



Consortium for Research on
Educational Access,
Transitions and Equity

**The Impact of Language on
Educational Access in South Africa**

Michel Lafon

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The Education Policy Unit at the
University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Summary

The role of Medium of Instruction or Language of Learning and Teaching has not received sufficient attention as a factor denying meaningful access to education in South Africa. Yet the majority of under-performing learners are also children who learn in a language that is not their mother-tongue. This research aims to assess how recent language policies have changed the linguistic practices of schools and how this impacts on 'meaningful' access (understood as learners' access to the curriculum and therefore broad content knowledge). Interviews and open discussions were conducted with principals, teachers and parents from various township schools located in KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng to illustrate the problems.

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