

Abstract

Research has shown that embedding academic literacy support into specific disciplines is more effective in enabling students to develop academic literacy practices as they engage with the discourses of these disciplines, hence leading to epistemic access. The argument put forward is that embedding academic literacy programmes in disciplines is more effective than stand-alone academic support courses. This is because academic literacy is a social practice that is contextually bound and therefore cannot be divorced from the discipline. This study aimed to contribute to the conversation by examining the efficacy of an embedded academic literacy intervention programme and how it shaped first year B.Ed. students' academic literacy practices.

Theoretically, the study draws on a social realist framework that acted as both an analytical and explanatory tool. As a theoretical framework, social realism provided a lens through which to examine the structural and cultural conditioning within the intervention programme that either enabled or constrained students' learning as they participated in the intervention programme with the aim of developing academic literacy practices

The data was collected through individual interviews and focus group discussion with students, peer tutors and one coordinator of the programme. Additionally, data was also collected through observations, field notes, and student reflective journals as part of document analysis. The main finding of the study shows that the intervention programme provided enabling conditions in which students' academic literacy practices and agency were transformed.

This study has provided insight and understanding of how an embedded academic support programme can help students develop academic literacy practices. This study provides universities, higher education academic support practitioners and policymakers with the opportunity to be better informed about the importance of embedding academic support programmes into the curriculum.

Keywords: social realism, academic literacies, academic support, embedded support, programme, access and success, higher education.