

Arab physical education teacher's attitudes toward inclusion before and after participation

In a professional development Workshop

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the attitudes of physical education teachers about inclusion and teaching students with disabilities in Arab sector in Israel before and after they participated in a professional development program focused on inclusive ideology and strategies. The participants were Arab physical education teachers, there were 90 respondents who agreed to take part in the sample (40 women and 50 men). Located around the city of Nazareth. The research method was pretest-posttest group design.

The primary data source was the physical Educator's judgments about inclusion survey, a three-dimensional attitude survey scale which an accompanying demographic questionnaire. Data were analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics. Results indicate during the professional development program that focused by the Multidimensional Model can be effective if focused on: (a) increasing PE teachers' inclusive attitudes to attract disabled students on equal base with non-disabled students in the PE lessons. (b) elaborating the methodology of implementation of the instructive program of PE teachers from the inclusive perspective focused on the socio-educational inclusive policies. (c) enhancing practical inclusion oriented strategies for including process of children with disabilities.

Introduction

Background and context

Over recent years the inclusion agenda within schools has risen up the political and statutory agenda with an increased emphasis on special educational needs (SEN) through legislation such as the National Curriculum Physical Education (NCPE) [1]. SEN and Disability Rights Act and the Revised Code of Practice. However, there is no universally accepted definition of the term inclusion and the related terms mainstreaming and integration and the lack of clarity can be problematic for PE teacher trainers if they are to fully prepare for and appreciate the issues and implications for including children with SEN.

It is so important upon the government to ensure, design and monitor "children with disabilities" (to ensure they) can, on an equal basis with others, participate in games, sports, recreation and leisure activities in an inclusive format [2]. Pro-inclusion efforts have resulted in an increased number of students attending general education schools with their peers without disabilities [3]. However, even though students with disabilities are more likely to be educated in inclusive classes, research suggests that inclusive classes are typified with little interaction between students with and without disabilities and feelings of exclusion among students with disabilities due to a lack of support and accommodations from teachers [3]. For example, researchers found that student with Down syndrome in an inclusive physical education class, they found that although the student did not have difficulties performing activities he was unable to establish social relationships with peers.

Research suggests that the attitudes and abilities of physical education teachers are central to the success of inclusive classes.

Unfavorable attitudes negatively affect many aspects of schools which can impede the learning potential of students with disability . many physical education teachers have expressed hesitancy about teaching students with disabilities and contend that they are not adequately prepared to do so effectively. Therefore , although more students with disabilities are being educated in inclusive classes, unprepared teachers tend to improvise pedagogical practices because of inadequate training . for example , Alves and Duarte (2014) reported that feelings of exclusion for students with disabilities in physical education occurred as a result of lack of adaptations presented by their physical educators [4].

Physical education teachers: Attitudes and Professional preparation:

Researchers suggests that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and teaching students with disabilities can have a considerable impact on students' experiences. Researchers, globally, have analyzed a number of variables related to teachers' attitudes, and a number of themes have emerged [5]. Noteworthy findings include physical education teachers (pre-service/in-service) tend to have more favorable attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities if they have more coursework in adapted physical education (APE) , including practicum experiences teaching students with disabilities [6].

Amongst the many issues impeding inclusive educational practices, often teachers are not and do not feel adequately prepared to teach students with disabilities in their general education programs, including physical education [7]. It is predicted that, in the future, more students with disabilities will be educated in inclusive classes because of increased pro-inclusion efforts and current national legislation. This warrants physical education teacher candidates and inservice teachers receiving proper professional preparation and development, respectively, to effectively teach students with disabilities in their classes. In recent data-based research, Taliaferro and Harris (2014) reported on the effectiveness of a one-day professional development workshop in the USA. They argued that professional development training can help in-service physical educators by increasing their knowledge about disabilities, adaptations, and accommodations, and the overall benefits of inclusion for all students . Although not statistically significant, they asserted that the increase found in teachers' attitudes in their study held practical significance and was limited by a small sample size. Likewise, a number of scholars have studied and discussed the importance of professional development workshops for physical education teachers' effectiveness .(in other areas (Bechtel and O'Sullivan, 2006; Martin et al., 2008; O'Sullivan and Deglau, 2006) [8]. For example, Martin and colleagues (2008) found a social cognitive theory-based professional

.development intervention to positively influence teachers' pedometer and computer efficacy

However, there has been a dearth of intervention research, including studies focusing on professional development, pertaining to inclusive practices published in adapted physical activity-related journals in recent years [9].

