CHALLENGES IN TEACHING GIFTED STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL LEARNING DISABILITIES: USING A STRATEFY MODEL OF 'ASKING, ANALYZING AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS' (AAAMS) TO IMPROVE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was developing a strategy for teachers working in classes for students identified as Gifted and Talented (GT) with Special Learning Disabilities (2Els) situated in an Israeli secondary school. The research describes the challenges teachers meet while teaching Humanities Subjects (HS) to these students and the strategies they need in addressing their dual exceptionalities (2Els). Such students may experience difficulties especially in HS, and achieve significantly lower results than expected. The combination of giftedness with learning disabilities and underachievement creates special challenges for their teachers, for which they need specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs. The main purpose of this study is to examine how specific strategies may contribute both tothe quality of teaching and to a better learning environment. The author developed a model (AAAMS) with an additional manual for teachers, which combines three strategies from the field of teaching gifted students and from the field of special education to help with HS.The qualitative research was conducted as a case study in a high school that the author of this paper both teaches and works as a vice principal in. The model was implemented by two teachers teaching HS in two high school classrooms with 60 2Els students overall. The information was collected through observations, interviews and open questionnaires. The research findings of this study describe the challenges that teachers may face with 2Els and the significant contribution of the implementation of the AAAMS to teachers and students. The research fills this particular gap in the literature, in the Israeli context, and the findings of this study bear policy implications and indicate the need for the tailoring of relevant teacher' CPD' programs, to include strategies, to better address the needs of 2ELs for optimal success in fulfilling their potential and overcoming their difficulties..

Key Words: Gifted students (GT), gifted students with learning disabilities (2Els), special learning disabilities (SpLD), dual exceptionalities, continuance professional development (CPD), humanities subjects (HS), high order thinking skills (HOT), strategy, learning, a model of three strategies (AAAMS).

1. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the challenges that teachers face whilst teaching gifted students who also have learning disabilities (2Els). The study took place in an Israeli high school and offers a continuance professional development (CPD) program, in order to assist teachers to cope with their 2ELs, especially in Humanities Subjects (HS). McCallum et al. (2013) describes 2ELs as a

paradox because of the discrepancies between their strengths and weaknesses, nevertheless, since 2ELs represent just about 1% of their age group in general, it becomes harder to identify them and to create the specific needed strategies to help them. The research topic arose from the authors practice as a vice principal and a literature teacher. From working with separate gifted student's classes, the author noticed that many of these students have extraordinary abilities in High Order Thinking skills (HOT) and extensive knowledge but they have difficulties to express it in writing assignments, even though they are competent in mathematics and sciences. The research confirms that there is an ambiguity and disagreement concerning definitions, characteristics and needs of 2Els which has implications on the lack of adapted CPD programs for theirteachers. Once those were clarified by the researcher the AAA Model of Three Strategies (AAAMS) (Salem, 2014) was created. This model is a combination of three different strategies that are commonly used by teachers, but up to this point were not used in combination.The strategies meet the needs of gifted students with deficiencies in writing assignments in Humanities subjects with large textual content, and simultaneously foster their extra ordinary abilities as gifted students, while providing the necessary tools to their teachers.

Four research questions (RQ) were formulated for the duration of the research: RQ1: What are the critical components of teaching humanities subjects to a class of gifted students with learning disabilities (2ELs)? RQ2: What are the characteristics of 2ELs studying Humanities Subjects? RQ3: What is the contribution of each of the AAA model of three strategies (AAAMS) to teachers and students? RQ4: From the perspective of values and pedagogical aspects, what is the contribution of the intervention as a whole program: a continuance professional development (CPD)program for teachers and implementation of AAAMS in classes?

The objectives of this study are in three aspects; affective, cognitive and organizational.

Cognitive: provide teachers with a continuance professional development (CPD)that increases their knowledge about the characteristics and needs of 2ELs; Affective: raise teacher awareness of the needs of 2ELs, foster a positive attitude towards their students, increase teachers' professional commitment and responsibility; Organizational: enhance teachers' abilities so they can meet their 2Els' needs, while taking into consideration the expected programs of their educational systems.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

There is great ambiguity with regards to 2Els definition and characteristics. Lovett and Sparks (2011) reviewed 46 empirical research studies about 2ELs, only to reveal the lack of clarity in this field, which has an impact on the way teachers detect and treat these student's difficulties. There is no generally accepted definition of this phenomenon and there are nofocused CPD programs for 2Els teacher nor an existing research in this domain (Bourne, 2005; Kay, 2002; Landau, 2001; Nielsen, 2002). The focus is either on gifted students or on students with learning disabilities, lacking in the unique group of 2Els who have dual exceptionalities (Manor-Benjamini, 2005; Winstanley, 2005; Kay, 2002). Teachers find this phenomenon confusing and need definitions and tools to cope with these challenges. The gap between their successes in other fields and their low levels of achievements in Humanities Subjects is surprising, and not

understood (Bourne, 2005).This creates a deep sense of frustration and despair in students, with a decrease in self-esteem and motivation to learn (Plotkin, 2008).

