The importance of inclusive teaching in covering students different thinking speeds; Tripoli Secondary School Teachers ' Perspectives

أهمية التدريس الشامل في تغطية سرعات التفكير المختلفة لدى الطلاب؛
وجهات نظر معلمي المدارس الثانوية في طرابلس
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مستخلص البحث :

يجب أن تشرك مهارات التدريس الفعالة للطلاب بشكل كبير في عملية التعلم . القدرة على دعم التعلم الذي يتكيف مع مستويات الفهم الحالية للطلاب ؛ ـ إشراك الطلاب معرفيًا في التفكير العالي، وتشجيع النجاح ودعمه. يعد التدريس الشامل فعالاً لجميع الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة أو بدونها.

تبحث هذه الورقة البحثية في أهمية التدريس الدامج والشامل في تغطية سرعات التفكير المختلفة لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية من وجهة نظر المعلمين. وأبرز الباحث ضرورة تنفيذ هذا التطبيق في قاعات الدراسة بالمرحلة الثانوية من أجل اهتمام أكثر بالطلاب الأقل سرعة في التفكير من غيرهم.

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Abstract

Effective teaching skills should highly engage students in the process of learning. The ability to support learning that is adapted to students` current levels of understanding; cognitively involving students in higher order thinking, and encouraging and supporting success. Inclusive teaching is effective for all students both with and without special education needs.

This research paper investigates the importance of inclusive teaching in covering different thinking speeds of secondary school students from teachers perspectives. The researcher highlighted the need of this

implementation in secondary school classrooms in order to pay more concern to those students who are less speed thinkers than the others.

Keywords: Inclusive teaching, Secondary school teachers, Differentiated instruction, Learning speeds, Special education needs

Introduction

Classroom environments favor a certain kind of thinker, usually the students who can recall the information easily and quickly or the answer when the teacher asks a question. But that's not the only type of mind, and it is not even always the best kind of mind for learning.

Teachers are faced with the challenge of teaching students whose differences vary across many dimensions. With the growing acceptance of the concept of inclusive education, students who were once directed toward specialized programs due to being deemed "less able" are now recognized as rightful participants in mainstream classrooms. (Ferguson, 2008; Ofsted, 2004; Thomas & Vaughn, 2004). However, it is often argued that teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with such students in inclusive classrooms (see Ofsted, 2008; Scott, Vitale, & Marston, 1998). Schools often ignore, or refuse to include, certain students on the grounds that teachers do not have the requisite knowledge and skills to teach them (Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009). The feeling of being unqualified or unprepared to teach all students in inclusive classrooms prompts discussions about what defines 'essential knowledge and skills.' The literature explores varying perspectives on what classroom teachers need to understand and how they can be effectively trained to succeed in inclusive classroom settings (Fisher, Frey, and Thousand (2003), Pugach (2005), Kershner (2007), and Abu El-Haj and Rubin (2009) highlight various aspects of this topic.

Statement of the Problem

Knowing the importance of using the inclusive teaching in a classroom that is mixed in regard to thinking speeds is very important. The statement of the problem revolves around identifying the to what extent that secondary school teachers are aware of the importance of implementing the inclusive teaching in their daily practice of teaching, and whether they put it in their consideration.

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Objectives of the research

The main purpose of this study is to find out whether the secondary school teachers are aware of the importance of the importance of inclusive teaching in covering students different thinking speeds or not.

The empirical investigation is guided by the following objectives:

a. To see teachers` understanding of the importance of inclusive teaching.

b. To find out whether the teachers apply inclusive teaching in their classrooms.

Research Questions

The main research question in this research is:

   Are the secondary school teachers aware of the importance of inclusive teaching?

The following sub question is:

   Are they applying inclusive teaching as part of their teaching?

Literature Review

In many countries, inclusive education is mainly associated with the idea of providing schooling for children and young people with disabilities. Internationally, the concept primarily aims to to avoid the excluding students with special educational needs, regardless they may be, by closely supporting them with their needs.

The ability to learn at different speeds is a natural human characteristic. Some people learn quickly, while others need more time to process information. This diversity in learning speed is evident in the classroom, where students can have a wide range of abilities. Ellis and Fuchs (2008) discuss the importance of providing differentiated instruction to students with different learning speeds. They argue that by providing students with different learning materials, activities, and assessments, teachers can help all students succeed.

