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Lecturers' perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Higher Education

A research report presented to the Faculty of Humanities (School of Education)

By

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Student Number: 1542591

In partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Education by Coursework



University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Date of submission: 10th August 2018

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and

Dr Laura Dison

As the candidate’s supervisor I have approved this dissertation for submission.

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Supervisor: Thabisile Nkambule

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Supervisor: Laura Dison

Declaration

I declare that Lecturers' perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Higher Education represents original work by the author and has not been submitted in any form to another university. Where use has been made of the work of others, this has been duly acknowledged in the text and a complete, alphabetised reference list has been provided. I fully understand that the University of the Witwatersrand will take disciplinary action against me if evidence suggests that this is not my own unaided work or that I failed to acknowledge the sources of the ideas or words in my writing.



_____

Jane Pinnoy

10th August 2018

Date

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.

Abbreviations

AL	Academic Literacy/literacies
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CBI	Content Based Instruction
DoE	Department of Education
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institute
ICE	Inter Curricular Engagements
SA	South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
WAG	Writing across disciplines
WID	Writing in disciplines
LMS	Learning Management System
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

It is argued by Seligmann (1999) and Sticht, McDonald and Thomas (1990), that exposure to academic text is limited in most students enrolled in Higher Education Institutes (HEI), and this impacts on the development of concepts and schema required for success in tertiary studies (Bertram, Appleton, Muthukrishna and Wedekind, 2006). Similarly, Grabe (1986, p.35). In addition, it explains that this inadequate exposure results in students experiencing great difficulty in the reading and writing of academic discourse, as reading is considered as a critical skill required by students to achieve academic success. This is one of the many reasons to consider academic literacy (AL) in this study, more specifically, the nature of AL for the first-year students within the higher education (HE) context. This study will focus on: lecturers' perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Higher Education.

1.2 Background to the Study

The need for urgent attention to AL becomes apparent considering the following statement from Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007, p.vii), "It has become widely accepted that, in the context of globalisation and the knowledge economy, higher education is vital for national development, not least in terms of the need for an appropriate number and mix of graduates of good quality. It is of great concern that the output of South Africa's higher education sector is not meeting national need". This statement implies that as things stand South Africa will lack national development, both economically and socially, and the status quo will limit access to the "knowledge economy", as well as access to globalisation. A greater throughput of graduates is essential for South Africa's well-being, socially, culturally and economically.

Jackson, Kirkwood, Padayachee and Parkinson (2008) reason that the situation in South Africa concerning AL, is particularly unusual, because a high proportion of South African students enter tertiary education with a level AL that is not conducive to success. AL in South African education cannot be debated without a discussion of the

historical factors exacerbating the issue, that can be traced back to the apartheid era (Morrow, 2007). This era particularly disadvantaged South African students who experienced a different education system, through the passing of “The Bantu Education Act of 1953” (Morrow, 2007). This act was dedicated to keeping education segregated and inferior and much less money was spent on education for black children, than on the education for white children (South African History, 2016). The act was repealed in 1979, but replaced with another act based on segregation, The Education and Training Act (1979). A segregated education system was effectively in place from 1953 to 1994 when the South African Schools Act came into being. The result was forty years of segregated education, affecting several generations. The legacy of these forty years of segregated education is still evident in our society today and is mainly associated with race (Hoadley, 2008 and Morrow, 2007). This legacy resulted in a “highly stratified system of education in terms of social class has become entrenched”. This has resulted in the schooling system in South Africa failing to improve the lives of the majority of students (Hoadley, 2008 and Morrow, 2007). The challenges in AL in students can be largely traced back to this legacy.

The Department of Education (DoE, 2008) conducted national cohort studies in the HE sectors, and the data revealed extremely low levels of performance (Scott et al., 2007, p.vii). The DoE (2008) and Maher (2011) have problematised literacy throughout the education system, and suggest a requirement for improving students’ access to new information and knowledge through effective AL. The statistics released by the DoE (2008) paint a bleak picture citing 49% of all students who are not achieving their learning outcomes and propose that students in higher education are not competent readers and have limited proficiency in English. It should be noted that the DoE (2008) does not make any racial distinction in these statistics and that the above statistics suggest that a large majority of our population is still being excluded from achievement in the education system. With this being the case, AL is of concern in South Africa and has implications for throughput in HEI across the board, creating a need for continuous research in academic literacy.

It thus becomes imperative to find ways of improving the inclusivity of our education systems. By implication this would require a concerted effort to better understand the challenges of AL in HEIs’. Geyser and Gravett (2004) posit that most students need

assistance in their ability to use the English language or any other language to graduate and function as productive members of the economy. AL is not a problem defined by the students' racial background. So, while the study is cognizant of historical factors, it will include all first-year students, regardless of their racial background as academic language is new to all first-year students entering tertiary education for the first time. This study will focus on the lecturers' perspective of the role they play in recognising and addressing first year students' academic literacy.

Before proceeding with the discussion, it is important to understand and to identify a working definition of AL, considering that definitions in the literature vary. Preto-Bay (2004) believes we should look at students' "linguistic and socio-cultural repertoire" from a non-deficit perspective. Academics can explicitly teach academic literacy at several levels, "academic, linguistic, historical and socio-cultural" and at the same time respect students' identity, values and culture (Preto-Bay, 2004). Preto-Bay's (2004) definition suggests academic literacy development should be genre specific and assist students to find their way around the "new academic culture" without the need for a specific literacy classroom. Preto-Bay (2004) proposes that to understand AL, students need to understand the interrelationship between "what is written and read, who reads and writes and when, how and where it is done", making it appropriate for the current study. In this way, the production of knowledge and transmission of knowledge is essential to the academic success of students as they become the essence of the academic community itself. (Preto-Bay, 2004). This definition covers the socio-cultural, student identity, genre specific and lecturers' roles in academic literacy, which is necessary for this study.

1.3 The Problem Statement

If AL was taught well at school level, it would diminish the need for academic AL interventions in HE (Jackson et al., 2008). However, Jackson et al. (2008), DoE (2008), Bharutram (2012) and Dzansi and Sebolai (2015) concur that this is currently not the case, and that there is a gap between the AL possessed by school leavers and the level of AL required for academic success in HE. The challenge currently falls firmly into the domain of HEIs and their academic staff, with the assumption that the staff have skills and knowledge of AL. It is suggested by Geyser and Gravett (2004) that the challenges faced in HE, particularly around AL, could be reduced by lecturers

playing a role in the improvement of AL amongst students in their disciplines. This would require a different approach from the more traditional and popular module / course approach.

A new focus on meaning making in approaches to AL has resulted in the recognition that AL varies from discipline to discipline, and is discipline specific (Jackson et al., 2008). This research adopts the view of Jackson et al., (2008) that AL is genre, or discipline specific. This is contrary to the current traditional, decontextualised approach to AL and has resulted in a significant shift towards building AL into the content of courses (Jackson et al., 2008). While the traditional approach to AL does not fall into lecturers' areas of responsibility, if adopted, a contextualised approach puts lecturers centre stage. They will be expected to develop an awareness of the nature of AL in their disciplines and develop strategies for integrating subject specific AL into their teaching. AL is no longer seen as someone else's problem; it is therefore important to consider and investigate lecturers' perception of the challenges faced by their students in their disciplines.

