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هيئة التحرير

- د. علي سالم جمعة رئيساً
 - د. أنور عمر أبوشينة عضواً
 - د. أحمد مريحييل حرييش عضواً

المجلة علمية ثقافية محكمة نصف سنوية تصدر عن جامعة المرقب /كلية الآداب الخمس، وتنتشر بها البحوث والدراسات الأكاديمية المعنية بالمشكلات والقضايا المجتمعية المعاصرة في مختلف تخصصات العلوم الإنسانية.

- كافة الآراء والأفكار والكتابات التي وردت في هذا العدد تعبر عن آراء أصحابها فقط، ولا تعكس بالضرورة رأي هيئة تحرير المجلة ولا تتحمل المجلة أية مسؤولية اتجاهها.

توجه جميع المراسلات إلى العنوان الآتي:

هيئة تحرير مجلة العلوم الإنسانية

مكتب المجلة بكلية الآداب الخمس جامعة المرقب

الخمس /ليبيا ص.ب (40770)

هاتف (00218924120663 د. علي)

(00218926724967 د. احمد) - أو (00218926308360 د. انور)

journal.alkhomes@gmail.com

البريد الإلكتروني:

journal.alkhomes@gmail.com

صفحة المجلة على الفيس بوك:

قواعد ومعايير النشر

-تهتم المجلة بنشر الدراسات والبحوث الأصيلة التي تتسم بوضوح المنهجية ودقة التوثيق في حقول الدراسات المتخصصة في اللغة العربية والانجليزية والدراسات الاسلامية والشعر والأدب والتاريخ والجغرافيا والفلسفة وعلم الاجتماع والتربية وعلم النفس وما يتصل بها من حقول المعرفة.

-ترحب المجلة بنشر التقارير عن المؤتمرات والندوات العلمية المقامة داخل الجامعة على أن لا يزيد عدد الصفحات عن خمس صفحات مطبوعة.

-نشر البحوث والنصوص المحققة والمترجمة ومراجعات الكتب المتعلقة بالعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية ونشر البحوث والدراسات العلمية النقدية الهادفة إلى تقدم المعرفة العلمية والإنسانية.

-ترحب المجلة بعروض الكتب على ألا يتجاوز تاريخ إصدارها ثلاثة أعوام ولا يزيد حجم العرض عن صفحتين مطبوعتين وأن يذكر الباحث في عرضه المعلومات التالية (اسم المؤلف كاملاً- عنوان الكتاب- مكان وتاريخ النشر- عدد صفحات الكتاب- اسم الناشر- نبذة مختصرة عن مضمونه- تكتب البيانات السالفة الذكر بلغة الكتاب).

ضوابط عامة للمجلة

- يجب أن يتسم البحث بالأسلوب العلمي النزيه الهادف ويحتوى على مقومات ومعايير المنهجية العلمية في اعداد البحوث.

- يُشترط في البحوث المقدمة للمجلة أن تكون أصيلة ولم يسبق أن نشرت أو قدمت للنشر في مجلة أخرى أو أية جهة ناشرة اخرة. وأن يتعهد الباحث بذلك خطيا عند تقديم البحث، وتقديم إقراراً بأنه سيلتزم بكافة الشروط والضوابط المقررة

في المجلة، كما أنه لا يجوز يكون البحث فصلاً أو جزءاً من رسالة (ماجستير - دكتوراه) منشورة، أو كتاب منشور.

- لغة المجلة هي العربية ويمكن أن تقبل بحوثاً بالإنجليزية أو بأية لغة أخرى، بعد موافقة هيئة التحرير..

- تحتفظ هيئة التحرير بحقها في عدم نشر أي بحث وتُعدُّ قراراتها نهائية، وتبلغ الباحث باعتذارها فقط إذا لم يتقرر نشر البحث، ويصبح البحث بعد قبوله حقاً محفوظاً للمجلة ولا يجوز النقل منه إلا بإشارة إلى المجلة.

- لا يحق للباحث إعادة نشر بحثه في أية مجلة علمية أخرى بعد نشره في مجلة الكلية، كما لا يحق له طلب استرجاعه سواء قُبِلَ للنشر أم لم يقبل.

- تخضع جميع الدراسات والبحوث والمقالات الواردة إلى المجلة للفحص العلمي، بعرضها على مُحَكِّمين مختصين (محكم واحد لكل بحث) تختارهم هيئة التحرير على نحو سري لتقدير مدى صلاحية البحث للنشر، ويمكن ان يرسل إلى محكم اخر وذلك حسب تقدير هيئة التحرير.

- يبدي المقيم رأيه في مدى صلاحية البحث للنشر في تقرير مستقل مدعماً بالمبررات على أن لا تتأخر نتائج التقييم عن شهر من تاريخ إرسال البحث إلى هـ، ويرسل قرار المحكمين النهائي للباحث ويكون القرار إما:

* قبول البحث دون تعديلات.

* قبول البحث بعد تعديلات وإعادة عرضه على المحكم.

* رفض البحث.

-تقوم هيئة تحرير المجلة بإخطار الباحثين بآراء المحكمين ومقترحاتهم إذ كان

المقال أو البحث في حال يسمح بالتعديل والتصحيح، وفي حالة وجود تعديلات طلبها المقيم وبعد موافقة الهيئة على قبول البحث للنشر قبولاً مشروطاً بإجراء التعديلات يطلب من الباحث الأخذ بالتعديلات في فترة لا تتجاوز أسبوعين من تاريخ استلامه للبحث، ويقدم تقريراً يبين فيه رده على المحكم، وكيفية الأخذ بالملاحظات والتعديلات المطلوبة.

- ترسل البحوث المقبولة للنشر إلى المدقق اللغوي ومن حق المدقق اللغوي أن يرفض البحث الذي تتجاوز أخطاؤه اللغوية الحد المقبول.

- تنشر البحوث وفق أسبقية وصولها إلى المجلة من المحكم، على أن تكون مستوفية الشروط السالفة الذكر.

- الباحث مسئول بالكامل عن صحة النقل من المراجع المستخدمة كما أن هيئة تحرير المجلة غير مسئولة عن أية سرقة علمية تتم في هذه البحوث.

