

Advancing the Learning Equity Agenda through a Social Constructivist Epistemology to Teaching and Learning in the Curriculum

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this conceptual paper is to examine how adopting a social constructivist epistemology enhances equity pedagogy in the classroom. The paper thus adopts a Vygotskian conceptual framework in so far as it serves as an ideal model for improving learning equity among students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. As a conceptual as opposed to empirical study, the key concepts explored in this discussion are in relation to how the social constructivist approach to teaching and learning enhances equitable learning, how mediated learning experiences (MLE), situated learning activities in the learners' zones of proximal development (ZPD) help scaffold students skills from lower to higher psychological functions through the use of learning tools (material, psychological and semiotic tools) as well as through the use of learning conversations (LC) and some forms of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in the constructivist classrooms. Among the key findings of this study was the view that adopting a multipronged strategy that includes the use of authentic learning conversations, situated learning activities and using examples of some indigenous knowledge systems in teaching and learning situations goes a long way towards fostering social justice in the curriculum. The study recommended that classroom practitioners certainly need to take into account and adopt the many and varied benefits that can be derived from an authentic social constructivist epistemology to teaching and learning in the curriculum.