

Disciplinary Measures Used in South African Schools: How Do Learners View Their Effectiveness?

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ABSTRACT The study reports on learners' views on the effectiveness of disciplinary measures used against them by educators in South African schools. The study was a descriptive survey that was a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It looked into insights of 300 learners selected from 15 independent schools in Mthatha district in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Data were collected mainly through a semi-structured questionnaire administered on selected learners as well as interviews with selected learners. Quantitative data were analysed with the aid of the SPSS version 17 software whereas qualitative data reporting took form of narratives and thick description. The study revealed that most disciplinary measures used to deal with minor forms of indiscipline were rated lowly and they were also judged to be mostly ineffective in: deterring offenders, teaching self-discipline, teaching behaviour accountability, helping the offenders understand disciplinary problem, avoiding resentment, ensuring future cooperation and ensuring the offender considered other learners' feelings. The study also found that a number of disciplinary measures used to deal with major forms of indiscipline were rated as ineffective in: teaching behaviour accountability, responsible behaviour, self-discipline, respect of other learners, handling of conflict and helping the offender to understand the disciplinary issue. The study concludes that disciplinary measures that are mostly punitive are ineffective in curbing learner indiscipline in schools. The study recommends the use of learner-centered, supportive, proactive and cooperative disciplinary measures when dealing with learner indiscipline.