

أثر العلاج بالفن التشكيلي على مهارة التعبير الشفوي لدى طلبة صعوبات اللغة الشفهية وعسر القراءة في سلطنة عمان

The Effect of Visual Art Therapy on Oral Expression Skills among Students with Oral Language Disorders and Dyslexia in the Sultanate of Oman

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المخلص:

بحثت الدراسة في موضوع العلاج بالفن التشكيلي وأثره على مهارة التعبير الشفوي لدى طلبة صعوبات التعلم ذوي صعوبات اللغة الشفهية وعسر القراءة بالحلقة الثانية (للصفين الخامس والسادس) بمحافظة جنوب الباطنة في سلطنة عمان. وقد استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الكمي للإجابة على أسئلة الدراسة. وذلك بالرجوع للتصميم شبه التجريبي. كما قامت الباحثة بقياس أثر التدخل العلاجي بالممارسات الفنية المعتمدة على أنشطة الفن التشكيلي والمحتوى العلمي لمادة اللغة العربية في القراءة والتعبير الشفوي على مستوى مهارة التعبير الشفوي لطلبة صعوبات اللغة الشفهية وعسر القراءة. تضمنت الدراسة على أنشطة التدخل العلاجي ومقياس مهارة التعبير الشفوي. طبقت الدراسة على 50 حالة من طلبة صعوبات اللغة الشفهية وعسر القراءة بالمحافظة في سلطنة عمان. تم تقسيم الطلبة إلى " 25 مجموعة تجريبية" و "25 مجموعة ضابطة". تم تطبيق التدخل العلاجي على المجموعة التجريبية لمدة أربعة أشهر بواقع 30 جلسة علاجية. أشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى العديد من الفروق ذات الدلالة الإحصائية بين كلا المجموعتين بعد تطبيق التدخل العلاجي على المجموعة التجريبية لصالح العينة التجريبية وذلك "عند مستوى الدلالة 0.05"، وهذا دليل على أثر التدخل العلاجي على طلبة صعوبات اللغة الشفهية وعسر القراءة في تحسين مستوى مهارة التعبير الشفوي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العلاج بالفن التشكيلي، صعوبات اللغة الشفهية، عسر القراءة، التعبير الشفوي.

Abstract:

This study aimed to investigate the impact of art therapy on oral expression skills among students with learning difficulties, specifically those with verbal language disorders and dyslexia, in the second cycle of basic education in South Al Batinah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman. A quantitative approach was adopted to address the study questions, utilizing a quasi-experimental design. The study assessed the impact of a therapeutic intervention based on visual art activities and the Arabic language curriculum content—specifically in reading and oral expression—on students' oral expression skills. The intervention included structured art-based activities and a standardized oral expression skills scale. The study was conducted on a sample of 50 students diagnosed with verbal language difficulties and dyslexia in South Al Batinah. The participants were divided equally into an experimental group (25 students) and a control group (25 students). The therapeutic intervention was implemented over a period of four months, comprising 30 treatment sessions. The findings revealed statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in favor of the experimental group at the 0.05 significance level. These results indicate that the art-based therapeutic intervention had a positive effect on improving oral expression skills among students with verbal language difficulties and dyslexia.

Keywords: Visual art therapy, oral language disorders, dyslexia, oral expression.

Methodological Framework of the Study:

Introduction:

A significant number of learners within the school environment experience suffer from learning difficulties that impact their overall functioning both inside and outside the classroom (Rahmi, 2020). Suleiman (2018) pointed out that learning difficulties are among the most prevalent educational conditions, affecting approximately 3% of population around the world. Many school children face challenges in acquiring foundational academic skills, particularly in reading, writing, and arithmetic. According to (Van Lith et al., 2021), psychological and cognitive challenges frequently co-occur with learning difficulties during school age.

Students with oral language difficulties, dyslexia, and general learning disabilities often lack effective knowledge organization and intellectual expression processes. As a result, they face difficulties in decoding phonological sounds and recognizing letters and words, primarily due to their limited vocabulary, which hinders their ability to speak or comprehend the words they hear (Al-Qara'an, 2018). Consequently, specialized learning disability programs have emerged, along with specialized teachers and designated classrooms to which students with learning difficulties are referred (Z. Moula, 2021). These initiatives aim to provide a tailored educational environment that addresses the academic and developmental challenges faced by this group, employing various programs, strategies, and methods that facilitate easier and faster knowledge acquisition and use (Franklin, 2018).