A lot of researchers have drawn attention to the attitudes and professional preparation of pre-service physical education teachers in regards to teaching students with disabilities. Scholars argue that determining, analyzing, and theorizing about the beliefs and intentions of physical education teachers is important in the preparation and professional development of such teachers [10].

Adapted physical education (APE) and adaptation programming

As a modern field of study within the sport sciences, adapted physical activity (APA) has been defined as "research, theory and practice directed toward persons of all ages under-served by the general sport sciences, disadvantaged in resources, or lacking power to access equal physical activity opportunities rights". From an educational perspective, this means that students with all types of disabilities and within all types of educational settings should be served in a way that conforms to their human rights, suits their individual functions, and focuses on their educational needs [11].

The central term used within APA terminology is adaptation, referring to assessing and managing variables(related to the tasks, persons involved, and environment) to meet unique needs and achieve desired outcomes. Adaptation occurs as "an interactive and reciprocal process of change between the individual and environmental agents, who by means of their practice may facilitate or hinder this process. The aim of adaptation in APA is "to enhance physical activity goal achievement of individuals of all ages with movement limitations and / or social restrictions.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to analyze the attitudes of physical education teachers about inclusion and teaching students with disabilities before and after participated in a professional workshop focused on inclusive ideology and strategies. The following research hypotheses were tested :

-physical education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion will improve following professional development training.

-physical education teachers' attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities will improve following professional development training.

-physical education teachers will express a desire for more professional development opportunities following professional development training.

The rationale supporting the three hypotheses is that teachers who participate in the professional development workshop (i.e. the Adapted Physical Activity [APA] Symposium) will gain knowledge

.about effective strategies in teaching students with disabilities in physical education classes

In turn, this will have a positive effect on their attitudes toward inclusion and teaching students

with disabilities. Further, they will have a greater awareness of a need for additional opportunities

for professional development.

Method

Research design

The research method was a pretest–posttest group design using a survey approach.

In the pretest–posttest group design, a designated sample.

physical education teachers) is measured or observed both before and after exposure to an .intervention [12].

This method permitted direct access to physical education teachers before and after they attended a professional development workshop, which was designed to emphasize inclusive ideology and strategies for teaching students with disabilities in physical education. Direct administration of the study's attitude survey with an accompanying demographic questionnaire allowed the researchers to collect and analyze data from the participants in a manageable and economically feasible manner.

Participants

There were 90 respondents who agreed to take part in the sample, (40 women and 50 men). The participants' ages ranged from 23 to 54 years. Teachers experience ranged from 5—24 years. The category of teachers was classified according to each five years of seniority. In order to validate the formative stage two groups were used- the findings of the experimental /intervention group who received a specific plan in order to succeed in the integration of students with disabilities (N=43), were compared to those of the other group who did not receive any session or program(N=47, control group). Then again, we performed interviews with those students of the two groups, and we saw the ratio and the teachers attitudes towards the integration of children with disabilities. The same questionnaires which were distributed to the teachers in the pre-training stage,were re-distributed at the post-training stage, to see the difference in the results. Collecting all the data regarding all the teachers was conducted in person through the department of education in the local authority to which the schools belong.

Attitude Questionnaire: The Attitude Questionnaire (ATIPE) deals with the perception of the difficulties and the advantages of integrating children with disabilities / abnormalities in physical education, adapted by Schechtman (1991). This questionnaire contains 15 items, first used in 1991. The instrument includes short statements regarding the inclusion context. Internal consistency of the questionnaire was found in Shechtman alpha = .84. The questionnaire is constructed by arguments for and against integration. All arguments are phrased in a positive way to reduce the risk of social desirability bias[13].