There is an increasing trend internationally for lecturers to possess a teaching qualification, and it is noted that Australia and the United Kingdom recently made it a requirement in HE for lecturers to have a teaching qualification (South African Council for Educators, 2010). This policy was influenced by a belief that a teaching qualification would enhance the quality of teaching and learning and thus increase throughput in tertiary education. Lecturers in South Africa currently are not required to do a tertiary qualification as it is assumed they are experts in teaching their disciplines. I obtained a postgraduate diploma in higher education in 2015. and having completed a postgraduate diploma in higher education, I am more equipped to reflect meaningfully on my teaching and assessment practices and therefore question whether teaching qualifications or formalised teaching and learning training should be a requirement for all lecturers. SACE (2011) believes that a qualification or lecturer training programmes in higher education would make a difference to throughput. It raises the question, emerging from this research, as to whether South African HE should consider compulsory professional development qualification courses for lecturers. While HEI have been implementing generic interventions for many years, it is unclear whether lecturers consider AL to fall within their domain; if the AL problem is regarded as

external to the disciplines, there seems little chance of the throughput rate improving. As mentioned earlier, until the “revolution in primary and secondary schooling occurs” AL will continue to fall into the realm of HE (Jackson et al., 2008). With current approaches not improving the throughput rate fast enough, if HE is to make a difference, a sense of urgency is required, and HE has no choice but to consider an alternate approach to traditional approaches, which is shown in the literature review to not have evidence of success.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

The personal motivation for this research topic can be attributed to a number of reasons; I began studying education and became a lecturer concurrently, first studying a Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education and then my Master’s in education with course work. However, I am considered a subject matter expert in Marketing and Communication Science and lecture these subjects. I progressively began to appreciate how my studies in education were changing my approach to lecturing. My education courses encouraged me to reflect on teaching practices and assisted me to experiment and improve my teaching practice as well as gain a deeper insight into my role in assisting students with their academic literacy. My research at postgraduate level involved using a specific strategy in the classroom to improve the student’s AL and I started to contemplate how lecturers without a background in education were perceiving their role in the academic literacy of their students within their disciplines. This thought process led to this research topic.

It is now well established through statistics and research that current throughput rates in South Africa (SA) are not acceptable (DoE, 2008; Scott et al., 2007). With recent student frustrations made evident through the #feesmustfall campaign improving throughput has taken on a new sense of urgency (Boughey & McKenna, 2016). The Ministry of Education in 2001 gave the dropout rate as high as fifty percent over the full degree period and states that one in three students drop out by the end of the first year (McGhie, 2012; Scott et al., 2007). Tertiary institutes are feeling the pressure to improve these rates (Jackson et al., 2008; Geyser and Gravett, 2004).

Extensive research has been conducted on attempting to understand this phenomenon, the reasons for the high dropout rate and possible solutions. AL has been highlighted as a major reason for student’s challenges with epistemic access in

their reading and writing (Morrow, 2007) with AL having received much attention and being in the spotlight not only in SA but globally.

1.5 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand lecturers' perceptions of their role in addressing the challenges of AL in first year HE students. The study will explore the degree to which lecturers believe AL is a barrier to a student's success in their discipline and whether they have identified any possible strategies to assist students with their AL challenges. It will be important to ascertain lecturers' perceptions on obtaining a qualification in higher education or receiving specific training to address their students' AL challenges and develop strategies in the context of their disciplines. This purpose links directly to the key objectives of the study.

1.6 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research in brief are as follows:

a) To explore lecturers' perceptions of their role in addressing the challenges faced by first year students in AL.
b) To gain insight into the extent to which lecturers believe AL is a barrier to first year students.
c) To confirm whether lecturers identify any possible strategies for addressing the AL challenges of their students.
d) To understand lecturers' perceptions of furthering their studies or training in education, to further assist first year students with their academic challenges.

1.7 The Research Questions

1.7.1 The Main Research Question

How do lecturers perceive their role and the challenges of first year students in AL?

1.7.2 Sub questions

a) How do lecturers describe the AL challenges in their disciplines when considering the academic success of first year students?

b) Have lecturers identified any possible strategies for addressing the challenges in academic literacy their students face?

c) What are lecturers' perceptions on furthering their studies or participating in education-specific training, to further assist first year students with their academic challenges?

1.8 Structure of the Study

This dissertation comprises six chapters. The aim of **chapter 1** is to provide a background to the study, emphasising the lecturer's perception of their role in the academic literacy of first year students. This chapter also presents the problem statement, the purpose of the study and the research objectives and questions.

Chapter 2 presents the literature which outlines the well-researched AL challenges faced by students in HE. The study looks at the increasing pressure on increasing throughput which the HEI faces. It considers three different AL interventions as well as the role lecturers play in AL.

Chapter 3 introduces the conceptual framework for the study which is the Lea and Street (1998) academic literacies model, which allows for an approach to AL which is transformative.

Chapter 4 provides information regarding the research methodology selected for this study. It describes how this study uses a qualitative approach and related methods. Sampling technique and justification of sample size are defined. In addition, the matters of trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability and transferability are considered.

Chapter 5 considers the discussions and findings from the interviews in light of the theoretical framework.

Chapter 6 offers a summary of the findings discussed with consideration to the theoretical framework**,** research questions and literature**.** Focus will be given to the limitations of the study**,** gaps in the literature and possibilities for future research.

Chapter 2

A review of the literature

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Introduction relook at this whole section

The solution for more than twenty-five years in most tertiary level contexts has been the adoption of the generic or study skills approach to improving AL, but the effect of this approach on throughput has been limited (Bury and Sheese, 2016; Drennan, 2015; Hirst et al., 2004; Jackson et al., 2008; Lea and Street, 1998; McWilliams and Allan, 2014). Despite this the idea of language for academic purposes being a set of neutral skills as in the study skills or autonomous approach, continues to predominate in the South African university landscape (Boughey and McKenna, 2016). This autonomous literacy model denies "disciplinary literary practices" and socially decontextualises the student. Global trends are now looking towards contextualised or embedded interventions, which integrate AL into disciplinary practice and emphasise literacy as a social practice in specific disciplinary contexts. The role of the lecturer will change in such an approach as they are expected to play a role in facilitating the AL practices of the students within their disciplines. For this reason, this research will investigate perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students.

This review will engage with literature which presents three models of academic literacy development, the generic/study skills or add-on approaches to AL, an academic socialisation approach and a contextualised or embedded approach to AL will be examined and finally, literature will be explored that gives insights into the importance of the lecturers' perceptions in addressing the academic literacy challenges of first year students.

2.1.2 Study skills approaches to AL

Since the 1980s there have been programmes developed that assist to bridge students from school to tertiary education. These have taken the form of separate

modules, bridging courses, writing centres, to name a few (Jackson et al., 2008). These decontextualised approaches are named by Lea and Street (1998) as a “study skills approach”, while Friedrich (2008) refers to them as a “one size fits all” approach. The study skills approach was one adopted in South Africa in the early 1980s and was developed, according to Boughey (2007), in a broader movement she calls the academic support phase of academic development. In addition, these approaches are often referred to as writing across the curriculum (WAC) initiatives. According to Russel, Lea, Parker, Street and Donahue (2009), WAC means learning and writing across all university faculties and disciplines. They have been criticised for not recognising that writing is always uniquely situated (Sutton, 1997; Russel et al., 2009). Sutton (1997) further proposes that an assumption by students and institutions that generic AL skills can transfer across disciplines should be avoided. In support of Sutton’s claims, Chanock, Horton, Reedman and Stephenson (2012) propose WAC should have a shared focus, the use of generic academic strategies and the use of the student’s assignments from specific disciplines to promote AL. Chanock et al. (2012) posits that in this way both generic and discipline specific AL skills can be transferred to the classroom situation. However, Chanock et al.’s (2012) approach does not require direct involvement of the lecturer, the onus is on the student to be aware of the purpose of their discipline and the framing of the assignment. This appears to me to be an approach that is neither totally contextualised, nor totally decontextualised, although it does show some sensitivity towards literacy as a social practice. Currently the institution where I lecture is piloting an approach similar to the one Chanock et al. (2012) describes, where the AL course requires the student to complete an assignment in one of their major disciplines, but the discipline lecturer is not involved directly in this activity.

These decontextualised AL approaches have had minimal impact on the throughput rate or achievement of the objectives of both the government and the institutions (Jackson et al., 2008 and DoE, 2008) as mentioned earlier. While some institutions claim success, the statistics suggest otherwise, as Jackson et al. (2008) claim that despite the implementation of such approaches over the past twenty-five years in tertiary institutions, the generic academic focus of these courses has often resulted in further alienating students from such interventions. Lillis and Scott (2008) suggest AL only becomes visible to an institution when it is considered to be problematic and that

the institutions view diversity as a difficulty and not a resource. Bury and Sheese (2016) posit this is a deficit approach that stigmatises students and results in negative perceptions and avoidance by students who need it the most. Jonsmoen and Greek (2017) challenge the study skills model and articulate that AL has different meanings depending on the cultural context and social practice.

