Teachers’ Perceptions of the Interactive Boards for Teaching and Learning: The Case of Arab Teachers in Israel

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ABSTRACT

The interactive board is an integral part of the modern classrooms and a tool that teachers utilize for its didactic and pedagogic potentialities. The main goal of this research was to examine teachers’ perceptions of the educational aspects (pedagogic, didactic, technical-pedagogic and technical-didactic) of the interactive board for teaching and learning in the Arab sector in Israel, where interactive boards have been introduced into the classrooms for almost two years. Three hundred ninety five teachers from three school types (primary, middle and secondary) from different districts participated in the research. A questionnaire was built to examine teachers’ perceptions in the four educational aspects. The research findings show that teachers from the three school types had positive perceptions of the interactive boards for teaching and learning. Further, significant differences were found in teachers’ perceptions of the interactive boards that could be attributed to school's type and experience of teachers in using the interactive board in the classroom. Moreover, no significant differences were found in teachers’ perceptions that could be attributed to participating in a preparatory workshop or to gender.

Keywords: Interactive Boards, New Media, Teachers’ Perceptions, Teaching and Learning, Technology

INTRODUCTION

According to the ‘Promethean’ technological education company, an interactive whiteboard is a large interactive display that combines a whiteboard, a computer and front projection. As learning tools they engage students with vivid images, video and audio. Further, they enable anything that can be done on a computer screen to be projected onto an interactive whiteboard. According to Smart Technologies’ site, the first interactive board was introduced by Smart Technologies in 1991. Since then, they are...
becoming an integral part of the educational scene in schools in western countries and are not considered just an additional aid to teaching (Kent, 2004a, 2004b). This also has been the case for the last couple of years in Arab schools in Israel, so an evaluation is needed for teaching with the interactive boards. One aspect of this teaching is the teachers' perception of the interactive boards as tools for teaching and learning. This research will attempt, using quantitative methods, to examine such perceptions regarding didactic and pedagogic issues. It will examine whether there are significant differences in teachers’ perceptions that could be attributed to (1) school type, (2) participation in a preparatory workshops, (3) teachers’ use of the interactive board for teaching, and (4) gender.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Researchers point that interactive boards help change, improve or add to the teaching methods of teachers who use them in the classroom (Cuthell, 2002; Latham, 2002; Levy, 2002 & Jones & Vincent, 2010). Cuthell (2002), for example, administered a questionnaire in internet sites about teachers’ opinions regarding the use of interactive boards in learning in elementary and middle schools. The findings show that when the interactive boards are installed in the classrooms and when the teachers have the required skills for using those interactive boards, a technological environment will be created which will support teachers and enable the transformation of their teaching methods to ones that are appropriated for the diverse population of their students.

Interactive boards add more resources and strategies to the teaching methods of teachers, enabling them to use more efficiently learning resources (Cuthell, 2002; Glover & Miller, 2001; Campbell & Kent, 1998; Levy, 2002). At the same time, they help teachers provide the students with more challenging learning opportunities (Latham, 2002). Levy (2002), for example, found that teachers looked at the interactive boards as aiding in presenting information and learning resources (as the easiness with which it is possible to draw on a greater number and wider variety of information and learning resources), in facilitating classroom interaction and activity (as freeing up time for interaction and task-related activity), and in their educational impact (as helping teachers to give more effective explanations).

Interactive boards not only contribute to the teacher but to the student too, supporting his learning - enabling understanding, concentrating, presenting information, remembering, thinking processes, and causing motivation (Kuzminsky, 2008; Levy, 2002; Schmid, 2008; Wall, Higgins, & Smith, 2005); stimulating learning - through increasing motivation, fun, selfconfidence, attention, and interest (Beeland, 2002; Wall, Higgins, & Smith, 2005); providing preferred learning approaches - through supporting different learning styles: visual, audio, verbal-social, and kinesthetic (Schmid, 2008; Wall, Higgins, & Smith, 2005); making students involved more interactively in learning and more focused on the learning material (Latham, 2002; Levy, 2002); enabling connectedness in an easy way - with the software, the hardware, and the multimedia (Wall, Higgins, & Smith, 2005); enabling wide range of learning resources and materials (Cuthell, 2002; Schmid, 2008) and increasing the student’s achievement (Kuzminsky, 2008; Lewin et al., 2008).

The previous researches described the advantages of using interactive boards in the classroom, while other researchers reported that interactive boards had no significant impact on the educational scene in schools. For example, Missika and Rotem (2008) reviewed some educational studies in the world which reported that no significant change in the class discussions occurred, nor in the basic pedagogy of teaching, but a consistent change did happen in the approach and teaching method of teachers who used the interactive boards. Further, installing an interactive board in the classrooms and supplying laptops to all teachers promote the implementation of computerized learning environments. It can be concluded from the
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