

Opinion Article

ECLECTIC TEACHING METHOD: A PARADIGM SHIFT IN CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGY FOR AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

Abstract

One of the major challenges of teachers in modern times is the continuous search for pedagogy and approaches to meet diversities among learners in an inclusive school. Since being aware of student's personal characteristics are some of the key components in managing learners in an inclusive classroom. The eclectic method employs a variety of teaching resources in order to respond to the various ways of learning inherent among learners. It is important that teaching and learning materials are interesting and motivating for the learners. This means that the teacher should carefully select teaching materials according to the teaching point, learner needs and characteristics and the cultural context of the learning and teaching context should be taken into consideration. Ideas of inclusion assume that every learner has equitable access to education and schools organize learning. Due to different approaches, the eclectic method allows individuals to study objects from different angles. This paper examines the issues of elective methods in an inclusive classroom. It highlights some recommendations to teachers in an inclusive classroom. This is followed with a conclusion.

Keywords: elective teaching method, inclusive classroom and pedagogy.

Introduction

In recent decades, the impact of technical, social and cultural change has added new challenges to education throughout the world. This is reflected in our classroom which has prompted most educational stakeholders to think of methods and strategies in teaching and learning that can accommodate all these differences. Being aware of student's personal characteristics is the key to classroom management. since students are from diverse background. One of the major challenges for teachers in modern times is the continuous search for pedagogy and approaches to meet this diversity in inclusive schools. Ideas of inclusion assume that every pupil has equitable access to education and that schools organize learning. Since the early 90s, educators have been developing the philosophical theory of the eclectic approach. Due to different approaches, the eclectic method allows individuals to study objects from different angles. This technique allows the teacher to explain the material to the students using various techniques. Eclecticism allows teachers to find unity in various pedagogical methods and makes the learning more dynamic. This method also helps to implement an individual approach to learning and solving social problems. Most importantly, it is based on the study of the interests and needs of the child. To

Comment [L1]: ECLECTIC TEACHING METHOD: A REVOLUTION IN MODERN EDUCATION FOR INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Comment [L2]: The ongoing quest for pedagogy and approaches to accommodate the diversity of students in an inclusive school is one of the most significant challenges facing educators today. Since being aware of the personal characteristics of students is one of the most important aspects of managing students in an inclusive classroom. The eclectic method employs a variety of instructional resources in order to accommodate the various innate learning styles of students. It is essential that instructional and learning materials are engaging and motivating for students. This requires the teacher to carefully select instructional materials based on the teaching objective, learner requirements and characteristics, and the cultural context of the learning and teaching context. Inclusion principles presume that all students have equal access to education and that schools organize learning. Due to its variety of approaches, the eclectic method permits individuals to examine objects from various perspectives. This paper explores the issues surrounding the use of eclectic methods in an inclusive classroom. It highlights some recommendations for inclusive classroom instructors. This is accompanied by a conclusion.

answer all students' needs and solve all of the issues students face, teachers must know and apply more than one methodology. These are positive outcomes of the method on day-to-day education. Educators who eclectically mix different teaching methods can always present the material following the students' preferences. This led to the emergence of the eclectic teaching approach which is claimed to be the suitable approach for teaching Brown (2002) argues that eclectic approach allows teachers to select the materials that work well in their classrooms within their dynamic contexts. Gilliland et al. (1994) pointed out that the reason for adopting eclecticism is because it does not rely on a single teaching method or approach. The eclectic approach has a broad theoretical basis and has a flexible set of activities. Therefore, the place of eclectic teaching method during teaching and learning especially in handling learners in an inclusive classroom cannot be over emphasized.

The Eclectic Method: Definitions, Meaning and Implications

The eclectic approach was born out of the realization that each of the individual methods of teaching had strengths and weaknesses and that no one method was responsive to the dynamic classroom context. Thus, based on the shortcomings of the methods, Brown (2002) argued that eclecticism provides the solution because the approach allows the teacher to select what works within their own dynamic contexts. Gilliland et al. (1994) stated that the justification for the eclectic approach lies in the weaknesses of the single approach because a single method has a narrow theoretical basis and has a delimited set of activities and is therefore inflexible. Since eclecticism is context sensitive, learning is fun and innovative and the approach works for every type of learner regardless of their social economic background and preferences.

