

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

Acknowledgements

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 |