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A Step in the Right Direction: Can the Responsive Classroom Approach Improve Learning and Social Skills Outcomes in Minority Predominant Elementary Schools in Germany?"

As the world becomes globalized, the need for cultural sensitization and integration becomes paramount. My research study focuses on the impact of academic and social learning of elementary school-aged students with immigrant backgrounds under the Responsive Classroom Approach. By understanding and celebrating the cultural background of the students and equally teaching them to become more sensitive, tolerant and responsible for their behaviour in class, students are exposed to a learning environment that equips them with academic and social skills that enable them to be more productive, as well as, maintaining peaceful interactions with their classmates and eventually the larger world.

My doctoral study will follow an experimental research design using a simple randomized sampling method. The proposed sample population will come from Mannheim which is situated in Baden-Württemberg - a thriving metropolis with over 332,000 inhabitants of which 40 percent are immigrants. Approximately 100 elementary schools will be randomly selected, and out of the total, six schools will be randomly sampled and divided into two. Three schools will serve as the treatment group while the other three schools will serve as the control group. An assessment of reading and math scores as well as social skills will be carried out in the select elementary schools to identify the baseline for the study. Data collection will be carried out through questionnaires, structured interviews with the principals and teachers, review of test scores and class reports.

In summary, the push for increase in learning outcomes and improvement of social skills in vulnerable schools is a major focus of the German government, and consequently, programmes are being developed to address the need. It is therefore pivotal that young children, especially those from immigrant backgrounds, are equipped with the skills needed to afford them a fair start in their academic and social journey.

Key words (English): Responsive Classroom Approach, Culturally Responsive Classrooms, Minority Predominant Elementary Schools, Cultural Sensitization, Integration, Academic and Social Learning Skills

Schlüsselbegriffe (Deutsch): Responsive Klassenzimmer Ansatz, kulturell ansprechenden Klassenzimmer, Minderheitengrundschule Übergewicht, kulturelle Sensibilisierung, Integration, Bildung und Soziales Lernkompetenz