

https://dspace.org/

The mediation of the integrated approach to literacy instruction programme to grade eight learners in an independent secondary school in South Africa.

Andrews, Douglas Peter Spencer

2013-09-17
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/13142

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Copyright Notice

The copyright of this dissertation vests in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, in accordance with the University's Intellectual Policy.

No portion of the text may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including analogue or digital media, without prior written permission from the University. Extracts of or quotations from this thesis may, however, be made in terms of Sections 12 and 13 of the South African Copyright Act No. 98 of 1978 (as amended), for non commercial or educational purposes. Full acknowledgement must be made to the author and the university.

An electronic version of this thesis is available in the Library webpage (www.wits.ac.za/library) under "research resources".

For permission requests, please contact the University Legal Office or the University Research Office (www.wits.ac.za).

THE MEDIATION OF THE INTEGRATED APPROACH TO LITERACY INSTRUCTION PROGRAMME TO GRADE EIGHT LEARNERS IN AN INDEPENDENT SECONDARY SCHOOL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Douglas Peter Spencer Andrews

Student number: 9406366T

A dissertation submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand in fulfilment of the degree of Master of Education

Johannesburg 2012

ABSTRACT

The role of literacy skills in learning and the ability to have the cognitive learning skills necessary to receive, process and make meaning of information is core to academic achievement at school. Many learners whose underdeveloped literacy skills prove to be a considerable barrier to learning struggle to make any significant progress at school, particularly at secondary school if these learners have come into their grade eight year from a remedial primary school where only a limited curriculum is taught. Often these learners drop out of the educational system altogether with no real alternatives available to them. Inclusive education policy states that schools must do everything they can to make the curriculum accessible to all learners regardless of their barrier to learning.

This research project examined the critical success factors of implementing a one-on-one mediated literacy programme to eight selected grade eight learners as part of their school programme. The learners selected to be participants on the programme were identified from an analysis of background history, educational testing, and parent and teacher recommendations as learners whose specific barrier to learning was associated with inadequate literacy skill ability. The programme was called the Integrated Approach to Literacy Instruction(IATLI), and it combined the mediation of literacy skills simultaneously with metacognitive learning strategies. The research project was participatory in nature, as the researcher was the mediator of the programme to the eight learners. The project was based on participatory action research theory, and was a case-study design implemented at an independent secondary school in Johannesburg. The methodology used to evaluate the research project was a mixed research design incorporating structured surveys of the teaching staff, pre- and post-testing of the eight learners using standardized educational tests that evaluated literacy ability, semi-structured interviews with the teachers who taught the eight learners, and commentary from the learners themselves recorded in the researcher's journal.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data indicated that the programme was a worthwhile initiative, and that certain critical success factors of the IATLI programme's implementation emerged. Of these critical success factors, highlighted in the research sub-questions, success was often more evident in some learners than others. The data also highlighted a number of challenges that the programme's implementation exposed, notably sustainability of the programme in the long term, as the programme was driven by the learning support specialist and the factor of burnout with regard to the intensive nature of the programme and its demands on the learner participants and the school's internal structures. Other challenges that emerged were the practical aspects of integrating an inclusive education initiative into the demanding high school curriculum, and addressing the paradigm shift necessary to get all educators collaborating with learning support programme outcomes and then supporting initiatives in their own teaching.

KEYWORDS:

Case-study, Cognitive, Comprehension, Curriculum, Inclusion, Learner, Literacy, Participant, Phonics, researcher, self-esteem, Self-efficacy

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at another University.

_____

Douglas Andrews

Day of in the year

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Michelle, our beautiful daughter Jenna, my sister Janet and my mother, all of whom inspired me to undertake this journey

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Ruksana Osman, for her professional support and dedication while assisting me with my study. Her kindness and constant willingness to be of assistance and guidance to me over the duration of the research process has contributed to my enjoyment and development as a researcher and post graduate student.

I would also like to acknowledge the academic and support staff at WITS who assisted me throughout the research process. Their expert academic input, generosity, openness and willingness to be of assistance and support was invaluable to my enjoyment and progress.

I would also like to thank my wife Michelle and daughter Jenna without whose constant support and encouragement this dissertation would have been very difficult to accomplish.

