

Abstract

This report presents an investigation carried out to determine lecturers' perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Higher Education. A phenomenographic qualitative framework was used to collect data at the Institute of Higher Education from five lecturers to elicit their perspective of the role they play in addressing academic literacy challenges. Due to the qualitative nature of the study the unstructured interview was used as the instrument for the collection of rich narrative data from the lecturers. Furthermore, this study used Lea and Street's Academic Literacies approach as the conceptual framework, in order to gain insights into the lecturer's thoughts, observations and experiences that influence and explain their perceptions of the role they play to address the academic literacy challenges of the students.

While academic literacy has been well researched it is most often studied with the student or the academic literacy interventions as the object of study. There appears to be a dearth of research that considers the academic literacy of students from the lecturer's perspective. This study aims to gain insights into the perceptions lecturers have of their role in the academic literacy in students and hopes to serve as a catalyst for other similar research. The results of this study confirm that lecturers mostly perceive the academic literacy challenges of their students as being limited to the surface characteristics of language such as grammar, vocabulary and syntax without recognising students' sociocultural identities in specific contexts. Lecturers therefore perceived themselves as playing a limited role in the academic literacy challenges of their students, most often referring students to the traditional, generic or decontextualised academic literacy interventions offered by the institution.