

Online Early Childhood Monitoring and Evaluation of Systems in Underprivileged Communities: Tracking Growth and Progress in Young Children's Ability Levels

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Abstract : A study was conducted in the underprivileged setting of Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa in order to monitor the progress of learners whose teachers receive training through the Early Inspiration Training Programme. Through tracking children's growth & development, the effectiveness of the practitioner-training programme, which focuses on empowering women from underprivileged communities in South Africa, was analyzed. The aim was to identify impact & reach and to assess the effectiveness of this intervention programme through identifying impact on children's growth and development. A Pre- and Post-Test was administered on about 850 young children in Pre-Grade R and Grade R classes in order to understand children's ability level & the growth that would be evident as a result of effective teacher training. A pre-test evaluated the level of each child's abilities, including physical-motor development, language, and speech development, cognitive development including visual perceptual skills, social-emotional development & play development. This was followed by a random selection of the classes of children into experimental and control groups. The experimental group's teachers (practitioners) received 8-months of training & intervention, as well as mentorship & support. After the 8-month training programme, children from the experimental & control groups underwent post-assessment. The results indicate that the impact of effective practitioner training and enhancing a deep understanding of stimulation on young children, that this understanding is implemented in the classroom, highlighting the areas of growth & development in the children whose teachers received additional training & support, as compared to those who did not receive additional training. Monitoring & Evaluation systems not only track children's ability levels, but also have a core focus on reporting systems, mentorship and providing ongoing support. As a result of the study, an Online Application (for Apple or Android Devices) was developed which is used to track children's growth via age-appropriate assessments. The data is then statistically analysed to provide direction for relevant & impactful intervention. The App also focuses on effective reporting strategies, structures, and implementation to support organizations working with young children & maximize on outcomes.

Keywords : early childhood development, developmental child assessments, online application, monitoring and evaluating online

Conference Title : ICECET 2016 : International Conference on Early Childhood Education and Technology

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : August 04-05, 2016