Inclusive practices in teaching students with dyslexia: Foreign language teachers’ concerns, attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs on a massive open online learning course

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Self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes and self-confidence of teachers are key factors in implementing inclusion practices in education. The aim of the study reported in this talk was to show how effective a four-week long massive open online course on dyslexia and foreign language teaching was in raising foreign language teachers’ self-confidence, self-efficacy and attitudes to using inclusive educational practices with dyslexic students. We also wanted to find out how these factors change as a result of participation in the online course. The online questionnaire survey of two cohorts, before (n=1956) and after the course (n=1132), showed a significant increase in self-efficacy beliefs, self-confidence, and knowledge of what dyslexia is but indicated no significant change in concerns and attitudes.

The results revealed that before the course those who had previous training on dyslexia, experience teaching dyslexic students and longer teaching experience in general had significantly higher self-efficacy beliefs than those who had no prior training, no experience teaching dyslexic students and lower teaching experience in general. We also observed that before the course those with longer teaching experience had higher self-efficacy beliefs, but they also reported to be more concerned about meeting the needs of dyslexic students than less experienced teachers. The differences among participants with regard to previous training and general teaching experience, however, disappeared by the end of the course. These findings suggest that the course was effective in raising teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs irrespective of prior training and teaching experience.

Participation in the course, operationalised as the number of units completed, the number of comments written, and the number of replies written to comments, was moderately strongly associated with post-course self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes. Our survey suggests that active involvement in an online teacher training course can contribute to the development of participants’ self-efficacy beliefs and foster positive attitudes to inclusion.

Keywords: self-confidence, inclusion, self-efficacy beliefs.