One of the explanations put forward for ignoring the special needs of 2ELs is a lack of resources for research because it is a small group and thus this topic has not been carefully considered (Winstanley, 2005; Montgomery, 2013). This phenomenon is often not treated because schools do not know how to face this type of challenge (McCallum et al., 2013). During the school year teachers rely on a planned schedule in order to meet the criteria of the education system. Teachers are trained to impart knowledge, not to mentor or develop critical thinking skills (Harpaz, 1998). The educational system should make more efforts towards a shift in attitude regarding 2ELs and plan tailored programs for their teachers to better meet their needs (Einat, 2004; Feuerstein, 1997; Kay, 2002).

2.1. Impact of the Israeli Ministry of Education Regulations on Gifted & 2ELS Education

The Israeli education system is responsible for the detection and assessment of gifted students within schools. The Division for Gifted and Outstanding Students in the Israeli Department for Gifted and Excellent Students (2016) has established criteria for the diagnosis of gifted students and provides them with a formal diagnosis at the age of eight. There are several possibilities of academic environment offered to students who are diagnosed as gifted. 1. Separate class for gifted students with an accelerated curriculum, in a regular school setting 2. Inclusion of gifted students in a regular class with various enrichment activities in the afternoon 3. Boarding schools. The students and their parents can choose the framework most suitable for them. City mayors can decide to set up separated classes for gifted students in their schools or to integrate gifted students in regular classes. In Israel, underachieving gifted students are directed to psycho-didactic tests that diagnose them as having learning disabilities. Still, the Israeli government does not provide focused CPD programs for their teachers. Manor-Benjamini (2005) points out that these teachers are also surprised by the phenomenon of 2ELs and are deeply frustrated, as their lack of knowledge and proper training prevent them from knowing how to deal with these students' difficulties, and especially how to help them realize their potential and overcome their deficiencies.

2.2. Definition of Terms

2.2.1Gifted Students

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016) GT students are those with exceptional talent who demonstrate the potential to achieve significantly higher levels of accomplishment compared to their peers. The U.K. Department for Education (2016) defined GT students as having exceptional abilities in subjects such as Mathematics, Sciences, Literature, History, Art, Sports, and Music and who are in the top 1% of these respective groups. Freeman (2010) claims that the most significant characteristic that defines GT students is their exceptionally high intelligence. These students' High Order Thinking (HOT) skills include abstract levels of thinking, exceptional memory, and an inventive and creative approach to solving complicated and sophisticated problems. They often have rich vocabulary and autodidact acquisition of

general knowledge (Kay, 2002; Winner, 2000). Boredomis a prominent characteristic of gifted students during classes which might lead to disruptive behaviors (Landau, 2000; Millman, 2012; Montgomery, 2013; Ziv, 2000).

2.2.2. Definitions &Characteristics of Students with special learning disabilities (SpLD)

SpLD is a general term covering different learning disorders (DSM-V, 2013). Learning disabilities represent a group of intrinsic neurological-development disorders with varying characteristics (Einat, 2004; Heiman, 2011) such as difficulties in developing capabilities in speech, listening, writing, understanding and difficulties in Mathematics. These problems manifest especially in Spelling and Mathematics, in acquiring new languages, and in mental processes like symbolization, memory and perception (Dahan & Meltzer, 2008; Einat, 2004; Manor-Benjamini, 2005). Margalit (2000) defines students as having learning disabilities when there is a gap between their intelligence and their levels of achievement, and also between the students' age and their abilities compared to the level of the same age peers.2ELs who have deficiencies in writing skills waste too much energy thinking about a simple question. This can cause frustration and emotional problems (Kirby et al., 2009). The students find it challenging to express their knowledge in writing, in spite of their high verbal ability and thus achieve low grades (Mamen, 2007). Students' difficulties are usually demonstrated in three domains: cognitive, affective and behavioral (Heiman, 2011).

2.2.3. Definitions and Characteristics of GT Students with SpLD (2ELs)

Definitions of 2ELs must describe the conflict of their dual exceptionalities that combines giftedness with learning disabilities (Bourne, 2005). According to Millman (2012) it is difficult for teachers to detect 2ELs because they are divided into 3 subgroups with ambiguous characteristics:1.GT students that also have SpLD (2ELs), but since they are underachievers they are not treated as GT, but solely as students with SpLD;2. Students that are identified only as having SpLD. This happens because their high order thinking skills (HOT) are shaded and not identified, they often get support just for their deficiencies, but not for their GT qualities; 3. Students with HOT skills that compensate for their deficiencies, whilst the deficiencies block their HOT skills. The result is average achievements (Brody & Mills, 1997). The research focuses solely on the first group of 2Els students. They are characterized as underachievers, and many of them have difficulties especially in the humanities subjects where a lot of writing is demanded (Ries et al., 2000). Plotnik (2008) reports that such students exhibit low self-esteem, lack of motivation, and low self-confidence and this affects their social lives during their schooling years. They tend to avoid tasks such as homework or writing answers, deepening the learning difficulties, increasing their behavioral problems, which in turn blocks their development of skills (Winstanley, 2005). 2Els express difficulty in asking for support due to their low self-esteem and previous experiences of failure. Heiman (2011) suggests providing these students with positive learning experiences while simultaneously mentoring them in order to improve their social skills.

