results

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 10.0 was used for the analysis. Simple percentages were used as part of the analysis. The narrative data on questions (open ended) via the focus group (12 pupils randomly selected out of the 60 pupils used as targets for the observation) and interview of the food vendor's gave a qualitative data. To increase the opportunity of producing credible findings triangulation was used. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient Method was also employed to determine the coefficient of correlation between responses from the teacher's questionnaire (0.76 Cronbach alpha reliability) and researcher's observations checklist.

The use of triangulation did confirm the harmony between the qualitative and the quantitative data in respect of the pupils without disabilities and the food vendors. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient Method also revealed that there was a strong association or relationship between the regular school teacher's responses as per the questionnaire and the researcher's observation checklist.

Relying upon research literature and findings from this study, it is quite clear that mainstreaming pupils with disabilities but in a separate unit within a regular school compound ecology will help such children to socialize and interact with their peers and other people with disabilities.

Recommendations

Collaboration among stakeholders is needed to ensure that the social gap between the education of pupils with and without disabilities is bridged. After all pupils with disabilities will come back to the mainstream society after their education whether segregated or mainstreamed since there is no separate world for them.

Suggestion for Future Research

There is the need for the study to be replicated to confirm or deny the findings.

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Contact Information
Seth Amponsah Kwarteng
University of Cape Coast
School of Education Studies
Department of Basic Education
Cape Coast, Ghana
skwarteng@ucc.edu.gh

About the Author
Seth A. Kwarteng is a lecturer in special education at the University of Cape Coast. His research interests include issues in Learning Disabilities and Early Childhood Special Education. Currently, Seth is a PhD student (Learning Disabilities) in the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

EFFECTIVENESS OF METACOGNITION STRATEGIES TRAINING ON READING IN FIRST AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Soheila Safary
Salar Faramarzi

Conceptual Framework and Background

Reading is a receptive language skill and an important need for humans without which a normal balanced life is not imaginable (Hudson, 2007). Reading is the most complex and valuable function of the mind and acquisition of reading skills is the key for all kinds of learning (Miller and Faircloth, 2009). The ultimate goal of the reading process is to extract meaning from text (Gajria et al., 2007). Researchers have suggested that favorable reading performance involves the interaction of cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational variables (e.g., Berkeley et al., 2011).

Metacognition refers to one's knowledge of their own cognitive processes and their optimal use in achieving goals, and in controlling and evaluating their own progress (Dermitzaki et al., 2008). Current theoretical definitions of metacognition (e.g., Serra & Metcalfe, 2009) agree on the distinction between two components: (1) metacognitive knowledge or metacognitive awareness, by which the learner understands how he or she must think, learn, behave, specify his/her learning goals, and that he/she is in possession of strategies to use for reaching the goal; and (2) metacognitive monitoring and regulation that refers to a range of executive skills, by which the learners evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies and revise them if necessary. Thus, metacognitive components have two important functions: they embody the knowledge about cognitive subjects and inform the learner about his or her own thinking and cognition; and regulate the cognitive activities using three fundamental skills including planning, reviewing and evaluating. Metacognition in reading consists of a reader's awareness of his or her understanding about what he or she is reading; and monitoring and organizing mechanisms for reading comprehension (Pressley & Harris, 2006). Research has shown that metacognition is an important predictor of learning and academic performance (Bradford et al., 2008; Hudson, 2007) and skilled readers had more experience in using such strategies: they had better monitoring skills, were more flexible when compared to unskilled readers; and were able to regulate and control their reading process in different situations (Horner & Shwery, 2002).

Many studies recognize the role of metacognitive awareness in reading process, whether an individual is reading in his/her native or a foreign language and metacognitive strategies are as essential for skilled reading in a second/foreign language as in the first (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). It has been shown that EFL readers use fewer and different metacognitive strategies. Also their comprehension monitoring and reading speeds are lower than native readers (Fitzgerald, 1995). Therefore, with their limited linguistic knowledge, foreign language readers often have to use more cognitive strategies to decode the meaning of a text, and at the same time, they have to monitor their own reading comprehension to ensure effective and efficient use of those strategies (Pang, 2008). Researches also revealed the positive effects of metacognitive strategies on the ability of reading in foreign language learners (Fung et al., 2003).

Several studies have investigated the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies training on learners' reading comprehension in Persian language but there has been none examining the effects of such strategies on reading performance of Persian-speaking learners in English as a foreign language. Thus, this study is performed to evaluate the effect(s) of metacognitive strategies training on students' reading performance, comprehension, speed and accuracy of reading in both Persian and English languages; and to compare their reading performance after having learned these strategies.

Research

Participants of this research included 60 female high school students (mean age: 15 years, 7 months) were selected by multistage cluster random sampling and assigned to three groups: two interventions and one wait-list control.

In order to assess the participants' reading performances in pre and post-test stages, an informal reading inventory with its validity and reliability verified, was used. This inventory was planned in Persian for one intervention group and in English for the other. Each test consisted of a short text containing 150 words that each participant read it aloud individually and afterwards answered to 10 questions about the text. The participants in two intervention groups attended eight metacognitive strategies training sessions. This intervention program was developed based on the Klingner, Morrison and Eppolito (2011) metacognitive protocol that employs mutual teaching techniques to improve reading comprehension skills and includes a set of methods developed to train students in attaining self-conscious control over the learning and problem solving process. The program includes eight 30-minutes sessions.

Results

Results of covariance analyses showed that metacognitive strategy training improved reading comprehension and reading accuracy but not speed of reading in participants of intervention groups in comparison with wait-list control groups in both Persian as the first and English as a foreign languages.

These findings support the important role that learning theories give to the teaching of metacognitive strategies. Teaching metacognitive strategies such as ignoring redundant information, identifying the main idea(s), taking notes, etc. accompanied by explanations on how to use them can result in the learners' extended reading-time consciousness and increase their metacognitive knowledge of the task. Furthermore, because of instructing these strategies, executive functions such as attention, reviewing the text and organizing information are improved in the learners which will consequently improve their comprehension. Applying these strategies will extend perceptive processes, facilitate the transfer of cognitive skills, increase of attention and guide the thinking process while learning is taking place (Reid, 2003). In addition the individuals predict what they are reading and correct these predictions, pay attention to the value of meanings, ask questions and keep their concentration while answering them (Pressley & Harris, 2006). All of these skills make students pay more attention while reading a text and read the words correctly.

On the other hand, according to the results the performed intervention had no effects on participants' speed of reading either in the first or the foreign language. Increasing attention and concentration as a consequence of improving metacognitive strategies will not increase the speed of reading and can also reduce it sometimes. Therefore it seems that metacognitive strategy instruction has no meaningful effects on reading speed.

Recommendations

Considering the results of this study, teachers, trainers, therapists and all of those involved in the educative process can make use of metacognitive strategies in order to reduce reading problems in learners. These strategies may help learners improve their reading skills and consequently, their academic achievements.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is a need to conduct similar researches which will use more standard tools to assess participants' reading performance. Considering the participants of this study were only female students of high school, conducting the present study with male students and also other students in different educational levels is suggested. Moreover, larger statistical populations and more studies are needed to examine the effectiveness of instructing such strategies on the speed of reading. Also it is suggested that future studies should examine the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies in other learning and thinking areas such as writing, calculating, problem solving, etc., and similar studies should be designed for other learner groups; and even comparative research could be conducted between different cultures or countries.

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Contact Information:
Soheila Safary
Department of Psychology of Children with Special Needs, Faculty of Education,
University of Isfahan
Isfahan, Hezarjarib St, Isfahan, Iran.
s.safary@edu.ui.ac.ir

About the Authors:
Soheila Safary is a PhD student in Psychology of Children with Special Needs at the University of Isfahan. Her research interests include issues in learning disabilities, early intervention programs, and relevant issues to the psychological problems of children with special needs.

Salar Faramarzi is an assistant professor in Psychology of Children with Special Needs at the University of Isfahan. At graduate level he majored in intellectual disabilities education and family-based early intervention programs. His research interests include special education for individuals with hearing and visual impairments as well as therapeutic methods for learning disabilities.

IMPORTANCE OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

Rasheed A. A. Hamzat

Conceptual Framework and Background

Frantic efforts are being made by experts especially those whose area of interest is improving the educational standard of learners with intellectual disabilities in every society. This special population's education in Nigerian context cannot be improved if regular and conventional methods of assessing students in general classroom setting are not upheld. Meeting the academic needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities demands more than summative types of assessment but high evidence of *formative assessment* geared toward systematic and cyclically focused on learning progressions of the targeted population.

The evidence is shown in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 as educators have increasingly turned their attention to exploring the potential of *formative assessments as one approach to* increasing students' outcomes (Blacks & William, 1998). Consequently, classroom teachers use *formative assessment* to improve learning outcomes for all students, especially those struggling with learning and students with disabilities, promote effective instructional practices, and increase coherence when aligned with other types of assessment (Gallagher & Worth, 2008; Black & William, 1998).

The conventional strategies of assessment of individuals with intellectual disabilities have been through summative types of assessment not taking into cognizance the unique abilities of such a group and the needs for learning to be more interactive towards identifying their needs and adjust teaching to fill their specific gaps. Against this background, the researcher sought to investigate the conventional and/or rather "end of the term" types of assessment employed to evaluate the academic performance of individuals with intellectual disabilities in Ilorin Kwara State, Nigeria. Regardless of the type of assessment, emphasis should be on promoting learning by targeting the students' needs. *Formative assessment* can be a powerful tool for enabling students to learn; providing feedback that goes beyond right or wrong can help students succeed (Black & Harrison, 2004).

Recently, in Nigerian educational system, students with intellectual disabilities are found in our heterogeneous classes; *formative assessment* principles and interventions remain an effective yardstick that can seamlessly weave the instructional flow, as learning becomes learner-centered. The languishing of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the country is linked to the same summative methods of assessing the learners with individuals with intellectual disabilities in heterogeneous settings. Conversely, *formative assessment* is capable of increasing cognitive abilities of students with intellectual disabilities in academic performance. This corroborates the research (Anderman, Austin, & Johnson, 2002) showing that these students use deeper cognitive strategies than other students and relate new learning to prior knowledge.

Research

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants for the study. The participants were selected from special schools that had students with intellectual difficulties. Twenty participants were used. The researcher used a questionnaire to elicit from them the types of assessment being used to determine the students' academic performance. A overall reliability alpha of (0.70) was obtained. Subjected to series of assessments continuously, the feedback was positively reflected in the students' academic performance.

Results

Improving academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities in Nigeria calls for teachers expertise in all types of assessments; most importantly, the knowledge of *formative assessment* is needed to improve the academic performance of this population. It was discovered that their level of educational attainment was improved.

Recommendation

No instruction or method is greater than the teachers who employ such instruction. Teachers of students with intellectual difficulties, especially in Nigeria, need to be exposed to *formative assessment* strategies as a means of improving the quality of academic performance of this special population. The Nigerian government, Federal, State, and Local levels should revisit the National Policies on education inculcating the needs of the students struggling to learn both found in heterogeneous and homogeneous settings.

Suggestions for Further Research

The teaching of students with intellectual disabilities calls for systematic and effective assessment procedures to promote and/or improve their curriculum. There is also a need to orientate the teachers/personnel working with this special target on the latest pedagogy of teaching a differentiated curriculum that fits the special needs of these learners.

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Contact Information:
Rasheed Alaro Adewale Hamzat
Kwara State University, Malete, Ilorin Nigeria
College of Education
Department of Special Education
rasheedalaro@gmail.com

About the Author:
Rasheed Alaro Adewale Hamzat is an assistant lecturer from Department of Special Education, Kwara State University, Malete, and Ilorin Nigeria. He is a masters' degree holder in special education and currently a PhD student at the University of Ibadan studying special education. His area of specialization is gifted and talented children and his area of research work is on methodology.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE OF QATAR

Asma Al Attiyah

Conceptual Framework and Background

There has been growing recognition of the equality and rights of women and individuals with disabilities within the conventions and international legislation within many countries. In spite of efforts to empower women in society as well as empower all men and women with disabilities, as stipulated by the Convention of Human Rights (1948) and the Convention on the Rights of Individuals with Disability, more needs to be done. Human rights are universal and do not differ for individuals with disabilities. Women in general face many aspects of discrimination, and if this is the reality of women in general, women with disabilities are exposed to even more discrimination practices (Abdullah, 2004). According to the UN Development Program (UNDP), over 1 billion individuals (15% of the world's population) live with at least one disability; 80% of them live in developing countries; disabilities are more common among women than men; and women with disabilities are more likely to experience exclusion and are more vulnerable to abuse.

A great deal of work has been done to identify and address disabilities and human rights issues specifically in relation to women (e.g., Bruce, Quinlivan, & Degener, 2002). Al Attiyah, (2006) indicated that the main problems faced by women with disabilities include the following: 1) physical and verbal violence, 2) psychological abuse that is represented via isolation and/or lack of communication, 3) economic exploitation in reference to acts that reduce a woman's ability to control property, funds and to share in inheritance, and 4) neglect of health, nutrition and personal care.

Disabled women's issues have recently gained global as well as local interest within the context of Qatar. Qatar has taken on a leadership role through its focus on education and health services and equal opportunities at work for people with disabilities. Qatar has issued rules and regulations to protect women with disabilities from abuse. Although there is full recognition of equality as a cornerstone of the communities that seek social justice and human rights, the availability of many of the laws and regulations that ensure the right to participate fully in the community, is still a work in progress.

Research

The purpose of this study was to identify the types of disabilities experienced by females and living in Qatar. Data were collected from two non-government organizations to acquire as comprehensive picture as possible (see, Al- Merekhi, & Al-Buainain (2012); Al- Merekhi & Al-Buainain (2008). What follows is the findings presented in terms of highest to lowest incidence by type of disability experienced by females living in Qatar as well as demographics concerned with education, work and marital status.

Results

Physical disabilities were found to be the most prevalent disability experienced by females living in Qatar. Intellectual *disability was the second most frequent disability reported*. Deaf and hearing impairment *was reported the third* most frequent type of disability. Visual impairment *was fifth in terms of prevalence*.

In terms of demographics in relation to the educational level of women with disabilities, it was found that only 21% could read and write, 12.2% completed primary education, 6% completed high school education, 3% completed higher education and 1.1% enrolled and completed some type of a training program. In terms of the social status of the women with disabilities, 37.4% of women with disabilities were married, 33.2% widowed and the remaining 30.4% single. In terms of work, 2.10% of women with disabilities worked outside the home, with 63.3% of those working in some type of administrative job.

Recommendations

Given the low educational achievement and low percent of women with disabilities entering the workforce, collaboration among those involved in education is of paramount importance in helping to ensure the success for women with disabilities. This can be achieved through both planning and collaboration to ensure that woman with disabilities are offered high-quality, accessible educational opportunities and assistance in transitioning from school to work.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is a need for a systematic study to investigate fully barriers to education and work for individuals with disabilities with consideration given to the type of disability. For example, given physical disabilities is the most prominent disability for females in Qatar, future research needs to investigate if lack of accessibility is limiting educational and work opportunities. Given the findings from this study, there is a need to a conduct much more comprehensive, methodologically-sound research to gain a better understanding of all educational and work-related challenges faced by women with disabilities.

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Contact Information:
Dr. Asma Al Attiyah
Qatar University
College of Education
Head, Psychological Sciences Department
Doha, Qatar P.O. Box 2713
aalattiyah@qu.edu.qa

About the Author:
Dr. Al Attiyah is an Associate Professor of Special Education and Department Head of Psychological Sciences College of Education at Qatar University. Her research focused is in the area of mental health issues, particularly in relation to children with disabilities and their families. She serves on numerous committees in Qatar related to special needs, human rights and women's issues.

AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION IN A REGULAR CLASSROOM ROUTINE: CASE STUDY

Débora Deliberato
Leila Regina d´Oliveira Paula Nunes

Conceptual Framework and Background

The concern of professionals and researchers to ensure the permanence of students with disabilities in regular schools has increased theoretical and practical actions, both in teachers' education and the implementation of programs involving partnerships between professionals from different areas (Deliberato, 2013; Nunes et al, 2011). Regarding the area of augmentative and alternative communication, the literature has showed that the use of resources and strategies involving augmentative and alternative communication systems favors not only communicative skills, but also enables the participation of nonspeaking students with disabilities in educational activities programmed by the teacher (Rocha, 2013).

The school could be an important environment to foster the necessary support for children and youth with disabilities, the use of augmentative and alternative communication systems (Von Teztchner, Brekke, Sjothun, & Grindheim, 2005). In fact, the school has two challenges: to ensure support for the communicative skills of nonspeaking students with disabilities and to ensure the participation of this student in the planned pedagogic activities in the curriculum.

Adapting the school environment to the diversity of students is an important goal, but it is a challenge given the diversity of students with disabilities. The literature has discussed the need to train teachers in the use of different resources of assistive technology. In this context, the general classroom teacher and the other students should be trained in the use of adapted resources and strategies to be able to participate in pedagogical tasks in conjunction with a disabled child. The area of augmentative and alternative communication has been an instrument for disabled child learning. Given these issues, the aim of this study was to describe the use of graphic systems in a classroom for routine childhood education through a collaborative program.

Research

For this research, we selected one teacher, 22 students, a professor from Special Educational Services (ESA) and the mother of a child with disabilities to participate in the study. The activities were carried out in a preschool in a city in Brazil. For data collection, the following instruments were used: Protocol for assessing nonspeaking students' communicative skills in family setting (Delagracia, 2007) and the protocol for assessing nonspeaking students' communicative skills in school setting (Paula, 2007). In addition to the protocols, observation of the classroom routine through a log book and filming of the activities involving

the child with disabilities were performed. The planned and organized activities were performed according to the model of action program in schools proposed by Deliberato (2013), for a period of four months.

Results

After structuring and organizing information in a written text, themes were identified according to Bardin (2004). Significant selected units were defined as theme and sub-themes, since the content analysis could overlap between them. From the written text it was possible to identify the following themes and sub-themes:

- The theme *Classroom Routine* was defined as the activities planned by the teacher and performed by the students during the school day. The sub-themes identified were: pedagogical activity and ludic activity.
- Activity was understood as several tasks in sequence, i.e., to carry out an activity, several actions are required by the person who performs it. Thus, Pedagogical Activity was defined as the accomplishment of tasks planned by the teacher and performed in the classroom routine, while Ludic Activity was the sequence of tasks when the students used different resources freely, without prior planning of the task sequence.
- Resources are understood as school materials, teaching materials, games, toys, utensils used during meals, resources used for positioning, and other materials and utensils, in addition to CDs of songs, storybooks and poetry used by the student in the school setting. Adapted resource materials were modified to the specificities of the student with disabilities including adapted pedagogical resources in order to expand her motor, perceptual, communicative and pedagogical performance.
- The definition of the theme *Mediation* refers to the role of the educator who is in the classroom, helping the children with or without disabilities in the school activities, through adaptations and differentiated materials, to develop, to learn and to experience school situations.
- The theme *Teacher Training* was defined by all theoretical, practical and theoretical-practical information carried out with the regular classroom teacher or SES teacher. On the theme *Assessment*, the following sub-themes were identified:

Assessment on Characteristics of Students: all information obtained regarding the abilities and needs of students

- Performance was defined as the production and quality of the student's action while participating in activities using the existing conventional and adapted resources in school, i.e., the results obtained by the student through her participation.
- Assessment of Working Conditions in the Classroom is the information about the physical conditions of the environment, as well as the pedagogical teaching materials used routinely.

Final Considerations

The results obtained by the analysis of the themes and sub-themes identified that all the children used the graphic system in their routine activities; the graphic system helped the children in reading the words; the teacher inserted the graphic system from the mediation of the researcher; the routine of pedagogical activities planned by the teacher facilitated the insertion of the graphic system in the classroom with the students, providing support in the context of alternative language for the students in the classroom; the resources used through graphic system favored the participation of the student with disabilities with the collaborative efforts between the researcher, the classroom teacher and SES teacher.

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Contact Information:
Débora Deliberato
Adress: R. Guanás, 70 ap 154 – CEP: 17502-560
Marilia – São Paulo
Brazil
delibera@marilia.unesp.br

About the Authors:

Débora Deliberato, PhD, is associate professor of speech language pathology in the Special Education Department of São Paulo State University – Unesp. Her current interests include technology for augmentative and alternative communication within family and school environment, special education and augmentative and alternative communication training.

