

**RESEARCH PAPER****Teaching Approaches to Enhance Social Interaction for Student with Hearing-Impaired at Higher Education Level in Lahore****¹Dr. Amna Arif* ²Saima Rani and ³Quba Siddique**

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Corresponding Author amna.arif@umt.edu.pk**ABSTRACT**

The present study intended to explore the importance of classroom social participation, explain the challenges teachers and students face while promoting social participation in classroom, describing the strategies teachers use to enhance the social participation, find out the challenges teachers face while facilitating social participation and explain the teachers' management of the challenges in promoting social participation. Previous studies have focused on students' experiences, but teachers' use of social inclusion techniques was less studied. This study used phenomenological research design. A sample of 10 teachers of students with hearing impairment was recruited using a purposive sampling technique. The researcher collected the data by physical visits to each district using an interview protocol. The data was analyzed by using thematic analysis. It was revealed that social participation improves social abilities, enhances social resilience, empowers confidence, enhances classroom engagement, and improves communication. Students' challenges were related to communication, variation in sign language and low levels of confidence. Teachers use audio translators, assigning group work to enhance the sense of teamwork, and educational Trips. Teachers' challenges included the students' behavioral issues, their introverted personality type and time management. Teachers reported that they overcome the challenges they face by involving the students in peer tutoring activities, designing interactive games and collaborative teaching. Future researcher should select sample from wider population and include people with different types of special needs in their sample.

Keywords: Hearing Impairment, Higher Education Level, Social Participation**Introduction**

Afzaal, Zafar, Anis, Abbas, and Amjad (2022) underscore that the Constitution of Pakistan unequivocally guarantees every individual the fundamental right to education. This constitutional mandate is upheld through structured educational policies in Pakistan, aimed at ensuring that all students receive fair, non-discriminatory, and accessible educational services. Central to Pakistan's educational policies is the integration of social education within mainstream schools. This approach is recognized as pivotal in fulfilling the universal right to education for all children, regardless of their background, abilities, or socio-economic status. Social education initiatives in Pakistan are designed to foster inclusive learning environments where every student can actively participate, learn, and thrive.

By implementing social education strategies, Pakistan seeks to address barriers to education and promote equitable access to quality learning opportunities. These initiatives are crucial for enhancing educational outcomes and empowering students to contribute meaningfully to society. Social education encompasses teaching strategies and curricular approaches that promote social skills, empathy, diversity awareness, and inclusive practices among students and educators alike.

Moreover, the emphasis on social education reflects Pakistan's commitment to international frameworks such as the United Nations' Education for All goals and the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994). These global initiatives advocate for inclusive education practices that accommodate diverse learning needs and promote equal educational opportunities for all children. The integration of social education into regular schools aligns with Pakistan's commitment to support global initiatives such as the United Nations' efforts to promote inclusive and quality education for all, as articulated in the Education for All goals and the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994). These international frameworks emphasize the importance of inclusive education practices that accommodate the diverse needs of students, including those with disabilities and special educational requirements.

By implementing social education practices, Pakistan aims to create inclusive learning environments where every child, regardless of their background or abilities, can access quality education. This approach not only fulfills constitutional mandates but also contributes to broader societal goals of promoting social cohesion, equity, and the empowerment of all citizens through education. The goal of social education is to remove any obstacles to learning that children may encounter, encompassing issues related to gender, religion, physical limitations, social-emotional constraints, and disparities in academic performance. In Pakistan, the practice of social education starts at the early childhood level and extends through primary and secondary education. This approach ensures that all children have equitable access to learning opportunities and resources, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities. According to the Indonesian Government (2017), similar practices are implemented in higher education, emphasizing the importance of inclusive education strategies at all levels of the education system.

