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Learner performance disparities between former white and former black schools in Gauteng Province of South Africa after more than a decade of democracy.

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ABSTRACT

A Five-pillar conceptual framework -good social environment, focused instruction, well-trained and regularly supervised teachers, family background and language of learning and teaching- is used in this dissertation as a theoretical construct through which to make sense of persistent learner performance disparities between former white and former black schools in the South African public education system. This is a largely qualitative research project which employs a case study approach within a study area comprised of four purposive sample schools. The study is exploratory in nature in that it seeks to investigate why former white schools continue to perform better than former black schools despite massive educational changes made since 1994. I argue in this dissertation that teaching and learning processes between former white and former black schools are still fraught with huge inequalities, hence learner performance disparities. In other words, despite the investment, inputs and strategies since 1994, the education system in historically black schools is not working largely because of issues of classroom practice. A multi-method approach for data collection purposes was used in this study: testing, interviews, observations, intensive literature review and documentary analysis. Learner focus groups, maths teachers, teacher union representatives and school principals formed the backbone of research respondents in this project. The results show immense and unrelenting prevalence of inequalities and variations between former white and former black schools in terms of almost all aspects of teaching and learning processes. The essence of the results is that for the South African education system to achieve equitable learner performance across all schools, it must first achieve equity in terms of teaching and learning processes and needs.

Key Words

Learner Performance
Disparities
Former Black Schools
Former White Schools
Educational Equity
Family Background

Socio-Economic Status
Teacher Quality
Supervision and Evaluation
Content Knowledge
Pedagogical Content Knowledge
Accountability
Development
Dysfunctional
Language of Teaching and Learning

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other University.

Signed _____

H.G. Baloyi

_____ day of _____ 2011

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To God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, you've never let me down and you've never disappointed me. Thanks for your love, mercy, protection and wisdom.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my late mother – a single parent, who, though uneducated herself, wanted her children to be educated- and mothers like her. Lack of education forced my mother to become a farm labourer, working from one farm to another, enduring poor working conditions and exploitative remuneration packages in order to provide for my siblings and I. She was a hard worker -a very strong woman indeed, and she sacrificed a lot for us. She used to encourage me to work very hard and make sure that I break the poverty circle in the family. I am proud of her, and this achievement belongs to her and all single mothers keeping the educational fires burning in low-income families.

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ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

AED	Academy for Educational Development
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CK	Content Knowledge
COSATU	Congress of South African trade Unions
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education For All
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
ELLs	English Language Learners
ELSN	Education for Learners with Special Needs
EMIS	Education Management and Information System
EPU	Education Policy Unit
ETS	Educational Testing Services
FET	Further Education and Training
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GET	General Education and Training
HBSS	Home-Based School Support
HE	Higher Education
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Committee in South Africa
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLE	Home Learning Environment
HLM	Hierarchical Linear Model
HoA	House of Assembly
HOD	Head of Department

HoD	House of Delegates
HoR	House of Representatives
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
IIEP	International Institute of Educational Planning
LoTL	Language of Teaching and Learning
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievement
MST	Maths, Science and Technology
NAEP	National Assessment of Education Programs
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NCTM	National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
Non-ELLS	Non-English Language Learners
NPNC	Non-Personnel Non-Capital
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSD	Occupational Specific Dispensation
OTL	Opportunity To Learn
OTQL	Opportunity To Quality Learning
PEDs	Provincial Education Department
PEI	President's Education Initiative
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PMS	Performance Management System
PTAs	Parent-Teacher Associations
PTSAs	Parent-Teacher-Students Associations
RNCS	Revised National curriculum Statement
R$R	Rationalization and Redeployment
RSA	Republic of South Africa

SASA	South African Schools Act
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADTU	South African democratic Teachers' Union
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SES	Socio-economic Status
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
TED	Transvaal Education Department
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Survey
US	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSP	Voluntary Severance Package
WCEFA	World Conference on Education For All
WITS	University of the Witwatersrand
WRDM	West Rand District Municipality
WSE	Whole School Evaluation