

Enhancing Academic and Social Skills of Elementary School Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder by an Intensive and Comprehensive Teaching Program

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Abstract : Objective: To develop an Intensive and comprehensive program (ICP) for the Inclusive Class Teacher (ICPICT) to teach elementary students (ES) with ASD in order to enhance the students' academic and social skills (ASS) and to study the effect of the teaching program. Methods: The purposive sample included 15 Khon Kaen inclusive class teachers and their 15 elementary students. All the students were diagnosed by a child and adolescent psychiatrist to have DSM-5 level 1 ASD. The study tools included 1) an ICP to teach teachers about ASD, a teaching method to enhance academic and social skills for ES with ASD, and an assessment tool to assess the teacher's knowledge before and after the ICP. 2) an ICPICT to teach ES with ASD to enhance their ASS. The project taught 10 sessions, 3 hours each. The ICPICT had its teaching structure. Teaching media included: pictures, storytelling, songs, and plays. The authors taught and demonstrated to the participant teachers how to teach with the ICPICT until the participants could display the correct teaching method. Then the teachers taught ICPICT at school by themselves 3) an assessment tool to assess the students' ASS before and after the completion of the study. The ICP to teach the teachers, the ICPICT, and the relevant assessment tools were developed by the authors and were adjusted until consensus agreed as appropriate for researching by 3 curriculum of teaching children with ASD experts. The data were analyzed by descriptive and analytic statistics via SPSS version 26. Results: After the briefing, the teachers increased the mean score, though not with statistical significance, of knowledge of ASD and how to teach ES with ASD on ASS ($p = 0.13$). Teaching ES with ASD with the ICPICT could increase the mean scores of the students' skills in learning and expressing social emotions, relationships with a friend, transitioning, and skills in academic function 3.33, 2.27, 2.94, and 3.00 scores (full scores were 18, 12, 15 and 12, Paired T-Test $p = 0.007, 0.013, 0.028$ and 0.003 respectively). Conclusion: The program to teach academic and social skills simultaneously in an intensive and comprehensive structure could enhance both the academic and social skills of elementary students with ASD. Keywords: Elementary students, autism spectrum, academic skill, social skills, intensive program, comprehensive program, integration.

Keywords : academica and social skills, students with autism, intensive and comprehensive, teaching program

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