- ترفق مع البحث السيرة العلمية (CV) مختصرة قدر الإمكان تتضمن الاسم الثلاثي للباحث ودرجته العلمية ونخصه الدقيق، وجامعته وكليته وقسمه، وأهم مؤلفاته، والبريد الإلكتروني والهاتف ليسهل الاتصال به.

- يخضع ترتيب البحوث في المجلة لمعايير فنية تراها هيئة التحرير.

- تقدم البحوث إلى مكتب المجلة الكائن بمقر الكلية، أو ترسل إلى بريد المجلة الإلكتروني.

- إذا تم ارسال البحث عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني أو صندوق البريد يتم ابلاغ الباحث بوصول بحثه واستلامه.

- يترتب على الباحث، في حالة سحبه لبحثه أو إبداء رغبته في عدم متابعة

إجراءات التحكيم والنشر، دفع الرسوم التي خصصت للمقيمين.

شروط تفصيلية للنشر في المجلة

-عنوان البحث: يكتب العنوان باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية. ويجب أن يكون العنوان مختصراً قدر الإمكان ويعبر عن هدف البحث بوضوح ويتبع المنهجية العلمية من حيث الإحاطة والاستقصاء وأسلوب البحث العلمي.

- يذكر الباحث على الصفحة الأولى من البحث اسمه ودرجته العلمية والجامعة او المؤسسة الأكاديمية التي يعمل بها.

-أن يكون البحث مصوغاً بإحدى الطريقتين الآتيتين: _

1:البحوث الميدانية: يورد الباحث مقدمة يبين فيها طبيعة البحث ومبرراته ومدى الحاجة إلى هـ، ثم يحدد مشكلة البحث، ويجب أن يتضمن البحث الكلمات المفتاحية (مصطلحات البحث)، ثم يعرض طريقة البحث وأدواته، وكيفية تحليل بياناته، ثم يعرض نتائج البحث ومناقشتها والتوصيات المنبثقة عنها، وأخيراً قائمة المراجع.

2:البحوث النظرية التحليلية: يورد الباحث مقدمة يمهد فيها لمشكلة البحث مبيناً فيها أهميته وقيمه في الإضافة إلى العلوم والمعارف وإغنائها بالجديد، ثم يقسم العرض بعد ذلك إلى أقسام على درجة من الاستقلال فيما بينها، بحيث يعرض في كل منها فكرة مستقلة ضمن إطار الموضوع الكلي ترتبط بما سبقها وتمهد لما يليها، ثم يختم الموضوع بخلاصة شاملة له، وأخيراً يثبت قائمة المراجع.

-يقدم الباحث ثلاث نسخ ورقية من البحث، وعلى وجه واحد من الورقة (A4) واحدة منها يكتب عليها اسم الباحث ودرجته العلمية، والنسخ الأخرى تقدم ويكتب عليها عنوان البحث فقط، ونسخة الكترونية على (Cd) باستخدام البرنامج

الحاسوبي (MS Word).

- يجب ألا تقل صفحات البحث عن 20 صفحة ولا تزيد عن 30 صفحة بما في ذلك صفحات الرسوم والأشكال والجداول وقائمة المراجع. -يرفق مع البحث ملخصان (باللغة العربية والانجليزية) في حدود (150) كلمة لكل منهما، وعلى ورقتين منفصلتين بحيث يكتب في أعلى الصفحة عنوان البحث ولا يتجاوز الصفحة الواحدة لكل ملخص.

-يترك هامش مقداره 3 سم من جهة التجليد بينما تكون الهوامش الأخرى 2.5 سم، المسافة بين الأسطر مسافة ونصف، يكون نوع الخط المستخدم في المتن Times New Roman 12 للغة الانجليزية و مسافة و نصف بخط Simplified Arabic 14 للأبحاث باللغة العربية.

-في حالة وجود جداول وأشكال وصور في البحث يكتب رقم وعنوان الجدول أو الشكل والصورة في الأعلى بحيث يكون موجزاً للمحتوى وتكتب الحواشي في الأسفل بشكل مختصر كما يشترط لتنظيم الجداول اتباع نظام الجداول المعترف به في جهاز الحاسوب ويكون الخط بحجم 12.

-يجب أن ترقم الصفحات ترقيماً متسلسلاً بما في ذلك الجداول والأشكال والصور واللوحات وقائمة المراجع.

طريقة التوثيق:

-يُشار إلى المصادر والمراجع في متن البحث بأرقام متسلسلة توضع بين قوسين إلى الأعلى هكذا: (1)، (2)، (3)، ويكون ثبوتها في أسفل صفحات البحث، وتكون أرقام التوثيق متسلسلة موضوعة بين قوسين في أسفل كل صفحة، فإذا كانت أرقام التوثيق في الصفحة الأولى مثلاً قد انتهت عند الرقم (6) فإن الصفحة

التالى ة ستبدأ بالرقم (1).

-ويكون توثيق المصادر والمراجع على النحو الآتي:

اولا :الكتب المطبوعة: اسم المؤلف ثم لقبه، واسم الكتاب مكتوبا بالبنط الغامق، واسم المحقق أو المترجم، والطبعة، والناشر، ومكان النشر، وسنته، ورقم المجلد - إن تعددت المجلدات- والصفحة. مثال: أبو عثمان عمرو بن بحر الجاحظ، الحيوان. تحقيق وشرح: عبد السلام محمد هارون، ط2، مصطفى البايي الحلبي، القاهرة، 1965م، ج3، ص40. ويشار إلى المصدر عند وروده مرة ثانية على النحو الآتي: الجاحظ، الحيوان، ج، ص.

ثانيا: الكتب المخطوطة: اسم المؤلف ولقبه، واسم الكتاب مكتوبا بالبنط الغامق، واسم المخطوط مكتوبا بالبنط الغامق، ومكان المخطوط، ورقمه، ورقم اللوحة أو الصفحة. مثال: شافع بن علي الكناني، الفضل المأثور من سيرة السلطان الملك المنصور. مخطوط مكتبة البودليان باكسفورد، مجموعة مارش رقم (424)، ورقة 50.

