



What are the inclusive teaching tasks that require the highest self-efficacy?



Francisco T.T. Lai ^{a, b}, Eria P.Y. Li ^c, Mingxia Ji ^c, Wikki W.K. Wong ^c, Sing Kai Lo ^{b, c, d, *}

^a Department of Psychological Studies, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

^b Assessment Research Centre, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

^c Graduate School, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

^d Centre for Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

HIGHLIGHTS

- There is insufficient information on the most urgent needs for training in inclusive education.
- A survey on primary school teachers was conducted to examine their efficacy for inclusive tasks.
- The tasks were ranked by the extent of self-efficacy using a Rasch rating scale model.
- Tasks requiring notably higher efficacy could potentially imply the need for additional training.
- Findings can also be taken into considerations when designing curriculum for teacher training.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 17 November 2015

Received in revised form

27 June 2016

Accepted 6 July 2016

Keywords:

Inclusive education

Teacher efficacy

Rasch rating scale model

Special educational needs

ABSTRACT

Inclusive teaching tasks have consistently been found challenging for teachers, but it is unclear how they are ranked in terms of the extent of self-efficacy required. This study aimed at deriving such a hierarchy. A survey was conducted on 107 primary school teachers in Hong Kong using the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices scale. A Rasch rating scale model was applied to empirically examine the hierarchical structure. Good person reliability (0.89) and model fit (MNSQ 0.6–1.4) were achieved. Managing physical aggression was found at the top of the hierarchy; this and other results could facilitate the identification of training needs.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Implementation of inclusive practices in mainstream classrooms has always been full of challenges and obstacles for teachers (Lacey & Scull, 2015; Pivik, McComas, & Laflamme, 2002; Shah, Das, Desai, & Tiwari, 2016). Teachers of students with special educational needs (SEN) in inclusive settings are required to juggle numerous difficult tasks in their daily practice (Foote & Collins, 2011; Westwood, 2013). For example, one of the most frustrating missions is to manage the occasional aberrant behavior of students

with developmental difficulties (Counts, Nigg, Stawicki, Rappley, & Von Eye, 2005; Winstanley, Eagle, & Robbins, 2006). Frequent follow-up consultations with professionals and regular meetings with parents are also required to tackle the problems. All these jointly imply an urgent need for additional knowledge, experience and skills. Therefore, in recent years, an emphasis on inclusive education training for teachers in the hope of enhancing their capability to face the challenges of inclusive education has been strengthened (Florian & Rouse, 2009; Lancaster & Bain, 2007; Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008).

1.1. Three common aspects of inclusive teaching

Regarding the design of curricula for this kind of training, it is commonly believed that teachers would require skills in at least three aspects as proposed and discussed by Sharma, Loreman, and

* Corresponding author. The Education University of Hong Kong, 10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong.

E-mail addresses: francisco@s.eduhk.hk (F.T.T. Lai), eriali@eduhk.hk (E.P.Y. Li), mxji@eduhk.hk (M. Ji), wikki@s.eduhk.hk (W.W.K. Wong), skl@eduhk.hk (S.K. Lo).

Forlin (2012). Firstly, appropriate and clear instructions to be communicated to students are important. For instance, educational goals for students with SEN are in most cases different from those of mainstream students. It is demanding to assign learning tasks and assessments tailor-made for them while simultaneously teaching all students as a single class. Although guidelines are available (Broderick, Mehta-Parekh, & Reid, 2005), many teachers need additional training and years of experience to be self-efficacious and fully capable of performing this task.

Secondly, inclusive education always requires collaborative effort to succeed (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Engelbrecht, Oswald, & Forlin, 2006). Trust and support from parents, information and administrative assistance from seniors in school, and professional advice from experts need to be solicited and gathered for the best results. This has been proven to be difficult given the heavy workload of teachers. For example, in the Hong Kong aided school systems, educational psychologists, who typically provide consultation and service to several schools simultaneously, only visit schools twice a month, sometimes even less. This imposes challenges for teachers to initiate collaboration and seek their professional advice.

Thirdly, as illustrated by the aforementioned example, managing the behavior of students is of utmost importance. Disruptive behavior is common among students with developmental difficulties (Counts et al., 2005; Winstanley et al., 2006). Intervention strategies have been introduced to improve their behavioral issues, such as Social Story™ and Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) (Crozier & Tincani, 2005; Virues-Ortega, Julio, & Pastor-Barriuso, 2013). However, given the limited time and resources as well as the tight teaching schedule and syllabus, teachers seldom have opportunities to properly implement these strategies, and have to leave the job to counselors and other professionals. This, in turn, leads to even fewer opportunities for them to master the skills of handling the students.