Leila Regina d'Oliveira de Paula Nunes, PhD, is Titular Professor in Special Education at University of Rio de Janeiro. She has experience in Education and Psychology, working in areas such as human development, language and communication, social interaction, alternative communication, education of disabled people and experimental research methodology.

MANAGING BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS AMONG GIFTED STUDENTS THROUGH BIBLIOTHERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS

Gboyega Adelowo Adelodun, Ph.D

Background to the Study

The characteristics of gifted children often lead to social and emotional problems that can affect their emotional and social development. To understand one's gifted child completely, it is a good idea to see how his or her giftedness can influence his or her behavior. Behavioral disorders, also known as disruptive behavioral disorders, are the most common reasons that parents are told to take their children for mental health assessments and treatment. Behavioral disorders are also common in adults. If left untreated in childhood, these disorders can negatively affect a person's ability to hold a job and maintain relationships.

An emotional behavioral disorder affects a person's ability to be happy, control their emotions and pay attention in school. According to Galladet University, symptoms of an emotional behavior disorder include:
- Inappropriate actions or emotions under normal circumstances
- Learning difficulties that are not caused by another health factor.
- Difficulty with interpersonal relationships, including relationships with teachers and peers.
- A general feeling of unhappiness or depression.
- Feelings of fear and anxiety related to personal or school matters.

According to Olanrewaju (2014), behavioral disorders may be broken down into a few types which include:
- Anxiety disorders.
- Disruptive behavioral disorders
- Dissociative disorders
- Emotional disorders
- Pervasive developmental disorders

What causes a Behavioral Disorder among Gifted Persons?

Adejare (2013) is of the opinion that a behavioral disorder can have a variety of causes. According to him the abnormal behavior that is usually associated with these disorders can be traced back to biological, family and school-related factors. Some biological causes may include: Physical illness or disability, malnutrition, brain damage and hereditary factors.

Other factors related to an individual's home life may contribute to behaviors associated with a behavioral disorder:
- Divorce or other emotional upset at home
- Coercion from parents
- Unhealthy or inconsistent discipline style
- Poor attitude toward education or schooling.

Emotional and Physical Symptoms of Behavioral Disorders Among Gifted Persons

According to Boston (2006), some of the emotional symptoms of behavioral disorders include:
- Easily getting annoyed or nervous
- Often appearing angry
- Putting blame on others
- Refusing to follow rules or questioning authority.
- Arguing and throwing temper tantrums
- Having difficulty in handling frustration

Unlike other types of health issues, a behavioral disorder will have mostly emotional symptoms, with physical headache being absent. However, sometimes people suffering from a behavioral disorder will develop a substance abuse problem, which could show physical symptoms such as burnt fingertips, shaking or blood shot eyes (Adelowo, 2013).

Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of a Behavioral Disorder Among Gifted Individuals

If left untreated, a behavioral disorder may have negative short-term and long-term effects on an individual's personal and professional life. People may get into trouble for acting out, such as face suspension or expulsion for fighting, buying or arguing with authority figures. Adults may eventually lose their jobs. Marriages can fall apart due to prolong strained relationships, while children may have to switch schools and then eventually run out of options.

According to Temitope (2013), the most serious actions a person with a behavioral disorder may engage in include starting fights, abusing animals and threatening to use a weapon on others. The earlier a behavioral disorder is diagnosed and properly treated the more likely it is that a child or adult suffering from it will be able to control their behavior (Jonson 2013).

Behavior Management Strategies

Tips for Becoming an Effective Behavioral disorder Manager (Mac 2008)
-        Phrasing comments to enhance chances of compliance and build self-discipline in kids
-        Giving effective (versus ineffective) Praise.
-        Praising resistant kids.
-        Giving criticism that helps (not hurts)
-        Getting respect by giving it away.
-        Managing behavior with your instructional style.
-        Managing the behavior of groups
-        Promoting positive peer pressure in your classroom.
-        Quieting the noisy classroom
-        Quieting the talkative student
-        Raising achievement test scores
-        Remembering to focus on your initial goal (when kids get you flustered)

Ways To Reduce Behavior Problems

Gifted students generally do not develop behavior problems when they are:
(i)   Placed with a teacher who enjoys teaching gifted children and learning with them;
(ii)   Afforded frequent opportunities to learn with intellectual peers;
(iii)   Actively engaged in learning that is appropriately complex, challenging, and meaningful; and
(iv)   Provided guidance in how to understand and cope with their giftedness in society.

Recommendations

In order to successfully manage behavioral disorders among gifted students, it is recommended for parents and teachers of such children that during times of trouble, when emotions run high, they should help children to develop the skills necessary to manage their feelings, to confront unpleasant or adverse realities and to acquire greater emotional stability. In order to support children in better understanding their world, parents and teachers may have to help them come to terms with circumstances that are frightening, confusing, overwhelming, or possibly unrelated to their past experience.

Suggestion for Future Research

There is a need to carry out further researches looking into how to manage behavioral disorders among other categories of students with special needs like the visually impaired, hearing impaired, intellectually disabled ones, students with learning disabilities and so on.

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Contact Information:
Gboyega Adelowo Adelodun, Ph.D.
Gifted and Talented Unit
Department of Special Education
University of Ibadan
dradelodun2@gmail.com

About the Author:
Dr. Adelodun teaches both undergraduate and Postgraduate courses in the Department of Special Education (Gifted and Talented Unit), University of Ibadan. He has published about fifteen articles including book chapters on Gifted and Talented Education, Creativity, Counselling parents and children with special needs, Underachieving Gifted Children as well as inclusive education.

STRATEGIES FOR MAXIMUM LEARNING WITH MINIMUM STRESS

Kay D. Thomson

Conceptual Framework and Background

Students of any age are a mix of personality traits, what they have learned, and human tendencies. Even students with emotional difficulties can learn expectations if those expectations are explicitly stated, practiced, and effectively monitored and upheld. How much practice is required is often a matter of consistency and clarity of the actual expectations themselves, combined with a student's ability to learn, process the information, and internalize it.

Instructional time is a finite and valuable resource. However, instead of instructional use, it can be used up on office referrals, interactions such as repeated warnings or requests, confrontations, and documentation. Teachers spend countless hours conferencing with parents, other teachers, and administrators over a few students, while "well-behaved" ones are often neglected. Parents may also become resentful, as they sometimes feel what should be handled within the classroom and school setting is not. Little things can escalate into big things. According to Adelman and Taylor, (2005) "an estimated one-third of students fail to learn because of psychosocial problems that interfere with their ability to fully attend to and engage in instructional activities." In a poll of the American Federation of Teachers (Walker, 2004) "17 percent said they lost four or more hours of teaching time per week thanks to disruptive student behavior; another 19 percent said they lost two or three hours. In urban areas, fully 21 percent said they lost four or more hours per week. And in urban secondary schools, the percentage is 24. It's hard to see how academic achievement can rise significantly in the face of so much lost teaching time, not to mention the anxiety that is produced by the constant disruption (and by the implied safety threat), which must also take a toll on learning." In England, a survey showed "69% of members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) reported experiencing disruptive behavior weekly or more frequently" (Neill, 2001). Much of the literature suggests that it is 'low-level' frequent disruption that is the most common form of pupil misbehavior (ATL, 2010; ATL, 2011; Munn et al, 2004 and Scottish Executive 2006, both cited in Hallam and Rogers (2008), Continental Research (2004), and Ofsted (2005).

Method

Whether the disruptions are due to significant psychological and/or emotional issues, or simply an escalation or continuance of less severe behaviors, certain aspects are common to effectively increasing learning time with less behavioral disruptions. These aspects include 1) unconditional positive regard, 2) warmth and nurturing, 3) clear and specific expectations, 4) effective follow through, 5) consistency of "enforcement" 6) physical environment, and 7) communication and interaction between teacher and student(s).

Unconditional positive regard looks differently for a teacher/student relationship than a parent/child relationship. While a teacher likely doesn't "love" their students in the same sense as a parent loves their children, a teacher will like their students and can separate the student from his/her undesirable behavior(s) to let them know they are liked simply because they are members of the class. A student can get the same sense of this positive regard from the teacher who has communication, shows interest, and has involvement with the student outside of instructing academics. For instance, a teacher might ask, "How was your game Friday night?" Or, "How is your sister doing with her science project?" Showing involvement might be something like, "Do you want to practice those math facts 1 more time with me before you head to math class?" Having unconditional positive regard demonstrates warmth, caring, and nurturing.

Teachers sometimes do not understand either the importance of clear and explicit expectations, or how to create classroom rules in this manner. Expectations must be clearly defined and measurable in order to be effective. Without clarity, they are more difficult to enforce. The rules a student is most likely to follow, are the ones that are monitored and enforced. Following through with a request, expectation, or demand every time (consistency) is vital to a classroom climate in which maximum learning with minimal disruption occurs. Inconsistent follow through of expectations creates anger in the student, and can escalate smaller things into

bigger things quickly and raises frustration levels of both the student and the teacher. For example, "be quiet" can have multiple meanings. To the teacher, "be quiet" often means "silence," but to students who live in very chaotic homes, it could mean "don't yell."

The physical environment of the classroom plays a huge role in effective classroom discipline. "Energy goes where the eye flows," is a true statement. Keep distractions out of a student's range of vision during times when the teacher should be "commanding center stage." Consider special seating needs of individual students and arrange furniture with its purpose in mind. Is the classroom a lab type classroom, one in which there is a great deal of collaborative learning, or do students need to focus on the teacher or key instructional areas during a lesson? Keeping a clock in full view of the students keeps them more focused, as they are not distracted by wondering what time it is, how many minutes are left, etc.

Last but not least, it is important teachers avoid arguments and power struggles with students. In the book, *Managing the Cycle of Acting out Behavior*, by Geoff Colvin, (2004), he discusses the 7 phases of Acting-Out behavior. They are 1) calm, 2) triggers, 3) agitation, 4) acceleration, 5) peak, 6) de-escalation, and 7) recovery. Learning strategies to manage negative and acting out behavior can minimize a given incident to escalate into a higher phase.

Conclusion

Having clear and explicit expectations, along with consistent, effective follow through of enforcing those expectations are keys to effectively run classrooms with maximum learning time for students. Further, it reduces stress for both the teacher and the students, and creates more harmonious environments.

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Contact Information:
Kay D. Thomson
Awsaj Academy
Senior Curriculum Developer/Trainer
PO Box 6639
Doha, Qatar
kthomson@qf.org.qa

About the Author:
Kay Thomson draws upon her experience teaching in both public and residential settings for "troubled" and delinquent youth. While parenting foster teens, she co-wrote an emancipation program that was adopted by the Department of Social Services, and taught parenting classes for the County Probation Department.

HELPING STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES TO THINK MATHEMATICALLY

Jeremy M. Lynch
Adelaide Aukamp
Danielle Dulick
Sararose D. Lynch

Conceptual Framework and Background

There is a recent shift in the United States, driven by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), from mathematics instruction in an inclusive classroom that traditionally used teacher initiation, student response, followed by teacher evaluation to an approach that is more student centered. According to NCTM (2000 & 1991) and the CCSS for Mathematical Practice (CCSSI, 2011) kindergarten through high school mathematics instructional practices should promote mathematical discourse for all students, including students with disabilities. However, traditional mathematics instruction for students with disabilities relies, primarily, on the use of direct instruction (Swanson, Moran, Lussier, & Fung, 2014). Teachers need to understand that when working with students with disabilities, their answer (from unstructured discussion) may not provide the best information about their ability. While many pre- and in-service teachers recognize the need for active discussion during mathematical problem solving, they struggle when trying to implement it in classrooms (Lynch,

2012). The I-THINK framework promotes NCTM recommended reflective and conceptual instructional practices, such as student justification of solutions and mathematical discourse. Facilitation of I-THINK helps students to become aware of and learn to monitor and evaluate their mathematical thinking (Lynch, Lynch, & Bolyard, 2013). This information allows teachers to gain a better understanding of why students with disabilities reached a particular conclusion, and then address the successes and errors in their students' problem solving approaches. This is critical because students with disabilities included in general education classrooms are now required to justify their reasoning for solving a problem.

Research

Participants included 118 students from six fully included classrooms in grades two, three, and four (two classrooms per grade). Several disability categories were represented in the sample, including specific learning disabilities, speech/language impairments, autism spectrum disorders (verbal and non-verbal students), intellectual disabilities, ADHD, and emotional/behavior disorders, as well students identified as gifted. A quasi-experimental control group design was used to determine whether the I-THINK problem-solving framework leads to greater problem solving performance versus a structured Think-Pair-Share (TPS) framework. Post-test data consisting of four multi step "word" problems was collected and analyzed following a six week instructional cycle using the assigned framework (1 group each per grade).

Results

Paired-samples t-tests were used to determine whether there was a statistically significant mean difference between pre-test and post-test scores for both the I-THINK and TPS groups within all grades and across all grades. Data are mean ± standard deviation, unless otherwise specified. Across all grades, participants in the I-THINK groups scored higher on the post-test (43.536 ± 10.626), as opposed to the pre-test (37.464 ± 7.957), a statistically significant increase of 6.071 (95% CI, 3.295 to 8.848), $t(55) = 4.382$, $p < .001$, $d = .58$. Participants in the TPS groups scored higher on the post-test (35.702 ± 12.145), as opposed to the pre-test (31.123 ± 10.83), a statistically significant increase of 4.579 (95% CI, 2.187 to 6.971), $t(56) = 3.834$, $p < .001$, $d = .51$.

An ANCOVA was run to determine the effect of the two different problem-solving frameworks, after controlling for pre-test scores. There was a linear relationship between pre- and post-test scores for each intervention type across all three grades, as assessed by visual inspection of a scatterplot. There was homoscedasticity and homogeneity of variances across all three grades, as assessed by visual inspection of a scatterplot and Levene's test of homogeneity of variance (2nd grade $p = .561$, 3rd grade $p = .254$, and 4th grade $p = .931$), respectively. After adjustment for pre-test scores, there was a statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the frameworks for second grade, $F(1,31) = 4.769$, $p = .037$, partial $\eta^2 = .133$. Post-test scores were statistically significantly greater in the I-THINK vs. the TPS group ($p = .037$). There was also a statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the frameworks for third grade, $F(1,39) = 6.394$, $p = .016$, partial $\eta^2 = .141$. Post-test scores were statistically significantly greater in the I-THINK vs. the TPS group ($p = .016$). There was no statistically significant difference in the post-test scores between the frameworks for fourth grade, as neither group had statistically significant gains from pre- to post-test (as determined by paired sample *t*-tests). Combined across all three grades there was no statistically significant difference between the post-test scores after adjustment for pre-test scores $F(1,110) = 3.377$, $p = .750$. However, when analyzing the scores from the two grades that had significant improvements in both groups (2nd and 3rd), there was a statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the I-THINK and TPS groups, $F(1,73) = 7.404$, $p = .008$, partial $\eta^2 = .092$. Post-test scores were statistically significantly greater in the I-THINK vs. the TPS groups ($p = .008$).

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, engaging young learners, including students with disabilities educated in general education classrooms, in mathematical discourse practices using either the I-THINK or structured TPS increases students' multi-step problem solving abilities and enhances their cognitive and metacognitive functioning. However, by engaging students with the I-THINK framework they are able to make greater gains in their problem solving abilities. In both 2nd and 3rd grades, students in the I-THINK groups significantly outperformed their peers in the TPS groups on the post-test. Although results from 4th grade did not produce significant gains for either group, anecdotal records obtained from the 4th grade teachers' journals indicated social and self-confidence gains in the students' willingness to attempt complex multi-step problems. Further discussion with the 4th grade teachers revealed that they believed the lack of gains could be attributed to student frustration with the content and by placing too much pressure on the students to perform well for the study. Nonetheless, the overall results of the study support the use of strategies that promote discussion of mathematical concepts when solving complex problems.

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Contact Information:
Jeremy M. Lynch
Slippery Rock University,
1 Morrow Way, 212D McKay Education Bldg.
Slippery Rock, PA 16057

Author Information
Dr. Jeremy Lynch, Assistant Professor of Special Education at Slippery Rock University, has an earned doctorate in special education from West Virginia University. Jeremy's research interests include mathematics instruction and instructional technologies for students with disabilities. Before entering high education, Jeremy was a special educator in West Virginia public schools.

Dr. Sararose Lynch, Assistant Professor of Mathematics Education at Westminster College, has an earned doctorate in curriculum and instruction from West Virginia University. Sararose's research interests include mathematics instructional strategies. Before entering high education, Sararose was a mathematics educator in West Virginia and Maryland public schools.

Danielle Dulick, Graduate Research Assistant, Slippery Rock University, has earned bachelors degrees in special education and early childhood education and a master's degree as a Reading Specialist. Danielle holds professional certification in Elementary Education and Special Education.

Adelaide Aukamp, Graduate Research Assistant, Slippery Rock University, has an earned bachelors' degree in early childhood education and a master's degree as a Reading Specialist. Adelaide holds professional certification in Elementary Education and currently serves as an education service provider with AmeriCorps.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER-TRAINING PROGRAMS: DO LICENSURE SCORES/GPA PREDICT TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS?

Dr. Holly Pae
Dr. Richard Combes

Teacher Effectiveness

The question facing education reformers in teacher preparation is determining how pre-service teacher candidate effectiveness can be accurately measured in order to improve the teacher workforce. Teacher quality is predicated on the notion that an educator's ability to successfully deliver instruction in the classroom hinges essentially on proficiency in knowledge and skills obtained prior to entry into profession, thereby generating the need for licensure programs. Commonly the institutions gauge candidates' performance in terms of: a) the completion of a state-approved program of study, b) the grade point average (GPA) earned for each course required, and c) the score earned on tests for licensure. Given these prerequisites, one would assume that an examination of the criteria would serve as a means to verify Program efficacy and common qualities achieved among its graduates who are now special educators.

Method

This study investigates the utility of two metrics currently employed to determine teacher candidates' eligibility for licensure: GPA and Praxis II® scores. We identify which course GPAs achieve a statistical correlation with the state required Praxis II® examinations' scores at a level considered significant.

Participants, Materials, and Procedure

As a means to control the threats for bias and inconsistency associated with other studies that examined GPAs, this study uses longitudinal data (2000-2012) representing candidates' GPA performance from 10 graduation cohorts of the same program. These graduates all completed coursework taught by same two professors in six of the seven professional LD Program courses the grades for which were used in this study. A total of 92 student performances are included in this study; all participants represented met the criteria for certification and are employed special education classroom teachers.

Design and Analysis

The Pearson-r correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength of relationship between the GPA and test score variables. Seven courses' GPAs are included: LD Characteristics (Char), LD Methods (Meth), Special Education Assessment (As), LD Curriculum (Curr), LD Reading (Read), LD Language (Lang), and Behavior Management (BM). The GPAs are based on a 4.0 scale (A = 4, B+ = 3.33, B = 3, C+ = 2.33 and C = 2). Candidates cannot continue in the LD Program with Program grades lower than a C. The grades were compared with two Praxis II® tests. The Education of Exceptional Children (Core) includes three sub-tests: Domain I: Understanding Exceptionalities (UE), Domain II: Legal and Societal Issues (LS), and Domain III: Delivery of Services to Students with Disabilities (DEL), whereas the Education of Exceptional Students LD exam includes the sub-tests: Domain I: Learner Characteristics- Historical & Professional Context (LC), Domain II: Delivery of Services (DEL), and Domain III: Problem Solving Exercises (PSE). The Pierson-r correlations of the 7 courses' GPAs by the 4 Praxis II® scores (total, Domain I, II, III) generated a matrix of two 28 pair-wise tests.

An analysis to measure significance between the GPA and Test results was performed to determine the probability that the observed results would be highly unlikely under the null hypothesis (i.e., no statistically significant correlations between the course GPAs and Praxis II® scores). The P-value is set at 0.05 (5%). Thus, if a p-value was found to be less than 0.05, then the result would be considered statistically significant and the null hypothesis would be rejected.