ثالثا: الدوريات: اسم كاتب المقالة، عنوان المقالة موضوعاً بين علامتي تنصيص " "، واسم الدورية مكتوباً بالبنط الغامق، رقم المجلد والعدد والسنة، ورقم الصفحة، مثال: جرار، صلاح: "عناية السيوطي بالتراث الأندلسي- مدخل"، مجلة جامعة القاهرة للبحوث والدراسات، المجلد العاشر، العدد الثاني، سنة 1415هـ/ 1995م، ص179.

رابعا: الآيات القرآنية والاحاديث النبوية:- تكتب الآيات القرآنية بين قوسين مزهرين بالخط العثماني ﴿ ﴾ مع الإشارة إلى السورة ورقم الآية. وتثبت الأحاديث النبوية بين قوسين مزدوجين « » بعد تخريجها من مظانها.

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THE PROBLEMS OF TEACHING MIXED ABILITY CLASSES

: Ekram Jabreel Khalil

ABSTRACT

Working as a teacher in English provides challenges every day. The teacher has to face 25-30 students at a time who are all at different

levels of ability, have varying motivation for working with English and have their own special interests and experiences. The teacher meets these mixed-ability classes each day.

I am going to write about what mixed-ability classes are and the challenges they present but most of all how a teacher should work in these classes in order to help all the students, especially the weaker ones.

I have chosen to write about this because I feel it is a problem that all teachers are faced with. I myself have encountered this each time I have been out on my school placement, and most teachers I have met on those occasions have talked about the difficulty of teaching large mixed ability classes. I have found it difficult to know how to motivate all the students in each class, especially the weaker ones.

Chapter one: Introduction

Background :

I have been a teacher for more than five years and during these years I noticed that there are a

lot of problems faced me as a language's teacher because of mixed-ability classes some

of examples of these problems are :

-While some students follow the lesson and are able to answer questions and do

well in tests, others fall behind, don't seem to understand and do badly in tests.

-While some students pay attention and are cooperative, others 'misbehave' and

seem disinterested.

-Teachers feel concerned that they are not challenging the high-achievers enough

and at the same time are not giving enough help to those who are not doing as

well.

-Teachers find it hard to ‘pitch’ their lessons at a level where all students can be

engaged.

So; I decided to write about “*problems and solutions in teaching mixed-ability classes*

in Libyan schools”. The importance of this research is in defining this problems and

finding solutions which can be apply in Libyan schools.

Research problem :

As a teacher my aim is to reach to all of my students; however, it is well known that

every student has different ability to understand, different way of learning and learn at

different speed, so the problem of the research is the difficulties in teaching mixed-ability class in Libyan schools?

Research questions :

1. What is the extent of mixed-ability classes in Libyan schools in Alkhums city ?
2. What are the reasons for having mixed-ability classes ?
3. How can teachers effectively help students to learn in mixed-ability classes?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having mixed-ability classes?

5. Why learn to manage mixed-ability classes?

The objectives of the research :

In this research I will try to count the most effective problems in mixed-ability classes

and find solutions to these problems. Then I'm going to make comparison between two

mixed-ability classes, one of them I will apply solution to the problems and the other I

won't, and see if the results are different or not .

The significance of the research :

The problem of having mixed-ability classes is a very common Most, if not all, language

classes contain students of mixed abilities. This happens for a number of reasons, but

mainly because of different learning styles, different learning speeds, variations in

motivation and, very frequently, as a result of logistic decisions.

The importance of this research is in finding solutions to the problems and see if these

solution can be applied in Libyan schools or not .

The scope of the research :

The school which I chose to be my sample is in Alkhums city. It is FatmaAlzahraschool,

the two classes which I will work with are my classes, they are in second preparatory

year, every class has 25 students.

The definitions of the terms :

Mixed ability or ‘heterogeneous’ classes are terms used to describe classes made up of

students of different levels of proficiency. These terms are misleading as no two learners

are really alike and ‘homogeneous’ classes do not actually exist (Ur, 1991).

Methodology

In my research I will use two methods; interviews with five English teachers and tests (pretest –

post test) both are in FatmaAlzahra school. The interviews will be with one male teacher with

25 years of experience in teaching, one female teacher with 15 years and three females with 5

years of experience.

The reasons why I chose interviews are to discover other opinions about mixed ability classes

and to see if teachers have enough information about mixed ability class, its problems and how

they solve the problems.

The other method which is tests (pretest-post test) I will test two classes which are my classes

they will be class A and class B. after doing the test I will use peer teaching method with class A

ask strong students to help the weak students to understand the comparative and superlative

adjectives then I will test both classes A and B and compare the results of the two classes see if

this method suitable or not .

Chapter 2 : literature Review**Introduction**

Mixed ability teaching is related to working with students who

have different personalities, skills, interests and learning needs. Though most classes are usually multi-level, teachers (especially those with little or no experience), find teaching such classes a very difficult and demanding task as it involves planning lessons which include a rich diversity of tasks corresponding to a variety of learning styles and abilities. The differences which cause problems in such classes are in language learning ability, language knowledge, cultural background, learning style, attitude towards language, mother tongue, intelligence, world knowledge, learning experience, knowledge of other languages, age, gender, personality, confidence, motivation, interests, and/or educational level. However, these variations may occur in different degrees in different classes. Thus, if the teacher wants to ensure that all students perform to their maximum potential, the teacher must identify these problems and deal with them accordingly.

(Howard Gardner.)

Mixed ability classes are a fact of not only language classes but all courses. Since no two

students can be the same in terms of language background, learning speed, learning ability and

motivation, it is a utopian view to think that our classes could be homogeneous in terms of these

aspects. In private and public teaching institution, with students from all levels and background a

common problems faced by teachers is often unavoidable mixed ability class.

Lilian Katz says, "*When a teacher tries to teach something to the whole entire class at the same time, chances are, one-third of the kids already know it; one-third will get it ; and the remaining third won't*".

We should avoid this. As educators we need to ask ourselves, "What do I need to do so that I do

not waste anyone's time and so that each of my students gets the support

that he or she needs and

deserves?" We must realize that some of our students may need extra support in terms of

understanding the English language.

What is mixed ability class ?