2.3.Teachers' Learning Processes - What Makes a Difference to Teachers' CPD

When teachers lack appropriate knowledge and training, it leads them to accuse the students of laziness, which contributes to the students' sense of frustration and failure (Winstanley, 2005). Therefore, teachers' professional learning must include knowledge, teaching practice and emotional processes (Day and Gu, 2010). The CPD in this research was based on two domains:

1.Rethinking teachers' attitude towards 2Els – most teachers lack knowledge about the needs and characteristics of 2Els, and use strategies that are adapted to regular classes. As the tools do not fit the needs of such students, teachers become frustrated, which may damage their self-efficacy. Teachers tend to have ambivalent attitudes towards gifted students, influencing their practice, which can eventually determine the development of the gifted.

v2.Equip teachers with strategies – it is recommended to invest in teachers' CPD that include re-thinking of their attitudes towards 2ELs (Perković Krijan and Borić, 2015). Most existing CPD programs are dedicated to teach content rather than on using strategies, therefore teachers sometimes are not equipped with the necessary strategies (Kaniel, 2006).

Teacherstend to enter classrooms of GT students with a set of stigmas assuming they have excellent abilities and extensive knowledge but at the same time are arrogant, critical, know better than the teachers and easily get bored. Often teachers feel intimidated to teach such students (Freeman, 2010). The teachers' stigmas are intensified when the students have dual exceptionalities (2Els).Teachers find it difficult to believe that GT students can have learning disabilities (Montgomery, 2013). Teachers' attitudes have an impact on their motivation and commitment towards their 2EIs(Talmor, 2007).Changing teachers' attitudes to gifted students can be achieved through providing teachers with training in their schools (Gross, 2016).

It is crucial to prepare CPD programs that focus on teachers' needs especially with special populations as 2Els teachers. Experiences of successes in employment of new strategies lead to greater openness towards new experiences in teaching (Mutton, 2011). Teachers' self-efficacy is empowered when they learn how to improve their professionalism (Yosifon, 2004) through acquiring relevant knowledge and a set of strategies that prepare them to teach their students. Then they enter classrooms and their experiences of successes empowers them (Day and Gu, 2010). It has a positive impact on teachers' teaching skills and attitudes. It is important to teach teachers when and how to use the strategies in their lessons. Then, it is crucial to tutor them during the implementation of the strategies in their classes (Manor-Benjamini, 2005).It is important to teach HOT skills within the curriculum, in order to enable the students to develop tools for coping with the great amount of information of our era and critical thinking should make learning relevant to the students (Weiss, 2010; Weiss & Kreindler, 2011).
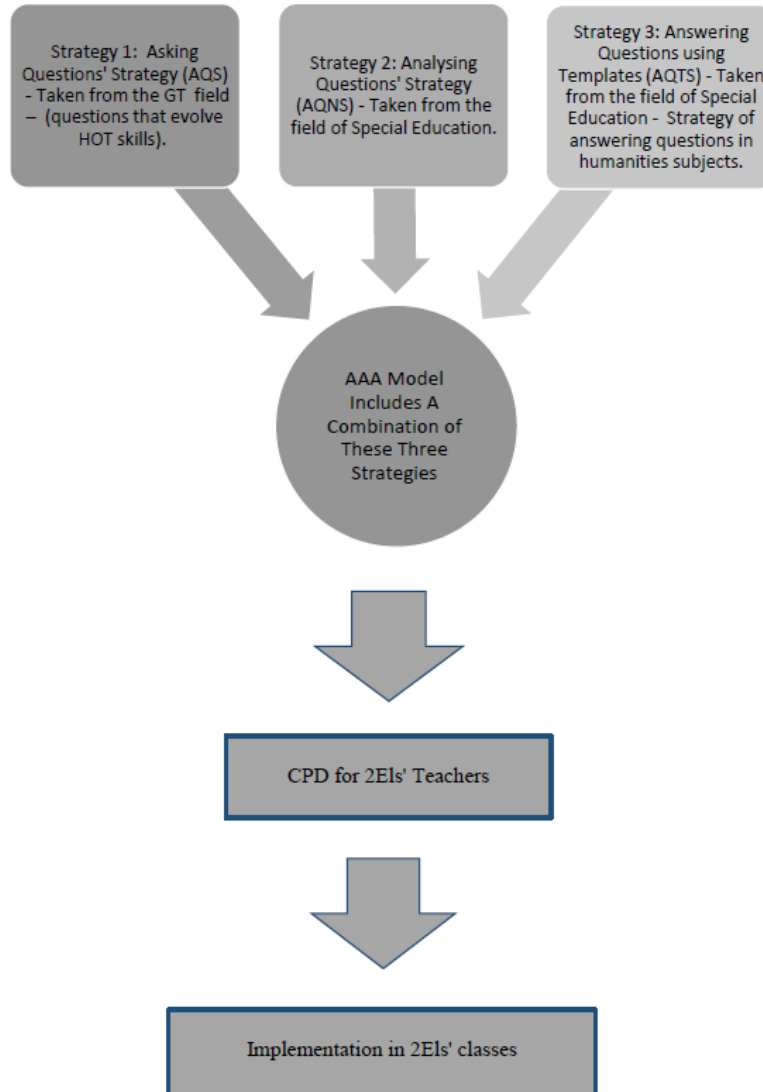
Figure 1: AAAMS Model of Three Strategies (Salem, 2014)

