

29 September 2022

**REIMAGINING OUR
PRACTICES:
ACADEMIC LITERACY
AND WRITING CENTRE
SUPPORT FOR THE 21ST
CENTURY STUDENT**

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Reimagining our practices: Academic literacy and writing centre support for the 21st century student

Unit for Academic Literacy, University of Pretoria

The Unit for Academic Literacy (UAL) is an entity similar to other academic departments in the Faculty of Humanities in terms of teaching and research. It is responsible for academic literacy facilitation, writing centre support, and corporate translation and editing (through the Language Unit). Our academic literacy interventions are embedded in internationally recognised best practices in curriculum design and classroom facilitation, and are research-led. At first-year level we offer subject-specific modules in academic literacy to students in the Faculties of Humanities, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Economic and Business Sciences, Health Sciences, Engineering and the Built Environment, Law, and Theology. Postgraduate offerings include generic as well as subject-specific interventions.

The Humanities Writing Centre caters for the needs of undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Faculty of Humanities, as well as students from other faculties who are registered for academic literacy modules.

The UAL is also involved in the testing of academic literacy to inform placement. At undergraduate level only first-year students in the Health Sciences are tested, using the Test of Academic Literacy Levels (TALL). The academic literacy abilities of post-graduate students are tested only upon special request, using the Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS).

Cutting edge research is done on various themes, including academic reading, writing centre interventions, translanguaging and reading development, the use of ICTs in promoting scientific and academic literacy, career narratives, and multilingually scaffolded concept literacy.

In addition, the Unit offers non-curricular short courses in Business Writing and Report Writing via CE@UP. These courses are aimed at providing skills and useful reference materials in a variety of media to delegates from a variety of occupational backgrounds, which will assist them to succeed in today's highly competitive workplace.

We continually strive to raise the profile of the Unit for Academic Literacy as a leading centre for teaching, research and consultancy in the field of academic literacies.

The Humanities Writing Centre, University of Pretoria

The HWC is open to undergraduate and postgraduate students registered in the Faculty of Humanities, who may need academic writing support. Our services also extend to students and staff across the campus who reach out to us for such support. Our consultants provide academic writing advice in structuring, writing, revising and editing a student's text. We aim to create a positive and professional environment that fosters encouragement to students struggling with their writing. Our consultants work hard to develop in students an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses regarding their writing, and encourage the transfer of the acquired skills and abilities to their other writing assignments. The HWC also works closely with lecturers in the Faculty of Humanities, and across the campus, with a view to embedding workshops within modules/departments, as well as to ensure that lecturer needs are catered for as well.

Reimagining our practices: Academic literacy and writing centre support for the 21st century student

UFS Academic Language and Literacy Development

The overarching aim of the ALLD at the UFS is to further student access with success through innovative language and academic literacy support. We do this in two ways: through the English academic literacy courses (EAL) and Write Site support.

The EAL courses are designed to support students studying across the disciplines. These courses focus on writing guided academic assignments for the purpose of developing students' writing ability in various discourses. They also place emphasis on intensive and extensive reading and listening and note-taking as vital to developing academic skills. Students are introduced to a variety of topics relevant to the respective disciplines through sustained content-based instruction.

In pursuit of epistemological access, the Write Site aims to establish collaborative relationships with content lecturers across faculties to meet students' subject-specific writing needs. Discussions with content specialists inform the development of tailor-made online and face-to-face workshop materials that prepare students to complete specific assignments due in the disciplines. All workshop materials include authentic, discipline-specific texts that address academic writing aspects such as the structure of specific text types, thesis statement formulation, development of academic arguments, paragraph formulation, synthesis, paraphrasing and summarising, and referencing.

The South African Association of Academic Literacy Practitioners (SAAALP)

The overarching aim of SAAALP is to provide like-minded South African academic literacy practitioners with a space to discuss key issues of the day; share ideas and insights into AL best practice; and form a supportive community of practice. Ultimately, we aim to increasingly professionalise the AL field in South Africa and ensure that students receive the best provision possible. This will also be a space for innovation and advice from fellow practitioners to ensure the future development of the field.

Dirisana+

Dirisana+ is an EU co-funded grant project coordinated by the University of Pretoria. The project is aimed at improving health sciences education in southern Africa through collaboration of eight higher education institutions: the University of Pretoria (South Africa), Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (South Africa), the University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa), the University of Namibia (Namibia), Welwitchia HealthTraining Centre (Namibia), the University of Turku (Finland), Maastricht University (the Netherlands), and University College Dublin (Ireland). The project focuses on six main themes of research, with one being Academic and Research Literacy. In the theme of academic literacy, the Dirisana+ consortium believes that good writing and effective communication are the cornerstones of academia. All partner institutions in South Africa and Namibia find a need for writing support for students who often study in English as their second, third or fourth language. The Dirisana+ project supports the UP and UFS Joint Virtual Conference through assistance in organisation and marketing.

Conference programme

Opening and keynote speakers		
	Room A	Room B
	Link to Room A	Link to Room B
08:00 - 08:10	Opening	
08:10 - 09:00	Keynote presentation Prof Arlene Archer (University of Cape Town)	
09:00 - 09:10	Break	
Curriculum decolonization and/or transformation		
	Room A	Room B
	Chair: Puleng Sefelane	Chair: Laura Drennan
09:10 - 09:40	Teaching Research and Researching Teaching: A Perspective from Historical Studies Ian Macqueen (University of Pretoria)	Internationalisation and globalisation in higher education as decolonial blockages Berrington Ntombela (University of Limpopo)
09:45 - 10:15	Mind over matter? Imagine shifting focus and responding to matter Zettie Venter (University of the Free State)	Addressing academic writing challenges by utilising reflective teaching Joel Moletsane (North-West University)
10:20 - 10:50	Second-year English Academic Literacy curriculum: moving towards learning-centred teaching Linique Martin (University of the Free State)	Reading comprehension of academic genres: Fostering an academic literacy enculturation process in Higher Education Viviana Innocentini and Jorge Sánchez (National University of Mar del Plata)
11:00 - 11:30	Integrating the Writing Centre into the Academic Literacy class to enhance skills transfer in content subjects Linda Sparks, Siwapiwe Mpapela and Gawain Norval (University of the Free State)	Humanizing teaching pedagogy: An evaluation on disciplinary literacy in higher education Soyiso Godsave Khetoa, Mokala Teresa Ntsoaki (University of the Witwatersrand) and Lihotetso Gloria Matee (National University of Lesotho)
11:35 - 12:05		Decoloniality essay competition as a tool to empower students' academic writing Thandaza Msimang (University of the Free State)

