

Joanna Nijakowska
University College of English Language Teacher Education
Warsaw University

Inclusive teaching practices with dyslexics: Online training-induced changes in foreign language teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes, and concerns

Background

The study took place within the framework of a four-week long MOOC on Dyslexia and Language Teaching provided by the FutureLearn platform. The course was aimed at the international audience of teachers of languages, in particular teachers of English as an additional/foreign language. The MOOC was based on the materials intended for foreign language teacher training on dyslexia developed in the DysTEFL project.

Aim

The aim of the reported study was to show how effective a four-week long massive open online course (MOOC) on dyslexia and foreign language teaching was in raising foreign language teachers' knowledge and self-confidence in using inclusive instructional practices with dyslexic students. Another aim was to find out how foreign language teachers' concerns, attitudes, and self-efficacy beliefs change as a result of their participation in this course.

Method

The study involved survey research, with a questionnaire administered online via the SurveyMonkey tool. A comparison of two cohorts, before (n=1956) and after the course (n=1132) was conducted. The questionnaire consisted of a number of demographic questions and a 15-item 6-point Likert scale on attitudes, concerns and self-efficacy beliefs. SPSS software was used for data analysis.

Results

We demonstrated significant changes in concerns and attitudes but with very small effect sizes. We also verified the impact of a number of demographic variables, including previous training on dyslexia, experience teaching dyslexic students, teaching experience in general, and level of education, on foreign language teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes and concerns before and after the course. Finally, we looked at foreign language teachers' participation in the course, operationalised as the number of units completed, the number of comments written, and the number of replies written to comments, and we found out that active involvement in the course can contribute to enhancing participants' post-course self-efficacy beliefs and can foster positive attitudes to inclusion.

Conclusions

The findings of the study confirmed significant increase in self-efficacy beliefs, self-confidence, and knowledge of what dyslexia is. They suggest that the four-week long massive open online course on dyslexia and foreign language teaching was effective in raising participants' self-efficacy beliefs irrespective of prior training and teaching experience.