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## **DEDICATION**

This report is dedicated to my family and friends for their support.

## DECLARATION

I **DouglasGawaniPhiri** do solemnly declare that this work is my own and that it has not been previously submitted for a degree at the University of Zambia or any other university.

Signed:..... Date.....

## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by **DouglasGawaniPhiri** has been approved as partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Special Education of the University of Zambia.

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## ACRONYMS

BASAT	Basic Skills Assessment Tool
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
NBTL	New Break Through to Literacy
PRP	Primary Reading Programme
SACMEQ	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring learning Quality
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
ZAMISE	Zambia Institute of Special Education
ZNAD	Zambia National Association for Deaf
ZSL	Zambian Sign Language

## **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to establish how home and school environments affect reading among grade one learners with hearing impairments in Lusaka District. A case study design was used in conducting this research. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis were employed. The sample consisted of 47 respondents comprising 10 teachers, 23 learners with hearing impairments and 14 parents of children with hearing impairments.

The findings of the study revealed that the home environment had an effect on reading where parents mostly used home signs which are not universal; lack of appropriate environment and development procedures with children with hearing impairments in infancy and early childhood; and lack of pre-school experience before entering grade one. It was found that teachers who taught reading skills to the learners with hearing impairments in Zambian Sign Language and American Sign Language produced positive results in reading. This study however has shown that use of Zambian Sign Language as medium of instruction to teach learners with hearing impairments impacted positively on learner's reading skills.

Although most teachers stated that they were conversant with New Break Through to literacy (NBTL) and could teach effectively, a few of them produced positive results - an indication that teacher's teaching methods had an impact on the reading skills of the learners. The study has also shown that lack of teachers' use of resource centres to source for reading materials; and lack of training in sign language by teachers impacted negatively on the reading skills of the learners.

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made: The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) should ensure that parents are taught basic sign language through seminars/workshops on basic sign language; MESVTEE should train more teachers in sign language to meet the current demands of teachers in special education; teachers teaching learners with hearing impairments should be encouraged to attend Continuing Professional Development meetings for them to abreast themselves with new methods of teaching reading skills and also upgrade their competencies.