

Case Study of a Child with the Autism Spectrum Disorder

Karantonis Dimitrios

PhD Student

Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine

ABSTRACT

This article aims to observe all the manifestations of the behavior of a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which shows deficits mainly in the communication sector. Also, the child shows repetitive and stereotypical behaviors throughout the lesson (Stasinios, 2016). Initially the paper describes the methodology followed. It then describes the child's cognitive profile and the deficits he presents. He then analyzes the intervention that was applied in order to improve the difficulties he faces and to further strengthen the skills he has already acquired. Finally, the paper presents the main conclusions as they emerged from the intervention.

KEY WORDS: autism, student profile, education.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder characterized by deficits mainly in communication and social interaction (Gonella, 2006). Also according to Kanner (1943) people on the autism spectrum exhibit repetitive and stereotyped behaviors that can persist throughout a person's lifetime. The diagnosis of autism can be made before the child turns three years old (Stasinios, 2016). The causes of autism spectrum disorder have not been identified to date, but many researchers believe it is a combination of biological and psychosocial factors.

II. PARTICIPATORY OBSERVATION

The characteristics of C. which I observed for two weeks were recorded through the method of participatory observation. More specifically, in addition to being a mere observer, I was actively involved during all the activities that took place both in and out of the classroom, as well as in his play during the breaks. I also noticed the way he responds both during the teaching and based on the questions I asked him. In this way I also recorded my observations in relation to his social interaction. Of course, my involvement during the teaching by taking on the role of teacher of parallel support helped me in this process which is used in the context of various social research, case studies and recording of various phenomena related to the interaction of the people involved in it. Apart from these, it is important that I was an active member, as mentioned above, taking on the role of special educator and interacting daily with the specific child (Palaiologou, 2016).

III. THE PROFILE OF STUDENT C.

G. is a 9-year-old boy who attends the general school in his neighborhood. Based on the diagnosis of KESY, he / she needs a parallel support teacher during the learning process. During these two weeks I used the method of participatory observation and recorded its characteristics and behavior based on the areas of development mentioned by Kanner (1943), namely, cognitive, linguistic and social. Of course, I also used the Wing (2002) deficit triad utilizing the areas of interaction, imagination and communication.

The cognitive field of development of student C.

G. is a student who, due to his distracted attention, is constantly looking for a quiet and peaceful corner to work (Politte et al., 2018). He is not able to attend the teaching at the same pace as his classmates because his level of understanding and perception is too slow, leaving him behind (Kalyva, 2005). Also, I noticed that she was having a lot of difficulty in individual work and needed the help and support of her parallel support teacher. In general, this student did not understand when he should start doing his individual work and to do so he needed reminders. Despite his weaknesses, however, he has a pretty good memory (Stasinios, 2016), as I found that he remembered the numbers from 1 to 20 very well except for the occasional time when he gave the impression that he did not know them at all. This is confirmed by Gonella (2006) who typically states that

students with autism are likely to "belly" about new knowledge, that is, it may take a week to exhibit such behavior that give the impression that they know nothing of what was taught.

Still, this student handles the pencil correctly but finds it difficult to copy words if one does not direct it. In addition, G. presents difficulty in performing additions and subtractions while, he knows almost all the geometric shapes and as mentioned above he knows how to count up to 20. However, he has great difficulty in the operations of multiplication and division as well as in performing mathematical problems. I noticed that he really likes zoology and dinosaurs. As mentioned by Stasinis (2016) children with autism have special interests and he likes to draw printed images with dinosaurs on paper but also to draw the way he imagines. Finally, he seems to know a lot about these animals although he cannot explain exactly what he has painted.

The language sector of student development C.

G. uses one-word speech when someone asks him a question, that is, he answers the questions with a "yes" or a "no". When he speaks he uses mainly affirmative speech. He also has difficulty with open-ended questions and his speech is monotonous and colorless (Nikolopoulos, 2008). His linguistic expression is weak and this is confirmed by the way he expresses himself when he speaks. Apart from that, his vocabulary is not rich. All this shows the difficulty presented by people with autism in terms of comprehension and communication (Vogindroukas, 2008). This student is accustomed to imitating sounds and various words he hears (sound) at awkward intervals as mentioned by Stasinis (2016). He is not able to conduct a discussion and is not creative during any activity. Finally, when he paints the dinosaurs that are one of his favorite animals, he paints about the same sketches and refuses to use different color shades.

The social sector of student development C.

During the observation of G. I found out that he is a child quite far from his classmates. During the breaks he had his own specific program, that is, he sat on the terrace of the school yard and ate. When he finished his food he walked carelessly shaking his hands up and down as children with autism usually do (Stasinis, 2016). If he is interested in something he is very curious and approaches to see exactly what is happening without paying attention to his classmates and then goes to a quiet place alone. Apart from that, he enjoys running alone in the courtyard without paying attention to those around him again. Also, he shows intense irritation when someone disrupts his routine and does not listen while continuing his routine (Varvogli, 2006). He has not befriended any school children due to the fact that he has deficits in the communication sector.

