

An Action Research Experiment of Integrating Children with Attention Deficient Hyperactive Disorder “Adhd” in Main Stream Classes: A Case Study

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to try to integrate a student with "ADHD" into a normal class following a qualitative action research approach. The study main key question is: What strategies do teachers find effective to support students with ADHD to integrate within mainstream education? The study importance stems from the hope that it will provide an opportunity for teachers who teach heterogeneous classes to benefit from its outcomes. The study followed a qualitative action research approach, that was carried out on a student diagnosed as suffering from ADHD. The intervention included some educational, emotional and behavioral aspects. The findings indicated some improvements of the child's behavior. The student became in a better position to control some of his negative behavior, such as movement and lack of random beating, or aggressive behavior when responding. In light of these results, the researchers recommend to select one or two behaviors of the student to research, in cooperation with the parents, and the rest related body in the school. It is also recommended that those who deal with a student with ADHD should keep calm when the student with ADHD is in a losing control position. Teachers should avoid talking about the student's negative behavior in front of him or his classmates. Finally, the teacher must arrange a weekly meeting with the parents to discuss the student's development.

Keywords: Special education, Adhd, Inclusive education, Action research, Case study

Introduction

It seems that the environment and related logistics in our societies are almost designed for a certain group of people, failing to serve all segments of society. Whether societal differences are mental, physical, cultural, values, life, language, or any other differences, all aspects must be included, even the way of thinking (Dawany, 2010). From here, we find that the environment (especially schools) does not take into account the diversity and differences between individuals within the community.

When a child is born, the life of his/her family changes. The social, physical, and moral responsibilities are increased by all family members. Responsibilities increase dramatically if this child has special needs, which therefore requires much sacrifice from as this child is different from the rest of the children and will need other services and facilities. A child with special needs is different from the normal child with regard to their mental, physical, linguistic or educational abilities. He needs special treatment and special services in addition to special methods in behavioral and educational education according to his needs and level (Al-Qumaz, 2014). In a related context, special education might be defined as a kind of education that takes care of children with special needs. Each of them are taken care of according to their needs, level and type, whether audio, visual, emotional, speech disorders, learning difficulties or mobility disabilities. This education happens either in the regular classes or in specialized educational situations. (Al-Qumaz, 2014).

Since 2015, Palestine allocated a small amount of the country's budget to improve the quality of education. Moreover, the Ministry of Education has maintained its focus on labor force, and private education, shifting its focus to inclusive education. Therefore, it is logical for Palestine to develop approaches to improve quality of teaching as well as inclusive education. (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2015).

According to a survey conducted by the central Bureau of statistics in 2011, it was found that persons with special needs make up 7% of the total population of Palestine, which is not small or insignificant! Figures suggest that there are many children with special needs that are not attending schools, so the 37.8% of people with disabilities had received no education at all. And 33.8% of them had received a simple stipend but had dropped out before completing secondary school. Also the majority of the school infrastructure was old and was not in accordance with the standards and measurements needed to receive students, the conditions of civil defense or protection, the standards of space, nor ventilation and lighting. (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2015).

Recently, Palestine has witnessed a wide spread of private schools, especially in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate, which are supervised and funded by individuals or private bodies. They are subjected to the laws, regulations and instructions issued by the Ministry of Education. These bodies and individuals are performed by religious affiliations or for business considerations, and are classified for the children of upper and middle class. (Al-Fatafeta, 2015).

Almost all researches and educators in Palestine and various countries agree on the importance of integrating children with special needs into mainstream education. Hence, this is one of the biggest challenges in the education system in different countries. Working on having all students with and without special needs enroll in the same school is one of the biggest challenges that educators and ministries of education face, which they must deal with to provide what students need with all individual differences. (Ainscrow & Miles, 2008).

Studies that were figured around the subject of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) show that this disorder is the most common and widespread in children. Research also show that diagnosis rates are increasing, so work must be expanded among parent and professional councilors, teachers and others to help children to successfully progress through their academic life. Additionally, these children often continue to confront their behavior in their academic and social life in and out of the classroom and at risk, so they eventually drop out of school, and because of the behavioral and emotional problems they face, they are also vulnerable to anxiety and depression. Therefore, schools need to be provided with relevant support and resources to let teachers and students, with the participation of parents, support themselves in achieving their desired goals. The role of school councilors is very important to help all students achieve academic and emotional success. (Branscome, et.al, 2014).

In a related context, Abdulrahman (2014) shed light on the spreading rate of this disease among the children of the Arab world as follows:

Saudi Arabia 16%

Emirate 14.9%

Qatar 11.1 %

Egypt 10 %

The rate is approximately Six for males versus One female. Unfortunately, there are no defined and clear statistics on the exact percentage of children affected by this disorder in Palestine so far.

The aim of this study was to try to integrate a student with "ADHD" into a normal class. This study is very important because it is from recent trends in special education, in addition to global and local education for the difference that aims to teach heterogeneous students in a single learning environment. Its importance also stems from the hope that it will provide an opportunity for teachers who teach heterogeneous classes to benefit from the outcomes of this research.

