

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

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

The following comments pertain to the above document I reviewed. The author has undertaken important research on the teaching of languages in South Africa. This is an important topic to be explored since reading is a fundamental component of the four language skills. However, the following observations were noted during the review:

1. The abstract is rubric; it does not follow conventions for writing an abstract in academic papers and/or book chapters. Some points are written in bullet format instead of continuous writing.
2. There is an overcited scholar, "Cronje." At times, this scholar will be the only scholar cited in the whole paragraph, and this weakens the scholarship in this article. Perhaps one would have wished to know what other scholars say about this topic.
3. Since the paper deals with phonetics and phonology, conventional phonetic symbols should be used, e.g., /b/, etc.
4. The author assumes that the reading problems in S.A. township schools are attributed to the methods of teaching, especially the lesson plan, and does not acknowledge other variables that may affect reading, such as socioeconomic status, parents' level of education, and parental support to their children. So, the teaching methods are just one variable among others. The author needs to acknowledge that.
5. There are old studies dating back to 1992, 1995, etc. I think these studies are too old to weigh on what is happening currently. The author needs to find more recent studies to explain current teaching practices. I am sure a lot of studies have been conducted between this period.
6. In the recommendations, there is a suggestion that there should be development of new teaching materials; this recommendation has no basis since in the whole study, materials were not reviewed or cited as a compounding factor, but the lesson plan was. So, it is folly to recommend the change of materials if they are not cited as a problem.
7. There is also a recommendation that teachers should be trained on new strategies for teaching reading. The author seems to use methods and strategies interchangeably, yet these are two different concepts. The paper alludes to methods and not strategies.
8. Under recommendation 2, the author also suggests that the lesson plan should be withdrawn and CAPS be used. The question is: Is a lesson plan not necessary when teaching using CAPS? If it's necessary, what will the teachers use if the current lesson plan is withdrawn and NOT improved? CAPS is also a policy and not a teaching method.
9. May I recommend that the author look and address the above concerns.