According to Gao (2011), the principles of eclectic approach would challenge instructors to ensure that decisions about classroom instruction and activities are based on a holistic and comprehensive understanding of all teaching theories and pedagogies, in terms of the goal and situation of teaching and learning, learners' needs and the available materials. Gao (2011) viewed eclecticism as a teaching method that combines all language skills (e.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing) and encompasses some practice in the classroom. He also advises teachers to integrate and take advantage of all other teaching methods and to avoid their disadvantages. Wali (2009) stated that principled eclecticism should not serve methods but learners. Thus, it is up to the teachers' discretion to choose procedures and techniques inside the classroom. Given that all teaching methods has its own advantages and disadvantages, and there is no concrete or ideal approach in teaching. The eclectic teaching approach is characterized by keen flexibility since teachers can choose whatever works to achieve learning objectives (Wali, 2009). It is extremely important to note that the eclectic approach is not rigorous, and its features are combined with other teaching methods. Ali (1981) attempted to explain the major characteristics and principles of eclecticism as follows:

- Teachers are free to select various types of teaching techniques in the classroom with reference to the lesson objectives.
- Teachers could choose any method or aspect that suits teaching inside the classroom.

Comment [L3]: In recent decades, the impact of technological, social, and cultural change has added new obstacles to education around the globe. This is reflected in our classroom, prompting the majority of educational stakeholders to consider teaching and learning methods and strategies that can accommodate all these distinctions. Personal characteristics of students are the key to effective classroom administration. Because pupils come from various backgrounds. The ongoing quest for pedagogy and approaches to accommodate this diversity in inclusive schools is one of the greatest challenges facing educators today. Inclusion concepts presume that all students have equal access to education and that institutions organize learning. Educators have developed the philosophical theory of the eclectic approach since the early 1990s. Due to its variety of approaches, the eclectic method permits individuals to examine objects from various perspectives. This method permits the instructor to convey the material to the students using a variety of methods. Eclecticism enables educators to find cohesion in diverse pedagogical approaches and makes learning more dynamic. This method also facilitates the implementation of an individualized approach to learning and social problem resolution. Most importantly, it is founded on an analysis of the child's interests and needs. To address all student needs and resolve all student issues, instructors must be familiar with and employ multiple instructional strategies. These are the advantages of the method for everyday education. Educators who employ a variety of teaching techniques can always convey the material according to the preferences of their students. This resulted in the emergence of the eclectic teaching approach, which is purported to be the optimal method of instruction. Brown (2002) argues that an eclectic approach permits teachers to choose the materials that function best in their dynamic classroom contexts. The reason for implementing eclecticism, according to Gilliland et al. (1994), is that it does not rely on a single teaching method or approach. The eclectic method has a flexible set of activities and a broad theoretical foundation. Therefore, it is impossible to overstate the importance of an eclectic approach to teaching and learning, particularly when dealing with students in an inclusive classroom.

- Learners will see different teaching aids that make lessons more stimulating and interesting.
- Teachers and learners would be in a better situation to overcome difficulties that may arise from the textbook materials.

The eclectic approach saves much time and effort in the presentation of learning activities. The eclectic approach is subjective since it is constructed by teachers according to the learning context. The teacher should carefully select the materials to suit the learning context and make the teaching process more motivating and interesting. Widemann (2001) affirmed that good teachers spend much time in collecting attractive and interesting teaching materials to gladden their teaching. Teachers should not spare a thought in developing materials for the learners. In eclectic approach, teachers can use computers, pictures, maps, music, film, radio, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, research articles, chats and realia in their teaching (Ledema, 2003). Like any other teaching method, the eclectic teaching approach has advantages and disadvantages. The eclectic approach is live, motivating, participatory, context-sensitive, and learner-centered and includes using a variety of classroom tasks and activities. In addition, the eclectic approach is flexible to the needs of the classroom during the lesson, it is correlative and objective since it addresses the learners' needs of diverse backgrounds (Kumar, 2013). The eclectic approach is said to have disadvantages that include (1) discouraging teachers to reflect upon their teaching; (2) The adoption of the eclectic approach could be unsafe due to the methodological baggage that comes with it. Nonetheless, the eclectic approach is more advantageous than disadvantageous; most of the limitations of this approach are justifiable when teachers are poorly prepared for the classroom (Widemann, 2001).

