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Reading instruction for students with Autism Spectrum disorder and Complex Communication Needs

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Abstract

Our research endeavors to support the development of reading skills of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and complex communication needs (CNN), enhancing their learning opportunities, participation and inclusion in society. To this end, we engage in partnerships with school-based practitioners within a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in Canada and Switzerland to foster teachers' professional development. More specifically, we focus on two main goals: first, developing effective training to support teachers' appropriation and implementation of adapted, evidence-based practices; and second, assessing the effectiveness of the co-designed reading program in ensuring reading progress of students with ASD and CNN. Our experimentation process is cyclical and bidirectional, involving continuous research-based training, classroom-based experimentation, direct feedback, discussions within the PLC, as well as ongoing adjustments to better embrace the students' diversity in the classroom contexts. Ultimately, our research contributes to advancing knowledge on how to train teachers for effective reading instruction, identifying best practices to foster progress in these students. The main outcomes of our collaborative work provide concrete avenues of support, guidance and training for teachers within a PLC, fostering sustainable improvements in the classroom practice.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Reading, Complex Communication Needs, Professional Learning Community, Teachers' Training