- A class or a system in which pupils are taught a subject together in the same class, even though some very clever at the subject and others are not
(CollinsCobuild English Language dictionary)
- The term mixed ability is defined as "involving students of different levels of ability".
(Cambridge Dictionary)
- "All classes are, of course, mixed ability. Although there are mild and acute cases of mixed ability, all classes are made up of individuals who differ in any number of ways".
(Prodroman1992:7)
- A class is mixed ability because children have different strengths and weaknesses and develop at different rates..... teaching mixed ability class will work if all pupils are allowed to experience success and to learn as individuals

(Ireson&Hallam 2001)

Mixed ability, heterogeneous and multilevel class

There are two terms which are used to describe classes with uneven languageabilities. The first

one is **mixed ability**. The term mixed ability as mentioned above defined as "involving students of different levels of ability" (Cambridge Dictionary). Thesecond one is

heterogeneous, which is, by the same dictionary, defined as “consisting of parts or things that are very different from each other”. Both terms are used when speaking of classes with different language abilities.

However, different authors prefer different terms. Whereas Luke Prodromou refers to these classes as mixed-ability, Penny Ur (302) favours the term heterogeneous.

She finds the term “mixed-ability” confusing, because it does not cover all aspects of heterogeneity as applied to a

class of language learners, but relates rather only to an ability to perform. In contrast, she

claims, the term heterogeneous includes also another factor influencing language learning, such

as different previous opportunities for learning, better or worse previous teaching, higher or

lower motivation etc.

Natalie Hess describes mixed-ability classes as “multilevel classes” and states in her

publication *Teaching Large Multilevel Classes* this attitude: “It is not easy to provide an

exact definition of what constitutes a large multilevel class. Since all learners are different in

language aptitude, in language proficiency, and in general attitude toward language, as well as in

learning styles, we can probably say that most language classes are multileveled. Language

classes also tend to be highly heterogeneous. That is, students in many of our classes are

different genders, maturity, occupations, ethnicities, cultural and economic backgrounds, as well

as personalities. Multilevelness then, as much as class size, is a matter of

perception.” (Hess 2001: p.1)

mixed ability factors:

There are many factors that influence the characteristics of the learners that make up one single

class. Some of these factors include :

1. Age .

Age is one of the major factors which influence the way how and what we teach; but in my case

age is not an important factor because the age of my students is the same.

2. Intelligence and multiple intelligences.

Language aptitude has a connection with intelligence which is another factor related to language

acquisition. Intelligence may be describes as "general intellectual abilities" (H.H.Stern2009).

Harvard psychologist introduced a new concept according people do not possess a single

intelligence, but range of intelligences which Gardner called multiple intelligence which are:

- Linguistic
- Visual
- Musical
- Logical
- Bodily
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersona

3. Learning styles

Learning styles are the various ways of learning and acquiring a new language.

Robin Scarcella and Rebecca Oxford(p61) characterizes styles as
"general approaches that

*students use to learn a new language. These are the same styles they
 employ in learning many*

other subjects and solving problems".

4. Language aptitude

Language aptitude may be characterized as *"your innate talent or
 predisposition for language*

learning" Thornbury,p15

5. Language level

Language level describes our language ability. There are various
 classification which are used to

divide learners in groups according to their language level. The most
 common classification

divides students into three main groups: beginner, intermediate and
 advanced.

6. Learner autonomy

Another factor which influences mixed ability class is learner autonomy.
 Autonomy can be

described as *" your capacity to take responsibility for, and control of,
 your own learning, either*

at school or outside, without teacher's control". Thornbury,p22

7. Motivation

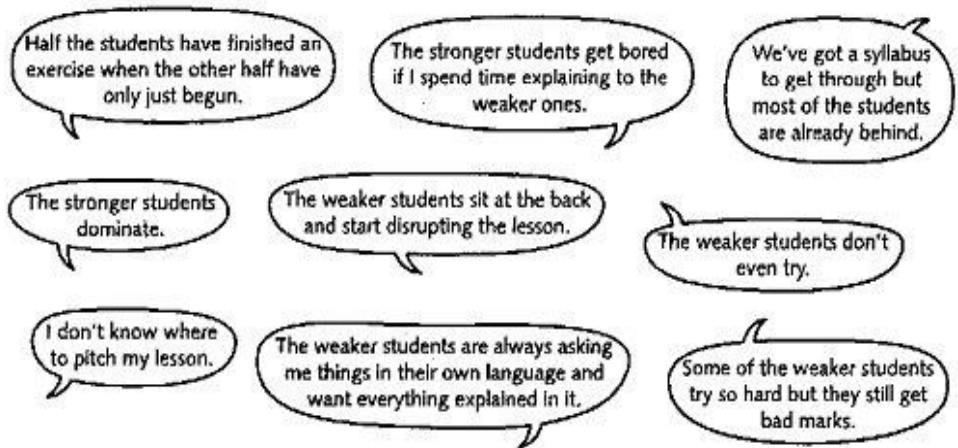
According to Answer.com motivation can be defined as " the intensions,
 desires, goals, and

needs that determined human and animal behavior".

When the parents or teachers do not develop a real motivation, the student would not feel learning foreign languages as attractive and could become very indifferent in the lessons.

Penny Ur reminds that motivation is one of the most important matters for the heterogeneous class teachers and suggests that teacher in order to make his/her teaching and learning easier, more pleasant and productive, he/she must motivate their students

Problems in teaching Mixed ability classes



As Penny Ur (134) suggests, there is a number of problems teachers encounter in mixed ability environment

1. **Discipline.** 'I have discipline problems in these classes; I find them difficult to control.'

The first problem is without any doubt the discipline (classroom management). We often find mixed-ability classes chaotic and difficult to control. The differences in language ability cause either boredom of more advanced learners or disconcertion of

weaker students, who often are lost in the lessons. For that reason we might feel incapable of controlling the class; while we are occupied by certain students, usually weaker ones, who need more extensive explanations, the rest of the class might begin to feel without being supervised and thus switching into a mother tongue and discussing issues which are not related to the content of the lesson.

2. **Correcting written assignments.** ‘I can’t keep up with the marking load.’

Hess suggests that students need the feedback about their written assignments in order to learn from their mistakes, and they also want to know and to hear what others people think of their written assignments. In our multilevel classes which have a large number of students. Teachers often feel completely overwhelmed and not up to the task.

3. **Interest.** ‘They get bored: I can’t find topics and activities that keep them all interested.’

