

The Effects of Mindfulness on Adolescents with Special Needs' Readiness for Learning

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Abstract

Students with mild intellectual disability aged between 13 to 16 years old attend a special needs secondary school, with an academic cum vocation curriculum in a typical four-hour school day. Anecdotally, educators commonly feedback that student who experience severe reading challenges may develop adverse attitude towards academic learning by adolescent age.

This pilot study aims to investigate the effects of providing students with mindfulness tools and its impact on fostering resilience and readiness to learn. It also examines whether mindfulness tools promote decoding and encoding skills necessary for reading and spelling. The study employs single group pre/post-test design. Four students attend a 13-session mindfulness cum phonological awareness programme held twice weekly for an hour. The sessions are jointly conducted by a psychologist and a speech pathologist. Students are taught mindfulness activities for the first half of each session followed by phonological awareness activities/instruction.

This presentation will address whether the ability to acquire skills necessary for academic learning were moderated by mindfulness strategies. Findings of this study may contribute to the development of support necessary for adolescent students in the special education sector.

Keywords: mild intellectual disability, special education, mindfulness, readiness to learn, phonological awareness.