Inclusive education

Inclusion is an on-going process, a never-ending quest, aiming for increased participation in education for everyone involved. Some define it as representing the participation and education of disabled pupils and special needs pupils in mainstream or general education (Salend, 2010). This view focuses on special needs, as the prerequisite for inclusion, meaning that it is a part of special needs education. Those who adhere to this definition hold the worldview that the difficulties pupils experience in school are a consequence of their impairments or shortages. Thereby they exclude the possibility that pupils' difficulties can be attributed to failure in relationships, to the fact that curricula and approaches to teaching and learning are not responsive to diversity, or that difficulties can arise from the social pressures homes and communities bring into schools (Slee, 2011).

For others, the development in defining inclusion comes from the notion of diversity, rather than disability and how schools respond to and value a diverse group of pupils. Diversity is a natural characteristic of a school community, mirroring the wider community, and it can be explained as the range of characteristics that result in a perception of difference among people. This perception of difference can elicit responses in others that can either be favourable or unfavourable to the individual in question (Lumby & Coleman, 2007). Inclusion is aimed at diverting attention towards inequalities presented in exclusion and discrimination against

Comment [L4]: The eclectic approach arose from the realization that each individual teaching method had advantages and disadvantages, and that no single method was responsive to the dynamic classroom environment. Thus, based on the deficiencies of the methods, Brown (2002) argues that eclecticism is the solution because it allows teachers to select what works in their own dynamic contexts. Gilliland et al. (1994) stated that the justification for the eclectic approach resides in the weaknesses of the single approach because a single method has a narrow theoretical foundation and a limited set of activities, making it rigid. As a result of the context-sensitivity of eclecticism, learning is engaging and innovative, regardless of the learner's socioeconomic status or personal preferences.

According to Gao (2011), the principles of an eclectic approach would require instructors to ensure that decisions regarding classroom instruction and activities are based on a holistic and comprehensive understanding of all teaching theories and pedagogies, in terms of the objective and context of teaching and learning, the needs of the learners, and the available materials. Gao (2011) viewed eclecticism as a teaching method that integrates all language abilities (such as

Comment [L5]: In terms of presenting learning activities, the eclectic approach saves considerable time and effort. The eclectic approach is subjective because instructors construct it based on the learning context. The instructor should select materials that are appropriate for the learning environment and make the teaching process more motivating and engaging. Widemann (2001) asserted that excellent teachers devote a great deal of time to collecting appealing and engaging teaching materials to enliven their lessons. Teachers should not neglect any effort when creating instructional materials for students. The eclectic approach allows teachers to incorporate computers, images, maps, music, film, radio, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, research articles, conversations, and real-world examples into their lessons (Ledema, 2003). As with any other method of instruction, the eclectic approach to education has advantages and disadvantages. Using a diversity of classroom tasks and activities, the eclectic approach is dynamic, motivating, interactive, context-sensitive, and learner-centered. In addition, the eclectic approach is adaptable to the requirements of the classroom during the lesson, correlative, and

diversities such as social and ethnic circumstances, religion, gender and ability of pupils and their families. Thus, we state that inclusive education is a movement against exclusion of any kind and a reaction to political segregation and social inequality (Petrou, Angelides, & Leigh, 2009).

The goal of inclusion is to work against inequality and nurture people's sense of belonging in school and society. Inclusive schools aim to find ways to educate all their pupils successfully,