Drennan (2015) argues that, lecturers' perceptions of study skills-based approaches are negative and cites student disinterest, lack of commitment and poor motivation in students. While literacy skills are seriously needed for many students' academic success, study skills have not resulted in a change in the status quo. Jonsmoen and Greek (2017) argue that the AL challenges student experience are more epistemological than related to the surface issues of language such as grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure, yet courses remain unaltered and there is minimal evidence of improvement in throughput or epistemological access. (Morrow, 2007).

The study skills approach where the student is perceived as needing to be 'fixed' is often considered to lay the blame on the students, allowing the lecturers to abdicate responsibility (Biggs, 1999). The approach is seen to promote student stigmatisation and unless there is change, the universities will continue to do the students a disservice (Jackson et al., 2008, McWilliams and Allan, 2014 and Bury and Sheese, 2016). Lea and Street (1998) argue that this approach led to another approach that was more sensitive to the needs of the students and took the broader social context and learning issues into consideration. This approach was named the academic socialisation approach.

2.1.3 Academic Socialisation model

In the academic socialisation model, there is more emphasis on the lecturer, as it is seen to be their role to induct the student into the 'culture' of the institution (Lea and Street, 1998). Lea and Street (1998) advise that the academic socialisation, approach was considered progressive as it considered the students in terms of their social and cultural context however it lacked the deeper language, literacy and discourse it required to be transformative. According to Boughey and McKenna (2016) transformative practice in the South African context would mean finding ways of supporting students access to 'the powerful knowledge promised by the university'.

While the academic socialisation model was an important progression it was still preparing students to fit into the normative discourse practices.

The value of both the study skills and academic socialisation approach continues to be questioned by academics such as Lea and Street (1998) and there has been a move to what has been termed discipline specific AL. However, these three approaches cannot be viewed as separate or distinct from each other but rather as Jacobs (2007) suggests viewed on a continuum. Boughey (2007) proposes that each approach is considered indicative of a dominant discourse. Similarly, Lea and Street (1998) advise the three approaches to AL can be described as being embedded in each other; the study skills approach being embedded in the socialisation approach, which in turn is embedded in the academic literacies approach.

In South Africa, much internationally referenced research has been conducted to understand academic literacies from both a social and political point of view. This seems to have had little influence on the dominance of the generic / study skills approach in the classrooms of HEIs (Boughey and McKenna, 2016; Jacobs, 2007). It is proposed by Boughey and McKenna (2016) that the ongoing dominance of this approach to AL in South Africa, sits side by side with the students' anger and frustration over other issues in the #feesmustfall protests in 2016. This proposition highlights that a sense of urgency is required when researching transformative AL approaches in South African HEIs.

This review will now look at some of the literature of embedded interventions or the academic literacies approach to AL interventions as the conceptual framing for my research, as an alternative to the study skills and academic socialisation approaches.

2.1.4 Embedded interventions

The embedded approach to AL interventions, has been advocated by many of the contemporary researchers in AL. Both Lea and Street (1998), McWilliams and Allan (2014), Jacobs (2007) and Boughey (2007) consider the embedded / academic literacies approach to be transformative. A transformative approach, according to Boughey (2007) allows for nuanced and contextualised practices that contribute to differentiated learning.

McWilliams and Allan (2014) advocate that the argument for embedded interventions has strong pedagogical support. The embedded approach to AL assists students to make more explicit, subject specific connections in preparation for specific projects or assignments (McWilliams and Allan, 2014). Similarly, Sutton (1997) refers to this approach as writing in the disciplines (WID), which he proposes as essential in the development of discipline specific development of critical reading and writing skills.

Sutton (1997), Jacobs (2007) and Boughey (2007) consider that AL is never neutral but should be recognised as socially and contextually unique and allow students to be critical and reflective in their approach. “Mastering disciplinary writing implies an understanding of how knowledge in the discipline is presented, debated and constructed” (Jonsmoen and Greek, 2017). Lillis (2015) suggests this transition from a normative to a transformative pedagogy is essential if we are to move away from a monologue and move towards dialogue in AL practice.

This embedded approach resonates with me as my experience of higher education students is that they are focused and interested in their subject content and are reluctant to “go back to school”, as the study skills approach requires. Having lectured on a generic academic literacy course to first year students at a tertiary institute in 2015, the students lacked interest in the course and simply considered it as a credit they needed. Furthermore, they communicated the perception that the course was simply repeating High School English. From this critical perspective there may be more value in embedded AL interventions as they are integrated into the students’ subject choice therefore not as easily dismissed. Bury and Sheese (2016) posit that, a faculty or discipline in a university is a subcommunity of the larger academic community and has its own academic discourse and “ways of being”. Thus, they argue that discipline specific AL makes more sense, than decontextualised programs. (Bury and Sheese, 2016).

However, the embedded approach is not without its disadvantages, it requires institutional support as there can be logistic challenges and it is time consuming (McWilliams and Allan, 2014). It could be argued that generic courses or other similar study skilled based modules are similarly time consuming, logistically challenging and expensive, yet most universities roll out such programs, because they see it as a quick fix. If there is strong pedagogical support for an embedded approach as argued by

McWilliams and Allan (2014), perhaps it means a redirection of finances, time, logistics and skills and resources, to support this approach. Another possible hurdle highlighted by Bury and Sheese (2016) is the amount of training, workshops, perspective change and lecturer buy in that is required for success of an embedded approach. In addition, it would require lecturers to reflect more systematically on the nature of learning in their disciplines.

Bury and Sheese (2016) developed a program for lecturers and other key academic staff and found that lecturers were concerned and worried about their students' academic literacy while showing an interest in being involved in the students' development. However, this is not always the case and conflicts with Geyser and Gravett's' (2004) suggestion that lecturers did not consider students' AL their problem. In an embedded / discipline specific approach to AL, the perceptions of lecturers and their role in addressing the challenges of AL of their students is key to the success of the approach and therefore to the success of students in their discipline. These considerations will guide my research.

2.1.5 Lecturers' role

For more than twenty-five years there has been talk of lecturers being involved in the AL of students globally. As far back as 1991, Gambell whose focus was on academic writing, advised the academic community that lecturers and peers should all work together to improve academic writing, believing that this collaboration would facilitate the success of students. McWilliams and Allan (2014) believe both lecturers and faculties take discipline-specific AL for granted and Jacobs (2007) posits that it is vital that lecturers' 'ways of thinking' of AL shift from the normative to transformative pedagogy, through a collaborative pedagogy (collaboration between literacy specialists and disciplinary lecturers).

More recently, Ngidi (2007) conducted research which considered both students' and lecturers' perceptions of thirty-seven factors that influenced students' success or failure, at a historically black university in South Africa. His findings suggested that there was a weak correlation between lecturers' insights into the reasons for student failure and the students' perceived reasons for their failure. The key findings in this study state that lecturers ranked the academic literacy of the student as number

thirteen in a total of thirty-seven failure factors, while students were less concerned with the state of their academic literacy and listed it twenty-three in a list of thirty-seven failure factors. These results imply that either these students overrated their AL abilities, or the lecturers underrated it. This may explain why many students lack interest, commitment or motivation to take part in generic / study skills approaches to AL. If the students feel their AL is low on their list of priorities for academic success, they are unlikely to value the decontextualised or neutral courses. Although, Ngidi's (2007) study confirms that these lecturers considered AL one of the reasons for student failure.

Geyser and Gravett (2004) believe that the responsibility for AL in first year HE students has fallen to academic teaching staff at universities. They propose that there is a need for educators in HE to go "back to basics" stating the necessity for lecturers to reflect and ask probing questions with regards to methods and strategies to deal with AL in South African university students (Geyser and Gravett, 2004). Van der Slik and Weideman (2007) concur and infer much of the pressure is on lecturers to ensure that students can critically assess academic material, through reading and comprehension. Geyser and Gravett (2004) and Van der Slik and Weideman (2007) once again reiterate the role of the lecturer in AL and that they can no longer 'get away' with ignoring the AL of their students.

