

South African Student Teachers in a Multicultural Social Science Classroom: An Analysis of the Teaching and Learning Experiences

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Abstract:

South Africa's schooling landscape depicts a multicultural setting because of the change in government since 1994 when 'apartheid' was dismantled, and a democratic era was ushered in. Learners from different racial, ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds are now assembled in the same classroom. This qualitative study is an investigation of final years Social Science education students' experiences of Social Science teaching and learning in a South African multicultural classroom. The purpose of the study is to analyse the experiences of student teacher's engagement with diverse learners in Social Science multicultural classroom and the influence it has on the teaching and learning project. Through a qualitative research methodology, data was gathered from Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions with three groups of five teacher education students from the same race, in their final year, specializing in Social Science teaching. The results of the study indicate that student teachers find the teaching of Social Science in a multicultural classroom very challenging, irrespective of their race, culture, or socio-background. The study therefore recommends regular exposure to diverse learners through mandatory teaching practice at multicultural schools, appropriate training and development throughout the students' teacher training with supported policies and integration of social justice into the curriculum content.

Keywords:

Teaching and Learning, Social Science, multicultural, experiences, classrooms, diversity, student teachers.