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Instructional Strategies and Challenges for Training Daily Life Skills for Students with Intellectual Disabilities: Teachers' Guide

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Abstract: It is very essential to teach students with intellectual disabilities daily living skills such as bathing, dressing, eating, washing hand, toileting, get in and out of bed, walk as needed, e.t.c in order to take care of themselves and live independently. however, this paper discussed the concepts of intellectual disabilities, daily living skills, instructional strategies, challenges for teaching daily living skills, provide some recommendations and a conclusion was drawn.

Keywords: Instructional Strategies, Challenges, Teaching, Daily Living Skills, and Intellectual Disabilities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The students those experiencing Intellectual Disabilities need more extra support services than their peers through employing certain training strategies to carry out daily life activities at home and schools. Unfortunately, teachers, parents, social workers, and care givers are not fully aware with the right and appropriate strategies to be employ for training daily living skills to students with intellectual disabilities, so that it is imperative to have a literature that will guide them to select appropriate teaching strategies and help them to address the challenges they are experiencing for training daily living skills to students experiencing intellectual disabilities.

Concept of Intellectual Disabilities

The commonly used definition of intellectual disabilities is that of Grossman (1973), cited from American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD) (1970), defined intellectual disabilities as "significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance." Connecticut State Department of Education (2007),

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also reported that "it is a significant impairment in general intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior". Moreover, in line of the above two definitions, Idris (2023) cited Connecticut State Department of Education (1998), and outlined three essential characteristics of the students with intellectual disabilities as follows:

1. Impairment in general intellectual functioning
2. Impairment in a domain variously termed social incompetence, adaptive skills and adaptive behavior
3. Developmental onset, requiring that evidence must be available of significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior before the age 18 (State Department of Education,1998).

In another development, made by Johnson (2019), outlined some symptoms for identifying students those experiencing intellectual disabilities which comprised: "failure to meet intellectual milestones, problem learning to talk or trouble speaking clearly, Sitting, crawling, or walking later than other children, memory problems, inability to understand the consequences of actions, inability to think logically, childish behavior inconsistent with the child's age, lack of curiosity, learning difficulties, Intellectual Quotient below 70, inability to lead a fully independent life due to challenges." In addition, Zeldin (2016), argued that students with intellectual disabilities are characterized by the following:

1. Language Delay: Zeldin (2016), reported that "it is the first signs of intellectual disabilities in which the students experience delay in expressive language (speech), and receptive language (understanding)."
2. Fine Motor/Adaptive Delay: This entails significant delay in activities such as self-feeding, toileting, and dressing (Zeldin, 2016).
3. Cognitive Delay: Difficulties with memory, problem-solving, and logical reasoning.
4. Social Delay: Lack of interest in age-appropriate toys and delay in imaginative play and reciprocal play with age-matched peers (Zeldin, 2016).
5. Gross-Motor Developmental Delay: Infrequently accompany the cognitive, language, and fine-motor/adaptive delays associated with intellectual disabilities. unless the underlying condition results in both intellectual disabilities and cerebral palsy (Zeldin, 2016).
6. Behavioral Disturbances: Students with intellectual disabilities associated with aggression, self-injury, defiance, inattention, hyperactivity, sleep disturbance, and stereotypic behavior (Zeldin, 2016).
7. Neurologic and Physical Abnormalities: Prevalence of intellectual disabilities is increased among students with seizure disorders, microcephaly, and macrocephaly (Zeldin, 2016).

However, determining the causes and level of severity of students with intellectual disabilities are very important when it comes to designing an effective instruction. Unfortunately, almost 30 to 50 percent of the causes is not identified even after thorough diagnostic evaluation and this aspect remain subjected gap for researchers to empirically undertake studies on it (Cury et al., 1997). They further reported that intellectual disabilities are broadly cause by the following, namely: genetic causes, environmental causes, prenatal causes, perinatal causes, postnatal causes, iodine deficiency, and malnutrition (Cury et al., 1997).

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Daily Living Skills for Students with Intellectual Disability

Daily living skills for students with intellectual disabilities simply means the Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) are routine, self-care tasks in which most students participate on a daily basis with parents and teachers' prompt. Edenwald (2021) reported that "the basic daily living skills include showering and bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, get in and out of bed, walk as needed, get up and down from a chair or bed, and move from one place to another to complete other daily living skills." Moreover, another set of daily living skills also exists, sometime called as "Instrumental Activities," Edenwald (2021) "they include managing finances, keeping the family home safe and clean, shopping and preparing meals, communicating via telephone and taking medications as prescribed." Friend (2008). Argued that "Daily living skills are home and community living activities those allow individuals to deal with current and future day to day demands and responsibilities. These skills enable the individual to learn to be independent and responsible. The skills are: personal care and hygiene, clothing-dressing, laundry process, shoe and shoe care, food preparation and eating, money, transportation, job skills, home and kitchen management, time management, leisure and recreation".