Jacobs (2007) advises that lecturers should question their 'ways of knowing' or implicit knowledge of their disciplines and be able to convert these into overt teaching strategies. Further to this Chokwe (2012) and Bury and Sheese (2016) submit that lecturers will require a continuous process of professional development to equip them with the strategies for integrating AL in their individual disciplines. This could be in the form of a teaching qualification, as suggested by SACE (2010), or very specific institutional training. While this could be a limiting factor in the implementing of embedded AL, what are the consequences if such an intervention is not implemented? There is a need for lecturers to contemplate their role in the AL challenges of their students and reflect on their teaching philosophies and lecturing strategies to improve the teaching and learning of their disciplines.

2.1.5 Conclusion

The literature suggests a dissatisfaction with the study skills / generic approach to improve AL in students and a global move towards embedded subject specific or ideological model of AL literacy intervention (Lillis, 2003). The role of lecturers in such an approach becomes a key factor. Whilst both the students' AL as well as AL interventions are well documented from the reviewed literature, there is a dearth of literature that specifically investigates the lecturers' perceptions of their roles in promoting AL in their students within the context of their disciplines and addressing AL challenges. In my literature search I didn't find any research specifically studying the lecturers' perception of their role in the AL of their students' AL challenges. This research aims to address this gap and contribute to this field by eliciting from lecturers their perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students. This information will be useful for informing a theorised and systematic approach that develops students' discipline-based AL practices in the private university within which this research takes place.

Chapter 3

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study will be the Lea and Street (1998) academic literacies model. Lea and Street (1998) argue that in higher education, student literacy falls into three approaches; the study skills approach, the academic socialisation approach and the academic literacies approach. The study skills approach and academic socialisation approaches are nested within the greater academic literacies approach and elements of these models could be called upon if required. The academic literacies framework has been chosen for this study for several reasons discussed below.

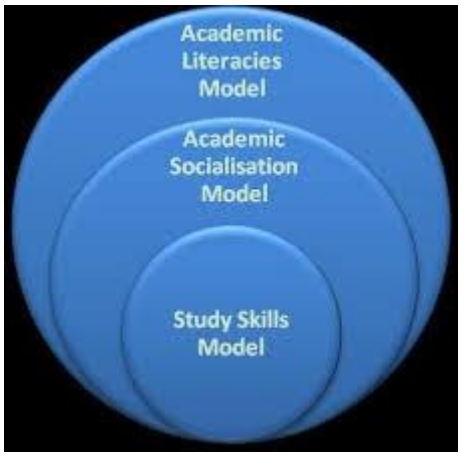


Figure 1. A Nested Model of Academic Writing Approaches

(Zhang, 2011).

The academic literacies model is a transformative approach, taking into consideration the identities of the institution, lecturers and students alike. It is considered to elicit the perspectives of both lecturer and student (Lea and Street, 1998). Coffin (2012) proposes that the academic literacies model is ideal to use in response to AL in HE as it emphasises inclusion of all students regardless of their background, gender, race, language, ethnicity or socio-economic background. This approach is strongly aligned to addressing the needs of diverse students in the South African context with its history of inequalities and limited access to HE for many school leavers. Lillis (2008) confirms the “fit” of this framework when she proposes that the academic literacies model is

grounded in social practice which reiterates the importance the model places on transforming inequalities embedded in social relations.

Zhang (2011) makes an important point when he posits that the academic literacies model allows for more than one type of literacy and suggests that literacy should be understood within the context of 'different communities, socio-cultural origins, domains of life, social institutions and power relations'. The concept of "literacies" as opposed to literacy is vital to this study as literacy is complex with many facets and cannot be considered in a one-dimensional way in the South African HE context. Significantly, the academic literacies model recognises the central role played by subject specific lecturers in facilitating AL processes in their disciplinary contexts (Lea and Street, 2006).

Lea and Street (1998) advise that there is a growing body of literature using the academic literacies framework and this can be utilised in the assessment of the predominant study skills approach to AL. Lillis (2003) confirms the academic literacies approach "is powerful as an oppositional frame" that is as a critique of current conceptualisations and practices surrounding student writing, academic literacies. The Academic Literacies framework of Lea and Street (1998, p.192) supports the objective of this study which is understanding lecturers' perceptions of their role and the challenges of first year students in academic literacy. With the trend to subject specific AL approaches and the emphasis of the lecturers' role in the process, the "gaze" of the academic literacies approach seems relevant to this study.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Whilst Chapter 3 focussed on the conceptual framework, the focus of this chapter is to describe my journey during the research process. In order to collect the rich data, I required for exploring the lecturer's perceptions of their role in the academic literacy of first year students, bearing in mind the dearth of research in this area, I used a qualitative approach according to the Scott and Morrison (2006) qualitative research "centres upon the subjective realities of research participants". The aim of this research was to collect thick narrative data understanding the perception of participants using a phenomenographic approach.

4.2 Qualitative research approach

The research design is the 'blueprint' or plan that establishes the study, the overall strategy that integrates the different elements of the research such as: purpose, relevance, resources, originality, accuracy, accountability, generalisability, objectivity and subjectivity, ethics and proof (Scott and Morrison, 2006). Cresswell (2002) states that it is important for a researcher to identify the research approach, as this links with the theoretical framework, the research design, the choice of sampling, data collection tool and processing of the data. The choice was between quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. In brief quantitative research stems from a positivist practice and data is analysed numerically. Qualitative research makes sense of data by engaging in different processes such as coding transcribed data, categorising responses, identifying patterns, and recognising emerging themes, while mixed method research is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007). Qualitative approach was chosen for this study because it offers a holistic experience of the participant's world and is also concerned with human experience in all its complexity (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). Of importance in qualitative research is that it allows for the collection of participant meanings in natural context (Cresswell, 2002) and for this study it has provided the opportunity to gain insight into lecturers' personal meanings about the nature of first year students' AL.

4.3 Research Design

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) state that devising a research design for the study involves determining the strategies which the researcher intends to use in order to address the objectives of the study. Qualitative case study has been used in this study because it provides opportunities to explore or describe a phenomenon within its real-life context using a variety of data sources (Yin, 1984). It further allows the researcher to explore individuals or organisations, simply through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programs and supports the deconstruction and the subsequent reconstruction of various phenomena (Yin, 2003). Similarly, Zainal (2007) posits that case studies allow for in depth investigation and explanation of complex social behaviours in real life situations, especially when the research sample is small. Thus, a case study, according to Yin (2003), should be considered when the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; when a researcher cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; or wants to cover contextual conditions because of a belief that they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; and when the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context (Baxter and Jack, 2008). This study explored how lecturers conceptualise academic literacy and understand whether and how the contextual conditions influence lecturers' perceptions of first year AL in an institution of higher learning.

4.4 Research methodology

Phenomenography investigates the many ways in which people think or experience the phenomenon (Khan, 2014), and "the object of study is not the phenomenon being discussed per se, but rather the relation between the subject and that phenomenon" (Sin, 2010). Similarly, Marton (1986) proposes that phenomenography is used for plotting the different qualitative ways in which "people experience, conceptualise, perceive, and understand" numerous aspects of phenomena surrounding them. The goal for phenomenography is to account primarily for variation in experience, by uncovering the relation between the participant and the phenomenon. Phenomenography allowed for the exploration of the lecturer's own reality and experiences with regards to their historical relationship with AL, their teaching philosophy and its connection to their perceptions of their first-year students' AL. In order to solicit a variety of experiences and to allow all relevant voices to be heard, a

highly varied sampling of participants was necessary in this phenomenographical study. This study used different lecturers from different socio-contextual and historical backgrounds, to present various experiences.

