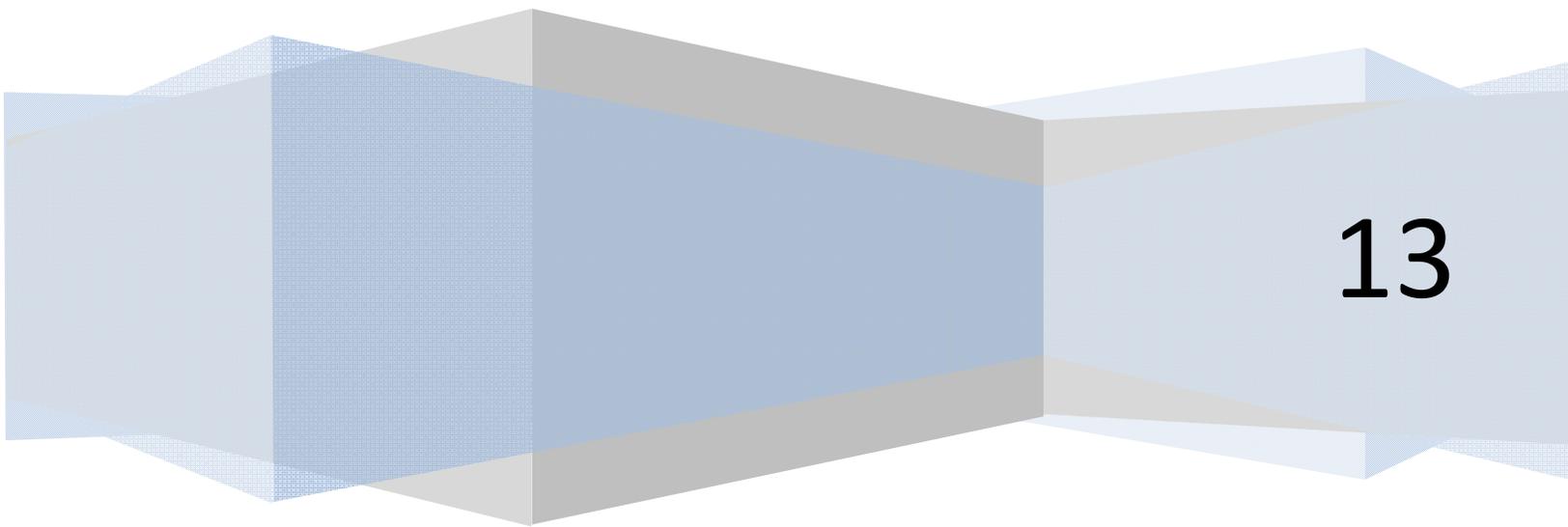


# LEARNING DISABILITIES



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## **ABSTRACT**

This report has been carried out to learn about the various disabilities of the people in Masqat. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to know how the resource room can support learning disabilities students, especially who has writing and reading difficulties, to achieve those academic skills into the general education setting in First Cycle in Education in Muscat. The study has a qualitative approach towards the methodology. Through the qualitative method, it will be easier to understand the perspectives of such individuals. The process of research involved many questionnaires, surveys, etc which would record the opinions of the individuals. The purpose of the study emphasized on the ways in which the resource room can tackle the people with learning abilities and helps them achieve academic excellence. The interview that was conducted was carried out in batches and took several hours. After the records were collected, it was found that with the help of IEP, teaching evaluation, feedbacks, tools and teaching aids, educational strategies helped in improving their disabilities. It helped them learn better and remember accurately at the same time. The use of focus groups in the article was worthwhile as it contributed in addressing sensitive issues relating to social class, race, and age. Thus, the survey too showed the same progress and improvement in teaching facilities to help the individuals with learning disabilities successfully achieve excellent academic skills.

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## Chapter. 1 INTRODUCTION

### Introduction and Background

Learning disabilities refers to difficulty in learning or gaining a particular knowledge in a particular way due to some unknown factors. In other words, it is the difficulty in learning in an academic area. This concept always spoken with reference to learning disorders which is a clinical diagnosis. Learning disabilities involve a collection of disorders identifiable by the lack of academic skills. Typical examples include dyslexia (reading disability), dyscalculia (mathematical disability) and dysgraphia (writing disability). Such disabilities are usually caused by an unknown factor affecting the ability of brain in receiving and processing useful signals.

As a result, a person ends up with a disorder where he or she cannot comprehend whatever is being learnt. People with such disabilities cannot perform particular tasks or skills if made to learn things on their own. Learning disabilities are non curable but learning skills can be improved with conventional methods? The cognitive or academic skills can be improved in such individuals with the help of technological assistance. Such individuals face a lot of problem in their life but new strategies should be implemented to help them gain a successful career in the future. Technologies should be such that they act as tools and aids for enhance their learning.

In other words, learning disabilities are neurological problems affecting the information system of the person. These are diagnosed as outcomes of comprehending psychological assessments.

