Effects of Educational Improvements on Student Social Desirability

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Abstract

This study was designed to examine effects of educational improvements on students social desirability. The sample of 360 students was recruited from primarily schools and then they were screened for learning disorder; final sample consisted of 38 female students. They were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. The experimental group received multi sensory training. Both groups were administered Social Desirability Test before and after training. Results show that there was significant differences between two groups in social desirability after training procedure. Students who had received treatment show higher scores in Social Desirability Test.

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Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Dr Zafer Bekirogullari.
keywords: Learning disability, Social desirability, Academic achievement

1. Introduction

Children and adolescents with developmental disabilities are at a greater risk of developing mental health or behavioral problems than their peers. This fact is supported by several epidemiological studies: Rutter, Graham, P. & Yule (1970) studied 10- to 12-year-old children on the Isle of Wight and found that emotional and behavioral disorders were more common in children with learning disabilities. Corbett (1979) showed in a study of children with severe learning disability in south-east London that 47% of the sample had some form of psychological disorder. Emerson & Hatton (2007) studied 641 children with learning disabilities and found higher rates of social disadvantage and an increased risk of all psychiatric disorders. Some children with LD also have problems with social relationships – difficulty in making and retaining friends (Westwood, 2008).

Each day at school, children work to maintain and establish interpersonal relationships, attempt to develop social and a sense of belongingness, observe and model standards for performance displayed by others, and are rewarded for behaving in ways are valued by teachers and peers. Always, children who succeed in these social endeavors are also the most successful students (Wentzel, 1999). It is proposed that social desirability can facilitate learning and performance outcomes by promoting positive interactions with teachers and peers and, from a motivational perspective, by providing students with additional incentives to achieve (Wentzel, 1999).

One study explore relationship between self-concept and academic achievement, it hypothesis that the relationship between academic achievement and self-concept can best be understood in terms of the child's achievement standing compared with that of classmates. At this study 159 6–12 yr old academic underachievers in 17 self-contained classrooms were tested. Researchers were administered the Metropolitan Achievement Test and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. When relative within-classroom achievement standing was not considered, reading achievement was not significantly related to self-concept,
although mathematics achievement was. When relative within-classroom achievement standing was considered, both reading and math achievement were found to be significantly related to self-concept (Rogers, Smith, & Coleman, 1978).

Most studies focused on effects of self concept and social desirability on students’ academic achievements, this study focused on the other side of the problem. This research investigates possible effects of academic achievements on social desirability of students who have LD.

To enhance academic achievements of student multisensory training was used; Gordon, Vaughn & Schumm, (1993) noted that multisensory instructional techniques are successful for learning disability. In addition, computer-assisted instruction was used to greater emphasis on skills learned. Past researches showed positive effects of computer-assisted instruction (Fulk & Stormont- Spurgin, 1995; Gordon et al., 1993). In this research working memory software and metronome was used as computer-assisted instruction, these device motivate student to learn and help them to enhance their auditory and visual sensation and audio-visual coordination.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

In this research multi-stage sampling was used, at first stage three primarily schools were randomly selected. These schools had 12 classes and 360 students; teachers identified 240 of them based on spelling disability symptoms, and they were screened for spelling disability. Final sample consist of 38 female students.

2.2. Procedure

The Sample of 38 students was randomly assigned to an experimental and a control group. Students in both condition individually participated in two assessment sessions; these consisted of an initial pre-training assessment session and a post-training assessment session. The assessment task was Social Desirability Test. The experimental group received 12 sessions of multisensory training and the control group received no treatment.

2.3. Measures

2.3.1. Social Desirability Test

Social desirability refers to the tendency behave in a manner that will be viewed favorably by others. Ford and Rabin (1970) were made this test to assess children needs for social acceptance. This test has 17 close ended questions; internal constancy for boys was (0.83) and for girls was (0.85).

2.3.2. Spelling test

To test spelling ability of the student a script was selected from elementary reading book. This script contained all Farsi alphabets. Reliability of the equivalent forms was good (0.86).

2.3.3. Metronome

This devices has LCD and microprocessor, it makes sound and light signs. Metronome can work in different ways: 1. the device makes noise then the word will be read, 2. the device make light and the word will
be shown. 3. the device makes a light and a noise at the same time and then words will be read and shown. These facilities improve student memory and sensory coordination.

2.3.4. Working memory software

This software has three parts, auditory enhancement, visual enhancement, and audio-visual coordination. All these parts have eight levels, the first level is the easiest and the last level is the hardest, the game begins level depends on student ability. The software reinforces correct responses, this makes students motivated.

2.3.5. Multi-sensory training

This training plan consisted of 12 sessions which is mentioned in Table 1.

Table1: Training plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Auditory sensation enhancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Auditory memory enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Visual sensation enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Work on visual sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>Use metronome to enhance student auditory sensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Work on auditory sequence by metronome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 7</td>
<td>Use metronome to enhance student visual sensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 8</td>
<td>Work on visual sequence by metronome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Audio-visual coordination enhancement via metronome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 10</td>
<td>Auditory memory enhancement by working memory software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 11</td>
<td>Visual memory enhancement by working memory software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 12</td>
<td>Audio-visual coordination enhancement by working memory software</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Result

Analyses were directed at examining the effect of the training procedure on total spelling error, and score of Social Desirability Test.

3.1. Analysis of total spelling error

Results show that there was significant differences between two groups in dictation score after training procedure. Students in experimental group showed higher score than students in the control group ($F = 40.5, p < 0.001$).
3.2. Analysis of Social Desirability Test

Results show that there was significant differences between two groups in Social Desirability Test score after training procedure. Students in experimental group showed higher score than students in the control group (F = 42.5, p< 0.001). When their spelling score increased their social desirability score increased accordingly.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was exploring effects educational improvements on student’s social disirability. To enhance student academic achievements multisensory training was used. After training procedure students in the experimental group had better dictation score than students in the control group. In addition, students in experimental group show higher score in Social Desirability Test than students in control group. Possibly, after training they have learned they can control their academic performance and then their self concept is improved. They probably think if they can control academic outcomes, they can control their social relationship. As result their social desirability increased too. Most of the past researches in this area are co-relational (for example see Wentzel, 1991). Effectiveness of the training is consisting with previous research. Wentzel (1991) found that there is relationship between social competence and academic achievements.

5. References