In phenomenography research, the researcher's deep, open interview technique causes the participant to reflect on the phenomenon richly (Mann, 2014). It should also be noted that the participants' description and the participants' actions may be different from each other, thus phenomenographers do not claim universal truth; they rather claim that they have found something useful for education. It was not the intention of this study to uncover generalised truth, but to understand lecturers' experiences of AL and the nature of first year students' AL.

4.5 Research Sampling

Cohen et al. (2007) proposes that researchers' success or failure can be found in the appropriateness of the sampling strategy chosen. Issues such as accessibility, time and financial outlay should be considered when choosing an appropriate sampling strategy (Cohen et al., 2007). It is suggested by Palys (2008) that the sampling strategy should be closely aligned with the objectives of the study. Convenience sampling is often called opportunity or accidental sampling with the researcher choosing respondents who are available and accessible to them (Cohen et al., 2007). Cohen et al. (2007) propose that convenience sampling is often used for case study research, and generalisability of the results to a wider population are insignificant (Cohen et al., 2007). In this research, the choice of lecturers for the research was based on availability, accessibility and convenience, although the socio-historical background was also considered.

4.5.1 Selection of participants

The participants for this study comprised of five lecturers with various experiences, in consideration of the phenomenography selection criteria. According to Mann (2014) the significant criteria for participant selection may include the participants' education backgrounds, career trajectories, cultural experiences and professional responsibilities within the larger scheme of their employers' relationships to one

another. This criterion was taken into consideration during the selection of participants for the study and race and gender were not major criteria.

4.5.1.1 Participants

The Vice-Principal Academic at the HEI in question assisted with the choosing of participants. These were primarily chosen on availability, accessibility and convenience, but we were mindful that a diverse spread of participants would be preferable. The final choice was all South African lecturers with diverse backgrounds.

The participants chosen all fitted the criteria in the table below:

Table 1: Lecturer selection criteria

Institution	Participants currently lecturing at the HEI where research is being conducted.
Students	Participants currently lecturing first year students
Availability	The participants needed to be available during a two-week period at the end of November and beginning of December.
Additional information	While it wasn't a requirement I was cognizant of choosing a spread of lecturers in terms of home language. The selection included one lecturer whose first language was Afrikaans, a lecturer whose first language was an African language, one lecturer whose ethnicity is Indian and while her home language is English, there is the subtlety of a different dialect of English. The final two lecturers were English first language.

The sample size of five participants was chosen, despite the confines of the degree, to ensure that there was a variety of rich data collected. This proved to be supportive of the data analysis process as some participants were more forthcoming than others and the interviews ranged between thirty minutes to sixty minutes in length.

4.6 Research data collection

As this research is interested in understanding the individual's internal representations, thoughts and feelings viewed through a phenomenographic lens, the data collection process used was unstructured interviews as they encourage detailed narrations (Squires, Andrews and Tamboukou 2013). McCance, McKenna and Boore (2001) consider it important to ask open-ended questions in an interview to generate narratives. Bamberg (2012) claims narrative provides a gateway into the 'realm of experience' where speakers can present their experiences and subjectively confer meaning. Narratives are developed within a social context and play a part in social construction of identity (Earthy and Cronin, 2008). Both social context and social construction of identity are a focus of the theoretical framework of the research. Thus, it was considered important to use unstructured interviews in this study and detailed narratives of the experiences and history of participants' literacies were produced. A small sample size was used, to gain in depth understanding about the experiences of the participants (Scott and Morrison, 2006).

4.6.1 Interviews

Considering the work of McCance et al. (2001), Squires et al. (2013) and Scott and Morrison (2006), to collect the quality of data required for this study an unstructured interview method is the most appropriate data collection tool. Unstructured interviews allowed for the participants' interpretations of their own reality, experience of their own literacy history, their teaching philosophy and their perceptions of their role in the challenges of the first-year students in academic literacy. The unstructured interviews produced rich, descriptive, narrative content that was analysed in detail and creatively, that will do justice to the phenomenographic approach of the research.

4.6.1.1 Unstructured face to face interviews

The use of unstructured interviews permitted a free flow of conversation which allowed for rich narrative data to be collected. It permitted for the perceptions of the lecturers to be spontaneously expressed. It allowed for the lecturer's own reality and experiences to be recounted in a narrative form and each lecturer was able to convey their journey in education and perception of their role in the phenomenon of AL of first

year students. The interviews were conducted in a consultation room, which allowed for a private and peaceful environment. The interviews took place at the HEI during exam time therefore less students were on campus; noise levels were minimal, and no disruption was experienced. The unstructured nature of the interviews allowed both me and the lecturers to ask for clarification when required. The interviews were audio recorded for the interviewer to be able to focus on the dialogue, listening carefully to the narrative and to probe for rich data when required (Cohen et al., 2007 and Gall et al., 2007). They were approximately thirty to sixty minutes, depending on the participants' responses and to be mindful of the interviewee's time.

Table 2: Time taken to complete each unstructured interview

Participant Name	Time taken
Michael	Fifty minutes and five seconds
Aneke	Thirty-one minutes and twenty seconds
Natalie	Forty-eight minutes and three seconds
Lerato	Fifty-nine minutes and twenty-eight seconds
Kavita	Forty-one minutes and forty-eight seconds

The time taken for each interview is clear from the table above. Initially I allowed thirty to forty minutes for each interview, but due to the unfolding of the narrative of each lecturer and rich data being the required outcome I didn't interrupt the participants. Early in the data collection process I realised the maximum time required for each interview was approximately 60 minutes. These interviews were conducted at the end of November and early December during exam time when both my time and the lecturers' time was more flexible. Each participant chose a time suitable for their interview to take place. Although one participant reneged on her commitment to be interviewed due to a health problem which prevented her from driving to campus, a replacement participant had to be found. After a discussion with the Vice-Principal Academic, a suitable replacement was found who we knew would be available to be interviewed within the time line I had put in place.

During the interview process I initially thought I was obtaining data that was not answering my research question and started doubting my interview schedule. I assumed the lecturers would speak about language barriers and the diverse identities of the students when approaching the subject of AL challenges, however this was not the case. Once I realised that what the lecturers were not saying was just as important as what they were saying, I realised the richness of the data I was collecting. The data collection process affirmed my research methodology choices.

4.7 Data analysis

Once the data was collected it was analysed and interpreted (Cresswell, 2002) in a particular way to reflect the phenomenographic ways of data research. When analysing the data collected through audio recordings, a process of organising and making sense of the data was followed (Scott and Morrison, 2006). Elements of several narrative analysis approaches were considered, such as Labov's (1972) structural approach to narrative analysis, Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal's (2004) approach of narratives as a perception of events or Rosenweld and Ochburg's (1992) approach which places emphasis on social construction of identity. Sandelowski (1991) cites Labov's (1972) approach which considers narrative to be structured using the following format: Abstract, or what is the story about; Orientation, involves the who, what, where, and when of the story; a complicating action such as what happened next; an evaluation or the" so what" of the story; a resolution or how did this end; finally, a coda, a sign that the story is over, a return to the present.

Elements of Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal's (2004) approach were chosen as they argue that narratives are based on perceptions or observations of actual events, as well as elements of Rosenweld and Ochburg's (1992) approach, who propose narratives play a role in the social construction of identity. The data analysis approaches of Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal and Rosenweld and Ochburg seem particularly relevant as the former considers perceptions of actual events, which assisted in highlighting lecturer's perceptions of their life experiences with AL, and the latter as identity plays a role in how these experiences interact with their teaching philosophy and ultimately the perception of their role in the academic literacy of first year students.

Table 3: Themes and sub themes for lecturer's perceptions of their role in first year students' AL

Main Themes	Sub themes
Lecturers' perception of AL challenges and diversity	• Lecturers' identity and its role in the AL challenges of first year students • Lecturers' perceptions of the AL challenges first year students face • Lecturers' perceptions of the diversity and identity in the student body and its relationship to AL • Implications for practice
AL as transformative pedagogy	• Lecturers' current approaches to pedagogical practice and its relationship with AL challenges. • The use of Generic or Study- Skills intervention as an AL support mechanism for students.
Lecturers' perceptions of their relationship with education	• Lecturers' perceptions on obtaining a qualification in education

4.8 Trustworthiness, Credibility and Confirmability

4.8.1 Credibility

Credibility is defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as "having confidence in the truth of findings". The credibility of this study can be assessed through allowing the participants access to the transcripts of the interview, so they can screen them for any discrepancies in the wording and/or meaning. The interviewer was aware of any biases or subjectivity while transcribing the interviews. The audio tape allowed the researcher to capture the responses of the interviewee accurately.