Students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia need personalized intervention plans that correspond to the degree of their learning challenges (Al-Salmi, 2019). They also need direct, face-to-face instruction in environments free from distractions, as well as engaging

educational settings that foster their psychological and mental well-being to help them overcome the learning difficulties and achieve their desired goals (Al-Azmi, 2021). Among the therapeutic and rehabilitative programs developed for this purpose is visual art therapy, which has increasingly been adopted in many schools to reduce the burden of learning difficulties (Al-Saeed, 2019). According to Z. Moula (2021), visual art therapy is defined as the creative use of artistic mediums as a means of non-verbal or symbolic expression within a therapeutic environment, encouraged by the therapist relationship, in order to achieve treatment goals tailored to the individual.

Study Problem:

Oman, through its Ministry of Education, has prioritized the support of students with learning difficulties in both public and private schools since the academic year 2000–2001, focusing on the first cycle and some schools in the second cycle, continuing to this day (Al Maqbali & Alfawair, 2020).

Many students with learning difficulties face various challenges throughout their educational stages, facing different problems at each grade level. These challenges significantly impact the child's mental and emotional well-being, often resulting from the pressures students experience in the educational environment and in their interactions with peers (Habeeb, 2017; Al-Salmi, 2019).

In Oman, researchers have increasingly focused on students with learning disabilities in order to better understand the characteristics and needs of this group (Najm, 2017; Hamidah, 2017). Najm (2017) pointed out that the most prevalent types of learning difficulties observed in the educational field among students in Oman are oral language disorders and dyslexia. These issues have a significant impact on other forms of learning difficulties and can, in some cases, contribute to the emergence

of additional challenges (Wilson & Braaten, 2018). Moreover, they affect students' academic achievement, particularly in subjects that require strong reading skills, which are essential for understanding and engaging with various concepts in order to achieve the learning objectives (Najm, 2017). According to Shunaidi (2018), students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia—who suffer with spelling, reading, and writing—may also possess other cognitive talents, such as abilities in innovation, creativity, or imaginative drawing. Therefore, with instruction that is appropriate to their academic level, students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia can overcome their learning challenges (Franklin, 2018).

Recent studies in visual art therapy have addressed a wide range of issues related to mental and psychological treatment, as well as educational rehabilitation for various conditions—whether emotional, psychological, or cognitive—faced by school students (Beauregard et al., 2024; Bosgraaf et al., 2024; McDonald et al., 2019, 2020; Moula et al., 2021; Tamir & Regev, 2021). These studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of numerous art-based therapeutic programs within school environments, showing them to be both valuable and beneficial for children experiencing internal and external psychological or cognitive challenges. The research also recommends that schools should emphasis on integrating art activities into the daily schedule due to their significant impact on students' emotional well-being, mental health, and academic achievement.

Visual art therapy has been shown to improve behavioral, social, emotional, and cognitive difficulties simultaneously (McDonald et al., 2019; McDonald & Holttum, 2020; Zoe Moula et al., 2021a; Tamir & Regev, 2021), by enhancing emotional expression, social connection, and psychological well-being. Zoe Moula et al. (2021a) noted that students with learning difficulties are often perceived as having disabilities and are not typically expected to benefit from group-based art therapies aimed at

addressing emotional and behavioral challenges. However, Ramirez & Haen (2021) pointed out that art therapy addresses a wide range of student needs beyond the primary level, including both students with academic struggles and high-achieving students who feel positively about their academic performance.

The research problem can be expressed through the following main question: What is the effect of visual art therapy on the oral expression skills of students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia in the second cycle (grades five and six) in South Al-Batinah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman?

Study Objectives:

The aim of this study is to identify the effect of visual art therapy on the oral expression skills of students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia in the second cycle (grades five and six) in South Al Batinah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman.

Study Hypotheses:

There are no statistically significant differences in the effect of applying visual art therapy between the experimental and control groups in improving oral expression skills among students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia in the second cycle (grades five and six) in South Al-Batinah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman.

The Importance of the Study:

Practical Significance:

The Practical Importance for Administrators, Educators, and Students in Educational Institutions:

This study helps art teachers and main subject teachers learn how to create plans, strategies, methods, and support programs using art

activities to deal with the behavioral, learning, social, and emotional challenges that students face in school. These activities can support and encourage students to overcome their difficulties.

The study also helps Arabic language teachers and those who work with students who have learning difficulties. It shows how to use simple and effective teaching methods with students who struggle in Arabic, read or write slowly, or have trouble expressing themselves.