3.4. AAA Model of Three Strategies for 2Els (AAAMSSalem, 2014)

The AAAMS model (Figure 1) is based on 3 different strategies. The first strategy is Asking Questions whilst the other two strategies are from the area of learning disabilities in Humanities Subjects. The purpose of applying the Asking Questions' strategy, is to produce an active learning process, which will lead the students to direct their thinking and become autodidacts (Salomon, 2000) while the role of teachers is to be mentors and to intermediate the knowledge (Feurstein, 1997).There is a direct connection between asking questions and An important

criterion in planning CPD for GT students' teachers is to choose strategies that develop and nurture the students' HOT skills. GT students may think differently and sound 'weird' and 'crazy' to their teachers. Teachers need to be taught how to allow GT students the freedom to ask questions and express unconventional ideas thus assisting them to be original yet skeptical (Shaked, 2007). Maman (2007) argues that GT students invest much time and effort in the first stage of understanding and defining a problem or a question. Their ability to see problems from different perspective can lead them to re-think this step, whereas other students usually accept the questions as given and immediately move to the next stage of answering the question. That is the reason why the strategy ofasking questions can meet these needs of GT students. This strategy uses different types of questions posed by teachers to their students, such as clarifying, directing, or asking critical questions which challenge, stimulates and develops students learning developing thinking. AQS develops the students' metacognitive abilities (awareness of thinking processes), memory, acquisition of knowledge, skepticism and curiosity. It helps the students classify, choose between various options, add knowledge and examine situations(Shaked, 2007).The second and the third strategies in the AAA model are chosen from the area of learning disabilities in Humanities Subjects.Students who have SpLD as well as 2ELs find it difficult to develop strategies automatically. Therefore, they need teachers' assistance to acquire them. 2ELs are challenged by deficiencies in expressing their knowledge and abilities especially in writing skills (Bourne, 2008). The strategies chosen in this research to meets 2Els challenges are Analyzing Questions (ANQS) and Answering Questions in a Template (AQTS). Combining these two strategies contributes towards improvements in the performance and achievements of students with learning difficulties and can meet the dual needs of students with SpLD (Heiman, 2011). All strategies AQS, ANQS and AQTS were selected because they are easy to learn and integrate in the curriculum.

The purpose of ANQS is learning to break up the question into its various parts in order to help students understand the question and focusing students on the subject and the instructions, thus preparing them to take the next step and answer the question properly (Kaniel, 2006). This strategy must be taught methodically with constant practice if the students are to be able to assimilate the strategy and apply it. The third strategy, AQTS, is used to learn how to write answers in the appropriate patterns. This is useful as the Israeli Department of Education (2016) has clear demands of templates in writing assignment in each discipline. AQTS helps students who have difficulties in finding words and sentences to express their knowledge in writing assignments. It enables them to formulate the information, relate to the subject of the question and organize the material and knowledge they possess. The strategy of writing in a template helps the students understand clearly and methodically what they need to do step-by-step, and focus their energy on the various stages of writing answers instead of struggling with the initial assignment (Heiman, 2011).

3. METHODOLOGY

As the literature indicated, there is lack of CPD programs for teaching 2Els, therefore, for the duration of the research a special model was created by the author, called the "AAAMS". An elaborate manual was created, alongside a2-month seminar for the participating teachers. The

goal was to explore the needs of teachers and students in this field, and eventually plan and implement an intervention based on these needs.For the duration of this research the qualitative approach was chosen, which is based on the naturalistic constructivist paradigm since it stresses the importance of the subjective experiences of individuals in the creation of their social life. Lee (2009) points that qualitative research is best suited for processes that develop over time and is therefore most suitable for education or social science research. The research placed the individual's needs in the center supporting the claim by OECD (2014) that teachers should be provided with specific information and strategies for their students' needs, thus they become more self-confident, and improve their self-efficacy. No hypotheses are tested but the research questions are formed during the process of the study (Shenton and Dixon, 2004).

The study suggests five objectives: 1. Develop teachers' awareness about GT students with SpLD and increase their professional commitment towards them. 2. Meet the cognitive aspects by expanding the teachers' knowledge about the characteristics and needs of these students while presentingalternative teaching methods and strategies, 3. Improve the ability of teachers to plan and organize their time and the process of teaching in class, 4. Write a manual for teachers of 2Els, 5. Assess the contribution of the intervention, in order to turn it to a recommended CPD program for teachers in this area.

3.1. Research Approach

The study was designed as a case study, and was guided by the humanistic approach that places equality in educational system in the top of its principles as declared in the World Education Forum (UNESCO, 2015). All participants signed consent forms indicating their agreement to the research procedures (AERA, 2002; BERA, 2011). Their anonymity was preserved throughout the whole process. Full transparency of the researchers' actions was available, and there was constant communication with the participants. The author chose participants with the best potential to have insights on the studied issue in order to maximize what can be learned. In order to prevent withdrawal, theauthor had close touch with the participants, maintaining a relationship based on trust and cooperation (Elliott et al., 2008). The research was conducted as a single case rather than multiple cases, so that even if one participant was to leave, a viable case unit would still remain (Yin, 2008). The model of the case study was based on framework for a case study, consisting 4 dimensions:

•Conceptual nature of the study - the teachers participating must teach multi-words subjects (History, Literature, Bible) in separated classes for 2Els with at least 3-5 years of experience in teaching and at least 2 years teaching specifically GT classes.

