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Academic writing challenges faced by first year B.Ed students at a South African university.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research was to investigate academic writing challenges faced by first year B.Ed. students at the University of the Witwatersrand in order to assist tutors support these students.

One of the main findings is first year B.Ed. students find it challenging to move from school literacies to academic literacy, and thus they need to be 'initiated' into academic literacy. The findings indicate that students need assistance with reading the articles on which essays are based, with understanding what essay questions require them to do, with quoting and referencing from sources and with the 'mechanics' of writing.

A further finding is that some students face academic writing challenges because they resist being initiated into academic conventions for several reasons.

The study concludes with some recommendations to course designers and tutors including the recommendations.

Keywords: academic literacy; first year B.Ed. students' challenges