

THE DESIGN AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF
INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES
FOR DISADVANTAGED
SCHOOL BEGINNERS

by

ELLEN MOIPONE LENYAI

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Declaration

I declare that **THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES FOR DISADVANTAGED SCHOOL BEGINNERS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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MRS EM LENYAI

Student no 580-187-7

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DATE

Acknowledgements

- This thesis is dedicated to my sons, Molefe and Thebe for their compassionate encouragement and inspiration during the years devoted to this study.
- To my sister, Seapei Noge, I am indebted not only for her expertise in the field of early childhood learning, but also for her tireless support throughout the period of this investigation.
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Summary

The aim of this study was to investigate the design and implementation of early intervention programmes used for disadvantaged learners in South Africa. The focus was on the Grade R class since it has been introduced to prepare learners for formal schooling. The extent to which the programme could influence the learner's skills were investigated.

The design is defined in terms of the structure, goals, and content of the programme. The implementation strategy in this investigation is explained in broad terms to include ECD policies, delivery structures and modes, teacher preparedness and arrangements made at school level.

The investigation was conducted as a case study in disadvantaged school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng province. It established that the design of the Grade R programme followed the constructivist approach by combining the developmental and behavioural approaches to teaching. The design was commendable with regard to its goals and its duration. However, concerns were raised with regard to the structure and content of the Learning Area Programmes. An alternative design is recommended.

The success of any programme depends to a large extent on implementation strategies used for delivery. This investigation established that policy formulation at national level followed international trends. Implementation power was devolved to the provincial departments in order to accommodate provincial diversity. However, structural deficits and undefined line functions were identified at provincial and district levels. The impact of this deficiency was evident in the Grade R classes.

Finally this study concluded that although learners showed developmental gains, this cannot be regarded as the influence of the Grade R teaching because this age group is still developing and the change could be ascribed to maturation. The learners did not acquire basic literacy skills. Their poor language and intellectual abilities remain extremely low.

KEY WORDS

disadvantaged learner; disadvantaged schools; Early Childhood Development; Early learning programmes; Foundation Phase; implementation strategy; intervention programmes; Learning Area; learning materials; learning outcome; literacy skills; practitioners; programme design; school readiness; SETT

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