Results

All coursework GPAs included in this study had a weak to moderate relationship with the candidates Praxis II® Core Test performance, including the total GPAs that were compared to the tests' three domain scores. The correlations between four of the seven course Total GPAs and the Praxis II Core Test were significant (Char, As, Read, and Lang). In terms of the subtests, the UE had a correlation at a significant level with the Read GPA as well as with the Total GPA. The DEL subtest had a correlation of significance with the Char, Read, and Total GPA scores.

The correlations between the Praxis II® LD Tests and the LD Program coursework were weak to moderate for four of the classes (Char, Meth. As, and Curr). Three classes (Curr, Meth, and As) had a correlation with the Test's Total or Domain scores that are considered significant. The Lang, Read, and the BM coursework had no relationship with the test's scores.

Discussion

Correlations exist between the course GPAs and Praxis II® total and domain scores. In several cases these relationships are statistically significant. The recognition of these correlations provides a starting point for examining the Program's content. Since all participants in this study are employed classroom teachers, the GPA and test score correlations may best signify important content that impacts teacher effectiveness.

Praxis II® Core. The Praxis II® Core test purports to examine teacher's knowledge of the basic principles of special education. This may explain why the LD Characteristic, Assessment, and Total GPAs produced a significant correlation indicating a moderate positive relationship with the Core Test's total score. The findings confirm that effective teachers are and must be knowledgeable about their field. Teacher trainers in turn need to provide at least one class that establishes the candidates' knowledge of special education and its practices.

The Praxis II® Core Test also focuses on one's ability to apply knowledge through teaching. Curiously, the Reading course GPAs had the greatest number of moderate correlations (Total, UE, and DEL scores) in comparison to all of the other classes and only the Core Test. Unlike the other courses, this and the Language class incorporate a field-experience in a local school. The participants' moderate GPA and Core Test score correlations may reflect the positive impact that this practice has upon one's competencies in areas such as Understanding Exceptionalities (UE) and Delivery of Services (DEL). Teacher training programs thereby may enrich the candidates' skills by providing coursework that includes field experiences directly linked with the content of the Program's courses.

Praxis II® LD Test Considerations. The LD Methods, LD Characteristics, and Assessment GPAs each had at least one moderate correlation with the LD Test that is at a significant level. Whereas the LD Characteristics and Assessments classes are knowledge-based courses, the LD Methods class prepares candidates with knowledge and skills of the practices associated with behaviorist theory and its model of teaching (i.e., direct instruction, task analysis, and precision teaching). The emphasis on this theory and its application in meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities is important.

Conclusion

This study validates that a relationship exists between course requirements and tests. Moreover, because the coursework aligns with specific professional standards, this comparison singles out the qualities that teacher-training programs must cultivate in order to produce highly effective teachers: 1. Equip future teachers with the basic knowledge of the field, 2. Provide field-based

experiences to accompany skill-based class curricula, and 3.Teach instructional practices grounded in theory and proven by research.

Contact Information:
Dr. Holly Pae
School of Education
University of South Carolina Upstate
800 University Way
Spartanburg, SC 29349
hpae@uscupstate.edu

About the Authors:
Dr. Holly Pae is an Associate Professor in the School of Education and the Program Coordinator for the Special Education Learning Disability Program at the University of South Carolina Upstate. Her research interests include program accreditation, research-based practices, and school reform. She teaches the upper-division level coursework in Learning Disabilities.

Dr. Richard Combes is an Associate Professor in the History, Political Science, Philosophy, and American Studies at the University of South Carolina Upstate. A teacher of Philosophy, his coursework includes Contemporary Moral Issues, Ethics, and Logic. He has collaborated in several projects that examine special education services and best practice.

ENHANCING VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM THROUGH HIPPOTHERAPY

Abiodun Adewunmi
Olaniyi Lawal

Conceptual Framework and Background

Children with autism often demonstrate significant challenges in the areas of communication and social interaction. These challenges can range from mild to severe, depending on the cognitive abilities of the individual. Children with Austin Spectrum Disorder (ASD) often exhibit difficulty developing language skills and understanding what others say to them. They also have difficulty communicating non-verbally, such as through hand gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions, making them have problems with communication, and thus develop negative or poor social interaction.

Teaching children with ASD how to communicate is essential in helping them reach their full potential, and having full benefit of their psycho-social world. To this end, several strategies have been developed over the years to manage communication difficulties in children. These strategies include Memory Aids. By using images and phrases that are brief and simple, memory aids seek to capitalize on patients' automatic communication abilities, with the goal of improving the structure and quality of communication with others (Bourgeois & Mason, 1996).

Hippotherapy is a form of animal-assisted physical, occupational and speech therapy in which a therapist uses the characteristic movements of a horse to provide carefully-graded motor and sensory input. A foundation is established to improve neurological function and sensory processing, which can be generalized to a wide range of daily activities. Hippotherapy offers opportunity for improved postural symmetry, reduced abnormal muscle tone, social interaction, and improved ability to express thoughts and needs.

Hippotherapy is commonly used for children with ASD. The horse offers a peak experience with total unique physical experience as in a joyous social environment. Outcomes in children with ASD have been studied in adaptive horseback riding lessons. Results indicated that children with ASD displayed improvement in sensory processing, direct attention, and social motivation (Bass, Duchowny & Llabre, 2009). Also, it has been found that interventions focusing on motor abilities, such as hippotherapy, can potentially result in increases in social competence and improve participation in children with ASD (Hilton, Zhang, White, Klohr & Constantino, 2011).

Research

The participants for the study were persons with Autism, attending Alba Home School, Jericho, Ibadan-Nigeria, which were purposefully selected, and randomly distributed into two groups of experimental and control, consisting of five participants each. The participants were all males, and were aged 11- 20 years (sub-categorized into 11-15 years, and 16-20 years). A 3 x 2 factorial matrix was used to determine the significant main effect of treatment and age on the participants, and the interaction effect of treatment and the age on the verbal communication skills of the participants. Instrument used, in addition to the hippotherapy treatment, was the Reading Comprehension Skill Test (RCST) for persons with Autism. The researchers developed this instrument for pre-test and post-test measures. The comprehension passage contained in the text was extracted from English language syllabus and textbooks of the participants.

The RCST was divided into four parts of A-D. Part A dealt with participants' personal data and demographic information. Part B comprised five words taken from the comprehension passage while part C comprised five questions taken from the comprehension passage. Part D measured participants' ability on verbal communication based on the passage by using five short answer questions and five short alternative answer questions in the comprehension passage. Any participant who was able to identify and pronounce correctly all the underlined words was awarded ten marks in part B while in part C, participants were awarded twenty-five marks for correct answers. The RCST yielded a 0.72 reliability coefficient. The participants in the experimental group received 45-minute hippotherapy sessions per week, under direction of a horse handler, which included donning of the helmet, preparation to mount, approximately 30 minutes on the horse, and time for dismount. All the participants mounted at a portable mounting ramp and dismount to the ground. Teachers were present in the arena during all hippotherapy sessions, with the motive of giving assistance to the participants.

Each participant (rider) in the experimental group was accompanied by one trained horse leader, two trained side walkers, and one therapist. Each session started by leading the horse in a counter-clockwise and clockwise motion around the perimeter of the arena, first at a walk and then at a trot. Obstacles were laid in the same place for each session, and the horse and participant walked over poles and weaved through cones. Posters were placed on the walls of the arena to encourage visual scanning and to offer opportunities for language. The therapist referred to these pictures and encouraged the participant to respond verbally while riding. The participants in the control group did not receive any treatment, but were pre and post-tested on the RCST.

Results

With the use of one-way between-subject Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), the main effect of treatment was significant, which implied that participants in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group. Between-subject ANCOVA revealed there was no main effect of age, i.e. age does not affect performance in the sessions. Further, there was no significant interaction effect of age and treatment in the experimental group.

Recommendations

The task of enhancing the communication skills of persons with autism is a Herculean task that should not be restricted to a single professional, but should involve collaboration among professionals for purposes of best practices. Therefore, therapists are encouraged to adopt the use of hippotherapy to improve the communication skills in persons with autism.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is need for other treatment packages to be experimented on, to find out the influence of such treatment on verbal communication of persons with autism, and also, if it would be more effective than hippotherapy. More children with autism should be used in future study. Longer period of therapeutic sessions should be considered, in order to determine any long-term influence.

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Contact Information
Abiodun Adewunmi
University of Ibadan
Faculty of Education
Department of Special Education
P.M.B.1(001) U.I. Post Office, U.I.
pasionsabbey37@yahoo.com

About the Authors:
Abiodun Adewunmi is a special education lecturer at the University of Ibadan. At graduate level, she majored in Learning Disabilities. Her research interests include issues in Learning Disabilities, Auditory Processing Disorders, and education of learners with special needs in Nigeria. She has her doctorate in view.

Olaniyi Lawal is a graduate of special education, where he majored in Learning Disabilities. His research interests include Autism, and he plans for a career in the area of management of the disorder.

UNDERSTANDING AND ADVOCATING FOR IEP ACCOMMODATIONS

Diane D. Painter, Ph.D.
Katherine L. Valladares, M.S. Ed.

Conceptual Framework and Background

Students who receive special education services in the Unites States are not always aware that their Individual Education Program (IEP) guides the delivery of their special education program with specific supports and services. In particular, they do not always know that they have a right to certain accommodations to assist them in being academically successful. Some students who do know that accommodations are listed in their IEPs are not comfortable talking with their teachers about them, or the students lack the knowledge and skills needed to advocate for those accommodations in the classroom or during testing situations. Deborah McCarthy states that students need to learn to manage their disabilities. In helping the students do so, educators need to encourage students to learn about self-advocacy (McCarthy, 2007).

Purpose of the Project

When completing a Master of Science in Education-Special Education program at Shenandoah University, students are expected to develop an awareness of the issues prevalent in today's society affecting schools and communities. The main goal of one graduate student's capstone project was to determine from her students and their parents if there were any issues related to their understanding of IEP accommodations and if her students advocate on their "own" for these accommodations. In her literature research on the effectiveness of IEPS, the graduate student noted that developing advocacy skills is vital for students with disabilities life in every aspect of their lives. Teaching self-advocacy skills at a young age will eventually lead to students automatically advocating for themselves without experiencing any embarrassment or agony and without parental assistance (Alper, Schloss, & Schloss, 1995).

Project Implementation

The project began when the graduate student held an IEP-Accommodations Informational Event one evening for parents and their students who have IEPs. Sixteen families of students with disabilities were invited to attend this IEP session during a seventh grade showcase event at the school where families viewed students' work that was completed during the first academic term. However, only three families chose to attend the IEP session.

Before the event began, parents and students completed a short *ticket in form* to determine what they currently knew about IEP-Accommodations, such as the reasons for the accommodations and how they relate to helping students succeed in school. Only one family indicated an awareness of the accommodations the student had listed in her IEP document and why the accommodations were recommended for her. The other two students knew that they had a calculator and read aloud accommodations for tests and quizzes, but they stated that they were embarrassed to be pulled out of class by school staff members for read aloud sessions. After discussing with the students why they have the read aloud accommodation and how it helps them, it appeared to the graduate student that the students were more open to learning more about their other accommodations.

What Was Learned

During this IEP information session, it was noted that two students who did not initially understand their accommodations attentively listened to the one student who explained what she knows about her own accommodations. This open and frank dialogue led to a discussion about how students can advocate for themselves since the girl was so frank about how she advocates for herself. In addition, the girl's parents shared that it was important to them that their daughter understands her goals and accommodations so she can work towards accomplishing the goals. The girl's parents stated that when their daughter's IEP was initially written, they were afraid that their daughter's accommodations would not be available unless she asked for them. They wanted to ensure that the girl's accommodations were always available to support her academically. In addition, they stated they are very proud of their daughter for advocating for herself, and for sharing her experiences with the other students during this IEP information meeting. The mothers of the students who initially had little understanding of accommodations or the importance of self-advocacy stated in their *exit ticket forms* that they were happy they had come to the meeting, and as a result, they felt much more knowledgeable about their own children's accommodations and the importance of self-advocacy.

Next Steps

When the graduate student shared the results of the event with other educators at her school, it was decided that the school would host each school term an informal afternoon session for students so they can share their success stories regarding accommodations and self-advocacy. It is important to the staff that students have a safe place to ask questions so the educators can address any concerns, and students can share self-advocacy tips with one another. The two students who learned about their accommodations at the initial IEP information evening promised to check in with their case manager when progress reports are sent home to discuss how they are doing when it comes to self-advocacy, and review the effectiveness of their accommodations.

Final Thoughts

When asked what she learned from this project, the graduate student stated:

> I think that if we were to have informational sessions, or check in with the students quarterly, they would feel more comfortable seeking help when they recognize that they need additional support. I am going to try and keep the information sessions going to assist in helping the students at my school become strong self-advocates, and to arm them with the knowledge of their accommodations to be successful not only in school, but to be successful in whatever is in store for them in the future.

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Contact Information:
Diane D. Painter, Ph.D.
School of Education and Human Development -Shenandoah University
20 S. Cameron St. Room 119
Winchester, VA 22601 (USA).
dpainter@su.edu

About the Authors:
Diane D. Painter, Ph.D., chairs the Curriculum and Instruction Department and heads the M. S. Education- Special Education program.

Katherine L. Valladares completed this IEP project as a capstone experience for her graduate degree, conferred in May 2015. She is a special education teacher at Rippon Middle School, Prince William County Public Schools located in Woodbridge, Virginia (USA).

ENHANCING DIGITAL LITERACY OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Kelly Ling Li Peng
Zuraidah Noordin

Background

Literacy is traditionally understood as the ability to read and write (Merriam-Webster.com, 2014). The meaning of literacy has been expanded to include the ability to view, design, speak and listen in a way that allows learners to communicate effectively and to make sense of the world (UNESCO, 2006). The advent of technology has brought about a major shift to the educational landscape in school where literacy has expanded to include skills to access knowledge through the use of technology and the ability to assess complex contexts (UNESCO, 2006). The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in classrooms to support learning for both mainstream and special needs schools has been an emerging trend in the past decades (Educators Technology and Mobile Learning, 2014). Along with the term ICT, the term digital literacy has emerged which can be defined as the ability to interpret and design nuanced communication across fluid digital forms (Heick, 2014). While clearly many aspects of understanding digital literacy requires higher levels of cognitive competence, there is a need to moderate the degree of complexity and/or pace of learning for learners with special needs due to the day-to-day challenges which include impaired handwriting skills, attention and concentration span deficits as well as social and emotional difficulties.

TPACK Framework

In Singapore, the Ministry of Education emphasises on the use of ICT in mainstream and special needs schools and integrating ICT into classroom teaching. In collaboration with the National Institute of Education, a trans-disciplinary thinking has been developed to foster the use of technologies in teaching and learning of the 21st century. The Technological, Pedagogical, Content Knowledge (TPACK) has been introduced as a framework to enrich and transform classroom learning (Office of Education Research, 2010). TPACK approach is teacher-centric, formulated by Mishra and Koehler (2006) to characterise teacher knowledge with respect to integrating ICT into teaching and learning activities.

TPACK is a framework that combines three knowledge areas: (1) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), (2) Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK) and (3) Technological Content Knowledge (TCK). This framework looks at how trans-disciplinary thinking works together to increase learners' motivation and make the content more accessible to learners. This framework rests upon the underlying assumptions where educator's knowledge is ever expanding through continual research and

professional development and optimal learner outcomes can be achieved using a balanced combination of technological know-how, pedagogical experimentation and content mastery (Cox, 2008).

There are an inadequate number of research papers on the use of TPACK in special education. Stetter and Hughes (2010) concluded that using computer-assisted instructions to improve reading comprehension for learners with special needs have positive effects on the learners. In another example Lyublinskaya and Tournaki (2013) examined TPACK through developing lesson plans for special math and science education.

The Application of TPACK in Special Needs School

In Singapore, a preliminary study on the use of TPACK in a special needs school to enhance digital literacy of learners with special needs has resulted with positive effects. The special needs school has decided to integrate ICT into their literacy education for a cohort of senior students. Traditional classroom settings with didactic approaches to teaching alongside rote learning challenged the learners' ability to comprehend the content presented to them, and the teachers' ability to maintain interest and attention in the classroom. The only motivational mechanism used to entice learning was the colourful pages of the textbooks used. After rounds of discussions with respective subject heads and teachers-in-charge, and engaging the help of external ICT consultants, the school arrived at a consensus and agreed to adopt Microsoft PowerPoint as the ICT platform to communicate its content knowledge to the learners in a new and engaging way. Customised literacy courseware was developed to engage and enhance the learners' ability to understand the subject matters. Microsoft PowerPoint's Animation feature was used to animate images (scanned and cropped from relevant textbooks) to represent curriculum content such as action words; and voices were recorded, converted and embedded into the courseware to enable learners to follow along while listening to the program.

In the sample study described above, the following intersections of the TPACK were demonstrated:
- Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK): Educators equipped the school administration with expert advice on feasible approaches for teaching the intended literacy content.
- Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK): External ICT consultants presented the school with MS PowerPoint as the ICT solution to teach the intended literacy content.
- Technological Content Knowledge (TCK): In consultation with external ICT consultants, MS PowerPoint's Animation features were adopted. Images were being animated and embedded with appropriate audio. Learners received responses through hyperlink features in the program. The courseware was also designed into bite-size PowerPoint modules to allow self-pace learning.

Conclusion of Using TPACK in Special Needs School

The educators of the school have managed to demonstrate a good degree of understanding in respect to the integration of ICT into teaching and learning activities. They were able to address the learners' level of learning abilities by providing them with the appropriate content while teaching them the customised courseware. Learners were able to hear the content several times and also repeat until they fully understood before moving to the next module. Headsets were given to learners so that they could better focus on learning the intended content. On the other hand, learners who were able to follow the content without much repetition can progress to the next module on their own without having to wait for others. The courseware has proven to be a success as it addresses different literacy needs for a classroom with different learning abilities.

Future Recommendations

The ability to read and write in today's complex world is often not enough (UNESCO, 2006) for learners with special needs to communicate effectively and make sense of the world. ICT has been shown as an effective enabler in school curriculum and structured programmes, to improve the level of digital literacy of learners with special needs. This is a positive move whereby learning can be brought to the next level where learners can learn on-the-go and not be constraint only in classroom environment. With new development of smart devices such as smartphones and tablets, their functions can double up to support learning for learners with special needs. With the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), every learner will be an engaged learner and meet the desired outcomes of their educational goals.

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Contact Information:
Kelly Ling Li Peng
Society for the Physically Disabled, Singapore
kelly29ling@gmail.com

About the Authors:
Kelly Ling has been a Senior Trainer with SPD (Singapore) since 2009. She is an ACTA-certified Trainer and Accredited Tester for ICDL Asia. Kelly oversees vocational training programmes ranging from ICT to Soft Skills for Work Preparation. She is passionate about transforming the lives of PWDs via vocational training.

Zuraidah Noordin is a Senior IT Trainer who has worked with SPD (Singapore), and has more than 20 years of experience in training. She is a firm believer in the value of lifelong learning and has deep passion in helping the special needs through modalities of technology integration with education.

PARENTS OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN'S EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Iwona Jagoszewska

Conceptual Framework and Background

In the Polish system of education, the law guarantees learning opportunities in all types of schools, according to the individual developmental and educational needs and predispositions of all children with disabilities, including those who are deaf. The parents (or legal guardians) are responsible for selecting the most appropriate educational establishment for their children with hearing loss; it is also up to them to decide on their children's school career, the language of communication, and contacts with peers. The contemporary situation in the education of people who are deaf is the result of changes introduced over the years. It should be particularly noted that on November 17th 2010 the Ministry of National Education introduced a regulation governing rules for the organization of special education in kindergartens and schools - public or integration (Ministry of National Education, 2010).

Although in recent years much has changed in Polish special education, parents of Deaf children still face many difficult choices regarding the education system. Also preparation for school readiness of hard of hearing children seems to be an important issue (Jagoszewska, 2011). This reference points to certain expectations of parents towards the education system. For example, differences resulting from parents' own situation as hearing people or as Deaf, as well as expectations of parents to communicate with their own Deaf child and their opinion on the possibilities and limitations of integration process in the Polish education system. Integration means, among others, feeling a rightful member of society. Unless we fulfill this condition, we cannot achieve full integration of the deaf in the world of hearing people (Korzon, 2002; Jagoszewska, 2014). A child who is hard of hearing should spend most of his/her time in the environment of hearing people.