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Conference programme

LUNCH BREAK		
	Room A	Room B
12:05 - 12:35	Lunch	Lunch
Multilingualism and language (in)justice		
	Room A	Room B
	Chair: Pineteh Angu	Chair: Anneen Church
12:35 - 13:05	Envisioning a multicultural writing centre space: Perspectives from writing centre consultants during a training workshop Emma Paulet and Avasha Rambiritch (University of Pretoria)	Language proficiency and Code Switching in Diverse Classrooms: The Use of Nguni Dialects Bizo Luviwe Bomela (Walter Sisulu University)
13:10 - 13:40	The Design and Implementation of an Academic Literacy Module during Covid-19 Pandemic in a Higher Education Institution in South Africa Nomalungelo Ngubane (University of the Free State)	Feeling at home: reflections on the use of vernacular languages in writing consultations at the Wits School of Law Writing Centre Jean Moore (University of the Witwatersrand)
13:45 - 14:15	Translanguaging in the Life Science class: A case of the University of Limpopo Mkateko Ngobeni and Berrington Ntombela (University of Limpopo)	The English Language: A communication tool for an emerging Cameroon Diana Njweipi-Kongor (St Jerome Catholic Universtiy Douala, Cameroon)
14:15 - 14:25	Break	Break
Social (in)justice		
	Room A	Room B
	Chair: Brian Sibanda	Chair: Avasha Rambiritch
14:25 - 14:55	The Role of the Writing Centre within a Universal Design for Learning Framework Desiree E Moodley (University of Cape Town)	Ubuntu in the Academic Literacy class: establishing a sense of community for inclusive and effective learning Louri Louw and Linda Sparks (University of the Free State)
15:00 - 15:30	Neither here nor there: Exploring first-year undergraduate students' sense of belonging in an online academic literacies module Martina van Heerden and Sharita Bharuthram (University of the Western Cape)	Reflections on the development of writing tutors as emerging academics at a Writing Centre in a South African university Arona Dison, Mapula Maropola, Phoene Oware and Irene Nyamu (University of the Western Cape)

Conference programme

Technology related/enhanced teaching		
	Room A	Room B
	Chair: Michelle Joubert	Chair: Mapula Maropola
15:35 - 16:05	Social presence as the key to unlocking quality in online assessment and learning in Academic Literacy Michael Rowley (University of the Free State)	From a rural campus perspective: Moving Academic Literacy assessments online Linique Martin and Palesa Selepe (University of the Free State)
16:10 - 16:40	Exploring the value of online writing clinics as third space for enhanced inclusivity in developing research literacy – a case study Brenda van Wyk (University of Pretoria)	
16:40 - 16:45	Closing	

Technical assistance

Please follow the room links on page 1 of the conference programme to access the Blackboard Collaborate Rooms as a guest. Kindly note that there is only one link per room for the entire day.

For any technical issues or assistance in joining the rooms please contact the following:

Room A: Meg-Kyla Erasmus

meg-kyla.erasmus@up.ac.za

Room B: Miksha Harripershad

u17061017@tuks.co.za

Arlene Archer, *University of Cape Town*

Reimagining our practices: innovative approaches for writing centres in diverse and multilingual contexts

In reimagining ourselves, Writing Centres need to consider the increasing massification and internationalisation of Higher Education and ways of harnessing diverse resources to enrich communication. This presentation explores how Writing Centres can use a range of modes of communication to innovatively extend and develop thinking within multilingual and diverse contexts. This will give us a better understanding of what Writing Centres have to offer Higher Education in terms of pedagogical innovation and social justice. I argue that combining academic literacies approaches and social semiotics can be generative in investigating meaning-making practices within specific contexts. It is clear that online and in-person spaces present different opportunities for writing tutors in terms of forming relationships with online clients, procedures for responding to documents, and creating appropriate tutor roles. Thus, the presentation will explore the changing function of modes in online versus face-to-face consultations (post-pandemic lockdowns), including talk as mode, silence as mode, visual modes, and the use of time. I show how an expansion of the repertoire of resources can help to create semiotically open writing consultations, including multilingualism and local semiotic practices. The aim is to interrogate the codes and practices of the academy in relation to students' brought along resources, including student experience, multilingual resources, multimodal resources and embodied resources.



Arlene Archer is an Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics and is the director of the Writing Centre, University of Cape Town. Her research employs a multimodal social semiotic perspective to interrogate issues around social justice, academic writing and academic literacies in Higher Education. She is currently investigating changing forms of writing in a digital age with a British Academy Fellowship. She is co-editor of the SAGE journal *Multimodality and Society*.

Integrating the Writing Centre into the Academic Literacy class to enhance skills transfer in content subjects

Linda Sparks, Siwapiwe Mpapela and Gawain Norval

One of the main aims of successful implementation of Academic Literacy (AL) is the transfer of AL skills into other subjects. This entails students being adequately able to read and write at suitable academic levels, especially when it comes to being able to research and write assignments. One of the problems with AL subjects at first year level is that they usually take a long period of time for skills to be taught. Yet, in the meantime, content modules require these skills almost instantly. This results in lecturers in other subjects often desperately trying to teach writing skills alongside their own curriculum or possibly just accepting poor writing and a low pass rate, or even adjusting standards to have an adequate pass rate. Ultimately, this means that, potentially, students will not master both writing skills and the content of the subject. Therefore, this paper seeks to rectify this adverse effect by implementing writing centre workshops into the AL classroom at around the time students start writing assignments in other subjects. Furthermore, investigation as to whether academic writing in both content subjects and the AL subject improves is of critical importance to this study. As a result, this Writing Centre workshop intervention focuses on assisting students with writing assignments in their content subjects, as well as in the AL module itself. Lessons have been set up to follow a social-constructivist approach to teaching writing, with much brainstorming, background activation, scaffolding of difficult concepts, confidence building, discussion and debate, peer and group work, facilitator-to-student interaction, and feedback. Writing Centre workshops within the AL classroom mostly focus on summarised AL skills needed for assignment writing, such as unpacking questions using the subject's material, paraphrasing and referencing skills, and basic writing structures involved in academic writing. Although these workshoped lessons are a summarised version of the entire subject and these skills will still be taught in a more in-depth way throughout the year, at least content subjects gain swift benefit. Students then have a greater chance of still mastering both AL and subject content which has lasting benefits to future academic achievement. In addition, students then also realise the importance of AL skills in eventual success at university. This paper thus seeks to explore the benefits of this strategy by analysing both quantitative and qualitative data based on students' perspectives of their improvement in assignment writing in other subjects, as well as facilitators' reflections thereof. In addition to this, facilitators' perspectives of student improvement will also be analysed. Participants of the study are therefore the coordinator, students and facilitators (who are also mostly experienced Writing Centre consultants) involved in the intervention, which took place once per semester. Thus, this paper has as its specific aim, the investigation into whether implementing Writing Centre workshops into the AL classroom will benefit academic writing in content subjects.



Linda Sparks

As an Academic Literacy Coordinator at the University of the Free State, Linda Sparks has been involved in the teaching and running of academic literacy courses for the last 13 years. She is dedicated to inspiring students' academic success and believes that innovative research in this field will help to achieve this.



Siwapiwe Mpapela

Siwapiwe is an Academic Facilitator on the UFS Literacy courses. She has six years of experience and now also works at the University's Writing Center as an Academic Writing Specialist. She is devoted to student-centred learning, especially in the field of second language learning.



Gawain Norval

Gawain is employed at the University of the Free State, where he works as an English Academic Literacy (AL) Facilitator and Writing Consultant. His passion is teaching academic literacy; he teaches students in a practical way, and provides them with the necessary AL skills needed to successfully navigate their academic careers.

Internationalisation and globalisation in higher education as decolonial blockages

Berrington Ntombela

There is one common denominator between internationalisation and globalisation of higher education: it is English language. Canagarajah (2005: 195-196) has aptly stated that “[w]hile non-Western communities were busy working on one project (decolonisation), the carpet has been pulled from under their feet by another project (globalisation)”. That is, decolonisation is set to resist the hegemony of English language whilst, in the opposite direction, globalisation enacts the centrality of English, and so does internationalisation. This is seen in higher education systems, such as academic literacy, that are set to support attainment in higher education. It is unthinkable that higher education literacy can proceed without English proficiency. In other words, academic literacy and its subsidiaries, the writing centres, are set to assist students attain the highest possible command of English discourse which is essential in academic transactions. As such, being literate has come to be equated with the level of accuracy (and fluency) in handling the English language for academic transactions. The place and utility of a multilingual ethos is only cited as a façade and political correctness but barely reaches practice. Through the adoption of a critical approach, this paper is therefore set to interrogate the tenets of globalisation and internationalisation, in the context of decolonisation, and its implications for academic literacy and writing centres. Published literature on higher education internationalisation and globalisation will be systematically analysed.