Recommended activities to support teachers

1. *Formulating and implementing policies to meet the needs of trained teachers:* Considering the importance of professional training for teachers, it would be necessary for the Ministries of Higher, Secondary and Basic Education to come up with a policy on this issues that ensures that our trained teachers at the level of primary, secondary and even in Higher Education can competently handled learners with special needs given the growing need of diverse learners in the classroom
2. *Organization of pre-service and post service training programmes:* The centralized and the decentralized services of the ministries of Higher, Basic and Secondary education and with the help of experts in these areas should organized seminars, works to enhance professional development of teachers given the nature of today learners. Lay private and confessional school should be part of this programme.
3. *The organization of learning station:* One way to create an instructionally responsive classroom is to set up learning stations (Good & Brophy, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999). Learning stations can be used with pupils at different ages within different subjects and are organized at different spots around the classroom. The time frame, tasks, content and learning processes are differentiated to accommodate for pupil resources. In addition, teachers plan assignments by pupil readiness and employ flexible grouping. The assignments at each station can vary and pupils can be allowed to suggest topics and tasks. Setting up such learning stations in our regular schools will enable teachers to organize and plan individualized tasks for each studentand have them working independently or towards independence
4. *Use of cooperative learning:* Cooperative learning is a form of teaching and learning in which the teacher organizes pupils to work collaboratively in small groups. For pupils to gain individual accountability or positive interdependence, the teacher structures the group work, gives pupils different roles to be accountable for, designs groups that are small enough for everyone to contribute, and clearly defines the tasks. By using cooperative learning, an opportunity is created for pupils to work with others and listen to a variety of responses and different points of view. Furthermore, the teacher enables pupils to add their perspectives to the discussion and get acquainted with different cultures (Gillies, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2003). Thus, it should be noted that this form of teaching and learning works well in diverse inclusive classrooms.

Comment [L6]: Inclusion is a never-ending process that aims to increase educational participation for all parties involved. Some define it as the participation and education of disabled students and students with special needs in general or mainstream education (Salend, 2010). This perspective emphasizes special needs as a prerequisite for inclusion, suggesting that inclusion is a component of special needs education. Those who adhere to this definition believe that the difficulties students face in school are due to their deficiencies or impairments. Thus, they exclude the possibility that pupils' difficulties can be attributed to failure in relationships, to the fact that curricula and approaches to teaching and learning are not responsive to diversity, or to the fact that difficulties can result from social pressures brought to schools by families and communities (Slee, 2011). For some, the evolution of defining inclusion stems from the concept of diversity, not disability, and how schools respond to and value a diverse group of students. Diversity is a natural characteristic of a school community, reflecting the larger community, and it can be defined as the range of characteristics that result in a perception of difference between individuals. This perception of difference can elicit favorable or unfavorable responses from others towards the individual in question (Lumby & Coleman, 2007). Inclusion aims to divert attention away from inequalities caused by exclusion and discrimination based on pupils' and their families' social and racial backgrounds, religion, gender, and abilities. Therefore, we assert that inclusive education is a reaction to political segregation and social inequality (Petrou, Angelides, & Leigh, 2009).

5. *Use of Differentiated Instruction (DI) and Understanding by Design (UbD)*: These are two strategies that work well together and can be used to cater for pupils' abilities, strengths and interests. Understanding by Design (UbD) is a strategy to use for curriculum planning. It has also been termed 'backward design' as it entails beginning by identifying the desired learning outcomes and deciding how learners show evidence of learning, similarly to UDL (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). Thus, the instruction and learning experiences are planned based on clear learning goals specifying what pupils should be able to do. Differentiated instruction is however aimed at the way content or aims are organized with diverse pupils in mind. Thus, in planning instruction there is variation and inherent flexibility in content (what is to be learned), processes (how it is learned) and products of learning (how learning is evidenced) (Tomlinson, 2003). This means that pupils can choose their learning approach and product rather than the teacher making the choice for them based on some pre-set profile of the pupils (Ferguson, 2008; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). These two approaches together, backward design and differentiation, present a holistic method of organizing curriculum, assessment and instruction based on ideas of effective teaching and learning for diverse learners in our classroom.
6. *Collaboration and parental involvement in school*: Collaboration here refers to how practitioners and others interact and work cooperatively to accomplish a task or series of tasks in and for various situations (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010). This will enable teachers and others with different skills and expertise to work together and to problem-solve in order to respond more effectively to pupils (Ferguson, 2008; Meijer, 2003). Research on effective inclusive schools has shown that the disposition and aptitude of staff towards working together was seen as critical for accommodating diverse groups of pupils (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). Furthermore it is suggested that collaboration is most likely to be beneficial when collaborators each have something to contribute, share mutual goals, work together voluntarily, contribute equally, and share responsibility for making decisions and achieving pupil outcomes (Friend et al., 2010; Guðjónsdóttir, 2010). The active involvement of parents in the education of their children can facilitate the work of the classroom teachers in many ways. Mbipom(1997) emphasizes the need to sustain the partnership between the school and parents of children with handicapping condition. This communication between the teacher and parents can help the classroom teacher to understand the children, home and cultural backgrounds influencing the children's learning and behaviour. Thus reaching out to parents, establishing and maintaining effective communication are key in handling learners with diversities in an inclusive classroom.

