

Action Research: Visual Dialogue: A Strategy for Managing Emotion of Autistic Students with Intellectual Disabilities

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Abstract : Action research equips teachers with the skills needed to work on a particular situation in their classroom. This paper aims to introduce a strategy, visual dialogue between student and teacher, used by the researcher to help autistic students with intellectual disabilities to regulate their immediate emotions to achieve their academic goals. This research has been conducted to determine whether teaching self-regulation strategies can be effective instead of segregating them. The researcher has identified that visual dialogue between the student and teacher is a helpful technique for teaching self-regulation. For this particular research, action research suits the purpose as the findings can be applied immediately in the classroom. Like many autistic students, the teacher had two 15 years old autistic students with intellectual disabilities in class who had difficulty in controlling their emotions and impulses. They expressed their emotions through aggressive behavior, such as shouting, screaming, biting teachers or any adult who was in their sight, and destroying school property. They needed two to four hours to recover from their meltdowns with the help of a psychologist. The students missed the classes as they were often isolated from the classroom and stayed in the calming room until they calmed down. This negatively affected their learning. Therefore, the researcher decided to implement a self-regulation strategy, a visual dialogue between students and teachers, instead of isolating them to recover from the meltdown. The data was collected through personal observations, a log sheet, personal reflections, and pictures. The result shows that the students can regulate their emotions shortly in the classroom (15 to 30 minutes). Through visual dialogue, they can express their feelings and needs in socially appropriate ways. The finding indicates that autistic students can regulate their emotions through visual dialogues and participate in activities by staying in the classroom. Thus it positively impacted their learning and social lives. In this paper, the researcher discussed the findings of exploring how teachers can successfully implement a self-regulation strategy for autistic students in classroom settings. The action research describes the strategy that has been found effective for managing the emotions of autistic students with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords : action research, self-regulation, autism, visual communication

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