

Some Pedagogical Tensions in the Implementation of the Mathematics Curriculum: Implications for Teacher Education in South Africa

Lovemore. J. Nyaumwe; Mapula G. Ngoepe; Moshe M. Phoshoko
University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the pedagogical tensions that interns face during teaching practice. The tensions have the potential to widen their theory-practice gap. Whilst government policies on training to use enquiry methods in the classrooms are explicit, the contexts of schools such as paucity of mathematics and science teachers, makes some interns in these subjects practice teaching without the guidance of experienced teachers. In circumstances where interns are attached to experienced teachers to coach them, the examination system and differences in conceptions on the nature of mathematical content makes traditional rather than learner-centred methods emphasised by experienced teachers. The paper reveals the reasons why reform pedagogy is difficult to be implemented in schools. This revelation presents training institutions with mammoth tasks in educating interns when the enquiry methods that they emphasise are not practised in schools. The paper informs ongoing debate on Higher-Education Institutions (HEI)s in South African schools in particular, and Africa in general, on how to arrange practicum programs for interns that can facilitate the integration of theory and practice.