

THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: THE MOTHER OF OUR DEMOCRACY

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SUMMARY

This paper explores student-teachers' understanding of the right to freedom of expression in education. Analyses of case law and legal principles affirm that the right to freedom of expression is an essential prerequisite to protect and promote democracy. Based on qualitative research, the empirical evidence indicates that although student-teachers are aware of the fact that the right to freedom of expression is not absolute and may be limited, they have a superficial knowledge of the application of this right. Student-teachers have a sense of the importance of the right to freedom of expression in a democracy, but they have not yet internalised the mechanism or process of balancing the right in praxis. This does not bode well as the school system will fail to be a market place of ideas. In order to enable learners to reach their full potential as critical thinkers and autonomous citizens in a developing democracy, it is imperative that teachers should understand and master the application of the right to freedom of expression in schools.

KEYWORDS: Democracy, human rights, freedom of expression, transformative curriculum, teaching-learning approaches, student-teachers.

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