In addition, the study is useful for school leaders and social or psychological counselors. It helps them apply support plans for students with behavioral issues or personal challenges, giving these students a way to express their feelings and improve their confidence and sense of self through art.

Curriculum Designers and Developers:

This study draws the attention of curriculum designers and developers to the importance of including flexible activities in visual arts curricula in Oman that enrich art therapy sessions. These activities should be emphasized and enhanced when developing the art curriculum.

The study also supports designers of other academic subjects—such as Arabic, English, and Mathematics—in creating activities that consider students' individual differences. These activities can include artistic and creative practices that stimulate both sides of the brain, making it easier for students to understand, remember, and process information.

Additionally, the study helps those who design learning difficulties programs to include creative art-based activities as part of therapeutic programs for students with learning challenges.

Decision Makers:

This study is considered one of the most important recent applied studies in the field of art therapy for students with learning difficulties in Oman. Its findings can help decision makers design programs and strategies that support students in overcoming psychological, mental, and academic challenges.

The study also contributes to the development of teacher preparation programs, helping to train qualified educators who can effectively use therapeutic approaches. These efforts aim to improve the overall mental health and well-being of students—especially those with learning difficulties—in educational, health, social, and other institutions.

Scientific Importance:

From a theoretical perspective, this study in the field of learning difficulties seeks to fill a gap in the literature concerning students and teachers dealing with such challenges. It highlights key concepts and issues related to methods of enhancing learners' mental health, which in turn supports the improvement of their educational abilities.

The study's findings will provide valuable reference contributions to the body of knowledge on how to strengthen this form of expression in students—specifically through visual art-based therapeutic practices for students with dyslexia and learning difficulties in Oman.

Moreover, the study will enrich discussions around the methods used to enhance mental well-being, which may influence students' personalities and their learning outcomes. It is expected that the results of this study will help clarify and strengthen the application of art therapy—particularly visual arts therapy—and support future research in this field.

Limitations and Constraints of the Study:

1. Spatial Limitation: This refers to the public schools in the South Al-Batina Governorate, Sultanate of Oman.
2. Time Limitation: The first semester of the 2023–2024 academic year.
3. Human Limitation: This refers to students with learning difficulties in the second cycle of education in the schools of the South Al-Batina Governorate, Sultanate of Oman.

Study Terminology:

Therapeutic practice:

In this study, therapeutic practice is operationally defined as a treatment plan based on artistic practices and creative activities. These practices are designed to stimulate students with learning difficulties to overcome their educational challenges and psychological conditions, either directly or indirectly, either individually or sometimes in group.

Art Therapy:

The researcher defines art therapy in this study as the use of various artistic practices—such as drawing, sculpting, and modeling with artistic materials—as a rehabilitative therapeutic intervention for students who suffer from various learning difficulties. The aim is to improve their psychological well-being through artistic expression of repressed inner emotions, enhance self-esteem, social interaction, and verbal expression, by attempting to attract students' attention and promote spatial and visual perception, motor coordination, and movement control through artistic and academic practices related to reading.

Oral Language Difficulties/ Dyslexia:

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability with a neurobiological basis. It appears as a cognitive weakness and is associated with behavioral language symptoms, such as challenges in reading. It is characterized by difficulty in decoding words, spelling, and recognizing letter symbols (Forteza–Forteza et al., 2021)(Wilson & Braaten, 2018).

The researcher operationally defines oral language difficulties/ dyslexia as the challenges faced by students with learning disabilities in the second cycle in the linguistic domain. These challenges include difficulties in decoding letter and word symbols, spelling, and reading words correctly.

Oral Expression Skill:

It refers to the student's ability to express themselves in all aspects that require speaking, in alignment with their academic level, provided that the expression is in Modern Standard Arabic. This includes proper use of pauses and connections, correct pronunciation of letters, appropriate voice tone, and the use of gestures and body language, along with active interaction with the listener to attract and engage them with the idea, opinion, attitude, or information being communicated (Al–Sharouf & Abu Snena, 2019).

The researcher operationally defines oral expression as a linguistic performance used by students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia to express their feelings and emotions toward a specific idea or topic.

