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Implementation of SASL in foundation phase: a case study about transformational and transformative leadership

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2017

http://hdl.handle.net/10539/23665

Batchelor, Michelle Clara (2016) Implementation of SASL in foundation phase: a case study about transformational and transformative leadership, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <http://hdl.handle.net/10539/23665>

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Abstract

South African Sign Language (SASL) is officially recognised as a formal Home Language school subject within the National Curriculum Statement Policy of South Africa. However, this long awaited roll-out of the CAPS SASL raises a number of issues within the context of each school for the Deaf regarding implementation and school leadership. Hence, a case study was undertaken at a public school for the Deaf located within Johannesburg District to draw attention to these issues. Using Freire's concepts of *Dialogue, Conscientization and Praxis* (Freire, 1972) as a means to bring about transformational changes within the school for the implementation year of SASL, 2015, the study explored the dialogue between School Management Team (SMT) and staff members who teach the Deaf learners. The models of school leadership investigated were: transactional, transformational and transformative leadership (Shields, 2010) as a framework for the changing roles as demonstrated by the SMT and the said staff members. Qualitative data provided insight into different strategies employed by them as well as class assistants to implement SASL; and further revealed the changes experienced within the school and by several staff members, where members were becoming more aware of their SASL abilities and how they would want to improve. Emergent themes included the 'SASL curriculum', 'leadership and change', 'bilingual education and quality of education' for Deaf learners. Change was evident between the positional authority of SMT members and the language authority of the Deaf staff members and revealed how this transformation in respect for different roles of the SMT assisted the SASL implementation. Findings revealed that SMT members and Deaf staff need to engage in extensive dialogue and implement strategies to facilitate the SASL implementation if there is to be meaningful transformation within the school.

Key terms:

Critical dialogue, medical model, socio-cultural model, SASL curriculum, school leadership, transformational leadership, transformative leadership, transactional leadership.