Berrington Ntombela

Berrington Ntombela is an Associate Professor of English Studies in the Department of Languages, University of Limpopo. He holds a DPhil degree obtained from the University of Zululand. His research interests include decoloniality, linguistic imperialism and English Language Teaching. He has published a number of journal articles and book chapters.

Mind over matter? Imagine shifting focus and responding to matter

Zettie Venter

In this paper I explore the use of arts-based methods and material to reveal the insufficiency of language to, consciously and explicitly, make known the quality of our human experiences. In a current doctoral study, I find that the use of arts-based methods and materials such as painting, drawing, drumming and poetry can gift us with inclusive spaces and attentiveness to foreground embodied knowledge. Embodied knowledge is situated and subjective, arguably encompassed by relevant local knowledge systems. Autoethnographic storytelling can be used in a collaborative way to relate and respond to local knowledge systems, portraying the transitions/refrains (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 300) of embodied learning into writing. I invited some peers in science education to collaborate on exploring conditions that allow us to show up holistically as our authentic selves in class (UFS-HSD2020/2131/21/22). During an arts-based workshop we used methods such as painting, drawing and drumming to respond to challenges and opportunities throughout our educational journeys. By overlaying our embodied response to challenges and opportunities in science education onto the arts-based layers, a storied layer becomes noticeable. This emerging, storied layer can be seen as a less elitist way for us as educational practitioners and researchers to relate locally relevant knowledge to the global education context. As a science educator, becoming an educational researcher, I respond to some entanglements within the curriculum by using the method of diffraction to overlay educational experiences as arts-based creations over one another. Diffraction, first proposed as metaphor for the method used by Donna Haraway in 1992 and later taken up by Karen Barad, allows for overlaying painting, drawing, drumming and poetry flowing into autoethnographic storytelling. From a curriculum perspective, as early as 1975, William Pinar, in his method of currere, referred to laying over educational experiences as regressive, progressive, analytical and syncretical. In correspondence with the method of diffraction and doing embodied work, I follow Spatz (2019) to gain distance (horizontal layer) while collaborating with other practitioners coming forward in arts-based workshops and conversations. In the same way, overlaying more personal arts-based work enables going deeper (vertical layer). In overlaying arts-based work onto an emerging autoethnographic story, practitioners' work can be imagined as becoming wider and deeper, arguably more attentive and caring. Can such a deepened awareness amongst educational practitioners and researchers be seen as attending to the call to cultivate new knowledges, or are we perhaps beginning to notice that we find ourselves in a field with buried knowledges and insufficient excavation tools? This, since man(y)/white humans, complicitly so, devalued these knowledges for too long? I imagine for practitioners in education to shift focus and respond attentively to embodied knowledges. Various arts-based methods and materials can guide a shift in focus and a corresponding attentive response. I imagine knowledge systems worldwide being enriched when practitioners in education respond attentively to the mattering of embodied knowledge and its transition into storytelling.



Zettie Venter

Zettie is an educator learning what it might mean to engage with a neurodiverse way of perceiving complexity directly. This encompasses a life-long vulnerability trying to share embodied knowledge. In unexpected ways, Zettie is moving towards understanding what researching education might mean from a post-qualitative perspective.

Decoloniality essay competition as a tool to empower students' academic writing

Thandaza Msimang

Students come from different educational, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, the gap between schools and tertiary institutions can potentially be daunting to them. This affects their academic writing, which is one of the most important and perplexing skills as they suffer greatly in developing it. These writing difficulties cannot be attributed to only one factor, but to a myriad of factors. Therefore, first year students need support through this transitory process (Clarens, 2011:1280; Irvin, 2010:5-6). In response to our students' diversity and seeking a new approach to help them foster their insight into the nature of academic writing the writing center (Write Site) of the University of the Free State (Qwaqwa campus) introduced a decoloniality essay writing competition. Students who participated were given systematic assistance that was characterized by a series of gradually fading support sessions to bolster and enable them to be proficient academic writers (Foxworth, Hashey, Dexter, Rasnitsyn and Beck, 2021:269). To prepare them, they were given a presentation on decoloniality and trained in how to structure their academic essays. They also had a choice of writing their first draft and booking a consultation with the Write Site, wherein the consultants discussed issues they perceived with the students' structure and referencing. These interventions were implemented to eliminate unnecessary barriers brought about by student diversity, bearing in mind Universal Design for learning (UDL). This enabled us to encourage inclusive and equitable education for the contestants (Monne de la Pena, Espinoza and Bolanos, 2021:105). Subsequently, with the use of both constructivist and transformative learning theory in mind, we measured the impact of these interventions with the help of a developed rubric, and reviewed the essays of the students who booked for consultations against the essays of those who did not book. We also compared their first draft against their final draft, and this enabled us to see the difference that the consultations made in the student's writing. Moreover, this competition also gave students a voice on the most important topic in tertiary institutions and this will give our campus an angle on the student's point of view with regards to the decolonization of their education.



Thandaza Msimang

Thandaza Msimang is the UFS (Qwaqwa campus) Write Site coordinator. She previously taught English for 20 years in a secondary school. She has a Master of Education (M.Ed.) from the University of the Free State, Qwaqwa campus, as well as a Higher Education Diploma from UNIN, Qwaqwa campus.

Please note that this talk has been cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances - a recorded version of the talk will be sent around after the conference.

Use of workshops as a bridge to assist postgraduate students to improve academic writing skills: The case of NUL

Masechaba ML Mokhathi-Mbhele, Bertha Muringani, Relebohile Letlatsa and Mokhoele Hala-hala

This paper reports on a series of advanced academic writing workshops that were initiated with postgraduate students in the department of English at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) during the period, January to April 2022. In the absence of a writing centre at NUL, the workshops were meant to equip the advanced learners with the argumentative writing skills required at postgraduate level. As observed from previous studies, academic writing at postgraduate level poses a number of challenges to most students, especially those using English as a second language, and NUL postgraduates are no exception (Bloch 2010; Chang & Schleppegrell 2011; Muringani 2021; Wu & Paltridge 2021). Problems experienced by the postgraduate students in academic writing were explored before commencement of the workshops in order to adopt suitable presentation approaches and to prepare materials that would address the problems. The overarching problem identified was the lack of knowledge about how to use various rhetorical devices to produce effective arguments. It was found necessary to conscientize students that academic writing is the nucleus of academic communication, and poor academic writing would negatively impact upon the assessment of their work. The series of workshops aimed at improving the postgraduate students' academic writing skills, whose basics are expected to have been acquired at an undergraduate level, as required by the students' programmes. Ways of improving the problematic areas were discussed during the workshops. The workshops covered the following topics: communication process and presentation skills, plagiarism, citation practices or referencing and the use of metadiscourse, which were all explained and described as argumentation resources. After presentations, postgraduate students engaged in group activities where they critically analyzed MA research proposals in relation to what they had learned from the presentations. During the remainder of the semester, May to July 2022, we analyzed the final research proposals of the students who participated and the term papers that they wrote after the workshops to see if there were improvements in the students' writing. In this way, the workshops functioned as an intervention strategy that helped students and lecturers to address the writing problems experienced and to reinforce good academic writing practices. This exercise has implications for courses such as Academic Literacy and Language Education. The intent is to extend these workshops to other departments of the Faculty of Humanities and then to the rest of the University faculties. Ultimately, an advanced academic writing course would be proposed for NUL postgraduate programs.