According to Hess when we teach mixed ability class we often feel discouraged when some students, often the one who like speaking out in front of the whole class, participate and other look bored and invisible. We cannot make all the students active and feel interest towards the lesson.

4. **Effective learning.** ‘I can’t make sure they’re all learning effectively; the tasks I provide are either too difficult or too easy for many of them.’

In mixed-ability classes, it is extremely difficult to provide effective learning for all.

The activities to be completed in the lessons may be either too difficult or too easy for some students. For that reason, there will always be learners who would not take

any benefit from some activities.

5. **Materials.** ‘I can’t find suitable material: the textbooks are ‘homogeneous’ – rigidly aimed at

one kind of learner, with no options or flexibility.

"Since most language textbooks are designed for an ideal classroom environment, teachers always have to deal with the problem that students react to the textbook differently due their individual differences. First of all, some students may find the textbook boring and very hard, whereas some find it interesting or very easy. In addition, as language teaching course materials are currently based on content-based or theme-based syllabi, some students may find the topics dull, strange, or meaningless; whereas others find it enjoyable, familiar or interesting. Therefore, it is usually necessary for the teacher to evaluate and adapt the materials according to her class".

International Scientific Conference: "Education in the Era of Globalization - XXI Century Challenges". Materials

6. **Individual awareness.** ‘I can’t get to know and follow the progress of all the individuals in my class: there are too many of them, and they’re all so different.’

As Hess (6) says, “we would like to allow each of our students to find his/her preferred and unique way and pace of learning.” However, teaching a mixed-ability class represents a situation, where there are too many differences to be taken inconsideration, which makes it difficult to devote time and attention equally to all students.

7. **Participation.** ‘I can’t activate them all: only a few students – the more proficient and confident ones – seem to respond actively to my questions.’

Prodromou claims that in mixed ability class there are students , often the strong one and the one who like speaking out, always participate, and the other who are the weak and bad students, are always do not participate and look as invisible.

principles for coping with mixed ability classes

▪ **Variety**

Hess (8) suggests that

“a variety of activities and techniques is important in all learning situations but particularly relevant in mixed ability classes because varieties of tasks can accommodate different levels in our class.” Activities should also be aimed at different skills so that learners who do not perform well at speaking tasks may succeed in reading activities or others skills. Last but not least aspect to mention is a variety in groupings – students should work in pairs, groups or individually and the grouping should be often changed.

▪ **Pace**

Correct pacing is another important principle when working with a mixed ability class. It is not easy to establish a correct pace in a classroom. Right pacing is a result of a long observation.

Teaching a class too slowly or too fast can destroy a positive atmosphere and will lead either to boredom or frustration of some students (Hess 9).

Each individual in a class has a different working pace. Depending of course on number of slow or fast students in a class, I would suggest teaching a class at pace of faster or stronger students in order to prevent them from getting bored and on the other hand, extend their knowledge of

English language as much as possible during a lesson. With slower students teacher can work

individually, explain to them problematic aspects, and pay more attention to their individual needs.

■ **Interest**

Hess in his book *Teaching Large Multilevel Classes* suggested that Once the class loses interest, it will result in de-motivation, distraction, making noise. Often it is exhausting and time-consuming to come up with interesting activities and all teachers keep looking for new activities for each lesson.

The activities which are likely to be entertaining and challenging for students are those which require expressing students' opinions, ideas and experiences, those which boost students' curiosity, which are controversial, not stereotypical or relates to current issues in the society, and those which are competitive.

■ **Collaboration**

Collaboration means working together and cooperating (Hess 10). Hess (10) suggests that students who work together will participate, learn how to compromise, negotiate meaning, become better risk takers and self-evaluators. Working together supports learner autonomy, because students will learn not to count on teacher all the time but rather figure out the unknown expression on their own. They can learn from each other and share their opinions and experiences, which will lead to increasing their tolerance and awareness of people's differences. Students will not only learn a language, but also moral abilities, such as respect of each other,

willingness to help and support each other rather than laugh at someone's failure.

■ **Individualization**

Individualization is perceived differently by different authors. Whereas Penny Ur (306) describes it as "allowing learners choice in what tasks and materials should students

use and how”, Natalie Hess (12) describes it as “providing opportunities for students to work at their own pace, in their own style and on topics of their choosing”. She suggests several ways of promoting individualization, such as portfolios, self-access centres, individual writing or personalized dictionaries. For private language school courses, it is a vital idea to allow students to help to decide what will be studied and why. This enables students to feel like equal partners with a teacher and supports establishing of positive rapport.

▪ **Personalization**

Penny Ur (306) suggests adapting and designing materials allowing students individual responses wherever possible. It is important for students to feel as individuals, whose opinions and ideas are taken seriously. Personalized tasks arouse students’ interest, because they are based on something they have experienced and therefore they will always have something to say about it.

▪ **Open-endedness**

Open – ended exercises allow student to respond to tasks and questions which have a variety of possible answers rather than a single correct one. Usually the text book exercises calls for very specific answers that is why it considerably decreases students’ participation. Open ended exercises allow students to use their language skills in order to complete a task. This is why they work well in mixed ability classes.

According to Hess (13), examples of open-ended exercises:

- Giving students the beginning of a sentence and asking them to finish it in an appropriate way

- Giving students number of questions and allowing them to answer any number of them
 - Brainstorming
 - Writing their own definitions of words
 - Matching answers where several matches are acceptable as correct answers
 - Questions that may be answered in many different ways
- **Compulsory plus optional tasks**

The strategy of compulsory plus optional tasks allows students to choose what quantity of tasks they want to complete – the class is given a material and told what the minimum that everyone

has to complete is (Ur 306). The rest of the task is optional. Therefore everyone is kept engaged all the time and can feel a sense of achievement when completing a task. This strategy is especially suitable for designing tests.

Advantages of having mixed ability classes

1. There are less 'sink' groups in schools.
2. Different teaching styles are opened up, moving away from didactic methods.
3. There is potentially less negative labelling of students.
4. Teachers have contact with a wide range of students.
5. This form of teaching makes for diagnostic

- teaching.
6. Troublesome students are ‘diluted’ through the school.
 7. A sense of community can be developed in the school (though, it must be said, this is under threat as schools have an open-access policy, moving them away from being neighborhood and community schools).
 8. There is a wide social mix in classrooms.
 9. Students’ self-esteem and motivation are promoted.
 10. Equality of opportunity and outcome are furthered.
 11. Mutual respect, support, understanding and tolerance are developed between students.
 12. The classroom reflects the social mix of the world outside school.
 13. Teachers develop new teaching skills.
 14. Competition is replaced by co-operation.
 15. The pastoral aspects of schooling take on increasing significance.
 16. The errors of selection are avoided (e.g. where students are incorrectly assigned to bands, streams or tracks).