Friend and Bursuck (2019) also emphasize the importance of differentiated instruction. They provide a number of strategies for differentiating instruction, such as providing different levels of support, using multiple teaching methods, and offering choices to students.

Thousand et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of flexible grouping inside inclusive classrooms. They believe that by grouping students flexibly,

teachers can create learning experiences that are tailored to the individual needs of each student.

Many studies have investigated the perspectives of secondary school teachers on inclusive teaching. These studies have found that teachers generally believe that inclusive teaching is important, but they also face a number of challenges in implementing it.

Skrtic (2011) found that teachers were generally supportive of the idea of inclusion, but they also expressed concerns about the lack of resources and support they had to implement it effectively.

Sterling-Krape and Williams (2015) concluded that teachers were more likely to support inclusion for students with mild disabilities than for students with more severe disabilities.

Bender and colleagues (2019) found that teachers reported a number of challenges, such as managing students behavior, differentiating instruction, and communicating with parents.

Inclusive teaching, though challenging, is a vital educational approach that benefits every student. Teachers can foster inclusive classrooms where all learners thrive by incorporating differentiated instruction, utilizing flexible grouping strategies, and providing additional support to those who require it.

What is Inclusive Teaching?

Inclusion has been interpreted and understood in various ways, with no universal perspective prevailing within a single country or school (Dyson & Millward as cited in Ainscow & César, 2006). Inclusive teaching and learning involve pedagogical strategies, methods, and approaches that address the diverse needs and backgrounds of all students, fostering a sense of value and belonging in the classroom. Teaching inclusively leverages the unique strengths that both learners and educators contribute while acknowledging the impact of power dynamics and privilege. Such practices are essential for creating and sustaining a democratic and supportive educational environment where all participants, regardless of their perspectives or backgrounds, feel engaged and respected (Zumbrunn et al., 2014). Inclusive teaching requires educators to be aware of their responsibility to address and respond to micro aggressions within the

classroom. Classroom interactions between teachers and students, as well as among students, can be directly or indirectly shaped by factors such as age, abilities or disabilities, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and other individual characteristics (Hoffman and Toutant, 2018). In inclusive classrooms, the course is purposefully and unambiguously designed to include various viewpoints and wide-ranging experiences reflective of the demographic composition of the classroom.

Students cannot leave their sociocultural identities behind or instantly surpass their current stage of development, even though some may view classrooms as culturally neutral spaces or choose to disregard cultural influences. Therefore, in order to foresee potential conflicts in the classroom and take proactive measures to resolve them, it is critical that the pedagogical tactics we use in the classroom reflect an understanding of social identity development (Ambrose et al., 2010, p. 169-170).

However, the role of inclusive education is frequently restricted to particular kid types in many nations. For instance, inclusive education is still a topic of discussion in Japan over how to accommodate children with disabilities in regular classroom settings and how to set up special education for those who require it (Forlin, Kawai, & Higuchi, 2015). Similar to this, inclusive education is typically viewed in Finland as a practical strategy for providing the greatest support possible for individuals in need, especially those pupils classified as having Special Education Needs (SEN) (Malinen, Vaisanen, and Savolainen, 2012).

Challenges that may face teachers in inclusive classrooms

Teachers now face a great difficulty as a result of the demands of inclusiveness and a varied student body. The classroom environment has not altered nearly as much as the rest of the world (Levin, 2012). Although the idea of differentiated instruction is not new, it is more important than ever to guarantee that a diverse student body achieves high academic standards. Teachers can make the required adjustments to enhance their everyday teaching practices.

graduation rates and other measurements. Because students bring a range of experiences, expectations, and obstacles that can impede the way they learn, successful education can only take place in a safe setting that supports their

emotional needs. If the classroom is to meet the needs of every student, then an experienced teacher who is at ease delivering an inclusive education is needed. Instructors should be able to give programming within the limitations of the time and resources available. To give students the kind of education they require, differentiation, emotional support, and professional development are all necessary.

Managing student behavior: When students have different needs, it can be difficult to keep everyone on task and behaving appropriately. Teachers need to develop strategies for managing behavior that are fair and effective for all students, including those who may have behavioral challenges due to their learning disabilities or other conditions. Differentiating instruction: This means providing different learning experiences for students with different needs, including those who learn at different speeds. This can be challenging, as it requires teachers to have a deep understanding of the content they are teaching and the different ways that students learn.

Engagement: Keeping students engaged and motivated in the learning process, especially when they struggle to keep up with the pace of the class, can be difficult (Meltzer, 2010).

