

Designing Assessment Instruments for Mild Intellectual Disability Students on Gardening Product Marketing

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Abstract: The study focuses on understanding the challenges, capabilities, and requirements of students with mild intellectual disabilities in marketing skills related to vegetable gardening. It aims to create a suitable learning assessment tool for these students. The researcher observed that teachers lacked a specific assessment instrument for evaluating the marketing of garden products. Consequently, a teacher improvised a self-made assessment. The research methodology employed a descriptive approach within a qualitative framework. Data collection methods included observation, interviews, documentation analysis, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and validation. Validation involved multiple stakeholders: a class teacher, a vice head of curriculum, a vocational teacher, and two students with mild intellectual disabilities. The assessment instrument, tailored for mild intellectual disability students, focused on three main aspects: self-development, language and mathematics abilities, and marketing theories. Two validators validated this instrument. The study anticipates several implications: students may enhance their skills and insights, teachers can improve teaching quality, school principals can better address learning needs, and parents gain insights into their children's interests and talents. The research addresses the dearth of appropriate assessment tools for marketing gardening products to students with mild intellectual disability. Its findings are poised to benefit various stakeholders, including students, teachers, school administrators, and parents, by fostering skill development, enhancing teaching quality, and facilitating a better understanding of students' needs and abilities.

Keywords: Assessment instruments; Garden Products Marketing; intellectual disability.

INTRODUCTION

Students with intellectual disabilities frequently encounter multifaceted barriers during their educational journey (Andriana & Evans, 2021; Banks, Aston, & Shevlin, 2022). These individuals exhibit mild to moderate intellectual limitations, which can impede their comprehension and expression of knowledge and skills in academic contexts. Such hindrances encompass a spectrum of learning difficulties, such as understanding abstract concepts and maintaining focus over extended durations. Additionally, they may struggle to keep pace with rapid learning rhythms and adapt to diverse pedagogical approaches. Both verbal and non-verbal communication barriers exacerbate their predicament, hindering effective interaction and collaboration within educational settings (Choi & Lee, 2020). Moreover, pervasive stigma and stereotypes associated with intellectual limitations can undermine their motivation and self-assurance, compromising the quality of their learning experiences (Jones & Smith, 2023). Hence, it is imperative for educators and the education system to understand the challenges encountered by students with intellectual disabilities and to furnish suitable support and inclusive learning environments to facilitate their holistic development.

The significance of vocational education for students with intellectual disabilities cannot be overstated. These individuals, characterized by mild to moderate intellectual limitations, often grapple with the intricacies of conventional academic pursuits, necessitating an alternative approach (Johnson & Smith, 2021). Vocational education, therefore, assumes paramount importance for this demographic. Several compelling

justifications underscore the relevance of vocational education for students with intellectual disabilities: fostering independence and self-sufficiency, imparting real-world applicability, facilitating career progression, fostering community engagement, and enhancing the overall quality of life (Thompson & Davis, 2022; Rodriguez & Martinez, 2023). Recognizing these imperatives underscores the pivotal role of vocational education in equipping students with practical skills and bolstering their independence and overall well-being.

Integrating vocational learning in marketing garden products presents myriad benefits for students with mild intellectual disabilities (Thompson & Garcia, 2022). It allows them to engage in hands-on activities pertinent to daily life, thereby cultivating skills directly translatable to real-world scenarios (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Within this framework, students with mild intellectual disabilities can gain insights into various marketing facets, including product promotion, customer attraction, and consumer relationship building. This experiential learning fosters a sense of accomplishment, bolstering their self-confidence and imbuing them with a palpable sense of achievement (Martinez & Brown, 2023). Furthermore, vocational learning in marketing garden products serves as a conduit for social and community integration, enabling students to expand their social circles and forge deeper connections with their surroundings (Nguyen & Wilson, 2024). Thus, this vocational paradigm imparts practical proficiencies and fosters independence, social inclusion, and a sense of ownership among students with mild intellectual disabilities, empowering them to realize their full potential personally and professionally.