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Chapter three : Data Analysis

As I mentioned before that the data which I will analysis in this part is from two methods, the first method is interview with five English teachers the interview reflects teacher’s opinion in having mixed ability class and their opinion about the solutions for mixed ability class problems the second method is tests with the students they will be two tests (pretest and posttest) I will use one method to solve the problems

with mixed ability class and see if this method can solve these problems or not by comparing the results of the posttests. I will start with the interview :

1- Interview

I will now account for the results of the interviews carried out by the five English teachers in FatmaAlzahra preparatory school. I will go through each question in order and comment on all five teachers' responses.

The interview questions were asked directly by me, each interview was oral and I was writing the teacher's answers in my notebook, all the teachers agreed to this arrangement.

The questions asked started out as more general ones and then became more focused on how to work with mixed ability class.

The interviews were based on these questions, but the teachers were also free to add their opinion about anything related to mixed ability class.

I will name the teacher with alphabets A,B,C,D and E.

A the teacher with 25 years of experience .

B the teacher with 15 years of experience .

C the teacher with 5 years of experience and she had studied course in teaching methods .

D and E the teachers with 5 years of experience .

1- Do you know what is the meaning of having mixed ability class ?

All the teachers answer with yes, all of them know what is the meaning of having mixed ability,

their answers to this question are similar to each other except teacher A. Teacher A was more

accurate in his answer he said that mixed ability classes are the classes which have different

students, then I asked him in which factors the students are

different, he replied that the students

are different in the learning styles, learning ability , background , motivation, attitude towards the

language and the confidence. The other teachers defined the mixed ability class as the class

which consist different students I asked them the same question which I asked teacher A in

which factors the students are different? Their answers were very limited they said that the

students are different in learning ability and confidence .

2- What is the extent of having mixed ability in your class?

All five teachers answered that all the classes they are teaching and the classes they taught before

are having students which are extremely different from each other, the two teachers A and B

added that in some classes there are students which have similar abilities such as in learning

ability, learning speed and also their English knowledge is similar to each other.

3- What are the main problems in your mixed ability class ?

Teacher A answered that the main problems he faces in his mixed ability classes are: learning

ability, while some students find that the learning task is very easy to deal with, others may find

it difficult to understand. Other problem teacher A faces is participation, some students prefer

using English in the class usually the strong students, while others do not

use usually the
weak students.

Teacher B said that the first problems in having mixed ability is that every student has English

background differs from another student, some students come to the class with strong English

Background and others come to the class without any knowledge about the English language.

Another problem is that the curriculum which we as teachers use it is designed for class which

has students have the same abilities (homogenous class), so it not easy to make this curriculum

suitable for all students with different abilities, she added that make all the students speak

English in the class is a very difficult, some students feel shy and they do not have confidence to

use English in front of the class .

Teachers C, D and E answered this question with similar answers, they said that the main

problem they faced in their mixed ability class is discipline (classroom management), all of the

three teachers find that it is difficult to control mixed ability class, because in the class and

during teaching a lesson some of the students pay attention to what the they said but the others

who are weak and they do not understand start to make noise. Another problem they mentioned

is that making all the students interest during the lesson is a difficult, while strong students

prefer communicative activities and discussion tasks, weak students would rather prefer to spend

time on activities which do not require their spoken ability.

Teacher C added that it is very difficult to provide effective learning for all the students, some

Students find the method which the teacher use is interesting, other find it boring.

4- Do you think your way of teaching is suitable for your mixed class? If yes how did you know that your way is suitable? If no what are the reasons that make you unable to find the right way?

Teacher with long experience answered with yes, that's their way of teaching is suitable for the

mixed ability class they are teaching. When I asked how do you know that your way is suitable,

teacher A said that depending on the results of the tests he did at the beginning of the year and

the one he did after a month he noticed that his students have been improved. Teacher B said that

she knew that her way is suitable by seeing the interaction of all her students in the class, how all

the students participate during the lesson and the activities.

Teacher C which studied teaching methods before starting work in the school answered with yes

that she is using the right method in teaching her mixed ability class, but she adds that sometimes

she faces problems which make her way unsuitable. I asked her how and she replied that from

what she had learned in teaching method courses can know what is the right method, but as a

teacher you cannot guess what will happen in the class or how each student will react towards

the way I used.

The other two teachers D and E answered with no, that their way in teaching mixed ability is not

suitable, and they explained why they don't use a way that will be suitable; Teacher D said that

she is new in teaching and five years are not enough to know how to deal with students in mixed

ability class, she added that she tried many ways but she faced obstacles which prevent her way

in teaching mixed ability class to be suitable.

Teacher E explained why she does not use the right way in teaching mixed ability class, she said

that curriculum has not helped her at all, some of the students find the lesson and the activities

very easy, others find them very difficult, she also added that the school does not provide any

help to the teacher such as providing modern equipments in teaching.

5- All of us as a teachers suffering from having strong and weak students in the same class. How can you manage your class in order to make your class interest of all the students ?

In this question also the teachers with long experience has similar answers, they said that during

their working as a teacher for more 10 years they faced this big problem, they thought that it was

important to make the students feel safe and not nervous in the class, they added that a teacher

needs to have patience with the students and let them take their time.

Teacher C said that she always tries to pay more attention to the weak students and ask them if

they understand the lesson or not, she gives extra time for the weak students after the class to

explain what they do not understand.

Teacher D told me that the students need to feel that they know *what* to do, *how* to do it and that

they understand and do not feel stupid. It is important to enhance their self-confidence, so they

are not afraid to ask questions. She also believed that it is very important how the teacher

approaches them. The teacher may need to decrease the material to work with as well as give

them the time and offer extra help.

Teacher E said it is important to make the weak students interest within the class but at the same

time she said that strong students also must feel interesting otherwise they will feel boring and

stat make noise.