Lambung Mangkurat University in Banjarmasin exemplifies a proactive approach towards inclusivity in higher education, particularly for students with special needs, including those with hearing impairments. Since 2017, the university has made significant strides in accommodating students with diverse needs, including hearing impairments, thereby promoting accessibility and inclusivity in its educational environment. Hearing impairment, as described by Amka (2020), refers to the partial or complete loss of hearing ability, which significantly impacts various aspects of an individual's life. For children with hearing impairments, the challenges extend beyond the inability to hear sounds or speech effectively. They often face difficulties in verbal communication due to limited linguistic input and may struggle to develop spoken language skills naturally.

The educational environment at Lambung Mangkurat University is designed to support students with hearing impairments by implementing specialized accommodations and support services. These may include assistive technologies, such as real-time closed-captioning and sign language interpreters, to facilitate effective communication and learning. Moreover, the university fosters an inclusive culture that promotes understanding and awareness of diverse learning needs among both faculty and peers.

By enrolling students with hearing impairments and providing tailored support mechanisms, Lambung Mangkurat University demonstrates its commitment to ensuring equal educational opportunities for all. This initiative not only enhances the educational experiences of students with disabilities but also contributes to a more inclusive society where individuals with diverse abilities can thrive and contribute meaningfully.

Education of children with special needs is essential for the survival of society because it enables them to engage with others and receive the same treatment as other children (Pakistani Government, 2003). The most recent data indicate that many parents opt to send their special needs children to schools that are social education providers. Educational institutions that provide social education are appealing to parents of children

with special needs. As a result, during the past few decades, there has been a marked increase in the number of special needs kids enrolling in host schools (Yonker et al., 2020).

According to some studies, children with special needs who attend social schools still struggle to develop friendships with their peers; instead, they prefer to hang out with other kids who share their disabilities. Their social skills do not develop if they do not interact with classmates, and they frequently have unfavorable opinions of themselves. Negative self-perceptions trigger internalizing behaviors like anxiety and externalizing behaviors like aggressiveness. Due to their disconnection from their immediate surroundings, children with special needs frequently experience isolation from the outside world. Based on these findings, educational institutions that offer social education, from elementary school to tertiary level, must evaluate the social skills of children with special needs.

The successful implementation of social education programs for children with special needs is contingent upon addressing two pivotal factors: tailored academic services and fostering social connections within the school environment.

Firstly, providing academic services that are specifically adapted to meet the individual needs of children with special needs is crucial. This involves employing specialized instructional methods, adaptive technologies, and personalized learning plans that accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities. Tailoring academic services ensures that each student receives the necessary support to achieve academic success and reach their full potential.

Secondly, cultivating social connections within the school community plays a vital role in the overall development of children with special needs. Social interactions are integral for building relationships, developing communication skills, and fostering a sense of belonging among students. By promoting inclusive practices and creating opportunities for peer interaction, educators and school staff create supportive environments where children with special needs can participate actively in social activities and develop social competence.

Together, these dual components—tailored academic services and social connections—work synergistically to provide comprehensive support for the educational and social development of children with special needs. This holistic approach not only enhances their academic achievements but also promotes emotional well-being, social integration, and overall quality of life within the school community. It underscores the importance of creating inclusive educational environments that nurture both academic growth and social skills development among all students.

Van Mieghem, Verschueren, Petry, and Struyf (2020) emphasize the importance of integrating the social dimension into social education initiatives. They underscore that focusing solely on academic services overlooks the crucial role that social interactions play in the overall development and well-being of students with special needs. By fostering social ties within the school environment, educators and support staff create inclusive spaces where these children can build friendships, develop social skills, and feel a sense of belonging.

The researchers argue that focusing exclusively on academic instruction neglects the essential benefits that social interactions provide for students with special needs. Social ties within the school environment are essential for cultivating inclusive spaces where these students can establish meaningful friendships, enhance their social skills, and develop a sense of belonging within the broader school community. By fostering social interactions, educators and support staff play a crucial role in creating environments that nurture the emotional and social growth of students with special needs. These interactions not only contribute to their social and emotional development but also facilitate their integration into

the social fabric of the school community. Through inclusive practices and supportive environments, educators can empower students with special needs to participate actively, engage meaningfully with peers, and experience a sense of acceptance and inclusion.

