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Imagery,cognition and memory: The influence of mental imagery on improving reading, writing, and spelling abilities of grade 4 children with learning disabilities

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IMAGERY, COGNITION AND MEMORY:

The influence of mental imagery on improving reading, writing, and spelling abilities of grade 4 children with learning disabilities.

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Master of Arts (Psychology).

I hereby declare that this dissertation is, except where specified, my own work and has not been submitted for degree purposes to any other university.

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Lyndall Booth

ABSTRACT:

A learning disability, by inhibiting learning, renders the scholastic years of a young child fraught with trying and frustrating experiences. Cases of learning disabilities that are being identified are however on the increase. Thus, with the prevalence rate growing and with the knowledge that learning disabilities in the areas of reading, writing and spelling account for a large majority of all diagnosed cases, it has become necessary to devise alternative teaching methods. The Targeted Revisualisation programme which is a high imagery based programme being one such programme that might ease the difficulties that such a child may experience. This research hence aimed to explore the link between mental imagery and memory and to further explore the effectiveness of the Targeted Revisualisation programme on reading, writing and spelling abilities of grade 4 children with learning disabilities. Using a primarily qualitative methodology, in particular the aggregative case-survey method, this aim was achieved. The sample - obtained from Japari Remedial School - constituted eight children in grade 4 who had been diagnosed as having learning disabilities in the areas the Targeted Revisualisation programme addresses. The sample strategy employed may thus be considered quota, non-probability sampling. The eight children in the sample were then assigned to either the experimental group - receiving tutoring using the programme - or to the contrast group that received traditional remedial tutoring, both of a six month duration. With the end analysis the sample illustrating that both groups benefited from their respective tutoring and that the Targeted Revisualisation programme proved an effective tool for the improving of reading, writing and spelling abilities of such children. Furthermore, it was found from this research that children

with learning disabilities do use mental imagery as a learning aid for learning words and that there is indeed a strong link between mental imagery and memory.

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