Instructional Strategies for Training Daily Living Skills

Klein and Cook (2001), argued "no single instructional strategy of teaching daily living skills to students with intellectual disabilities can work alone without employing another instructional strategy at the same time." These instructional strategies enhance and enrich the learning of daily living skills for students with intellectual disabilities (Klein & Cook, 2001). Meanwhile, Ruteere (2013) outlined some of the instructional strategies for training daily living skills to students with intellectual disabilities include: Task analysis, prompting, Individualized educational plan, discrete trial training and structured teaching, interactive approach, cooperative approach, modeling, direct instruction, peer tutoring, team teaching.

1. Task Analysis: Ruteere (2013) "This is a teaching strategy which involves breaking complex tasks down into sub-tasks and reinforce in small, teachable steps. In teaching daily living skills to students with intellectual disabilities, the sub-skills may need to be taught and reinforced in sequence, for easy mastery of the skills."
2. Prompting: This is an instructional strategy for training daily living skills to students with intellectual disabilities, in which any one of the several different cues (e.g gestures, illustrations, photograph, and modeling) are used to help students learn new skills or behavior. The prompt is given before students getting ready to perform a task in order to prevent committing an error. Prompt is also used to teach behavioral and academic skills (Lynch, 2021).
3. Modeling**:** It is an observation learning, copying or even role playing. Modeling involves observation, imitation and copying. It incorporates such processes as: Attention Phase, Retention Phase, Reproduction Phase and Motivation Phase (Ruteere, 2013).
4. Applied Behavior Analysis: Teachers used this intervention strategy to increase the occurrence of desired behavior and decrease undesired behaviors in all learning situations. This method relies on the direct, repeated measurement and recording of observable behaviors targeted for change. This strategy helps the teachers to remain focused and work on the targeted skills only (Reynold & Zupanic, 2011).

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5. Discrete-Trial Training: It is mostly applicable in teacher-directed methods. It involves presentation of a stimulus or teacher's instruction, and then student's response is followed by a consequence in each trial. A correct response is reinforced with praise or a tangible reinforcer, while incorrect responses result in correction such as verbal feedback or physical guidance. This type of strategy generally includes multiple trials in teaching a specific daily living skills (Ruteere, 2013).
6. Structured Teaching: It is an instructional strategy developed by the University of North Carolina, United State. It dealt with understanding of the unique characteristics of students with intellectual disabilities, organizing students' environment, developing appropriate learning activities and teaching of daily living skills through various teaching methods. Brennan (2018) added that "this strategy also involves helping students understand what is expected of them." Pierangelo and Giuliani (2008) stressed that "structured teaching greatly enhance students acquisition of daily living skills for independent functioning which will assist throughout life."
7. Individualized Educational Programme: It guides the teachers to enhance teaching daily living skills through addressing individual students' needs. It spells out where the student is, where the students should be going, how the student will get there, how long it will take and how to tell if the student has arrived (Friend, 2008).
8. Interactive Teaching: in this strategy students are engaged in different activities during the lesson. For instance, some students would be involved in distributing materials, others in arranging tables, while still others did other class activities The involvement made them active and attentive. It also made them feel appreciated. This method was important because it assisted the students to avoid being engaged in other types of behavior that would make them be withdrawn from the learning situations. (Ministry of Education, 2001).
9. Cooperative Teaching: Ruteere (2013) "This is a teaching method aimed at improving academic achievement and social acceptance of students with intellectual disabilities. It involves arranging students into cooperative learning groups. Rather than competing against one another for grades, group members share the responsibilities for helping each other. The emphasis within each group is cooperation and shared responsibility. Cooperative learning arrangements promote increased academic achievements for students with intellectual disabilities. Cooperative teaching is considered a promising instructional approach." It encourages students with varying strengths and abilities to work together toward achieving a common goal. It is a method in which small heterogeneous groups of students are actively involved jointly in accomplishing an activity or assignment. The teacher structures the task such that each student significantly contributes to the completion of the activity according to his/her ability. It increased opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to experience success in school. It also benefited all students by enhancing their self-esteem as well as increasing acceptance and understanding between students themselves (Ministry of Education, 2001).
10. Direct Instruction: Direct instruction centred on the teaching process, offering special educators powerful methods for improving the daily living skills to students with intellectual disabilities. Teachers ensure that individual students receive assistance depending on their needs. The teacher maintains a strong academic focus and almost all

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available instructional time intensity. The teacher also ensures that he/she chooses appropriate tasks for his/her students, as well as monitoring their progress (Ruteere, 2013).