This holistic approach not only enhances academic outcomes but also promotes emotional resilience and overall social integration. It acknowledges the unique needs of students with special needs and emphasizes the importance of creating supportive environments that nurture both their academic progress and social competence. Despite the increased emphasis on social education, less is known about how Punjab higher education teachers encourage student with hearing-impaired to participate in society. This study examined teachers' qualitative social participation techniques to bridge the gap and better understand Punjab's specific difficulties and successful practices. Studies of these teachers' actual experiences and issues in social higher education are generally lacking. Zaki & Ismail (2021) and Aljedaani et al. (2022) address social education issues but failed to explained the instructional practices needed to promote social participation among Punjab higher education students with hearing impairment (Zaki & Ismail, 2021).

Literature Review

In the history of education for students with hearing impairments, segregation was a prevailing practice that significantly restricted their access to educational opportunities and hindered their integration into broader society. Institutions specifically designed for hearing-impaired students were typically isolated from mainstream educational environments. These institutions primarily utilized manual forms of communication, such as sign language, as the predominant mode of instruction and communication.

Segregation in education for students with hearing impairments meant that they were often educated separately from their peers without hearing impairments. This separation not only limited their exposure to diverse educational experiences but also restricted their social interactions with peers who did not have hearing impairments. As a result, students with hearing impairments faced significant barriers to developing social skills and forming relationships outside of their immediate educational environment.

Moreover, the reliance on manual communication methods like sign language reinforced the isolation of hearing-impaired students within specialized educational settings. While sign language is a valuable means of communication for many individuals with hearing impairments, its exclusive use in educational settings catering to hearing-impaired students contributed to their segregation from mainstream educational opportunities where spoken language predominated.

This historical context underscores the challenges faced by students with hearing impairments in accessing inclusive and integrated educational environments. It highlights the detrimental effects of segregation on their educational advancement, social development, and overall inclusion within broader societal contexts. The shift towards inclusive educational practices and the recognition of the rights of individuals with disabilities, as reflected in legislative advancements and societal changes over time, have aimed to address and mitigate these historical inequities.

However, significant legislative milestones marked pivotal shifts in the approach to disability and education, particularly for students with hearing impairments. The passage of key legislation in the United States, including the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975, later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, represented landmark moments in advocating for the rights and support of individuals with disabilities, including those with hearing impairments.

The EHA/IDEA mandated that students with disabilities, including hearing impairments, receive a free and appropriate public education tailored to their individual needs within the least restrictive environment possible. This legislation ensured that educational services and accommodations were provided to facilitate the integration of students with hearing impairments into mainstream educational settings. Similarly, the ADA expanded upon these rights by prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all aspects of public life, including education, employment, transportation, and public accommodations. The ADA mandated reasonable accommodations for students with hearing impairments, ensuring equal access to educational opportunities and fostering greater inclusion within educational institutions and society at large.

Power et al. (2018) highlight the significant social challenges faced by students with hearing impairments in higher education, particularly their struggles to engage in informal discussions and establish connections with hearing peers. This difficulty adversely affects their overall social development within academic settings. To address these challenges and enhance the social participation of students with hearing impairments in higher education, several measures can be implemented. Firstly, providing access to resources such as real-time closed-captioning interpreters proficient in sign language and assistive technologies like hearing aids or FM systems can significantly improve students' ability to communicate effectively in various educational contexts.

