

Ability Grouping as an Approach to Narrow Achievement Gap of Pupils with Different Cultural Capitals: Teachers' Involvement

Newman Wadesango* and Anass Bayaga**

**Walter Sisulu University, Centre for Learning and Teaching Development, East London, RSA*

***University of Fort Hare, Faculty of Education, East London, RSA*

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ABSTRACT Streaming is where students are graded into form classes according to ability. Movement from one class or level to another by a student entails movement to a different level in all subjects and perhaps a change of subjects also. Many countries have abolished this practice. The reason was to avoid branding students as overall achievers or non-achievers/failures according to form classes. This study therefore sought to investigate if secondary schools in Zimbabwe do subscribe to this practice. It adopted an interpretive qualitative research methodology and a case study research design. A purposive convenient sample of 5 school heads and 20 secondary school teachers formed the study. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews, documentary analysis and observation of two staff meetings per school. The study established that ability grouping is rampant in most schools in Zimbabwe although it is considered a problematic practice as it is associated with social segregation. The findings of the study therefore depict that teachers in all the five schools under study are empowered to make decisions in the streaming process.