

**خدمات التربية البدنية المقدمة للطلاب الكويتيين في المدارس
الخاصة الابتدائية: تحليل الاحتياجات**

**Physical Education services offered to Kuwaiti students with
disabilities in private primary settings: a gap analysis**

اعداد

د. مشعل المطيري

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المستخلص:

يعتمد هذا التقرير علي جمع بيانات من الاهل والمعلمون للطلاب من ذوي الحاجات الخاصة عن الخدمات المقدمة في مجال التربية البدنية في مدارس الابتدائية الخاصة بدولة الكويت. بغرض تحليل الاحتياجات. يعتبر الهدف الرئيسي للورقة البحثية هو جمع البيانات عن هذه الخدمات بغرض الوصول لما هو نافص وغير متاح حتي يتم استغلال هذه الخدمات لأقصى درجة في مصلحة الطلاب. تم الاستعانة باستبانة ونم توزيعها علي عشرة من المعلمين ثم تم الحاق هذا بمقابلات شخصية. بالنهاية تم عرض تحليل الاحتياجات بغرض دعم المعلمين والأهل وصناع القرار.

Abstract

This report is based on notes generated from interviews with stakeholders such as parents and teachers of children with disabilities about services offered in the area of physical education to Kuwaiti students in private mainstream primary schools for the purpose of gap analysis. The purpose of the paper was to investigate provision of services for children with special educational needs and disabilities that are related to physical education and what needs to be done to maximize the benefits of such services. A survey was distributed to 10 teachers and interviews took place with some students

requesting information on current services offered in that area with a focus on what is needed to improve the services. A set of gaps were determined to inform policy and decision makers as well as support further research.

Introduction

There is no doubt that the State of Kuwait is catching up on the inclusive education phenomenon for learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) (Gaad 2010). However when it comes to the area of physical education and supporting such learners we may find that there are some gaps. To identify such gaps and use the research to recommend changes and provisions, a set of tools were used to extract information from most affected by it, teachers and students. The goal is to provide an appropriate set of recommendations to support decision makers and teachers to make the most out of physical education curriculum to support learners with disabilities.

Methods

A mixed methods approach was used. A survey was distributed to 10 teachers and 10 students requesting information on current services offered in that area with a focus on what is needed to improve the services. Then a set of follow up semi structured interviews were used to get further information out of those who showed interesting answers. The interview followed a semi-structured format (Robson, 2005) as the 3 interviewees had been sent a prior set of questions. A set of gaps were determined to inform policy and decision makers as well as support further research.

Results

The survey included the following questions:

Survey for teachers:

Section 1: Demographics				
A. Teacher demographics				
What is your gender:	1. Male 2. Female			
What is your age:	1. Less than 25 2. 25 to 34 3. 35 to 44 4. 45 to 55 5. 56 to 64 6. 65 and older			
What is your nationality	List of nationalities			
What is your education level:	1. High school or below 2. University degree 3. Masters or above			
Do you have a teaching certificate:	1. Yes 2. No			
How long have you been teaching (in total):(number of years)			
Are you a :	1. Homeroom teacher 2. Subject teacher			
What curriculum do you teach:	List of curricula			
Have you received any professional development in	1. Yes 2. No			

relation to using physical education to support learners with SEND					
How long have you been teaching in this school:(number of years)				
On a scale from 1 to 10, how much would you rate activities especially designed for learners with SEND at the present time:	1..... .10				
<p>Qualitative questions will follow based on the response:</p> <p>1- Tell me more about role of physical education in the education of learners with SEND</p> <p>2- What is missing with regards to involving learners with SEND in physical activities</p> <p>3- Do you recommend and suggestion related to this matter to improve supporting learners with SEND using physical education</p>					

INTERVIEW WITH STUDENT:

The student smiles shyly when asked how she feels about physical education. She replies saying, 'It's okay'. When prodded further, she admits she finds it a little difficult. She says she prefers listening to the story or watching the other children and she is used to just sit aside because of her needs,

Student says she doesn't mind doing games, though her teachers keep telling her she must work hard to join in correctly. When asked to join the class she often does what is required incorrectly, Student also said she doesn't like taking part in physical education activities because there's too much to do. She does like math though, she says. Math is easy, according to her.

