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Abstract within 300 words:

The current study aimed to enhance academic achievement among Learning Disabled Adolescents using Expressive Arts Therapy and Brain Gym technique. The Research Design used was before, after and follow-up with waitlist control group. Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices, Schonell: Graded Reading Test, Schonell: Graded Spelling Test, The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test, Social Competence Scale, Moss Attention Rating Scale, Youth Disability Screener, Digit Span Test were administered to the participants. Initially 80 participants underwent IQ test and filtered to 70 participants. Out of 70 participants, 66 became part of the study with 35 participants in experimental group and 31 in waitlist control group. The participants in the experimental group took part in the Expressive Arts Therapy and Brain Gym intervention for 8 weeks. Participants in the waitlist control group were administered to the same intervention after follow-up phase. The results revealed that most of the participants had scored moderate Emotional Intelligence, Social Competence, Attention, Working Memory, Academic Achievement and Quality of Life. There was significant difference between Learning Disabled Boy and Girl Adolescent students in Emotional Intelligence. There is a significant difference in Experimental group and Waitlist control group in Emotional Intelligence, Attention and Quality of Life. Expressive Arts Therapy and Brain Gym technique had been effective in enhancing the Emotional Intelligence, Social Competence, Working Memory, Academic Achievement of the Learning Disabled Adolescents in the Experimental Group. From the study, it is imperative that Expressive Arts Therapy can be included in the curriculum to enhance the Academic Achievement of the Learning Disabled students and recommends inclusive education.

Key Words: Learning Disability, Expressive Arts Therapy, Emotional Intelligence, Social Competence, Academic Achievement

Major objectives :

- **i)** To identify gender difference in emotional intelligence, social competence, working memory, attention and academic achievement among learning disabled adolescents.
- **ii)** To measure the relationship between emotional intelligence, social competence, working memory, attention and quality of life among learning disabled adolescents.

iii) To enhance the emotional intelligence, social competence, working memory, attention, quality of life and academic achievement of the learning disabled adolescents through an intervention programme based on psychotherapy

Hypothesis:

The following research hypotheses would be tested during the research

H1, "There will be a significant difference among Learning Disabled Boy and Girl Adolescent students in Emotional Intelligence"

H2, "There will be a significant difference among Learning Disabled Boy and Girl Adolescent students in Social Competence"

H3, "There will be a significant difference among Learning Disabled Boy and Girl Adolescent students in Working Memory"

H4, "There will be a significant difference among Learning Disabled Boy and Girl Adolescent students in Attention"

H5, "There will be a significant difference among Learning Disabled Boy and Girl Adolescent students in Academic Achievement"

H6, "There will be a significant difference among Learning Disabled Boy and Girl Adolescent students in Quality of Life"

H7, "There will be a significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Social Competence among Learning Disabled Adolescents"

H8, "There will be a significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Working Memory among Learning Disabled Adolescents"

H9, "There will be a significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Attention among Learning Disabled Adolescents"

H10, "There will be a significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement among Learning Disabled Adolescents"

H11, "There will be a significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Life among Learning Disabled Adolescents"

H12, "There will be a significant relationship between Social Competence and Working Memory among Learning Disabled Adolescents"

H13, "There will be a significant relationship between Social Competence and Attention among Learning Disabled Adolescents"

H14, “There will be a significant relationship between Social Competence and Academic Achievement among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H15, “There will be a significant relationship between Social Competence and Quality of Life among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H16, “There will be a significant relationship between Working Memory and Attention of the Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H17, “There will be a significant relationship between Working Memory and Academic Achievement among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H18, “There will be a significant relationship between Working Memory and Quality of Life among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H19, “There will be a significant relationship between Attention and Academic Achievement among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H20, “There will be a significant relationship between Attention and Quality of Life among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H21, “There will be a significant relationship between Academic Achievement and Quality of Life among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H22, “There will be significant difference between Experimental Group and Waitlist Control Group in Emotional Intelligence among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H23, “There will be significant difference between Experimental Group and Waitlist Control Group in Social Competence among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H24, “There will be significant difference between Experimental and Waitlist Control Group in Attention among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H25, “There will be significant difference between Experimental Group and Waitlist Control Group in Working Memory among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H26, “There will be significant difference between Experimental Group and Waitlist Control Group in Academic Achievement among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H27, “There will be significant difference between Experimental Group and Waitlist Control Group in Quality of Life among Learning Disabled Adolescents”

