System reform and primary literacy: implications for education leadership

Brahm Fleisch
University of the Witwatersrand
PIRLS, 2006

Percentage of Learners at or above Lowest Reading Benchmark
Annual National Assessment, Verification 2011

### Grade 3 Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable Level of Performance</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3 Literacy</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3 Numeracy</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6 Language</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 6 Mathematics</td>
<td>12%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Grade 6 Language

- Not achieved: 70%
- Partially achieved: 15%
- Achieved: 12%
- Outstanding: 3%
Assumption

Instructional Practice (Tasks) → Performance


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standardized Tests used as a Catalysis</td>
<td>Change strategies often triggered by international test results or national attention generated on the weaknesses of the education system</td>
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</table>
| Focus on Literacy and Numeracy               | Basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, and the natural sciences  
|                                              | Narrowing of the curriculum, deemphasises on arts and other subjects       |
| National Targets                             | Political identification of national numerical targets attached to the political cycle |
| External Assessment and Accountability       | Sources of educational change are external innovations brought from the corporate world through legislation and national programs. |
| Prescriptive Curriculum                       | Tightly prescribed curriculum aligned to daily lessons with detailed scripting |
| Standardized Learning Materials              | Provision of centrally procured and educative learning materials to all learners |
| Professional Development                     | This takes a variety of forms from conventional short-course, just-in-time training to site-based coaching. |
Four Pillars of the GPLMS Strategy

1. **Measuring literacy and raising expectations**
   1.1 Annual National Assessments
   1.2 Common Assessments

2. **Strengthening the teaching of literacy & maths**
   2.1 Lesson Plans
   2.2 Provision of Resources: i.e. Graded Readers, Phonics & Workbooks
   Catch-Up Programme
   2.3 Training & Instructional Coaches

3. **Improving programmes of learner support**
   3.1 Homework Assistants
   3.2 Parent Support Programme Support
   3.2 Strengthening book collections in schools.

4. **Improving the management of teaching and learning**
   4.1 District Officials
   4.2 School Management Teams

- Implementation 2011-2014
- Initial literacy only, 2012 incorporated mathematics
- Grades 1-7.
- 832 underperforming primary schools
- ~12 000 teachers
- ~700 000 learners
- Funded out of the provincial budget
- GDE lead, contracts with outside NGO service providers
- Support from McKinsey & Co
Basic Model of Change

- Lesson Plans
- Learning Materials
- Training & Instructional Coaching

Instructional Practice