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**THE IMAGING TECHNIQUE AS LEARNING SUPPORT FOR EDUCATIONALLY
DISADVANTAGED LEARNERS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL, TO IMPROVE READING
COMPREHENSION**

Dissertation prepared by

MANDIZA DINAH NGWENYA

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“Reading is more than seeing words clearly, more than pronouncing words correctly, more than recognizing the meaning of isolated words.

Reading requires one to think, feel and imagine.”

Tarvener (1990:5)

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SUMMARY

Reading comprehension is one of the basic learning skills that need to be learned in an early school years. The English language is generally introduced as early as Grade 2 level in township primary schools. Township learners are at most exposed to English as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) for three years (Grade 5-7) before entering secondary school. Most township primary school learners enter secondary school with poor English language development and poor language proficiency. Reading comprehension is one of the problems experienced by most township secondary school learners. Lack of reading comprehension skills negatively affect their ability to construct meaning from what they are reading. Reading support techniques or strategies need to be sought and developed to address the reading comprehension problems experienced by learners especially from the disadvantaged environment. It is difficult to understand or interpret what they are reading.

This research focused on the use of the imaging technique on a learning support in developing reading comprehension skills of township secondary school learners. The emphasis was mainly on how this technique can be adapted in order to enhance its mastery in developing reading comprehension skills. This imaging technique is seen as a feasible technique in a holistic approach to develop reading comprehension skills. The imaging technique makes use of the formation of multisensory pictures during the reading process which are valuable in the independent construction of meaning. The use of imaging for reading enhances active learning and memory.

The research was conducted with learners in Grade 9 in a secondary school in a Pretoria township. The participants in the research group experienced reading comprehension problems, lack of English language development and difficulty in the use of English as the (LoLT). Some of the learners in the research group appeared to be experiencing intellectual learning disability. The practical implementation of the imaging technique was done in twenty sessions. A control group attended twenty reading support sessions using a dictionary method, for the same texts. Qualitative and quantitative analyses of the results are performed and discussed.

Keywords:

- reading comprehension
- second language as LoLT
- senior phase (Grade 9)
- reading problems
- township secondary school
- imaged pictures
- learning support
- imaging technique as reading support
- learning support
- assessment