ABSTRACT

An increasing number of students with learning disabilities are entering higher education with every passing year. As faculty play an important role in these students’ educational experience, it is important to increase faculty knowledge and skills in order to teach these students effectively. This study was undertaken to design and implement a training program on the faculty members on improving their knowledge, willingness, attitudes and interaction towards students with learning disabilities in higher education. Besides, this study highlights the need for psychological training along with training on knowledge about learning disability to enable faculty to mentor students having learning disabilities in higher education.

The study was conducted in a group of federal colleges in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The investigation adopted a pre-test / post-test experimental design using type technique. It involved two stages- namely the preparatory stage and the implementation stage. The sample comprised of 160 faculty members from the various federal colleges spread across different emirates. A multistage sampling design was selected for the execution of the study.

The ‘faculty survey on learning disability’, ‘survey instrument of teacher attitudes towards disability’ and the ‘interaction of disabled persons scale’ was used to survey the knowledge, willingness, attitudes and interaction of faculty members in mentoring students with learning disabilities. The effect of the demographic factors of the faculty
was examined prior to the training. The training program was then conducted on two experimental groups A and B, in which experimental group A was provided with training on knowledge of learning disabilities only and experimental group B was provided training on knowledge of learning disabilities and psychological skills. Results indicated that faculty of experimental group A and B had greater knowledge, willingness, attitude and interaction towards students after the training. Findings also indicated that there was substantial improvement in the faculty members of experimental group B who received training on knowledge of learning disabilities and psychological skill training than faculty of experimental group A, who received training on the knowledge of learning disability only. The implications of these findings are discussed.