Self-Determination and Self-Regulation for Students with Intellectual and Developmental

Disabilities

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Self-determination and self-regulation

From an educational perspective, self-determination is the way that individuals act according to their own decisions. It is characterized by knowing where and when a person should do a certain action without intervention from others. To be self-determined, it is necessary to develop self-regulation skills. Therefore, teaching the self-determination process should go through systematic instructions that focus on specific abilities. One of the major abilities is self-regulation. According to Ellen Galinsky (2010), self-regulation essential for success in school, work, and life. Usually, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are more likely to face difficulties in this area. Therefore, to promote self-regulation, educators should consider three factors as the main aspects of self-regulation. The three aspects are self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement. The purpose of this paper is to clarify some aspects of self-regulation and suggest some strategies to promote and enhance self-regulation.

Self-regulation

Tominey and McClelland (2011) defined self-regulation as the abilities that allow the person to control his or her emotions and behavior. Self-regulation means a high level of emotional control. It means how the person calm himself down in hard situations and how to choose the appropriate action when dealing with others. Self-regulation skills enable individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to manage their own behavior and enhance the quality of their life. Self-regulation is considered a main factor of the self-determination theory. Blair (2009) found "emotions may affect the development of the cognitive functions that contribute to successful self-regulation and thereby to school readiness" (p. 1). Also, self-regulation becomes a serious and challenging task for those who are not self-determined. Educators cannot say that a person is self-determined unless he has the self-regulation characteristics. In fact, to be determined,

especially for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, there is a need to be self-regulated. In most cases, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have some difficulties with being so. As a result, they may have serious issues that related to self-control (Wehmeyer, 2007). The characteristics that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities should have to be self-regulated (such as, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement and self-monitoring) can play an important role in enhancing one's personality.

Self-monitoring

There are several behaviors and characteristics linked with successful school adjustment are associated to self-monitoring skills. Promoting self-monitoring is a prerequisite of self-regulation. Individuals who are able to monitor themselves are more likely to achieve self-regulation characteristics. When the student observes himself, he will have better self-correction abilities. Kazdin, (1980) "because learners who measure and pay close attention to selected behaviors often react to this monitoring information by changing those target behaviors in the desired direction".Students will be more aware of their interactions with others when they are able to monitor themselves. Additionally, educators who are working on promoting self-monitoring allow the student to develop his or her evaluation also. Teachers are better if they give the student the ability to watch a video for his daily life activity at school. That will make the student ask the question, "why am I doing this particular behavior". With the teacher's intervention, the student will be able to rethink about the action and he or she may mange inappropriate behaviors with time (Snider, 1987).

Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is a person's assessment for himself and knowing their places and possibilities. Self-evaluation is a significant regulator of emotions and behaviors. Additionally, the

importance of self-evaluation comes from the ability that allows the individuals to be more aware of their goals and achievements. Self-evaluation also assists the student with intellectual and developmental disabilities to enhance their academic and social performance by training them to evaluate themselves. Hart, (1999) suggests "that the simplest tools to encourage student self-assessment are evaluative questions that force students to think about their work". Special needs educators may apply some strategies to enhance this skill such as asking s student to evaluate himself and reinforce the appropriate response. Educators may use a video to record the student behavior in a situation and allow the student to watch himself and give feedback or comments about his reactions. Sloan (1996) teachers should encourage self-evaluation because self-assessment makes the students active participants in their education. Also, educators may discuss the student reaction with the student himself and what can student do next time to act better if he acts inappropriately. For example, teacher may ask the student "what is the reason for hitting your friend. This kind of question may make the student to evaluate his actions toward others especially with using the reinforcement strategy from his teacher.

Self-reinforcement

When a student behaves in a polite way, educators should reinforce the student directly. On the other hand, the student himself should learn how to reinforce himself. The student with intellectual or developmental disabilities needs to learn self-reinforcement in order to be self-regulated. Self-reinforcement is a very effective factor in building self-regulation. Self-reinforcement means that the student reinforces himself directly after completing a task or after performing an appropriate behavior. Agran (1997) found that self-reinforcement is more effective than teacher reinforcement. Self-reinforcement provides the chance for a student to reinforce himself by their preference and as a result; the student will be more involved in his or her learning

environment. By using self-reinforcement strategy, the teacher may be able to develop and create affective method to teach academic and general life skills.