The other subjects are 'okay' but she does like the language subjects, she says. She loves dance lessons, and wishes she could have those classes everyday. Even if the student likes her Sports periods, has to miss one every week to come to the resource room for classes. When asked if she minds this, she said, she didn't as she gets to do 'fun stuff' at the resource room. She says Art is just 'Okay'. The student says she likes school, and she loves playing with her friends. She wishes she didn't have to do so much reading and writing though. She says her mother helps her at home whenever she can, but she tries to do her work on her own whenever she is supposed to.

TEACHER INTERVIEWS:

Class Teacher- Grade 2:

Grade 2 teacher says that students are often very active who try hard to please their teachers and other elders. This teacher is happy that learning support is being provided to these children with SEND as she feels they do have a legitimate difficulty in acquiring literacy skills. The teacher had attempted to be clear in instructions on worksheets so they could be read easily through familiar words. She also ensured that they read the instructions clearly to the students so there would be no room for mistakes owing to lack of understanding directions. She made it a point to revise new words a number of times from every lesson, and encouraged sentence making activities using these words. She set up a word chart in the classroom to keep keywords in sight at all times. She also felt that students may have benefited by being detained in Grade 2 to give them time to learn properly. However, when it comes to physical education teacher stated that mostly for safety reason some of the learners do not take part as that may affect them, heavy games and especially during heat and summer time she would be worried to risk that. She also stated that sometime such slots or physical education periods are taken to teach other basic subjects. She also feels that students' high

energy levels are indicative of the need for a more stimulating environment, both at school and at home.

Math & General Science Teacher- Grade 2:

The teacher says giving an example of a typical student (a girl) is a capable child who grasps concepts quicker than her classmates. However, she was at a distinct disadvantage in the first term as she had missed two months of classes initially as she was away on holiday. This made it difficult for her to catch up to the rest of the class, and her difficulties in math appeared to stem from this, according to this teacher. The teacher spoke to girl's mother about this, and advised her to put in extra effort to help her catch up with the portions. The teacher herself tried to make time to teach her the important lessons, but found it difficult to do this regularly owing to the busy schedule the girl has in school. She feels that she could do much better given a more focused schedule at home. Now in the middle of all of this, and as a typical example of a child with SEND it is too hard to focus on art and physical education for example.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

As illustrated above, a child with SEND's needs fall across a variety of areas. Recommendations for these needs can be made at the Individual Level, the Class Level and the School Level. Possible recommendations are as follows:

1) The Individual Level:

Child's skills in literacy and numeracy would need to be looked at closely for areas of potential skill breakdown so does any task for physical education. These points of breakdown would need to be analysed in order to devise strategies that take into account his or her individual needs. A task analysis of requisite skills would help lay out the structure and levels through which the child could proceed to acquire the needed skills. Having access to learning support is an advantage.

However, the extent to which the child can use this facility for physical education seems inadequate, as these sessions are barely for an hour a week. Therefore, in order to tackle this problem, there are three options:

a) The school should provide remedial sessions of greater number and higher frequency

b) The parent should employ the services of a special educator to provide after school remedial support for physical education.

c) The learning support division at school and the parent should form a partnership whereby the parent learns the recommended strategies from the resource room at school and uses them consistently at home with the child to support his or her physical development. This set-up would entail frequent and in-depth coordination between the home and school, and if done sincerely, could bring about improved academic performance in the area of physical education.

A number of approaches have been developed to help students acquire physical education skills. According to the different areas the Multi-sensory physical education Approach, etc can also be used for the child.

Other recommendations could be:

i) Involve the student in setting instructional goals in physical education

ii) Encourage the student to express his understanding of physical education concepts

iii) Utilise a variety of techniques and activities when teaching

iv) Use practice activities and provide immediate feedback

v) Let the student observe his progress through charts, graphs, etc.

vi) Encourage the use of instructional aids such as number lines, manipulative materials, etc

vii) Allow student to choose material for learning, whenever possible.

(Cited in Mercer, C. D. and Mercer, A. R. (1989)

It would also be beneficial to utilise a behavioural modification program that would help the students learn appropriate on-task behaviour during physical education sessions. This program should be followed consistently at home as well as at school.

Some amount of parent counselling will need to be part of the drawn up program, to help the parent cope better with the implications of having a child facing learning difficulties. It would be beneficial to both parent and child to build parent's skills at prioritising and carrying through necessary adaptations. Helping the parent turn her concern into action would empower her to partner with him or her child to cope with the learning difficulties during physical education sessions.

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