Active Learning with Tablet Computers in the Early Years
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Research aims or questions:

To examine how practitioners support children's active usage of tablet computers.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

There is a limited amount of research on the integration of tablet computers into early years settings and the majority of research that does exist focuses on the development of children's literacy and mathematics ability. Additionally, literature indicates that practitioners' have problems integrating technology into early years settings, displaying anxieties about children's passive interaction with technology.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Observations of the children were guided by an Observational Framework assessing for:
1. Four pillars of learning.
2. Characteristics of effective learning.
3. Shared Sustained Thinking.

Tablet apps were assessed using Highfield and Goodwin's continuum.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

An explorative case study consisting of children at play with tablets and semi-structured interviews with practitioners.

Ethical considerations:

1. Using picture books of research alongside simple verbal assent with children.
2. Continuous consent.
3. Removed identifiable data.

Main finding or discussion:

1. Practitioners revealed being initially wary of the integration of tablets.
2. Practitioners indicated a difficulty with finding appropriate tablet apps for children.
3. Practitioners were anxious about the potential passivity of tablets.
4. Practitioners educational philosophy appears to have affected how they supported creative play with tablets.

Implications, practice or policy:

1. The introduction of an external expert appears to be of use to nurseries that experience difficulty with tablet integration.
2. The definition of an educational app needs to be regulated.
3. There needs to be more research completed on the active use of tablets in the early years as it combats children's passivity whilst promoting problem solving and higher order thinking.
4. Practitioners may need training to understand the creative and sensory benefits of tablets.

Keywords: *Assessment, Play, Case study, Creativity, Technology and ICT*