Abstract: half-time seminar

Suvi Karjalainen
Avd för Logopedi, Foniatr och Audiologi

September 30\textsuperscript{th}, 2019, 13.15
Lokal: Salomon Sörensen, Kioskgatan 17, Universitetssjukhuset, Lund

Opponenter:
Docent Jenny Iwarsson, Köpenhamns universitet

Docent Åsa Lindberg-Sand, Utbildningsvetenskap, Lunds universitet
Better Communication and Learning in the Classroom.
Training Teachers’ Communication and Awareness of Room Acoustics.

Background: The school is the largest workplace in Sweden, integrating teaching staff and students. Media frequently reports about the following challenges in Swedish schools: teachers’ working conditions, well-being and students’ results. Also, the work-environment has drawn attention and discussion. Noise is an acknowledged challenge for classroom communication. Previous studies show that noise affects learning in classrooms. It is necessary to combine optimized acoustics with other preventive measures, such as vocal training and evidence-based tools to improve classroom communication in order to support teachers’ vocal health, well-being and students’ performance. There is a scarcity of studies looking at the effects of intervention on factors such as teachers’ health, self-efficacy and well-being. However, these factors are hypothesized to be crucial for good classroom management and communication with students.

Aims: We aim to investigate the effects on teachers' vocal health, self-efficacy and well-being by using an intervention program targeting classroom communication. A further aim is to explore the relationship between classroom acoustics and teachers’ vocal health, self-efficacy and well-being.

Methods: Teachers (n=25) teaching in school year 3-6 participated in an intervention program. The intervention focused on using healthy voice technique; adapting voice use to the sound environment; optimizing body communication and improving language learning environments. Assessments were done pre/post intervention and at 5-weeks and 3-months follow-up. The teachers were presented with questionnaires for self-assessments of vocal health, stress, burnout and self-efficacy. Their classrooms’ acoustics were measured for clarity (C50), reverberation time and ventilation system noise.

Results: There were a significant decrease of voice problems at 3-months follow-up and of stress and burnout at the follow-up at 5-weeks. The assessment of self-efficacy had increased significantly at 5-week follow-up. The results of the intervention program are promising and should be considered also in formal teacher education. The relationship between classroom acoustics and teachers’ well-being were not statistically significant, but the findings give an indication of the importance of investigating this interplay further.

Significance: Knowledge is lacking about outcomes of offering teachers practical communication training to cope with different sound environments. Our project shows that the training program has positive effects on teachers’ vocal health, well-being and self-efficacy.

Published articles:

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