Thanks must also go to the principal, management team and teachers at the school where I conducted my research study. Their openness and willingness to support my research project helped make the journey a satisfying and enjoyable experience.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the eight children and their parents who participated so willingly in my research project and who gave me their full support from the inception of the project to its conclusion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRELIMINARIES

Copyright notice ……..…… i
Title page……..……. ii
Abstract and Keywords……. iii
Declaration …….. iv
Dedication …… v
Acknowledgements ……... vi

CHAPTER ONE

1. **INTRODUCTION**……..... 1

1.1 The start of my research process ……. 2

1.2 Statement of the Problem …… 4

1.3 Research question ……... 5

1.3.1 Research sub-questions ……... 5

1.4 Rationale ……. 5

1.5 Aims, objectives and purpose of this study …… 6

1.5.1 Details of the mediation programme …….…….. 7

1.6 Conclusion to introduction …….. 9

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW……. 10

2.1 Introduction ……. 10

2.2 An examination of the IATLI and the Ecosystemic Graphic Organizer within the context of constructivist theory …….. 12

2.2.1 The structure of the IATLI Learning Support curriculum …….. 20
2.2.2 The Ecosystemic Perspective …….. 23

2.3 Mediation as an Interaction Method …….…….. 24

2.4 The cognitive process of speech and literacy …….. 25

2.4.1 Links between neuropsychology applications in education and the IATLI programme ……... 28

2.5 Programmes …… 31

2.6 Alternative approaches to evaluation …….. 32

2.6.1 Naturalistic and participant orientated evaluation models ……... 33

2.7 Focussing evaluative enquiry: evaluation forms and approaches …...… 35

2.8 Concepts of inclusive schooling …….. 36

2.9 Review of studies that support the mediated literacy programme utilised in this research project …… 41

2.10 A review of two studies that show the positive relationship between self-esteem, self-efficacy and the academic development of learners with learning disabilities ……. 44

2.10.1 Comparative Support Programme …….. 48

2.10.2 Comparison of an early literacy programme conducted in a Hispanic community in Los Angeles to the IATLI programme …….. 50

2.10.3 Discussion of a comparative, constructivist literacy programme implemented in elementary schools in Hawaii … 51

2.11 Rival hypotheses and the limitation of their impact on my study …...… 54

2.11.1 A critique of a 'work-based learning' model, with the intention of positioning and validating the need for a mediated learning experience for learners …….. 55

2.12 Conclusion ……... 56

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN…….. 57

3.1 Introduction ……. 57

3.2 Case study research ……. 59

3.3 This study operating as an action research …….. 60

3.4 Methodology ……... 61

3.5 Description of the intended data collection methods …….. 64

3.6 Consideration of the natural setting where my research was conducted 67

3.7 Triangulation ……... 68

3.8 Techniques of qualitative data analysis ……... 69

3.9 The researcher as an ethnographer …….. 71

3.10 Reliability and validity …… 72

3.11 Compliance with ethical standards …….. 74

3.12 Conclusion ……... 75

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS ……. 76

4. Introduction (Results of data analysis) …….. 76

4.1 Learner Participants' and Teacher Participants' Background History/Information …….. 76

4.2 Discussion of the results from the Likert-Type Questionnaire ……..….. 78

4.3 Discussion of the results from the researcher's journal as a framework to compare and analyse the results from the testing (SDRT) and the semi-structured interview …….. 84

4.3.1 Discussion of excerpts from the researcher's journal …… 85

4.3.2 Theme one: Participants' emotional responses to the IATLI Programme ……. 87

4.3.3 Theme two: Participants' and facilitators' impressions of their own learning skill development from their participation on the IATLI programme …….. 91

4.3.4 Theme three: Participants' commentary on their own literacy skill development from participation on the programme ……... 94

4.3.5 Theme four: Participants' focus and attention during the mediated learning sessions ……. 95

4.3.6 Conclusion ……. 96

4.4 Quantitative analysis: Results from pre- and post-testing of the eight learners who participated on the programme ……... 96

4.4.1 Results of the pre- and post-test scores for the Phonetic Analysis sub-test ……... 98

4.4.2 Discussion of the breakdown of the Phonetic Analysis sub-test of the SDRT ……... 99

4.4.3 Statistical analysis of the Phonetic analysis sub-test of the SDRT 100

4.4.4 Analysis of the Reading Comprehension sub-test of the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Tests …….. 101

4.4.5 Discussion of the breakdown of the literal and inferential aspects tested within the SDRT Reading Comprehension sub-test ……... 103

4.4.6 Statistical analysis of the Reading Comprehension sub-test of the SDRT ……. 104

4.4.7 Analysis of the Auditory Vocabulary sub-test of the SDRT ……. 105

4.4.8 Statistical analysis of the Auditory Vocabulary sub-test scores for the learner participants from the SDRT ……... 107

4.4.9 Discussion and comparison of the learner participants' results on the SDRT for Auditory Vocabulary ……... 108

4.4.10 Discussion of the three categories of the Auditory Vocabulary sub-test that included Maths and Science questions, Social Studies and Arts and Reading and Literature …… 109

