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Productive pedagogy: experiences of third year foundation phase student teachers

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2015-08-13
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/18216

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Abstract

The notion of learner diversity is becoming a familiar term to most South African teachers, as the rich diversity of learner population is a growing reality for many schools and classrooms in the country. This presents many challenges for teachers and student teachers, especially in the Foundation Phase, as this is when the building blocks for future school success are established. The need for a framework that can equip Foundation Phase teachers and student teachers with the necessary pedagogical skills to assist learners with diverse and extensive needs is essential for ensuring that equitable educational opportunities can be provided for all learners. The study aims to investigate how a pedagogical framework can be considered a potential supportive mechanism in pedagogically dealing with the issue of learner diversity in Foundation Phase classrooms. The aim is realised through exploring the experiences and reflections of third year Foundation Phase student teachers with regards to the chosen pedagogical framework.

To fit the aim of this study, the productive pedagogy framework was chosen as the appropriate pedagogical framework informing the methods of data analysis and overall findings. To investigate in what ways the productive pedagogy framework can be considered a potential supportive mechanism for Foundation Phase third year student teachers in pedagogically dealing with the issue of learner diversity in Foundation Phase classrooms, three main research questions were posed: Firstly, in what ways does the productive pedagogy framework assist in dealing with the issue of learner diversity apparent in Foundation Phase classrooms? Secondly, in what ways do third year Foundation Phase student teachers find the productive pedagogy framework pedagogically relevant for the Foundation Phase classroom? The last question is, how do third year Foundation Phase student teachers experience the implementation of the productive pedagogy framework in the Foundation Phase classroom?

Various approaches to data analysis are used to strengthen the validity of this research. To realise the aim of the study, a deductive approach to data analysis is used for the written responses and lesson plans. Additionally, the process of an

inductive Thematic Content Analysis is utilised for the interviews, and lastly, the data set of reflective journals are analysed descriptively.

The utilisation of these data analysis methods led to findings which demonstrate a variety of ways that the productive pedagogy framework can be considered as a supportive mechanism for teachers in pedagogically dealing with the issue of learner diversity in Foundation Phase classrooms.