4.8.2 Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that confirmability speaks to a degree of impartiality. The findings of the study have been formed by the responses of the participants and not the bias, motivation or interest of the researcher. The interviews were conducted in an environment that was conducive to the interview process being constructive. The interviewer-built rapport with the respondents through engaging, interacting and listening mindfully to their responses and fully understanding the meaning of their perceptions and experiences. The research supervisor has access to the interview audio tapes and transcripts to eliminate the possibility of interviewer or researcher bias.

The trustworthiness of this study relies on the establishment of credibility and confirmability and the arduousness of these processes. As this study is qualitative it would be difficult to totally remove the perspective of the researcher.

4.9 Ethics

Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) consider four issues in ethics when conducting interviews; the risk of unexpected harm should be limited, the protection of the interviewee's information, ensuring interviewees are well informed about the study and the risk of exploitation should be reduced.

4.9.1 Anonymity

Psychological support should be provided by the interviewer should the interviewee become stressed in any way during the process (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree ,2006). The interviews were conducted on campus, in a familiar place to the lecturers, in a private room with little foreseen interference.

The anonymity and the confidentiality of the interviewee was always maintained (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Anonymity and the protection of interviewees' information was upheld. The interviewees are identified by pseudonyms Michael, Aneke, Natalie, Lerato and Kavita. The interviewees were informed that all data or information collected, both the audio tapes and the transcripts will be kept in a password protected file on my hard drive, cloud and a USB drive and will only be shared with my two supervisors for academic purposes. These records are to be kept for three years after which they will be destroyed.

4.9.2 Informed consent

The interviewee should understand the intent of the research (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The interviewees should not be exploited in any way for personal gain (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The interviewees were presented with two informed consent forms, the first was a letter requesting their consent to take part in the study and the second letter requested permission for them to be interviewed and audio taped during the interview, to ensure the validity and reliability of data collected.

4.9.3 Right to withdraw

The interviewees were informed of their right to withdraw from the study or process at any stage. If they requested to withdraw, there would be no penalisation or liability in any form whatsoever. No participants have been remunerated for taking part in this study and there is no personal gain, the study is for purely academic purposes.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter describes the procedures and approaches used to collect rich phenomenographic, narrative data for the qualitative methodology of this study. The chosen methodology has served as a bridge between the theoretical framework and the actual practice of the study. It has allowed for the perceptions, experiences, thoughts and knowledge of the participants to be understood. This chapter allows for justification of the chosen convenience sampling which enhanced the study as it allowed for the participants to be chosen on their experience with lecturing first year students as opposed to being randomly selected. Unstructured interviews elicited the lecturers' experiences and knowledge in a narrative form. This research methodology allows for the lecturers' perceptions of their role in addressing the challenges of first year students in their courses. This chapter also outlines the ethical considerations of the study. Chapter 5 details the data analysis and findings of this qualitative research.

Chapter 5

Data Presentation analysis and discussion of findings

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the findings of the study which explored Lecturer's perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Higher Education, interviews were used as the data collection tool. While interpreting and deliberating the findings in this chapter I use the participant narratives as evidence of their perceptions of their role in addressing challenges faced by first year students. The purpose of the unstructured interviews was to collect rich narrative data to enable an in-depth discussion of findings. I will present a summary of the three major themes and sub themes that emerged from the analysis of these interviews, which I presented in Chapter 4.

The first major theme is the **"**Lecturers' perception of the AL challenges and diversity". This theme is to comprehend the Lecturers' insight into the diversity and individual identities of the students and its relation to their AL challenges.

The second major theme is "AL: normative or transformative". This theme is to explore the possible strategies Lecturers employ or draw on to overcome the AL challenges first year students may be experiencing, as well as exploring the type of AL interventions they perceive as being pertinent.

The third major theme is "Lecturers' perception of the value of pursuing a qualification in education to better assist first year students in addressing the AL challenges they face". This theme explores the lecturers' awareness and insights when regarding education as a discipline and of the possible benefits of an education qualification when supporting first year students to overcome the AL concerns they may face.

5.2 Lecturers' perception of AL challenges and diversity.

I identified some interesting perceptions in the participant's narratives on the AL challenges faced by the first year students in the findings, and while the study is concerned with Lecturers' perceptions of their role in AL of first year students it seems pertinent to first understand how each participants identity and the role it plays in the

AL challenges of students in their disciplines considering AL has long been problematised in HE by the DoE (2009), Maher (2011), Geyser and Gravett (2004), Lea and Street (1998) and previous studies have highlighted language barriers and the socio-cultural background of the students as a fundamental factor in the academic literacy challenges of first year students (Morrow, 2007; Lea and Street, 1998 and Geyser & Gravett, 2004).

5.2.1 Lecturers' identity and its role in the AL challenges of first year students

"Teacher identity is an intricate and tangled web of influences and imprints rooted in personal and professional life experiences" (Bukor, 2013). The identity of the Lecturers and the influences this has had on their approaches to AL created an important thread throughout the narratives. Bukor (2013) explains that the teacher's personal and professional experiences always influence their teaching practice and the student's identity either positively or negatively. A perception emerged throughout the participants' narratives that asserted if the students were more like them (the Lecturers), they would be able to overcome their AL challenges. For example, Aneke advised "*The things that were instilled in me back then are the things I still want to instil in the students today, that is you need to work hard to achieve, and they don't give you anything for free*" similarly Michael posits *'generally nineteen-year-olds learn the way I learnt as a nineteen-year-old*'. Kavita told the story of how she hated "*accounting and I've never been good at it"*, she explained further "*I was able to understand the concept because I put in the extra effort*" which led to the claim that '*if they [the students] just put in a little extra effort'* they would be successful in the same way I was. There is an inference in the above comments that suggest the identity of the student is not different to the identity of the lecturer. However, Ivanova and Smirkarov (2009, p.5) suggest the generational identities of students are changing at a much faster rate now than ever before. The type of knowledge previous generations considered valuable "they just consume in order to get diplomas and well-paid jobs. They are able to acquire only short-term knowledge and do not manage to reach reflection because their brains are constantly overloaded by the digital lives they live".

Therefore, it is important for Lecturers to ask the question, are the students going to change their identities or should I change my teaching practice? Prensky (2001, p.3)

speaks of the identities of Lecturers' in terms of Digital Immigrants [those born before the digital age] and the identity of students, Digital Natives [Those born in the digital age] and claims "Unfortunately, no matter how much the Digital Immigrants may wish it, it is highly unlikely the Digital Natives will go backwards". Prensky (2001) puts this in perspective when arguing "Digital Immigrant teachers assume that learners are the same as they have always been, and that the same methods that worked for the teachers when they were students will work for their students now. But that assumption is no longer valid. Today's learners are different". Prensky (2001) argues that today's Lecturers (digital immigrants) language is outdated and from a 'pre-digital age' and are struggling to teach the students (digital natives) who speak an entirely new language, and this has implications for academic literacy as it suggests Lecturers and students are not always speaking the same language.

Ivanova and Smirkarov (2009) declare that since Lecturers were first year students "society has changed at an exponential rate both technologically and socially". Ivanova and Smirkarov (2009) propose Lecturers should try to understand the generation they are lecturing by reflecting on the differences, this view concurs with Lea and Street's (1998) focus on the inclusion diverse identities in transformative AL. The generational identities of the students differ from the Lecturers' identities and both directly affect the AL approach taken. Lecturers are noticing these generational differences and some frustration is evidenced in the narratives and illustrated when Aneke proposed that '*today's generation wants to learn by themselves*' in addition to this Kavita claimed, '*this generation [of students] like the easy way out*' and similarly Lerato claimed "*possibly ninety percent of them [the students] lack direction and aren't quite sure why they are here*".