Analytical Framework of the Study:

Research Methodology:

This study depends on a quantitative research methodology, which involves the collection, analysis, and numerical representation of data through statistical analysis (Goertzen, 2017). The study focused on a quasi-experimental design, which relies on pre- and post-tests to measure students' performance before and after a specific intervention (Goertzen, 2017). Through this design, the performance of students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia in oral expression skills was assessed before the implementation of the art therapy intervention for both the control and experimental groups. Art therapy was then applied to the experimental group as a therapeutic intervention, followed by a post-test to reassess their performance in oral expression. The aim was to examine the impact of art therapy on students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia, and the results were compared between the two groups. This design was selected because there was no random assignment of students to the two groups (UDOSEN, n.d.).

Study Population:

The study population consisted of students with learning difficulties enrolled in public schools in South Al Batinah Governorate of Oman, under the Ministry of Education, during the academic year 2023–2024. There were a total of 1,444 identified cases of learning difficulties across all 111 public schools in the governorate, which collectively serve 77,410 students. Among these, 411 cases were specifically identified as students in Grades 5 and 6 experiencing oral language difficulties and dyslexia. That is according to official statistics from the Statistics Department of the Planning Division at the Directorate General of Education in South Al Batinah (Ministry of Education A, 2023).

Study Sample:

The study sample consisted of 50 cases of students with learning difficulties, distributed across 4 schools in the South Al Batinah Governorate. The sample was intentionally selected based on the schools that included a larger number of students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia. The sample was assigned and divided into two groups: a control group consisting of 25 cases and an experimental group consisting of 25 cases. The number of the purposive sample was determined based on systematic reviews provided from 2017–2024, which indicated that the sample size for experimental studies ranged from 15–60, depending on the purposive sample available in the educational environment (Akhavan Tafti et al., 2021; Azizi et al., 2022; Zoe Moula et al., 2022; Zoe Moula, Powell, et al., 2020; Van Lith et al., 2021).

(Franklin, 2018; Wilson & Braaten, 2018) indicated that students with learning difficulties need individualized therapeutic programs or small groups due to their limited comprehension in regular classes, which include 25–40 students. Additionally, learning difficulty programs in the Sultanate of Oman do not accommodate more than 15 students who are referred to the learning difficulty room in government schools located in the Sultanate (Ministry of Education, 2023).

Table 1: presents the purposive selection method of the study sample

School	Sample of fifth class		Sample of sixth class	
	experimental sample	control sample	experimental sample	control sample
1	7	7	–	–
2	6	6	–	–
3	–	–	6	6
4	–	–	6	6

Sum.	13	13	12	12
	26		24	
	50			

Study Tools:

Since the goal of the study is to measure the impact of art therapy on students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia by improving their oral expression skills, activities based on visual arts practices have been prepared to enhance the oral expression skills of students suffering from oral language difficulties and dyslexia. To assess the impact of these therapeutic practices, a scale for oral expression skills has been developed.

Data Analysis:

The "Statistical Analysis" (SPSS) program was relied upon to conduct statistical treatments to verify the effect of applying the therapeutic intervention based on visual arts activities in improving the mental and psychological health of students with learning difficulties as follows:

- The reliability of the scales for a sample of 30 cases was verified using the Alpha coefficient.
- The descriptive statistics for the study were obtained by extracting the mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness, variance, and the normal distribution for the total sum of the measurement tools.
- The validity of the hypotheses was also tested using the independent samples t-test.
- The effect size generated by the independent variable (therapeutic intervention) on the dependent variable (mental and psychological health) was measured.

Validity and Reliability of the Study Tools:

The study tools were reviewed by eight experts to assess content validity. Based on their feedback and recommendations, the tools were revised to better suit students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia, ensuring greater appropriateness for learners with learning disabilities. To ensure the reliability of the tools, they were applied to a sample of 30 students with learning disabilities. Internal consistency reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Additionally, the oral expression scale was administered to a sample of 30 students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia to verify its reliability. Internal consistency was also assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Table 2 shows the internal consistency value of the tools.

Table 2: Reliability of the Oral Expression Scale Using Cronbach's Alpha

Alpha Value	Number of Items
.948	5

Study Results:

Normality of Data Distribution:

Before conducting the analysis, it was necessary to ensure that the data followed a normal distribution. The researcher calculated the normality measures using the Shapiro–Wilk and Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests. Table 3 presents the results of the normality tests for the data.

Table 3: Normality Test of the Data Distribution

Experimental and Control Groups	Kolmogorov–Smirnov ^a Test			Shapiro–Wilk Test		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Experimental Group	.104	25	.200*	.959	25	.391

Mean	Control Group	.133	25	.200*	.957	25	.355
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Table 3 presents the normality test of the data distribution. The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests indicate that the significance values are greater than 0.05. Therefore, the data for both the experimental and control groups are normally distributed in both tests. This supports the use of parametric tests in addressing the study's hypotheses.

