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The pedagogical approach of educators regarding learners' learning in a rural school in the Eastern Cape

The focus of this study is on the pedagogical approach of educators regarding learners' learning. The study takes place in a school called Zithulele Independent School. It is located in a poor rural part of the Eastern Cape and forms part of the Public Partnership Schools model. Studying this school's teaching practices has yielded rich findings due to the diversity present in the classroom. The classes are filled with isiXhosa-speaking working-class learners and English-speaking middle-class learners.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the educators' pedagogical approach while teaching this diverse group of learners. The educators' pedagogical approach meets each learner in their current position towards learning by making the learners' environment part of the teaching that is taking place. The literature calls this pedagogical approach place-based teaching. This research investigates how the educators adapt their teaching to make the local environment part of the learning processes and thus maintain the diversity of learners on an equal basis.

The learners present in the school bring a wide range of knowledge from their home environment into the classroom and it forms part of the learning dialogue in the school. These dialogues also include resources from the middle-class and working-class. The resources from the middle-class are known as mainly cultural capital and the resources from the working class as mainly community cultural wealth. Cultural capital refers to the academic knowledge and practices that accompanies middle-class learners into the school environment. Community cultural wealth, in turn, refers to the practices and resources for learning that accompanies working-class learners in their school learning. This forms part of the theoretical underpinning of the study, as both of these sources are put to use in the classroom to enhance the learners' learning.

The overarching finding is that place-based learning brings forward a platform for dialogues between the learners' cultural capital and community cultural wealth that

enhances their learning. The study examines three aspects, namely multilingualism, interweaving of cultures and classroom dynamics. The educators teach in English and isiXhosa and through these two languages the two cultures are also accommodated during teaching and therefore a specific classroom dynamic is required to accomplish this. These aspects have been studied to gain a better view of the educators' approach to teaching and, as a result, to explain how it strengthens the diverse group of learners' learning.

Therefore, I argue, based on this study's findings, that educators' place-based teaching enrich and strengthen a diverse group of learners' learning, as it provides a dialogue platform between learners. The dialogues strengthen both the working-class and middle-class learners' learning because they place them in a more advanced position towards learning. This advanced position refers to the learners' ability, depending on their class background, to be more comfortable in a middle-class or working-class environment. It enables the learners to explore their education in a wider environment than being limited to just how their home environments position them. Place-based pedagogy provides them the opportunity to learn much wider knowledge and gain a better understanding of the larger world.