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**Effective Strategies for Teaching Students
with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

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Abstract

This study is concentrated on investigating effective strategies for teaching students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. It includes the following strategies: Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH), Auditory Integration Training (AIT), Parent Training Programs, and Peer-Mediated Interventions. It also presents the importance and value of utilizing these strategies for autistic students, teachers, as well as parents. The implementation of effective strategies makes learning easier, maintains students' physical organization, streamlines scheduling, and enhances teaching methods. In addition, the effective strategies decrease the stress levels of teachers as well as simplify the process of learning new skills for autistic students. Also, it would help students with autism to focus more on tasks without becoming distracted. The effective strategies help autistic students to learn how to express their feelings appropriately, interact with their peers, develop their skills/abilities, build the vocabulary, increase self-expression, and improve the cognitive skills.

Keywords: Strategies, Autism, Skills, Communication, Cognitive, Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH), Auditory Integration Training (AIT), Parent Training Programs, Peer-Mediated Interventions.

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استراتيجيات فعّالة لتعليم الطلاب الذين يعانون من اضطراب طيف التوحد

ملخص

تركز هذه الدراسة على استقصاء استراتيجيات فعالة لتعليم الطلاب الذين يعانون من اضطراب طيف التوحد. وتشمل الإستراتيجيات التالية: العلاج والتعليم للأطفال المصابين بالتوحد والاتصالات (TEACCH)، تدريب التكامل السمعي (AIT)، برامج تدريب الوالدين، والتدخلات التي تتم بوساطة الأقران. كما تعرض الدراسة أهمية وقيمة استخدام هذه الإستراتيجيات لطلاب التوحد، والمعلمين، وكذلك أولياء الأمور. وتوضح الدراسة أن تطبيق تلك الإستراتيجيات الفعالة يؤدي إلى تسهيل التعلم، الحفاظ على تنظيم الطلاب الفعلي، تبسيط الجدولة، وتحسين طرق التدريس. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تعمل الإستراتيجيات الفعالة على تقليل مستويات الإجهاد لدى المعلمين وتبسيط عملية تعلم المهارات الجديدة لطلاب التوحد. أيضا، تدعم الإستراتيجيات الطلاب الذين يعانون من التوحد للتركيز بشكل أكبر على المهام دون تشتت الإنتباه. علاوة على ذلك، تساعد الإستراتيجيات الفعالة طلاب التوحد على تعلم كيفية التعبير عن مشاعرهم بشكل مناسب، التفاعل مع أقرانهم، تطوير مهاراتهم/قدراتهم، بناء مفرداتهم، زيادة التعبير عن الذات، وتحسين المهارات المعرفية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإستراتيجيات، التوحد، المهارات، الإتصال، الإدراك المعرفي، العلاج والتربية للأطفال المصابين بالتوحد والاتصالات (TEACCH)، التدريب على التكامل السمعي (AIT)، برامج تدريب الوالدين، التدخلات التي تتم بوساطة الأقران.

Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a brain development disorder that causes different levels of disabilities among affected children. The effects of Autism Spectrum Disorder include disturbance in the skills of social interactions, verbal and nonverbal communication, or repetitive behaviors. The causes of ASD can be categorized into two main types: knowing reasons and unknowing reasons. The knowing reasons include genetic causes, environmental causes, or a combination of both. Genetic causes include abnormalities in brain structure or function, a cluster of unstable genes interfering with brain development, or certain medical conditions. Also, ASD can occur because of environmental factors such as microbiomes, environmental contaminants and toxins, maternal dietary factor, medications taken during pregnancy, or assistive reproductive treatments (Autism Spectrum Disorder Research, 2016). These environmental causes can independently or collaboratively lead to a case of ASD. Similarly, a combination of genetic and environmental factors can affect a child to become an autistic child.

There are many implications of Autism Spectrum Disorder. One of the implications is social development impairment which means autistic children lack the skills of face and emotion recognitions, have less eye contact, ignore surrounding people, and pay less attention to stimulus. Another implication of ASD is weak communication skills, which causes children with ASD to have delay in babbling, less-developed natural speech, and the habit of imitating others' speeches. Moreover, children with autism spectrum disorder have repetitive behaviors such as repeating words, hand flapping, head rolling, jumping, arranging and rearranging objects.

Research Problem

Children and adults with autism do not have the level of communication and knowledge like typical people. They have difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication. Many educators and parents face difficulties in teaching autistic individuals and spend a lot of time dealing with them. There is a need to identify several effective strategies that can be used by educators and parents to help students with autism in learning and communicating with others. When teachers and parents recognize effective strategies that help autistic students, they will utilize the strategies to streamline their educational efforts. Therefore, students with autism will improve in several skills such as communication, verbal talking, and language skills.

Purpose of Research

The significance of this study is to investigate several strategies that can be utilized in teaching students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The study concentrates on identifying effective strategies and methods to educate autistic students and enhance their communication and cognitive skills. Furthermore, it can encourage other researchers to create different strategies that can be used to teach different skills. This study is useful for special education teachers and parents who have or deal with autistic individuals/students. Recognizing and implementing effective strategies to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder would eventually enhance the skills of the students.