6- How can you control in your mixed ability class ?

Teacher A said that at the beginning of the study year he gave instructions to his students what

they have to do and what they have not to do, and warned his students that if any one make noise

will be banished. Teacher B has another way to control her class, she said that during the lesson

she tries to attract the attention of all the class, every 5 minutes asked students about the lesson

and what she was saying.

Teacher C used activities to make the students motivate and not feel boring, this is the same

technique teachers D and E used, but they still find difficulty in controlling their mixed ability

class, they said that the more they teach the more they learn how to control their classes.

7- Do you think mixed ability classes have advantages or just have disadvantages? If do you think they are having advantages what are they?

All the teachers answered with yes, that mixed ability classes have advantages as well as

disadvantages. All of them said that the most important advantage of mixed ability is that the

students learn from each other. Teacher B added that there are many opinions, experiences

and points of views in mixed ability classes that can each student benefit from them.

Teacher C said that mixed ability classes are challenging to teach and because of the need to

be creative, she researches for new teaching methods and strategies. As a result she is

developing her teaching skills.

Teacher E added that she cannot pay her attention to all the students in her class, so she

sometimes asked from the strong students or the ones who understand the lesson to help her

by teaching each other and working together.

8- What is your opinion in peer teaching as a solution to mixed ability class's problems?

Teacher A answered that peer teaching is an effective method with the students in mixed

ability classes. He said that he uses this method with the lessons that do not need to teach just by

him, he gave an example by showing me a lesson, the lesson does not have grammar to teach, it

was just a story, he said that he sometimes asks a student to explain this lesson to other students

in the break time.

Teacher B did not agree that peer teaching is an effective method in mixed ability classes, she

explained her answer by saying that peer teaching causes chaos in the class, she added that

whenever she asked students to help each other, the dialogue between the students turns to be

speech about another topic instead of being their dialogue about the topic of the lesson

teachers C and D said that they are using peer teaching method in doing the exercises of the work

book, they agreed that the time of the class which is 40 minutes is not

enough to answer all the

exercises, so they ask the students who have the answers to help the other students who do not

know the answers.

Teacher E said that as she mentioned in the previous question that she cannot pay her attention to

all the students in her class, that's why she uses peer teaching method, but she agreed with

teacher B that using peer teaching causes chaos in the class.

At the end of these interviews I noticed that the teachers with long experience are the teachers

who are familiar with dealing with mixed ability classes, they know how to deal with each

students.

Teacher C which studied the teaching methods before starting work in the school is aware of the

techniques she has to follow, but till the moment I did the interview she still tries with her mixed

ability class.

The most effective problem in the mixed ability classes of the teachers D and E is discipline,

how to manage their classes.

2- Tests (pretest, posttest)

In this method I used peer teaching technique as a solution to some of the problems of having

mixed ability classes.

The sample, which I tested them was my students. As I said before I'm teaching two classes

A and B, A was the class which I used peer teaching method with and B I did not use it.

The tests were about comparative and superlative adjectives, I explained the lesson to both

classes without using peer teaching method, then I asked the students in A and B classes to

study at home , the next day I did the pretest.

After doing the pretest, I started using peer teaching method in class A, the strong students

who had high marks in the test were asked to help the students who had low marks.

To avoid the embarrassment of the weaker students, I offered them to choose the students

who want to help them , also I encouraged the strong students .

The time between the two tests (pretest and posttest) was a month, during this month I was

using peer teaching in class A .

The number of the students who have low marks are 13 in class A which contains 25 students

and 11 in class B which also contains 25 students.

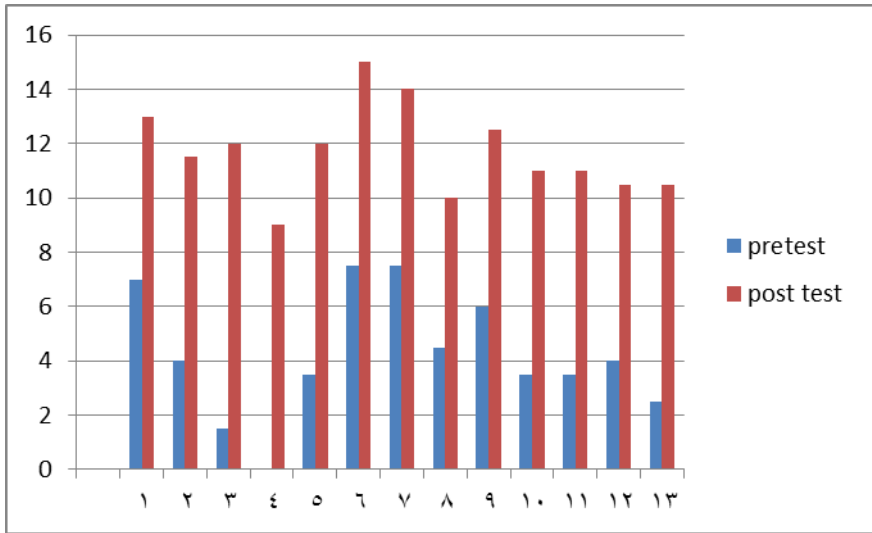
This table shows the marks of pretest of the weak students in both A and B classed :

Students	The marks of class A	The mark of class B
1	7/15	6.5/15
2	4/15	6/15

3	1.5/15	
4	0/15	
5	3.5/15	
6	7.5/15	
7	7.5/15	
8	4.5/15	
9	6/15	
10	3.5/15	
11	3.5/15	
12	4/15	
13	2.5/15	

shows the marks of the post test of the weak students

Students	The marks of class A	The marks of class B
1	13	5
2	11.5	4
3	12	5.5
4	9	7.5
5	12	1
6	15	1.5
7	14	4.5
8	10	4.5
9	12.5	3
10	11	3
11	11	1.5
12	10.5	4
13	10.5	5



This chart compares the results of pretest and post test for class A, the blue column shows the

marks that the students got in the pretest which were low marks, and the red column shows the

marks which the same students got in the post test.