**Bertha
Muringani**

Bertha Muringani holds a PhD in Linguistics and she is a Senior Lecturer in the English Department of the National University of Lesotho. Her research interests include communication skills and academic writing, particularly in relation to the writing of English L2 speakers.



**Masechaba
Mahloli Lerato
Mokhathi-
Mbhele**

Masechaba Mahloli Lerato Mokhathi-Mbhele holds a PhD in Linguistics and she is a Senior Lecturer in the English Department of the National University of Lesotho. She writes within Functional Linguistics-Onomastica and Applied Linguistics scope.



**Relebohile
Letlatsa**

Relebohile Letlatsa is a Lecturer at the the National University of Lesotho. She holds a PhD in Communication Management and her areas of interest in research include strategic communication in Institutions of higher education.



**Mokhoele A.
Hala-hala**

Mokhoele A. Hala-hala is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English, the Faculty of Humanities, at the National University of Lesotho. His research interests include Applied Grammar, (Variationist) Sociolinguistics, World (New) Englishes Studies, Critical Discourse Analysis, Onomastics, Mass Communication and Cultural Studies.

Reading comprehension of academic genres: Fostering an academic literacy enculturation process in Higher Education

Viviana Innocentini and Jorge Sánchez

In the last years, academic literacy (AL) has become a major concern in many higher education (HE) institutions in Latin America. AL has been defined as the “social function of universities to promote access to professional and scientific communities” (Carlino, 2002, p.3). Since English is used globally as the lingua franca for scientific communication, HE students need to read and understand English texts corresponding with their disciplinary fields. In this sense, reading can be defined not only as a complex cognitive skill involving a set of interactive operations at simultaneous levels (Woolley, 2011) but also as a social, situated and contextualized practice (Cassany & Aliagas Marín, 2012) related to specific social purposes (Zavala, 2012). A concept of pivotal importance, when reading is considered as social practice, is that of discourse genres (Bathia, 1993; Dudley-Evans, 2000; Swales, 1990, 2013) which associates texts with socially-constructed conventions and with the communities that enable them (Navarro, 2019). Due to the situated nature of genres, it is important to analyze approaches for the teaching and learning of reading academic genres in different English for Academic Purposes (EAP) contexts. Thus, this study examines convergences and divergences in methodological approaches and theoretical aspects underlying the reading of academic genres in agricultural and social sciences in two different Argentinian universities. The suitability of genre pedagogy in reading comprehension courses is analysed from an empirical qualitative perspective in relation to issues of discipline, curricula and students needs analysis. Although the reading of expert genres in English is emphasized in both university contexts, a more cognitive-linguistic approach prevails in the social sciences, whereas a focus on rhetorical aspects is observed in agricultural sciences. Both contexts offer a situated analysis of students' needs and propose complementary views to address reading and writing in HE. Implications and possible lines for further research will also be discussed.



Viviana A. Innocentini

Viviana Innocentini holds an MA in TEFL and is PhD candidate in Linguistics at Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina. She is a regular Assistant Professor at the School of Agricultural Sciences and is co-director of the research group Language Issues, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata. Her research interests include genre pedagogy, metadiscourse, academic literacy and multilingual / plurilingual academic communication.



Jorge Sánchez

Jorge Sánchez, MA in Applied Linguistics; Professor of English language and literature; Specialist in Teaching at Higher Education and Diplomado in Social Sciences. Professor and researcher at National University of Cuyo (Mendoza-Argentina). Areas of interest: Genre Analysis and English for Academic and Specific Purposes. Member of SAAALP, BALEAP, TESOL, ArTESOL, ALED, SAEL and IATEFL international associations.

Second-year English Academic Literacy curriculum: moving towards learning-centred teaching

Linique Martin

As the University of the Free State is moving from student-centred teaching to learning-centred teaching, it was time to update the curriculum of the second-year English Academic Literacy for Humanities (EALH) module. The learning approach for learning-centred teaching should be based on the graduate attributes (CTL, 2019). Graduate attributes can be directly linked to the employability of the 21st-century student. It was imperative to align the outcomes of the module with one or more of the graduate attributes. In turn, the assessments should be aligned with the outcomes. The entire curriculum was reworked, but this paper will focus on the alignment of the graduate attribute, oral communication, to one of the outcomes (oral skills) for the EALH module. Secondly, this paper will focus on one of the assessments, the presentations, which is directly linked to the oral skills outcome of the EALH module. According to Baranowski and Weir, (2011), students learn how to prepare material for presentations through presentations. In addition, they learn how to speak in front of a group of people, which will assist them in the workplace in the future (Baranowski & Weir, 2011). Two new lessons were created to prepare students for the presentations. The aim of this paper is to determine the efficiency of the two lessons. For each lesson, students had to submit a section of the lesson for marks. The idea behind this was to check understanding of the content. For data collection for this study, a questionnaire containing eight questions was sent to the 11 facilitators in this module. The overall marks for both the lesson's submissions were also considered, which indicated that the majority of the students did understand the content of the lessons. In addition, samples of the presentation rubrics were also considered. Looking at these samples, was a good indicator of whether the students could implement what they learned in the two lessons. The study found that the way the lessons were constructed was working. However, there are minor issues that will have to be addressed.



Linique Martin

Linique Martin is a lecturer at the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the UFS. She obtained her Masters in Linguistics at UWC in 2017 (Cum Laude). Her career as a lecturer began in 2018 at CPUT, where her passion for Academic literacy was cultivated.

Humanizing teaching pedagogy: An evaluation of disciplinary literacy in higher education

Soyiso Godsave Khetoa, Mokala Teresa Ntsoaki and Lihotetso Gloria Matee

Studies have suggested that there is a discerning literacy challenge in South Africa. The literacy crisis in South Africa is not unique to higher education institutions. Literacy challenges are exacerbated by promotion policies within the basic education department, which are not focused on learners' cognitive developments. Studies conducted on South African schools by Pistorious and Lephala (2011), and Howie et al (2017) cited in Anker (2020) have come to the conclusion that learners in South Africa fail to demonstrate adequate capability of understanding field-specific knowledge of the subject they are enrolled in. This challenge is not specific to schools alone. It is also prevalent in higher education institutions in the country. Linder et al. (2014) highlights that there is a necessity for transformation in teaching of physics due to representational competency challenges encountered within a teaching and learning environment. Within the South African context, government school alumnus have emerged from epistemologically unjust teaching practices where teaching of content was not offered in their languages. For every content subject they encountered a different world and they had to function in that world in the assimilated foreign language. Consequently, students fail to effectively function within the required proficiencies of the content subject due to the unmatched requirements of each subject. This study is premised on a qualitative methodology while adopting an interpretivist paradigm. Diverse repertoires must be looked upon as resources upon which students can rely to empower themselves. Multilanguage pedagogies such as translanguaging can be useful to advance the project of teaching and learning in higher education.



**Soyiso Godsave
Khetoa**

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**Mokala Teresa
Ntsoaki**

Dr Ntsoaki Mokala is a lecturer in the department of Languages, Literacies and Literatures at Wits School of Education. As a new researcher, she has published a number of articles within a very short time and she believes that with my determination and focus, she has a great potential in research and academia in general. Her research interests include: inclusive education, learner support, language acquisition, learning problems, cultural heritage, oral traditions and literature



**Lihotetso Gloria
Matee**

Lihotetso Matee is an English Language Education Lecturer and researcher in the Faculty of Education at National University of Lesotho. She is a former lecturer at Botho University Lesotho. Her research interests include; language and literacy development, educational and reading to learn pedagogy, curriculum studies, emerging trends and African cultural practices.