Secondly, enhancing faculty training on hearing impairment culture, interpersonal skills, and inclusive teaching practices is crucial. Such training empowers educators to better understand the unique needs of students with hearing impairments, fostering empathy and enabling them to adapt teaching methods that promote social interaction and inclusion. Additionally, implementing peer support programs can be highly beneficial. These programs pair students with hearing impairments with knowledgeable mentors or peers who can provide guidance, support, and encouragement. Peer support initiatives not only aid in academic adaptation but also facilitate the formation of meaningful social connections, helping students with hearing impairments integrate more fully into university life. In conclusion, by implementing these strategies—providing access to resources, enhancing faculty training, and establishing peer support programs—higher education institutions can effectively support the social participation and overall success of students with hearing impairments, fostering an inclusive learning environment that promotes both academic achievement and social integration.

Yuen et al. (2022) conducted a thorough investigation into the educational landscape in Hong Kong, focusing specifically on the importance of comprehensive training initiatives. Their study emphasized the critical role of such training programs in fostering a supportive and stable learning environment within Hong Kong schools.

The researchers highlighted Hong Kong's proactive approaches and initiatives aimed at integrating students with hearing impairments and other diverse educational needs into mainstream educational settings. These efforts underscored the importance of creating inclusive educational environments where all students, regardless of their abilities or challenges, can thrive academically and socially.

Yuen et al. (2022) advocated for comprehensive training programs that equip educators with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively support students with hearing impairments. Such training initiatives are essential in enhancing educators' abilities to create inclusive classrooms, implement tailored instructional strategies, and provide appropriate support services that meet the unique needs of students with hearing impairments. Lee et al., (2023) directed a concentration to examine the effect of customized learning approaches for hearing impairment understudies. The scientists altered educational methodologies in light of individual learning styles, inclinations, and interests. The review exhibited that customized learning further developed understudy

commitment and scholarly execution. Hearing impairment understudies profited from individualized help, prompting a more profound association with the topic and expanded fearlessness in their learning skills.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The study employed a phenomenological research design to delve into the individual perspectives of teachers who work with students with hearing impairments, specifically focusing on the topic of social participation. Phenomenology as a research approach was chosen because of its emphasis on understanding and interpreting the lived experiences and perceptions of participants.

Phenomenology aligns well with the study's overarching goal of exploring the nuanced and multifaceted experiences of teachers in relation to facilitating social participation among students with hearing impairments. By utilizing this methodological framework, the researchers aimed to uncover the unique challenges, strategies, and insights that teachers encounter in their efforts to promote social inclusion and interaction within educational settings.

Through in-depth interviews or qualitative observations, phenomenology allowed the researchers to capture rich, detailed accounts of teachers' experiences, perspectives, and interpretations concerning the social dynamics of their students with hearing impairments. This approach facilitated a deep exploration of how teachers perceive and navigate the complexities of social participation for their students, shedding light on both the barriers and effective practices observed in educational contexts.

Research Instrument-A semi structured Questionnaire

This study used an interview protocol to explore the individual perspectives of teachers of students with hearing impairment regarding social participation of students. On the basis of relevant literature, the researcher developed a semi structured questionnaire. It asks about their experiences, problems, and ideas for promoting social participation of some districts of Punjab higher education teachers regarding student with hearing impairment. The interview protocol offers a flexible framework for a complete comprehension of the topic and standardized data collecting.

Data Collection

The researchers collected the data from 10 teachers from higher education from 3 districts of Punjab. To collect data the interviews were conducted with teachers that took 25-30-minutes for each interview. On the basis of relevant literature, the researcher developed a semi-structured questionnaire. It asks about their experiences, problems, and ideas for promoting social participation of some districts of Punjab higher education teachers regarding student with hearing impairment. The interview protocol offers a flexible framework for a complete comprehension of the topic and standardized data collecting. Before conducting the interview, written permission was taken from each teacher. Open-ended questions enabled for in-depth analysis of teachers' experiences and viewpoints regarding social participation of students.

Validity

Using the experts' comments, the research instrument was rigorously validated and modified by using interview protocol. The instrument was validated to ensure it measured what it was supposed to. Content validity was maintained by aligning data collection with study topics. Thorough theme analysis using Braun and Clarke's technique improved the study's internal validity by correctly capturing participants' experiences. The researcher's commitment to ethical considerations like informed consent and confidentiality strengthened the study's validity, ensuring readers that the findings accurately reflected teachers' struggles to promote social participation among hearing-impaired students. The instrument is taken into account under the confirmation of experts.

