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Investigating affect, language, and meaningmaking in Deaf classrooms: using LCT and Decolonial analyses to understand influences on teacher practices

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Abstract

Deaf education in South Africa is an under-analysed space, with many questions left to answer. This project investigates affect, language and meaning-making in Deaf classrooms and explores what influences of these three components are present in teachers practices. Deaf students in South Africa are taught using the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which plays a determining influence upon teachers, regarding what they teach and how they teach. I have made use of an ethnographic self-study as a research method. I have also analysed the Life Science, Mathematics and Visual Arts CAPS documents and my reflection teaching experience journal entrees of the years 2017 and 2018, in a Deaf school, through the use of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) and decolonisation. The LCT analysis for the CAPS document used both the Semantic and Specialization planes. The results for the semantic analysis were that there is a large emphasis being place on complex stances, which are removed from the students' general context and experiences, as an influence on teachers' practice. Where the specialization analysis results reflects a high focus on specialist knowledge, which requires a specific type of knower, influencing towards this manifesting within teachers practice. The LCT analysis for the journal entrees made use of the Specialization plane only, which reflects that as practices within a Deaf classroom, teachers practice focus is on specialised knowledge structures, but not on the students as specialised knowers of the content. Where the students experience reflects that they are not receivers of specialised knowledge. This reflects a code clash being present between the two. The decolonisation analysis of the Life Sciences, and Mathematics documents showed a high focus on colonially orientated practice, where the Visual Arts analysis, reflected the opposite of this, fore fronting more decolonially orientated practices. The decolonial analysis of the journal had reflected mostly colonial influences at play within teachers practice within the Deaf classroom. Affect, language and meaning-making practices and the influences on these teacher practices was shown to have varying degrees of focus, in Deaf classrooms. Affect and language interact with each other, and when they do not interact in a positive nature this has a knock-on effect on meaning-making, which influences students self-actualisation in the Deaf classroom.

Key Words

Affect, language, meaning-making, decolonisation, Legitimation Code Theory, Deaf Education