

Critical Pedagogy and Literacy Development

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Abstract : This paper analyses the experiences of teachers of literacy in underprivileged schools in the Western Cape, South Africa. The purpose is to provide teachers in poorly resourced schools within economically deprived areas an opportunity to voice their experiences of teaching literacy. The paper is based on an empirical study using interviews and classroom observation. A descriptive account of the observation data was followed by an interpretive analysis. The content analysis of the interview data led to the development of themes and patterns for the discussion. The study reveals key factors for literacy underachievement that include lack of critical and emancipatory pedagogies, resources, parental support, lack of teacher knowledge, absence of cognitive activities, and the social complexity of poverty. The paper recommends that a new model of literacy that is underpinned by critical pedagogy challenge inequality and provides strategic and sustained teacher support in disadvantaged schools is crucial in a society emerging from oppression and racism.

Keywords : critical pedagogy, disadvantaged schools, literacy, poverty

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