Sample and sampling technique

A sample of 10 teachers was recruited by using purposive sampling technique from district Punjab, Pakistan. After taking written consent to be a part of this project, the participants received clear study information.

Table 1
Sample of the study

Sr. #	Number of teachers	Institutions
1	1	University of Management and Technology
2	2	University of The Punjab
3	2	University of Education
4	1	Degree College
5	1	Degree College
6	1	Degree College
7	1	Degree College
8	1	Degree College

Results and Discussion

Table 2
Demographic Information of Sample

Variables	%
Gender	
Male	60%
Female	40%
Profession of Sample	
Lecturer	50%
Assistant Professor	50%
Districts	
Lahore	54%
Rawalpindi	27%
Faisalabad	19%
Work Experience of Sample	
1-10 years	30%
10-20 years	50%
20-30 years	20%

Table 2 presents the demographic information of the sample. The gender distribution shows that 60% of the participants are male, while 40% are female. Regarding the profession of the sample, half of the participants (50%) are lecturers, and the other half (50%) are assistant professors. The distribution of participants across districts is as follows: 54% are

from Lahore, 27% are from Rawalpindi, and 19% are from Faisalabad. In terms of work experience, 30% of the participants have 1-10 years of experience, 50% have 10-20 years of experience, and 20% have 20-30 years of experience. This demographic data provides a comprehensive overview of the participants involved in the study.

