Use of Video Modeling to Improve Independent Functioning skills and Decrease Prompt Dependency in Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Abstract

In a school setting, students are expected to continually transition, which may cause behavioral problems and prompt dependency to complete transitional routines. The purpose of this study is to analyze whether using video modeling will improve independent functioning skills and decrease prompt dependency of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Statement of the Problem

One of the diagnostic criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the insistence of sameness and inflexible adherence to routines represented by extreme distress at small changes and difficulty with transitions, among other characteristics (DSM-V, 2011). That difficulty to adjust to changes and the strength in visual processing ability in this group has motivated teachers and professionals to create instructional strategies focused on visual cues. Some of those strategies are visual schedules and video modeling (VM) or video self-modeling (VSM). Visual schedules help students anticipate the order of events and activities and increase independence (Cohen & Sloan, 2007). Video modeling has been suggested as a positive instructional strategy since students are able to observe successful appropriate behaviors rather than inappropriate negative behaviors (Cihak, Fahrenkrog, Ayres, and Smith, 2010; Schmidt and Bonds-Raacke, 2013).

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to analyze whether video modeling will improve independent functioning skills and decrease prompt dependency in ASD students. The following research question will be investigated: How effective is video modeling in increasing independent functioning skills and decreasing prompt dependency in students with ASD during transitions?

Literature Review

Peer reviewed studies on visual supports and prompt reduction were analyzed. Studies show that transitions may be difficult for students with autism, and implementation of transitional supports may reduce transition time, problematic behaviors, and prompt dependency, (Cihak, 2010). Transitional supports have shown to be effective in increasing independent transitional skills. Students showed increased difficulty when transitioning to non-preferred activities or routine changes, with increased episodes of aggression, non-compliance, latency, and prompt dependency.

According to West (2008), the use of visual cues decreases adult prompting and increases motivation. Participation in less restrictive environments of students with autism may be hindered by behavior difficulty without external controls. An example of external controls would be visual supports. However, the study conducted by Jewell, Grippy, Hupp & Krohn (2007), contradicted the general consensus suggesting that changes in schedule and familiar people are detrimental to the progress of students with ASD. According to Jewell et al. (2007), there were no changes in the number of crisis events presented by students before or after rotation changes. Nonetheless, there is a body of literature that suggests otherwise.

Guardino and Fullerton (2014), conducted a study on the effect of transition times in an inclusion setting was reviewed. Classroom modifications on transition time were implemented,

and given the number of daily transitions, proactive strategies to reduce challenging behaviors and academic time loss are needed. Data showed a decrease in transition times and classroom disruption, and increase in learning time. Subsequently during the intervention phase, data showed less prompt dependency.

Research Methodology

This study will take place in a mixed-grade class of four first graders (3 males and 1 female) and three second graders (all males) with stationary individual visual schedules. Most of them are completing parts of the transition process, but none of them have been successful in completing the whole routine with few or no prompts. The routine consists of the following steps: a) go to their individual schedule, b) remove icon for next activity, and c) take icon to the matching checking board. The whole process is completed with continuous prompts (verbal, gestural, partial and full physical) from the adults in the room. One male second grader, and two first graders (male and female) will participate in the study. All of the students are Hispanic with a diagnosis of ASD and they are all attending a self-contained autism class. The ESE teacher will be responsible for implementing the plan and collecting data.

Data will be collected on number of prompts required to complete a transitional routine by the steps listed above, and number of steps being completed without physical or hand over hand prompts.

Findings

As a result of my research, I hope to find improvement in the independent functioning skills of my students, as well as less dependency on adult prompting through the use of video modeling in a highly structured environment. Video modeling for transitioning has not been

tried with this group yet and will make a difference in their daily routine. My hope is that this difference will give this group of students the key to independent transition. If this intervention is successful, I will introduce it to other areas of socio-emotional and independent functioning development. Furthermore, I will share my finding with colleagues to look into the viability of applying it in their classrooms and in other areas of development.

Implications

Students with ASD have difficulty with transitions that may lead to behavioral challenges and prompt dependency. The use of visual supports such as video modeling may assist students in improving their transitional skills and decreasing their dependency on adult prompting. Further research is required to determine the real impact of the implementation of video modeling as a visual support to assist transitions using a stationary visual schedule without any other behavioral supports in place. If this strategy is proven successful in improving independent transitioning, it could be tested in other areas of development. Data collection process will begin in January 19th, 2016, with baseline data, and will continue with intervention and post-intervention data collection. Data will be analyzed and reviewed by March 17th, 2016.

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