Parents of children with disabilities (including the ones who are hard of hearing) choose more often a local school in the area in which they live as a place of education for their children (Bogucka & Żyro, 2006). Integration has both supporters and opponents. However, there is no doubt that integration is especially important for parents of children learning in smaller localities, where access to special or integrative education is limited.

Deaf children's parents are well aware of the fact that we have not reached a satisfying agreement regarding a common language for hearing and non-hearing people yet. Hearing people use a sound language and non-hearing people use a sign language. At a stage of primary education in mass schools, school syllabi and handbooks refer to, among others, sign alphabet of non-hearing people. However, practical activities encounter a lot of problems, even though it does not require a lot of time or any special skills. We expect people with hearing impairment to acquire skills of using a sound language, which is not always successful in spite of many efforts and long-lasting rehabilitation. Also important in the education system and integration process is how approaches are introduced, as well as agreement between participants, conviction regarding the correctness of changes, and legal acts helping integration. This process is introduced with difficulties, because on the one hand the integration process of non-hearing people is similar as for all people with disabilities. On the other hand it is peculiar to the functioning of people who are hard of hearing people. An example of this can be expressing extremely ambiguous opinions and demanding, as follows: special privileges and equal social opportunities at the same time, integration actions and isolation at the same time (they group themselves willingly

with people similar to them), broadening possibilities of integrative education and demands of establishing schools for the deaf only, especially on higher levels of education. If we promote a right to education and full access to education, we should consider if all schools and institutions connected with education are prepared well to implement integrative education.

Research

This study surveyed 45 parents from schools that offered education for Deaf children; among them 23 were deaf and 22 were not. There were parents with deaf children only and parents who had both hearing and deaf children. The questionnaires of the survey were adjusted to the two groups of parents: deaf and hearing. The surveys were anonymous. The interview was introduced to improve the understanding of parents' expectations towards the education system.

Discussion of the Results

Expectations of parents of deaf or hard of hearing children about the education system are different because of their personal situation as hearing or as deaf people as well as their complex experiences in raising children attending special, mass and integration schools. Deaf parents most common choices for the education of their Deaf children are those that in the future could help the child to get a profitable profession, find a good job, live independently, and start a family. Deaf parents often are considering school rankings, learning opportunities in a very good school, or the need to complete the higher levels of education as less important. Hearing parents' expectations are higher, but they rarely try to solve them themselves. They are expecting that the teachers will provide a very comprehensive support for their Deaf child. They believe that in a well-organized system of education teachers have the best knowledge and would help their Deaf child to reach at least the level of matriculation. This involves, among others, the fact that the hearing parents expect their children to be like other hearing children.

Conclusion

The role of parents in the education of the Deaf child obliges them to take any action to improve their child's functioning in the system of education. The whole world has already adopted a focus on conducting broad rehabilitation, social integration, and normalization or inclusion of non-hearing persons. However, we can still improve our actions and change our behavior and expectations towards education system. Considering conditions of civilizational progress and globalization, building an integrated society based on the right to be separated and different is still a challenge. In our social reality, the parents of Deaf children still encounter a lot of obstacles which make it difficult for them to make a full use of their rights in the system of education. These difficulties result from, among others, differentiated parent's expectations. Although a lot has changed in a cognitive attitude towards people who are hard of hearing, there are still a lot of myths and stereotypes concerning them. Both the parents and the Deaf children live with a disability. The specificity of deafness has significant impact on the functioning of the families who often require support for their care and educational functions. Therefore, it is vital to establish cooperation between parents and proper institutions and specialists in the education system. Hearing dysfunction requires intensification of parents' actions in the field of recognizing and developing the strengths of the Deaf child.

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Contact Information:
Iwona Jagoszewska
University of Wroclaw
Institute of Pedagogy
1 Dawida Str.
50-527 Wroclaw, Poland
iwaja@wp.pl

About the Author:
Iwona Jagoszewska is academic teacher at the University of Wroclaw and Surdopedagog, sign language translator. Her doctor thesis "Education and social adaptation of deaf youth employment in Norway". Her research interests include issues in Deaf education and communication.

INDIVIDUALS' LEARNING POTENTIAL OF POLISH AND TAIWANESE PRESCHOOLERS IN DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT: COMPARATIVE STUDY

Ewa Maria Kulesza
Chiu-Hsia Huang

Conceptual Framework and Background

L. S. Vygotsky's theory of the "Zone of Proximal Development" is among the leading and most intensely explored educational concepts in many countries. The psychologist claims that instruction should anticipate development; therefore, the teacher's task is to give the student such problems that require his/her proximal development potential to be activated to be solved. Effectiveness of such approach is confirmed in international research (Brown & Ferrara, 1994) and in Polish research (Kulesza, 2004). Vygotsky's idea of development zones will be the basis of assessment of individuals' potential in preschool-aged children, which will be taken in the present study.

Individuals' potential is intended to be measured with the task-support-task procedure, which is known as a test-teach-test procedure in literature and often named "dynamic assessment". Instructional diagnosis usually uses two types of child learning: by observation and by imitation. The model to be imitated is the teacher and the problem solving strategy he/she demonstrates - based on A. Bandura's (1977) model of social learning.

Before cognitive achievement of children from different cultural backgrounds can be examined empirically, certain conceptual assumptions need to be established. It is assumed that Taiwanese and Polish children share characteristics concerning their functioning in task situations. Firstly, it is assumed that they learn by observation and imitation mainly; secondly, that they react to social stimuli in a similar way; and thirdly, knowledge of preschool children, regardless of their cultural background, is recorded in procedures first of all (implicit); fourthly, as the child develops, his/her knowledge becomes internalized and recorded as explicit. The tasks that will be offered to children in this study are action tasks, so they show the store of procedural knowledge above all.

Research

The research aims to determine the scope in which the cognitive achievements and individuals potential of Polish and Taiwanese children with normal development differ/are the same, and the theoretical and practical significance of this scope for diagnosis and cognitive development support. Particularly, the research aimed to answer: 1. Which tasks fall within the area of the Zone of Actual Development? 2. Which problems are solved at the level of the Zone of Proximal Development? 3. Which tasks are too difficult and fall within the area of the Zone of Distal Development? Group under study: 150 Polish children and 304 Taiwanese children at the developmental age of three to six years.

In the study is used a model of dynamic assessment based on Vygotsky's (2004) concept of zone of proximal development, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, and Case's (1985) concept of cognitive change.The procedure has the aspect of instructional diagnosis that is dynamic and sensitive to the problems encountered by the child while doing the tasks. This investigation applies a method of diagnositic experiment and test-technique that duplicates Kulesza' s (2004, 2011) studies. In this study will be used a valid and reliable tool developed by Kulesza - set of 44 tasks - validated based on the population of Polish children. The tool was adapted to the population of Taiwanese children.

Results

Studies conducted in 2012 and 2013 (Huang, Lo, Kulesza et al., 2013, Huang, Kulesza, Lo et al., 2012,) revealed that the reliability Cronbach's α of 3, 4, 5 and 6 years Taiwanese preschoolers is 0.708, 0.904, 0.967 and 0.847 respectively (the data from 2013). Psychometric analysis shows that the cognitive assessment is reliable, consistent and stable. Therefore, the set of tasks can be applied to the population of Taiwanese preschoolers without any significant changes related to cultural differences.

All Polish and Taiwanese preschoolers have performed the tasks appropriate for a given age group. Data analyses made by Huang, Lo, Kulesza and others (2012, 2013) indicate that over 65% of the tasks were performed by Polish and Taiwanese preschoolers independently, i.e. in the Actual Development Zone. In particular, 3-year- olds: 79.3% (2012), 80.3% (2013) Taiwanese and 88.8% (2012) Polish children; 4-year-olds: 70.4% (2012), 72.3% (2013) Taiwanese and 74.2% (2012) Polish children; 5-year-olds: 73.1% (2012), 65.8% (2013) Taiwanese and 80.0% (2012) Polish children: 6-year-olds: 73.6% (2012), 78.8% (2013) Taiwanese and 88.9% (2012) Polish children. Although studies have found lower results of Taiwanese preschoolers, that was not statistically significant differences between Taiwanese and Polish children. This is the proof that that the tasks are not affected by culture.

Our study indicates that 10.6% of tasks were completed with assistance (Proximal Development Zone) by 3 to 6 years old Polish preschoolers and 17.8% (2012) and 18.1% (2013) of tasks by 3 to 6 years old Taiwanese preschoolers. In particular, results of Polish children age groups performed the tasks in Proximal Development Zone (2012): 3-year-olds - 7.6%, 4-year-olds - 13.3%,

5-year-olds - 16.6% and 6-year- olds - 4.9%; results of Taiwanese children age groups performed the tasks in Proximal Development Zone (2012): 3-year-olds- 14.6%, 4-year-olds -18.3%, 5- year-olds -19.2%, and 6-year-olds- 18.9%. It was also found that 6.43% of Polish (2012) and 8.2% (2012) of Taiwanese children did not complete the tasks (Distal Development Zone).

Implication/Recommendation

Dynamic assessment enables the teacher to look at the child's learning potential that makes it easier to plan the work that supports the child's development. In addition, a left-slanting distribution of the results in each Taiwanese and Polish age-group allows the recommendation of this assessment for detection of developmental delays in preschool children.

Suggestion for Future Research

Although research showed no statistically significant differences between the Polish and Taiwanese children, the observed disparities, however, especially in the area of tasks performed with help, suggest the need for further research that would explain these differences. Moreover research using dynamic assessment should be extended to population of children from other cultural backgrounds. It would also be valuable to take such study in children with intellectual disability, because the tool was designed with a view to this particular group.

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Contact Information:
Ewa Maria Kulesza
The Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education
Special Education Institute, Therapy Education Department
Szczesliwicka 40, 02-353 Warsaw, Poland
ekulesza@aps.edu.pl

About the Authors:
Ewa Maria Kulesza is an associate professor at Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw. She got Ph.D. in Special Education at Hercen National Pedagogical University in Russia and habilitation at Warsaw University. Her interests include issues in assessment and intervention for preschool age children with developmental delays.

Chiu-Hsia Huang is an assistant professor at the Department of Special Education at National Pingtung University of Education. She got Ph.D. in Special Education in the US. Her research interests include issues in learning and intellectual disabilities.

ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES OF STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE NEEDS IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS

Ahon Adaka T.
Ugo, A. Elizabeth

Introduction

Since the convergence of the 1994 Salamanca World Education Conference and its declaration, Inclusive Education has been given a global acclaim as a better option for education of persons with disabilities. According to Ozoji (as cited by Oluka and Egbo, 2014) it is meant to ensure improvement of student learning outcomes and dismantle barriers to access in ordinary schools.

Okeke-Oti (2009) contends that inclusion is an educational placement which de-emphasizes exclusion and emphasizes the restructuring of institutions (schools), classrooms and approaches to instruction to meet the needs of all learners. For this to be achieved calls for appropriate means of assessing the learning outcomes of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms. In other words, alternative assessment becomes the norm in assessing learning outcomes in inclusive classes. This refers to any form of assessment in which the student creates his/her answer to a question, perhaps in the form of an essay or drawing, as opposed to choosing from provided responses as typically seen in standardized tests (Adaka, 2013). This means that alternative assessment focuses on inquiry as opposed to standardized test which emphasizes mastering bits of information. According to Adaka and Ugo (2013) alternative assessment can increase the chance for successful inclusion by considering a pupil's strengths, weaknesses and applying assessment information directly to strategize for effective teaching and learning.

Gomos, Uzor and Ekwok (2012) have identified inadequate plans for the identification or assessment of children with special needs as one of the weaknesses of inclusive program. Alternative assessments allow students with disabilities who cannot participate meaningfully in standardized assessments (even with accommodations) to be included in the large-scale evaluation process. Meanwhile, as we shift towards inclusion, there are two opposing views influencing educational assessment as discussed above. On one hand are the proponents of more standardized tests, pressing for a systematic approach of holding schools and teachers accountable for student progress in gaining knowledge. This view sees the curriculum as only consisting of a body of knowledge and facts that can easily be transferred from teachers to students. On the other hand, curriculum is said to consist of four parts, i.e., content, process, product and environment. This perspective shows how students learn, demonstrate what they have learned, and the circumstances in which they learn are all as important as what they learn. This paradigm requires alternatives to standardized testing to assess student learning outcome. This means with authentic and performance-based assessments, students are involved in tasks, performances, demonstrations and interviews reflecting everyday situations within realistic and meaningful contexts. With the growing number of students with special needs being included in regular classes and the pressure for accountability in assessments, classroom teaching has become more complex. Inclusion calls for general and special teachers to synergize their emerging roles in inclusive settings. In inclusive classes, regular teachers have the role to plan, coordinate, schedule, and evaluate curriculum and instructional outcomes within a secured, positive and enriched learning environment. Special teachers have to provide instruction and support which facilitate the participation of students with disabilities in regular education classroom. This means in an inclusive setting, regular teachers are specialists in content of what is to be taught and learned; while the special teachers takes charge of the methodology of imparting what is planned to teach.

In a nutshell, the core differences between traditional and alternative assessment according to Shull (as cited in Adaka, 2013) are:
- Traditional assessment assumes knowledge has a single consensual meaning; while alternative assessment assumes knowledge has multiple meanings
- Traditional assessment assumes the purpose of assessment is to document and monitor student learning; alternative assessment assumes the purpose of assessment is to facilitate learning
- Traditional assessment views assessment as objective, value-free, and neutral; alternative assessment views assessment as subjective and value-laden
- Traditional assessment perceives learning as an individual enterprise; alternative assessment perceives learning as a collaborative process

Strategies for Adopting Alternative Assessment in an Inclusive Class

Alternative assessment standards are based on the same academic content standards as those of a standardized achievement test. Alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards must cover the same curriculum for a particular grade content as the traditional assessments practices. Depending on extent and nature of the disability, such accommodation may include modification of test administration processes or modification of test content. Here are some tips to be adopted in the use of alternative assessment in the assessment of students with diverse abilities:
- Reduce the total number of test questions. For example, if the regular reading assessment for Primary VI has 60 questions, the alternative assessment may have 40 questions. The questions that are eliminated might be the more difficult questions on the regular assessment. However, the questions must still cover the same grade curriculum content as the regular assessment.
- Simplifying the language of test questions. For example, while the content being measured is retained, the reading level of the question might be lowered to make the question easier for some students to comprehend.
- Eliminate an item from multiple-choice questions. For example, if questions have 4 answers to choose from, the list of choices might be reduced to three.
- Use pictures to aid understanding. For example, adding a picture to a word mathematical problem may enhance the student's understanding.
- Provide more blank spaces on the test. This means that, questions are spread over more pages in the test booklet, i.e., providing more blank spaces on each page. This can eliminate distractions and help a student focus on each question.

Conclusion/Recommendation

For the attainment of goals of inclusion, teachers must be prepared and made to adopt alternative assessment strategies. This is because it is the only assessment technique through which learning outcomes of students with diversities can be assessed.

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Contact Information:
Ahon Adaka T.
Federal College of Education (Tech.), Gombe-Nigeria
adaterfa@gmail.com

About the Authors:
Ahon Adaka T. is a PhD student at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and lectures at the Federal College of Education (Tech), Gombe. In terms of knowledge advancement, Adaka has attended local and international conferences and has also published articles in reputable national and international journals to his credit.

Ugo, A. Elizabeth holds PhD (Special Education) and she is presently the Commissioner for Education Benue State of Nigeria. She is affiliated with professional bodies such as the National Association for Exceptional Children (NAEC) amongst others. She has a certificate on Leadership Decision Making Program (LDM) from Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education 2013.

MZUZU UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A STRATEGY FOR ADVOCACY AND COLLABORATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS

Ambumulire N. Phiri, Ph.D.
M. Lynn Aylward, Ph.D.

Introduction

This paper presents a discussion on the Mzuzu University Center for Inclusive Education (MUCIE) as an approach for advocacy and collaboration for students with diverse learning needs. The authors view the center model as an efficient, effective and viable means for community engagement that responds to societal needs relevant for Malawi. The MUCIE design is based on Mzuzu University's mission to provide high quality education, training research and complementary services that meet the technological, social and economic needs of individuals and community in Malawi.

Inclusive Education in Malawi

In Malawi, the government is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities and training, without discrimination, for all children (Malawi Government, 2007; Itimu & Kopetz, 2008; Chavuta et al., 2008). The field of Inclusive Education is one that takes into account the learning context and barriers to participation when considering curriculum and teaching practice for educating diverse learners. As the United Nations noted in 2008,

> Inclusive Education is central to the achievement of high-quality education for all learners and the development of more inclusive societies…it is increasingly seen more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners. (UNESCO 2008, p.5)

From a student's perspective, Inclusive Education is when learners perceive themselves reflected in school curriculum, their physical surroundings and the broader environment. In other words, Inclusion means diversity is honored and all learners are respected. (Ontario, Ministry of Education, Canada, 2009). Therefore, approaches to inclusive education ensure that every learner has a fair opportunity to experience meaningful education.

Barriers to Successful Inclusive Education in Malawi

Findings from a baseline study on inclusive education in the southern region of Malawi identified critical factors impeding the realization of meaningful learning and participation of learners with diverse needs in the schools (Chavuta et al., 2008). The study

found that barriers to inclusive education included: frequent absenteeism from school, lack of learners' interest and commitment to learning/education, inaccessible infrastructure, inadequate teaching and learning resources, large classrooms, low expectations and negative attitudes towards learners with disabilities by teachers and communities (Chavuta et al., 2008). Three years later, similar findings were identified by Munthali, Tsoka, Milner, and Mvula (2011) when they conducted a situation analysis of people with disabilities in Malawi. Despite positive strides and demonstrated commitment towards achievement of access and quality education for all learners (Ministry of Education, 2007), lack of awareness, inadequate knowledge and expertise on application of principles of universal design for learning and culturally responsive pedagogy remain critical deficits that delay progress in promoting successful inclusive education (Chavuta et al, 2008; Munthali et al., 2011).

The relevance of Mzuzu University Center for Inclusive Education (MUCIE)

Cognizant of the challenges facing educators today in Malawi, the authors developed an approach for addressing these challenges through a collaborative partnership between their universities, and the International Association of Special Education. Establishing a center for Inclusive Education offers opportunities for collaborative, interdisciplinary research projects, strengthening teacher education programs and curricula and pathways for the possibility of community partnerships and outreach. MUCIE is deliberately planned to engage in teaching, research and programming that aims to address the multiple elements of inclusion (Ex. reduced disparities, access, human rights, valued contribution, empowerment) and elements of exclusion (Ex. poverty, inequality, discrimination, barriers to access, and disability) that contribute to inequity/equity (Department of Health, N.S., Canada, 2003) in Malawian society and the wider world.

In addition to supporting learners with disabilities, MUCIE will facilitate the promotion of inclusive education in Malawi related to gender and education, specifically the support for girls' education in order to improve the access, retention and performance of all girls in all levels of schooling. Another consideration is programming that addresses health and wellness such as HIV and AIDS mitigation. In addition, MUCIE will search out ways to assist vulnerable families and children. Malawi is a country rich in its linguistic diversity and educational programs are most effective when they recognize students' languages and culture.

Specific objectives outlined for the center MUCIE's specifically seek to:
1. promote Inclusive Education by working towards increased participation of diverse learners in all levels of education in Malawi,
2. facilitate collaborations with community partners on projects that serve to increase the quality of education for diverse learners, and
3. improve teacher education curriculum and practice in the area of Inclusive Education.

In the area of teacher education, MUCIE researchers will demonstrate and lead projects that draw upon culturally responsive curriculum, current best practices for inclusive education, a continuum of resources and methods ranging from more specialized and individual to more generalized methods of increasing learner accessibility for all, TALULAR (teaching and learning using locally available resources) and Assistive Technology (where and as appropriate). The planned intra-University collaborative projects currently under discussion with relevant staff and faculty are:
- Establishment of a Teacher Education demonstration and resource center with support from IASE seed funding.
- Setting up of a Student Resource room in the University for supporting students with disabilities.
- Working with the Mzuzu University Children's library to assist with the publication of culturally responsive, multilingual, children's literature.
- Research projects that address key issues within inclusive education like Gender and education and HIV/AIDS education.
- Best practices for accessible and responsive curriculum in the areas of adult education, lifelong learning and faculty development.

