

Summary effect study Photo-interview

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The Photo-interview is a solution focused, client centered instrument, enabling children to choose their own goals at school, home or therapy. It starts with choosing out of a pile of photos what they wish to improve or learn. The three most important wishes are transformed into goals with solution focused question cards. This study was aimed to measure the effect of the Photo-interview on the motivation of students in their learning process at school. The study has been administered with students in the age range of 10-12 years old at an elementary school in the Netherlands. Included were ten students with specific educational needs (i.e. physical-, attention-, behaviour-, learning problems), from seven different classes.

Method

From a theoretical framework on motivational factors, based on the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), mindset theory (Dweck, 2013) and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 2006), a questionnaire was developed for Dutch students. The questionnaire implied a Visual Analogue Scale (VAS); a horizontal line without numbers. The students were asked to give their opinion on seven statements by putting a mark on this line, between 'completely agree' and 'completely disagree'. Extra open-ended questions were included. Ten students, their parents and their teachers, completed the questionnaire prior to the Photo-interview, directly after the Photo-interview and as a follow-up after 6-8 weeks. The parents and teachers were asked to answer from the perspective of their children/students. The classmates acted as a control group.

Results

The Photo-interview has a positive impact on motivation and self-determination of pupils with special educational needs. Their motivation became more internal (driven by internal motives i.e. personal value) and less external (driven by external motives i.e. expectations from parents/peers). Students gained insight into their own wishes for improvement, became more aware of their choices and developed hope and confidence that they themselves could initiate improvement. The students felt empowered and understood in expressing their desires. It helped them as a tool to formulate into self-chosen goals.

A long-term effect was not visible in the quantitative scores on the VAS scale in the questionnaires. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions after 6-8 weeks however still noted positive effects. In particular, the parents kept more hope and confidence in the self-determination of their children.

Compared to their classmates, eight out of ten students from the trial-group started below the average level on VAS scores on motivation. Follow-up results showed that 6 out of ten ended higher than average compared with their classmates.

It is recommended that the process, started with the Photo-interview, should be continued in order to maintain the self-regulation and autonomous motivation of students during their learning process.

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