

Draft Abstract Learning and Teaching Week 2026

Title: Towards an integrated understanding of the English Home Language curriculum: B Ed. final year students design integrated tasks

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Most student teachers experience the South African school Home Language curriculum as segmented, with various language aspects taught and learned in isolation. Although the English CAPS curriculum espouses the teaching of language skills in an integrated approach, the general practice in terms of teaching, learning, and assessment seems to cement a 'silo' view of language. Thus, borrowing from Bakhtin's (1981) theory of dialogic engagement and Hilary Janks' (2010) notion on 'critique' and 're-design', B Ed final year students were provided with an opportunity to design a series of integrated language tasks for a grade of their choice in SP/FET. In this paper we explore how the task was motivated by a concern that student teachers be prepared to not only 'fit in' to the system that would employ them, but that they could also challenge and critique its structures. We have taken an iterative, dialogic position where we interrogate our practice and how we model an integrated approach to language teaching. Working with students we learned that school systems are exam driven and conceptions of language were organised around the exam framework to the extent that this was normalized. An integrated task that challenged these assessment divisions proved challenging as students had to move from a critique of the system to a redesign of language learning possibilities. In conclusion, we found that the assessment for learning task challenged students to think more holistically about language learning as they moved to redesign learning thematically and become reflective contributors to knowledge.

References

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