

Exploring Academic Writing Challenges of First Year English as an Additional Language Students at an ODeL Institution in South Africa

Authors : Tumelo Jaquiline Ntsopi

Abstract : This study explored the academic writing challenges of first-year students who use English as an Additional Language (EAL) registered in the EAW101 module at an ODeL institution. Research shows that academic writing is a challenge for EAL teaching and learning contexts across the globe in higher education institutions (HEIs). Academic writing is an important aspect of academic literacy in any institution of higher learning, more so in an ODeL institution. This has probed research that shows that academic writing is and continues to pose challenges for EAL teaching and learning contexts in higher education institutions. This study stems from the researcher's experience in teaching academic writing to first-year students in the EAW101 module. The motivation for this study emerged from the fact that EAW101 is a writing module that has a high number of students in the Department of English Studies with an average of between 50-80 percent pass rate. These statistics elaborate on the argument that most students registered in this module struggle with academic writing, and they need intervention to assist and support them in achieving competence in the module. This study is underpinned by Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework and Transactional distance theory. This study adopted a qualitative research methodology and utilised a case study approach as a research design. Furthermore, the study gathered data from first year students and the EAW101 module's student support initiatives. To collect data, focus group discussions, structured open-ended evaluation questions, and an observation schedule were used to gather data. The study is vital towards exploring academic writing challenges that first-year students in EAW101 encounter so that lecturers in the module may consider re-evaluating their methods of teaching to improve EAL students' academic writing skills. This study may help lecturers towards enhancing academic writing in a ODeL context by assisting first year students through using student support interventions.

Keywords : academic writing, academic writing challenge, ODeL, EAL

Conference Title : ICLL 2023 : International Conference on Linguistics and Languages

Conference Location : Cape Town, South Africa

Conference Dates : November 06-07, 2023