



The Benefits of a Gross Motor Development Program on the Lives of Rural Marginalized Multi-Grade Primary School Learners in the Western Cape

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ABSTRACT This paper investigates the impact of a Gross Motor Development (GMD) program on the lives of learners in marginalized multi-grade environments in rural areas of the Western Cape. A transformative research paradigm was employed in order to address the research questions posed by this study. A purposive sampling technique was used to collect data from three schools. The researchers investigated the influence of an 18-month gross motor development program upon learners' lives in three multi-grade schools in the Western Cape of South Africa from the start of 2012 to the middle of 2013. A sample of 50 (N=30 males and N=20 females), grade 4-6 multi-grade learners participated in the study. Their gross motor skills were assessed using Project 4 – Innovative Motor Ability and Development (IMAD+) Test Battery. The test battery consisted of a series of physical exercises designed to assess gross motor proficiency. The data revealed that a total gross motor ability percentage score change occurred in the sample from 32.1 percentage score to a 56.8 percentage score; indicating a significant overall gross motor improvement of 24.7 percentage over an 18 month period. Improved self-esteem, positive attitudinal and motivational changes and increases in class attendance occurred among the learners. This improvement is aligned with research that indicates that development and improvement of motor skills through physical activity are related to positive development of self-esteem among learners. This paper contributes to a growing body of knowledge on education at rural, marginalized schools; suggesting that providing learners with the opportunity to participate in a structured program is likely to improve motivation which can, in turn, contribute toward positive scholastic achievement.