Reading Response Journal 5

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Summary

Identifying learning disabilities of ages 0-2 is an ongoing challenge. Identifying the delays is important for cognitive development in children. Current models of identifying early disabilities fail to account for children born preterm. The article discusses standardizing normative methods in order to better include this demographic. Preterm infants would benefit greatly from this inclusion and usually have poorer math and language skills without early intervention. Assessments currently used involve scoring discrete tasks presented by an examiner. The Bayley Scales of development is considered the gold standard in this category. Although these methods are great for the general population, the atypical developing children (such as those born preterm) are not being identified. One piece of evidence shows that scores can vary up to 1.5 standard deviations from week to week and shows the need for another tool to corroborate results to ensure accuracy. The purpose of the study mentioned in the article was to establish whether preterm babies were at risk for cognitive delays and whether their abilities are stable across the first 2 years of life. Models including the Bayley III, mobile paradigm, and means-end assessments are used alongside historical data to achieve this purpose. 52 infants were used, 23 were born preterm. The results showed that infants born preterm had cognitive delays as evidenced by the mobile paradigm. Delays detected in the first year of life persisted in the second year of life as well. Other more experimental “play-based” assessments corroborated the mobile paradigm by identifying sensitivity to cognitive delays as early as the first few months. Assessments focused on spontaneous play may later be used as a predictive model.

Analysis

This article uses many different appeals in its rhetoric. Logos are used to establish a logical need for standardizing tools of assessment. The authors point out a difference in the preterm population between identification rates of cognitive delays, and occurrence rates of cognitive delays. The article uses this proposition to evoke a pathos appeal. The authors claim there to be a "need" to update assessment models to include this population. To drive th pathos appeal home, the authors include pictures of the children alongside the data that would doom them to poor cognitive development including areas of math and language later in life. While this isn't a particularly overwhelming emotional appeal, it must be considered a rhetorical choice, as the authors had no reason to include pictures of children. The authors use ethos and credibility paradoxically, both appealing to the authority of Bayley III and calling for it to be revised or corroborated by more diverse measures. One such measure is the "play-based" assessments which the authors show can predict cognitive delay early in life and suggest strongly that it could be used as a predictor or identifier. While the paradox of supporting and denying Bayley III's effectiveness seems to be a negative thing, in fact, all the researchers are saying is that it is the gold standard and the normative examination, yet it is flawed. The call to revise the test isn't to overhaul it, but to include other measures to corroborate data and make sure nobody slips "under the radar" when it comes to detecting cognitive delay. This point is emphasized through an appeal to Kairos or timing. The authors claim, correctly, that cognitive delay can be curtailed with early intervention at 24 months. These types of interventions are well known in the world of autism and can have an astounding effect on a child's cognitive and social function later

in life. The appeal to timing is a crucial rhetorical choice as it provides a reason to revise the test and pairs it with the hope of a better outcome for the children.