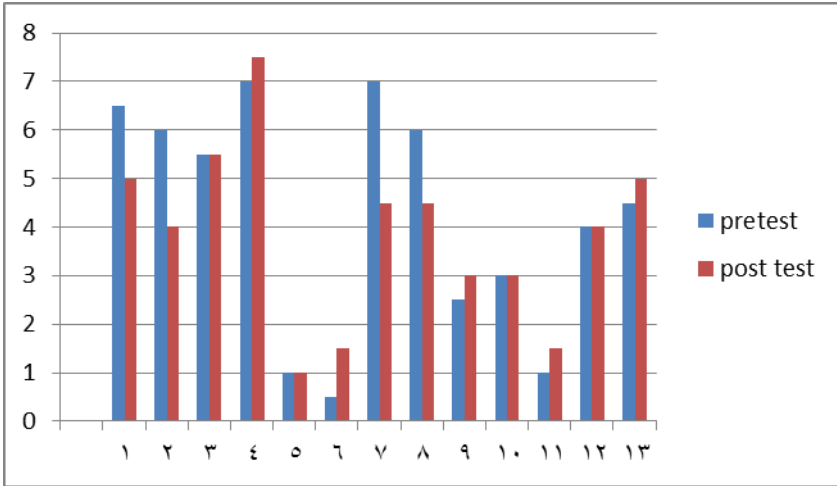
We can notice from the chart that the students have been improved, but this improvement is not

the same for all students we can see that some students improved more than other students.

When I asked students why, all the answers I got were the students who was teaching him, some

of them said that his partner gave all the effort to make him/her understand, the others said that

his/her partner did not help him a lot .



This chart compares results of pretest(blue column) and post test(red column) of the class B, we

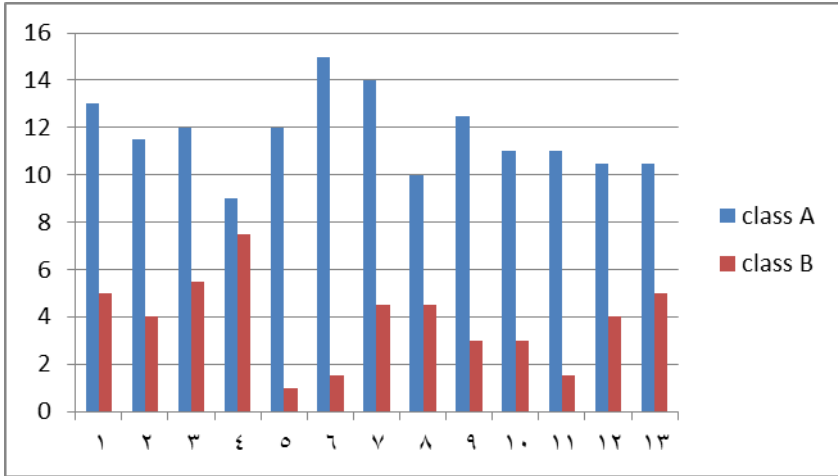
can see that most of the students did not improve and their marks still low, and there are students

got less marks than the marks which they got in pretest, these students said that they forgot the

lesson and that is why their marks are less than pretest marks.

Some of the students are very sensitive, they do not accept any help from other students, this is

another reason why they still having low marks.



This chart shows how students in class A increase their marks. While students in class B still

having low marks, so depending on these results I can say that the peer teaching method is a

successful one in teaching mixed ability classes, but if we misuse this method it could be as some

teachers said in the interview causes chaos.

To avoid chaos and noise in the class, I asked the students to study together when they do not

have any classes or they can study together at home.

Conclusion

When I was trying to decide about my research project I knew that I wanted to work on

something I could practically use in my own classes, this is why I chose to write about mixed

ability classes, their problems and the solutions to these problems.

The written sources and the teachers I interviewed agreed on the extent of mixed ability classes.

The teachers agreed that all the schools in Alkhums city are having mixed ability classes, the

students are having different abilities and if there are similar students in specific abilities they

will be different in other abilities.

According to the written sources, the reasons of having mixed ability classes are the factors that

influence the characteristics of the learners that make up one single class. These factors are age,

intelligence and multiple intelligences, learning styles, language aptitude, language level, learner

autonomy, and motivation.

I discovered from the interview with the teachers, that every teacher has his/her own way to help

students to learn in mixed ability classes. Some of the teachers prefer using activities in their

classes in order to assist the students to learn, others said that they are focusing on the weak

students more than on the strong students, others said it is important to make the students feel

safe and not nervous in the class and teachers need to have patience with the students and let

them take their time in learning.

All of the written sources agreed that mixed ability classes are having a lot of disadvantages

which are the problems that the teachers faced in their classes, but these written sources did not

agree that these classes are having advantages. In contrast, all the teachers I interviewed agreed

that mixed ability classes are having advantages which are; all the students can help each others

in learning, there are more than one opinion in the class, so they can learn how they accept other

opinions, also teachers can develop their teaching skills, because they have to research for new

method in order to use with his\her mixed ability class.

As a teacher we have to learn how we should manage mixed ability classes in order to help the

students to learn, because as I said before all of our classes are mixed ability so we are dealing

with the same problems every year with every class.

The most interesting part of my study was using peer teaching method with my class, it was

useful for me as well as for students. I learned that peer teaching is a suitable method with mixed

ability classes; although, not all the teachers agreed with my opinion about using this method. I

think it's depended on the teacher and how he apply it in his/her class. The results of the students

improved when I applied peer teaching method, which means that the students benefited too.

The limitations of the research

During my writhing of this research I faced some obstacles which limited my writing, the first

obstacle was the time, it was short time to find enough sources also the time was a problem

during data collection particularly in using peer teaching method, I used it for a month.

Other obstacle was finding enough written sources, the library was almost closed throughout the

course, so I tried to rely on some friends in finding books which I needed in my research. Also

internet was very useful in finding the written sources.

When I read the written sources and interviewed the teachers, I found that the extent of the

problems in mixed ability classes is different from one book to another and from one teacher to

another. This caused difficulty in finding solutions which can be work successfully with all of

these classes.

Recommendations

My recommendation is applying peer teaching method in other lesson to see if this method is

effect in all the lessons or just in grammar lesson as I did.

To sum up, in some cases the teachers do approach their mixed ability classes in a right way and

use appropriate teaching methods to involve all the students into learning process. Nevertheless,

sometimes need to gain more experience from their teacher colleagues or from the books .

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