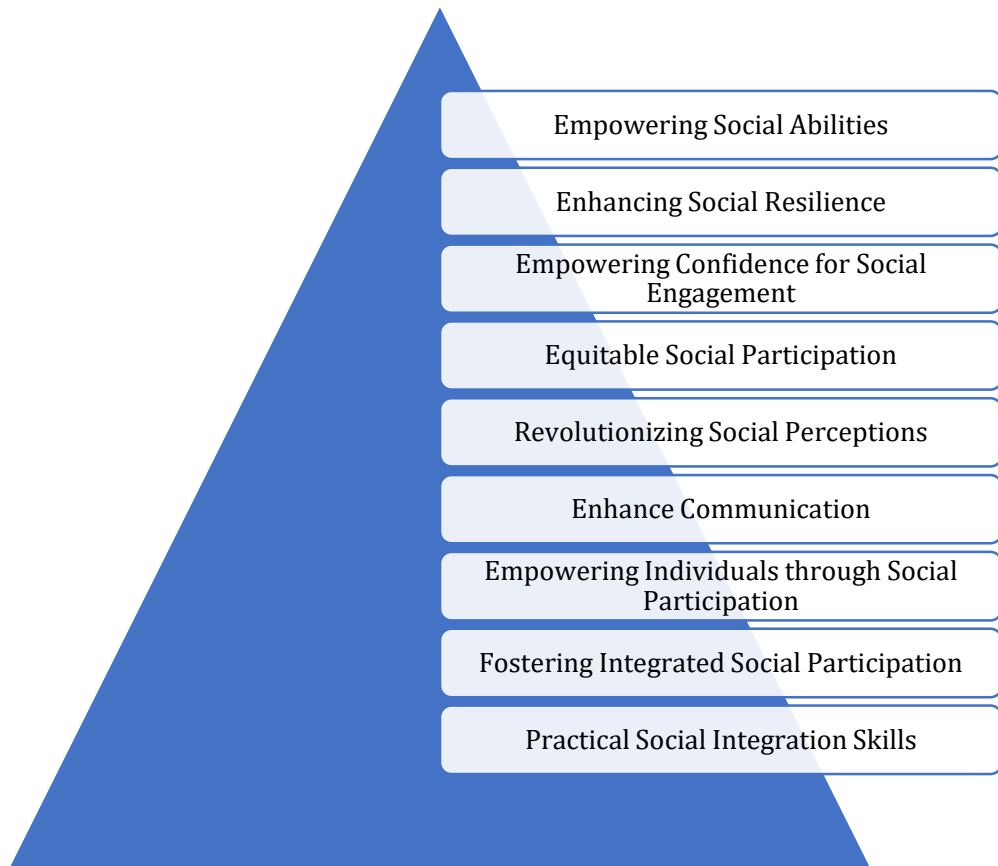


Figure 1: Importance of Social Participation for students with hearing impairment according to their teachers.

Figure 1 illustrates the perceived importance of social participation among students with hearing impairment as reported by their teachers. The figure is based on data collected through interviews with teachers who work with students having hearing impairments. The teachers reported that social participation empowering the students with social abilities, enhance social resilience, enhancing confidence, enhance their communication and fostering their social integration skills.

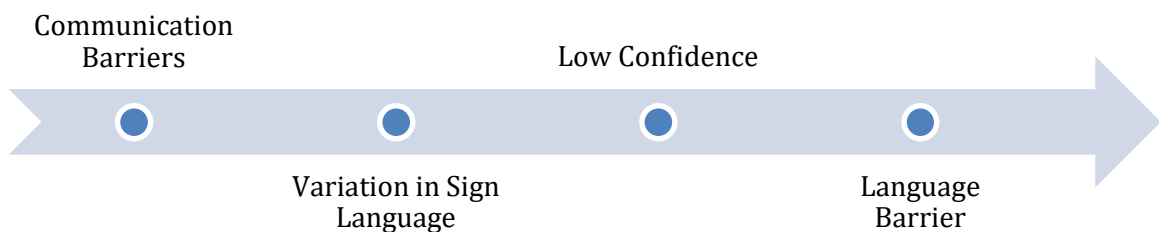


Figure 2: Challenges students with hearing impairment face while participating socially in the classroom.

Figure 2 presents an overview of the challenges encountered by students with hearing impairment when participating socially in the classroom. This figure is based on

qualitative data gathered from interviews or surveys conducted with students themselves, their teachers, or other educational professionals who work closely with students having hearing impairments. Teacher reported different challenges that students with hearing impairment face. Common challenges may include communication barriers, difficulties in understanding spoken language or lip-reading, social isolation or exclusion, limited access to auditory information, and challenges in participating in group discussions or activities.

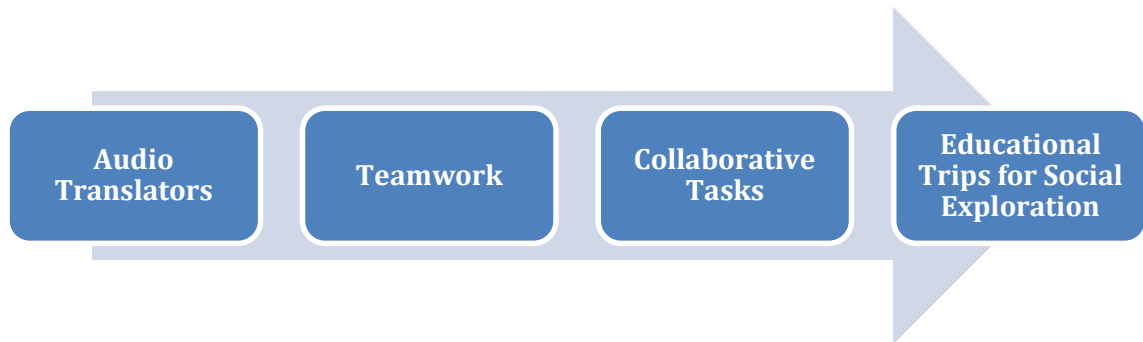


Figure 3: Strategies teachers use in classroom to promote social inclusion

Figure 3 elaborated the strategies which teachers use to promote the social participation of students in the classroom. Teachers reported that they use audio translators where needed and sometimes they need to design team work for students:

One teacher said:

"Cooperative group projects promote diverse contributions, ensuring each student actively participates in social collaboration and learning."

