WHAT IMPACT DOES THE USE OF DIGITAL READING HAVE ON THE READING ATTAINMENT OF A P6 CLASS?

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Abstract (653 words)

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many things in the lives of children and young people, including the way they work and learn. It is the responsibility of all educators to ensure they are adapting their learning and teaching to be responsive to the full range of learners’ needs (Education Scotland, 2021). As a consequence of this, the need for children and young people to be able to develop digital skills and abilities has come to the forefront.

Digital learning has been outlined as a priority by the Scottish Government in Education Scotland’s national improvement framework (2016) in order to ‘enrich learning and teaching, help to raise levels of attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap’.

Aim

This research study aimed to investigate the impact the use of digital reading had on reading attainment of a P6 class.

The digital reading intervention used is an online reading program called myON®. myON provides a large digital library from which learners can choose different texts based on ability and interests.

The sub questions were:

* What is digital reading?
* What are the perceived benefits or drawbacks of using DT in reading lessons?
* To what extent, if any, does digital reading enhance reading attainment?

Methodology

In order to achieve these aims, a mixed methods approach to gathering data was used. The research was carried out over a six-week period and 17 learners took part in digital reading sessions comprised of a 45-minute lesson, 3 times per week. All learners completed pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, FG and reading assessment. The qualitative data was used to gauge learners’ views and opinions on, not only the intervention, but on how the learners feel about reading. Assessment data also provided comparisons highlighting improvements in reading attainment scores. The data from the reading intervention, myON®, also provided a means to look at learners’ performances within reading attainment scores and provide evidence about student learning in the curriculum, in particular their reading development.

Findings

The findings indicated overall the responses from participants were very positive and learners enjoyed the change to reading lessons, engaged with the intervention and gave varying reasons for doing so.

Qualitative data indicated participants had an increased engagement and motivation for reading. Qualitative data showed an increase in reading assessment scores. The experience revealed that digital technology made a positive contribution to reading lessons. The results of this research confirm the importance of skill development for both teachers and pupils in DT to maximise the impact on learning.

The range of responses from participants throughout the qualitative data shows how the use of the myON**®** intervention has supported them overcome learning barriers. Themes within the qualitative data showed a shift from negative responses to positive responses. Responses indicated learners are able to read at their own ability, complete differentiated work and complete reading content more suited to their needs and learning style (Goundar, 2011).

Within the quantitative data, the gap between highest attainers and lowest attainers narrowed. This confirmed the positive themes within the FG responses that DT can support those with a barrier to learning and help to close the gap.

Recommendation

The recommendations from this study for future research include:

* further investigation using a larger demographic of participants
* a larger subject group to include all representatives at all stages of learning.

As well as this, Local Authorities could develop a digital device policy for educators who are unsure how to use devices safely and effectively. Additional Career Long Professional Learning training for educators and support staff could be implemented to build on existing technology available in schools.

Conclusion

As the world becomes digitalised, it is vital that educators are up to speed with the expectations the Scottish Government (2016) have set around the use of DT in education. The way learners learn is changing so the way teachers teach must also change. As John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education, said:

‘It is only by working together that we can realise the potential of digital technology for all our children and young people.’