

ABSTRACT

Exploration of Classroom Planning and Practices as They Impact on the Social and Emotional Development of Children

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This study sought to investigate classroom planning and practices as they impacted on the social and emotional development of children at a co-educational government primary school located in a suburban district of Trinidad and Tobago. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Participants comprised the students of three classes, three teachers, the principal, and vice-principal. Among the findings were that: 1) while the teachers articulated an awareness of the need for the development of social and emotional skills in their students, there appeared to be no deliberate approach in the teaching of these skills; 2) cooperative learning, a positive classroom environment, and modelling were all key factors in classroom activities; 3) there appeared to be very little correlation between the teachers' words and actions, and what actually took place during the teaching/learning experiences they created in their classrooms; and 4) the school's administrators agreed that the school, in addition to playing a crucial role in the social and emotional development of its children, had a responsibility to provide for the holistic development of all the students, regardless of their circumstances and, consequently, they felt that this could only be achieved in a positive school environment.

Keywords: Classroom environment; Primary school students; Child development; Emotional development; Social development; Trinidad and Tobago