Collaborative tasks and use of educational trips were also reported by teachers that improve the social participation of students.

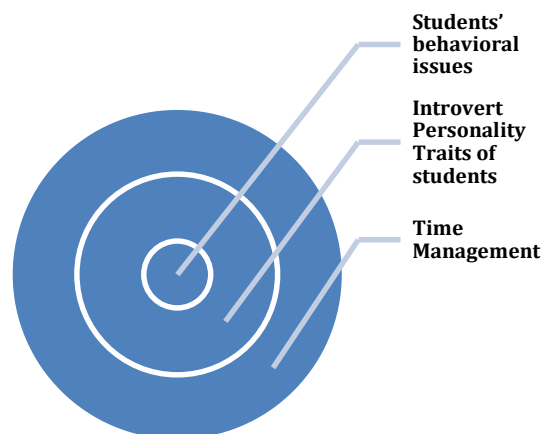


Figure 4: Challenges teachers face while facilitating social participation of students with hearing impairment.

Figure 4 outlines the challenges encountered by teachers when attempting to facilitate social participation among students with hearing impairment in educational settings. Teachers reported that sometimes students' own behavior and their dominant personality type become a challenge in promoting their participation in the classroom.

One teacher said this:

" Students' behavioral issues in social participation hinder peer connections, impacting social growth, academic achievement, and overall well-being."

Another teacher said this:

" Introverts favor quiet activities, fewer social interactions, influencing social participation."

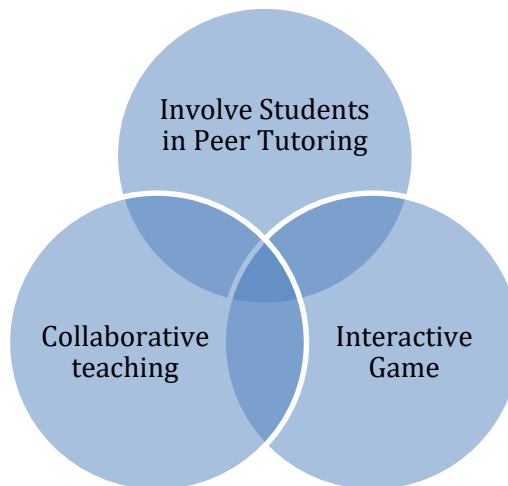


Figure 5: Teachers' management of the challenges in promoting social participation

Figure 5 illustrates the strategies and approaches employed by teachers to manage the challenges associated with promoting social participation among students with hearing impairment in educational settings. Teachers reported that they manage the challenges of social participation by including the students in peer tutoring, collaborative teaching and in interactive games.

One teacher said this:

" Peer tutoring enhances social participation, fostering collaborative learning environments."

Another teacher said this:

" Interactive games foster social participation, promoting cooperation, communication, and empathy."

Discussion

Firstly, to ensure that students with hearing impairments have equal access to educational resources and social participation, social practices in higher education are essential. The study emphasizes how important teachers are in creating social learning environments. This entails modifying teaching strategies, supplying required supplies, and setting up a welcoming school environment that values diversity (Oakes et al. 2018). An equitable educational experience is built on social practices, which foster a feeling of community, meet a range of learning requirements, and actively promote social engagement.

Second, the study highlights the range of communication difficulties that students with hearing loss encounter, including differences in sign language and personal shyness. It highlights how important it is to use personalized communication strategies, such as sign language interpreters, flexible teaching styles, and individualized instruction (Dela Fuente,

J. A. 2021). The study supports specialized solutions since it acknowledges the diversity of sign languages and shyness as a barrier. These practices are considered essential for improving understanding, promoting successful communication among children with hearing impairments, and eventually improving their social participation in school settings.

