

Teacher Perceptions on the Effectiveness of an English Remedial Teaching Programme in Primary Schools in Zimbabwe: Towards an Alternative to the Deficit Model

Clever Ndebele

*Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning, University of Venda, P. Bag X 5050,
Thohoyandou 0950, South Africa
Telephone: 0159628650, Cell: 0731720291, Fax: 0865119926,
E-mail: clever.ndebele@univen.ac.za*

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ABSTRACT In the Zimbabwean education system, primary school pupils are tested at the beginning of grade four to determine their English proficiency and based on the test results those who fall below a certain predetermined score are placed on a generic remedial programme offered by a specially designated teacher. This study set out to evaluate the effectiveness of this English remedial education programme in Zimbabwe. Using the descriptive survey method, a total of thirty respondents from ten schools, comprising ten heads of schools, ten Grade four teachers and ten remedial teachers were issued with a semi structured questionnaire. For data analysis, substantive themes were deduced and outlined from the data through content analysis. The study showed that very few pupils were benefiting from remedial instruction. Remedial teachers were poorly trained for remedial teaching, materials for use for both teachers and pupils were grossly inadequate, while supervision and monitoring by Schools Psychological Services (SPS) was virtually non-existent. The study recommends that Schools Psychological Services considers an integrated approach where, rather than pupils being sent to an external expert for fixing, the grade four teacher provides the extra tuition using authentic contextualized grade four material.