Conclusion

The collaborative research center model discussed in this paper offers developing countries, like Malawi, creative opportunities for implementing innovations that engage multiple communities. Mzuzu University's mission statement emphasizes programming that is responsive to community needs, as such the Center for Inclusive Education is rightly placed to provide concentrated efforts that address the challenges faced by learners with diverse learning needs. Through active community engagement, promotion of transdisciplinary approaches to inclusive education and involvement of education and related professionals, the Mzuzu University Center for Inclusive Education promises to offer a sustainable and culturally relevant approach to Inclusive Education.

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Contact Information:
Ambumulire N. Phiri, Ph.D.
Mzuzu University
Department of Education & Teaching Studies
Private Bag 201
Mzuzu, Malawi, SE Africa
ambumulire@yahoo.com

About the Authors

The authors are teacher educators and researchers in their respective countries. They met through IASE and have done collaborative projects through IASE Volunteer Service Program. Establishment of Mzuzu University Center for Inclusive Education is one of their recent projects.

INVESTIGATING INTO THE PRACTICE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

Adebayo F. Komolafe, Ph.D.

Conceptual Framework and Background

Inclusion is a term which expresses commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he/she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the service) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students). Inclusive education advocates that the child with special needs should be given the right to be educated under the same environment with their peers without special needs. It frowns at the idea of segregation (United Nations Educational Scientific and Culture Organization, or UNESCO, 2005). This is because this type of educational arrangement does not encourage the child with special needs to learn to integrate freely in the society which he or she is a part. Inclusive education system is about educating children with special needs in neighborhood schools. The schools they should have attended, if they were having no special learning needs. It connotes that no child should be left out of school irrespective of his/her psychological and physical differences. The implication is such that inclusive learners are made to have a sense of belongingness among their peers and other community members (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, 2012). Features of inclusive education systems include, but not limited to, the following: placement into the closest school to the child's home (neighborhood school); no rejection; no special class or block; there are support personnel and care givers; the environment is always disability friendly; and appropriate facilities are put in place.

Inclusive education, therefore, emerges to correct some perceived challenges in special needs education. Komolafe (2013) noted that special needs children who spend time with their peers tend to show increase in social skill and academic proficiency. Adebowale and Makinde (2012) stated that advocates for inclusion say that the long term effect is that students who are included at a very young age have a higher sensitivity to the challenges that others face, increased empathy, compassion and improved leadership skills which benefits the society among other benefits.

Looking at the strengths inherent in inclusive education, the Lagos State Government, Southwest Nigeria, felt that children with special needs in the State should not be left out. This paper therefore, looks at the implementation of inclusive system as an educational option for children with special needs in the State (Lagos State, Nigeria).

Research

The study adopted the descriptive survey. The purposeful sampling technique was used in the selection of the participants. 86 staff (teaching and non-teaching), 1,601 pupils with different categories of special needs were the participants of the study. Teachers and the pupils voluntarily participated in the research. An interview schedule was used in order to collect data from the supervising Board-Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board, Special Teachers, Regular Teachers, non-staff and pupils with special needs. Information collected was collated to answer the research questions raised.

Result

There was dearth of professional special educators. Some of these schools resorted to the use of unqualified teachers. Also, some teachers have not been promoted for a very long time and there are no welfare packages to motivate the teachers. Apart from the above, for ease of educational administration, Lagos State has been divided into six Educational Districts. The result revealed that few schools were designated as "inclusive" in each of the educational districts. However, these designated "inclusive" schools

were not evenly spread across the State. In all these schools, a block of classrooms were designated as the "inclusive" unit as seen when the researcher visited these schools. Similarly, on the state of infrastructure, it was generally poor. For instance, in some of these schools, classes were combined (primaries 1, 2 and 3 were combined to be in one room). This reveals that there is a shortage of rooms for classes and teachers.

On the research question that borders on funding, the structured questions on funding were not responded to. The researcher discovered that information on funding cannot be given out by the Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board (the supervising Board for the "inclusive" schools).

From the findings, it is worth mentioning that special needs education, as it relates to an "inclusive" system of education in Lagos State Nigeria, is still very far from what an inclusive system entails. To meet the educational needs of children with Special needs, appropriate implementation of the practice of an inclusive system of education through massive infrastructural face-lifting and building, funding, recruitment of staff and improved staff welfare which are key elements of a successful inclusive education which should be put in place.

Recommendations

Until about 1,004 primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria are made accessible for children with special needs, then inclusive education in its real sense is a mirage. The author is advocating that all the 1,004 primary schools in the State should be opened to children with special needs in line with the principle of inclusive education. There must be massive building of classroom blocks, libraries, laboratories etc. Deliberate policy on staff welfare must be put in place. The Lagos State government should embark on recruitment of professionals' teachers, caregivers and recruitment of professionals in accordance to the declared number of vacancies in the state.

Suggestion for Future Research

The researcher is suggesting a need for a study that will focus on the implementation of inclusive education in the entire country-Nigeria. Further research should be conducted on a comparative basis between Nigeria and other countries of the world in respect of the practice and implementation of inclusive system of education.

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Contact Information
Adebayo F. Komolafe, Ph.D.
Special Education Department
Faculty of Education
University of Ibadan, Nigeria
totooootun@yahoo.com

About the Author
Adebayo Francis Komolafe Ph.D. is a special education lecturer at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He specializes in Education of the Person with Visual Impairment, Counseling Psychology and general special education. His research interest includes improving the self-image of persons with visual impairment in Nigeria and Africa.

PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICES AND PRINCIPLES AMONG TEACHER EDUCATORS IN INDIA

Kathleen Puckett
Cynthia Mruczek

Recent legislation in India, the Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), outlines fundamental rights of all children, ages 6-14 years, to a free education in a neighborhood school, along with assurances for access and respectful treatment, specifications for teacher training and the development of curriculum in accordance with constitutional values. Similarly, the Persons with Disabilities Act provides these rights to children with disabilities to age 18 years. Implementing these important legislative milestones is a major concern for India's government schools, the country's largest provider of education.

The India Support for Teacher Education Program (In-STEP) provided support for this effort. Through a collaborative effort between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Ministry of Human Resources Development of India (MHRD), and Arizona State University (ASU), fifty-eight Fellows, teacher educators from across India, participated in a semester-long program, the aim of which was to assist them in developing educational reform proposals (ERP) to be implemented locally in their state or district.

Program Highlights

The In-STEP curriculum included three core courses: Philosophy & Education, Critical Reading & Writing in English, and Education, Diversity & Equity. The aim of the core courses was to equip the Fellows with philosophical, contextual, and pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary to become site advocates for equity and inclusiveness in their home institutions. Fellows also selected two pedagogical content courses from options in math, science, social sciences, language teaching in multicultural contexts, or educational leadership. These courses were supported by guided professional learning communities, which allowed the Fellows to experience working in collaborative groups first hand. Instructional fieldwork (observations and teaching in K-12 schools or community based educational settings) and professional development seminars gave the Fellows perspectives on educational systems and issues in the U.S. Thirteen ASU faculty and a project director facilitated the courses, fieldwork, and seminars.

Classes and activities were organized to create and sustain an inclusive environment, which assisted the Fellows in gaining a deeper understanding of the equity principles embedded within each course. Courses were designed with three strands in mind: 1) facilitating deep understandings of content specific concepts, 2) addressing cultural adaptations necessary for implementation in the Indian context, and 3) building pedagogical meaning to support the Fellows as they considered building the capacity of their colleagues.

Fellows were encouraged to make connections between course content and their own work on the Education Reform Proposals (ERPs). They were provided the opportunity to understand and utilize various tools and materials that would assist them in developing and implementing their ERPs, including surveys, observation protocols, and activities designed to encourage critical reflection on issues of educational equity.

Areas of Growth for Faculty and Fellows

One of the greatest areas of growth experienced by the faculty-facilitators in this program was in terms of their own understanding of the Indian context and cultures. Facilitators had a limited understanding of the Indian educational and societal context prior to the program. The bodies of literature that informed courses were often pulled from the U.S. context, which necessitated modification and adjustment in terms of application. Therefore, Fellows engaged in multiple opportunities for critical reflection around how course constructs might need to be modified, adapted, and expanded in order to be applied in home contexts. These opportunities were important because they allowed the Fellows to openly discuss barriers and difficulties they might encounter, as well as ways to overcome them. For example, while access, or simply allowing girls into schools, is a central problem to gender equity in Indian schools, deeply held cultural beliefs about the role of women, including arranged marriages, dowries, and levels of educational attainment, are also at play. The Fellows needed multiple opportunities to not only consider these somewhat hidden beliefs, but also to expose them in the first place.

Outcomes

Gender equity and student diversity were themes that resonated throughout the entire IN-STEP experience. The School Improvement Survey II: Classroom Level (Kozleski & Mruczek, 2014) was administered to the Fellows at the beginning and end of the program to collect self-report data about gender equity and student diversity. The survey consisted of 29 questions in which the participants were asked to indicate the degree to which a statement represents how an ideal school might operate, and the degree to which the school the participants are involved in could accomplish the statement. The scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A paired-samples t test was conducted to evaluate whether the participants perceived that participation in the project leads to increased levels of gender equity and presence of inclusive and democratic ideals.

Fellows entered the In-STEP program with relatively high expectations for what an ideal school would look like in terms of teaching practices that support student diversity and equity. These ideal expectations showed little change from pre-to post. Their only significant change in perceptions was in the area of representations of student diversity. Prior to the program, fellows agreed that ideally, each classroom is deliberately composed of a variety of students who represent the complete diversity of all students who attend this school. Post scores showed a significant increase approaching strongly agree in this area.

Results that compared the present, actual school environment with what participants perceived could be accomplished showed the greatest amount of significant change. The potential for school improvement increased from actual practices in seven areas: making learning motivating and relevant, adapting instruction to fit individual needs, differentiated classroom instruction, student exploration of interests and new ideas, providing alternative structures, materials, or standards, using mixed ability grouping to deliver instruction, and collaborative work among teachers to implement effective teaching practices.

The culminating project for In-STEP fellows was an Educational Reform Proposal (ERP), which provided a systematic plan for implementing the reforms in their context in India. Analysis of project content revealed the following primary themes: inclusive strategies (41%), technology 22%, professional learning (PLC or PD) 19%, reading improvement 9%, encouraging girls' education 7%, and math improvement 2%. The In-STEP faculty team providing follow-up reported that two months past the end of formal course work, most Fellows have already started implementing their ERPs. This team will continue to coordinate ways to communicate with the Fellows individually, and support their efforts through the end of the academic year 2015. ASU's College Research and Evaluation Services Team (CREST) will continue with assessment and evaluation to guide the faculty team in further support.

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Contact Information:
Kathleen S. Puckett
Cynthia Mruczek
Arizona State University, USA
7001 E. Williams Field Rd.
Mesa AZ 85215
kathleen.puckett@asu.edu

About the Authors:
Kathleen Puckett, Ph.D., is an associate professor of Special Education at Arizona State University. Her research interests include international special education services, assistive technology, and teacher preparation. She holds graduate degrees in special education and administration.

Cynthia Mruczek, Ph.D., is an Instructor of Special Education at Arizona State University, where she earned a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Her research interests include supporting teacher learning around issues of equity in classrooms and schools.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PRACTICE TEACHING IN INITIAL SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING

Tatiana Cekanova

Conceptual Framework and Background

The aim **orienting function** of the special education practice teaching is to inform students of the environment and the organization of schools, their educational curricula, different classes, educational groups, and pupils and teachers, etc. The second important function of practice teaching is **educational (informative) function** to complement and enrich the theoretical training of students to consolidate and deepen their knowledge as well as to create conditions for their instantiation and creative application in unique educational situations (Kontirova et al., 2010).

According to Gadusova (2008) the role of practice teaching is to activate and motivate the student for the teaching profession, develop pedagogical thinking, and learn to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. In addition, future teachers develop ethics of communication with all participants of the educational process, and develop skills in school management. It is also important for a future teacher to learn to self-reflect within practice teaching (Kalhous, Obst et al., 2002).

Student teachers' practice teaching is a mutual interaction of three inseparable entities – a student, a teacher and a pupil. The educational process leads to the mutual formation, influence and respect of the three mentioned entities. In educational process a practicing teacher gives a pupil practical and theoretical knowledge through direct teaching. The practicing teacher becomes a consultant and a guide for the student in his/her professional development. During practice teaching the teacher helps the student successfully incorporate into teaching staff at the school. Through the interactions "teacher – student and student – pupil", the student teacher verifies knowledge acquired in initial teacher training, and acquires practical skills needed for successful realization of the educational process.

At the end of the study, after completing the students' practice teaching, the student teacher should: be familiar with the school documentation; know the state educational programs (ISCED 1, ISCED 2); know the appropriate school educational program; be able to formulate educational objectives; correctly apply the didactic principles and methodologies; be able to implement individual approach in educational activities correctly; complement the teaching process with appropriate teaching materials; use a basic teaching unit rationally; evaluate the results of the pupil with regard to his/her disability without any prejudice; apply knowledge of special education diagnostics to educational practice; be able to make contacts with parents and to demonstrate appropriately and present educational achievements of pupils to their parents without prejudice.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the possibilities of student teachers' practice teaching realized at the Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, University of Presov.

Research

Based on the analysis of the educational documents we have come to following conclusions:
- In the 1st year of bachelors' degree course in the study program Pedagogy of intellectual disabilities, the students participate in the one-week excursion followed by observation and 'assistential' teaching practice in special nursery schools for 13 days during the semester. In the 2nd year the students go through their practice teaching in school clubs located near special elementary schools for four weeks during the whole academic year. Practice teaching takes an average of 23% from the total curricula during the bachelors' degree course.
- In the 1st year of the masters' degree course the continual practice teaching is done in special elementary schools in alternatives A or B and consequently in the next semester in the alternative C in the amount of four weeks. In the 2nd year, students go through their practice teaching in apprentice schools or practice schools in intervals of two weeks. The study is completed by continual five-week practice teaching in special elementary schools in school grades 5 – 9 or in the Special Educational Counselling Center. Student teachers' practice teaching takes an average of 25.50% from their masters' degree course.

Results

Synthesis of the experience of students by evaluative feedback, points to the following problem areas as well as positive areas of special educational practice teaching. Negative assessments of students show: inconsistency of the template for model preparation – school requires the template which is currently used by teachers; inconsistencies in the taxonomy of objectives; misinterpretation of instructions to practice from the training teachers (daily stay of the student in school, or in an institution; amount of competencies on the part of the student as well as the teacher trainer); authoritarian approach by training teachers (also unreasonable pointing out to insufficient students' preparation).

Students in their positive assessments have appreciated: appropriate methodological guidance from the special training teachers; patient attitude; desire to help; support during educational activities; assistance in the preparation of teaching aids; willingness of the teacher to consult with the student in his/her free time, outside the prescribed number of hours and control of practice teaching by the faculty perceived as the interest in the work of the student with the aim to help his/her professional and educational growth, not as a strict control in order to seek failures and faults of the student.

Recommendations

As the practice teaching is very diverse, we fail to meet practicing teachers who would help us with their experience and remarks to improve and enhance the initial teacher training of special education teachers. In the future, we recommend reinforcing communication between a practicing teacher and a methodologist for educational practice.

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Contact Information:
Dr. Tatiana Cekanova
University of Presov in Presov, Faculty of Education, Department of Special Education
17. novembra 15, 080 01 Presov, Slovakia
tatiana.cekanova@pf.unipo.sk

About the Author:
Tatiana Cekanova is a special education lecturer at the Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, University of Presov in Presov. She focuses on the education of pupils with intellectual disabilities and she works also as a coordinator of students' practice teaching in initial teacher training of special education teachers.

THE ROLE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING FACILITIES ON EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN NIGERIA

Ya'u Musa Dantata, Ph.D

Conceptual Framework and Background

Education is a human right. States recognize the right of the child to education with the view to achieving equal opportunity. Educational attainment is closely associated with teaching and learning facilities. Furthermore, educational attainment is associated with average democracy and social progress and by extension, international peace and security. Thus, improving access to teaching and learning facilities will have far reaching impact on the individual with visual impairment and on society as a whole.

In Nigeria, basic education is the education given to children aged 0-15 years. It encompasses early childhood education (0-5 years). This is segmented with ages 0-3 years situated in day care or crèches. According to the national policy on Education (2009) revised edition, the Federal government instituted a Universal Basic Education (UBE) program whose objectives include catering through appropriate forms of complimentary approaches to the promotion of basic education for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling.

The concept of early intervention program in special education refers to the practice of screening, assessment, diagnosis, and prerequisite training in basic skills during the critical years from birth to school age. The teaching strategies and adaptations include the provision and use of abacus and talking calculator for computation, tape recorders talking book machines, the use of large types or prints for use in learning reading, proper use of chalkboard with bold writings, the use of embossed and raised line drawing board, proper and relief maps that enable children with visual impairment to study geography especially maps with less difficulty by means of touch. The success in the adaptation of these materials line in the realization that each child is unique and therefore needs a well-organized individualized instruction.

Objective of the Study

To determine availability of teaching and learning facilities for children with visual impairment in special education school, Tudun Maliki, Kano state of Nigeria

Research Question

To guide the study, a research question was raised: Are there adequate teaching and learning facilities for children with visual impairment in Special Education School, tudun maliki, in Kano State of Nigeria?

Research Design

The design for the study was a survey study.

Sample

The population of the study was derived from Special Education School Tudun Maliki visually impairment unit and the sample size were selected from primary three and four.

Result

The result indicated that Special Education School Tudun Maliki were having the most essential equipment for the teaching and learning facilities of children with visual impairment. While, Braillion, thermaphome machine, adapted compute, etc., recorded very low. The absence of these equipment could be due to many factors, for example, high cost of the equipment and marginalization of children with visual impairment.

Discussion on findings

The finding regarding availability of teaching and learning facilities reveals that special education school Tudun Maliki were having the most essential equipment for the teaching and learning Braille reading. However, they were not in possession of equipment that were expensive such as thermaphome Machine, Braillion, etc. This result is consistent with the finding of Ojobo and Nwaki (1992, Olukotun (2003), Onibokun (1988), Oyeneye (1982), Mba (1980) and UNESCO (1988). For Ojobo and Nwaki (1992), saw facilities and equipments as resource materials and devices that appeal to the sense of hearing and sight simultaneously during class period. They noted that with the aid of material, the teaching and learning of Braille reading is made possible. Olukotun (2003) posited that teaching equipment are audio visual aids used in the classroom by the teacher as well as the learner to enhance teaching and learning Braille reading effectively. He opined that use of such teaching facilities and equipment makes reading Braille interesting and less burdensome.

In addition to that, Onibokun (1988) conducted a survey of pre-primary schools in some selected states of Nigeria and also found that the situation was even more deplorable. Further, studies by Oyeneye (1982) confirmed this finding. He went on to attribute the state of non-availability of services and facilities for special needs children to the well-known fact that such facilities are expensive. Essentially, Mba (1980) further confirmed that most finding confirm that more African countries that have educational program for the children with special need concentrate on certain categories particularly the visible types, i.e., mainly the those with visual impairment, hearing impairment and physically disabilities. The UNESCO report of 1988, on another note, confirmed that findings that in Nigeria, provision of childhood education are limited and tend to be geared towards meeting major special needs of categories earlier cited by Mba (1980).

Recommendation from the Study

Workshops and seminars should be organized for all primary school teachers so as to introduce innovations on teaching learning facilities.

Suggestion for Further Research

It is desirable to replicate this study in other geographical locations in Nigeria such as North East, North Central, South West, South East and South-South.

