

MULTISENSORY RESOURCE TO SUPPORT SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTY

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INTRODUCTION

- This presentation is on a multisensory tool for dyslexic learners.
- It will explore Orton-Gillingham sand tray, which is one of the multisensory tools that have been tested for effectiveness (Sheffield, 1991, p. 41).
- Specific areas to be evaluated include literature on the tool, learning areas that it develops, and associated theory.
- Apart from that, emphasis will be placed on emotional impacts that sand tray tool may have on the learners, its benefits, and barriers of application.

DYSLEXIA

- Dyslexia is one of the specific learning difficulties (SpLD) in which learners experience problems in recognising speech sounds.
- It is characterised by the learners' inability to decode letters or words by linking them to their corresponding sounds.
- Dyslexia is a learning and reading disorder which affects the part of the brain that processes language.
- In the United Kingdom (UK), it is estimated that up to 10% of the population have reading difficulties.
- Nonetheless, research studies and various practical approaches have proved that dyslexia can be corrected for the affected learners to overcome reading difficulty.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

- According to Wah (2010, p. 133), the Davis model of dyslexia can rectify perceptual problems in learners with dyslexia and enable them to read.
- As mentioned by Thomson and Gilchrist (1997, p. 125), writing on sand in a tray is one of the multisensory approaches which make all the sensory systems of learners integrated.
- Orton-Gillingham is a prescriptive and multisensory technique which has also been proved to be effective in assisting individuals with learning difficulties (Ritchey and Goeke, 2006, p. 171).
- Phonological theory is the basis of sand tray learning. According to this theory, dyslexic learners have problems in keeping and retrieving speech sounds (Ramus et al., 2003, p. 841).

SAND TRAY RESOURCE

- Using sand tray as an easy multisensory resource is effective in enhancing learning in dyslexic children.
- While some coloured pre-packed sand can be bought from the bookshops, teachers can improvise by just filling the trays with clean sand collected from the ground.
- Sand tray is commonly used in sound tracing where children draw letters on the sand as they spell them.
- Children are instructed to use the tips of their index or middle fingers in tracing words on the sand tray.

SAND TRAY RESOURCE

- Sand tray is significant in introducing new learning skills to the children.
- It is vital in assisting dyslexic children to learn phonemes where distinct sounds of a language are perceived.
- Writing on sand tray has also been established to facilitate learning of words in children with learning difficulties.



BENEFITS

- Sand tray makes the children interact with their everyday materials considering that they usually play with sand at home.
- Sand tray for SpLD can be easily improvised by teachers or parents using boxes or large bowls.
- Instead of sand, other materials like salt or washing powder can be used.



BARRIERS

- The biggest challenge in using improvised sand trays is that teachers or parents may collect dirty sand with infections which may threaten children's health.
- Using salt, sugar, or washing instead of sand may require close supervision since they may be ingested by the learners.
- In the process of using sand, children's learning environment may get untidy (Crosser, 1994, p. 28).
- Some children may be afraid to touch the sand, salt, or any other material used in the learning tray.
- This may make the learners emotional and wary towards the approach.

CONCLUSION

- Dyslexia is one of the SpLDs which affect many children, and, therefore, its several learning tools have been developed.
- The Orton-Gillingham sand tray can be used to assist dyslexic children to learn phonemes and sight words.
- Sand tray tool is based on the phonological theory which supposes that dyslexic children have difficulties in keeping and retrieving speech sounds.
- The main advantage of a sand tray tool is that it is cheap and improvisation can be used.
- However, the outstanding limitation is that children may fear touching sand and may be tempted to consume materials used.

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