

Teacher Professional Development in Saudi Arabia through the Implementation of Universal Design for Learning

Authors : Majed A. Alsalem

Abstract : Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is common theme in education across the US and an influential model and framework that enables students in general and particularly students who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) to access the general education curriculum. UDL helps teachers determine how information will be presented to students and how to keep students engaged. Moreover, UDL helps students to express their understanding and knowledge to others. UDL relies on technology to promote students' interaction with content and their communication of knowledge. This study included 120 DHH students who received daily instruction based on UDL principles. This study presents the results of the study and discusses its implications for the integration of UDL in day-to-day practice as well as in the country's education policy. UDL is a Western concept that began and grew in the US, and it has just begun to transfer to other countries such as Saudi Arabia. It will be very important to researchers, practitioners, and educators to see how UDL is being implemented in a new place with a different culture. UDL is a framework that is built to provide multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression that should be part of curricula and lessons for all students. The purpose of this study is to investigate the variables associated with the implementation of UDL in Saudi Arabian schools and identify the barriers that could prevent the implementation of UDL. Therefore, this study used a mixed methods design that use both quantitative and qualitative methods. More insights will be gained by including both quantitative and qualitative rather than using a single method. By having methods that different concepts and approaches, the databases will be enriched. This study uses levels of collecting data through two stages in order to insure that the data comes from multiple ways to mitigate validity threats and establishing trustworthiness in the findings. The rationale and significance of this study is that it will be the first known research that targets UDL in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it will deal with UDL in depth to set the path for further studies in the Middle East. From a perspective of content, this study considers teachers' implementation knowledge, skills, and concerns of implementation. This study deals with effective instructional designs that have not been presented in any conferences, workshops, teacher preparation and professional development programs in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, Saudi Arabian schools are challenged to design inclusive schools and practices as well as to support all students' academic skills development. The total participants in stage one were 336 teachers of DHH students. The results of the intervention indicated significant differences among teachers before and after taking the training sessions associated with their understanding and level of concern. Teachers have indicated interest in knowing more about UDL and adopting it into their practices; they reported that UDL has benefits that will enhance their performance for supporting student learning.

Keywords : deaf and hard of hearing, professional development, Saudi Arabia, universal design for learning

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