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Contact information:
Ya'u Musa Dantata Ph.D
Department of Special Education
Bayero University, Kano,
P.M.B. 3011 Kano, Nigeria
ymdantata@gmail.com

About the Author:
Ya'u Musa Dantata Ph.D is a special Education Lecturer at Bayero University, Kano. He obtained N.C.E, B.Ed M.Ed, Ph.D in Special Education in the area of the Education of students with Visual Impairment majoring in Braille reading and writing. His research interests include Visual Impairment Education, Braille reading and writing, Orientation and Mobility Early intervention program as well as contemporary issues in the education of students with visual impairment in Nigeria.

THE EFFECT OF FREE EDUCATION POLICY ON PUPILS WITH HEARING AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS' ACCESS TO PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA

Thomas Mtonga
Daniel Ndhlovu, PhD
Janet Serenje-Chipindi

Background

Access to education may be described as the extent to which the general eligible population participate in education and the efficiency of the education system to retain learners who enter at a given education entrance level (Ministry of Education, 2010). Participation, on the other hand, includes gross enrolment, net enrolment and gross intake rates while completion, progression and dropout rates denote efficiency of the internal education system. In the Zambian education system, access is predominantly at four levels, at Grades 1, 8, 10 and at entrance into tertiary institutions. For purposes of this study, gross intake and dropout rates were used to determine access to education in primary schools among learners with hearing and visual impairments. To ensure that children access education, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2002 introduced the free basic education policy from grade 1-7. In 2003, the Ministry of Education announced increased enrolment levels of about 78%. However, despite this increase, Mtonga et al (2012) estimated that 24% of the school age children with disabilities were not able to access primary education.

Additionally, Zambia Agency for People with Disabilities Report (2009) indicated that 40% of pupils with disability dropped out of school before they reached grade 7. In 2010, Ministry of Education also surprisingly records that 2.29% of the 472,238 pupils who enter school in grade one dropout every year (MOE, 2010). As percentage, this figure looks small and negligible but in terms of population it represents 108,142 of (472,238) the total number of new entrants at grade one. As a result it cannot be ignored. There was need therefore, to find out causes of high dropout rate among hearing and visually impaired primary school learners in Zambia. The question is why should a number of pupils dropout drop out of school when the government has said primary school education (grades 1 – 7) is free?

Research

The study sought to determine effects of free primary education on pupils with Hearing and Visual Impairments' access to primary education. The variables that were used to describe access include: participation with emphasis on gross intake rate (GIR) into grades 1, and efficiency with particular focus on progression to grade 7 and dropout rate between grades1 and 7. A case study design was used and a total number of 408 participants of which 15 were head teachers, 67 were teachers, 186 were pupils with hearing and visual impairments and 140 were parents participated in the study. The teachers and pupils were selected using simple random sampling procedure while parents of pupils with Hearing and Visual Impairments were selected using purposive sampling technique. Questionnaires and focus group discussions were used to collect data from the respondents and quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to obtain frequencies and percentages. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data.

Results

The study found that the policy on free education has had a positive effect on pupils with Hearing and Visual Impairments' access to primary school education. Areas where impact was felt included; reduced dropout rate, increased enrolment, increased grade 7 completion rate and improved academic performance. For instance, results showed that 123 pupils with Hearing and Visual Impairments were admitted to grade 1 in fifteen primary schools in 2006 and 66% of these progressed to grade 7 in 2012. On the basis that one pupil with disability is equivalent to 10 ordinary pupils (Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training, 2007), 123 is a significant number of pupils admitted to grade one. The majority of the head teachers, teachers, pupils and parents indicated that primary education was free but there were a smaller number of respondents that felt that primary education was partially free. These based their argument on the fact that schools still required pupils to pay some fees. Some of the fees paid by parents on behalf of their children in primary school Included: PTA, general purpose fund, civilian day charges, uniforms, building fund, bus fees and maintenance fees. These findings about fees are consistent with those of the Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS) (2012) who found that that about 56% of basic schools still charge user fees which they had given different names. Respondents had mixed views on whether fees currently being charged by schools contribute to dropout rates among pupils with Hearing and Visual Impairments. The mixed views of participants are a sign of education not being convincingly free or participants not knowing what constitutes free education. ZOCS, (2012) found that harsh economic situation parents found themselves in coupled with school fees are causes of high dropout rates. When asked to indicate whether the fees charged by some schools have an effect on the dropout rates of pupils with Hearing and Visual Impairments, a number of respondents admitted that though they were paying small amounts of fees, free education had considerable positive impact on enrolment, progression and completion rates of the learners. However, among the factors cited by that contribute to high dropout rates include: lack of sponsors, failure to qualify to grade 8, early marriages, pregnancy, too big to learn with young pupils, negative attitudes of both parents and pupils and failure by parents to pay boarding and other fees on behalf of their children.

Recommendations

MESTVEE should sensitise head teachers and parents on the constitution of free education in schools. Standard Education officers should monitor the fees parents pay in schools to ensure that the policy on free education is adhered to. The government needs to review the policy of free primary school education. Government should evaluate the policy and find better alternatives to its implementation especially for those with disabilities.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is need to conduct an investigation on the strategies that would improve the implementation of the free education policy in order to improve access to education for children with disabilities.

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Contact Information:
Thomas Mtonga
The University of Zambia
School of Education

Department of Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education
P. O. Box 32379, Lusaka, Zambia.
thomasmtonga.unza@gmail.com

About the Authors:
Thomas Mtonga is a Lecturer and Researcher at the University of Zambia in the Department of Educational Psychology Sociology and Special Education. His areas of interests includes issues Visual impairments, Advocacy for disabilities, Working with disabled people's Organisations, and Counselling for people with disabilities

Dr. Daniel Ndhlovu is a Special Education Lecturer and Researcher in the Department of Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education of the University of Zambia. His areas of interest include: Inclusive Education, Gender, HIV and AIDS and Counselling for persons with Disabilities.

Janet Serenje-Chipindi is a Lecturer and Researcher at the University of Zambia in the Department of Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education. Her areas of interest lie in issues to do with teacher preparations, learning disabilities, attitudes towards teaching profession and roles of higher Learning Institution in information creation and dissemination.

REFLECTIONS ON A DECADE OF UNIVERSITY INCLUSION FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL, DEVELOPMENTAL AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES IN CANADA

Rick Freeze
Zana Marie Lutfiyya
Trevi B. Freeze

Introduction

In Canada, attending university has become a new pathway to adult education and valued social participation for students with intellectual, developmental and multiple disabilities (Bruce, 2011; Freeze, Freeze, & Lutfiyya, 2015; Wilson, Bialk, Freeze, Lutfiyya, & Freeze, 2012). The guiding principles of university inclusion for these students are reported and discussed in this paper.

Guiding Principles

First and foremost, university inclusion is about creating access to existing university courses and on-campus experiences of all kinds for this group of students. There are no special "places" or "programs" for them. Their places are the same as for other students: classrooms, libraries, computer labs, recreation facilities, cafeterias, etc. Their programs are made up of the same courses, field placements and other learning options available to all students. Based on this principle, universities provide the supports that each of these students needs to engage in a normal life at the university. Such supports may include help with course selection and registration as an auditing student, introduction to learning resources (i.e., bookstore, libraries, computer labs, student services, etc.), orientation to the curricular and extra-curricular supports and opportunities available to students (e.g., study groups, clubs, sports and recreation options, etc.), individual academic tutoring (including the adaptation of materials and exams to reflect each student's academic abilities), and encouragement to engage with work, volunteer and leisure opportunities at the university.

Second, university inclusion must reflect an institutional commitment to equal opportunities for citizens with intellectual, developmental and multiple disabilities that is shared by administrators, faculty, staff and students across the university. This commitment is simultaneously fiscal, programmatic, academic, extracurricular, professional and personal. A key insight into realizing this kind of commitment is the recognition that nothing new or different is being created; rather, existing resources, provisions, and policies are being extended to enfranchise a new group of students who have been excluded in the past. This process of progressive inclusion has many precedents in the history of modern universities, such as the inclusion of women and racial, ethnic and religious minorities. Everyone learns and benefits from the inclusion of these students because they give everyone a chance to be part of the advancement of human rights.

Third, it is important not to pre-judge or limit students' choices in terms of their preferred areas of study, the number of courses they attempt, their extracurricular engagement, or their ongoing participation in other areas of life such as employment or volunteering. In other words, it is useful for the students' university supporters to adopt a holistic "ecological" perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that values not only course work; but also personal growth gained through meaningful social relationships with classmates, coworkers and friends, and positive life experiences gained through participation in athletic, cultural and artistic pursuits (Wolfensberger, 2004). To do this, it is helpful to value student self-determination and to solve problems through the resources and natural supports available to all students (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1997).

Fourth, academic tutoring and social coaching are the main ways that universities can support students with intellectual, developmental and multiple disabilities attending university. The first goal of academic tutoring is to ensure relevance and

success. This means that tutoring topics are focused on course content, *not* underlying skill deficits, and that academic assignments and tests are adapted to ensure a reasonable level of success. Adaptations may include strategies such as: (a) dividing assignments into smaller parts, (b) providing support in skills such as researching topics, organizing information and creating outlines, (c) pre-teaching and post-teaching important vocabulary and ideas, (d) conveying difficult concepts in alternative formats such as diagrams, videos and models, (e) coaching, reviewing and editing students' work during assignments, (f) practicing in-class participation and presentations, (g) accessing technological assists such as text-to-speech-to-text software to support reading and writing, search strategies to locate information, and autocorrect features to support spelling, syntax and style, (h) introducing accommodations for tests by restructuring (e.g., one question per page, providing more time, etc.), modifying (e.g., language clarification or simplification), re-expressing (e.g., changing from written to oral examination), reconfiguring (e.g., converting essay questions to multiple choice), or reducing them (e.g., removing some questions to reduce length or difficulty).

A second goal of academic tutoring is to engage students in ways that increase their self-determination and independence. In other words, the tutoring process is dynamic and evolves to help each student internalize the academic skill sets, work habits, and self-confidence that predict greater academic autonomy and efficacy over time.

Social coaching is a much less formal process. Through personal example, modeling, advice and encouragement, the tutors mediate the social integration of their tutees into a wide variety of university activities and opportunities, depending on each student's interests and needs. While some of these opportunities are structured and enduring (e.g., sports teams, clubs, choirs, etc.), others are unique (e.g., concerts, performances, exhibitions, job fairs, etc.), and still others are designed for self-improvement and service (e.g., volunteering, counseling groups, writers' groups, Toastmasters, Women's Centre, student government, etc.).

A fifth and final principle of university inclusion for students with intellectual, developmental and multiple disabilities has to do with their growing self-assurance about who they are and about how their disabilities "fit" into their self-imagery. They gradually shed negative judgments about themselves as devalued and disabled and come to see themselves as students and, ultimately, graduates. Often, this leads to a greater sense of responsibility to advocate for others who have not had the adult education opportunities they have enjoyed. They do this through presentations to university classes and at educational conferences and workshops, as well as through a variety of other means, including media interviews, artistic presentations and publications.

Conclusion

In conclusion, academic and social inclusion at university, for students with intellectual, developmental and multiple disabilities, share some similar guiding principles to inclusion at other levels of schooling and in other societal environments, including: (a) access to the same opportunities as other students, (b) institutional commitment to the advancement of human rights through equitable educational provisions, (c) student choice and self-determination as hallmarks of adult education, (d) academic and social supports provided by tutors and peers, and (e) self-awareness and social advocacy as evidence of success.

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Contact Information:
Dr. Rick Freeze, Professor, Inclusive Education
Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology
Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB, Canada
R3T 2N2
Rick.Freeze@umanitoba.ca

About the Authors:

Dr. Rick Freeze is a professor of Inclusive Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba. Rick has researched, taught and written about Precision Reading, consultation and collaboration, inclusive schooling, and the transition from school to work and post-secondary education for students with intellectual disabilities.

Dr. Zana Marie Lutfiyya: After receiving her graduate training at Syracuse University, Zana Marie Lutfiyya joined the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba in 1992. In her research, she has focused on the factors that help or hinder the social participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Trevi B. Freeze is the coordinator of the Campus Life program and a graduate student in counseling psychology at the University of Manitoba. She has worked and published in the area of access to university for students with intellectual, developmental and multiple disabilities.

COMMUNITY-BASED REHABILITATION AND PERSONS' WITH DISABILITIES

Udeme S. Jacob

Introduction

The World Disability Report estimates that there are over one billion people with disabilities in the world, of whom between 110-190 million experience very significant difficulties (WHO 2011). People with disabilities (PWD) include those with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments resulting from any physical or mental health conditions which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (United Nation (UN), 2008). PWD are reportedly excluded from education, health, employment and other aspects of society and this can lead to increase in or exacerbate poverty level (WHO 2011).

The life pattern of PWD in developed countries, is that of a productive member of the society and can look back on their life with satisfaction (Agarwal & Sharma, 2002) while those in developing societies like Nigeria are yet to find a place in the mainstream of social life, away from the usual occupation of begging, due to low school enrolment coupled with ignorance of what they can contribute to the society.

Community Based Rehabilitation

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a strategy within general community development for rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of all children and adults with disabilities (WHO, 2004), and the primary means by which people with disabilities in most countries of the world have any access to rehabilitation or disability services (Evans, Zinkin, Harpham, & Chaudury, 2001). WHO provides a general definition of CBR as the measures taken at the community level to use and build on the resources of the community, including PWD themselves, their families, and their community as a whole (Report of WHO Expert Committee on Disability, 1981, in Dalal, 2006)

This type of program is developed by one or more activities in one or more of the five components education, employment, health, livelihood and social services although the program is not expected to implement every component at a specific implementation of the CBR matrix, and not all PWD will need assistance in each component of the matrix but, however, a CBR program should be developed in partnership with PWD to best meet local needs, priorities and resources (Iemmi, Kumar, Blanchet, Hartley, Murthy, Patel, Weber, Wormald & Kuper, 2012).

Objectives of Community Based Rehabilitation

The focus of CBR goes beyond providing medical management but includes the provision of rehabilitation services by developing innovative and integrated community based program that will help PWD become functional member of the community they find themselves. CBR aims at providing equalization of opportunities by addressing emotional issues affecting the individual. Peters (2003) noted that in this type of rehabilitation program the family is the primary trainer while the community as a whole can be mobilized for support, as an alternative to formal schooling.

Benefits of CBR

CBR reduces barriers for participation of the physically-challenged in different activities, without neglecting the goals of the components of health, education, livelihood, social and empowerment and has many benefits particularly in remote and rural practice settings. CBR programs are considered fundamental to improving the wellbeing of people with disabilities, and for fostering their participation in the community and society at large (Cornielje, 2009; Sharma, 2007), and one of most cost-effective approach to improve the wellbeing of people with disabilities, in comparison with care in hospitals or rehabilitation centers (Mitchell, 1999).

Challenges of CBR

The major challenge of CBR is the provision of infrastructure because the development of a separate infrastructure only for CBR will be too expensive to maintain in a country like Nigeria and implementing the program will take long due to the challenges involved in committing new resources into the community, coordinating and incorporating it into the existing community infrastructure. Working with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) is strategic issues that require long-term development support, as these organizations are usually fragile with low self-esteem and lack the wider community recognition and support.

Women with disabilities often miss out on basic rights, such as, right to choose marriage and bring up children. Moreover they are under-represented when it comes to the process of decision making even among people with disability Sustainability of the CBR remains a challenge for many community based programs because the organization and management of a good CBR Programs is complex and difficult, in countries where people often have no tradition of formal management and handling funds.

Recommendation

It is important for PWD to remain within their own communities where they can easily get necessary support to develop their potentials based on the need of the community. Moreover they should be involved in the process of decision-making, both in general community affairs and in matters that particularly concern them as people with disabilities since they are the ones that will benefit from the CBR program; They should be given necessary that help discourage them from resorting to begging .

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Contact Information:
Jacob S.Udeme
University of Ibadan
Faculty of Education
Department of Special Education

About the Author:
Jacob Udeme is a special education lecturer at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His area of specialization is Education for persons with intellectual disabilities. His research interests include issues on inclusive education for the learners with intellectual disabilities and aggressive behavior among this group of students in Nigeria and Africa.

ISSUES AND ANSWERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF SERVICES FOR THE TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT

William F. Morrison, Ed.D.
Mary G. Rizza, Ph.D.
David Hampton, Ph.D.

Nielsen, Higgins and Hammond (1993) defined the twice-exceptional student as an individual who displays characteristics of a student with a disability/exceptionality while also displaying gifted and talented (GT) behaviors. Mills and Brody (1999)

developed a profile of the twice-exceptional student that included the following three characteristics: (a) evidence of an outstanding talent or ability, (b) evidence of a discrepancy between expected and actual achievement, and (c) evidence of a processing deficit. In many cases this non-traditional learning profile has led to misunderstanding of the unique educational and social needs that results from development that is asynchronous. The twice-exceptional student requires a learning environment that values differences, provides challenges, and works to remediate learning differences. The purpose of this paper is to look at the unique issues related to the development and delivery of services to the twice-exceptional student, with special emphasis on identification.

Identification/Assessment

Successful program design requires accurate definition of the student who will be served and the needs that will be addressed. Students who are twice-exceptional show distinct patterns of strengths and weaknesses that are more extreme than their general education counterparts. To be identified as twice-exceptional, students must meet the criteria for both giftedness and having a disability. Identification of the twice-exceptional student, therefore, requires clear definitions of what it means to be gifted and to have a learning disability.

Baum, Owen, & Dixon (1991) described three avenues by which twice-exceptional students are identified which continues to define how we view the twice exceptional. First, are the students who are identified as gifted and who later present with an area of disability. Students in this category often develop coping strategies that mask their disabilities longer than average peers. They are able to use their advanced abilities to counteract the demands of their weaknesses. The next category consists of students with disabilities who later display unique talents related to their giftedness. For these students, the disability affects multiple areas of functioning and requires intense intervention often precluding them from consideration for gifted services. The final category includes students who are not formally identified as exceptional because their abilities and disabilities mask each other. Often these student present as average but display behaviors that cause their progress to come into question.

Identification can sometimes be difficult since students who are twice-exceptional often present a pattern of abilities that does not easily fit into existing definitions. Students are viewed as exceptional (either gifted or having a disability) because they process information differently than their average peers. In the United States, a student with a disability must show discrepancies in performance that are caused by a condition defined according to specific categories. For example, students with learning disabilities must show discrepancies in performance caused by a disorder of psychological functioning that impedes the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. Regardless of the category, there must be documentation that the disability is having an adverse effect on the child's performance in school. Identification for students who are gifted is not as well defined nationally but still includes some documentation of advanced ability or talent that requires intervention. It is generally agreed that students who are gifted show advanced processing skills that manifest in outstanding performance in academic or artistic endeavors. Understanding how a student processes information is key to accurate identification, particularly for the twice-exceptional student. Discovering how the student processes, encodes, and retrieves information is the first step. The ability to solve problems and use information effectively for the task at hand is also important. Metacognitive and executive functioning are also key processes for learning that often play a factor in the profile of achievement for the twice-exceptional.

Proper identification is also difficult when students are not provided opportunities to work outside their current educational program. A student in a gifted program who does not succeed is often viewed as unmotivated and a student with a disability may not be appropriately challenged and become bored and unmotivated. In each case, the student is not working at maximum potential and may not be provided appropriate intervention because their behavior is not viewed within the proper context. Program design may actually increase identification efforts by providing students opportunities to actualize their skills and abilities.

Program Models

By definition, the models of delivering services to students with disabilities and students identified as gifted are diametrically opposed. Special education classrooms traditionally focus on remediation and skill development with little if any time spent on talent development. Gifted and talented programs traditionally focus on the development extraordinary ability or nurturing a talent area with little remedial skill training. The twice-exceptional student requires a unique combination of challenge and remediation, and while such programs do exist in limited numbers, it is unrealistic to assume that all schools will have the financial and available personnel to create such unique programs. Recommendations for programming should be made within the context of the current educational setting options.

Inclusion is a popular program model used with exceptional students. In order for inclusion to be successful, it must include true differentiation and collaboration among teachers. Inclusion can work for the twice-exceptional because it allows students to be exposed to a variety of activities and opportunities which may help the student realize areas of ability.

Resource room or pull-out opportunities are another program model used with exceptional students. Students who are pulled-out of the general education classroom to work with a specialist on areas related to identification. Resource rooms offer the student

small group or individual attention from a teacher who can differentiate their experience according to needs. The key to success in a resource room program is the teacher's understanding of the twice-exceptional.

