Effectiveness of Using Phonemic Awareness Based Activities in Improving Decoding Skills of Third Grade Students Referred for Reading Disabilities in Oman

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Abstract : In Oman the number of students referred for reading disabilities is on the rise. Schools serve these students by placement in the so-called learning disabilities unit. Recently the author led a strategic project to train teachers on the use of curriculum based measurement to identify students with reading disabilities in Oman. Additional the project involved training teachers to use phonemic awareness based activities to improve reading skills of those students. Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in words. We know that a student's skill in phonemic awareness is a good predictor of later reading success or difficulty. Using multiple baseline design across four participants the current studies investigated the effectiveness of using phonemic awareness based activities to improve decoding skills of third grade students referred for reading disabilities in Oman. During treatment students received phonemic awareness based activities that were designed to fulfill the idiosyncratic characteristics of Arabic language phonology as well as orthography. Results indicated that the phonemic awareness based activities were effective in substantially increasing the number of correctly decoded word for all four participants. Maintenance of strategy effects was evident for the weeks following the termination of intervention for the four students. In addition, the effects of intervention generalized to decoding novel words for all four participants.

Keywords : learning disabilities, phonemic awareness, third graders, Oman
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