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The Unprepared Literacy Teacher: A Challenge to Quality Early Grades Education

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Abstract

Recent literacy assessment surveys have been indicating a worrisome picture of literacy achievement standards of primary school children. The reports highlight that several children in higher grades fail to display the minimum required proficiency in literacy skills. These disappointing figures while highlighting towards several gaps in our education system also points to the poor status of literacy pedagogy followed in our early grades classrooms. Teachers are often blamed for not enabling young children to acquire basic literacy skills efficiently. On closer analysis, we will locate that teachers find it difficult to deal with the challenges of literacy failure as the teacher preparation courses hardly prepare them for the same. Most of the teacher preparation programs lack theoretically developed literacy courses. The absence of good literacy courses lead to unprepared teachers, which further lead to serious pedagogical limitations in the classroom. The present paper targets the poor status of literacy courses in the teacher education program and highlight the consequences.

Keywords: Literacy, Pre-service Teacher-Education, Early Grade Classroom, Assessment Surveys, Agency of teachers.

Teachers are a core stakeholder as well as the backbone of an educational system. It is, indeed, difficult to conceptualize schools without the presence of teachers. The importance of teachers is widely recognized by numerous philosophers, thinkers, and reformers. Mahatma Gandhi reflecting on the significance of teachers in his saying that, 'I have always felt that the true textbook for the pupil is his teacher'. Great Educationist and former President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam described, 'Teaching is a very noble profession that shapes the character, caliber, and future of an individual. If the people remember me as a good teacher that will be the biggest honor for me.' Brad Henry spotlight the power of the teacher as an