

Bridging the digital divide: A South African perspective on minimally invasive education

by

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I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Don and my children, Dietrich and Igna.

Thank you for always being there...

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations and Acronyms	Description
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DST	Department of Science and Technology
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IST	Information Society Technologies
MIE	Minimally Invasive Education
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OBE	Outcomes Based Education

Summary

Advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have brought many opportunities to South Africa and also challenges, such as narrowing the gap, known as the digital divide, between those who have (the “haves”) and those who do not have (the “have-nots”) access to ICTs. The majority of South Africans living in developing areas throughout South Africa do not have access to computers and are mostly computer illiterate.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) launched their Digital Doorway project across South Africa to evaluate the feasibility of an alternative computer training method following a minimally invasive educational approach. Within the scope of the CSIR’s project, this research study endeavoured to explore to what extent and how the children had obtained computer skills, without the guidance of a facilitator, during the Digital Doorway project launched in Atteridgeville, Pretoria.

A qualitative research methodology was adopted for the study.

During the course of this research project, it was not possible to determine whether the children obtained any initial or additional computer skills, since the children were mostly unable to use the computers due to the malfunctioning thereof.

The findings of this study coincide with authoritative literature on the topic which points out that real ICT access entails more than merely installing hardware and software.

Keywords

Computer literacy

Digital doorway

Computer skills

“Hole-in-the-Wall” experiment

Computer training

Information and Communication Technologies

Digital divide

Minimally Invasive Education