It occurs in the following form-

- i. Receive information in to the brain. (input)
- ii. Make sense of the information (organization)
- iii. Store as well as retrieve information (memory)
- iv. Get information back out (output)

The impairments involved are more or less related to the psychological processes such as -

- i. Language processing – to understand and express information with the use of words.
- ii. Visual spatial processing – perceive and organize information visually.
- iii. Visual motor processing – carry hand eye activities.
- iv. Phonological processing – identify and manipulate speech sounds.
- v. Processing speed – speed of information retrieving, receiving and sending.
- vi. Work memory – hold information in mind during retrieval of information.
- vii. Executive functions – plan and organize information

### **Problem Statement**

The learning disabilities are common in Pakistan and about five percent to ten percent are affected from it. However, each disability of learning is different from one to another. It is caused mainly because of the genetic or congenital defects during birth. Such acquiring of disabilities is also caused because of the various neuro biological factors. Thus, it is mainly a hereditary effect that is passed on from one generation to another. However, they do not occur as a result of differences in culture or languages between individuals.

But, the affects of learning disabilities increases due to inadequate instruction as well as lack of motivation. Learning disabilities usually coincide with conditions like attention behavior and also, emotional attacks. Also, the impact of such disabilities increases if a person is suffering from depression or other medical conditions. Non verbal learning disability (NLD) was discovered during the years of 1980s by a Neuroscientist named Dr. Byron Rourke of Ontario. NLD was first found in small children and the first NLD found in them was known as the social perception disability. People suffering from social perception disorder are intelligent and quick witted but still suffer from impairments in non verbal aspects of day to day life.

This may involve the understanding of perceptions of others, their feelings and social cues. Such individuals space out or tend to detach themselves from because they are overloaded with situations where they try hard to cope with such situations demanding full involvement. The language skills may not be developed as compared to the others in the surrounding and hence, may cause an emotional set back in them. Such disabilities in individuals may also end up having communication skills and may seek personal space often. On the other hand, it may be difficult for the other person to even comprehend what is being said to them by the person suffering from a learning disability. The listener may even ignore what is being said to them.

Learning disabilities can be cured or at least improved to reduce its impact on the individual suffering from it. They should be involved in activities or educational programs which can help them in learning and managing challenges relating to society and academics. There are many ways to tackle with the issues of learning disabilities which may include the following:

- i. Understand and identify the learning disabilities a person is suffering from.
- ii. Learn ways to set realistic goals pertaining to life and career, solve problems and find solutions.
- iii. Be friendly and free enough to ask doubts and seek help from others.
- iv. Trying hard to achieve the set goal.
- v. Having faith in one's own work and abilities.
- vi. Respecting the feelings of such individuals coping with learning disabilities.
- vii. Motivating such individuals through encouraging and positive words.
- viii. Helping them cope up when they commit mistakes or errors.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to know how the resource room can support learning disabilities students, especially who has writing and reading difficulties, to achieve those academic skills into the general education setting in First Cycle in Education in Muscat.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the study were;

1. To explore the difficulties of students with learning disabilities.
2. To explore interventions for students with learning disabilities
3. To explore the scope of resource room for supporting students with learning disabilities
4. To identify factors that contribute to improving students with learning disabilities.
5. To identify the teaching capabilities required to support students with learning disabilities

## **Research Questions**

1. What difficulties students with learning disabilities face in Masqat
2. What interventions have been introduced in Masqat Schools for students with learning disabilities?
3. Is the use of resource room helping students with learning disabilities?
4. What is the role of teacher in teaching students with learning disabilities?
5. What factor contributes to improve reading and writing among students with learning disabilities?
6. Does social environment impacts students with learning disabilities?

## **Chapter. 2 LITERATURE REVIEW:**

### **Defining Learning Disabilities**

What defines a disability? Presently, there is no single view on the nature of a disability (Thomas, 2004). However; there are two distinct understandings of the term disability (Thomas, 2004). The first understanding of the term disability is known as a disability study, while the other is called medical sociology (Thomas, 2004).

### **Educational Environment for individuals with learning disabilities**

Prevention of failure among the LD population requires an educational environment that is favorable to academic success that utilizes instructional strategies proven to be effective, adjusting the school climate to adopt academic success and empower students (Cummins, 1989). As a result, educators would become responsible for helping students learn (Ortiz, 1997). Such environments reflect a philosophy that all students can learn and that educators are responsible for helping them learn. Collaboration among administration and teachers is also essential when creating a positive school environment

Special education laws indicate that students receiving special education must be educated in the least restrictive environment, meaning that a student should be taught with his or her peers without a disability until he or she can no longer be serviced appropriately in that setting (Turnball, 2003).

Within an inclusive classroom, students with disabilities have access to insightful and demanding curriculum as those of the general education population. The instruction was to be designed to assist them in achieving full potential (Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 2006). Highlighting the learning standards encourages greater responsibility on teachers and administrators to warrant high levels of achievement to each of these students. IDEA of 1997 (National Center of Learning

Disabilities, n.d.) ensured that students with LDs have a right to academic instruction within the general education classroom, and it required teacher responsibility to ensure that these students progress within the setting. Thus, the high level of expectations and monitoring of progress is necessary for improving outcomes for students with learning disabilities (Turnball, 2003).

Klinger and Vaughn (1999) conducted 20 studies that examined the perception of learning of over 4659 students in kindergarten through the twelfth grade. Of those students, 760 had disabilities; and those students preferred and aspired to be like their peers – carrying the same books, learning the same material, completing homework, and using the same grading criteria. The study also revealed that students, with and without disabilities, were aware that all students learn differently and appreciated when teachers slowed the pace of instruction when needed.

