

Title:**Decolonising the Curriculum Through the Use of Situated Learning Characteristics****Authors:** Dr Desiree Hamman-Fisher**Second Author:** Prof Venicia McGhie**Proposal**

Decolonising the curriculum at higher education institutions in South Africa is critical to unleashing employment opportunities for South African graduates. Many scholars argue that curricula taught to students in economics and management are not relevant to the South African context and do not prepare students for the workplace. Hence, this paper reports on a study conducted at a traditional public university in South Africa. The study aimed to decolonise a third-year Training Management module at the university. This was done by providing students with authentic learning contexts, activities, and experiences through training and development industry practitioners who ushered in South African workplace realities. The overall objective of the study was to decolonise the module's curriculum in order to enhance the students' learning experiences and strengthen their development of workplace competencies.

The study was grounded on Lave and Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning Theory. These authors argued that, through the learning of facts and the practicing of technical procedures, students learn, developing an identity in a community of practice, while acquiring knowledge and skills from more experienced mentors (as apprentices), who are acknowledged as partners, and held accountable for work activities. In Situated Learning Theory, a student's cognitive development is considered, together with the social interaction that transpires in the learning environment, through the use of situated learning characteristics.

Five of the seven Situated Learning Theory's characteristics are relevant to this paper. These are: (i) authentic contexts and expert performance; (ii) authentic activities; (iii) articulation through multiple roles and perspectives; (iv) integration of different assessments; and (v) scaffolding and coaching.

The study was situated within a Critical Social Science Theory because the researcher did not only want to understand the issues, but she wanted to effect positive change. The Situated Learning characteristics were employed through McKernan's critical emancipatory action research design. Two action research cycles were used in the study. Based on the lecturer's reflections of the findings of Cycle one, improvements were made to the implementation of the scaffolding and coaching characteristics.

Students were provided with opportunities to become part of a community of practice comprising industry practitioners, lecturers, tutors, and peers. This approach was a move away from the colonised traditional teaching approach that silences students' voices. It assisted the students to construct their own indigenous knowledge because they became the apprentices who could observe and learn from the experienced industry practitioners within their everyday working contexts. The students also learned through group work, class and tutorial debates, discussions, and reflection.

Thus, the above Situated Learning characteristics assisted the lecturer teaching the module to decolonise the curriculum by including industry practitioners in the learning process, and providing the students with authentic contexts and activities, which facilitated the students' development of indigenous competencies. These competencies were unique to the South African context, given its previous discriminatory education system.

Keywords:

Third-year students

Training Management

Situated Learning

Decolonisation

Authentic Contexts

Community of practice

Apprentices

Workplace competencies

