

## Learning Academic Skills through Movement: A Case Study in Evaluation

**Authors :** Y. Salfati, D. Sharef Bussel, J. Zamir

**Abstract :** In this paper, we present an Evaluation Case Study implementing the eight principles of Collaborative Approaches to Evaluation (CAE) as designed by Brad Cousins in the past decade. The focus of this paper is sharing a rich experience in which we achieved two main goals. The first was the development of a valuable and meaningful new teacher training program, and the second was a successful implementation of the CAE principles. The innovative teacher training program is based on the idea of including physical movement during the process of teaching and learning academic themes. The program is called Learning through Movement. This program is a response to a call from the Ministry of Education, claiming that today children sit in front of screens and do not exercise any physical activity. In order to contribute to children's health, physical, and cognitive development, the Ministry of Education promotes learning through physical activities. Research supports the idea that sports and physical exercise improve academic achievements. The Learning through Movement program is operated by Kaye Academic College. Students in the Elementary School Training Program, together with students in the Physical Education Training Program, implement the program in collaboration with two mentors from the College. The program combines academic learning with physical activity. The evaluation began at the beginning of the program. During the evaluation process, data was collected by means of qualitative tools, including interviews with mentors, observations during the students' collaborative planning, class observations at school and focus groups with students, as well as the collection of documentation related to the teamwork and to the program itself. The data was analyzed using content analysis and triangulation. The preliminary results show outcomes relating to the Teacher Training Programs, the student teachers, the pupils in class, the role of Physical Education teachers, and the evaluation. The Teacher Training Programs developed a collaborative approach to lesson planning. The students' teachers demonstrated a change in their basic attitudes towards the idea of integrating physical activities during the lessons. The pupils indicated higher motivation through full participation in classes. These three outcomes are indicators of the success of the program. An additional significant outcome of the program relates to the status and role of the physical education teachers, changing their role from marginal to central in the school. Concerning evaluation, a deep sense of trust and confidence was achieved, between the evaluator and the whole team. The paper includes the perspectives and challenges of the heads and mentors of the two programs as well as the evaluator's conclusions. The evaluation unveils challenges in conducting a CAE evaluation in such a complex setting.

**Keywords :** collaborative evaluation, training teachers, learning through movement

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