

## Study on the Contributions and Social Validity of an Online Autism Training for School Staff

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**Abstract :** The increasing presence of young people with autism is forcing schools to adapt to this new situation and to offer services that meet the needs of this clientele. However, school staff often feels unqualified to support these students, lacking the preparation, skills and training to meet their needs. Continuing education for these staff is therefore essential to ensure that they can meet the needs of these students. As a result, the Government of Quebec has developed a bilingual (French and English) online training on autism specific to the needs of school staff. Therefore, adequate training for all school staff is likely to provide quality learning opportunities for these students. The research project focuses on the participants' appreciation, contributions, and social validity of the training. More specifically, it aims to: 1) evaluate the knowledge and self-efficacy of the participants, 2) evaluate the social validity and 3) document the evaluation of the ergonomics of the platform hosting the training. The evaluation carried out as part of this descriptive study uses a quantitative method. Data are collected using questionnaires completed online. The analysis of preliminary data reveals that participants' knowledge of autism and their sense of self-efficacy increased significantly. They value the training positively and consider it to be acceptable, appropriate, and suitable. The participants find it important for school staff to take this training. Almost all the items measuring the ergonomics of the platform have averages above 4.57/5. In general, the study shows that the training allows participating of the trainee school staff to improve their knowledge of autism and their sense of self-efficacy with young people with autism. In addition, participants recognize that the training has good social validity and appreciate the online modality. However, these results should be interpreted with caution given the limited number of participants who completed the research project. It is therefore important to continue the research with a larger number of participants to allow an adequate and general representativeness of the social validity, the feeling of competence and the appreciation of the platform.

**Keywords :** autism, online training, school staff, social validity

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