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TOPIC OF RESEARCH: DRAMA THERAPY FOR ENHANCING EDUCATIONAL INTEREST, CONCENTRATION, AND LIFE SKILLS AMONG CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

FINDINGS

Children with intellectual disabilities often experience difficulties in sustaining educational interest, concentration, and life skills within their daily life and educational settings. In this context, drama therapy provided opportunities for active engagement by interacting with different forms of drama such as role play, action techniques, drama games, puppetry, masks, improvisation, and storytelling. The research objectives were to study the behaviour of children with intellectual disabilities, to implement the drama therapy among children with intellectual disabilities, to identify the specific components of drama for improvement in educational interest, concentration, and life skills among children with intellectual disabilities, and to study the behavioural changes in the children with intellectual disabilities specific to educational interest, concentration, and life skills. The present study used exploratory research design along with a quasi-experimental pre-post intervention, this blended approach allowed to adopt a qualitative research design to study to an under-researched area along with the systematic examination of the changes brought about through the intervention. The sample consisted of twenty secondary-level children with mild intellectual disabilities studying in a special school in New Delhi. A drama module was implemented among children with intellectual disabilities. A total of nine weeks of different

forms of drama therapy activities were conducted. Data were collected using document analysis, observation schedules, focus group discussions, and narrative case studies. The data were analysed using thematic analysis, subjective analysis, and data triangulation was used in the present study.

The findings of the study indicated improvement in children's educational interest and concentration, and positive progress in life skills such as self-confidence, expression of emotions, and social interaction. Among the specific forms of drama therapy, puppetry was the most effective component, the results showed stronger engagement, emotional connection, better attention, and participation. The drama therapy increased willingness to participate in classroom activities, greater expressive, ability to relate classroom activities to real-life situations, following classroom instruction more consistently, clear communication such as using gestures, words, expressions, social participation, better confidence, self-regulation, appearing more joyful, more excited, and relaxed in the school environment. The study concludes that drama therapy enhances educational interest, concentration, and life skills among children with intellectual disabilities.