

Research Highlights

Topic: Self-Determination

Gilberts, G. H., Agran, M., Hughes, C., & Wehmeyer, M. (2001). The effects of peer-delivered self-monitoring strategies on the participation of students with severe disabilities in general education classrooms. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 26, 25-36.

BOTTOM LINE

Five middle school students with severe disabilities, participating in a general education class, were assigned a peer tutor who helped them learn self-monitoring strategies to increase their classroom performance of academic skills, such as looking at the teacher, arriving at class on time, and asking questions. Self-monitoring strategies included indicating the number of times they preformed a task correctly on a worksheet. Prior to training in self-monitoring the five students were rarely performing the targeted academic skills. After training the number of times they performed these skills in class increased, and the students' accuracy in recording the number of times they performed these skills was high. The teachers and students generally felt the training was helpful.

TIPS

- If you are a teacher or parent of a student in middle school, help the young person set up some tasks for self-monitoring using a chart or a calendar and support a student to learn how to keep track of the activities of the task, or how many times they complete an activity or action.

KEY FINDINGS

- Self-monitoring is a strategy that enables students to independently observe their behavior and record when they engage in a specific target behavior. Having the ability to self-monitor can give students with disabilities the ability to perform a variety of skills independently by making them aware of the number of times they are, or are not, performing these skills in class.
- Peer tutors can provide support to individuals with disabilities to learn these skills in the general education classroom.

KEY FINDINGS

cont.

- In this study, peer tutors discussed the importance of academic skills, such as looking at the teacher and asking questions, with students with disabilities and taught them strategies to self-monitor their performance of these skills on a worksheet with written prompts and yes/no check boxes to indicate whether or not each activity had been completed.
- The students with severe disabilities were engaging in these academic skills at low levels prior to training in self-monitoring (from 13% to 32% of the time the students were observed in the classroom).
- While receiving training from the peer tutor, performance of the academic skills increased to an average performance level of 68% to 80%. After training ended, students were able to maintain these high performance levels by self-monitoring their behavior, although some students needed reminders from their peer tutors.

METHOD

- Five students, three girls and two boys, ages 12 to 15, with severe disabilities who participated in general education classes participated in the study. Each student was assigned an eighth-grade peer tutor to train them in self-monitoring skills for selected academic skills.
- Targeted academic skills that were identified by general education teachers as important to classroom participation included looking at the teacher, asking and answering questions, and being in class when the bell rang.
- Peer tutors were trained in the skills, how to encourage students to engage in them, and how to teach the students to self-monitor their behavior by checking a box on a worksheet that provided written prompts for each skill. Peer tutors observed students and recorded behaviors.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Agran, M. (Ed.). (1997) *Student directed learning: Teaching self-determination skills*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Hughes, C., Copeland, S. R., Agran, M., Wehmeyer, M. L., Rodi, M. S., & Presley, J. A. (2002). Using self-monitoring to improve performance in general education high school classes. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 37, 262- 271.

RELATED
PUBLICATIONS
cont.

King-Sears, M. E. (1999). Teacher and researcher co-design self-management content for an inclusive setting: Research training, intervention, and generalization effects on student performance. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 34*, 134-156.

Wehmeyer, M. L., Agran, M., & Hughes, C. (1998). *Teaching self-determination to students with disabilities: Basic skills for successful transition*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

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