

Conference Name: Paris International Conference on Teaching, Education & Learning, 10-11 January 2024
Conference Dates: 10-11 January 2024
Conference Venue: Pullman Paris Centre – Bercy Address: 1 Rue de Libourne, 75012 Paris, France
Appears in: PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning (ISSN 2457-0648)
Publication year: 2024

Nazarana Mather, 2024

Volume 2024, pp. 09-10

DOI- <https://doi.org/10.20319/ictel.2024.0910>

This paper can be cited as: Mather, N. (2024). Prioritizing Positioning: An Exploration of the Influence of Teacher and Learner Positioning in the Writing Classroom. Paris International Conference on Teaching, Education & Learning, 10-11 January 2024. Proceedings of Teaching and Education Research Association (TERA), 2024, 07-08.

PRIORITIZING POSITIONING: AN EXPLORATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER AND LEARNER POSITIONING IN THE WRITING CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Existing research shows that in South Africa, there are reasons for concern regarding the achievements of a large proportion of Grade 6 learners in language learning. The impact of this poor language achievement affects their success rates across learning areas and in higher grades. It has also been found that historically, Grade 6 boys have achieved and continue to achieve lower results than their female peers in national and international language assessments. However, boys' language learning in the Intermediate Phase in South African schools is surprisingly under-researched, particularly their writing skills development. This study contributes to the existing field of research by using positioning theory to understand Grade 6 boys' writing development. It was an interpretative, qualitative, theory-seeking case study that was bound by time (1 year), space (Grade 6 classrooms in two mainstream schools in KwaZulu-Natal) and theme (the boys and teachers positioning during the observed writing lessons). Data were gathered from classroom observations and were analysed from the perspective of positioning theory. A cycle of the Grade 6 writing programme was analysed. Although the teachers followed the same policy statement, it was found that their scaffolding approaches within the stages of the writing cycle differed significantly. It was concluded that

there are significant links among three key elements: teacher knowledge, teachers' and learners' positioning in the writing process, and learners achieving the object of cognition in the stages of the writing cycle.

Keywords

Boys, Writing, CAPS, Writing Process, Positioning Theory, Positioning, Cognition, Dialogue