Abstract

Individuals with dyslexia find it difficult to read fluently and reading comprehension poses an even greater challenge for readers who are dyslexic. The Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) developed and implemented an Enhanced Reading Comprehension Curriculum as part of their specialized literacy intervention program and DAS Educational Therapists underwent a three-day training workshop to prepare them to deliver the enhanced curriculum.

This study investigates the changes in the DAS Educational Therapists' perceptions and teaching behavior following the training workshop and the role of teaching experience on those changes. Forty-seven DAS Educational Therapists were surveyed prior to the training workshop and after the workshop. The changes in their perceptions and teaching behaviors were analyzed using mixed between-within ANOVAs, with teaching experience as the between subject variable and training as the within-subject variable. Qualitative responses from the Educational Therapists were also evaluated to understand the reasons for their changes or lack thereof in perceptions post-training.

Findings from this study showed that post-training, Educational Therapists of all levels of teaching experience found greater ease in teaching the reading comprehension skills covered during training. As expected, the training did not affect the most experienced Educational Therapists' perceived ease in teaching skills not yet covered in training. However, the more experienced Educational Therapists reported an increase in their perceived ease in teaching the reading comprehension skills not yet covered.

The Educational Therapists' length of teaching experience also affected the frequency they taught those skills following the training. Less experienced Educational Therapists'
Therapists taught more of the skills they were trained on but the most experienced Educational Therapists did not. For reading comprehension skills not yet covered in training as well as non-reading comprehension skills, changes in teaching frequency were insignificant for all groups of Educational Therapists.

The training workshop also did not increase the perceived importance of skills covered during training for the most experienced group of Educational Therapists although it did for the less experienced Educational Therapists. The perceived importance of reading comprehension skills not yet taught and non-reading comprehension skills also dropped after training for Educational Therapists regardless of length of teaching experience.

With these findings in mind, curriculum teams and trainers need to consider the teaching experience of educators when implementing in-service training for curriculum changes. They also need to consider feedback from educators and address possible resistance towards changes to ensure that training is effective and translates to actual changes in teaching behaviors.