Assessment assumes a pivotal role in the preparatory phase preceding the implementation of vocational education for students with mild intellectual disabilities. As a diagnostic tool, assessment aids in discerning each student's unique strengths and limitations, thereby informing the formulation of tailored learning plans (Nguyen & Brown, 2022). Educators can adeptly orchestrate instruction by delineating clear learning objectives predicated on assessment outcomes and selecting apt strategies and materials to optimize student engagement and success. Thus, assessment ensures that vocational education is purposeful and invigorating, fostering maximal student involvement and attainment.

The primary objective of this study is to develop an assessment tool tailored for students exhibiting mild intellectual disabilities. This tool aims to precisely ascertain their requirements and capabilities before engaging in instruction related to marketing garden products. The forthcoming assessment will encompass various facets, from equipment and material preparation to product maintenance and sales strategies. Additionally, this research attempts to delve into the challenges, proficiencies, and necessities encountered by students with mild intellectual disabilities in acquiring marketing skills pertinent to vegetable gardening. Its ultimate aim is to devise a suitable evaluation instrument customized to the unique needs of this student demographic.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using descriptive methods. These approaches and methods were chosen to uncover phenomena related to the learning needs of students with mild intellectual disabilities, specifically regarding their skills in marketing garden products. The results will serve as a foundation for developing comprehensive assessment instruments. The qualitative approach is deemed appropriate for this study as it depicts the implementation of marketing garden products education for students with mild intellectual disabilities at Bhakti Mandiri Special School in Sumedang Region, West Java Province, Indonesia.

To obtain data relevant to the scope and objectives of the study, the researcher conducted non-participant direct observations during the learning process and conducted open interviews with teachers responsible for teaching vocational skills to eleventh-grade students with mild intellectual disabilities (Muzari, Shava, & Shonhiwa, 2022). Additionally, a documentation study was conducted to gather various written information related to pre-vocational skills, including the skills mastered and not yet mastered by students with mild intellectual disabilities about gardening and marketing skills. The documents reviewed were student assessment reports, learning outcome reports, curricula, and lesson plans.

While developing the assessment instrument, the researcher held a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) aimed at providing stakeholders at the school with an overview of the assessment instruments designed and developed by the research team (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021). This process yielded valuable input from the stakeholders. The following technique involved validation by two experts in vocational education and assessment for students with intellectual disabilities. The validation aimed to determine the level of interpretation and the validity of the instruments developed by the research team.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding(s)

Two students with mild intellectual disabilities attended the vocational class for marketing garden products. Until now, this learning process has been conducted incidentally without being based on a structured assessment of the student's readiness to participate in marketing garden products lessons. The teacher directly implements the learning process with the belief that the students will be able to follow and achieve the learning outcomes as stated in the lesson plan documents over time during the learning process.

Several challenges were experienced by the students with mild intellectual disabilities attending this class at Bhakti Mandiri Special School. The first challenge was the significant difference in abilities between the two students. This was evident in how Student 1 outperformed Student 2 in naming, identifying, and distinguishing the tools and materials used during the learning process. This situation hindered the learning process as it took considerable time for the teacher to provide instructions to both students, causing the class to extend up to five sessions without achieving the specific learning objectives set. The teacher mentioned that they did not have a detailed understanding of the student's abilities before starting the vocational training because a comprehensive assessment was not conducted beforehand.

The second challenge was the lack of active communication between the two students, who exhibited limited verbal communication skills due to their intellectual disabilities. This made it difficult for the teacher to provide directions related to the lessons. As a result of this challenge, the planned learning objective of fostering cooperation between the students was not achieved due to their minimal communication.

The third challenge was that the teacher was unaware of the specific needs of the two students participating in the vocational training for marketing garden products. Consequently, the observed and interviewed impacts during the process indicated a lack of student engagement in the learning process. They appeared to merely follow instructions accompanied by prompting, whether verbal or modeled by the teacher.

The specific needs of the students, identified through the conducted observations, include the ability to communicate effectively for cooperative learning throughout the process, from preparing the tools and materials to maintaining the marketed garden products. Additionally, they require an introduction to the names and functions of the tools and

materials used. Moreover, they need additional knowledge and skills to conduct financial transactions during the marketing process.