### **Effects of Learning Disabilities on Individuals and Families**

Upon examination, students with learning disabilities (diagnosed or not) demonstrate difficulties that interfere with everyday life, such as sports, family life, and socializing with peers (Silver, 1998). Students with learning disabilities typically demonstrate social problems. After reviewing 152 studies, Kavae and Forness (1996) concluded that about 75% of students with learning disabilities display deficits in social skills. Further, poor social skills often lead to rejection, low social status, fewer positive interactions with teachers, difficulty making friends, and loneliness (Lane, Pierson, & Givner, 2004).

These social difficulties may be exhibited by many students regardless of their placement. Some students with learning disabilities have difficulty staying on task or display high levels of hyperactivity. Students with learning disabilities typically have other difficulties such as motor coordination, time management, attention, organizational skill, processing speed, social skills, emotional maturation, verbal expression, and/or memory (Lerner, 2005). In fact, adults with

learning disabilities have difficulty performing tasks such as shopping, budgeting, filling out a job application, or reading a recipe.

### **Factors affecting students with learning disabilities**

Proponents of disability studies feel that disabilities are structured by social inequality, social exclusion, and social oppression (Thomas, 2004) . Using these approaches, Oliver (1996) argued that Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society. To understand this it is necessary to grasp the distinction between the physical impairment and the social situation, called "disability", of people with such impairment. Thus we define impairment as lacking all or part of a limb, or having a defective limb, organism or mechanism of the body and disability as the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities, (p. 22)

Consequently, disabilities are viewed as issues dealing with society, rather than individual concerns (Finkelstein, 1980). According to Hurst (1995), disabilities are byproducts of social factors, not medical or individual factors such as discrimination and prejudice. These medical and individual factors are also known as barriers used against disabled people by society (Hurst, 1995).

According to Goodland and Lovitt (1993), students with impairments or disabilities do better academically when they are able to socialize and be included with their nondisabled peers during

instructional time. The interaction between students with and without disabilities enhances academic achievement for students with disabilities (Goor & Schwenn, 1993). There are several ways to increase student learning, however few can do so while improving self-esteem and social relationships (Slavin, 1987).

A large percent of the population is affected by learning disabilities, which has a significant impact on individuals and families. The term learning disability refers to a neurological disorder in one or more of the basic processes involved in understanding spoken or written language. A learning disability may manifest itself in a variety of ways; it may impact the ability to speak, listen, read, write, spell, reason, organize information, or do mathematical calculations (Lerner, 2005). Students may display unpredictable test performance, perceptual impairments, motor disorders, impulsivity, frustration, and difficulty coping with everyday social interactions and unpredicted situations. Language and cultural differences are also factors that contribute to learning difficulties; these difficulties will become greater over time if academic instruction is not modified to address the specific needs of these students. Without the appropriate intervention, the LD population will continue to struggle; the gap between their achievement and that of their peers will expand wider and wider. In fact, studies have indicated that as many as 33% of students with learning disabilities are gifted (Fletcher, 2004) which emphasizes the importance of meeting the needs of this population.

## **Interventions for students with learning disabilities**

### **Resource Room**

Adamowycz (2008) noted that teachers found that students in an inclusive environment have more time and opportunity to work with their peers. In the classroom, they receive more positive role modeling from teachers and fellow students which they miss out on when they are in the

resource room. Special education students have fewer stigmas from feeling different or not as smart as the rest of their classmates. They have better attitudes toward teachers and students when they are in an IC.

### **Visual Strategies**

Many students who struggle with educational success may benefit from visual strategies to enhance understanding of what is happening. Visual supports are a great benefit for use with these students. Visual supports are things that are seen. Body movements, environmental cues, pictures, objects, and written language can all be used to enhance educational success. Examples of visual supports in day-to-day communication include logos and road signs.

Visual tools assist students in processing language, organizing thoughts, remembering information, and many others skills required to participate successfully (Hodgdon, 2008). Through observation it was noted that many students demonstrate strength in understanding visual information compared to auditory information. Over a 72-hour period, those who were presented information orally remembered only 10% compared to 65% who remembered information presented visually (Hodgdon, 2008). Visual strategies would complement this strength and improve success in the classroom.

Visual supports in the classroom help students understand directions, schedules, rules, and instructional materials. The visual supports can be presented with words or phrases, but the increase of printed words or phrases with visual supports as photographs, hand-drawn pictures, graphics, or computer generated icons actually benefit all students (Tissot & Evans, 2003), particularly those who have difficulty reading. Pictures are universally understood and, therefore, can be generalized to almost all functional settings. Visual supports can play a number of communicative roles in the classroom and in other environments in which the students must

engage. Visual cues can be utilized to teach organization, academic and life skills, communication, social interaction, and behavioral management (Quill, 1995).

