

Inclusive Education in South African Universities: Pre-Service Teachers' Experiences

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Abstract : One of the goals of inclusive education is to provide learners with suitable learning environments and prospects to best attain their potential. This study sought to determine the experiences of studying inclusive education on pre-service teachers' teaching within the South African education context. A purposeful sample comprising 6 pre-service teachers was selected from a university of technology located in the Western Cape South Africa. Data were collected using open-ended questionnaires, which were exploratory in nature and analyzed thematically. The findings supported significant proportions of experiences as self-reported by pre-service teachers. The pre-service teachers' experiences of studying inclusive education included inclusive education as an "eye-opener" to the fact that learners experiencing various barriers to learning can be accommodated in the regular classrooms, exposure to some aspects of inclusive education, such as diversity, learners' rights, and curriculum differentiation. It was also revealed that studying inclusive education made pre-service teachers love and enjoy teaching more. The study shows that awareness of inclusive education has influenced pre-service teachers in South African schools.

Keywords : experience, inclusive education, pre-service teacher, South Africa

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