H28, “There will be significant difference during before, after and follow-up phases in emotional intelligence among learning disabled adolescents”

H29, “There will be significant difference during before, after and follow-up phases in social competence among learning disabled adolescents”

H30, “There will be significant difference during before, after and follow-up phases in attention among learning disabled adolescents”

H31, “There will be significant difference during before, after and follow-up phases in working memory among learning disabled adolescents”

H32, “There will be significant difference during before, after and follow-up phases in academic achievement among learning disabled adolescents”

H33, “There will be significant difference during before, after and follow-up phases in quality of life among learning disabled adolescents”

Methodology :

Population and sampling frame

Location of the Study

Wisdomms Special School and Learning Centre, Chennai and Saraswathi Kendra Learning Centre for Children, Chennai were selected for the study. The reasons for selecting these centers are as follows

* Availability of the participants

* National Institute of Open School (NIOS) based curriculum

* Permission provided by the school authorities

Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling procedure was followed. Purposive sampling is a non probability sampling technique where the researcher deliberately chooses the sample items. It is also known as deliberate sampling, judgment sampling, selective sampling, or subjective sampling (Kothari, 2004). The sample included 80 learning disabled adolescents aged between 11 years to 16 years. The learning disabled adolescents comprised of dyslexic adolescents. The learning disabled adolescents (N=80) were screened and diagnosed for intelligence, reading score and writing score to identify dyslexic adolescents. In the experimental group, there were 22 boys and 13 girls. In waitlist control group, there were 14 boys and 17 girls.

Inclusion criteria

* Adolescents with dyslexia only
* Adolescents in the age group between 12 to 16 years
* Adolescents with poor memory and attention
* Adolescents with average emotional intelligence and social competency skills

Exclusion Criteria

* Adolescents with intellectual disorder
* Adolescents with psychological disorder
* Adolescents with high academic achievement
* Adolescents with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Research Design

Before, After and Follow-up with Waitlist Control Group Design was used for the purpose of research. In a waitlist control group design, the intervention will be administered to experimental group. The waitlist control group will be under waiting list and will receive the intervention after experimental group (Schimelpfening, 2021).

Methodology

The primary data for the study was collected using questionnaires and the study was carried out in 4 stages.

Stage I: From Wisdomms Special School and Learning Centre, Chennai and Saraswathi Kendra Learning Centre for Children, Chennai, 80 learning disabled adolescents were selected. The learning disabled adolescents were diagnosed for dyslexia using Raven's Standard Progressive Test, Schonel Graded Reading Test and Schonell Graded Spelling Test. After considering factors like moderate intelligence quotient (IQ) and low reading score and spelling score, 70 learning disabled adolescents were included in the study. All the 70 students were assessed using a Case Study Schedule, The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), Social Competence Scale (SCS), Moss Attention Rating Scale (MARS), Youth Disability Screener and Digit Span Test.

Stage II: After assessments, the learning disabled adolescents were divided into 2 groups – 35 adolescents from Saraswathi Kendra Learning Centre for Children, Chennai and 31 adolescents from Wisdomms Special School and Learning Centre, Chennai. The adolescents of Saraswathi Kendra Learning Centre for Children (N=35) belonged to experimental group and the adolescents

of Wisdomms Special School and Learning Centre belonged to waitlist control group (N=31). The experimental group received the intervention for 8 weeks (20 sessions) whereas the waitlist control group were kept waiting and they participated in the intervention at the end of follow-up phase. The therapy was administered to the Experimental group on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for an hour for 8 weeks (20 sessions). And to the waitlist control group, the therapy was administered at the end for 1 month on every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for an hour.