According to Wileman (1993), visual aspects of classrooms, lessons, and presentations within the learning environment play an important role in learning. Well regarded and concentrated visuals help any audience understand and retain information. Kavale and Forness (1990) completed a meta-analysis that indicated there is considerable evidence that tailoring instruction to the learning style of the students is ineffective. However, this interpretation should be viewed with caution, as the content being reviewed is nearly impossible to prove to be negative. It is known that the use of visual technology enhances the learning environment by developing an understanding of the topic at hand and motivating the students at the same time. Visualization techniques are credited for breaking down the presentation of difficult tasks as well as aiding cognition. Information presented visually assists learners' ability to gain information (Idowu et al., 2006). Content visualization can facilitate learners' acquisition of information. It is related to the individual's level of perceptual and associative learning in the content area.

Lindsey-Glenn and Gentry (2008) examined the use of visual supports to aid in vocabulary acquisition skills. Students who attend public schools who display learning disabilities demonstrated great difficulty remembering vocabulary words and using them in context (Donaldson & Nash, 2005)

Most experts agree that no single method of instruction works for all children; however, many suggest strategies with visual supports. Effective visual support systems allow visual images to sustain students attention, enable students to focus on the message and reduce anxiety often associated with academic learning situations, and make abstract concepts more concrete allowing

students to express their thoughts coherently (Bround, 2004; Glaeser et al., 2003; Li, 2004; Rao & Gagie, 2006).

Hodgdon (1995) stated that visual supports are used to aid children with autism to maintain attention and understanding of spoken language, sequence and organize language, and sequence and organize their environment. She further described visual supports as tools used to compensate for difficulties in attention, auditory processing, sequencing, and organization. Quill (1995) described the use of visual supports, including pictographic symbols and written explanations, as effective tools to enhance organization, facilitate communication and social development, and manage challenging behaviors.

There are many types of visual supports that may be beneficial for learning disabilities (not to exclude those without learning disabilities). Strategies include schedules, calendars, task organizers, behavior charts, response cards, and many more. It is necessary that teachers and educators directly involved with students who demonstrate great difficulty learning and or maintaining good behavior implement visual strategies to aid in educational success. Not all students are visual learners, which is why adding a visual strategy to the instruction already being presented is increasing the chance of success. Visual strategies are beneficial for students and help to improve their vocational skills.

### **Task Organizers**

Allowing the student choice in the sequence of academic tasks can increase rates of compliance and active academic engagement. The power of allowing the student to select the sequence of academic tasks appears to be in the exercise of choice, which for 'biologic reasons' may serve as a fundamental source of reinforcement (Kern & Clemens, 2007, p. 72).

### **Instructional Support**

The important instructional support is that of teacher. The need for effective instructional support highlights the role of the general education teacher and successful collaboration between the special education teacher and the regular education teacher (McGregor & Vogelsberg, 1998). This particular collaboration requires new responsibilities for the inclusion teacher and the special education teacher in the inclusion classroom. According to Lawton (1999), when two or more educators deliver instructions to a group of students with learning disabilities, and both are responsible for the evaluation of the student's progress, you have co-teaching. Students participating in inclusion will have the opportunity to learn from both teachers

Research conducted by Zigmond et al. (1995) scrutinized the impact that inclusion had on students with learning disabilities for an entire year. The study compared the students with learning disabilities to general education students by comparing their progress in reading. Thirty-four percent to 54% of the 145 students (Grade 2-6) with learning disabilities made significant progress, while 46% to 63% of the students failed to make meaningful progress. Based on the findings, the researchers believe that the students who did not make significant progress should be taught in a special education classroom.

### **Computer Class**

A study by Pererson -Karlan, Hourcade, Parette, and Dikter (2008) concerning writing presents a positive way to include students who have physical and educational related disabilities. Technology can enable the student with special needs the ability to express himself or herself through pictures, voice output, and by having assistive technology through a computer program. The use of computers for writing gives support to language development. "Children first begin to establish one-to-one correspondences between real and concrete objects/events, and their

symbolic representations. Later on the child develops symbolic representations for more abstract concepts” (Pereson-Karlan et al, p.17).

### **Art Class**

Bhroin (2007) reported that the earliest drawing of a child went back to 1224 in Russia. These drawing were done on birch bark by a 6-year-old child. Children’s drawings have been studied as early as 1887 by Ricci. These drawing showed a natural tendency of children to play, which was recognized by Rousseau in 1762. The concept that drawings could show aspects of a child’s life comes from a variety of fields including psychology, philosophy, education, and aesthetics. Each of these domains place values and importance on drawings done by children. Children can and do express themselves through art and play. This action allows the child to show expressions of their lives and their experiences. Goodnow (1977) maintained that, “children’s graphic art may be described not only as a visible thinking but even as a slice of life” (p. 154).

Bhroin (2007) went on to review the six strands of materials. These strands included: paint and color, printing, construction clay modeling, and work with fabric and fiber (Primary School Curriculum, Visual Arts, 1999). What was interesting in the drawing of the children was that the art provided a means for the child to express his or her self in a nonlinguistic self-expression and could show symbolic communication. It is from the six strands of materials that Bhroin defines art. His definition of art is anything that is visual, which the child creates using these modalities. The idea of children expressing themselves through the arts was also supported by Lowenfeld and Britten (1982). They stated that drawing, painting and the construction is complicated. The creative process gives way to the artistic activity. Matthews (1999) has stated that the “marks and configuration that appear to be minimal and insignificant have been found to contain tremendously important ideas” (p. 37). It is through the drawings that the child is able to express

ideas that have meaning to the child. Children are often asked to tell about their drawings. Based on these findings and reports, it is no wonder that art classes for students with special needs could hold valuable experiences and learning opportunities.

