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THE ABILITY OF ADOLESCENTS WITH HEARING LOSS IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS TO ACCESS AND USE ACADEMIC INFORMATION

by

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This thesis is lovingly dedicated to

My late mother Susan Maré

The most inspiring, caring mother in the world for always believing in me. Her faith, support and encouragement in me as a deaf child was amazing and her belief that God does not create failures has formed the basis of my entire life, my faith, and my academic career

AND

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“I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me”.

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ABSTRACT

TITLE : The ability of adolescents with hearing loss in special schools to access and use academic information

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Access and use of academic information by adolescents with hearing loss is important to assure their academic success. Learners with hearing loss experience problems regarding communication, literacy, and information literacy, which has an impact on their ability to access and use various types of academic information sources. This leads to problems in achieving tertiary education and employment in later life. In order for learners to develop their abilities and skills to access and use academic information, they need to learn to work independently, be familiar with all the types of academic information, and utilize the media centre. An urgent need existed to determine the abilities of adolescents with hearing loss to access and use academic information in order to make suggestions for an information literacy programme to be implemented for learners with hearing loss. The suggestions could be highly relevant for teachers and media teachers.

The research design was a descriptive design comprising of a questionnaire survey followed by an assignment survey. A set of questionnaires was a quantitative tool implemented for systematic and objective gathering of information from a representative sample. The survey assignment employed qualitative methods to investigate characteristics of a group of adolescents with hearing loss with regard to their ability to access and use academic information in the media centre. The questionnaires were distributed to 326 learners with hearing loss, 19 teachers, and 6 media teachers; and the quantitative survey assignment involved 48 learners with hearing loss. The research was done in order to develop an information education programme based upon scientific findings, for use within the planned educational system in South Africa.

The results from the study indicated that the majority of the participants always found academic information difficult to access and use, except where information was readily available in the classroom setting. Sub-goal 1 indicated that the majority of the participants always found academic information difficult to access and use except where information was available in schoolbooks. They mainly accessed and used academic information during and after school. There was not much consensus as to the purpose for which they accessed and used academic information. The participants regarded themselves as unsuccessful and relied on role players to help them to understand, find, and access academic material. They also preferred visual (graphical) information above printed information. The participants indicated they found OBE material difficult to access and use. It became clear that they did not visit the media centre regularly and did not have adequate computer and Internet facilities.

Sub-goal 2 indicated that the teachers displayed the perception that the adolescents experienced problems when accessing and using academic information. They indicated that the adolescents occasionally accessed and used information, but needed them as role players to assist them. The teachers and media teachers also suggested lack of motivation, lack of funds, insufficient training, and degree of hearing loss as possible constraining factors. They indicated that hearing loss has an impact on language and communication skills and consequently has an effect on literacy and information literacy skills. They also considered low literacy and information literacy skills and underdeveloped cognitive skills to have an effect on the adolescents' ability to access and use academic information. This has impact on learners' ability to access, apply, and analyse information. It is important to note that teachers seemed to be of more assistance to learners than media teachers and research is needed to determine the reasons for this. The teachers indicated that sign language influenced the subjects' ability to access information as the subjects seem to think in pictures rather than using words. This also calls for further research. Sub-goal 3 indicated that the media teachers' perception was similar to that of the teachers. They indicated that the subjects found English as a second language difficult to understand.

Sub-goal 4 indicated that the subjects were not able to complete the assignment in the media center with ease. The subjects also had poor knowledge of catalogue use and no knowledge of the Dewey classification scheme which is used to locate books on the shelves.

These findings were utilized to propose an information literacy programme at school media centres, to be implemented in the context of content-based courses and assignments. It is clear that adolescents with hearing loss are a heterogeneous group and due to the differences in the degree and type of hearing loss, they have varying frames of reference, language bases, and cognitive skills. Adolescents who have a language delay due to hearing loss, experience problems with access to formal as well as informal education.

Keywords: Hearing loss, information literacy, adolescent, special needs education, special school, , academic information, information literacy programme,

SAMEVATTING

TITEL	:	Die vermoë van adolessente met gehoorverlies in spesiale skole om toegang tot akademiese inligting te kry en dit te gebruik
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Die verkryging van toegang tot en die gebruik van akademiese inligting deur adolessente met gehoorverlies is van groot belang om hulle welslae op akademiese gebied te verseker. Leerders met gehoorverlies ervaar probleme ten opsigte van kommunikasie, geletterdheid en inligtingsgeletterdheid, wat 'n negatiewe invloed het op hulle vermoë om toegang tot die verskillende soorte akademiese inligtingsbronne te verkry en dit te gebruik. Dit lei tot probleme met die verwerwing van tersiêre opvoeding en ook verminderde werkgeleenthede. Ten einde hulle vermoëns en vaardighede met betrekking tot die verkryging en gebruik van akademiese inligting te kan ontwikkel, moet leerders leer om onafhanklik te werk, bekend wees met al die soorte akademiese inligting, en daartoe in staat wees om die mediasentrum te benut. Daar het 'n dwingende behoefte bestaan om te bepaal wat die vermoë van adolessente met gehoorverlies is om toegang tot akademiese inligting te verkry en daardie inligting te benut, sodat voorstelle gemaak kan word vir 'n inligtingsgeletterdheidprogram vir leerders met gehoorverlies. Sodanige voorstelle kan vir sowel onderwysers as media-onderwysers van groot nut wees.

