

Cultural Diversity in a Teacher Training Life Orientation Programme at a Higher Education Institution (HEI), South Africa

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ABSTRACT A great problem faced by many South African teachers is how to incorporate cultural knowledge in their teaching, starting at the Foundation Phase (Primary school level). Learning from different cultural backgrounds can be made valuable, interesting and exciting if approached multi-culturally, especially in a Life Orientation teacher training programme at the Higher Education Institution, that is, University. Unfortunately, the term 'multicultural' is interpreted differently by many researchers, educationists, parents, students and teachers for their own needs and interest, resulting in the term having a negative connotation for minority groups. Conceptualising 'cultural background' as embracing class, genetic make-up, culture, race, gender and religion, this paper therefore focuses on theory within a context of cultural diversity in a Life Orientation teacher training programme at the University in South Africa. It examined National Government policy documents and various perspectives from literature to argue that cultural diversity in a teaching and learning environment is here to stay if we want to promote equity and inclusivity in our education system. Qualitative generic research method was used in this study where survey questions were employed for data gathering. There was also interaction with student teachers specialising in Life Orientation Learning Area (subject) methodology. The findings from this study were that students needed the Life Orientation teacher training programme to be more improved and also be exposed to practical issues dealing with diversity and barriers to learning.