As stated by MacLean (2008) art classes allow students with special needs the opportunity to explore experiment and interact. However, to have this occur, teachers need to understand their content domain and how important this modality is and the impact it can have on the student's ability to express himself in a nonlinguistic manner and interact within the class. It is necessary to understand the impact that the disability has on the development of creative thinking and expression.

### **Music Class**

Bell (2008) reported on how his work with young people with special needs and the impact that music can have. His case study involved a student with Down syndrome who attended his class for two 40-minute sessions for a period of three months. This study was limited to students with special needs who merely listened to and enjoyed music. Bell related his own experiences as he mentioned how he learned to play Mary Had a Little Lamb on a recorder. The students in Bell's study did not play instruments or composed music. His study involved aptitude, student's needs and their ability to comprehend musical concepts, and how they could execute musical exercises. The range of ability of the students was not considered in the study. No age range was given for the students. The students were not given the opportunity to demonstrate their musical ability that they might have had. Bell's study was based on Bruscia (1981), Grant and LeCroy (1986), and McLeish and Higgs (1982). Other studies had shown that students with hearing impairments, autism, and Williams Syndrome can excel and enjoy music (Jahns, 2001; Shore, 2002; Stambaugh, 1996; VanWeelden, & Whipple, 2007; Waugh & Riddoch, 2007).

Pond stated that it is by music, that students with special needs are able to express themselves—their feelings and ideas. Pond stated that it was not the lack of ability by the students, but that of the accommodations they needed. Pond found that one way to overcome the issue and to accommodate the students was the use of computers. The idea of using computers to make music was also supported by others who stated, “computer technology is a significant factor in enabling any one make music” (Folkstead, Hargreaves & Lindstrom, 1998, p. 95). The authors went on to state that the process is the same for both students with disabilities and those without disabilities. Every student needs time to explore, time to become familiar with the medium as well as find their own strategies and gestures and time to practice. The use of computers takes the right and wrong out of the process. Pond’s study was based on the work of Folkstead et al. who believed that anyone can compose and there is no wrong way to do so. This approach allowed Pond to conduct the case study on the student with Down syndrome. Music had also been used for improving behaviors, time on task, and attitudes. Music was used by Waugh and Riddoch (2007) over a six-week period of time. The students in this study had severe intellectual disabilities.

### Chapter. 3 RESEARCH METHOD:

In this study, I will use qualitative method as it is the most appropriate method in order to achieve the purpose of the study. It characterizes the aim of the research and relates to the understanding of the aspects of social life. This method generates qualitative data for analytic purposes rather than statistical data in the form of numbers. These methods are used for understanding perspectives, experiences and opinion of the people. The researched methods for qualitative analysis involve surveys, questionnaires, feedbacks, etc. Hence, qualitative research method is one that involves the enquiring of attributes under various academic areas mainly in the area of social sciences. It investigates the why and how of making decisions and focuses on samples acquired from the focus groups that is group under study representing an entire community of individuals. In Such a research method helps in the seeking of empirical support for the hypothesis. The data collected in a qualitative approach of research is through various ways namely

- i. **Contextual data:** This includes various data sources like oral data and reports as well as project and research papers.
- ii. **Surveys:** As suggested by Maxwell (2008 ) qualitative research is useful for researchers by helping them to:
  - 1 Understand the meaning participants give to situation or experience;
  - 2 Understand the particular context in which participants act and that context influence their actions. Thus, researchers are able to understand the circumstances in which events and actions occur;
  - 3 Identify unanticipated phenomena and influences to generate new theories;
  - 4 Understand the processes by which actions and events take place;
  - 5 Develop causal explanations

The qualitative approach can be also to better understand the appropriateness of the method employed. The latter can be used when studying natural sciences. Bryman (2008) discusses this point by saying: "a key difference is that the objects of analysis of the natural sciences (atoms, molecules, gases, chemicals, metals, and so on) cannot attribute meaning to events and to their environment. However, people do." (p.385). Therefore, quantitative methods cannot match qualitative methods in describing context, behaviors, and human activities and characteristics. Additionally, the use of qualitative methods is growing in variety of disciplines, partly due, to the limitations of the positivist approaches linked to quantitative methods. In line with increasing use of qualitative methods, Devers (1999) suggests that underlying this view is the assumption that "reality is dynamic, contextual, and socially constructed" (p.1159).

### 3.1 Purpose / objective:

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to know how the resource room can support learning disabilities students, especially who has writing and reading difficulties, to achieve those academic skills into the general education setting in First Cycle in Education in Muscat.

### 3.2 Research design:

In this study I will use qualitative method because it is appropriate method to approach the aim of the study which is: The Learning Disabilities Room (Resource Room) as one of the Alternatives in Supporting Students with reading and writing disabilities, in the First cycle of the Basic Education, in the Sultanate of Oman. Qualitative method is a good method "to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups in social science. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures data typically collected in the participant's sitting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes and the researchers making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (Creswell, 2009: 4).