5.2.2 Lecturers' perceptions of the AL challenges first year students face

In the narratives there was a genuine concern for the experiences continuously challenging first year students. According to Michael, first year students are expected to have specific skills that are needed in an institution of higher learning to ensure success, and this response is illustrative *"… the skills they (students) need are reading, writing, it's engaging, attention, it's communicating…"*, which also influence students' engagement with academic language because they *"… are not always able*

to pick up the language as quick as they need to" (Michael). The response suggests that first year students lack reading and writing of academic discourse that is mentioned as language, because "reading is viewed as a critical skill required by second-language students to achieve academic success" (Bertram, 2006). Furthermore, the participants identified specific skills as fundamental in institutions of learning and linked them with first year students' challenges to pick up the academic language needed to succeed; of interest is the mentioning of the skills as *"… side learnings to be dealt with by a separate department…"* (Michael) and not necessarily Lecturers within specific discipline. This response disagrees with Drennan's (2015) content-based instruction (CBI) approach to AL which aims to enhance the cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) skills required by students to succeed in their studies in various subject areas. While the success of CBI depends on collaboration across disciplines and facilitates faculty members' understanding of "the interplay of language and content and the respective contributions of all faculty [members] to enhancing the language and academic proficiency of English language students" (Kandiko, 2013), the participant only wants to focus on teaching the subject and support a ready-made module kit to study and not the AL aspects of the subject.

Aneke concurs with Jackson et al. (2008), DoE (2008), Bharutram, (2012) and Dzansi & Sebolai (2015) in that he/ she detects a gap in the AL possessed by school leavers and the AL requirements required for academic success in HE, she remonstrates this when she claims the gaps in the school system were creating a "*lack of critical thinking*" in first year students and this she considers a skill required for her discipline. Aneke's perception is supported by Ramoroka (2016) who considers this lack of critical thinking a result of both the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and the more recent Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum, resulting in school leavers arriving in HE with a lack of critical thinking skills. Aneke further claims "*the school system is failing them (the students) in that detail is not considered as much anymore*" (Aneke). Aneke encouraged discussion to improve critical thinking in the classroom, but claims the students aren't interested "*for them it's just either a waste of time or it's playful, it's not serious, it's not something that they take to heart, because it's not going to be in the exam*". This insight speaks directly to the student's perception of AL and what they believe is required for assessment purposes. Aneke illustrates this when he/ she explains her discipline as "*primarily a learning subject and really even if you look*

at the exams and memos [model answers] it is basically very parrot like, memorising and that kind of thing, and the students find that boring ".

Aneke confirms later that summative assessments are perceived by herself and the students to require less critical thinking and more memorising, thus discouraging students to engage in activities that require critical thinking. This perceived disinterest in critical thinking observed in the students is reinforced in Fraser and Killen's (2005) findings in which first year students rank the 'inability to use higher order thinking skills' as item thirty-nine out of a possible fifty-five items contributing to failure. This low ranking could suggest two possibilities, either the students don't consider critical thinking essential to success or they consider their critical thinking skills to be sufficient for success. These findings could possibly support Aneke's perceptions that students find critical thinking "*either a waste of time or it's playful, it's not serious".* Aneke's response suggests a frustration with the first-year students' resistance towards any classroom strategies to improve critical thinking and AL.

Besides critical thinking Aneke acknowledges the ability to be able to express oneself on paper, study a chapter and answer a question on it showing insight is required in her discipline. She asserts "*that insight is missing, they don't know how to formulate sentences and grammar*". Aneke feels the solution to these AL challenges the students face lies in interventions outside of the classroom.

Similarly, to Aneke, in Lerato's narrative she considers the school system is letting the students down, however she adds societal values, economic disadvantage and parenting to these factors when she concedes "*It's a whole group of little things that were done in an attempt to make a better society that ended up disadvantaging the child*". Lerato affirmed that reading, research and ability to apply theory are required for her discipline and affirms "At *first year level I think theory is about sixty five percent and the other thirty five percent is application*", Lerato acknowledges that many of the first-year students are struggling to produce a "*typed formally written*" piece of work, with an introduction, body and conclusion or structure sentences properly. She claims "*It is easy for us to take certain things for granted and just assume that just because they are in university they know certain things*" showing insight into the need for the student to be inducted into the culture of the HEI or the 'ways of being' in the community of the institution (Lea and Street, 1998 and Bury and Sheese, 2016). She

felt her responsibility ended where the students were made aware of the institutional support available to them, including one on one consultations, tutors, the writing centre and workshops and other similar normative approaches.

Similarly, to Aneke and Lerato, Kavita considers the lack of ability to write academically "*comes from the school system*". However, Kavita's perceptions differed from those of Michael, Aneke and Lerato in that he/ she proposed some aspects of academic writing could be covered in the classroom particularly around assignment times, showing a preference for an integrated approach to AL. She explained "*maybe in a sense that we integrate it [plagiarism and referencing awareness] with our lecturing*" as the students "*feel like they already have such a big lecturing load, module loads*". Acquisition of these type of skills would normally take the place of referencing and paraphrasing workshops which students don't have time to attend. Kavita showed considerable insight into the problems surrounding the more traditional approaches to AL, and sensitivity to the students, who lack interest in attending such interventions. Kavita is speaking of an integrated AL intervention on plagiarism, however this type of integrated intervention cannot be considered discipline specific in the way Lea and Street (1998), McWilliams and Allan (2014), Jacob (2007) and Boughey (2007) define it. However, Kavita's suggestion demonstrates a subtle change in outlook, with Lecturers taking some responsibility for the AL of their students.

Natalie continues to reiterate the thread created by Lecturers' B, D and E, explaining the existing gap between school and tertiary education by acknowledging that first-year students arrive from school unable "*to put a sentence together, (understand) the difference between a simple, complex or compound sentence*". Natalie's focus on AL stood out from the other participants and there was evidence that she is already doing some work with AL in the classroom and it featured throughout her interview. Natalie was the only participant to directly address the language barriers in first year students and confirmed "*they have a barrier as English is maybe their fourth, fifth or sixth language, so some terminology that you would use in the classroom they don't quite get*" and claimed, "*it's important when you have a term to break it down, so that everybody is on the same page*". This exhibits a comprehension of concepts such as writing in the discipline (WID) or subject specific connections described by Sutton

(1997) and McWilliams and Allan (2014). When it comes to formative assessments Natalie explained how "*we wrote the topic on the board, we broke down every single thing"* for example they were asked to write their perceptions of a subject *"so I said; What is a perception? And they needed to break it down, because for you or me that may be an easy term…. but they don't know what a perception is*". This lecturer seemed more confident dealing with AL challenges in the classroom and there was multiple evidence of such contextualised AL. However, Natalie did see a need for institutional interventions such as the writing centre, or a course dedicated to AL as important to support the student's challenges to "*build vocabulary, build writing skills, that sort of thing*" and this perception is perhaps influenced by the long history tertiary education has with such normative approaches.

The variances between Natalie's perceptions and those of Lecturers' A, B, D and E are significant. Natalie has a teaching qualification and has taught in both secondary and tertiary institutions and she identifies as a teacher. Jonsmoen and Greek (2017) submit that Lecturers generally [with the exception of those with teaching qualifications] do not perceive themselves as teachers, and appear to feel uncomfortable around the teaching of AL. This might explain why participants Michael, Aneke, Anele and Kavita do not consider the AL of first year students a major concern, whilst Natalie with a teaching background appears to be more comfortable addressing AL in the classroom. In conjunction with this Jonsmoen and Greek (2017, p.12) argue that "academic staff's meta-language and textual knowledge were insufficient when it came to discuss writing issues and explicating the expectations they had for the student assignments". This advocates the view that it will take a considerable amount of lecturer development to implement embedded discipline specific AL strategies as suggested by Lea and Street (1998).