<u>Strategies to Promote Self-regulation:</u>

Using Exploratory Play in Classroom.

Encouraging students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to experience a variety of games in the classroom can be very beneficial to develop their thinking abilities. Students when playing this kind of games, they never stop using their imaginations. For instance, the student who playing with the toy may imagine the toy is his or her friend. This type of thinking could develop the student's ability to identify specific people in his or her life and as a result will have a better quality of communication.

Encourage Students for Exploratory Conversation.

Language is a vital factor in our life and our behavior. Language can be used enhance self-regulation. Using the appropriate worlds develop the language skills and give the student more ability to develop communication skills; and as a result, the student will have more confidence. Therefore, it is very important for the educator to select a time for free conversation with the student. According to Office of Educational Research and Improvement (2002), "ask and answer" is a very effective strategy that can develop conversation and communication abilities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For example, the teacher may ask or motivate the student to try to explain his feelings or thoughts about a specific situation.

Offer the Students Activities That Develop Independent Skills:

One of the key issues related to special needs is independent skills. Independent skills are in the first consideration for all special needs teachers. When a student with an intellectual and

developmental disability learn, and improve their independent skills, they are on the right path to enhance their quality of life and becoming a part of the society. In fact, independent skills should be taught gradually. Taking this task step by step is the safest way to achieve the most benefit. Educator should focus in specific task each time. Building independent student needs time and effort. For example, a student who have a difficulty holding items, teacher cannot teach a student writing a world before teaching him how to hold the pen first. Moreover, preparing a person with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be independent, requires collaboration between families and professionals. The teacher would work hard to activate the parent's role in this particular process. However, individually, the teacher can help the student to develop some abilities such as getting dressed or teaching morning routine skills. For example, the teacher may model or use another strategy to teach a student teeth brushing by teaching holding the brush first then putting the toothpaste and finally cleaning the teeth. Educators need to accept the student behavior whatever it was. That will teach the student with time to accept others and control his emotion.

Assist the Students to Control Their Emotions and Behaviors.

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are more likely to have difficulties that are related to emotions and behavior. Educators need to accept the student behavior whatever it was. That will teach the student with time to accept others and control his emotion. When the teacher says, "I'm sorry that didn't work out" and cheer up the student, the student will have more ability to control his emotions toward others and even to himself. With time the student will realize that these emotions are not good, but they are not harmful and will disappear. When the student learns this process in dealing with emotions and anger, he will develop an effective way to pass the tough time and sadness. Also, educators and even parents should make sure that

children with disability avoid seeing violence and the anger of someone in their environment. That will have direct negative effects on their personality and their feelings of safety. Feeling safe is a positive factor to the student, especially for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It can help the student to calm down. Therefore, their environment should always contain all factors that ensure safety and happiness.5t

To What Extent Is Self-Regulation Mattered?

While Diaz (2015) argued the effectiveness of teaching self-regulation skills, this paper argued that success people have very strong self-regulation skills. Self-regulation helps the person to regulate all his life aspects. Therefore, self-regulation becomes significant when talking about individuals with intellectual and developmental. Self-regulation skills may develop their thought behavior and emotions. In fact, Special needs, in general, need to enhance those abilities as much as possible. Most of the self-regulation skills are teachable. Even though they are hard in some cases but it is not impossible. Moreover, the importance of self-regulation comes from how the student listens to his teachers and how to manage his anger and listen to the rules. Also, self-regulation skills have positive effects on the student's academic performance such as focusing on learning. Self-regulation can improve the student's abilities in both social and academic life.

Conclusion

Self-regulation includes some important aspects such as self-evaluation self-monitoring and self-reinforcement. Self-regulation is not intellectual ability or an academic skill. It is a complicated ability that student can improve their academic skills through intellectual abilities. Moreover, self-regulation characteristics can be learned and accomplished. However, there are very clear strategies have been discussed previously in this paper that can improve social performance for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These strategies can

be achieved only after selecting the specific problems that related to self-regulation. There is no doubt that self-regulation is fundamental need especially for those who are disabled. Thus, to achieve successful life for those people, teachers should focus on the activities that develop short and long term self-regulation goals. Self-regulation allows the student to deal with his environment and gain an effective strategy to act appropriately with others and enhance his social skills. Also, self-regulation is a very affective when training a student to improve his cognitive abilities such as paying attention. As a result, more success in the academic performing.

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