The third popular program offered to exceptional students is the self-contained classroom, which can include rooms for intervention or advanced study like Advanced Placement (AP) or honors classes. This is the most restrictive environment for the twice-exceptional because student enrollment is based on a specific set of skills that they may not exhibit. Teachers in these programs have very specialized training that may not include pedagogy for students who have different needs. For example, a student in an advanced math class who has dyslexia may have difficulty processing word problems. The teacher may not be prepared to teach reading strategies. The student with an undiagnosed disability may feel out of place and the student identified first with the disability may not be considered for the advanced class at all.

Regardless of the program model used, the key to success will be student identification. Identification requires accurate assessment of skills for all students. Progress monitoring for all students will insure that each student is provided intervention geared to what and how they learn, thus insuring accurate understanding of student abilities.

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Contact Information:
Dr. William F Morrison
Bowling Green State University
College of Education – School of Intervention Services
Bowling Green Ohio 43403
fmorris@bgsu.edu

About the Authors:
Dr. William Morrison is an Associate Professor in Special Education at Bowling Green State University. His research interests include issues related to identification and service delivery for students with disabilities who exhibit gifted and talented behaviors and the use of non-fiction literature in the education of pre-service teacher.

Dr. Mary Rizza is a School Psychologist who works with students in elementary and secondary grades. Her research focus is to understand the educational and psychological needs of exceptional students, including those with disabilities, those who are gifted, and the twice-exceptional.

Dr. David Hampton is an assistant professor in Special Education at Bowling Green State University, Ohio, USA. David received his doctoral training at the University of Missouri specializing in Learning Disabilities. His research interests include validating formative assessments for classroom use in mathematics and reading.

NEW DIMENSIONS OF ENHANCING FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Werona Król-Gierat

Conceptual Framework and Background

Over the past 20 years, with regard to individuals with Special Educational Needs (SEN), the Polish system has evolved from a model of segregation towards a model of inclusion. Children with SEN can be placed in the following settings: ordinary classes in mainstream schools, inclusive classes in mainstream schools, inclusive classes in inclusive schools, special schools. Young learners in ordinary or inclusive classes follow the same core curriculum, which at the lower primary level is integrated and comprises: Polish language education, foreign modern language education (compulsory from the 2008/2009 school year), music education, art education, social education, science education, mathematics education, computer classes, shop/domestic science classes, physical education, and ethics. As for the foreign modern language education, children completing the first educational level (1-3 grades) should: understand that people speak different languages and that in order to communicate with them one has to learn their language, react verbally and nonverbally to simple teacher instructions, comprehend simple oral messages (differentiate words which sound similar, understand and use every day phrases, understand narratives when accompanied by pictures and gestures, understand simple audio/video dialogues), read and comprehend simple words and sentences, ask and answer to questions, recite poems and chants, sing songs, name and describe objects from the surrounding environment, take part in mini-

dramas, rewrite words and sentences, use picture dictionaries/books/multimedia, cooperate with peers (Ministry of National Education, 2014). All in all, Polish educational directives give every child an equal chance to develop his or her fullest potential. Research in the field of foreign language instruction of children with SEN is desirable in order to help teachers respond effectively to the diverse needs of their pupils.

Research

\The diagnosis of English teachers' needs and the problems they encounter while working with SEN children was done by means of a written questionnaire and informal interviews carried by the researcher. The purpose was to gain feedback from English teachers working in inclusive settings in Poland. 39 teachers were inquired about their professional preparation, problems encountered and strategies used when teaching classes attended by children with Special Educational Needs.

Results

Through the quantitative and qualitative analysis three research questions were answered:

1. Do English teachers feel prepared to work with children with Special Educational Needs?
Overall, the majority of respondents (57 %) did not feel prepared to approach children with SEN before starting work in inclusive classes. Most subjects (78 %) shift the blame on the program of their studies. They claim that the issue of Special Needs Foreign Language Education is rarely raised during teaching methodology courses. This gap should definitely be filled. Fortunately, the majority of interrogated teachers (54 %) take up additional trainings of various types to extend their specialist knowledge of the matter.

2. Can English teachers identify Special Educational Needs of their pupils?
In spite of the declared shortcomings in qualifications, most foreign language teachers affirmed their ability to recognize SEN of their learners - 46 % confirmed, 31 % confirmed with the help of other people (teaching assistants, school pedagogues, other teachers and specialists, parents), 13% confirmed the ability to recognize only some of the problems (mainly dyslexia, dysgraphia, ADHD), 10 % confirmed with the analysis of pupils' documentation – 10 %.

What needs to be remembered is that the above answers are teachers' subjective assessment of their own abilities. Still, if teachers do not have solid grounding in special education, one may doubt about their capabilities. Of course, by virtue of the actual profession, teachers should be equipped with a good intuition and a general pedagogical flair. Nonetheless, caution is required. Wrong pedagogical diagnosis may cause more harm than good. Again, raising the awareness of the teaching staff is the best way to improve the effectiveness of early pedagogical interventions.

3. What major difficulties do English teachers encounter while teaching children with Special Educational Needs and how do they cope with them?
From the vast array of difficulties mentioned, a few come to the fore. Firstly, heterogeneity should be taken for granted. Most problems with individualized instruction stem from it. Secondly, teachers point out to the problem with the adjustment of the pace of work to each and every child in the classroom. Unfortunately, it seems to be an indissoluble part of the teaching process in inclusive settings.

When it comes to factors which seem most limiting, subjects named the key ones: lack of knowledge (sic), size of classes, and lack of experience in working in inclusive settings. In addition, the lack of a teaching assistant may also pose a challenge, especially as regards classroom management. Despite all the above restrictions, more than a half of subjects (54%) believe in themselves, claiming that they can control the process of foreign language teaching to children with Special Educational Needs. Such confidence may come with time.

Recommendations

Partial results of the study presented in this paper can provide a forum for teachers and other specialists to explore and compare the variety issues which arise in their classrooms. Even though the small sample cannot be generalized to a larger population, many English teachers working in the Polish educational system may experience similar difficulties and reveal analogical problems.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are two sides of the same coin. On one hand, there are ministerial provisions, while on the other school reality with its daily struggles. There is a need for systematic study which will focus on foreign language teachers' attitudes, knowledge and strategies used while working with individuals with SEN. There is also a need for a comprehensive, methodologically-sound research into the effects of foreign language inclusive educational setting. Reconciliation of theory and practice is the key to enhancing foreign language instruction of individuals with special needs.

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Contact information:
Werona Król-Gierat
Pedagogical University of Cracow, Poland
Faculty of Philology, Institute of Modern Languages
Karmelicka 41, 31-128 Kraków, Poland
werona@krol-gierat.pl

About the Author:
Werona Król-Gierat is a university teacher and a PhD student of applied linguistics. Her main area of research interest is teaching English as a foreign language to children with Special Educational Needs. She is also qualified in Psycho-Pedagogical Diagnosis and Therapy.

INCLUSION IN A TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT: BUILDING THE PLANE WHILE FLYING

Marianne J. Fidishin

Since the inception of Public Law 94-142, the Education for Handicapped Children Act (EHCA) in 1975, one basic yet crucial element of the legislation is to ensure that all special needs children be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Wright and Wright (2009) explain, "to the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and support… along with their nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, unless a student's individualized education program (IEP) requires some other arrangement." The concept of inclusion, however, is not defined in the federal legislation and no federal definition as such has been created (Wright & Wright, 2009).

In 1993, the United States Congress instituted the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) to measure federal program performance. Concerned that federal programming lacked specific goals and outcome, *GPRA required federal agencies to develop annual performance plans and program reports*. *In 2004* similar performance requirements were instituted for state education agencies (SEAs) including **ensuring** Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. As a result, the **Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) identified 20 *indicators* to guide SEA's implementation of IDEA**, including *Indicator Five* (5), specifically designed to address LRE (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, Part B Indicators, n.d.).

Method

The school district in this case study is in an urban, Midwestern city consisting of 8922 enrollment of 8922 students, kindergarten through grade 12. Of those, 80.6% qualify for free and reduced lunch (an indicator of socio-economic status), 15.3% for special education services, and 92.8% are African American.

The school district had a history of significantly failing in all twenty special education indicators. With the requirement to monitor school districts more closely, SEA assumed strong oversight of the district special education programming in 2006 to guarantee compliance. Despite oversight, the district showed no improvement or progress on any indicator. It wasn't until the arrival of a new superintendent and director of special education in July, 2012, that special education programming received much needed attention.

Successful inclusive processes and practices require a strong investment. McCarthy, Wiener and Soodack (2012) found internalized institutionalized practices of a school maintain obstructions to inclusive practices. The district noted similar barriers, promoting an overwhelming number of students enrolled in full time special education classrooms. Another challenge district leaders faced was the inability to properly prepare staff for the inclusion process. Hampered by deadlines imposed by SEA *special conditions* and a teacher's contract limiting professional development opportunities, little preparation occurred in advance of the school year. The strategy that promoted inclusion the most was employing special education case managers, a position was designed to supervise and facilitate the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting process addressing inclusion challenges such as teacher's expectations, increase LRE placement, and legally sound decision-making.

During the 2012-2013 year, the percentage of students in general education at least 80% of the day was 18.26%; the state target was 60.4% or more. Similarly, the percentage of students in general education 20% or less of their day was 60.7% with the state target at 15.27% or less. Consequently, SEA employed authority to withhold federal funding until noted progress, also called *special conditions*.

Results and Discussion

Within one year of inclusive oversight and practice, the district demonstrated significant change in LRE placements. Although yet to reach the LRE goal established by the SEA, substantial growth has been made: 78.3% increase in inclusive settings. Encumbered with building the plane as they're flying it, the district has provided professional development for teachers during the 2013-2014 school year. One of the most unfortunate consequences of the radical inclusive process has been the academic preparedness of the special needs students. Since students had languished in segregated special classrooms coupled with low teacher expectations, transitioning students to grade level classrooms has been challenging. Considerable support is required for both the students and teachers to guarantee academic achievement.

Conclusion

As the school district moves forward, providing an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment for special needs students is paramount. With a year of experience lived, notable concerns were identified and must be addressed to make certain students are provided an inclusive learning environment. Of utmost importance is an increased focus on sound instructional strategies for both general education and special education teachers. Providing engaging, relevant instruction while differentiating to all students though a multi-sensory approach addresses the needs of all students. Likewise, increasing expectations of all students, especially special needs students, and establishing sound behavior management strategies would greatly diminish any challenges while changing the overall school culture.

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Contact Information:
Marianne J. Fidishin
Gary Community School Corporation, Gary, Indiana, USA
5858 N. Broadway St. #501, Chicago, IL 60660
mfidishin@comcast.net

About the Author:
Marianne Fidishin is the Executive Director of Special Education and Student Service in Gary Community School Corporation, Gary, Indiana, USA. Fidishin specializes in program transformation, compliance maintenance, parent advocacy, building capacity and sustainability for special education student success. Her research interests include institutional values and practices contributing to disproportionality.

THE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' SENTIMENTS, ATTITUDES, AND CONCERNS ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN CHONGQING OF CHINA

Xinrui LI
Suqiong XU
Youyu Xiang
Milon Potmesil

Introduction

The philosophies in relation to educating children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has dramatically changed since 1950s when a series of successive movements, such as the civil rights movements, as well as the normalization principle and mainstream movement happened in Western countries. This leads to a worldwide trend toward including children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into general schools to learn together with their typical peers. A lot of countries in the world have made effort to design and implement policies toward inclusion, fostering integration or inclusion of these students into mainstream environments.

A key factor in successfully implementing the inclusive policy is related to the belief and attitudes of the mainstream teachers who take the main responsibility of catering for special education needs or individual difference. It is stated that the mainstream teachers' acceptance of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as commitment to the government policy of

inclusion has great impact on their actual practice for these students in general classroom (Norwich, 1994; Avramindis & Norwich, 2002). Since the start of the inclusion, there has been a great number of researches that have been conducted to investigate the mainstream teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, proving which largely impact the efficacy of implementation of inclusive policy.

Recently, more and more researchers have concentrated on investigating pre-service teachers' attitude and belief before and after inclusion relevant training or program, for the purpose of exploring how to improve the program or training course of the pre-service teachers' preparation. It was found that variables such as length of training, gender, interaction with persons with disabilities, knowledge about local legislation, and level of training involved had significant impact on the participants' attitudes toward inclusive education (Forlin, Earle, Loreman & Sharma, 2011; Sharma, 2014; Thaver, Lim & Liau, 2014).

In China, the Learning in Regular Classroom (the LRC) was initiated in 1994, as a national movement on inclusive education to meet expanding enrollment of students with special education needs (SEN), which responds to the international trend of inclusion (Deng & Poon-Mcbrayer, 2004; Deng & Pei, 2009). Although the difference exists in roots between the Chinese LRC program and western inclusion movement, the LRC program has resulted in tremendous changes in China, which has gradually taken steps to move towards a harmonious society for all people including the disabilities.

The expansion of the LRC program has been demonstrated by the increasing enrollment of school aged children with SEN every year, which has broken the imperforation of special education in China (Xiao, 2005；Hua,2003). In LRC program, teachers are expected to take important roles of catering for individual diversity, changing the one-size-for-all teaching model, strengthening interaction and cooperation with classmates, etc. The teachers' attitudes towards integration and inclusion have received unprecedented interest over the past 20 years, being regarded as a key factor for successful inclusion (e.g., Peng，2003；Deng，2004).

However, there is lacking of research to investigate pre-service teachers' concerns and preparedness for teaching children with diverse needs in China. There is not any empirical evidence that could be provided for the teacher training institutions as well as the policy makers for future teachers' preparation to face inclusion challenge and the crucial task of catering or diversity in the mainstream classroom. This study thus reports data prior to pre-service teachers having any exposure to university training on special education. The aims of this research are to identify pre-service teachers' concerns, attitudes towards persons with disabilities and levels of discomfort in interacting with people with a disability prior to involvement in training for inclusive education; to identify demographic variables that may account for differences in attitudes.

Method

Participants

Participants were purposeful sampling, including freshman and sophomore of a Normal University in Chongqing of China. All participants were preparing to be the mainstream teachers of general major at primary phase. A total of 424 pre-service teachers participated in this study, with 68 males and 352 females.

Instrument

The Sentiments Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale Revised (SCACIE-R) (Forlin, Earle, Loreman, & Sharma, 2011) were adopted to collected data. The Chinese traditional version of the SCACIE-R used in HK had been translated into Chinese simplified version by three authors in this study, who master both Chinese and English well. The Chinese simplified version was further adapted in terms of specific words and expression according to the original version in English, for the purpose of fitting into language habits of people in mainland China. The SCACIE-R contained two parts. Part One referred to general demographic information about participants. Part two involved 15 items to investigating pre-service teachers' sentiments, attitudes, and concerns toward inclusive education. Each item on the SCACIE-R is rated on a 4 point-Likert type classification ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree) to 4 (strongly agree).

Statistical Testing of Results

All date was analysed through SPSS 17.0, including descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and T-test and single-factor analysis, with the inspection level of $\alpha=0.05$, to do mean comparison between different groups.

Results

Probability of more than 0.05 indicates insignificant difference between male and female pre-service teachers' sentiments, attitudes, and concerns toward inclusive education. Fifty-three percent of pre-service teachers once interacted with people with disabilities, whilst 47% had not any experience in relation to interaction with people with disabilities. The different interactive experiences of pre-service teachers with people with disabilities had significant impact on their sentiments and attitudes toward inclusive education ($P< 0.05$). Specifically, pre-service teachers possessing interactive experience with people with disabilities

held a relatively positive and active toward inclusive education. Moreover, there was insignificant difference in concern on inclusive education between them with and without interactive experience with people with disabilities.

About Seventy-three percent of pre-service teachers did not have any training experience in relation to special education, and 26.18% did accept some training. Whether they were trained with special education did not significantly impact their sentiment and attitude toward inclusive education (P>0.05). Whilst, those with experience of training in special education actually concern more about inclusive education than those without experience of training in special education. Fifty-three percent of pre-service teachers did not acknowledge the local legal regulations or policy in relation to children with disabilities, 32.38% slightly acknowledge, 11.32% quite understand, and only 2% were quite clear. Twenty-two percent of pre-service teachers had faith in educating students with disabilities, 62.97 displayed a general level of faith.

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Contact Information:
Xinrui LI
Institute of Special Education Studies Faculty of Education
Palacky University Olomouc Zizkovo nam. 5
771 40 Olomouc Czech Republic
xinrui223@gmail.com

About the Authors:
Xinrui LI is a PhD candidate in Faculty of Education at Palacky University of Czech Republic and a special education lecturer at Chongqing Normal University of China. Her research interests include early intervention and inclusive education.

Suqiong XU is a PhD candidate in HKIED and a special education lecturer at Chengdu University of China. Her research interests lies in inclusive education and practice.

Youyu Xiang is a professor at Chongqing Normal University of China. His research interests include learning disability.

Milon Potmesil is a professor at Palacky University of Czech Republic. His research interests include issues in deaf education and inclusive education.

LET'S GIVE THEM A CHANCE: TEACHING JOB SKILLS TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Zhanna B. Preston
Veronica Gallegos
Cynthia Vargas

Background Information

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1980, as amended in 2008, intended to bring people with disabilities into the mainstream, eliminate biases against hiring applicants with disabilities, increase their opportunities to obtain employment, and raise their quality of life (United States Department of Justice, 2015). Despite these protections, people with disabilities have been historically isolated from society and continue to face significant challenges related to obtaining and maintaining employment in the private business sector. Understanding the perceptions of employers with regard to hiring people with disabilities is critical to

the process of preparing students with disabilities for their post-school employment career. In addition, the perceptions of high school special education teachers and job coaches working with students with disabilities on their job-related skills are critical for the continuous improvement of transition education required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Ed.gov, 2015). The preparation of students for employment, an important part of transition education, is also emphasized by the new college and career readiness requirements.

Purpose, Theoretical Foundations, and Methodology

Increasing the ability of students with mild intellectual disabilities to obtain and retain employment probed the researchers' interest and intent to conduct a study in Southern California. The purpose of the study was to identify the most critical job-related skills that transition education programs must include in order to better prepare students with mild intellectual disabilities for gaining and maintaining employment. Phenomenology (Roberts, 2010) and grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) served as the study's theoretical foundations. The study employed a Delphi (Murray & Hammons, 1995) method defined as a "group communication process that aims at conducting detailed examinations and discussions of a specific issue for the purpose of goal setting, policy investigation, or predicting the occurrence of future events" (Hsu & Sanford, 2007). Employers and personnel from a mid-size district in Southern California were selected for the study. After permissions to participate in the study were obtained from organizations and individuals, the researchers formed an expert panel to carry out the investigation. The expert panel, comprised of five employers, five special education teachers, and five job coaches, was requested to participate in the three round Delphi style anonymous electronic survey. In Survey Round 1 the participants were requested to review the definition of an individual with a mild intellectual disability defined as a person with an IQ of about 50-70 experiencing delays in the following areas: conceptual skills (language, literacy, money, time, number concepts, self-direction); social skills (interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, naïveté, social problem solving, the ability to follow rules/obey laws and to avoid being victimized); practical skills (activities of daily living, personal care, occupational skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of the telephone). Participants were also asked to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of hiring adults with mild intellectual disabilities, and identify the types of duties they would be expected to perform in the work place. Survey Round 2 requested the participants to list job-related skills that would increase the likelihood of an adult with a mild intellectual disability to obtain and maintain employment. The data obtained in Round 1 and Round 2 were analyzed and categorized to form ten job-related skills which served as a foundation to formulate Round 3 questions. In Round 3 the participants were requested to rate the importance of the ten job-related skills identified in previous rounds using a five point Likert scale.

Results

The study identified the following most critical job-related skills adults with mild intellectual disabilities needed in order to obtain and maintain employment: social skills, mobility, time management, independence, following directions, being a team player, money skills, professional appearance, basic cleaning/organizational skills, and self-advocacy. Mobility, defined by the participants as *getting to and from work, moving from one work station or work area to another independently, was rated as the most important skill* (mean 4.71). The analysis of the standard deviations demonstrated no significant deviations between the responses.