In addition, Special Education is a very complex field and that makes it more complex is the variability of the participants. This complexity in special education has several implications for research. Researchers cannot just address a simple question about whether a practice in special education is effective but they must specify clearly for whom the practice is effective and in what context. Thus, qualitative method is an appropriate method for this study.

The qualitative research genre is broad, complex and growing; hence settling on one definition is difficult. A definition that we believe is flexible enough to be inclusive is that qualitative research is a systematic approach to understanding qualities or the essential nature of a phenomenon within a particular context. Most researchers in special education used qualitative method to understanding and addressing the special education needs problems, such as Hames. (2001) and Smith, (2002).

Qualitative research methods focus on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants—that is, qualitative research explores meaning, purpose, or reality (Hiatt, 1986) and that what my research need it especial when we talking about teaching learning disabilities students in regular school exactly in resource room .

### **3.3 Procedure:**

In this study I will adopt a qualitative method and in particular the focus groups. This method has become popular by increasing use to investigate a variety of social phenomenon. However, like any other methods, focus groups may entail strength and weakness. Morgan (1988) emphasizes that “the hallmark of a focus group is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (p. 12).

Consequently, focus groups provide researchers with interactive environment where participants are encourage expressing and discussing their opinions on the examined topics. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) stress that "the interaction between participants, will itself illuminate the researcher issues" (p.58). The researcher plays an important role in organizing, monitoring and moderating the discussion among members of group. This may require certain skills in creating an environment where participants are involved in discussion and their opinions are heard and considered.

Accordingly, the moderator has the role to invite each person to speak and ensuring this opportunity for her/him (Pickard, 2007). Some research suggests that focus groups can be used to get a preliminary sense of the topic (Sofaer, 1999) or can be used when exploring a poorly understood or ill-defined topic (Britten et al., 1995). In fact, focus groups can be used at different stages of the research design; this may occur depending on data to gather of issues to tackle during research process.

For example, it can be used at an initial stage to explore issues that can be carried out by employing in-depth interview. Focus groups can be also used after in-depth interviews with smaller groups of participants to discuss issues at strategic levels and which may have high impacts on the examined topic. Additionally, by following such research process, data collected previously can be validated through focus groups (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). A description using similar methods is better explored in the section below concerning the use

### 3.4 **Survey:**

Surveys are a means of gaining opinions of individuals at a mass. Thus, appropriate survey questions and options should be adhered to that keeps in mind the ethical issues relating to research attributes as well as society. Surveys need to be monitored in order to ensure that the

participants can fruitfully adopt the quality of asking questions and comprehending the answers at the same time. The administering of the surveys should be such that the participants get a chance to answer all the questions at their own pace. As the same time, it arouses a sense of confidentiality among the survey takers.

Moreover, the survey takers are always conscious regarding the handling of the surveys and their outcomes mainly by third parties. As a result of this, the participants tend to answers all the questions in the survey more openly as well as honestly. Surveys can be conducted in two different ways. Firstly, the survey form or the questions can be handed over to the participants and allow them to complete their survey at their own pace. Secondly, the in charge of the surveys can go to each and every individual or respondent in order to get their questions answered in an honest manner.

The former is a more appropriate form of survey taking as it gives a deep consideration of confidentiality and the opinion of a particular respondent is not overheard by any other respondent in the same resource room. Unlike in the later form of survey taking, the answers may not depend on a respondent's personal opinion rather on the environment. This may bring about errors during this method of survey taking as the opinions may be overheard by the others in the resource room. However, it may also help in shaping the opinions of others encouraging more participation in the latter. Surveys are mainly of three types which are mentioned as follows -

- i. **Mail surveys:** These types of surveys are the most traditional way of seeking opinion of individuals and they are of course cheaper than the other forms of survey taking. It allows a researcher in conducting mail studies and collecting random samples as the index nature of the mailing address. The only drawback in this type is the low

response rate leading to inaccuracy of the outcomes of the research. Nonetheless, it is the easiest and the most common way of receiving opinions from various groups of individuals including older populations.

- ii. **Telephone surveys:** Telephone surveys are the most flexible form of survey taking overcoming the problem of geographical locations. This type of survey taking is mostly preferred by the national polling organizations as it allows an accurate random sampling of data via random digital dialing. Nowadays, mobile phones are also playing the role of a tool that facilitates the features of survey taking apart from the general features. Through telephone surveys, surveys as well as participants can be monitored effectively. This type of data collection results in the generation of the most accurate and high quality data.
- iii. **Online surveys:** These types of surveys are cheap and help in the generation of results instantly. It uses multimedia in the survey pages to obtain a quick response from all the respondents as it may seem attractive to them. This would also establish a keen interest among the respondents for the high leveled multimedia features used in the survey. The results or the outcomes of these surveys are achieved within seventy two hours of the initiation of the surveys. However, it has a low response rate mainly when the number of questions is more than ten or fifteen. Moreover, the random sampling of such type of surveys and their responses is extremely time consuming.