•Sample size: two teachers teaching in two different classes, 30 students per class.

•The location is a high school in Israel with 2000 students in grades 7-12. The school runs a project of separate classes for 2ELs. In each grade, there is one such class with 30 students. The classes that participated in this study were in Grades 7 and 8.

•The time frame was from September 2011 to February 2013.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was designed as a case study in order to study the impact of an intervention (MucDuffie & Scruggs, 2008). Data was collected from multiple methods as interviews, observations and questionnaires and a proper chain of evidence was maintained through the six stages of the research to ensure triangulation in order to increase reliability, validity and maintain a generalizable study (Shkedi, 2003). In order to support external validity, a wide variety of literature was evaluated, discussing a range of professional and academic theories, models, and debates regarding the research's subject that supports the findings (Shkedi, 2003). The findings that emerged from all the research methods, strengthened the internal validity (Gavton, 2001) of this study. There was open access to the manuals for further evaluation. Shalski and Alpert (2007) point out that reliability requires data collection over a long period of time; therefore, the study lasted a year and a half, and the findings were rechecked in different periods of time.

Table 1. Six stages of the research, timetable and qualitative methods used in each stage

Phase	Timetable	Stage of Research	Method
1	March 2009-June 2011	Gathering information on the subject – reading literature and conducting interviews with teacher of 2Els classes.	3 Semi structured interviews
2	July 2011	Write the AAAMS (Salem, 2014) and the teacher manual based on three sources; 1. Interview findings, 2. relevant professional literature 3. professional experience as a teacher of teachers.	
3	August-September 2011	Conducting a 2-month intensive teachers' CPD seminar using the above-mentioned manual; planning a research method based on interviews, observations and questionnaires.	
4	Three points of time during the school year: October 2011 March 2012 May-June 2012	Implementation of the AAAMS in the GT classes. Data was gathered in multiple methods	8 semi structured interviews 4 open observations 12 semi structured observations 60 open questionnaires.
5	February 2013	Additional round of interviews six months after the end of implementation in classes.	2 semi structured interviews
6		Analysis of all the gathered data.	

During the observations the researcher did not participate as an active teacher (Sabar Ben–Yehoshua & Hashahar–Francis, 2000) in order to avoid biases. An outside observer was hired to increase the validity and reliability of this study, exposing the author to other points of view (Lee, 2009) and was provided with a manual for the observations.It prevented participants from feeling judged or criticized by a person of authority. A semi structured interview method was used in the research. The questions in the interviews were different at each stage of the research in order to reflected the goals of the relevant stage, nevertheless, in each stage all participants were asked the same questions.An open questioner was employed.The information was cross checked with the other methods used.Four final categories were defined: 1. Characteristics, challenges and needs of teachers who teach 2Els, 2. Characteristics and needs of 2Els, 3. Contribution of each of the three strategies of AAAMS (Asking Questions, Analyzing Questions and Answering Questions in a Template) to the development of teachers and students, 4. Contribution of the intervention as a whole program both to teachers and students. Each strategy included enabling and inhibiting factors in the cognitive, affective and organizational domains.

4.3 Enhancing the Quality of Data

Four main components to trustworthiness were established according to Lincoln and Guba (1985):1. Credibility – using a variety of data collection methods, 2. Transferability – detailed description of the findings (Shenton and Dixon, 2004), 3. Confirmability – basing findings on participants' responses, not on a potential bias or personal motivations, 4. Dependability – having enough information to repeat the research with similar results.

5. FINDINGS

The research findings were divided into categories and each category was analyzed and accompanied by quotes from the interviews with teachers, observations in classes and open questionnaires of students. Data from the preliminary interviews made it clear to the researcher that among teachers there is a great lack of knowledge about 2ELs and of didactic tools suitable for teaching such classes in Humanities Subjects. In each category, there is evidence of enabling criteria and of inhibiting criteria that contribute to or detract from how teachers learn and then cope with teaching Humanities Subjects(HS) to 2ELs. Also, how these criteria contribute to or block the development of cognitive and affective skills of these students. The findings that arose from the first and second research questions were the basis for the researcher in developing the manual for CPD teachers' seminar, including the AAAMS (Salem, 2014). These findings helped track the 2Els teachers' needs and 2Els characteristics in order to base the intervention on this information and to respond to 2Els teachers' needs.It is an important principle to plan CPD for teachers after mapping their needs and then meeting these needs in their training programs. The teachers participating in the research were trained by the researcher and then they implemented the AAAMS in their classes