Demographic Questions: in this questionnaire the physical education teacher provide us his experience with the inclusion towards children with disabilities. This instrument could be used to investigate attitudes beliefs of PETE majors toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in GPE.

Based on previous attitude surveys in Europe and the U.S [14], it was concluded that different disabilities are perceived differently by practitioners, and that physical, intellectual, and sensory disabilities appear to create the greatest challenges when including students.

Interview

In this study, we have also interviewed a group of students with disabilities and also physical education teachers regarding inclusion.

Name tool: semi-built-in-depth interview questionnaire positions.

Type of research tools: depth semi-structured interview.

The interview in this study built after a review of the literature on attitudes, and based on the key questions that encourage the development of major significance descriptions of the respondents used them in the organization of our world and lives as children with disabilities. The interview structure provided flexibility, you can talk to evolve, and let the interviewer exceed pre-prepared questions and ask questions according to the interviewees' life stories.

The inter-dependent design of responsibility distribution based on the Multidimensional Model to forming the PE teachers' inclusive attitudes- professional development workshop- "sport is for everyone"

The multi-dimensional pedagogical system in the Arab sector (which includes, the school administration, teachers, school staff, local authority education department etc.) are in charge of formulating methods of dealing with the adequate inclusion of children with disabilities in the educational system, along with support services within and outside the school. In addition, the students' family involvement in the inclusion process is also taken into account. In this complex process, physical education field, which has its specific characteristics as an enriching part of the school system which unlike regular lessons of the curricula is applied outside the regular class frontal frame, has the potential of being a connective link between children with disabilities special needs and the educational systemic goals.

The Multidimensional Model to forming the PE teachers' inclusive attitudes towards students with disability was put in practice throughout the intervention program "Sport is for everyone" in the frame of the formative experiment which involved 43 PE teachers, defined as teachers with negative attitudes towards inclusion students with disabilities.

The main objectives of the ascertaining experiment were:

- To offer a theoretical and praxiological model to forming PE teachers' inclusive attitude to including students with special needs in PE lessons
- To increase the participation of students with disabilities in physical education lessons .
- To ascertain the correlation between the 4 PE teachers' distinguished key features and their impact on their attitudes with regards to children with disabilities integration as specified below:

- experience in integrating students with special needs
- PE teachers gender
- (Years of work experience (in teaching PE)
- PE Participation in an academic course (" sport for everyone- course which give an tools for teachers in including process-APE).

Procedures

The intervention program "Sport is for everyone" included 10 meetings, 2 hours each. The objectives of the program were:

- .Enhance student with disability engagement to PE lesson and to the school .
- Increase education aspects of all the teachers-students in regard to inclusion, such as participation in PE lessons and all the activites, motivation, self-efficacy for both teachers-students and also sense of belonging to schoo.l
- .Reduce risk factors such as discipline problems and involvement at violence .
- .Reduce risk social factors such as develop a sense of social rejection .

Table 1. Professional development workshop topics and schedule

Topic	Description
Education and students with disabilities	.A discussion about education and students with disabilities The term disability was disability was discussed and defined , and laws enacted to protect the rights of people with disabilities including civil and educational provisions with disabilities.
Distinguishing between integration versus inclusion	A discussion about the philosophical underpinnings of these orientations and group participation in a demonstration highlighting the differences between integration and inclusion.
Strategies for facilitating inclusion	A discussion about strategies for facilitating the inclusion of students with disabilities in physical education and sport environments
Practical class activities for	Hands –on demonstrations of use of picture exchange communication system symbols, structure , and differentiated

<p>including students with several disabilities</p> <p>The inclusion of students with disabilities in the context of physical education and sport</p>	<p>instruction in common physical education activities</p> <p>Review of key content from the previous day and an introduction of additional content and concepts on the inclusion of students with disabilities in physical education and sport environments</p>
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Table 1 summarizes the professional development workshop topics and schedule.