Teaching research and researching teaching: A perspective from historical studies

Ian Macqueen

A perusal of the acknowledgements in many history books gives insight into the importance of undergraduate and graduate teaching for informing research (for example, Beinart 2001; Manning 2003; Simpson 2021). However, examining the significance of teaching for research has attracted little scholarly attention, with the bulk of focus rather on the importance of research for teaching (for example, Loughran 1999; Booth 2003; Williams 2015). The paper is an exploration of the dynamic potential of teaching for research. Informed by an autoethnographic approach and reflective of the author's specialisation, the paper is particularly informed from the perspective of teaching and research in historical studies. As a discipline that works, or should work, in conjunction with academic literacy programmes, history is a writing-intensive discipline that prioritises wide reading and still maintains the centrality of essay writing. The paper makes the case that with the increasing demands on academics' time and energy, strategies are needed to combine the areas of research and teaching. While specialisation of research is perhaps unavoidable, with academics required to engage in research alongside their teaching duties, this article makes an argument for the need for research flexibility. This is a willingness to adapt one's research interests to the modules one teaches, and then to reflect critically on the insights that one's extant research brings to one's teaching, what this article characterises as a 'virtuous circle'. The article proposes a recognition for the synergies between teaching and research as a useful exercise in developing teaching and research that is sensitive to the needs of students.



Ian Macqueen

Dr Ian Macqueen is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria. He has taught at second year, third year and honours level programmes since 2015. He is the author of *Black Consciousness and Progressive Movements under Apartheid* (UKZN Press 2018).

Addressing academic writing challenges by utilising reflective teaching

Joel Moletsane

The importance of academic writing at institutions of higher learning cannot be overemphasised. Several scholars (e.g. Evans, 2013; Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis & Swann, 2003) have concluded that academic writing is an activity at the centre of teaching and learning in Higher Education (HE). As Evans (2013: 85) states, "writing is important in academia. Besides it being one of the foremost ways that we communicate to each other, it is also a way that we are assessed, and, therefore, it is crucial to our progression. However, writing is not something that comes naturally to anyone. It is something we all learnt to do and then practice and develop as far as is appropriate to our context". Because of the complex nature of writing, particularly academic writing, several scholars (e.g. Butler, 2013; Archer, 2008; Lillis & Scott, 2007) have argued that teaching university students academic writing can assist them to succeed in their studies. It is, therefore, crucial for academic writing instructors to find ways through which students can better understand this form of writing in order to mitigate the gaps that come with the interim literacies they bring to university. One of the strategies that instructors can utilise is the use of reflective teaching and learning. This paper argues that by utilising reflective teaching and learning, first-year university students may be assisted in overcoming the academic writing challenges they face. Following the action research design, the paper explores the reflections that academic writing lecturers and students make on teaching and writing and how the reflections assist students in their endeavours to improve their writing during the offering of the academic literacy module at a South African university.



Joel Moletsane

Joel Ramonewa Moletsane has been lecturing academic literacy modules at North-West University, Mahikeng campus for over 20 years. His research interests include academic writing, reading and Second Language Acquisition.

Envisioning a multicultural writing centre space: Perspectives from writing centre consultants during a training workshop

Emma Paulet and Avasha Rambiritch

Writing centres, by their very nature and set up, have been and continue to remain largely marginalized, operating on the periphery of their home institutions. Originally set up as a 'quick fix' (Sefalane-Nkohla & Mtonjeni, 2019) to deal with the massification in higher education, writing centres nationally and internationally have cemented their identities as safe and non-judgmental spaces (Archer & Richards, 2011; Rambiritch, 2018) where students can talk freely about their writing concerns. However, writing consultations in this safe space often take place in English only and therefore do not respond effectively to rich cultural and linguistic diversity especially in South African higher education institutions. Interestingly, the South African higher education classroom, or writing centre, today is akin to the proverbial 'melting pot' of cultures and languages.

This raises three critical questions:

1. How does this monolingual bias align with the language needs of our students?
2. What actions must be taken, in the context of our writing centre, to move away from the privileging of English, to embracing and exploiting our students' full linguistic repertoires?
3. What steps must be taken to open up the discussion and take concrete action in transforming the writing centre from a largely monolingual space to one that embraces our student's multilingualism?

This paper uses qualitative data collected during a writing centre training workshop to examine how multilingual consultations can be used to foster a student-centred writing centre and to address issues of curriculum transformation and broader social injustices at a South African university. This will be done through identifying themes in the perspectives offered by a diverse group of consultants, bringing them to bear on questions of remaking practices of pedagogy and curriculum renewal, as well as language injustice in a writing centre space. The findings from this study will pave the way for further and sustained dialogue regarding the evolution of the writing centre to one that recognises and respects the language differences of our students. We envision such a centre as one that will have positive implications on the quality of support we provide.



Emma Paulet

Emma Paulet is a contract lecturer and tutor at various Pretoria-based institutions, as well as a freelance editor. A former writing centre consultant, she is passionate about writing centres and was contracted to help develop the IIE's Varsity College writing centres. She hopes to pursue a doctorate in Applied Linguistic.



Avasha Rambiritch

Avasha Rambiritch is a lecturer in the Unit for Academic Literacy at the University of Pretoria where she teaches a number of academic literacy and academic writing modules at undergraduate and postgraduate level. She is the coordinator of the writing centre.

Second-year English Academic Literacy curriculum: moving towards learning-centred teaching

Bizo Luwiwe Bomela

This study seeks to explore the complexities in using code switching and the implementation of language proficiency in diverse classrooms in remote universities where students and writing centre practitioners are Nguni speakers. Code switching and language proficiency are necessary skills for writing centre practitioners who want to ensure that students easily grasp concepts that are taught in English, which is not their first language. However, some of the Nguni-speaking writing centre practitioners might not necessarily be fluent in their mother tongue, in English, and in other Nguni dialects. This means that messages can be miscommunicated, and/or lost in translation, or even misconstrued by the receivers (students), and thus lead to students not performing well.

This study will adopt a phenomenological approach, and use primary data that will be collected using in-depth interviews, which will consist of semi-structured and unstructured interview questions. The study will focus on university students and lecturers in the Eastern Cape. This study will use purposive sampling strategy, which is synonymous with qualitative research, and the sample size of the study will be 4 students and 6 lecturers. Conclusions will be drawn from what other scholars have highlighted and suitable recommendations will be made.



Bizo Luwiwe Bomela

Bizo Luwiwe Bomela is graduate of both the University of Fort Hare and the University of KwaZulu Natal. Bizo is an activist who, since 2007, has been actively involved in literacy development, serving voluntarily at the Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development. While completing his Master's degree at UKZN, he established an academic writing society aimed at assisting students with writing academically, after he noticed that students were struggling with writing. From his MA thesis he is developing a module and a traditional spirituality theory as an emancipatory tool for women. Currently, he is serving as a Sub Committee Member on Gender for the South African Youth Council - crafting their first gender policy since its inception, and working as a Writing Centre Coordinator at Walter Sisulu University.