5.1 RQ1: What are the critical components of teaching in a class of 2ELs especially in Humanities Subjects?

The goal in this analysis was to trace the features that could be identified before, during and at the end of the intervention. The conclusions were based solely on the teacher testimonies, in order to detect their needs. Challenges were described both at the cognitive and affective levels. The necessity to constantly challenge the students academically whilst setting up boundaries both at the level of class discussion and the interpersonal level was raised by both teachers: "A teacher should be able to manage discussions at a very high level, more than in other classes."; "The teacher should be capable of giving legitimacy to different perspectives and opinions ". The teachers' vision about their role was to build trust with the students, develop empathy and the ability to understand them. In the interviews conducted at the end of the seminar the teachers said that their vision is to go on teaching with the strategies they had learned during the intervention because it contributed to them and to their students. Some of the concerns the author attempted to tackle were stigmas the participating teachers expressed. In the interviews conducted they expressed their confusion regarding the case of GT students having learning disabilities. Some of this confusion was originating from the belief that due to their extensive knowledge, and verbal fluency, their writing abilities should be developed as well. Furthermore, the concern of emotional destress some of these students may experience was communicated: "…I did not expect that they would have severe emotional problems. I thought they would be gifted and curious…";"They are carrying a burden which I do not understand… it distances me emotionally". The main conclusion from the interviews was that teachers should be educated about the needs and challenges in working with 2Els GT students, addressing the gap between their high level of abilities and low achievements. According to the teachers the CPD should be adjusted to the requirements of the educational system, this way, the teachers can feel more confident and improve their self-efficacy.

5.2RQ2: What are the characteristics of 2ELs in Humanities Subjects?

In this category were classified statements indicating the components of the students' strengths (enabling factors) and of the students' weaknesses (inhibiting factors). These two categories were tested in their cognitive and affective aspects.Information was taken from teachers' interviews before, during and after the intervention, and also from the open questionnaires and observations in their classes. The importance of this category is to learn about the 2Els characteristics both from teachers' and students' viewpoints and to use this information in teachers' learning CPD programs.

2Els points of strength are high order thinking skills, high capabilities in oral expression and extensive general knowledge. When teachers have the knowledge about what are HOT skills and how to nurture them it improves their teaching skills and they can feel more confident as teachers in these classes. According to one of the participating teachers:" I have two regular classes and one class of gifted students. As far as marks are concerned, the average marks of the regular classes are higher than that of the class with gifted students… but the gifted students have the capability for high order thinking skills and high oral expression skills… It seems to me that there is no issue that they don't know about..."; "The students have great curiosity and wide horizons, with a high level of intelligence and impressive oral abilities".

Nevertheless, GT students demonstrate boredom when they feel they know it all or the subject does not interest them, leading to interruptive behaviorswhich threatens the teachers.Low level of performance and outcomes especially in Humanity Subjects (HS) can cause behavioraland emotional problems "There is a huge gap between their intellectual and emotional levels. On the one hand, they are grown-up students in their ability to express themselves and childish in their emotional and social behavior…". Some of these students have experiences social rejection, harming their self-image, forcing them to focus on their academic achievements. Once, these are affected as well, it can cause a personal crisis. Their difficulties are both in understanding the question and in writing answers (appropriate to the lesson's topic and level). They often struggle in expressing their knowledge in writing, especially in HS which involves a lot of writing. Therefore, their achievements in writing assignments or exams can besignificantly lower than in oral exams. These students are sure the question is complex and deeper than it really is, influencing their understanding of the task. Another point of weakness is their argumentativeness on any subject. This can lead to extensive arguments that delay the course of the class. They can express cynical behavior and criticism towards other students and teachers alongside lack of patience and tolerance. Some of these are used as a defense mechanism. Lack of distinction between the important and less important is very typical to all students with learning disabilities. Sometimes, these students may express a very great obsession with a concept/theme/comment or even a word mentioned during the lesson and will not let go until they express their thoughts on the matter. Finally, some GT students do not get diagnosed as having SpLD, as they are able to mask their difficulties in primary school, resulting in inadequate attention to their needs. Findings showed that teachers found it easier to address these students because they learned about their disruptive behaviors and they were prepared and less intimidated. It assisted teachers in conducting in their lessons a better atmosphere and it improved their confidence.

5.3RQ3:What is the contribution of the AAAMS model of the three strategies for teachers and students? (AAAMS model includes: the strategy of Asking Questions, the strategy of Analyzing Questions, the strategy of Answering Questions in a Template).

AQS meets the 2Els needs to develop Hot skills and their curiosity and can minimize the boredom and disruptive behaviors. Employing this strategy in class enabled the teachers to create interest, pleasure and curiosity among the students. The evidence that emerged from the post-intervention interviews with the participants reveals the contribution made by the strategy of AQS also in the long term as they continued to use it. This strategy provides a response to gifted students' characteristics and needs, by enabling the development of critical thinking, investigation, using their previous knowledge and being skeptical. This strategy was a way to improve students' motivation to learn and it improved the learning environment. There is a connection between an enjoyable and challenging learning atmosphere and the growth of teachers' and students' motivation to learn. The students described the contribution of this strategy as enhancing their critical thinking, being skeptical and critical in reading, writing and in the whole learning process, demonstrating pleasure and interest when using this strategy. From the cognitive aspect the students feel that this strategy adds a layer to the development of their perspectives and enables them to expand their points of view. In addition, the students reported that this strategy enables them to link prior knowledge to new knowledge. They also found that

AQS provides opportunities to investigate the issue and to learn about it in alternative ways. According to teachers there is nothing to indicate inhibiting factors in this strategy, nevertheless, there are some students who opposed to using this strategy and explained it as a waste of time and was causing delays to the lesson and getting off the subject. For some students this was a disruptive factor which results in loss of concentration.