Results

we state that the Multidimensional Model to forming the PE teachers' inclusive attitude towards students with disabilities for increasing inclusion towards students with disabilities can be effective if focused on:

- increasing PE teachers' inclusive attitudes to attract disabled students on equal base with non-disabled students in PE lessons.
- diminishing the damage to the students with disabilities, emphasizing the undamaged skills ;of coping
- motivating students with disabilities and to non-disabled students participate in PE lessons together.
- exploring the predictive factors of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities.
- correlation with several factors, principles and forms of education, dropout preventive strategies.
- create the premises for enhancing disable students inclusion for personal and social develop.

At the same time, the Multidimensional Model can be efficient, provided that the following conditions are carefully kept: the PE teachers will be ready for their lessons; the PE teachers

recognize the factors that determined participation of students with disabilities; performance indicators of students with disabilities at rejection risk are determined; physical education teachers have to acquire and continually improve specific effective coping strategies in their process of integrating pupils with disabilities.

The actions stipulated by the Multidimensional Model should be combined with the issues addressed during the intervention program stages: Promoting equipments school, Enhancing cognitive and psychological engagement, Information processing, Situational influences through teaching strategies. It is very important to establishing a stable containing basis for for PE teachers- as a container in which they can feel sure to try on positive inclusive attitudes towards students with special needs.

The efficacy of the formative program, activities and methods aimed at increasing inclusion process towards students with disabilities in PE class depends on the degree of involvement of the educational factors concerned: family, school (PE teachers a part of them), community and the students themselves.

General Conclusion

Inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools is an educational essential process which is recognized by many international documents. Inclusion of students with disabilities being implemented in regular schools in concordance with disability advocating policies dating from the the late seventies, which maintain that children with disabilities should be served whenever possible in general education classrooms in inclusive neighborhood schools and community settings.

In the continual pursuit for suitable options for adequate inclusion physical education lessons have proved to constitute one of the most significant educational frameworks for inclusion implementation because of its benefic characteristics, its proved relevance for physical health maintaining and its additional potential to improve the self-image of various practitioners –a truth that can apply for special students if adequately applied; hence, the teacher's role is very as the key person to implement inclusive education is critical in the success of the inclusion process, particularly to help the child in fitting his expectations and efforts to the reality, for experiencing real success, which will eventually equip him with attitude. In this context, his/her attitudes are argued as playing a considerable role in implementing the educational mission of inclusion and he/she needs adequate training for coping with the challenges on his way.

In conclusion, the physical education framework can be considered as a significant container which may provide students with disabilities the wishful chance to feel equal and significant parts of their natural social environment.

In this context, the physical teacher's role is to keep a vital atmosphere in the PE classes containing all students, constituting a live model for his regular students in the process of learning to accept others and deal tolerantly with their difference. By stiking Multidimensional Model to forming the PE teachers' inclusive attitudes towards students with disability and implementing the "Sport is for everyone" program, the PE teacher is provided with a mental and paxiological platform of including every student in his/her classes with/without a disability.

The present study confirms the hypothesis is positively related to attitudes towards including children with disabilities in PE and also the study revealed PE teachers attitudes toward including students with disabilities in their classes.

Due to our research it is recommended not only to have a unique course on the subject of integration processes of students with special needs, but also to include it in the teaching material of regular courses in Colleges of Physical Education.

By the model we were able to change the attitudes of those teachers who were previously negative. After, Physical Education teachers were exposed and became familiar with the multi-diversity attitude changing model we could see that they actually became able to reconsider and change their attitudes towards the students, providing live leadership models for their "regular" pupils to keep making change happen. Since education is geared toward preparing future competent citizens with humanitarian agendas who should undertake the lifelong mission of coping with human-diversity, our recommendation to examine and modify attitudes as early as possible while this developmental goal is in the teachers responsibility, may be seen as a humble contribution toward this major goal.

Thus, the scientific research problem was solved by developing, implementing and validating the Multidimensional Model to forming the PE teachers' inclusive attitudes that contributed to increase inclusion of students with disability on equal base those without disabilities in PE lessons in the Arab sector of Israel schools, ensuring decreasing the negative impact to disabled students, enhancing their inclusion for personal and social development, and creating an inclusive environment.

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