11. Peer Tutoring: Ruteere, (2013) cited Pierangelo and Giuliani (2008) reported that "this is involvement of other students as instructional aides. students with intellectual disabilities can serve as tutors for younger peers. Peer teaching allows students more opportunity for interaction and feedback from one another. To ensure success of peer tutoring programs, the teacher must remain actively involved. Teachers facilitate the learning by ensuring that relevant daily living skills are practiced. Teachers also monitor the performance of both tutors and tutees. Peer tutoring has a potential of improving academic achievement of students but it does not necessarily improve the self-concept of students with intellectual disabilities."
12. Team Teaching: In this instructional strategy, Pierangelo and Giuliani (2008) posited that "staff members combine their specialized skills areas to team-teach the students. In addition to staff members, other various professionals and paraprofessionals can be part of the teaching team. Each of the team members contributes according to his/her specialty areas. Utilization of team-teaching provides the inmates with ongoing, consistent and individualized focus in all daily living skills. This approach enables the students with intellectual disabilities to get the right skills from the specialist teacher."

Challenges for Training Daily Living Skills to Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Most often, instructional materials for teaching daily living skills to students with intellectual disabilities are lacking which remained a threat for training daily living skills. For instance in the word of Ruteere (2013) "the most common challenge is shortage of funds from the government to Ministry of Education, specifically which cater for the education of students with intellectual disabilities. the school administration may not be able to procure enough teaching and learning materials to enhance teaching of daily living skills. Teacher-student ratio in most inclusive schools are high especially because of free primary education in most Nigerian states." National Action on Education for All (2015) further explained that "this affect the implementing of Individualized Educational Program." In a report made by the United Nation (2003), it was noted that "there was inadequate provision of education to the students with intellectual disabilities, specifically teaching of daily living skills which require concrete materials for concept formation." McMary and Sarah (2005) observed that "negative attitude from both the teachers and the school administration play a significant role in the training of daily living skills to students with intellectual disabilities. Negative attitude makes the teacher feel detached from the students. This limits the teacher's attachment and interest in teaching students with intellectual disabilities, hence they continue being dependent on other people."

Moreover, dearth of qualified personnel for students with intellectual disability is another challenge for training them daily living skills. Care givers who are not well-trained and groom in the field of intellectual disabilities may not understand vividly their nature hence would not appropriately apply training methods or even strategies effectively. In extreme cases, Friend (2008) "ignorance concerning intellectual disabilities can result in quite damaging prejudice, hostility and rejection." Ruteere (2013) cited McMary and Sarah (2005) "training daily living skills to students with intellectual disabilities is also adversely affected by shortage of

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specialized aids and equipment, specialized personnel, inappropriate curriculum, insufficient institutions and programmes, lack of coordination and unity of purpose between and among service providers, inadequate support staff, an absence of clear policy guidelines, lack of functional legal status on special education provisions, laxity on the side of government to fund special education materials, and among others."

Recommendations

1. The government should allocate adequate funds to purchase the equipment and supplies required to teach kids with intellectual disabilities daily life skills.
2. Instructions of teaching daily living skills should be design individually for student with intellectual disabilities by the team of multi-disciplinary professionals.
3. In order to choose appropriate techniques for training daily living skills to students with intellectual impairments, teachers should be exposed to the nature, types, causes, characteristics and assessment of student with intellectual disability.
4. Teachers, social professionals, and care givers should regularly attend courses, seminars, and conferences on how to educate students with intellectual disabilities daily life skills using improvised materials manufactured locally
5. Government, educators, parents, social workers, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), philanthropic organizations e.t.c should work together to address the difficulties in training daily life skills to students with intellectual disability.

2. CONCLUSION

Employing effective techniques for training daily life skills are highly significant for the upliftment of life of students. This was in line of students with intellectual disabilities do not acquire these skills normally as compared to their so-called counterpart peers. Most often, their so-called peers learned these skills normally through developmental milestones. Meanwhile, due to the nature of students with intellectual disabilities experienced delay in developmental stage and in learning daily life skills. They learned these skills through employing certain teaching strategies by teachers, social workers, and care givers in schools and home. Some of the teaching strategies they used include: task analysis, prompting, Individualized Educational Plan, applied behavior analysis. modeling, structured teaching, e.t.c. More so, teachers experienced serious challenges in training daily life skills that adversely affect the training instructions of students with intellectual disability.

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