Research Questions

- 1- How can the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) approach help students with Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- 2- How beneficial is using the Auditory Integration Training (AIT) to teach autistic students?
- 3- What is the effect of Parent Training Programs on promoting the skills of autistic students?
- 4- What is the impact of Peer-Mediated Interventions on the social skills of autistic students?

Terminology:**Autism:**

Is a complex neurobehavioral condition that includes impairments in social interaction and developmental language and communication skills combined with rigid, repetitive behaviors. Because of the range of symptoms, this condition is now called autism spectrum disorder (Autism Spectrum Disorder Research, 2010).

TEACCH:

Is an evidence-based service, training, and research program for individuals of all ages and skill levels with autism spectrum disorders (Marwick et al., 2005).

Auditory Integration Training:

Is an experimental procedure for reducing painful hypersensitivity to sound. It has proved beneficial for some people with neuropsychiatric disorders (Edelson & Rimland, 2001).

Parent Training Programs:

Are programs that are designed to help parents develop the skills necessary to manage their child's behavior and development (Kaminski et al., 2008).

Peer-Mediated Intervention:

Is an approach in special education where peers of the target students are trained to provide necessary tutoring in educational, behavioral, and/or social concerns (Chan et al., 2009).

Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH)

Autism is a unique disorder, and there are many effective intervention methods/programs that have been suggested to reduce the negative effects of Autism. According to a research published by National Centre for Autism Studies, the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) is an evidence-based service, training, and research program for individuals of all ages and skill levels who have autism spectrum disorder (Marwick et al., 2005). This approach targets three essential components that every autistic individual needs: physical organization, scheduling, and teaching methods. The approach encourages teachers of autistic individuals to set up classrooms in particular ways so that students understand where to be, what to do, and how to do it. Also, numerous studies reported that the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children program has several efficacies in reducing the stress levels of teachers as well as simplifying the skills assessment process for affected children. Moreover, the implementation of TEACCH program provides an opportunity to standardize environments such as routines, scheduling, and establishing rules and expectations. Organized environments encourage individuals to show normal behaviors as well as positive social interactivity (Blume, 1996).

The Benefits of Auditory Integration Training (AIT)

Edelson and Rimland (2001) reported that studies have shown several positive effects of Auditory Integration Training when provided to autistic children. One of the positives of Auditory Integration Training is that it improves the hearing acuity of autistic individuals. Individuals who underwent the training have gained better hearing abilities. Another benefit of Auditory Integration Training is that it increases the attention span of autistic children, which help them to focus more on tasks without becoming distracted. Additionally, this training decreases the sound-sensitivity of individuals who might find some sounds irritating and painful. The Auditory Integration Training (AIT) assists children to have a better speech and language skills, word recognition skills, and a noiseless life.

The Effect of Parent Training Programs

According to a research published in the Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, Parent Training Programs are very effective methods for promoting skills in children with autism (Kaminski et al., 2008). The research shows that children whose families had received training from intervention specialists showed greater initiation and responsiveness skills when compared to other parents who did not receive training. Trained parents play crucial roles in developing the skills of autistic children as well as assisting intervention specialists. Importantly, they can utilize their knowledge and skills to provide their children with the right and most effective resources.

Impact of Peer-Mediated Interventions

A research on peer-mediated intervention procedures has shown that peer-mediated interventions are effective methods to improve the social

skills of autistic children as well as their interactive abilities (McConnell, 2002). Peer-mediated interventions are designed to enhance the social interactions and skills of young children through the children's peers or classmates. In this case, classmates of an autistic child such as student can be taught specific behaviors and social skills, and then the classmates teach the autistic child the specific skills through interaction and modeling. According to the study, peer-mediated interventions have an effective impact on the social behaviors and skills of autistic children. Therefore, this approach can be applied to diversify the methods of interventions as well as generate positive outcomes. Parents and babysitters are considered peers of autistic children, and consequently, they have the ability to mediate and enhance the social behaviors and skills of their children.

Conclusion

Realizing and utilizing effective strategies would enable children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder to communicate with people around them, learn, as well as live a rich life. Teachers and parents should be supported to use effective educational methods that can attract autistic students' attention and engage them to learn and communicate. The aforementioned strategies aim to facilitate communication and build the vocabulary of autistic students, increase their self-expression, and improve their cognitive skills. The implementation of the strategies would enable students with autism to express their needs and emotions, and encourage them to interact with their surroundings. According to Autism Speaks Organization, early intervention is very important for children who have autism (Speaks, 2013). Intervention specialists believe in early training because they have seen the significant impact of early interventions on the

lives of autistic children. Additional trainings help autistic students to learn how to express their thoughts/feelings appropriately and how to interact with their peers. The experiences of peer-mediated intervention would develop skills/abilities of autistic students, and make them stronger and more social persons (Umbreit, Ferro, Liaupsin, and Lane, 2007). Finally, cooperative-based intervention would sharpen the skills of autistic students and their parents to act and live rightly.

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