In this study I will use survey (open-end questions) for parents of learning disabilities students to conduct them attitudes toward resource room because I cannot meet them individually. Also, it is very difficult to use focus group with them because of their situations. I will post survey to them by schools; the sample of parents about 3 surveys in each school out of 40 schools, the total is

about 120 parents. In this study I am going to adapt and amend survey from Somail, Al-Zoubi & Rahman (2012) study to match with the requirements of the study aim about parents attitudes towards resource rooms.

In addition, this study will conduct the role of school management in resource room program. To see information about that, I will be used survey to identify and measure this role by school administrators (head-teachers) in all schools that implicated the resources room programmed in Muscat. This survey I will build it later on after going back to the literatures.

## Chapter. 4 Results and discussion

The study highlighted the fact that most of the individuals suffering from learning abilities had difficulties in coping up in acquiring learning skills initially. The resource group or the focus group helped in gaining of a generalization of my study result on my target population. I was able to learn about the various themes of the focus group such as the time table or schedule of using the undersigned resources room, the role of school management and supervisors. It also helped in gaining data up on benefits and limitation of resource room as well as improvements made for working in resource room.

A detailed analysis of classroom management and cooperation between teaching staff was also studied. The progress of the students was evaluated efficiently. A wide variety of strategies can be implemented in order to help individuals in dealing with their learning disabilities. Some people are struggling hard to plan activities which can be dealt with the help of supplement reading materials containing pictures.

The teachers or the experts for such individuals should repeat their lessons often in order to ensure that they have retrieved the information efficiently. Supplement works including symbols or colorful letters should be presented for time table or important lists. The individuals in the resource room were allowed to preview materials every now and then in order to understand their lessons accurately and remember them at the same time. Illustrations and power point presentations can also be helpful in storing the information on their minds. Materials that are being read in front of them should be done so slowly and clearly. The individuals should be constantly motivated for reading by the use of reading materials related to experiences and specific area of interests.

The individuals should read turn by turn to compare the progress of improvement in improving their academic skills. The expert or the teacher can read along with the person in unison. The teacher should be patient enough to enable the student gain expertise and make him comfortable while reading or speaking. Their feelings should be understood well and should encourage them to participate actively and enthusiastically in academic activities and other community discussions. In case of oral language difficulties, individuals with such a disability should be encouraged in terms of describing their words which they find it difficult to pronounce or speak out. Moreover, they should be given enough time to illustrate their conversations and at the same time, conversations with such individuals should be done clearly and patiently.

The individual should be given enough room to express his or her ideas and opinions without interrupting them. A word of caution lies in the advice that people should not pass sarcastic comments on the individuals suffering from learning disabilities. The progress of the individuals should be monitored continuously from time to time. in case they lack a good vocabulary while they are made to give a speech or converse in public, cue cards should be provided to them for specifying ideas or words.

They should be asked to elaborate words or sentences in simplest forms and make them speak about their personal experience regarding any topic or related and familiar areas of interests. They should be taught or modeled with good listening skills by explaining them complex subjects via illustrations which are explained simultaneously. They should be made to understand the concepts or vocabulary that is complex in nature much before time. They should be provided with worksheets relating to the lessons in order to monitor the progress of the students.

Even at home, the family should motivate them to carry out writing and reading practices. They should be encouraged to write about any topic of their area of interest. Those with the problem of memory, such individuals should be asked to repeat a given task every now and then so that they remember the procedure always. The tasks to be performed in the resource room should be organized step by step. They should not be given complex tasks that would need multi tasking. The instructions for a particular task should be repeated from time to time and the rules of the tasks should be written in big and colorful letters so that they remember it quite often. The individuals can also be made to repeat the instructions after it has been narrated by the expert or the teacher.

The information should be provided to them in small proportion. Too many information in a single time period may lead to difficulties in memorizing them and hence, may forget right away. In order to help them memorize their lessons, mnemonic strategies should be implemented. This may include the creation of acronyms. This will help students learn better especially for those whose learning capacity is very slow. Ample amount of time should be given to the individuals to learn and comprehend better in class or resources room. Proper time should be given to such students to complete any class work that is given to them.

Notes as well as photocopies should also be provided to them with respect to the lessons and class lectures at the end of each session. Most importantly, explain them the details of the type of disability they are suffering from and assure them about improving their academic skills despite of the disabilities. This will give them a sense of positivity and confidence in themselves to acquire their much needed academic skills without paying much attention to the drawbacks of the particular disability they are suffering from.

The teacher should effectively provide any sort of assistance that is needed to help them acquire their academic skills. People should always avoid asking such individuals too many questions. At home, they should be made to perform various common tasks of day today life to keep them active both in terms of mind and body. The tasks may include making the bed before and after sleep, washing their teeth after getting out of bed. Furthermore, they should be instructed to have a bath everyday and also comb as well as dress neatly.

They should be provided to do list so that they do their tasks effectively and help them analyze their mistakes and errors on their own. Also, alternative approaches to the same particular task should be provided so that he or she can effectively decide the most efficient method out of the given alternatives. This will help them think and develop their thinking skills. This will also result in effective memorizing of the tasks and be judgmental about the activity or task being performed by him or her.

