

Democratisation of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Authors : Jane Ebele Iloanya

Abstract : The introduction of the learning outcome approach in contemporary curriculum design and instruction, has brought student-centered education to the fore. In teacher -centered teaching and learning, the teacher transfers knowledge to the students, who are always at the receiving end. The teacher is assumed to know it all and hardly trusts the knowledge of the students. Teacher-centered education places emphasis on the supremacy of the teacher over the students who should ideally, be able to dialogue with the teacher. The paper seeks to examine the issue of democratisation of the teaching and learning process in Institutions of Higher Learning in Botswana. Botswana is a landlocked country in Southern Africa, with a total population of about two million people. In 1977, Botswana's First National Policy on Education was unveiled. This came eleven years after the country gained independence from Great Britain. The philosophy which informed the 1977 Education Policy was "Social Harmony". The philosophy of social harmony has four main principles: Unity, Development, Democracy and Self-Reliance. These principles were meant to permeate all aspects of lives of the people of Botswana, including, the issue of how teaching and learning is conducted in Botswana's institutions of higher learning. This paper will examine the practicalisation of the principle of democracy in teaching and learning at higher education level in Botswana. It will in particular, discuss the issue of students' participation and engagement in the teaching and learning process. The following questions will be addressed: 1.Are students involved in planning the curriculum? 2.How engaged are the students in the teaching and learning process? 3.How democratic are the teachers in terms of students' rights and privileges? A mixed-method approach will be adopted in this study. Questionnaires will be distributed to the students to elicit their views on the practicalisation of the principle of democracy at the higher education level. Semi-structured interview questions will be administered in order to collect information from the lecturers on the issue of democratisation of teaching and learning at the higher education level in Botswana. In addition, relevant and related literature will be reviewed to augment collected data. The study will focus on three tertiary institutions in Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana. Currently, there are ten tertiary institutions in Gaborone; both privately and government owned. The outcome of this study will add to the existing body of knowledge on the issue of the practicalisation of democracy at the higher education level in Botswana. This research is therefore relevant in helping to find out if democratisation of teaching and learning has been realised in Botswana's Institutions of higher learning. It is important to examine Botswana's national policy on education in this way to ascertain if it has been effective in giving the country's education system that democratic element, which is essential for a student-centered approach to the teaching and learning process.

Keywords : democratisation, higher education, learning, teaching

Conference Title : ICHE 2016 : International Conference on Higher Education

Conference Location : Boston, United States

Conference Dates : April 25-26, 2016