

The Effect of Emotion Education on Rational Thinking and Emotional Stability of Students in the Institute for Juvenile Delinquents

Abstract

The objective of this study was to develop an emotion education program for the students of the Institute for Juvenile Delinquents and to investigate its effects on the students' rational thinking and emotional stability. Two areas were investigated: (1) the effectiveness of the program in promoting rational thinking and emotional stability; and (2) the factors which affected the effectiveness by studying the process of the program.

The program itself is based on the theory of Rational Emotive Therapy developed by Albert Ellis. There were in total nine chapters in the program, which were organized into ten sessions. Each session took 60 to 90 minutes. Two female subjects were included in the study.

In order to determine the program's effect, the two subjects were pre- and post-tested with the "Personal Belief Scale" and "Emotion Scale". Qualitative data including subjects' feedback, systematic observation records of two independent observers, and interview with the instructors of the institute and the two subjects were collected and employed to cross-verify the results and to analysis the process.

The major findings of the study were summarized as follows:

1. after joining the program, subjects' rational belief and emotional stability increased;
2. group atmosphere, which was categorized as harmonious, safe, warm and comfortable, could enhance program effectiveness;
3. leader's demonstration and warm up exercises would promote self-disclosure. Student-oriented activities, competitive games and intra-students evaluation could induce learning motivation. Intensive interaction moved from leader-centered to student-centered according to the extent that the program development could intensify the effect of the interaction itself. Regarding interaction content, completing, disputing and establishing new belief for peer would help transfer learning. Moreover, positive learning incentives could raise the effectiveness of the program;

4. leading and group counseling skills which combined cognitive, emotional and behavioral techniques of Rational Emotive Therapy could confirm the program's effectiveness;
5. brain storming, in which interaction could not be promoted, could not function effectively. As a corollary, high level cognitive activities should not be conducted in the form of competitive games.

Finally, limitations of the study have been mentioned and the implications suggested.