COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENTS.

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Abstract:
This article explores issues that emerged from a longitudinal reading and literacy research project carried out in three high-poverty primary schools in an urban South African setting, implemented by the Academic Literacy Unit (ALRU) at UNISA. This project investigates facets that affect and influence reading and literacy, including access to books and school libraries. The focus in this article is on the development of a collection policy, taking into account various issues in the South African environment (such as multilingualism and limited publishing in the indigenous languages) and the educational environment. The article takes a closer look at book collections in these school libraries, how they have been developed, and what measures can be taken to further literacy and reading development regardless of language. The article discusses issues of multilingualism including mother-tongue teaching and parental attitudes. It also examines aspects of book collection development at the three schools, with special reference to the quality versus quantity problem of children's books in indigenous languages. The authors make recommendations for book collection policies in multilingual school libraries based on the principles of McDonaldisation, namely efficiency, calculability, predictability and control, applied to books in the three school libraries.

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