Differentiated Instruction: Implementing differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of students with varying processing speeds can be challenging for teachers (Tomlinson, 2005).

Extended Processing Time: Teachers may need to allow more time for students to process information, answer questions, or complete tasks, which can affect the pace of instruction (Vaughn et al., 2003).

Strategies for implementing inclusive teaching.

It was fascinating to note that, teachers deploy different teaching methods. This is important because it enables teacher to create conducive learning environment for special educational need students. Teachers should use varieties of teaching methods to meet the diverse requirements of the students (Callan, 2013). It was acknowledged by the teachers that every child has different level of understanding, so teachers use mixed teaching methods to meet the needs of diverse students. Different students have different cognitive development level as child is born in different historical and cultural environment (Vygotsky, 1978).

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Teachers need be flexible when they are in the classrooms explaining lessons, in order to support recognition learning, they need to provide flexible and multiple methods of presentation. In order to support strategic learning, they need to provide multiple, flexible methods of expression. In order to support affective learning, they need to provide multiple, flexible methods of engagement.

Sample of the study

The sample of this study was 40 English language teachers in Tripoli. Their experiences are from 2-36 years. They were 13 males and 27 females.

Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaire

1. Inclusive teaching is very important in covering students with different thinking speeds.   a. strongly agree   b. agree   c. neutral   d. disagree   e. strongly disagree

2. I'm concerned about the effect that students with less thinking speed will have on students with much more thinking speed level.
a. strongly agree   b. agree   c. neutral   d. disagree   e. strongly disagree

3. I meet the number of minutes for students with less speed thinking in the my classroom.
 a. strongly agree   b. agree   c. neutral   d. disagree   e. strongly disagree

4. I understand the benefits of inclusion for students with less thinking speed. a. strongly agree   b. agree   c. neutral   d. disagree   e. strongly disagree

5. I do a lot of large-group work, and mix students with different speed levels with each other.
a. strongly agree   b. agree   c. neutral   d. disagree   e. strongly disagree

6. I encourage friendships and social connections in an inclusive classroom.
a. strongly agree   b. agree   c. neutral   d. disagree   e. strongly disagree

7. I know how to develop students benefit from inclusion.

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a. strongly agree   b. agree   c. neutral   d. disagree   e. strongly disagree

8. 8.I have difficulties in implementing inclusive teaching in my classroom.
   A). yes b). No. If yeas, what are they? ………………………………

9. How challenging is your implementing inclusive teaching?
   a. very challenging b. challenging   c. neutral   d. not challenging

Analysis

Table (1) presents the importance of inclusive teaching .

Inclusive teaching is very important in covering students with different thinking speeds.	Percentage
a. strongly agree	19%
b. agree	35%
c. neutral	33%
d. disagree	12%
e. strongly disagree	1%

The results show that 19% of the participants answered strongly agree and 35% agree. While 33% were neutral and showed that they either they don't know the term, or they don't sure about its importance. And 12% of them disagreed on the importance of inclusive teaching which I think is a high percentage. And only 1% with strongly disagree.

Table (2) presents the effect that students with less thinking speed will have on students with much more thinking speed level.

I'm concerned about the effect that students with less thinking speed will have on students with much more thinking speed level.	Percentage
a. strongly agree	5%
b. agree	43%
c. neutral	38%
d. disagree	11%
e. strongly disagree	3%

Results show that only 5% of the teachers have chosen Strongly agree,43% Agree, and 38% of them have chosen neutral. 11% disagreed and 3% were strongly disagreed. I think the percentage of the choices a and b should be higher, whereas the choices on c, d, and e should be less than this result, so that teachers are concerned about the effect that students with less thinking speed will have on students with much more thinking speed level.

Table (3) Shows whether the teachers meet the number of minutes for students with less speed thinking in the my classroom.

I meet the number of minutes for students with less speed thinking in the my classroom.	Percentage
a. strongly agree	3%
b. agree	15%
c. neutral	20%
d. disagree	55%
e. strongly disagree	7%

3% of the participants have chosen Strongly agree , 15% Agree, and 20% of them have chosen neutral. With a 55% disagree which show that more than half of them don't know how to manage the time for students with less speed thinking in the classroom. And 7% were strongly disagree.

Table (4) Shows whether the teachers meet the number of minutes for students with less speed thinking in my classroom.