Die navorsingsontwerp was 'n beskrywende ontwerp en het 'n opname deur middel van vraelyste behels, gevolg deur waarneming met behulp van 'n opdrag. 'n Stel vraelyste is gebruik as kwantitatiewe werktuig vir die stelselmatige en objektiewe insameling van inligting van 'n verteenwoordigende steekproef. Die waarneming met behulp van 'n opdrag het gebruik gemaak van kwalitatiewe metodes om die kenmerke van 'n groep adolessente met gehoorverlies na te gaan ten opsigte van hulle vermoë om in die mediasentrum toegang tot akademiese inligting te verkry en

die inligting te gebruik. Die vraelyste is verskaf aan 326 leerders met gehoorverlies, 19 onderwysers, en 6 media- onderwysers; en die kwalitatiewe waarneming het 48 leerders met gehoorverlies betrek. Die navorsing was daarop gemik om 'n opleidingsprogram vir inligtingsgeletterdheid op die grondslag van wetenskaplike bevindings te ontwikkel, vir gebruik binne die beplande onderwysstelsel in Suid-Afrika.

Die resultate van die studie het aangedui dat die meerderheid van die deelnemers dit altyd moeilik gevind het om toegang tot akademiese inligting te verkry en die inligting te gebruik, behalwe waar die inligting geredelik in die klaskamer-opset beskikbaar was. Sub-doelstelling 1 het daarop gedui dat die meerderheid van die deelnemers dit altyd moeilik gevind het om akademiese inligting te kry en te gebruik behalwe waar die inligting in hulle skoolboeke vervat is. Hulle het akademiese inligting hoofsaaklik tydens en net na skool-ure opgesoek en gebruik. Daar was nie veel konsensus oor die doel waarvoor hierdie inligting benut is nie. Die deelnemers het hulleself as onsuksesvol beskou en het op ander rolspelers staatgemaak om hulle te help om akademiese materiaal te verstaan, te vind en te benut. Hulle het ook visuele (grafiese) inligting bo gedrukte inligting verkies. Die deelnemers het aangedui dat hulle moeilik toegang tot UGO materiaal gekry het en dit moeilik gevind het om te gebruik. Dit het duidelik geword dat hulle nie die mediasentrum gereeld besoek het nie en ook nie voldoende rekenaar- en internetfasiliteite tot hulle beskikking gehad het nie.

Sub-doelstelling 2 het daarop gedui daar by die onderwysers die persepsie bestaan het dat die adolessente probleme ondervind het met toegang kry tot en gebruik van akademiese inligting. Hulle het aangedui dat die adolessente wel soms inligting gevind en gebruik het, maar dat hulle die onderwysers se hulp nodig gehad het. Die onderwysers en media-onderwysers het verder voorgestel dat gebrek aan motivering, gebrek aan fondse, onvoldoende opleiding en die graad van gehoorverlies moontlik beperkende faktore was. Volgens hulle het gehoorverlies 'n invloed op taal- en kommunikasievaardighede en gevolglik ook op geletterdheid en inligtingsgeletterdheid-vaardighede. Hulle was ook van mening dat lae vlakke van geletterdheid en inligtingsgeletterdheid en onderontwikkelde kognitiewe vaardighede 'n uitwerking het op die adolessente se vermoë om akademiese inligting na te slaan

en te gebruik. Dit het 'n invloed op die leerders se vermoë om inligting te vind, toe te pas en te ontleed. Dit is belangrik om daarop te let dat onderwysers blykbaar vir die leerders tot groter steun was as die media-onderwysers en navorsing is nodig om die redes hiervoor te bepaal. Die onderwysers het aangedui dat die gebruik van gebaretaal die leerders se toegang tot inligting beïnvloed het, aangesien dit lyk of die leerders in prente eerder as in woorde dink. Ook hier is verdere navorsing nodig. Sub-doelstelling 3 het daarop gedui dat die persepsies van die media-onderwysers soortgelyk was aan dié van die onderwysers. Volgens hulle het die leerders Engels as tweede taal moeilik gevind om te begryp.

Sub-doelstelling 4 het daarop gedui dat die adolessente nie daartoe in staat was om met gemak die opdrag in die mediasentrum te voltooi nie. Hulle het min kennis van katalogusgebruik gehad en geen kennis van die Dewey-stelsel, wat gebruik word om boeke op die rakke op te spoor, getoon nie.

Hierdie bevindings is gebruik as grondslag vir 'n voorgestelde inligtingsgeletterdheid-program in skool-mediasentra, wat in die konteks van inhoudsgebaseerde vakke en opdragte geïmplementeer kan word. Dit is duidelik dat adolessente met gehoorverlies 'n heterogene groep is en dat hulle as gevolg van verskille ten opsigte van graad en tipe gehoorverlies ook verskillende verwysingsraamwerke, taalbasisse en kognitiewe vaardighede vertoon. Adolessente wat 'n taalagterstand het as gevolg van hulle gehoorverlies ervaar probleme met toegang tot formele sowel as informele onderrig.

Sleutelwoorde: Gehoorverlies, inligtingsgeletterdheid, adolessent, buitengewone onderwys, spesiale skool, akademiese inligting, inligtingsgeletterdheid-program.



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