

Using a Community Engagement Project to Prepare Economics Education Students for Culturally Diverse Learning Environments

Micheal M. van Wyk¹, Matshidiso J. Taole² and V.A. Nkonyane³

¹*Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, School for Teacher Education
College of Education, University of South Africa
E-mail: vwykmm@unisa.ac.za*

²*Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, School for Teacher Education
College of Education, University of South Africa
E-mail: taolemj@unisa.ac.za*

³*Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, School for Teacher Education,
College of Education, University of South Africa*

KEYWORDS Focus Group Interviews. Open and Distance Learning. Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) Project. Survey

ABSTRACT Critics of teacher education have suggested that initial teacher training institutions have not done an adequate job in preparing student teachers to teach culturally diverse learners. This research paper aimed to explore Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) economics teaching methodology and students' views on how the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) project prepared them on how to teach culturally diverse learners in multicultural ecologies. This paper also aimed to identify issues and solutions to improve the STAD project for diversity. Surveys and interviews were conducted to analyse the data collected from students' responses. Findings revealed that the majority of students showed a greater awareness of the needs of diverse learners during the project. Suggestions were formulated to empower students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to teach diverse learners.