

Review of: "Is the Reading Crisis in South Africa Sustained on Purpose?"

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Early grade reading instruction forms the foundation for future reading success and all future learning. Early-grade reading research in English and African languages has flourished in the past ten years. The rich data that has emerged from this current study can guide our thinking around early literacy and early grade reading in South Africa, and we can decide what counts as adequate reading instruction in the early years. This study makes a significant contribution to our understanding of (1) the *scripted Grade 1 lesson plans* (2) the implications of these *scripted in the teaching of ESL & HL* (3) *the teaching of early grade reading*. A satisfactory engagement with the topic was made. This manifested through the engagement with literature and how data generated was analysed in line with the requirements of the objectives of the study. The conclusions reached in the article are a true reflection of the data generated and what the literature presented.

In trying to respond to the research question “How can reading be improved again, and learners also be helped to understand written English Second Language (ESL)? The author begins by providing us with the background on the state of literacy in the 1990s for us to better understand where the problem lies and how it can be addressed. The detailed description of the studies conducted in the early 1990s is an important one in the current South African context where we are grappling with low literacy levels. These findings suggest that “the wheels” are coming off at the very beginning of the learning-to-read journey in Grade 1.

In the abstract and later in the article, the author mentions ‘poor children’; it might be important to explain what is meant by ‘poor’ in the context of the study. It will also be important for the author to present her views on issues around monolingualism, bilingualism, and Mother Tongue Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE) to justify her theoretical position and statements like these “...whereas at present large amounts of written ESL are given from early in Grade 1, **confusing children** with two different sets of letter sounds – in their HL and ESL and “The simultaneous introduction of reading in both the HL and ESL, meaning that children have to deal with two different sets of letter sounds which may **be confusing to them.**”

Finally, South Africa is still grappling with the low literacy levels in the Foundation Phase and still finding ways to respond to the question posed by the 2030 Reading Panel “What needs to change for us to ensure that all children learn to read by 2030?”, findings of this study would have been helpful if access was granted and the study was completed in Grade 1 classrooms. The article is well-written but can further benefit from proofreading.