ANQS was well accepted by teachers and 2Els because it was interesting and effective. Students wrote in questionnaires that using ANQS as part of lessons is an enabling factor because it improves their ability to understand the questions more precisely without missing out information and to focus on the main and important points. There are some students who indicated that there is an inhibiting factor in this strategy because the use of this strategy takes time in class and it is not useful for them. Such difficulties in acquiring new strategies are very common among students with learning disabilities because it intimidates them and they are afraid to fail again. The teachers participating in the intervention were ready to learn this new strategy because it met their 2Els difficulties in separating the main issues from the less important and it assisted them to focus on all the parts of the questions. The teachers believed that learning ANQS enabled them to develop learning and writing skills in students with difficulties, contributing to their motivation and behavior in class.

2ELs found AQTS as an enabling factor because it is a tool to improve their writing skills. The strategy helped the students focus on the important and relevant issues in order to formulate an answer or text. In addition, students expressed the pleasure they had using this strategy. Nonetheless, some students argued that AQTS is an inhibiting factor because they felt like robots and it prevents them from being creative. Teachers saw the integration of AQTS as an enabling tool for producing cognitive changes in the students' attitudes to the questions and how to answer them. Teachers said that by learning and teaching AQTS they experienced a change in their learning, motivation and enthusiasm, and obtained the same change in their students' learning, alongside an improvement in their outcomes. The teachers emphasized that AQTS is simple and easy to implement and also easy to transfer to other subjects. According to the teachers they used this method both in regular and 2ELs separated class.The teachers did not find any inhabiting factors in this strategy.

5.4 .RQ4: From the perspective of values and pedagogical aspects, what is the contribution of the intervention as a whole program: CPD program for teachers and implementation of AAAMS in 2ELsclasses?

The intervention contributed to the teachers' values by improving their self-efficacy as a result of their newly acquired knowledge about the students. They have a vision and a personal belief about their role and desired behavior. They have more tools to provide their students with interesting and enabling environment, to develop thinking and learning skills. Learning in an interesting and beneficial way results in improvement in students' performance in terms of enthusiasm, joy and in a better learning climate.

With regards to the pedagogical contribution, the findings showed that the teachers learned how to develop critical and creative thinking skills as parts of HOT skills. Also, teachers said that the

implementation of the improvement amongst all student's achievements. Teachers felt they changed their attitudes, enabling them to lead the students through taking responsibility, lead with more patience, understanding and openness, to increase their motivation to learn and provide the tools for learning. In post-interviewsthe teachers reported the whole intervention was beneficial in the long-term. They employed the new tools in the planning of their curriculum and teaching methods in all their classes after the end of the intervention.

The contribution of the intervention to the teachers was from 'learning from success' as leverage for affective and cognitive improvement. The students improved their outcomes due to the use of the AAAMS and this motivated them to continue using it in the future. The teachers transferred the new knowledge they acquired, from 2Els classes to regular classes. Teachers were empowered and felt experts in teaching new strategies. This transformation in their self-efficacy led them to initiate a change in alarger circle in their school.Both teachers and 2Els said they felt confident in employing the AAAMS and they were proud to pass on their new knowledge to other teachers and students in their school, creating a bank of knowledge that all teachers can employ (la Velle, 2015). According to the teachers, the initiative to use transfer of knowledge came from the students that passed on the strategies to teachers who had not attended the training seminar, because they experienced success and it changed their views of learning to more positive's ones.

6. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The data in this research was analyzed through the inducive approach and evaluates the contribution of this research to 2ELs teachers' learning processes in an Israeli high school in two aspects: 1. Providing relevant knowledge to 2ELs teachers about their students' characteristics and needs; 2. Implementation of the model of three strategies AAAMS (Salem, 2014) that was adapted to 2ELs' needs especially in Humanities Disciplines. Findings showed that the intervention positively contributed to 2ELs teachers. Teachers changed their attitudes and stigmas towards 2Els, and acquired tools that assisted them to enter their classes with more confidence, eventually enhancing their self-efficacy (Day and Gu, 2010). Teachers felt that they succeeded in meeting 2ELs needs and they opened their minds to new learning strategies as they employed them in their classes (Levy, 2008). The teachers felt that they helped their students in the acquisition of tools that develop their HOT skills with tools that cope with their difficulties in writing skills. The by-products are improvement in 2ELs self-esteem, motivation and outcomes which results in the teachers' motivation to mobilize the new knowledge they gathered in this intervention to other areas in their school (la Velle, 2015). This research met the objectives set for itself in both its values and pedagogical aspects in the cognitive, affective and organizational aspects. Findings indicated the teachers' challenges while coping with classes of 2Els in an Israeli high school are due to the lack of CPD that prepare these teachers according to these students' needs. This deficiency creates conflicts between teachers and students, thus impairing the ability of teachers to fulfil their roles. The intervention had a positive contribution since it provided solutions customized both to teachers' and to 2ELs' needs in the field of teaching Humanities Subjects. The provision of the AAAMS model contributed to the improvement of teachers' abilities to organize their lessons in a systematic way, incorporating into the curriculum

new strategies. Proper planning of teaching allows the creation of an optimal learning environment (Montgomery, 2013; Mutton et al., 2011).

