Action Research for Innovative Program of Picture Books in Early Intervention that Applied to Increase the Cognitive Concepts of Daily Life about Preschoolers with Special Needs

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Background:
Children were always curious about the world surrounded by them, but for many preschoolers, they didn’t have chances to propose their question about their life, especially for those with special needs. Preschoolers with special needs often spent a lot of time in training for their basic living ability. According to the research (Monhardt & Monhardt, 2006), children could promote their cognitive ability by learning in a meaningful and designed situation, and Ostlund (1988) had proposed that there was potential for children’s literature to create a close and meaningful situation for children to learn. Therefore, our study had designed a series of intervention activities through pictures books to promote the cognitive ability in preschoolers with special needs.

Purpose:
The goal of this study was to design a series of effective intervention teaching activities through pictures books to promote the cognitive ability in preschoolers with special needs and to investigate its effectiveness in order to provide some suggestions for reference for education practitioners. There were three questions for this study to investigate:
1. Could picture books intervention activities promote color concepts in cognition of preschoolers with special needs?
2. Could picture books intervention activities promote the participation of preschoolers with special needs?
3. Could picture books intervention activities promote the concentration of preschoolers with special needs?

Methods:
Participants
We’ve chosen an early intervention institute in Taipei City as an intervention place. There were four preschoolers with special needs who were 5-6 year old be recruited as participants, and they had received 40 minutes intervention per week for three weeks.

Research tools
In order to cooperate with the institute theme, the researchers have designed a series of intervention teaching activities aimed at color concepts. The picture books “Hello, there is a letter!” was adopted in the whole intervention period, and the intervention period were all videotaped and underwent translation analysis.

Research processes
Action research was adopted in this study. The processes of an action research were a recycling model; they were planning, action, observation, reflection, revise, and action, and these processes have been followed in this study (see Table 1).

Data collecting and analyzing
Through weekly teaching videotaping and qualitative data collecting, the learning situations of the preschoolers were analyzed by observation, diary record, and narrative evaluation and these data would be seen as the foundation of intervention activities adjusting. Besides, the cognitive ability in preschoolers with special needs was promoted or not would be evaluated by goal attainment checklist.

Result:
The first results were as follows:
1. Picture books intervention activities could promote effectively at least one color concept in preschoolers with special needs.
2. During the intervention time, participation in preschoolers with special needs had been promoted obviously, especially in interaction with picture books.
3. Through observation record analyzing, researchers had found out that the lasting time of concentration of the preschoolers with special needs had all been promoted.

Conclusions:
According to the result of this pilot study, here were some suggestions:
1. Further studies could try to design the picture books intervention activities in every domain in cognition to understand its effectiveness.
2. Preschoolers with special needs did need more chances for practicing; there was a need for gaining the intervention times in a week.
3. It could be designed to cooperate with the home-based picture books intervention activities.
4. To enforce the picture books intervention activities with different kinds of preschoolers with special needs and to raise the frequency and times of the intervention.
5. We had chosen an institute as our research place, and we would like to recommend that not only school but also intervention groups should use picture books intervention activities to promote the cognitive ability in preschoolers with special needs.

Table 1: Action Research

1. To focus on preschoolers with special needs' requirements and to discover their problems in living and cognition.
2. To design the teaching strategies of the picture books intervention activities
3. To find a collaborative institute
4. To enforce the picture books intervention activities by cooperating with the institute theme and to discover the problems through videotaping.
5. To reflect the teaching process and to make a revision according to the discussion.
6. To revise the picture books intervention activities.
7. To enforce the corrected picture books intervention activities and to discover the problems through videotaping.
8. The corrected picture books intervention activities could promote the cognition in preschoolers with special needs.
9. To reflect the teaching process again and to make a revision according to the discussion.

The next cycle