

State of Multigrade Teacher Training in South African Universities

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Abstract

This reflective paper argues the point for the training of multigrade teacher trainees. Multigrade teaching affords learners from deep rural areas access to education. Education faculties in universities are crucial in the provision of the nation's new teachers. SA has about 26 universities, none of these universities has a fully-fledged multigrade qualification. Only one university has a centre dedicated to multigrade teachers training. Other universities mention multigrade in passing. This paper is part of my study on multigrade teaching in the foundation phase.

This was a qualitative study couched in critical emancipatory research and employed participatory action research. Data was generated in three (3) selected multigrade schools through FAI (Free Attitude Interview) with co-researchers. Various data generation tools such as reflection sessions, debriefing engagements and classroom observations as used in the primary study to extrapolate the status of multigrade teacher training at universities via document analysis.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to analyse and interpret data at textual level to identify the themes and patterns related to lack of multigrade teacher training in SA universities.

The key findings of this study include an urgent need for multigrade teacher training in SA universities. There seems to be inadequate implementation of multigrade teacher training which has resulted in a situation where many learners in rural schools are taught like those in monograde classes. Multigrade teachers are not sufficiently and relevantly trained to handle these classes.

Keywords

Multigrade, SA universities, teacher training,