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Applying Humanism-based Instructional Strategies in Inclusive Education Schools

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Abstract

This article addresses the theoretical perspective to practice of humanism-based instructional strategies in inclusive education schools. Recommendations are offered for both special education and general classroom teachers considering humanism-based instructional strategies in inclusive education schools.

Keywords: Humanism-based, Inclusive Education, Students with SEND

Introduction

Worldwide, inclusive education has become a mandated educational practice in a new era of education, offering the opportunity to apply humanism-based instructional (HBI) strategies. HBI strategies have been effectively practiced with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) students (Malone, Fodor, & Hollingshead, 2019; Ncube, 2011; Slavin, 2011, 2014; Stenhoff & Lignugaris-Kraft, 2007; Jenkins, Antil, Wayne, & Vadasy, 2003; Sutherland, Wehby, & Gunter, 2000). Application of several HBI strategies has improved the education of students with SEND, especially those evidence-based strategies with an effect size greater than 0.40 (Al-Shammari, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2019d; Hattie, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2017; Hornby, 2014).

This paper offers a theoretical perspective on using HBI strategies. Recommendations are provided to both special education and general classroom teachers interested in applying HBI strategies in inclusive education schools.

HBI Strategies: Theory to Practice

Theoretically, humanism focuses on the belief that learning comes from direct experience, personal choice, and responsibility (DeCarvalho, 1991; McLeod, 2015). According to Maslow and Rogers, essential human motivation is based on personal growth and fulfillment, and striving for self-actualization is the main driving force (DeCarvalho, 1991). Humanism focuses on teaching the whole person; both Maslow and Rogers emphasized human needs and motivation. Learning is more meaningful when the material is relevant to the

subject, problem-solving is part of the process, and learning takes place in a non-threatening environment, with learners relying on their own resources (Rogers, 1959).

Practically, HBI strategies involve applying humanism in inclusive education settings. Instruction utilizing a humanistic approach centers on each student's needs and motivators. The humanistic classroom is student-centered, with each student's self-esteem and self-worth an integral part of the classroom environment (Schunk, 2012). Students take responsibility for setting their own goals in the humanistic classroom—this practice promotes intrinsic motivation and avoids making students dependent on outside praise (Huitt, 2009). In the humanistic classroom setting, the teacher is a facilitator of learning and follows a less rigid structure than is found in a traditional classroom. Huitt (2009) offered teachers ways to implement a humanist structure in education. This included: (1) allowing students to choose tasks or activities when possible, (2) helping students set realistic goals, (3) incorporating cooperative learning, (4) acting as a facilitator in group discussions, and (5) exhibiting beliefs, attitudes, and habits that show students how to grow as individuals. The best humanistic instructional strategies relate to the key components of inclusive education—they focus on students and are designed to influence student learning and achievement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this article, HBI strategies, both in theory and practice, are considered effective educational practices in inclusive education schools. Recommendations are offered here for both special education and general classroom teachers who work with students with SEND in inclusive education schools.

First, all teachers interested in using HBI strategies with SEND students in inclusive education settings must gain the necessary knowledge and skills. Teachers must practice these effective HBI strategies more than ten times using micro-teaching practices, working with their colleagues.

Second, all teachers should undertake literature reviews on HBI strategies, focusing on why and how each strategy may be most effectively implemented in the education of students with SEND. This will show teachers how to improve their teaching performance, competencies, and SEND students' learning outcomes.

Third, all teachers should attend intensive professional development programs and training workshops to enhance their knowledge and skills on inclusive education and on HBI strategies, with emphasis on strategies with effect sizes greater than 0.40.

Last, all teachers should self-assess to continuously improve learning outcomes for all students with SEND, focusing on teaching effectiveness and performance and curriculum and instruction.

For further details, teachers interested in assessing student learning outcomes should visit the Analysis Model for Learning Outcomes (AMLO) page (www.MTMM.ac). AMLO provides teachers with strength and weakness indicators for teaching performance and learning outcomes (i.e., see Al-Shammari, 2012).

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