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics:

The researcher first calculated descriptive statistical measures, including measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion, to answer the study questions. Subsequently, the study hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics as follows:

What is the effect of art therapy on improving oral expression skills among students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia in the second cycle of basic education in the South Al Batinah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman?

To answer the research question, the difference between the mean and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test scores for both the experimental and control groups was calculated. Table 4 presents the differences in the mean and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test scores for the experimental and control groups on the oral expression scale.

Table 4: Differences in the Mean and Standard Deviation of the Pre-test and Post-test Scores for the Experimental and Control Groups on the Oral Expression Scale

Group		Sample	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Mean	Standard Deviation
Experimental	Pre-test Mean of the Oral Expression Scale	25	.00	2.00	.9600	.53852
	Post-test Mean of the Oral Expression Scale	25	1.50	4.00	3.6000	.61237
Control	Pre-test Mean of the Oral Expression Scale	25	.50	2.00	1.3600	.42131
	Post-test Mean of the Oral Expression Scale	25	.00	2.00	1.2600	.56125

Table 4 illustrates the differences between the mean and standard deviation for both the pre-test and post-test measurements of the experimental and control groups on the oral expression scale. The pre-test mean and standard deviation for the control group were ($M = 1.36$, $SD = 0.42$), while the post-test mean and standard deviation for the control group were ($M = 1.26$, $SD = 0.56$). The pre-test mean and standard deviation for the experimental group were ($M = 0.96$, $SD = 0.53$), while the post-test mean and standard deviation for the experimental group were ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 0.61$). This indicates a significant post-test difference in the level of oral expression.

According to the five-point Likert scale classification, the post-test mean for the experimental group ($M = 3.60$) falls between 3.40 and 4.19 on the Likert scale, indicating a high effect on the level of oral expression (Abd El-Ghani, Habashi, & Abd El-Aziz, 2024).

Results of the Study Hypothesis:

One of the main findings of the study hypothesis is that there were no statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the effect of applying art therapy between the control group and the experimental group in improving the oral expression skill among students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia in the second cycle in South Al Batinah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman.

To test the third hypothesis of the study, which states that "there are no statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the effect of applying art therapy between the control and experimental groups in improving oral expression skills among students with oral language difficulties and dyslexia in the second cycle in South Al Batinah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman,". To test this hypothesis, a t-test was used for an independent sample. The means and standard deviations of the scores for the experimental and control groups were calculated, as shown in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Post-test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups on the Oral Expression Scale

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
Experimental	3.6000	.61237
Control	1.2600	.56125

Table 5 presents the differences in the mean and standard deviation between the experimental and control groups in the post-test application of the oral expression scale. The control group recorded a

mean of ($M = 1.26$, $SD = 0.56$), while the experimental group recorded a mean of ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.61$).

Table 6: Post-test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups on the Oral Expression Scale Using the T-Test

Confidence Interval at 95%		Standard Error	Arithmetic Mean	Statistical Significance	Degrees of Freedom	T-Value	Statistical Significance	F-Value
Highest	Lowest							
2.67403	2.00597	.16613	2.34000	.000	48	14.085	.906	
2.67410	2.00590	.16613	2.34000	.000	47.640	14.085		.014

Table 6 shows the scores for both groups, where the result of Levene's test (Levene's $F = 0.14$, $P = 0.906$) indicates that there are no differences in variance between the experimental and control groups in the post-test application of the oral expression scale. Therefore, the data from the first row will be used in the T-test, with the results showing $t(48) = 14.08$, $p = 0.000$. Here, the statistical significance value is smaller than $t(84) = 14.08$, $p < 0.05$, indicating that we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This means that there are statistically significant differences between the means of the experimental and control groups in the post-test of the oral expression scale, which can be attributed to the experimental group, as its mean score was $M = 3.6000$, while the mean score for the control group was $M = 1.2600$.

The researcher also calculated the effect size for the independent samples t-test to determine the level of the therapeutic intervention's effect on oral expression, according to the Eta-squared formula (Coe, 2002).

Table 7: Effect Size of the Therapeutic Intervention According to the Eta-Squared Equation

Eta	Eta-Squared
.897	.805

It is evident from Table 7 that the effect size is greater than 0.14, indicating a large effect size for the therapeutic intervention in improving students' level of oral expression.

