

Social Responsibility in Reducing Gap between High School and 1st Year University Maths: SMU Case, South Africa

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Abstract : Students enrolling at the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) come mostly from the previously disadvantaged communities of South Africa. Their backgrounds are deprived in resources and modern technologies of education. Most of those admitted in the basic sciences were rejected in medicine and health related study programmes in SMU. Mathematics (maths) is the main subject for admission into SMU study programmes. However, maths results are usually low. In an attempt to help to prepare the students in the neighbourhood schools of SMU, some Maths educators partnered with local schools to communicate the needs and investigate the causes of poor maths results. They embarked on an action research to determine the level of educators' maths education. The general aim of the research was to investigate the causes of deficiencies in maths teaching and results in the local secondary schools, focusing on teachers and learners. Asking the teachers about their education and learners about maths concepts of most difficulty, these were identified. The researchers assisted in teaching the difficult concepts. The study highlighted the most difficult concepts and the teachers' lack of training in some content. Intervention of the researchers showed to be effective only for the very poor performing schools. Those with descent pass rates of over 50% did not benefit from it. This was the sign of lack of optimality in the methods used. The research recommendations suggested that intervention methods should be improved to be effective in all schools, and extension of the endeavours to more schools.

Keywords : action research, intervention, social responsibility, support

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