The design and implementation of an academic literacy module during the Covid-19 pandemic in a higher education institution in South Africa

Nomalungelo Ngubane

This paper reports on the design and implementation of a credit bearing academic literacy module for first year students in a new medical school in South Africa. Participants were 50 superdiverse first year students. Data was collected through module evaluation feedback in first semester and at the end of the module, and through focused group discussions. Data were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Findings indicate a need for more disciplinary-specific writing opportunities. The inclusion of study skills component assisted the first year transitioning and facilitated critical reflections on learning behaviours. Furthermore, students indicated that the reading of medical journal articles was most relevant for their socialization into the disciplinary ways of writing. Dominance of English for peer learning opportunities undermined diverse linguistic repertoires for meaning making. High stake assessments posed anxiety and challenged the developmental processes. Covid-19 pandemic online lectures revealed a digital divide among students. The study concludes that in multilingual academic literacy classrooms, especially where most students emerge from diverse educational and linguistic backgrounds, there is a need for a hybrid, 'fit for the purpose' academic literacy module. Students' linguistic capital plays a vital role in scaffolding their disciplinary capital.



Nomalungelo Ngubane

Dr. Nomalungelo Ngubane joined the University of the Free State in 2022 as the Director of the Academy for Multilingualism. Before joining the UFS she was a Senior Lecturer (Academic Literacy) at Nelson Mandela University Medical School. She has also worked as a Lecturer and Discipline Head of English Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She holds a PhD in Education focusing on the teaching and learning of writing among English first additional language students. Her research interests include academic literacy, English second language writing, multilingualism/translanguaging and Ubuntu philosophy.

Feeling at home: reflections on the use of vernacular languages in writing consultations at the Wits School of Law Writing Centre

Jean Moore

Although language rights are constitutionally protected in South Africa, this does not translate into language equity for most South Africans, particularly in educational contexts (Khumalo, 2016). If anything, the hegemony of English has become more entrenched than it was in the pre-constitutional era (Alexander, 2000; Mayaba et al., 2018). In the context of higher education, this has implications for students' success. It is well-established that trans-languaging is a powerful practice in educational contexts, particularly for students' academic identity and cognitive development (Cummins, 2001; Madiba, 2013; Makalela, 2015a, 2015b; Motlhaka & Makalela, 2016). Furthermore, the purposeful use of trans-languaging is congruent with the imperative to decolonise the academy, particularly in the global South (Makalela, 2017; Mayaba, Ralarala, & Angu, 2018). At the Wits School of Law Writing Centre, multi-lingual consultations are offered as one component of the writing centre's strategy to develop undergraduate law students' legal and academic writing.

In this presentation, I describe our attempts to facilitate the use of vernacular languages in students' writing consultations with peer writing consultants. Drawing primarily on the reflections of writing consultants and students, I explore four affordances of multi-lingual consultations that we have observed: that trans-languaging in consultations can help students to feel more at home in the discipline; that it can deepen understanding of key concepts; that it can assist students to develop confidence in their writing and intellectual capacities; and that it can deepen engagement with the writing centre.



Jean Moore

Jean Moore is a language development and academic literacies practitioner, with a particular interest in legal writing. Currently, she co-manages the work of the writing centre at the Wits School of Law. She has just completed an inter-disciplinary PhD that interrogates conceptions affecting what it means to write in law.

Translanguaging in the Life Sciences class: A case of the University of Limpopo

Mkateko Ngobeni and Berrington Ntombela

Whilst education in general is built on the Western tradition of monolingualism, a multilingual reality is all around. A monolingual ethos forces and expects students to suspend every language in their repertoire in favour of the medium of instruction. This means that a typical South African student who is conversant with, say, Tshivenda, Xitsonga or Sepedi, will be expected to only utilize English for any academic engagement. As such, the high proficiency in the English language is equated with high intelligence whilst the same proficiency in any of the African languages is not recognized. Students therefore find themselves left behind when they have to first master the command of the medium of instruction before they can access the knowledge offered in that language. Nevertheless, it has not been possible to restrict bi/multilingual students from utilising their linguistic repertoires in order to access and make sense of the knowledge they are receiving. This means students juggle between languages available in their repertoire in order to access content knowledge. This paper therefore investigates multilingual students' translanguaging practices in order to access knowledge in a Life Science class in the University of Limpopo. The research is conducted through classroom observation where data are gathered through video-recordings. After transcribing video-recorded data, classroom discourse analysis is used to analyse how translanguaging is used by students. The findings of this research have implications on how knowledge in higher education should be linguistically packaged in order to increase epistemic access. This presentation will highlight the utility of translanguaging in allowing multilingual students to make sense of their academic world.



Mkateko Ngobeni

Mkateko Ngobeni is a Lecturer in the Department of Physiology and Environmental Health at the University of Limpopo. She holds a Master's degree in Translation Studies and Linguistics obtained from the University of Limpopo. She is currently reading for her doctoral degree in the Department of Translation Studies and Linguistics.



Berrington Ntombela

Berrington Ntombela is an Associate Professor of English Studies in the Department of Languages, University of Limpopo. He holds a DPhil degree obtained from the University of Zululand. His research interests include decoloniality, linguistic imperialism and English Language Teaching. He has published a number of journal articles and book chapters.

The English language: A communication tool for an emerging Cameroon

Diana Njweipi-Kongor

This paper is a qualitative study that focusses on the importance of English as a global language and the role it must play in Cameroon on its way to emergence and Africa as a whole. Taking cognizance of the fact that Cameroon is an essentially multilingual society, it needs to identify ways and different educational programmes for English Language teaching and learning, that would enable its population to fit into and be adequately prepared for the world that is rapidly becoming a global village. It addresses the problem of choosing one or more languages from the multitude of indigenous languages in our country through which to communicate and interact with the rest of the world in its course to emergence. The paper is a case study based on the different English language programs that have been instituted at St Jerome University, to stimulate and foster the use of the language, with very encouraging results. Therefore, even though the results reflect the realities of St. Jerome Catholic University, they can be generalized. The author of this paper sees St. Jerome as a representation of Cameroon and other multilingual African countries; holding the view that the results achieved in St. Jerome are an indication that our practices, as academic literacy and writing Centre practitioners, simultaneously advance the global knowledge economy and “internationalising at home” (de Wit & Altbach, 2021) by recognising and foregrounding knowledge systems that are also locally relevant.



Diana Njweipi-Kongor

Dr Diana Njweipi-Kongor is a Cameroonian. She holds a BA in English from Yaounde University 1, MA from University of Ibadan, and PhD in English Studies from Stellenbosch University. She heads the English Unit of Polytechnic. She teaches English to graduate and undergraduate students. She is a Writing Consultant in the Language Centre in St Jerome and Ets Global TOEIC and TOEFL Test Centre Administrator. Diana’s research interests are in Sociolinguistics, focusing on use of English as Lingua Franca and on aspects of pedagogy like e-learning and e-teaching.

The role of the Writing Centre within a Universal Design for Learning Framework

Desiree E Moodley

Could a transformative, inclusive, and emancipatory educational framework like the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) that foregrounds physical, cognitive, and linguistic injustices advance academic success for all beyond merely meeting academic literacy standards within higher education settings like writing centres? Could racism and dis/ableism be dismantled through such an emerging educational scholarship trend that offers a redefinition of dis/ability to abolish oppressive pedagogical practices that perpetuate constructed views of special needs, often negatively correlated with racial and intellectual superiority? And, more essentially, could these questions be addressed through the role of the writing centre at higher education institutions in 21st century South Africa? These critical questions are some of the tensions raised in this paper proposing a compelling yet controversial attempt at advancing student learning and achievement within an expanded definition of dis/ability offered by the UDL framework, developed by Rose and Meyer (2002) at the Center for Applied Special Technology at Harvard University. This paper seeks to understand the obstacles and opportunities of UDL within the role of writing centres in 21st-century South African higher education. Through personal and professional insights as a qualified practicing academic research and writing consultant, both locally in South Africa and abroad in the United States, this initial critique on the emerging vociferous dialogue around the adoption of UDL at higher education institutions in South Africa and its implications for the role of writing centres is based on this author's pragmatic, commonplace experiences as well as research studies conducted on UDL and the Harvard Review. It is hoped that this paper may make visible also some of the inherent juxtapositions UDL may hold for meeting individual students' learning needs principled on its universal approach to learning success for all mindsets and affording further critique.