Discussion of the Results:

Oral Expression Skill Among Students with Speech Language Difficulties and Dyslexia.

The research question aims to investigate the effect of art therapy on improving oral expression skills for students with speech language difficulties and dyslexia in the second cycle in the South Al-Batina Governorate of Oman. The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test of the oral expression scale after the therapeutic intervention. The control group relied on the standard oral expression prescribed in the Arabic language subject, while the experimental group applied oral expression through the therapeutic sessions, using artistic practices that were closely related to the student's personal experiences.

This result is consistent with several studies that applied art therapy, such as (Azizi et al., 2022; Beauregard et al., 2017; Cohen-Yatziv & Regev, 2019b; Grajo et al., 2020; Harpazi et al., 2020; McDonald & Holttum, 2020; Zoe Moula et al., 2022; Or et al., 2022). The findings of these studies indicated that visual arts therapy is effective in improving verbal issues, verbal communication skills, self-expression and emotions, as well as the overall effectiveness of art in enhancing learning

and reading in regular classroom settings for students without special needs.

Systematic reviews have confirmed this result in studies that measured the effectiveness of art therapy in enhancing verbal participation and communication (Cohen–Yatziv & Regev, 2019c; Grajo et al., 2020b). The result was also supported by the study of Or et al. (2022b), which showed the effectiveness of identifying and overcoming verbal problems in preschool children. This was evident in the students' language repertoire, which was developed through dialogues and discussions after the art therapy sessions, leading to an improvement in their oral expression abilities.

The study by Azizi et al. (2022b) also highlighted the effectiveness of drawing–based assessments in addressing problems related to students' verbal skills. This aligns with Dimension 3, which showed that students with learning difficulties—as well as students in general—tend to rely on memorization when performing oral expression tasks. In contrast, the expression that emerged from artistic practices was tied to mental images conveyed through drawing or other tools, then translated into simple words that reflected the students' personalities. Adolescents also reported that art therapy helped them express their feelings without fear (Harpazi & Snir, 2020). Similarly, Dimension 4 revealed that when students were asked questions after performing traditional oral expression tasks, they usually did not respond because they did not understand what they had memorized. In contrast, during the art sessions, they spoke spontaneously and responded naturally to questions.

Migrant school students in Canada expressed their suffering and struggles related to war through creative expression activities in the classroom (Beauregard et al., 2017, 2022, 2024). This finding is also reflected in Dimension 1, which emphasized that drawing based on

students' real-life experiences followed by oral expression is far more effective than speaking about pre-assigned topics that students memorize without truly understanding.

This study differs in its specific focus on students with speech and language difficulties and dyslexia, aiming to improve their oral expression skills. It did so by harnessing the emotional aspect of self-expression and encouraging verbal articulation of artistic work in the form of oral presentations before peers in the classroom. This approach sought to enhance the academic performance of these students and help them reach outcomes similar to their typically developing peers—empowering them to overcome their difficulties and speak confidently in front of classmates, teachers, and within the broader school environment. The researcher found it difficult to identify studies that contradicted this hypothesis.

The researcher attributes the statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the post-application of the oral expression scale—favoring the experimental group—to the structure of the therapeutic intervention. The intervention included educational content that allowed for flexible planning of therapy sessions. It also contained detailed steps outlining the art therapy process, from the initial diagnostic interview to the final stage of completing the art therapy sessions.

The art therapist has a background knowledge of the conditions of students with speech and language difficulties and dyslexia. The therapy process begins gradually by allowing students to express themselves freely through drawing without being assigned a specific topic. This helps uncover suppressed emotions, which are then discussed in individual sessions. After that, students are given specific topics to express through art, enabling the therapist to explore their interests, desires, challenges,

and learning difficulties. These feelings are discussed either individually or in small groups, leading to more advanced stages of therapy where students express specific topics and speak about them in front of the class. Eventually, students present an art exhibition showcasing their work and talk about it in front of their teachers and attendees.

Conclusion:

The findings of this study show that visual art therapy had a positive effect on students with speech and language difficulties and dyslexia in grades five and six in the South Al-Batinah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman. The therapy helped improve their oral expression skills through a structured intervention that included artistic practices based on brain-based learning theory, psychoanalytic theory, and previous research in art therapy.

The results suggest that art therapy can effectively address student challenges in the Omani school environment. Teachers trained in art therapy viewed its application in schools positively. Therefore, it is important to adopt similar interventions to support students' academic performance through psychological and educational guidance.

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