However, I noticed that he is a sensitive child who is somehow able to perceive the emotional charge of other people. I noticed this when a classmate hit her on the leg and started crying then he approached her and gave her a big hug. Beyond that, despite being antisocial, he likes to sit with a classmate during his music career who has the opportunity to express himself through his emotions (Happé, 2003). In addition, G. is an apprentice who wants to have a specific program during his daily life and I noticed that he said "mom" several times. I realized that when he says that he feels the need to be with his mom. So I thought I'd ask his mother what he likes to do when he's together and he told me he really likes to dress him in front of the bathroom mirror because he laughs and grimaces. So I decided to have a mirror with me and tell him to look at it when he is emotionally charged and make him happy.

IV. EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS

When the process of participatory observation of G. was completed, the program of educational interventions was carried out in order to be able to socialize and self-serve. For this particular student I relied on the TEACH program (Teacher Education and Compression Helps) according to which the student through various activities slowly learns to function independently without the help of the teacher (Shulman, 2004).

Initially, I placed his curriculum near the classroom table so that my student would be aware of his daily school routine at all times. In this way my goal was to reduce his stress. G. was having a hard time reading his program so I thought of placing a program I had prepared with clock hands and various pictures through which the school routines he was to follow were presented, which were numbered. He really liked this program and we even read it together to consolidate it and then he read it himself without my help. In this way he felt safe and relaxed knowing his routine so he did not look for his mom (Koutoumanos, 2012).

I also thought that there should be short breaks when I show him various videos in the context of teaching so that he can unwind and can continue in a pleasant mood. According to Gonela (2008), students should be given the opportunity to relax through short breaks during teaching. At the same time, through the breaks, each student with autism has the feeling that he / she is rewarded and can continue.

Then, due to the difficulties that G. presents in both written and oral expression as well as the execution of mathematical operations, a personalized intervention program is necessary, which will be proportional to the characteristics he presents, the degree of autism, the needs and the his abilities, his behavior and the goals that

have been set for the intervention, provided that the observation and recording of these elements has preceded (Stasinis, 2016). More specifically, the curriculum of the specific student, ie the structured teaching was in accordance with his needs and possibilities. More specifically, he was asked to match various letters, numbers and actions that were illustrated and located in a specific box (Cd, envelopes with various illustrated elements), or a game using different visual stimuli (dice and bars) in order to be able to perform the actions. of addition and subtraction. These were some of the training activities implemented under the TEACH training program. Through this program this student had understood the exact instructions of the activities and was operating independently without my help and I noticed an improvement in his concentration due to the strict construction that existed during the activities. In addition to the above when guiding him I was careful to speak to him using clear instructions and simple suggestions so that he does not get confused (Mesibov & Howley, 2003).

Then, regarding the cognitive field of its development, I chose PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) which is an "image exchange communication system" (Bondy & Frost, 2011) in order to eliminate to some extent the deficits presented by G. in in the field of emotional expression. In this way I chose to shape and enhance both his desires and his expressiveness using various images, which depicted various types of objects that we use in our daily lives, but also colorful little people through which various emotional expressions were depicted (Charl Christy et al, 2002). I noticed that he showed an improvement, slow but steady in the communication sector, both with his classmates and teachers, as well as with his family.

Later, in relation to his social development, various types of multi-sensory toys were used, namely puppetry puppets to activate his senses and role-playing shoes in order to express his emotions (Ratto et al., 2011).

Then, in order for G. to learn the stages of preparing an individual work, the teaching of peers was applied. Specifically, G. joined a group of 3 students (one of them was G. himself). His two classmates helped him in the stages of preparing the work. Specifically, all the stages of the work were pointed out to him in writing. Each student worked individually in the group and as soon as he completed one step he informed the rest of the group about his result. Then instructions were given for the next step and so on. By teaching peers G. managed to learn how to work on completing an individual task (Chang & Locke, 2016).

Finally, in order for G. to acquire the skill to conduct a topic of discussion, social stories were used. Specifically, I wrote on 5 cards the order that someone uses to develop a theme. On the first card there was the topic for discussion (how I spent my Sunday), on the second card there was the question "what did I do", on the third card there was the question "when did I do it" on the fourth card there was the question "with whom did I do it" and on the fifth card was the question "how did I feel?" Each time G. looked at the card with the question and answered. The same was repeated for various relevant topics until G. could develop on his own, without seeing the cards a topic for discussion.

Also through social stories, G. learned when to wait his turn to speak as he conducted the above activity with a classmate. Each time he answered a question he waited for his interlocutor to answer the same question and then took the floor to answer the second question and so on (Reynhout & Carter, 2007).

V. CONCLUSIONS

It is clear from this article that children on the autism spectrum need an educational intervention program that must be individualized according to their abilities and needs in order to be able to strengthen the remaining areas. Therefore, the most appropriate educational intervention program should be implemented after the teachers agree and cooperate with the children's guardians.

Of course, it is important to emphasize that there are many different intervention programs that can be used by both parents and teachers, but no intervention alone is possible to successfully address the problems of children with autism. . For this reason it is important to emphasize the fact that the most effective interventions must be combined and adapted according to the needs of each individual to have results. In other words, the above educational planning of the intervention program is not a "panacea" for effective managing all the problems that people in the autism spectrum have due to the multidimensional nature of autism spectrum disorder.

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