Although these task domains have been well categorized and tested with good validity, and have facilitated well-organized design of inclusive education training curricula (Forlin, Sharma, & Loreman, 2013; Park, Dimitrov, Das, & Gichuru, 2014; Sharma et al., 2012), inclusive education training should be more focused and specialized on tasks that represent areas where teachers feel less efficacious. This is because, if teachers are found to be highly efficacious in certain tasks, they might have already obtained a certain level of relevant experience and skills. In this case, resources invested in the provision of such training to teachers would better be allocated to other areas where they feel less efficacious.

Therefore, the main objective of this study was to identify a sequence of inclusive teaching tasks along the continuum of teachers' efficacy; this will enable us to recommend those requiring the highest level of efficacy, on which more focus and training emphasis should be placed. Furthermore, it would be insightful to investigate how the tasks of each domain require different levels of efficacy, and to analyze how the teacher's background might influence his/her particular efficacy for individual tasks, given a similar overall efficacy level.

1.2. Inclusive teaching efficacy

To guide our reasoning on inclusive teaching efficacy, Bandura's conceptual framework on self-efficacy has been adopted (Malinen et al., 2013). Inclusive teaching efficacy is defined as the judgement of one's capability to implement the required teaching practices in an inclusive education setting (Bandura, 2006; Gibbs et al., 2007). Efficacy is theorized as being constructed from mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and

somatic and emotional states (Bandura, 1977). When comparing the required teacher efficacy levels between tasks and across socio-demographic factors, adoption of this conceptualization of efficacy will facilitate the interpretation of the results.

Research on teaching efficacy specific to the context of inclusive education is relatively scarce in spite of the emerging trend of inclusive education. A significant proportion of this research investigates the effects of different specific training programs on inclusive teaching efficacy (Forlin, Loreman, & Sharma, 2014; Sharma & Sokal, 2015; Sokal, Woloshyn, & Funk-Unrau, 2013). For example, Sokal et al. (2013) suggested that student teachers going through both practicum and coursework achieved higher efficacy scores than those who did only coursework, in support of the conceptualization of mastery experiences as a crucial source of self-efficacy (Malinen et al., 2013). Forlin et al. (2014) evaluated improvements in efficacy on using inclusive instructions after a system-wide professional training program in Hong Kong. There were other studies examining socio-demographic determinants of efficacy. Gender (Shaukat, Sharma, & Furlonger, 2013), experience with students with SEN (Malinen et al., 2013), previous special education training (Levi, Einav, Raskind, Ziv, & Margalit, 2013), school climate (O'Toole & Burke, 2013), cultural background (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Malinen, 2012) and democratic beliefs (Almog & Shechtman, 2007) were identified as having significant influence on inclusive teaching efficacy. Despite the importance of the insights generated from these studies, little research has investigated the associations with efficacy by item level (i.e., specific tasks), or comparing each inclusive teaching task in terms of their required self-efficacy. The current study intends to fill this gap.

1.3. Research hypothesis

Based on an overview of the literature on inclusive education practices, it is hypothesized that teaching tasks regarding physical aggression and disruptive behavior of students with SEN will be seen as most significant in terms of a hierarchy of required self-efficacy (i.e., requiring the most efficacy to carry out), followed by tasks that involve collaborations with parents in the classroom.

1.3.1. Physical aggression and disruptive behavior

It is common that students with certain developmental difficulties show occasional aberrant behavior or physical aggression (Bears, Johnson, Handen, Smith, & Scahill, 2013; Eikeseth, Klintwall, Jahr, & Karlsson, 2012; Kaat, Lecavalier, & Aman, 2014; Logan et al., 2015). In primary school settings, although such behavior probably causes no physical harm to teachers, it inevitably affects the emotional stability of the teacher, and would lead to less satisfying teaching quality and thus worse learning outcomes (Klusmann, Kunter, Trautwein, Lüdtke, & Baumert, 2008). Teaching and taking care of students with behavioral issues is difficult, as reflected by the abundance of behavioral intervention strategies teachers need to master and implement in order to properly manage behavior. Also, student behavioral issues have been reported to have caused serious stress for teachers in Hong Kong (Pang, 2011).

Facing the prevalent behavioral issues of students with SEN, behavioral interventions, such as Social Story™ (Karkhaneh et al., 2010) and TEACCH (Virues-Ortega et al., 2013) have been introduced. However, in spite of the evidence of their effectiveness, it takes time for noticeable improvements to be observed (Brophy, 2003; Crozier & Sileo, 2005; Karkhaneh et al., 2010; Scattone, Wilczynski, Edwards, & Rabian, 2002; Virues-Ortega et al., 2013). Also, these strategies might have to be used in after-class hours or when the student is taken out of class. During class time, given the

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6850575>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6850575>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)