Desiree E Moodley

Desiree Moodley is a lecturer and PhD doctoral candidate. Her research interests are in 21st-century curriculum and pedagogy in higher education. Her Masters research focused on the contributions, complexities, and contradictions of multimodalities, learning styles, and differentiated pedagogy in curriculum implementation in South Africa. She is a qualified writing consultant.

Ubuntu in the Academic Literacy class: establishing a sense of community for inclusive and effective learning

Louri Louw, Linda Sparks

Effective learning transpires when students experience a sense of community in the classroom. From an African perspective, this is noteworthy as it simulates an environment where Ubuntu is possible. This is especially true for Academic Literacy (AL) classes on an Access Programme where the teaching approach typically stems from social constructivism. This approach enhances the classroom participation of students through positioning them in the centre of learning, and moving the lecturer to the side. Fostering peer-to-peer relationships, and teacher-to-peer relationships, forms an integral part of this teaching approach. For instance, students are motivated to share ideas and responsibility through peer or group work, as well as through teacher guidance and feedback. Thus, grounded in shared power and respect, a community underpinned by Ubuntu – “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am” (Mbiti, 1989: 106), is ideally created. Through assessing students’ experience of the AL classroom environment, this study sets out to determine if the aim of creating a sense of community and inclusivity is actually executed. Hence, this study focuses on improving the quality of teaching practice by establishing classroom community through analysis of student perspectives obtained from quantitative and qualitative data. Participants of this on-going study are students on an Access Programme. Data collection occurred through a survey measuring students’ perceptions of a sense of Ubuntu and community within the classroom, in addition to their reflections of the environment in their AL classroom. Findings show positive results. This implies that teaching and learning are improved if a sense of community and Ubuntu in the classroom is established. Therefore, the study aims to improve AL skills by ensuring that students feel a sense of community and Ubuntu in the classroom, and furthermore to recognize our students’ diversity through inclusivity. This aids learning in the AL class through socially just teaching practices, which will ultimately assist in student success at university.



Louri Louw

Louri Louw has been an academic literacy facilitator at the University of the Free State for 11 years. She is also in the privileged position to teach creative writing at The Central University of Technology. Driven by a passion to enhance student learning, her current research interests lie in increasing student engagement in the online environment.



Linda Sparks

As an Academic Literacy Coordinator at the University of the Free State, Linda Sparks has been involved in the teaching and running of academic literacy courses for the last 13 years. She is dedicated to inspiring students’ academic success and believes that innovative research in this field will help to achieve this.



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Neither here nor there: Exploring first-year undergraduate students' sense of belonging in an online academic literacy module

Martina van Heerden and Sharita Bharuthram

Belonging may be defined as people's sense of "connectedness and mattering at the organization or institutions where they work, study, or are otherwise involved" (Sumara, 2022). For students in higher education, belonging is important as it facilitates a sense of being recognised and included as a valid and valued member of the university community. This is especially important for first-year students, as belonging fosters motivation and enjoyment; moreover, students who feel like they belong are more likely to continue with their studies (Pedler, et al, 2022). Engagement with fellow students, their tutors and lecturers is crucial to this sense of belonging, as it helps to create a sense of connectedness to others, which in turn reflects a sense of connectedness to the academic community at large. To that end, we may distinguish between academic belonging and social belonging, where academic belonging fosters a sense of being part of the academic community, while social belonging refers to belonging to social communities (Nunn, 2021). Academic literacy modules are ideally positioned to foster especially academic belonging, as they enable students to develop the skills they would need to be 'recognised' as belonging to the academic community. Moreover, the engagement with fellow first-year students may help to develop a sense of social belonging. However, the recent shift to online learning may have greatly impacted the way that students engage with others, as the immediacy of the classroom environment is no longer an easy gateway into a sense of belonging (Thomas, et al., 2014).

The aim of this presentation is therefore to discuss how the shift to online learning has impacted students' sense of academic belonging and social belonging. Qualitative data were collected from first-year undergraduate students in an academic literacy module via an online questionnaire. Students were asked to reflect on their experiences of online learning, and what emerged from the data was a sense of isolation and disconnection, both socially and academically. Our presentation ends by considering what the long-term implications of this sense of 'unbelonging' might be.



Martina van Heerden

Martina van Heerden is an academic literacy lecturer at the University of the Western Cape, where she teaches English for Educational Development to students in the Science faculty. Dr van Heerden's research interests include feedback, peer review, academic literacies, and academic development.



Sharita Bharuthram

Sharita Bharuthram is an Associate Professor in academic literacies at the University of the Western Cape. Her research focus is on reading and writing in higher education as well as on assessment practices. Professor Bharuthram has published in national and international journals and has participated at local and international conferences.

Reflections on the development of writing tutors as emerging academics at a Writing Centre in a South African university

Arona Dison, Mapula Maropola, Phoene Oware, Irene Nyamu

Writing centres can provide a powerful context for writing tutors' development (Archer and Richards, 2011; Lewanika and Archer, 2011). However, this aspect of professional development, taking place in a liminal space (Archer and Richards, 2011), is largely invisible and unrecognized within university settings. This paper reports on the first stage of a research project, which aims to explore the development of Writing Centre tutors as emerging academics within the context of the Writing Centre at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). UWC writing tutors are postgraduate students who play a crucial role in the work of the Centre. They come from diverse backgrounds in South Africa and other African countries. In addition to having individual and group consultations with students, they often work in teams on workshops and projects. Here less experienced tutors learn through participation in communities of practice with more experienced tutors and the Coordinator. The majority of these postgraduate tutors aspire to becoming professional academics. This research project adopts a case study design and also uses elements of collaborative autoethnography (CAE). This paper reports on the first stage of the project, which uses CAE methods. CAE is a methodological variation of autoethnography, a qualitative research method in which the researcher draws on his/her autobiographical material as "a window into the understanding of a social phenomenon" (Chang, Longman & Franco, 2014, p. 376). Collaborative autoethnography takes a more collective approach to the autoethnographic method. In CAE, two or more researchers share their autobiographical materials related to a common social phenomenon and analyse the collective data to interpret the meanings of their personal experiences within their sociocultural contexts (Chang et al, 2014). The researchers on this project are the Writing Centre Coordinator, two current tutors at the Centre and one past tutor. Two of the researchers are South Africans from very different backgrounds and two are from Kenya. We also come from different disciplinary backgrounds – Education, applied Social Sciences and Biotechnology. In the first stage of the project, the four researchers each write their own response to the following question or prompt. "How has your participation in the Writing Centre influenced your development of capabilities, particularly those related to becoming an academic?" These texts become a source of data, which the researchers share in order to generate follow-up questions, which will be applied in the research. We believe that a paper reporting on this process will be of interest to academics in the Writing Centre and academic literacy communities. This is both because of the insights into tutor development that emerge as well the use of a collaborative writing research method.



Arona Dison

Arona Dison is Coordinator of the Writing Centre and Teaching and Learning Specialist in the Directorate of Learning, Teaching and Student Success at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Her research interests include academic literacies, professional development of academics, writing centres and formative feedback.



Mapula Maropola

Mapula Maropola is a doctoral student at the department of Microbiology at University of the Western Cape (UWC). She has been a tutor at the UWC Writing Centre for 2 ½ years and is currently Acting Coordinator of the Centre.