The study attempted to achieve its objectives by answering the following key questions:

What strategies and methods do teachers find effective to support students with ADHD to integrate and adapt them within mainstream education?

How can a student with ADHD affect his/her peers being with them in a mainstream classroom?

The study followed a qualitative approach with a case study design adopting an action research orientation that was carried out on a student suffering from ADHD who had difficulty in sitting and moves a lot. This student displayed his impatience by speaking a lot, not waiting for his turn during work or play. In addition to the other conditions available in his behavior in terms of impulse, he was interrupting others constantly and disturbing

them without thinking about the consequences of it. Also, teachers informed me about leaving the student's classroom and his inability to stay in class for a long time and so he went out of class without even giving any attention to the teacher. Also, during his English class, his teacher added that he is always looking for a reason to get out of the class. In addition, the school nurse added that he does everything he can do to see her, whether he hurts his head, nose or not.

The case of this student indicates a great degree of characterization of Shaheen and Al-Ajrana (2011) for the symptoms of ADHD, where they segregated subjects into three types, namely hyperactivity, impulsivity and lack of attention. It was observed from the student's case that he had difficulties in focusing during the class. He also had difficulty in listening to others, as well as having difficulty in following the instructions and finishing the activities he is doing. The case also showed that the child avoided tasks that need concentration and he had difficulty organizing and lost things due to the distractions of his classroom surrounding.

Based on the research instruments that have been applied from observation: kind viewing, cameras, videos, and interviews; views and opinions were obtained on the same student and it appears that the intervention is sincere and consistent because there is common evidence (triangulation), whereas the teacher hold the student to sit and to do his work. The education officer said that the teacher worked a lot to improve the student's behavior and improvement was visible. The mother said that she knows her child and they didn't know how to deal with him. They found that the student cannot sit for a long time and likes to move a lot. In addition, teachers in many cases told the student to sit or they will call his mother or prevent him from participating.

According to the researcher and the teachers who dealt with this student, the results of the study showed improvements in some behaviors of the student and his academic achievement. There were also positive effects of the intervention with that Art teacher saying: "I hope you are always with us, so he can sit like that". Also another teacher was waiting for me in order to help him.

The intervention included some educational, emotional and behavioral aspects that were carried out by the researcher and the teacher of the class. They gave clear and specific tasks while sitting with a very small group inside the class, asking the teacher to explain the most important at the beginning of the class, and giving him a break with the councilor when his behavior was inappropriate. Also giving him extra time when working, trying to attract his attention before talking to him and if giving him detailed explanations or different methods if needed, will help him match the academic and behavior status of his peers. The teacher would then reinforce him positively either verbally or materially when doing what is required from him directly. If he did anything wrong, he would receive a break to discuss why he did that.

In parallel, providing him with support when doing homework and during the exam of the class gave him the time needed to complete it. Drawing his attention while talking to him, and sending him to a separate room when he needed a detailed explanation of different methods allowed him to keep up with his peers. Moreover, in order for this student to continue with the same progression without being distracted, clear written tasks were sent home with him so his parents can help develop the skills he has been building.

The result of this study indicated some improvements of the child's behavior. We have noticed during the previous period that this student can control some of his negative behavior such as movement and lack of random beating or his aggressive behavior when responding. We would also prefer if this semester was longer as we expect that we can help to be the external factor of self-control which Rabiner (2008) talked about, because the bad behavior, like hitting and shouting, that disturbed teachers, was almost gone.

In light of these results, the researcher recommends that it might be more helpful if the teacher chooses one or two behaviors to monitor and assess him in various ways, with setting rules and regulations that the parents, student, and school.

The research also recommends that those who are dealing with a student with ADHD should stay calm as much as they can when the kid with ADHD is losing control. The school must provide an assistant teacher in the class with ADHD students to help the main teacher, so that the main teacher of the class can give time to ADHD student and guide them. Also, the teacher must specify a weekly meeting with the parents to discuss the student's development and needs.

Nevertheless, avoid talking about the student's negative behavior or complain about him in front of him or his classmates. According to Barkley's theory, children with ADHD are more responsive to direct outcomes and should be stimulated directly and immediately when they meet the behavioral expectations that are identified

with them. It is essential to provide the rewards that the child is fulfilling. It's also a problem to tell the child who has ADHD that if he behaves correctly he will receive a reward by the end of the week; because he may not respond to his internal control ability. Barkley suggest dividing long-term goals into several short-term goals. The child may need to be reminded again about the rewards. (Rabiner, 2008).

However, he still makes behavioral mistakes, but not like before so I will give some recommendations that will contribute in helping him to control his behavior.

This research was a great opportunity for my professional development. I developed my teaching strategies in the classroom environment having students with special needs. I applied some activities, which helped the students who suffer from ADHD to integrate more in the class and make it more interactive in meaningful ways for both the classmates and those who deal with the child. Furthermore, the presence of a special needs student in the class means that this student needs more care and encouragement. To sum up, this experience helped me to develop my practices and to become aware of the positive aspects of it so I can know what to develop in my character and during activities when being with children inside the class and what to modify if my activities do not fit them. Every child got his own way for knowledge and I need to develop my ways to reach all the children

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