Thirdly, the study highlights the important influence that sign language expertise has on teachers' ability to engage pupils who have hearing loss. It emphasizes how important language proficiency is for promoting social interaction and successful communication. It emphasizes how important it is for teachers to receive ongoing training to close communication gaps and improve all-around student assistance (Flores et al. 2021). To provide a setting where teachers are adept at meeting the special requirements of students with hearing impairments and cultivating an environment that encourages active social participation, faculty development becomes a crucial element.

Fourthly, limited resources, such as limited availability of assistive equipment and support services, provide difficulties for students with hearing impairments. The report suggests that to get beyond these restrictions and ensure that resources are widely available, action and significant investment are encouraged (Eccleston-Turner, M., & Upton, H. 2021). Activism plays a crucial role in promoting inclusion, encouraging social participation among students with hearing impairments, and fighting for the funding required to equalize educational possibilities.

Fifthly, social judgments related to hearing loss influence students' social participation and lead to social exclusion (Hara, A. C. C. 2020). The study highlights how important education is in dispelling these myths. To counteract social exclusion, raise awareness, and eventually create an environment where students with hearing impairments feel welcomed, valued, and included in social interactions, educational settings must have a welcoming and social culture.

The study underscores the transformative impact of education beyond academic achievements, emphasizing its profound influence on students' empowerment, self-confidence, and overall personal development (Masten, 2021). Education serves as a catalyst for fostering social participation and plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals into resilient, engaged members of society across various aspects of life.

Masten (2021) argues that education equips individuals with essential knowledge, skills, and self-awareness necessary to navigate challenges and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Beyond imparting academic knowledge, education cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and interpersonal skills, empowering students to actively participate in social interactions and decision-making processes.

Moreover, education fosters a sense of personal agency and autonomy, enabling individuals to advocate for their rights, pursue opportunities, and contribute positively to societal progress. By nurturing self-confidence and promoting a sense of belonging, education enhances social cohesion and builds a more equitable and inclusive society where individuals from diverse backgrounds can thrive.

Conclusion

This study has examined the many approaches professors use to encourage their hearing-impaired students to participate socially in higher education. The results highlight how important social inclusion is to establishing fair and stimulating learning settings. It is clear from the topics discussed that social interaction is an essential part of the educational process for children with hearing impairments, not only an extracurricular activity. All of the practices that have been identified from personalized communication strategies to social learning spaces help to remove barriers and create an atmosphere in which all

students, regardless of hearing ability, can actively participate in social interactions and academic pursuits.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes how education fosters not just academic success but also personal development and resilience in students who have hearing difficulties. The focus on debunking popular beliefs, offering psychological and intellectual support, and cultivating a feeling of community all point to a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond traditional educational goals. The study emphasizes how crucial it is for teachers to continue their professional development and awareness campaigns as they deal with issues including resource constraints, varied sign languages, and impediments to communication. Teachers make a substantial contribution to the overall objective of developing social higher education settings that enable students with hearing impairments to flourish academically and socially by adopting these practices and continually improving techniques.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, following are the future recommendations:

1. Incorporate thorough sign language instruction into pre-service teacher education programs to provide future teachers the tools they need to help and communicate with pupils who are hard of hearing.
2. Faculty development programs should be exclusively designed to empower the teachers to facilitate social participation of students in the class.
3. Encourage the use of technology, visual aids, and a variety of teaching strategies to create an atmosphere that allows students with hearing impairments to participate socially in the classroom. These strategies should take into account the varying learning styles of the students.
4. In educational system, collaborative teaching styles must be used. So, teachers get ample time to plan activities to promote social participation.
5. Peer support networks should be established to provide students with hearing impairments with responsible assistance that doesn't lead to reliance. This creates a welcoming environment and encourages independence while guaranteeing cooperative learning opportunities.
6. Future studies should look at several angles, such as student experiences, to give a more complete picture of the difficulties and solutions related to social participation that students with hearing impairments face in higher education.

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