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Adapted Dance Class and Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Abstract

Background: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral symptoms. Although a variety of interventions for those with ASD are available, Adapted Dance Class (ADC), also called Dance Movement Therapy (DMT), is a relatively understudied intervention that has the potential support social skill development for this population.

Method: This is a descriptive, exploratory case study in which researchers aimed to discover whether DMT is effective in promoting social and communication skills in adolescents with ASD. We viewed 16 videos of four students who participated in two DMT classes and procedurally documented social behaviors of attention, motor imitation, verbal imitation, following directions, participation, and turn-taking. Data was described using descriptive statistics and analyzed using Spearman correlation coefficients.

Results: Observed social behaviors included attention, motor imitation, following directions, and participation. One participant was found to have Spearman correlation coefficients of $r(1.0000)$, $p < .0001$ for Attention, $r(1.0000)$, $p < .0001$ for Motor Imitation, and $r(1.0000)$, $p < .0001$ for Following Directions.

Conclusion: Data was insufficient to draw conclusions on correlation coefficients; however, descriptive exploratory information found will be beneficial to support ongoing research in this emerging intervention area. Occupational therapists are skilled in interventions that can assess and analyze behaviors that provide continued evidence based practice on the use of DMT and its influence on social and communication skills in adolescents with ASD. Researchers suggest continuation of this exploration using larger samples, preferably through field observations, to obtain quantitative data.

Keywords: adolescent, attention, following directions, imitation, participation, social interaction

Appendix A

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