Then, he or she would be able to comprehend and analyze the pros and cons of each methodology or approach of performing the task. In the study, I was able to address these issues of deciding the correct way of performing the given tasks for achieving generalization in my research. The activities that were supervised by their parents brought about a better understanding between the student and parents. The parents now realized the different strategies and approaches available to help their children cope with their disabilities which were preventing them from acquiring effective academic skills like the general students. Such individuals should also be encourages for pursuing activities related to their own area of self interest.

Various activities need to be planned to help them increase their chances of a successful career. They should be asked to try challenging tasks and activities so that they could themselves analyze the good from the bad. Even if the progress of an individual suffering from a learning disability is low while trying to improve the impacts of his or her disability, we should avoid any sort of criticism and rather, should motivate them to correct their mistakes.

Apart from these, various measures to help such individuals attain emotional awareness and control is also must. Words that give room to anger and frustration should be avoided at home as well as in any educational institution. The use of words like 'I cannot' or 'it is too tough' etc should always be avoided. Assistance should be provided whenever required in a friendly and supportive manner. Such individuals should never be forced to perform any tasks if they do not wish to as it may lead to frustrations in the individual which will ultimately hamper his learning skills and tasks or activities.

Patience is the key to success and the teachers dealing with such individuals should not lose his or her patience in any case. Negative feelings like frustration, sadness, anger, etc should be validated. The social attributes should also be kept in mind while helping them learn their academic lessons. They should be gain the ability of self awareness and be alert regarding their surroundings. Through their acquiring of such skills, they will be able to behave positively and politely with others with whom they may converse in the society.

The resource room will also give them an opportunity to understand and express their feelings. This would also help them analyze and comprehend their behavior as well as the responses they gain from the person involved in the conversation. Through repeated conversations, an individual suffering from a verbal disability can improve his communication skills.

At the end of sessions where they have performed their tasks and the progress has been recorded, feedbacks should be given to them regarding their progress as well as their behavior. This would help them interact more with the people around which would eventually help them in achieving the listening and speaking skills. They should also be provided with the opportunity of engaging themselves in solitary tasks which may involve peer interaction at the same time. They would be able to understand and recognize different situations and conditions that may pose a problem or act as a hindrance in their activity of any kind. This may also help them in developing measures or strategies of dealing with such problematic situations on their own.

Descriptive and non judgmental form of delivery to be ensured in the resource rooms to address inappropriate behaviors and attitudes of a particular individual. Real life examples should be used to explain them any lesson that needs explanations via the use of examples. Artificial examples do not really click for such individuals as they would fail to recall that particular example in day to day life. As a result, the examples are forgotten. They should be encouraged to repeat their tasks often in case they go wrong in their first or second attempts.

Proper counseling classes should be arranged for such individuals at the same time to help them express their personal grievances or difficulties if any of them arises during the academic sessions. Individuals suffering from learning disabilities also suffer from emotional setbacks at times and if despised for their performance, this may lead to depression or failure in the achievement of the goal of their life. Likewise, their career or the ability to gain academic excellence may also reduce. Hence, they need to be motivated and appreciated for all their tasks that they perform even if it leads to failure after the first attempt.

They should always be provided with a flexible mode of learning and should not be forced to engage him or her in any tasks that are not of any interest to him or her. This would bring about a negative feeling or behavior in him or her otherwise. Communication levels should be increased gradually and their academic progress should be highlighted to their peers as well as parents from time to time. Parents should always be supportive and help them achieve their appropriate academic skills. Their expressions and opinions should never be suppressed and encourage them further to attain a state of emotional well being at all times. Their doubts if raised should be cleared as soon as possible at the right moment and probably on the spot.

Comparative analysis is must to analyze the developing stages of the individuals. The concept of self evaluation should also be entertained in order to strengthen their self esteem and by inventing directly in to their lives by parents and friends too. Regular health checkups should also be carried out to ensure that their learning process is not being hampered by any medical condition both mild and severe as this is common among individuals suffering from learning disabilities. They should have frequent talks of casual forms with parents or even the counselor for discussing their problems, issues and to help them improve their personal strategies or measure that they have adopted to improve their academic skills.

## **Chapter. 5 Conclusion:**

Hence, we can conclude that learning disabilities refers to difficulty in learning or gaining a particular knowledge in a particular way due to some unknown factors. . Learning disabilities are non curable but learning skills can be improved with conventional methods? The cognitive or academic skills can be improved in such individuals with the help of technological assistance. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to know how the resource room can support learning disabilities students, especially who has writing and reading difficulties, to achieve those academic skills into the general education setting in First Cycle in Education in Muscat. The process of research involved emerging questions and procedures data typically collected in the participant's sitting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes and the researchers making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

The interview usually lasted up to several hours. It focused on the uses of open-ended questions which allowed the respondents to answer freely. Questions that followed were then entirely based on how the respondent's answer led to the interview. In this study, I used passive participation type of observation in resource room in which I did not interact with the participants for intervening included precipitation or causing an event that normally occurs infrequently in nature. In addition to this, some behaviors and attitudes were difficult to measure or evaluate through interviewing or other ways of methods. Thus, the direct and natural observation gave clearer and more precise details for that behaviors, attitudes and reactions. In this study I adopted a qualitative method and in particular the focus groups. This method has become popular since the past decade by the increasing use of investigation of a variety of social phenomenon.

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