

Students' and Staff Perceptions of the Efficacy of English Language Literacy Support Programmes for Students at a Previously Disadvantaged Higher Education Institution in South Africa

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ABSTRACT This study, informed by the academic literacies approach, was part of a broader study that sought to establish students' perceptions of the efficacy of the English language interventions at a university using a case methodology. A sample of 142 students responded to a structured questionnaire on English Language Literacy Support Programmes for Students offered by the University's Writing Centre. The non-probability sampling method was used in selecting the students. Data were also collected through an interview with three university officials for triangulation purposes. Questionnaire data were quantitatively analysed (statistical frequencies) while interview data were qualitatively analysed by discerning themes. Paradoxically, the findings indicated that the students did not perceive themselves as weak in English (an aspect refuted by the interviewed officials) but indicated that they were in need of English language support. The study concluded that the English Language support services were therefore not as effective as they should be since few of the students made use of them. It is recommended that the English Language support services need improvement in terms of space, human and e-resources to support teaching and learning. Moreover university authorities should seriously consider implementing a compulsory assessment test for all new entrants whose mother tongue is not English to identify those in need of such support.