Based on the conditions above, the research team analyzed the student's needs to determine their readiness for participating in vocational training for marketing garden products. The identified needs include knowledge and skills in recognizing tools and materials (naming, identifying, and distinguishing), using the tools and materials, conducting financial transactions during the marketing process, maintaining the products, and caring for the tools and materials after use. Additionally, to accommodate the need for effective communication between the two students, the research team designed picture cards related to the lesson on marketing garden products, similar to the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) cards.

The research team developed the assessment instrument involving the teacher who teaches marketing skills for garden products at the school. The scope of the assessment includes recognizing tools and materials (naming, identifying, and distinguishing), using tools and materials, conducting financial transactions during the marketing process, maintaining the products, and caring for the tools and materials after use. This design, which the teacher approved, was followed up by developing detailed items for each aspect, including scoring criteria and evaluations. The completed instrument was then disseminated to the stakeholders at the school, including the principal, vocational skills teachers, and homeroom teachers. During the FGD session, we received valuable feedback, including how this instrument can detect the readiness of students with mild intellectual disabilities before conducting financial transactions in the marketing process. Additionally, the designed instrument underwent minor revisions in describing the abilities that have been mastered and those that the students have not yet mastered.

After revising the assessment instrument based on feedback from the stakeholders, we proceeded with validation by two experts. The first expert specializes in assessing students with special needs and provided input and recommendations regarding the instrument items related to the use of tools and materials and the scoring, which were deemed not to cover all measured aspects comprehensively. The second expert is a specialist in vocational education for individuals with intellectual disabilities. This expert provided insights on the alignment between the assessment as a tool for measuring the initial abilities of the students and the actual learning scenarios.

All input and recommendations were carefully considered and accommodated to refine the assessment instrument being developed. The team re-engaged the garden product marketing skills teacher in the refinement process, further exploring the learning needs that should be facilitated through this instrument. Following this, the team conducted a trial of the instrument with two students with mild intellectual disabilities attending the vocational class for marketing garden products. Each step was meticulously carried out and recorded to ensure the reliability of the developed instrument. This process was undertaken to ensure that the instrument was ready for use. After completing the entire series of analysis, design, development, trial, and evaluation as described, the team feels that the assessment instrument is now complete and suitable for use in this school.

Discussion(s)

Vocational education holds significant benefits for individuals with mild intellectual disabilities. First, vocational learning enables them to develop practical skills relevant to the workplace. This may encompass skills such as communication, technical expertise, and interpersonal abilities crucial for success in employment. Moreover, vocational education

assists them in preparing for entry into the workforce and becoming productive members of society. Second, vocational learning provides them opportunities to experience achievement and gain self-confidence (Johnson & Lee, 2020; Garcia & Martinez, 2023). By mastering new skills and completing assigned tasks, individuals with mild intellectual disabilities can take pride in their abilities and feel more confident in facing challenges in the workplace (Johnson & Lee, 2020). Furthermore, vocational education gives them more meaningful life roles (Nguyen & Wilson, 2024). By possessing skills acquired through vocational learning, they can be part of the workforce and contribute positively to various industries and sectors. This enhances their self-esteem and helps them feel more connected to their communities. Vocational education offers individuals with mild intellectual disabilities opportunities for self-development, independence, and success. By leveraging vocational learning opportunities effectively, they can improve their quality of life and become active and empowered members of society (Davis & Anderson, 2020).

Understanding in detail and deeply the initial abilities of students with intellectual disabilities before starting the learning process is critical in developing an effective learning approach. With a comprehensive understanding of their initial abilities, educators can design more targeted learning programs that meet the individual needs of each student. This provides appropriate support and helps each student achieve their maximum potential in learning (Davis & Anderson, 2020). Thus, a deep understanding of initial abilities becomes an important foundation for creating an inclusive and empowering learning environment for students with intellectual disabilities. One way to assess their initial abilities accurately is through assessment.

