

Matching/Mismatching of Teaching and Learning Styles in Rural Learning Ecologies of Lesotho: Does it Enhance Academic Achievement

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ABSTRACT The Lesotho Junior Certificate results between 2003 and 2006 indicate that in the rural secondary schools of Lesotho the pass rate ranged from 51% to 58%. These figures are low compared to those in the urban schools for the same years which ranged from 70% to 72%. In addition, the Teaching Service Department shows that there was 40% of unqualified teachers in these rural schools in 2003 and 35% in 2007. There seems to be a correlation between the high numbers of unqualified teachers and low academic achievement of learners in these schools. This study was undertaken to determine the extent to which matching teaching and learning styles enhances academic achievement of learners in the rural secondary school ecologies of Lesotho, with the view to improve academic achievement of such schools. The Solomon Felder Index of Learning Styles (SFILS) and self-designed teaching style questionnaire were used using 190 learners and 95 teachers from rural secondary schools, respectively. The empirical findings indicate that mismatches of teaching and learning styles largely inhibit academic achievement of learners while matching them largely enhances this achievement. The findings of this research indicated that mismatches do exist in the teaching styles of teachers and their learners' learning styles and that matching teaching and learning styles enhances academic achievement of learners in rural learning ecologies. In this regard, it is recommended that: Teachers should match their teaching styles with the learning styles of their learners in most lessons to enhance their learners' academic achievement.