Stage III: In this stage, the learning disabled adolescents were reassessed to measure the effectiveness of the intervention by administering the psychological tests used initially in stage II.

Stage IV: Here, the participants were measured using the same psychological tests used in Stage II. This follow-up phase followed after a month gap from the completion of intervention.

Tools used

The tools used in the study were

1. Case Study Schedule
2. Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices
3. Schonell Graded Reading Test
4. Schonell Graded Spelling Test
5. The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)
6. Social Competence Scale (SCS)
7. Moss Attention Rating Scale (MARS)
8. Youth Disability Screener (YDS)
9. Digit Span Test – Subscale of Malin's Intelligence Scale for Indian Children

Findings:

- Learning Disabled adolescents were diagnosed with poor intelligence, poor reading ability and poor writing ability. These were identified as a major causal factor to develop psychological disorders such as poor self-awareness, poor social interaction, decreased academic performance, altogether affecting their quality of life. Considering the impact of intelligence and reading and writing scores on academic performance, emotional intelligence, social competence, working memory, attention and quality of life, this study delves deeper to study the characteristics of these variables on gender, relationship between them and to identify the effect of Expressive Arts Therapy.

- The results of the study shows that the group is homogenous as the sample of the schools (Saraswathi Kendra Learning Centre for Children, Chennai and Wisdomms Special School and Learning Centre, Chennai) had uniform NIOS Curriculum, age group of students allotted to classes, examinations and syllabus. This facilitated the experimenter to conduct the therapy at both the centers.
- The ANOVA results on the influence of gender on the variables shows that there was a significant difference in Emotional Intelligence among Learning Disabled Boy and Girl Adolescent students. It is imperative that due to internalization of emotions, girls tend to suppress expressing emotions and that affects their tendency to be self-aware, self-regulate, stay motivated.
- The correlation study among the variables shows that there is no correlation among the variables and hence there is no multicollinearity. This is important as the variables stand unique and independent which is a requirement to conduct the therapy.
- Expressive Arts Therapy and Brain Gym were effective in enhancing Emotional Intelligence, Social Competence, Working Memory and Academic Achievement. Expressing emotions through art is a gateway to relax out body and mind. Learning Disabled adolescents were identified to possess internalizing problems, poor social interaction beyond school and decreased academic performance. The therapy had been effective in enriching the emotional intelligence, social competence, working memory and academic achievement among the participants.
- As the students were asked to gain knowledge on emotions, engage in individual activity and group activity to express their emotions, initiate interactions, the group gained an ecosystem of experiences to share and reflect emotions. Art and exercise as a medium of expression brought in favourable conditions to self-reflect emotions during the therapy session. Few activities that had critical thinking and logical thinking component created a venue to engage the participants with full concentration and attention. Quick decisions and spontaneous answers created a unique environment to work on their ability to recall and recognize, thus contributing to improve working memory. The participants were asked to gain awareness on their overall well-being by analyzing their learning disability condition and their readiness to learn to measure and identify quality of life through introspecting activities.

- Altogether, the Expressive Arts Therapy and Brain Gym catered to two categories of activities. One that helped to improve the cognitive measures such as attention, working memory and affective measures such as improve emotional intelligence, social competence and quality of life. These cognitive measures and affective measures become the significant contributing factor for academic achievement. The results show that the participants had enriching experiences in both the cognitive measures and affective measures. This reflects in the result with significant improvement in Emotional Intelligence, Social Competence, Working Memory and Academic Achievement.
- The variables such as attention and quality of life demands further studies to identify the impact of Expressive Arts Therapy and Brain Gym. This may be due to fact that the measurement used for the variable attention is a teacher-rated questionnaire and thus the influence of bias could be one factor to address "the lack of improvement in attention. Quality of life aims to introspect the conditions of learning disability and its impact on their readiness to learn." This too experienced biased results from participants as many were unaware of their learning disabled condition, neither were they ready to accept the relation of poor academic achievement is due to the existing condition. This lack of insight over their learning disabled condition might be the reason for no improvement in quality of life.

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