

Reading Literacy in Primary Schools in South Africa: Educator Perspectives on Factors Affecting Reading Literacy and Strategies for Improvement

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ABSTRACT As a developing country, South Africa is faced with challenges in the sphere of education which have a direct impact on the literacy level of learners. Learners are taught in a language (English) which is not their home language. The socio-economic challenges, particularly of having little or no parental support, as well as the challenges of educators who are not proficient in English as a medium of instruction, and large class sizes, also contribute to the low literacy levels. South Africa's performance in terms of the international reading tests, as well as the national literacy tests, has confirmed the seriousness of the problem and the urgency of finding solutions. This paper seeks to investigate the factors that impact on reading literacy as a preliminary step to finding measures to improve the quality of reading. Through an empirical study using a survey, data has been gathered from the perspective of educators from 40 schools in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The study will be beneficial to educators in the inter-mediate phase of primary schools; curriculum development specialists and national policy makers.