Comment [L7]: Activities suggested to assist instructors

Developing and implementing policies to meet the demand for trained teachers: Considering the significance of professional training for teachers, it would be necessary for the Ministries of Higher, Secondary, and Basic Education to develop a policy to ensure that our trained teachers at the primary, secondary, and even higher education levels can handle learners with special needs competently, given the increasing demand for diverse students in the classroom.

Organisation of pre-service and post-service training: Given the nature of today's learners, the centralized and decentralized services of the ministries of Higher, Basic, and Secondary education should coordinate seminars and other activities to enhance the professional development of teachers. Private and religious schools should be included in this program.

The structure of the learning station: Setting up learning stations is one method to create an instructionally responsive classroom (Good & Brophy, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999). Learning stations can be used with students of varying ages and in a variety of subject areas, and they are situated in various locations throughout the classroom. The time frame, tasks, content, and learning processes are differentiated based on the resources of the students. In addition, teachers utilize flexible grouping and design assignments based on student readiness. The assignments at each station can vary, and students can propose topics and activities. Teachers will be able to organize and plan individualized assignments for each student and have them work independently or toward independence if such learning stations are installed in conventional schools.

Utilization of cooperative learning: Cooperative learning is a method of teaching and learning in which the instructor organizes students to work in small groups. For students to acquire individual accountability or positive interdependence, the teacher structures group work, assigns students distinct roles for which they are accountable, creates small groups in which everyone can contribute, and clearly defines the tasks. By utilizing cooperative learning, students have the opportunity to work with others and listen to a variety of responses and perspectives. In addition, the instructor encourages students to contribute their perspectives to the discussion and to become acquainted with various cultures (Gillies, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2003). Consequently, it is important ...

Conclusion

This review study sheds light on the research on the use of the eclectic method in an inclusive classroom in recent times in the domain of teaching and learning. Considering the complexity and diversity of learners in the regular classroom. It is important for teachers to use the eclectic teaching method since it will enable them to choose whatever works to achieve learning objectives. Therefore, classroom teachers play an important role in the effective realization and implementation of inclusive education in our society.

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Comment [L8]: Collaboration here refers to how practitioners and others interact and work cooperatively to complete a task or series of tasks for various situations (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010). Parental involvement in school refers to how parents are involved in their children's education. This will allow instructors and others with diverse skills and knowledge to collaborate and problem-solve in order to respond to students more effectively (Ferguson, 2008; Meijer, 2003). According to research on effective inclusive schools (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004), accommodating disparate groups of students is dependent on the staff's attitude and ability to collaborate. Moreover, Friend et al. (2010) and Guðjónsdóttir (2010) suggest that collaboration is most likely to be beneficial when collaborators each have something to contribute, share mutual goals, work together voluntarily, contribute equally, and share responsibility for making decisions and achieving student outcomes. The active participation of parents in the education of their children can facilitate the work of classroom instructors in numerous ways. Mbiom (1997) stresses the importance of maintaining the partnership between the school and the parents of children with a handicap. This communication between the teacher and parents can aid the classroom instructor in gaining a better understanding of the children, their homes, and the cultural influences on their learning and behavior. In an inclusive classroom, reaching out to parents and establishing and sustaining effective communication are crucial for dealing with students from diverse backgrounds.

Conclusion

This literature review illuminates recent research on the use of the eclectic method in an inclusive classroom in the field of teaching and learning. Taking into account the complexity and diversity of conventional classroom students. It is essential for teachers to use an eclectic approach to instruction because it allows them to choose whatever works best to achieve learning goals. Consequently, classroom instructors play a

Comment [L9]: Ali, A.M. (1981) Teaching English to Arab Students. Jordan: Al-Falah House

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