

The Effects of Guidance Course on Improving Secondary One Students' Adaptability to Secondary School Life

Abstract

This study aims to explore the effects of a guidance course which is designed to improve Secondary One students' capabilities in tackling stress and adapting better to secondary school life.

Subjects of this study are Secondary One students from one of the secondary schools in Macao. They were invited to join a guidance course on the topic of "Mastering Stress." Sixteen students signed in the course and they formed the experimental group whereas other sixteen classmates of theirs were randomly selected from their classes to function as the control group.

Tools for measuring the effects of the guidance course included the "Life Events Checklist (LEC)". Academic results in the school subjects of Chinese, English and Mathematics were also taken as indicators of how well the participants were adjusting themselves to their secondary school life. In addition, the "Teachers' Observatory List" was designed to collect further research data from class-teachers.

The guidance course designed in this study consisted of four main cores: awareness of the stress problems, self-assertiveness, stress managing strategies, as well as interpersonal communicative skills. Performance of the participants in each part of the course was

evaluated by means of quizzes, worksheets and observation records of the students' participation in the group.

Findings of the study revealed that though the experimental group dropped significantly in its stress level as measured by LEC after the experiment, their academic performance did not improve remarkably. Class and age factors were also found influencing the effects of the course. Correlations of different factors were also explored and showed that some of the course cores were positively correlated to students' academic achievements. In the same way, remarkable positive correlation was also detected between teachers' observation and the stress level of the students.

Transition to an entirely new school is not an easy task. It involves a lot of stress and efforts to overcome the problems. This study verified that most participants took the guidance course as interesting and challenging. Thus, guidance course may be a good choice for directing assistance to these new-comers of the school.