

On the Effectiveness of Play Therapy on Mentally Retarded Elementary School Students' Educational Progress

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Abstract : The current paper was designed aiming at finding the impacts of play therapy on the development of mentally retarded students in elementary school. The sample included 191 elementary students from 5 classes, and 60 students were chosen in each class and, based on their learning capabilities, were further assigned into similar control and treatment groups. Then, five groups received treatments with special types of games, instruments, and methods for two months. The teacher-made instruments in literature, math, and science were adopted after their content validity had been confirmed by experienced teachers. The findings were analyzed in both descriptive, including mean, median, and standard deviation, and interpretive levels, using covariance analysis in SPSS. The results were indicative of the fact that play therapy (individual and group games) was positively effective in mentally retarded students' educational development. Moreover, regarding $P < 0/001$, it was found that group games were more influential than individual ones. It was also clear that the student's gender played no role in this kind of treatment. Therefore, it is highly recommended to implement play therapy as a part of the educational curriculum for mentally retarded pupils.

Keywords : play therapy, mentally retarded students, development, learning

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