

## ABSTRACT

### **A Study of Literacy Development in the Early Grades of a High Poverty-Low Performing (HPLP) Elementary School**

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This ethnographic study investigated the implications of the ecologies of the school, the classroom, and the family on the literacy development of children in four classes in the Infant department of a high poverty-low performing (HPLP) primary school in Trinidad and Tobago. Data were collected through interviews with the teachers and one parent from each class, as well as through observations and document analysis. The themes that emerged at the school level included the stressful teaching/learning environment, quality concerns, embedding inequalities, and wasting time; at the classroom level, the themes were surviving the classroom, the challenges of teaching and learning, valuing education, and blaming; and at the level of the family, the themes were the daily grind, survival skills, and becoming literate.

**Keywords:** Literacy achievement; Case studies; Primary school students; Parent attitudes; Teacher attitudes; Social factors; Economically disadvantaged; Socioeconomic status; Trinidad and Tobago