I understand the benefits of inclusion for students with less thinking speed.	Percentage
a. strongly agree	19%
b. agree	35%
c. neutral	39%
d. disagree	7%
e. strongly disagree	0%

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The results show that 19% have chosen strongly agree, 35% have chosen agree, and 39% of them have chosen neutral and 7% disagree. To some extent, this shows that there is a belief among the teachers that they understand the benefits of inclusion for students with less thinking speed, but still the percentage in the neutral field is high.

Table (5) Shows whether the teachers do a lot of large-group work, and mix students with different speed levels with each other.

I do a lot of large-group work, and mix students with different speed levels with each other.	Percentage
a. strongly agree	5%
b. agree	15%
c. neutral	31%
d. disagree	49%
e. strongly disagree	0%

The results show that 5% have chosen (a), and 15% have chosen (b) while 31% have chosen (c) , and 49% have chosen (d). This is a clear indicator that they don't do a lot of large-group work, and mix students with different speed levels with each other.

Table (6) Shows whether the teachers encourage friendships and social connections in an inclusive classroom.

I encourage friendships and social connections in an inclusive classroom.	Percentage
a. strongly agree	18%
b. agree	39%
c. neutral	12%
d. disagree	30%
e. strongly disagree	1%

The results show that 18% have chosen (a) , while 39% have chosen (b) whereas, 12% have chosen (c). with 30% for the choice (d) and 1% for (e).

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The percentages show that a high percentage of teachers don't encourage friendships and social connections in an inclusive classroom.

Table (7) Shows whether the teachers know how to develop students benefit from inclusion.

I know how to develop students benefit from inclusion.	Percentage
a. strongly agree	9%
b. agree	17%
c. neutral	21%
d. disagree	38%
e. strongly disagree	15%

The results show that 9% have chosen (a) , 17% have chosen (b) whereas, 21% have chosen (c). 38 % for (d), and 15 for (d). When a teacher knows how to develop the students benefit from inclusion, this helps students with less thinking speed a lot to cope with the other students with much more speed in the same classroom. But the results above in this field show that a high number of teachers don't know how to develop students benefit from inclusion.

Table (8) Shows whether the teachers have difficulties in implementing inclusive teaching in my classroom.

I have difficulties in implementing inclusive teaching in my classroom.	Percentage
a. strongly agree	5%1
b. agree	25%
c. neutral	50%
d. disagree	10%
e. strongly disagree	0%

The results show that 15% of the participants answered strongly agree and 25% agree. While 50% were neutral and showed that they either they don't know the term, or they don't sure if they have any difficulties . And 10% of

them disagreed on difficulties in implementing inclusive teaching in my classroom.. And 0% with strongly disagree.

Table (9) Shows how challenging is implementing inclusive teaching for teachers.

I face challenges in implementing inclusive teaching in my classrooms	Percentage
a. strongly agree	25%
b. agree	35%
c. neutral	28%
d. disagree	12%
e. strongly disagree	0%

The results show that 25% have chosen strongly agree, 35% have chosen agree, and 28% of them have chosen neutral and 12% disagree, and 0% strongly disagree. To some extent, this shows that there is a belief among the teachers that they face challenges in implementing inclusive teaching in their classrooms, but still the percentage in the neutral field is high.

Conclusion

This study investigated the importance of inclusive teaching in covering students different thinking speeds; Tripoli Secondary School Teachers` Perspectives. Teachers need to be trained on dealing with students with different thinking speeds, as well as the inclusive teaching itself, because in the questionnaire the answers of neutral choice was high. Which showed that the participants are unaware of this term. Also training them regarding the time of the class or time management is very important.

 The main challenges which hindered successful implementation of inclusive education were identified. Schools needed trained teachers, teaching assistants and extra support for teachers. It is recommended that the policymakers take necessary measures to provide resources and make changes to current policy in teacher allocation and class size. Also, steps should be taken to support general teachers with skills and knowledge through continued professional development programs and awareness programs to foster positive attitudes and teacher collaboration. Furthermore, it is proposed for policymakers to build partnerships with higher education

institutions to develop innovative teacher education programs to ensure all teachers are equipped with skills, knowledge, and experience to implement inclusive education.

If the classroom is to meet the needs of all students, then it requires a well-trained professional comfortable in providing an inclusive education. Teachers need the capacity to deliver programming within the constraints of the time and resources provided. Each component of differentiation, emotional support, and professional development is required in order to provide the type of education that students need.

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