

Chapter 7

Towards an African–Centered Model of Learning: Africanism

Rendani Tshifhumulo

University of Venda, South Africa

Faith F. Musvipwa

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7691-9721>
University of Venda, South Africa

Tshimangadzo Justice Makhanikhe

University of Venda, South Africa

Livhuwani Daphney Tshikukuvhe

University of Venda, South Africa

ABSTRACT

This chapter interrogates the current teaching and learning strategies in South African higher institutions of learning in relation to the negligence of cultural aspects. For many years now, the general population in South Africa agitated for the amendment or annulment of the current education system as a means of restoring the African norms and values. The suspension and/or expulsion of some African students from schools due to their adherence to African values is a vivid example of how the education system undermines African cultures and traditions. The chapter deliberated on story telling as one of the methods that is relevant for Indigenous Knowledge Systems. On the central argument of the chapter the authors conversed on colonisation and its impact on education in South Africa. OBE and the revised national curriculum statement and the crises in South African education system are discussed. The chapter ends by interrogating the possibility of using African Languages in the school curriculum.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter interrogates the current teaching and learning strategies in South African higher institutions of learning in relation to the negligence of cultural aspects. For many years now, the general population in South Africa agitated for the amendment or annulment of the current education system as a means of restoring the African norms and values. The suspension and/or expulsion of some African students from schools due to their adherence to African values is a vivid example of how the education system undermines African cultures and traditions. Regrettably, with the issue of African cultures, they are taught as archaic, attributed to contradict the systematic, scientific and technological developments in a society. Resultantly, because these African cultures are not systematically written, it threatens this knowledge with extinction.

The results of such teaching and learning are expected to impact the African continent. However, it is deplorable and heart-breaking that students still use Western research paradigms and frameworks in their leaning, even if they should empirically justify African Indigenous Knowledge Systems. This system creates not merely a methodological challenge, but it justifies an abusive application of knowledge hence, challenges the golden thread of a scientific research process and purported learning outcomes. The first part of the chapter therefore, focusses on the African-Centred Theories to teaching and learning in relation to Indigenous knowledge systems. The second part of the chapter zooms into colonialism in Africa and how it affected African ways of knowing. In addition, the third part of the chapter looks specifically in Post-colonial and apartheid South Africa and its crises in education system. The last part of the chapter interrogate the importance of language, culture and development in teaching and learning processes.

The English word ‘education’ is often taken to refer to the formal systems of schooling originally introduced to Africa by colonial administrators, and further developed by post-independence governments. An examination of its original meaning, however, reveals something quite different. Senge (1990) highlights the fact that education is derived from two Latin words: *educare*, ‘to rear or foster’, and *educere*, ‘to draw out or develop’. Education thus incorporates all the processes of raising up young people to adulthood and drawing out or developing their potential to contribute to society, that are traditionally found in rural communities.

This should not be interpreted as meaning that literacy, numeracy and the acquisition of new languages are unnecessary. No society can exist in isolation: people have always sought ways to communicate with one another and to trade in goods and services, and this has never been more important than it is today. In an increasingly interdependent world, it is as essential for us to be fluent in the languages of international economics and politics - in order to defend our rights

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