4.5 Discussion of results from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the teachers who volunteered to participate in this research study …….. 110

4.6 Analysis of results …… 112

4.6.1 The first research sub-question stated: Will educators and the mediator observe an improvement in literacy skills reflected in the learners' class activities over a six month period? …….. 112

4.6.2 Discussion of the data with regard to sub-question two which asked: Is the IATLI programme enhancing the self-esteem of the target audience, in this case the participating grade eight learners?……. 123

4.6.3 Research sub-question three asked: Will quantitative and qualitative evidence show that the participant learners on the programme internalised the cognitive learning strategies outlined by the outcomes of the IATLI programme?…….. 135

4.6.4 Research sub-question four: Does this method of programme mediation enhance the school's ability to provide an inclusive learning environment?……..... 145

4.6.5 Sub-question five: Have the stated outcomes of the IATLI programme been achieved?…… 158

4.7 Logic model ……. 162

4.8 Conclusion ……... 165

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS 167

5.1 Summative conclusion: The chapters comprising this study that investigated the critical success factors related to mediating the IATLI programme to grade eight learners at an independent school …….. 168

5.1.1 Chapter One: Introduction ……. 168
5.1.2 Chapter Two: Literature Review ……... 169
5.1.3 Chapter Three: Methodology and Research Design …….. 173
5.1.4 Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion of Results ……..... 175

5.2 The main research question of this study asked: 'What are the critical success factors of mediating the Integrated Approach to Literacy Instruction to grade eight learners in an independent school?' …… 177

5.2.1 Sub-question one: Will educators and the mediator observe an improvement in literacy skills reflected in the learners' class activities over a six month period? …… 178

5.2.2 Sub-question two: Is the IATLI programme enhancing the self-esteem of its target audience, in this case the participating grade eight learners? …… 182

5.2.3 Sub-question three: Will quantitative and qualitative evidence show that the participant learners on the programme internalised the cognitive learning strategies outlined by the outcomes of the IATLI programme? …… 186

5.2.4 Sub-question four: Does this method of programme mediation enhance the school's ability to provide an inclusive learning environment? ……. 189

5.2.5 Sub-question five: Have the stated outcomes of the programme been achieved? ……... 192

5.3 Conclusions when investigating the power relationships that prevailed for the duration of this case-study ……..... 196

5.4 Conclusions when comparing this study to other studies discussed in the literature ……... 197

5.5 Individual learner profile description at the conclusion of the mediated IATLI programme for each of the eight participants …. 199

5.6 Concluding arguments ……. 209

5.7 Significance of the findings of this study for the wider educational community and national education structures …… 212

5.8 Recommendations for further study …….. 214

5.9 Envisaged contribution of the study to scholarship and policy or practice ……... 215

REFERENCES……. 216

FIGURES

1 Bar Graph 1: Phonetic Analysis ……..… 110
2 Bar Graph 2: Reading Comprehension …….. 111
3 Bar Graph 3: Auditory Vocabulary …… 111
4 Logic Model ……... 163

TABLES

1 Outline of data gathering procedures ……. 63
2 Teachers who participated in the research project ……. 77
3 Phonetics Analysis test score analysis ……... 98
4 Phonetics Analysis detailed breakdown ……. 99
5 Reading Comprehension test score analysis …….. 102
6 Reading Comprehension detailed breakdown ……... 103
7 Auditory Vocabulary test score analysis …… 106
8 Auditory Vocabulary detailed breakdown ……...…….. 107

APPENDICES

1 Participant one (P1) ……..... 224
2 Participant two (P2) ……... 226
3 Participant three (P3) ……. 229
4 Participant four (P4) ……... 231
5 Participant five (P5) ……... 234
6 Participant six (P6) ……. 238
7 Participant seven (P7) …… 241

8 Participant eight (P8) ……. 243
9 Likert-type questions ……. 247
10 Framework of the semi-structured interviews ……... 250
11 Headmaster consent form …….. 252
12 Parent permission form …….. 254
13 Learner permission form …… 256
14 Teacher permission form ……... 258

ACRONYMS:

ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
DAPSC	Draw a Person Self Concept Scale
EGO	Ecosystemic Graphic Organizer
FET	Further Education and Training
IATLI	Integrated Approach to Literacy Instruction
IEB	Independent Education Board
KEEP	Kamehameha Elementary Education Programme
MLE	Mediated Learning Experience
PALS	Peer Assisted Learning Strategy
SDRT	Stanford Diagnostic Reading Tests
WSA	Whole School Approach
WJ-III	Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement-III
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development