The first and second objectives: The combination of knowledge and strategies in the CPD program improved teachers' teaching skills, minimized their opposition to employ new methods, and changed their stigmas and attitudes towards 2Els. The teachers reported a sense of empowerment of their self-efficacy when they experienced successes during the intervention and their students enthusiastically cooperated and showed great interest. The CPD made a difference to teachers' learning because the researcher based the CPD program on teachers' needs with a consideration of characteristics and specific needs of their 2ELs. Teachers were open and anxious to learn new strategies because they needed new tools to cope with 2Els. During the intervention the teachers' enthusiasm was enhanced when they realized that the strategies were effective and their students improved their behavior and their outcomes. The teachers felt that they helped their students in the acquisition of tools that develop their HOT skills alongside tools to cope with their learning disabilities in writing skills.

The third objective: Teachers combined the current curriculum with the strategies learned in the intervention and diversified their teaching methods in the classrooms, therefore improving their ability to plan and organizethe time and the process of teaching in class. This enabled the infusion of the strategies, andthe creation of interesting and challenging lessons.

The fourth objective: The researcher trained the teachers in order to give them tools to cope with the needs of 2ELs students. The researcher accompanied the teachers during the employment of the strategies in 2Els classes. The findings showed that this was an effective process of learning for teachers and student.

The fifth objective:2ELs teachers underwent a learning process of changing their attitudes towards their students, from antagonism and distance, to a position of caring and understanding of the challenges faced by these students. Teachers felt that they can contribute to their classroom atmosphere, which enabled learning and developing HOT skills, while at the same time providing solutions to the students' difficulties. The students also improved their academic outcomes as they were given a proper attitude that nurtured their strengths and addressed their points of difficulties enhancing their self-image. This research conclusion can be mobilized to the Israeli Educational Department as a recommendation for preparing CPD programs for 2Els teachers.

7.SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the challenges teachers face when teaching gifted students who also have learning disabilities in writing skills (2Els). The innovative aspect of this paper was a CPD for 2Els teachers that was created for this research including relevant knowledge about 2Els characteristics and a set of strategies that could fit these teachers' needs (AAAMS, a model of three strategies, Salem, 2014). The CPD was tailored to the unique needs of teachers who teach Humanity Subjects such as History, Literature, Bible to 2Els.Thesecondary research confirmed that there is a lack of focused CPD for 2Els teachers in Israel (Manor-Binjamini, 2005) and this

has implications on teachers' self-efficacy. Teachers should be provided with adapted CPD to their needs (Day and Gu, 2010).It is important to create specific and classroom-based CPD programs and thus increasing teachers' acquisition of knowledge and improving their teaching skills (Walter and Briggs, 2012).The importance and contribution of this research is in identifying and mapping what is needed in 2ELs teachers' learning. The research investigated theenabling and inhibiting motives in Israeli 2Els teachers' learning processes concerning cognitive, affective, and organizational aspects. The results show that before the intervention, teachers felt intimidated by 2ELs students, hence negatively labelling them (David, 2011)which created antagonism and fear of teaching (Perković Krijan and Borić, 2015).As a result of the intervention the teachers underwent learning processes of changing their attitudes from antagonism and distance, to a position of caring and understanding of the challenges faced by these students.

The intervention contributed positively to the learning processes of both teachers and students. Teachers perceived learning as an empowering process and consequently, they enter classrooms with more confidence. Their experiences of successes empower them and improve their professionalism (Yosifon, 2004).The AAAMS (Salem, 2014) model of three strategies, was well accepted by teachers and students since these strategies were a new way to learn, meeting 2Els points of strength and weakness. Teachers varied their teaching methods and improved their skills. They experienced success when the students improved their learning skills, outcomes, and their self-image. Furthermore, they had greater motivation and satisfaction which lead them to greater openness towards new experiences in teaching.

In summary, the intervention in this research proved that the 2Els teachers' CPD including the AAAMS model of three strategies (Salem, 2014) was a new way to learn and was well accepted by both teachers and students. The teachers that participated in this research became a focal point of knowledge in the field of teaching 2ELs in their school and they mobilized new knowledge from their professional development and translating it for other teachers in their school. The students that participated in the intervention acquired new learning methods and experienced success in improving their learning skills and as a result of this process, they were asking other teachers to adopt these methods. In this way, they also contributed to the change in their learning environment. The CPD contributed to teachers' learning skills and self-efficacy and drove teachers to re-think their attitudes and methods in meeting their challenges while teaching 2Els. For these reasons, it can be assumed that the methods that were investigated in this research can be generalized to larger populations of 2Els teachers, and can be used to prepare CPD for 2Els teachers. The educational systems should develop CPD for 2Els teachers in high schools as well as in elementary schools that is focused on providing teachers with knowledge and methods. Teachers should learn how to employ strategies in order to help their students develop their learning skills. Future research should continue to study 2ELs teachers' learning processes in various directions such as inquiry of the challenges of 2Els teachers in elementary school or inquiry of the learning processes of teachers who teach mathematics and sciences to 2Els.

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