

TIMSS SA Newsletter



Education and Skills
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Exploring Educational Progress in South Africa

TIMSS 2019: Where are we?



The TIMSS 2019 cycle began early in 2018, and data was collected at the Grade 5 level the same year. The data collection for Grade 9 learners was completed in September 2019. This [infographic](#) presents an overview of the process thus far, and outlines what remains to be done before the results are released in December 2020.

Mid-level high school certificate and youth employment

In this Daily Maverick [article](#), Cyril Nhlanhla Mbatha and Vijay Reddy reflect on the introduction of the General Education Certificate at the end of Grade 9, arguing that it may provide much-needed structure to the schooling system and probably improve the quality of learning, resulting in better long-term outcomes for learners.

PIRLS 2021

South Africa will participate in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2021, the next cycle of the reading literacy assessment. PIRLS is one of the studies conducted by the IEA and is supported by the Department of Basic Education. PIRLS is conducted by the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) at the University of Pretoria.

The full 2016 PIRLS Report is available [here](#), and the PIRLS Literacy 2016: South African Highlights Report can be found [here](#).

Choice of language in education: do we know what South Africans want?

Using data from the 2003-2016 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), Jaqueline Harvey and Steven Gordon examine the public's attitudes towards the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). They found that a majority of the general population favoured English as the [Main Language of Instruction](#) in education. An [article](#) based on this journal publication was written for The Conversation.

Education in South Africa: hits and misses over the past 25 years

In this [piece](#) which appeared in The Conversation, Vijay Reddy, Ncamisile Zulu and Sylvia Hannan, reviewed 25 years of the education priorities set out in the annual State of the Nation address. The piece examines the focus on issues related to basic and higher education, and identifies successes, as well as issues that require further attention.

South African Schooling: The Enigma of Inequality

A recently published book, [South African Schooling: The Enigma of Inequality](#) edited by Nic Spaull and Jonathan Jansen, covers a range of South African schooling issues: from financing and policy reform to in-depth discussions of literacy, numeracy, teacher development and curriculum change.

Chapter 9 “Mathematics Achievement and the Inequality Gap: TIMSS 1995 to 2015”, by Vijay Reddy, Andrea Juan, Samuel Fongwa and Kathryn Isdale, used Grade 9 and Grade 5 TIMSS data to paint a picture of South African mathematics achievement patterns over the last 20 years. The chapter examines the continuities and discontinuities in home and school conditions and their influence on achievement patterns.

TIMSS Publications

Journal articles

The contribution of South African teachers to students’ sense of belonging and mathematics achievement: Students’ perspective from the 2015 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

In this [article](#), Fabian Arends and Mariette Visser used TIMSS 2015 data to provide evidence of how learners’ attitudes towards teachers contributed to their sense of school belonging, as well as their mathematics achievement.

PhD Thesis

Developing a model of school climate unique to secondary schools in South Africa: A multilevel analysis approach

A 2019 [PhD thesis](#) by Lolita Winnaar investigated the relationship between school climate and academic achievement. Using multilevel analysis, the thesis investigated school climate changes from 2003 to 2015 and developed a model to measure school climate in South African secondary schools. The results show that school climate explains considerable proportions of the variations in achievement between schools.

Master’s Dissertation

A cross-country comparison of mathematics teachers’ beliefs about technology pedagogy and content knowledge (2018)

The purpose of this [study](#) was to determine how South African teachers compare with their international counterparts, in relation to their views about computer activities, teaching strategies as well as teaching specific mathematics content. The results revealed some similarities despite differences in socio-economic status. The differences in teachers’ beliefs between South Africa and the identified countries provided information about classroom practices and different teaching approaches.

Interested in using TIMSS data for research?

If you are interested in working with us on publications based on the TIMSS data, please [contact us](#).