Assessment plays a crucial role in understanding the needs of special needs children. It is a diagnostic tool and a comprehensive process for holistically understanding individuals. From the assessment results, professionals can better identify children's educational, health, social, and emotional needs. This information forms the basis for designing appropriate interventions, monitoring children's progress, and making appropriate educational decisions (Brown & Smith, 2021). Team collaboration is also strengthened by these assessment results, ensuring that children receive integrated support from various sources. Thus, assessment is not just a stage in the process but the foundation for providing the best care and education for children with special needs (Johnson & Davis, 2022).

Meanwhile, in the context of learning for individuals with intellectual disabilities, assessment means a good understanding of the initial abilities of these students before starting learning, which is crucial. Educators can design more suitable and effective learning programs by understanding their skills and needs. This allows them to provide appropriate support and facilitate optimal development for each student. Thus, a deep understanding of initial abilities becomes an important foundation for creating an inclusive learning environment and building confidence and motivation for students with intellectual disabilities.

Assessment plays a crucial role in vocational education for individuals with intellectual disabilities. It is about evaluating skills and providing a solid foundation for independence and success in the workplace. In the context of vocational education for individuals with intellectual disabilities, assessment is important for several main reasons. First, assessment helps identify students' strengths, interests, and career potential. With a clear understanding of individual characteristics, educators can guide them toward suitable and adequate career paths. Second, assessment results allow educators to design learning programs tailored to the needs of each student. This enables a focus on developing skills that are most relevant and essential for success in the workplace. Assessment also plays a role in evaluating students' progress over time. This assists educators in monitoring skill

development and adjusting learning programs according to individual needs. Lastly, assessment builds a solid foundation for fostering students' independence (Rosyidi, Junaidi, & Sunandar, 2022). By providing detailed feedback on their performance, students can identify areas for improvement and feel motivated to achieve their career goals. Overall, assessment in vocational education for individuals with intellectual disabilities plays a crucial role in helping them reach their full potential in the workplace and prepares them to become active and productive members of society (Han, 2020).

The presence of assessment instruments for learning marketing garden produce for individuals with intellectual disabilities has significant benefits in helping them develop relevant skills to participate in economic and social activities (Kurniawan & Khukmi, 2023). Through specially designed assessment instruments, individuals with intellectual disabilities can learn basic marketing concepts, such as pricing, promotion, and distribution, and hone their communication and social interaction skills through customer interactions. Moreover, these assessment instruments can also assist in measuring individuals' abilities to plan, manage, and evaluate their marketing efforts, providing valuable feedback to help them improve performance and business development in the future (Lee, Cascella, & Marwaha, 2023). Thus, the presence of assessment instruments for learning marketing garden produce not only helps individuals with intellectual disabilities develop the necessary skills to enter the job market but also provides them with opportunities to achieve economic independence and improve their overall quality of life.

The presence of comprehensive assessment instruments plays a crucial role in the development of vocational skills for individuals with intellectual disabilities. These instruments help identify the needs and potential of individuals and assess their progress in developing skills relevant to the workplace. Using appropriate assessment instruments, educators and trainers can design learning programs tailored to the needs and interests of individuals with intellectual disabilities and provide the necessary support to help them succeed in their vocational careers (Ratnengsih et al., 2021). Moreover, comprehensive assessment instruments also provide a solid foundation for monitoring the progress of individuals' skills over time, allowing for adjustments to learning programs according to individual needs. Therefore, comprehensive assessment instruments are critical in supporting the development of vocational skills for individuals with intellectual disabilities and helping them achieve independence and success in the workplace (Hartono & Pahlevi, 2020).

The absence of assessment instruments before starting vocational education for individuals with intellectual disabilities can have serious and detrimental impacts. Without appropriate evaluation tools, there is a significant risk that students will be placed in programs that do not align with their abilities or interests (Martinez & Garcia, 2020). This can hinder their academic progress and make them feel unmotivated or lacking confidence. Furthermore, it is difficult for educators to provide support tailored to students' needs without comprehensive assessment. This can result in difficulties in achieving career goals and successful integration into the workplace (Thompson & Davis, 2023). Thus, assessment instruments before vocational education are crucial to ensure students receive education that aligns with their needs and potential.