Implications for Implementation

The study findings provided practical suggestions for transition education by suggesting a laser focus on the ten most critical job-related skills identified by employers, high school special education teachers, and job coaches. The study findings provide a foundation for developing research-based transition curriculum critical for instruction in the age of data-based decision making and evidence-based practices.

Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

While the generalizability of the study is limited to students with mild intellectual disabilities, some respondents shared that job-related skills they discussed also apply to other special education students. Future research may widen the scope of the current study by exploring job-related skills that would prepare all students' to successfully obtain and maintain employment after school. Further research may also examine the employers,' teachers,' and job coaches' opinions on most effective instructional delivery methods of teaching and practicing job skills to best prepare students for the increasingly competitive job market.

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Contact Information:
Zhanna B. Preston
38840 Cobblestone Circle, Murrieta, CA 92563
dosy 2801@gmail.com

About the Authors:
Zhanna B. Preston is an executive director of special education of a public school district. She oversees special education programs, including workability and adult transition programs focusing on employment skills. Ms. Preston has a Master's degree in Secondary Education and is currently working on her doctorate at Brandman University.

Veronica D. Gallegos is a special education teacher instructing adult students with disabilities between the ages of 18-22 years old. As an Adult Transition teacher she oversees job coaches and teaches vocational, social, and life skills. Ms. Gallegos received her Education Specialist Instruction Credential from National University.

Cynthia D. Vargas is a partner with Fagen, Friedman & Fulfrost LLC. As an education lawyer Ms. Vargas represents and advises school districts regarding all aspects of special education law and practice. Ms. Vargas has worked as a special education teacher prior to receiving her Juris Doctor degree from UCLA.

ROBOBRAILLE IN POLAND: EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE

Marlena Kilian
Emilia Śmiechowska-Petrovskij

Conceptual Framework and Background

There are about 285 million individuals with visual impairment (WHO 2014) in the world and almost two million are in Poland (GUS, 2006). Due to total inability or significantly reduced ability to read print, individuals with visual impairment experience communication difficulties that impact their successful education or work life (Kapperman, Sticken, Heinze, 2002). Communication problems affect individuals with visual impairment who are often unable to communicate through print.

Specialized technologies capable of converting print to synthetic speech or braille characters do not solve the problem, because they may be inaccessible to some people, expensive, technically complex, and require training to use. There is demand for widely available, cheap, and easy to use tools also among non-disabled people and non-professionals. Such tools would facilitate mutual communication between people with difficulties in reading texts and people without such difficulties. Not only could those tools enhance the autonomy of people with disabilities, but they can also facilitate their social integration.

RoboBraille is one of those versatile and widely available tools. It is an email-based service which can convert digital text documents into either braille or audio files. Its users send e-mails with attached text documents to the specific RoboBraille e-mail account created for this purpose. Shortly after, they receive the document back from RoboBraille in the specified format. RoboBraille allows the user to receive printed texts in alternative formats, offering:
1. Braille transcription services: translation to and from braille (contracted and uncontracted).
2. Audio conversion services: documents can be converted into mp3 files. Furthermore, RoboBraille is capable of converting well-structured Word documents into Daisy Talking Books complete with audio.
3. Accessibility services: otherwise inaccessible documents such as image files, image-only pdf, as well as all types of pdf files can be converted to more accessible formats.
4. E-book conversion services: most document types may be converted into popular ePub and Mobi (Kindle) e-book formats.

Research

Research carried out in Poland was designed to evaluate the use of RoboBraille among its Polish users in terms of: 1) types of selected services, 2) frequency of use, 3) evaluation of services in such categories as conversion speed, quality of the converted materials, overall satisfaction of its users with the service, and 4) the importance of the services for the respondents. The research, based on questionnaires with open-ended and one answer closed questions, was conducted in two groups: Group I consisting of 64 non-visually impaired people and Group II consisting of 31 visually impaired people. Group I consisted mostly of 20 to 29-year old people (81%), whereas people below 20 years old prevailed in Group II (77%). Women were dominant in both groups (86% vs. 74%). Group I included mostly students (73%), whereas Group II members were younger with the majority of schoolchildren (67.7%).

Results

Types of Selected Services

The conversion of text documents to synthetic speech was by far the most popular format chosen by individuals with non-visual imparirment compared with individuals with visual impairment (92% vs. 84%). Other output formats, including Ms Word files from pdf files (24% vs. 16%), braille characters (14% vs. 16%), and DAISY (audiobook structure) were significantly less popular (2% vs. 16%).

The vast majority of the respondents (93% vs. 84%) declared their willingness to use the service to convert text to mp3 audio files (82% vs. 52%), DAISY formats (21% vs. 23%), image files, pdf, and rtf files or MS Word documents into other types of files (30% vs. 10%), and documents to braille characters (36% vs. 0%).

Frequency of Use

The majority of the respondents used the service 1-3 times (85% vs. 87%), followed by 4-9 times (8% vs. 6%), and 10 times or more (2% vs. 6%).

Evaluation of the Services in Terms of Conversion Speed, Quality of Output Materials, and Overall Satisfaction with the Service

The conversion process was assessed by the respondents as fast or very fast (76% vs. 87%), moderately fast (19% vs. 13%), and slow or very slow (5% vs. 0%). The respondents assessed the quality of converted documents as good or very good (78% vs. 84%), average (21% vs. 13%), and bad (2% vs. 3%). 83% vs. 90% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service, whereas 17% vs. 6% of them were moderately satisfied with it. None of the respondents declared his or her dissatisfaction with RoboBraille.

Importance of the Services for the Respondents

Almost all the respondents (95% vs. 100%) appreciated the fact that the service is free of charge, and the vast majority of them (86% vs. 90%) considered it as a good complement to other assistive technologies. The group of visually impaired people generally agreed that RoboBraille is a technology that facilitates studying and/or spending leisure time (34% vs. 68%), is important in everyday life (17% vs. 45%), and offers solutions without which users would be more disadvantageous in life (11% vs. 19%).

Conclusions

In majority of cases, RoboBraille has been used to convert printed texts to synthetic speech (mp3 or DAISY audio files). Compared with the group of individuals with visual impairment, the group consisting of non-visually impaired respondents was more interested in converting texts to synthetic speech as well as converting image files, pdf, rtf, or MS Word documents into other types of files and documents into braille characters. Conversely, a greater number of respondents with visual impairment declared their satisfaction with the available services (although both groups used the service with varied frequency). Both groups admitted that the fact that RoboBraille is free of charge was a crucial factor. More people with visual impairment acknowledged RoboBraille as an important technology that facilitates their day-to-day lives. Test results of the research show that RoboBraille was positively assessed, and it was a popular solution between individuals with and without visual impairment users.

Recommendations

It is recommended to popularize RoboBraille among individuals with visual impairment, in their immediate environment, among their teachers, especially as part of inclusive education, their employers, as well as public and private service providers.

Suggestions for future research

It is recommended to carry out in the future a more detailed evaluation of the RoboBraille service among its long-term users, and to conduct comparative research on a larger sample of individuals with and without visual impairment users.

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Contact Information:
Marlena Kilian
Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw
Wóycickiego 1/3, bud. nr 15,
01–938 Warszawa
m.kilian@usw.edu.pl

About the Authors:
Marlena Kilian, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Special and Integrated Education, Faculty of Pedagogy, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland. Her research focuses on education and rehabilitation of older people with disabilities, especially with visual impairment.

Emilia Śmiechowska-Petrovskij, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Special and Integrated Education, Faculty of Pedagogy, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland. She is a Braille instructor and certified proofreader of textbooks for blind and visually impaired students in Centre for Education Development in Poland.

TRANSITIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: DO STUDENTS HAVE VOICE AND CHOICE?

Iva Strnadová
Therese M. Cumming
Vanda Hájková

Conceptual Framework and Background

The importance of developing and supporting students' self-determination, especially in the context of transitions, is well established and recognized (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998; Wehmeyer & Shalock, 2001). The majority of this evidence and research in the area of transition processes in general has originated in the United States, leaving a gap in international transition research. Researchers in Australia and the Czech Republic recently collaborated on an international study of transition processes.

The aim of the research was to examine the current state of transitions in both New South Wales (Australia) and the Czech Republic (Europe), specifically: (a) the supports provided by teachers and schools to prepare students for transitions; (b) teachers' perceptions of the transition process for students with developmental disabilities, and (c) home–school collaboration in regards to the transition process. The authors built on this research as well as literature in the field to focus on ways in which self-determination of students with developmental disabilities can be supported to improve students' post-transition outcomes.

Research

The authors conducted a research study examining transitions for students with developmental disabilities (i.e., intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorders) in the New South Wales (Australia) and in the Czech Republic (Europe). Ethics approval was obtained from UNSW's Ethics Committee as well as from NSW Department of Education and Communities. The participants in this study were 37 primary schools, 38 secondary schools and 32 special schools in New South Wales, and 12 primary schools, 8 secondary schools and 41 special schools in the Czech Republic. Each school nominated one person to complete an online survey about transition practices. The responses were analysed using content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) and those relating to student self-determination are discussed below.

Results

The most surprising result of this collaborative study was the lack of focus or even awareness of the importance of developing and supporting students' self-determination in the context of transitions. Only a few participating schools mentioned the need to support their students' self-determination within the transition process. This was mostly related to communicating with their students about the options they have after school, and to the development of skills necessary for independent post-school life. Unfortunately only one participant overall included a student with developmental disabilities when describing the stakeholders who are actively involved in the transition process. Interestingly enough, the results were similar between the two countries, irrespective of the varied history, culture and economic background of each. Teachers simply did not consider the students as important players on the teams that plan their futures. It is evident that schools need to provide more opportunities for students to develop their self-determination skills. The following section includes recommendations for teachers on how to improve students' self-determination and participation in the transition process.

Recommendations

Self-determination is a crucial life skill, and should be included the educational programming for all students, but particularly those with disabilities. It should also be the focus of transition programming, both in instructional and practical activities. There

are a number of ways that teachers and parents can work together to foster self-determination. These include but are not limited to: (a) giving students choices, (b) helping students to develop positive self-esteem, (c) encouraging students to explore post-school options in order to make informed choices, (d) supporting students in setting goals and planning for their attainment, (e) encourage problem solving skills development, and (f) promoting self-advocacy (Bremer, Kachgal, & Schoeller, 2003).

The fact that teachers did not even give a thought to having students participate in any manner in their transition planning was sad and shocking. This result leads to the recommendation that that the topic of self-determination of students with disability needs to be emphasised more strongly in both pre-service teaching programmes and teacher professional development. Teachers need to understand the importance of student self-determination, as well as possessing the knowledge of how to support them in acquiring the skills it requires.

Suggestions for Future Research

The results of this study suggest that teachers and schools in Australia and the Czech Republic undervalue the importance of self-determination for their students with disabilities, specifically as it relates to transition. Future research should focus on teacher knowledge and perceptions in regard to student self-determination in those and other countries internationally. Other studies should examine the role of self-determination in teacher education and professional development programs internationally. The results from these studies may inform future teacher education and professional development curricula internationally.

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Contact Information:
Iva Strnadová, University of New South Wales, School of Education
Room 129 Goodsell Building, NSW 2052 Australia
i.strnadova@unsw.edu.au

About the Authors:
Iva Strnadová is an Associate Professor in Special Education at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. Her research interests include well-being of people with developmental disabilities and their families; life span transitions as experienced by people with disabilities; women with intellectual disabilities; and mobile learning.

Therese M. Cumming is a Senior Lecturer in Special Education at the University of New South Wales. Her research interests include: students with emotional and behavioural disorders, positive behavioural interventions, the use of technology in the classroom, and life transitions for people with disabilities.

Vanda Hájková is an Associate Professor in Special Education at the Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Education, Czech Republic. Her research interests include inclusive education, and whole school approaches to managing diverse learning needs. Vanda Hájková is also president of non-governmental organization "Somatopedická společnost" operating in the Czech Republic.

MULTI-SENSORY TREATMENT PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT WITH SPELLING DIFFICULTIES

Mandana Sepanta

Conceptual Framework and Background

Many children with visual impairments may have other disabilities, such as learning disabilities, neurological disabilities, or behavioral disorders (Silberman, 2000). Dual sensory impaired and multi-sensory impaired children constitute over 50 percent of children with visual impairments (Hatlen, 1998). Compared to traditional education programs, individualized education plans have shown to be more effective in overcoming difficulties learning disabilities in spelling.

Multi - sensory techniques are frequently used for overcoming spelling difficulties in sighted or partially sighted individuals. Blind students (or Braille readers) with learning disabilities, like their sighted or partially sighted counterparts, face many spelling errors, such as transposition of letters, writing backwards, missing, etc. However, to date no officially approved method has been proposed for resolving learning disabilities in spelling.

Research

A great deal of research has focused on diagnosing and treating spelling difficulties. Yet, no study has thus far reported an approved technique for treatment. Since a multi-sensory approach is effective in improving spelling among sighted and partially impaired students, a similar technique, with slight changes, was used for the current research.

The proposed technique employed various activities for enhancing speech perception, auditory discrimination and memory, and also tactile perception, memory and discrimination. The activities included playing with clay, touching different sorts of beads and geometrical shapes of varying sizes, touching smooth and rough surfaces, threading needles, cutting holes using nails, etc.

The study recruited students at and above second grades in elementary school, who had difficulty in spelling. The participants were hearing students with good sense of touch, who were shown to be average in intelligence. They were not diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and did not undergo any sort of therapeutic interventions. The participants and their mothers were fully informed of the treatment procedure to be exercised in school and home. The following is a description of the procedure.

Words that are frequently spelled incorrectly are initially included in a list. Then, numerical and algebraic nuts, which are different from Braille spelling nuts, are used. In a misspelled worth with letters, for example, for each letter 6 cells on the left side of the account board are considered for a Braille cell. Numerical nuts (numbers the students like, for example 1) are used for letters spelled correctly. Next, the misspelled letter is written with algebraic nuts which are different in shape from numerical nuts. The students are then asked to read aloud the letters and spell as they touch them. As they master the spelling, they are required to practice writing the word in Braille several times and produce sentence with the word. In each session, words that have been misspelled in previous sessions are further practiced, so that learning is reinforced.

Results

This study reports a two-month case study on two blind students with average IQ scores and no ADHD. After performing the multi-sensory treatment, the number of spelling errors made by one of the students were decreased from 18 to 3 or 2, and for the other student the errors were decreased from 9 to zero.

Recommendation

Establishing rapport and describing the procedure and its effects on overcoming spelling difficulties significantly facilitated the treatment. Further, upon any progress, the students received verbal encouragements and rewards.

Suggestions for Future Research

A promising line of research concerns employing the proposed technique for overcoming spelling difficulties in students with visual impairment in other countries with different letters that produce identical sounds.

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Contact information:
Mandana Sepanta
Esfahan University
Children with Special Needs Department
Iran, Esfahan, University street , Isfahan university, psychology Department
Sep_mani@yahoo.com

About the author:
Mandana Sepanta is superior consultant to the country (IRAN) and Lecturer and PhD Student of Psychology and Education of Children With Special Needs. Mandana is also a Counselor at Samani Blind School in Esfahan Learning Disabilities Consultant at The Department of Education Esfahan.

Collaborators
Amir Ghamarani, Esfahan university, IRAN
Saeedeh Safari , Esfahan university, IRAN
Nargess Izadi , Samani Blind school
Amir ranjbar , Esfahan university, IRAN

IMAGE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS PARTICIPATING IN SCIENCE CAMPS FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS IN TAIWAN

Ying-Ting Chiu
Jong-Ching Wu
Shu-Fen Lin

Introduction

Science camps for students with visual impairments (VI) have been held biannually by Yuan T. Lee Science Education for All in Taiwan since 2009. In general, curriculum design follows the principles of "hands-on" and "multisensory" to make science more accessible for them (Perkins, 2015). Unlike sighted students, students with VI need extra assistance from teaching assistants (TAs), in addition to teachers in class. Therefore, undergraduate students from the colleges of science and special education in National Changhua University of Education (NCUE) were recruited to work and link up the advantages of both domains to assist students with VI in doing science projects. For 77 students with VI, a total of 30 TAs were assisting them in the classes, thus the ratio between student with VI and TA was 2.5. Indeed, TAs play an important role in learning effectiveness of students with VI. Therefore, in our observation, their ability to assist students with VI should be taken into assessment more seriously.

Research

In this presentation, TAs' perspectives reveal the image of TAs participating in science camps for students with visual impairments. Their role at the camp and the demand of facilitating learning of students with VI were evaluated via an open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire included TAs' background, motivation (in pre-test), expectation, role orientation, and feedback (in post-test). Thirty TAs participating in the Summer Science Camp 2014 took part in this research. All of them filled out the pre-test questionnaire before the TA training courses*, but only 27 filled out the post-test questionnaire after the camp. Responses from both questionnaires were coded following the structure of the open-ended questions. Data interpretation was done by researchers specialized in science and education, respectively, to assure the reliability of this research. *TA training courses include: (1) Knowing about visual impairments; (2) Learning orientation and mobility (O&M) skills to guide students with VI; (3) Understanding curriculum contents by preparing teaching materials.

Results

Our findings revealed that TAs' perspective and attitude towards students with VI are changed after the science camp. TAs were amazed by the good memory and creativity of the students with VI. Their positive learning attitude, such as high motivation, curiosity, and persistence, impressed TAs. Moreover, students with VI's independence, self-confidence, and optimism indeed changed TAs' perceptions about students with VI. This convinced TAs that students with VI were capable of doing many things by themselves, so TAs could let them try their best in classes. However, students with VI still needed TAs' assistance and the assistance they needed could be very different. For that reason, special needs of different types of students with VI in specific science learning contents must be explored for adequate assistant skills enabling to lead students with VI to better learning effectiveness.

TAs' high expectation towards the students with VI was unfolded in this study as well. TAs were eager to improve their abilities of interaction, cooperation, flexibility, and leadership because they thought it was a challenge to assist students with VI in and out of the classroom at the camp. But sometimes TAs would feel frustrated trying to assist students with VI adequately because the learning ability of the students with VI in the same group varied within wide limits and their learning needs could be quite different. Accordingly, the consideration of applying either heterogeneous grouping or homogeneous grouping should be discussed more particularly.

As regards TAs' motivation, most of the TAs participated in the camp due to the fact that they are cultivated to be secondary school teachers in the future. TAs with a background of special education stated that their science knowledge was not sufficient, while TAs with background of science stated that students with VI needed much more time than how much they thought at the beginning. This indicated that the training courses related to science teaching and content for students with VI in secondary teacher education program did not seem sufficient for them. Therefore, the circumstance should be noticed and improved in policy development.

Feedback were also made by TAs, such as verbal description was addressed to be the most primary and important skill when assisting VI students in doing science. Thereby, teachers should provide explicit and clear verbal description in class, especially in hands-on science activities.

Conclusions

By revealing perspectives of every role among the camp, including students with VI, teaching assistants, and teachers, the outcomes could be taken as suggestions for practically implementing science education for students with visual impairments. In this study, TAs' image revealed the implementation of science camps for students with visual impairments in different aspects to improve the camp. TAs' attitude change also represented that the social awareness towards the students with VI enhanced, which is important and necessary in our society.

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Contact Information:
Ying-Ting Chiu
National Changhua University of Education
Master Student
Graduate Institute of Science Education
No.1, Jinde Rd., Changhua City, Changhua County 500, Taiwan (R.O.C.)
arielqq@gmail.com (ARIELQQ@GMAIL.COM)

About the Authors:
Ying-Ting Chiu is a master student of Graduate Institute of Science Education at National Changhua University of Education (NCUE), Taiwan. Her research interests focus on science learning for disabled students, especially for those who are visual impairments, which include science curriculum design and learners' conceptual understanding in science.

Jong-Ching Wu is a physics professor at National Changhua University of Education, Taiwan. Professor Wu is an experimentalist and has long been working on physics and fabrication of nanostructures. He is also promoting outreach of science education for all, especially for the students with visual and/or hearing impairments in recent years.

Shu-Fen Lin is an assistant professor of Graduate Institute of Science Education at National Changhua University of Education (NCUE), Taiwan. Her research interests include material development of science education, science demonstration, learners' science learning in informal context and teachers' professional development.