

Using an Empathy Intervention Model to Enhance Empathy and Socially Shared Regulation in Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Abstract : The purpose of this study was to establish a logical path of an instructional model of empathy and social regulation, providing feasibility evidence on the model implementation in students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This newly developed Emotional Bug-Out Bag (BoB) curriculum was designed to enhance the empathy and socially shared regulation of students with ASD. The BoB model encompassed three instructional phases of basic theory lessons (BTL), action plan practices (APP), and final theory practices (FTP) during implementation. Besides, a learning flow (teacher-directed instruction, student self-directed problem-solving, group-based task completion, group-based reflection) was infused into the progress of instructional phases to deliberately promote the social regulatory process in group-working activities. A total of 23 junior high school students with ASD were implemented with the BoB curriculum. To examine the logical path for model implementation, data was collected from the participating students' self-report scores on the learning nodes and understanding questions. Path analysis using structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized for analyzing scores on 10 learning nodes and 41 understanding questions through the three phases of the BoB model. Results showed (a) all participants progressed throughout the implementation of the BoB model, and (b) the models of learning nodes and phases were positive and significant as expected, confirming the hypothesized logic path of this curriculum.

Keywords : autism spectrum disorder, empathy, regulation, socially shared regulation

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