Phoene Oware

Phoene is a PhD candidate at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Her doctoral research explores the potential for complementarity between formal and informal social protection systems in Kenya. Phoene is also a tutor at the UWC writing centre where she supports students' development of academic literacies.



Irene Nyamu

Irene is a scholar in Southern Childhoods Studies and a researcher with a multi-disciplinary background in Development Studies. Her research focuses on child protection and children's rights; gender and education; albinism and disability politics in Africa; and transformative social policies in the Global South. Prior to joining academia, Irene worked in the development sector as programme manager and director with local and international development organizations in Kenya.

Social presence as the key to unlocking quality in online assessment and learning in Academic Literacy

Michael Rowley

The years of the COVID pandemic have shifted scholars' attention more to online modes of educational instruction in the Academic Literacy classroom. This, in turn, provides greater insight into the relevance of teacher presence when teaching vital Academic Literacy skills, such as process writing. This paper delivers an interpretation about the importance of teacher presence in the context of writing feedback and online assessment related to academic writing, such as expository/argumentative essays, during a time where teacher presence was restricted to a virtual platform. This research study focuses on interviews, surveys and evaluations conducted to gain both facilitators and students' perceptions of online formative assessment in the context of an Academic Literacy course for Economic and Management Sciences students, which yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. Findings from this research elicited concerns about students not responding adequately to constructive feedback when limited entirely to an online platform, especially with regards to process writing. The drawback of this is that students struggle to improve their writing to the extent needed to succeed sufficiently at university level. This paper will draw on the fact that lack of teacher presence poses a threat to students' learning potential. Furthermore, a lack of teacher presence combined with a lack of student interaction and engagement in an online environment is even more destructive. Fortunately, teaching exclusively in an online environment has allowed us to adapt and learn from unparalleled circumstances beyond our control. For example, to facilitate Academic Literacy skills, teachers have often had to employ more student engagement techniques than before. The paper therefore shows that we can take what we learned from the restrictions posed by an online environment to bolster either a blended, or if need be, an exclusively online learning approach. Teacher presence within a social constructivist approach to teaching and learning in academic literacy is thus key to providing students with the writing toolkit needed for success at university.



Michael Rowley

Michael Rowley coordinates an Economic and Management Sciences academic literacy course at the University of the Free State in South Africa. He has been part of the University's literacy programme since 2007. Currently, he is busy with research which focuses on both students' and facilitators' perceptions regarding the lack of social presence on online platforms. He is interested in implementing innovative teaching methodologies and the integration of technological tools to enhance blended learning.

From a rural campus perspective: Moving academic literacy assessments online

Linique Martin and Palesa Selepe

The University of the Free State (UFS), QwaQwa campus, is situated in an underprivileged rural community, in Phuthaditjhaba, Eastern Free State. Most students who enter this rural campus, are considered vulnerable students who have little-to-no access to the internet, experience frequent power disruptions, and struggle with connectivity and excessive data costs (Oyedemi & Mogano, 2018). Most of the students entering rural universities, do so with little or no computer literacy, requiring further attention and support. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, all the Academic Literacy courses at the UFS, QwaQwa campus, made use of paper-based assessments. Students would submit hard copies of their work to their facilitators for marking. Due to the pandemic, many Institutions of Higher Learning (IHE) moved to online teaching and learning. For the academic literacy courses at the QwaQwa campus, assessments were also moved online, making sure students were supported as far as possible. Students were given more time to submit and the option to submit pictures of the written work was also given to students. For online quizzes, students were given 3 chances to submit a quiz. This was done with the intention of assisting students who might face connection issues while taking the quiz. Facilitators were provided with extra training and support to ensure that the transition from paper-based to online assessments was as effortless as possible. Although all the academic literacy courses moved back face-to-face this year, the decision was made to keep the assessments online. This was decided as the University of the Free State is moving from student-centred teaching to learning-centred teaching. When considering assessments for the learning-centred approach, assessments should be continuous or a blend of summative and formative assessments focusing on achieving specific learning outcomes (CTL, 2019). In addition, when looking at the use of technology in relation to the learning-centred approach, technology should be used to create a flexible learning environment allowing for various types of learning to take place in different contexts. All the academic literacy courses within the Academic Language and Literacy Development (ALLD) department, make use of continuous assessments that directly link to everyday student life. The aim of this paper is to compare the aspects of both paper-based assessments and online assessments for academic literacy courses. Questionnaires were sent out to facilitators who were involved in the courses when both paper-based and online assessments were used. This paper will also look at and compare the administrative aspects of both assessment types. A quantitative and qualitative questionnaire was completed by 10 facilitators and two administrative officers. This study found that the positive aspects of online assessments outweigh the negative aspects.



Linique Martin

Linique Martin is a lecturer at the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the UFS. She obtained her Masters in Linguistics at UWC in 2017 (Cum Laude). Her career as a lecturer began in 2018 at CPUT, where her passion for Academic literacy was cultivated.



Palesa Selepe

Palesa Selepe is an officer for the Academic Language and literacy development, but before she stepped into this role, she was a facilitator for three years. She is currently studying BE.d Honours in curriculum studies, which is where she has developed a passion for understanding how the academic literacy curriculum has been adapted for Education 4.0.

Exploring the value of online writing clinics as third space for enhanced inclusivity in developing research literacy – a case study

Brenda van Wyk

Literature abounds the lack of research and eResearch literacy among novice researchers. Research competency refers to the ability to apply a range of statistical, technical, and theoretical knowledge, among very specific skills. E-research requires the use of information and communication technology to facilitate research and requires, inter alia, both academic and digital literacies. During the pandemic lockdown, a number of issues surfaced in the case under study: the lived extent and impact of digital exclusion, the inequality of the teaching and learning ecosystem were foremost in hampering the acquisition of eResearch skills. The transition to technology-assisted online facilitation posed challenges to both information specialists, academic and students alike. The aim was to answer two questions: firstly, which research literacy, e-Research skills and research competency are required by novice researchers; and secondly, how can writing clinics transition from the traditional writing centres to online facilitation in supporting academic writing and research online? Informed by recent research, and through the lens of Third Space theory, this paper reports on the findings of a mixed-method study. Qualitative data were collected from semi-structured interviews with research managers and triangulated with collected quantitative data from a survey of 26 academic and support staff involved in academic and information literacy. Findings are that the foremost reported barriers and challenges include a lack of critical digital literacies and eResearch competency to enable self-determined research and learning. Online writing clinics as a Third Space was offered as a solution. The difference between a writing clinic and the traditional writing centre lies in the acknowledgement of prevailing metacognitive injustice and addressing this design a more personal approach in alleviating fears of failure. This paper sets out to add to the existing body of knowledge and address inequalities.

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Dr Brenda van Wyk holds postgraduate qualifications in both Information Science and Education. She is currently a senior academic in the EBIT Faculty at the University of Pretoria. Some of her previous positions include the Head of LIS, the IIE and the Dean of Research at the IIE. She has been responsible for literacy teaching, postgraduate supervisor training and postgraduate support in her current as well as previous positions. She has a passion for technology-assisted teaching and learning towards digital inclusion and cognitive social justice. Her research interests include open scholarship, metaliteracy, ABET, critical digital literacy, information and research ethics. She serves on the steering committee of ACEIE. She was instrumental in the planning and implementing of open access research repositories. She is the Managing Editor of a DHET accredited journal: The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning (IJTL). She has published several manuscripts and articles in academic journals, chapters in books and conference proceedings. She is a research associate with JET Education Services.

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