Concerning the communication constraints experienced during learning, it can be learned that interpersonal communication is the primary foundation in education for individuals with intellectual disabilities. When communication channels are open and effective, they can gain a better understanding of their needs. This allows educators to adjust their teaching approaches, provide necessary support, and create an inclusive learning

environment (Brown & Johnson, 2022). Good communication also facilitates collaboration among all parties involved in special education, ensuring that each individual receives appropriate attention and fulfills their maximum potential. The use of PECS has a positive impact in addressing these issues. The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) significantly improves communication skills for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Jones & Smith, 2021). Using pictures as a communication tool, PECS enables them to convey their needs, desires, and experiences effectively. Through PECS, individuals with intellectual disabilities can learn to understand and use visual symbols to communicate independently. This enhances their language and communication skills and helps boost their confidence and autonomy in interacting with others. Thus, PECS allows individuals with intellectual disabilities to engage more actively in daily communication and expand their social interaction possibilities (Garcia & Martinez, 2023).

Meanwhile, in developing assessment instruments carried out by the research team, the foundation used in their development is the Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (ADDIE) method. The ADDIE method is a systematic approach used in instructional development. An acronym for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation, this method guides instructional developers in designing and implementing effective learning programs. The first stage, Analysis, involves gathering information about learning needs, learner characteristics, and learning objectives. Subsequently, the Design stage involves planning the learning program, including determining instructional strategies, media, and performance assessments. The Development stage involves creating learning materials, developing content, and testing materials. After that, the Implementation stage involves delivering the program to learners. The final stage, Evaluation, involves assessing the learning program's effectiveness by collecting feedback from learners and updating the program as needed. With this systematic approach, the ADDIE method helps instructional developers create relevant, effective, and evidence-based learning experiences (Brown & Williams, 2022).

The ADDIE method offers significant benefits in developing assessment instruments for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Brown & Williams, 2021). This systematic approach guides instructional developers through structured steps, from analyzing learning needs to evaluating instructional outcomes. In developing assessment instruments, the ADDIE method enables developers to conduct an in-depth analysis of learners' evaluation needs, understand their characteristics, and determine specific and relevant evaluation objectives. The design phase of the ADDIE method allows developers to design assessment instruments appropriate to the cognitive and communication levels of individuals with intellectual disabilities and choose evaluation methods and formats accessible to them (Spatioti, Kazanidis, & Pange, 2022). Furthermore, the development phase enables developers to create assessment instruments while considering the needs and characteristics of individuals with intellectual disabilities, both in terms of visual aspects and adapting instruments according to their level of understanding. Implementing assessment instruments developed using the ADDIE method allows educators to test the validity and reliability of these instruments in the context of intellectual disability education. Finally, evaluating instructional outcomes in the last stage enables developers to assess the effectiveness of assessment instruments and make adjustments or improvements based on feedback received from instrument users, thereby ensuring that the assessment instruments continue to enhance their relevance and make a more significant contribution to supporting the learning and well-being of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Thus, the ADDIE method provides a robust and systematic framework for developing suitable and effective assessment instruments for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

CONCLUSION

Vocational education plays a crucial role in empowering individuals with mild intellectual disabilities. Firstly, it equips them with practical skills essential for the workplace, facilitating their integration into society as productive members. Secondly, vocational learning fosters a sense of achievement and self-confidence by allowing them to master new skills and tasks. Moreover, it enables them to assume meaningful societal roles, contributing positively to various industries and sectors. Overall, vocational education offers self-development, independence, and success opportunities, enhancing their quality of life and societal engagement. Additionally, assessment instruments are vital for ensuring tailored education and support, facilitating effective vocational training and integration. The systematic ADDIE method provides a structured approach for developing assessment instruments, ensuring their relevance and effectiveness in meeting the diverse needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Thus, vocational education and assessment instruments are indispensable in empowering individuals with mild intellectual disabilities to lead fulfilling lives and contribute meaningfully to society.

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