Having a mediated, second-hand learning experience is extremely frustrating and alienating.

The issue of “separate” English/Afrikaans classes and separate residences based on language (which is against policy) is also highly problematic. It often leads to white-only Afrikaans classes or accommodation, which exists alongside mixed English classes and accommodation. How does this lead to integration and mutual understanding?

In a multilingual country, the ideal would be the development and use of all languages to the exclusion of none. The thing is, we have 11. This is simply not feasible in the short- or even medium-term.

In the balancing act between the right to access a historically well-resourced and currently highly functional university and the (qualified) right to learn in a home language, the former outweighs the latter. All students who qualify for university understand English but only 40% understand Afrikaans.

Among black African students, only 14% of those who qualify for university took any Afrikaans at school. We cannot see how excluding 86% of black students from accessing Stellenbosch University is fair, given our apartheid history, or how the university will become more representative of the country without transforming its language policy.

Ensuring that all courses are offered in at least English (without translation) is the least bad alternative of those available.

It is not the responsibility of public universities to protect and defend any one language or culture. This is especially so when the patterns of historical and current privilege and exclusion are essentially one and the same.

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