The phenomenon that stood out most for me in these narratives, except for Natalie's narrative, was a silence around the socio-cultural diversity of first year students especially considering the existing language barriers, meaning the large representation of students who don't consider English their home language. It is not clear if the Lecturers' silence on this was due to a perception that it was not central to the discussion, or that the range of home languages amongst the student body is taken for granted and therefore was not voiced.

5.2.3. Lecturers' perceptions of the diversity and identity in the student body and its relationship to AL

The identity of both lecturer and student is important in a transformative approach to AL (Lea and Street, 1998). For the purposes of this discussion diversity refers to the student's gender, race, ethnicity, generation, socio-economic identity or socio-cultural identity. Participants communicated students' diversity and identity and its relationship to AL in different ways, for example Natalie identifies socio-cultural diversity when she proposes "*you've got such varying contexts from different cultures, different religions, different languages and they need to be aware of this as well*." This response suggests acknowledgement of the links between student's socio-cultural background and the ability to use academic literacy appropriately, in particular because "*English may be their fourth, fifth or sixth language*" (Natalie). The explicit teaching of AL skills is influenced by the Lecturers' perceptions of students' background and realising the importance of developing AL skills within the content in relation to the student's understanding of the course holistically. In addition, the mentioning of English language as influencing students' development of AL is interesting if Van Wyk and Yeld (2013) point out about monolingual educational approach negatively influencing students' learning and progress and ultimately their academic success is seriously taken into consideration. The participant's response suggests that first year students have challenges with AL because English is not their first language. Both Michael and Lerato referred to possible socio-economic challenges the students may face. Michael affirms that the student's challenges are "*not all academic challenges, it's not all writing and speaking, it's transport, its finances, there are multiple challenges that affect the learning experience*". Similarly, Lerato explains "y*ou have parents with a lack of education*" referring directly to the disadvantaged South African students who experienced an inferior, segregated education system (Morrow, 2007). These students are now parents, and the result of this inferior education system and the apartheid legacy resulted in many African women working as domestic workers. Lerato acknowledges this legacy by pointing out, "*If my mother is working, let's say at a suburb in somebody's house, by the time she gets home the last thing on her mind it to check my book*". Lerato's narrative claiming many of the AL challenges students face today can be largely tracked back to this legacy is supported by Hoadley (2008) and Morrow (2007).

Both Michael and Aneke considered the individual emotional challenges faced by the students as a challenge to the first-year student's ability to focus in the classroom. Michael describes situations where "*students arrive here (the institution) in a state because they haven't been admitted to campus, they had to be walked to reception and allowed in by security because their bill wasn't paid. That student is going to be less receptive to the message*". Aneke embellishes on this theme when she claims, "*the emotional issues they [the student] have to deal with hold them back as well*". She argues that today's society produces a very "*challenging environment*" for first year students. She further articulates this societal context by asserting "*Mom and Dad at home will be complaining about difficulties, there is a very high divorce rate, there are lots of suicides amongst their friends, drug abuse, all these things impact on them emotionally*". This impacts AL because as Michael asserts, under these circumstances the student is less receptive to the message. The negative impact of these socio-economic factors on AL is confirmed by Valente, Swanson and Eisenberg (2012) who maintain that negative emotions affect students' ability to engage in high order thinking.

The socio-cultural identity of the students in these narratives appears to be interpreted mostly as the generational gap, and Ivanova and Smrikarov (2009) recognise that "Each generation is shaped by the social and cultural values of the society where it grows up". This is a phenomenon echoed in the participants' narratives in a number of ways, for example; Aneke argued "*today's generation wants to learn by themselves and unfortunately instead of getting up after failing, they tend to be demotivated*" She further alludes to a sense of entitlement amongst young people of today. This is a recognition of the characteristics of Generation Y identified by Ivanova and Smrikarov (2009) who posit this generation expects immediate feedback and reward, instant gratification and they become detached if there is no immediate reward for their efforts. Kavita claims an understanding of "*this thing of Generation X and Generation Y and the millennials* "and is thus taking into consideration "the social and cultural values of the society it [the generation] grew up in" (Ivanova and Smrikarov, 2009). Kavita claims a comprehension of this gap assists her "*to understand them [the students] as individuals in this generation, this helps me in the lecturing space*". While Lecturers' C and D didn't directly identify the generational gap, they indirectly allude to it. Natalie suggests she uses the students' frame of reference to gain their attention when she

states, *"I use examples that are relevant to them, because they are watching "Big Bang Theory" [a popular television series], as a part of their source of knowledge"* This approach is supported by Ivanova and Smrikarov (2009) who explain that generation Y and Z (the majority of first year students belong to these generations) are "Inspired by commercials, TV shows, and all the entertaining stuff offered" Natalie is thus tapping into the student's generational behaviour to support learning. Lerato shows awareness of the generational identity of first year students when she asserts "*possibly ninety percent of them lack direction and aren't quite sure why they are here*". This observation is affirmed by Ivanova and Smrikarov (2009,) who propose, for the current first year student's generation "Education and work plays a minimal role in their lives and they do not see them as means of survival".

5.2.4 Implications for practice

Considering this evidence there is an inherent risk for AL in a teaching practice that perceives success to be linked to the concept that the Lecturers and students should share similar identities. Ivanova and Smirkarov (2009) suggest it is time for Lecturers to reflect and ask, "as Lecturers, do we really manage to reach our students when we deliver our knowledge to them?" They explain that HE has a dilemma and that it has been losing the attention of students more and more each year and it will require substantial change in HE and teaching practice to find improved ways to engage with them (Ivanova and Smirkarov, 2009).

While the participants all considered student identity and spoke about it in different ways, it was surprising to me that only Natalie spoke about the diverse identity of the students in relation to ethnicity, race and language and Lerato spoke about the impact of South Africans' unique history on AL. This gap is problematic in AL within the broader context of South Africa as it speaks to a decontextualization of the students from their values, ethnicity, race and language (Boughey and McKenna, 2016). The challenging nature of this gap is confirmed by Lea and Street (1998) who emphasise inclusion of all students regardless of background, gender, race, language, ethnicity and socio-economic background, as vital for AL to be transformative.

While the generation gap is irrefutable and is a consideration in the AL challenges of first year students, it is interesting that the Lecturers' narratives revolve more around

frustrations based on generational influences as opposed to the diverse nature of the student body in terms of race, ethnicity and language. This oversight is particularly thought provoking when Lea and Street (1998) argue that implicit to the academic literacies approach, are Lecturers' pedagogies that recognise the diverse and unique identities of the students, as well as an acknowledgement that academic literacies exist as a genuine and significant challenge for first year students.

5.3 AL as transformative pedagogy

Normative AL pedagogy has been the status quo for many years in both South Africa and internationally. The over used cliché coined by Albert Einstein that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results seems pertinent here. For almost forty years the study skills approach to academic literacy has been employed to little effect, which emphasises that a change from this normative pedagogy is required. Lillis (2015) posits that AL is never neutral but always socially and contextually unique. The embedded academic literacies approach requires the lecturers to be involved in AL in their classrooms and is considered by Lea and Street (1998) to be transformative. For this reason, it is imperative to understand the lecturers' current pedagogical practices and approach to AL as well as their perceptions of the study skills approach to AL.

5.3.1 Lecturers' current approaches to pedagogical practice and its relationship with AL challenges.

Understanding Lecturers' current pedagogical practices and approach to AL becomes vital when considering their perception of the role they play in first year students AL. In the interviews the Lecturers expounded some of their current pedagogical practices, giving insight into their priorities and focus during lectures. Reflecting on these practices allows for insight into the Lecturers' awareness of AL challenges while lecturing.

Michael learnt to teach himself when he studied part time and he stated that he ended up "*having to teach myself, because I need to be taught, so I taught myself and what I did was I made audios and I went through a little bit of a ritual every night teaching myself the content*" he believes the success he achieved using these led to the

realisation that he " *would somewhere, somehow be in some form of instruction or teaching, facilitating*" (Michael). Michael has a strong conviction that the teaching strategies he developed while studying, will assist students to overcome their student's challenges. He explains further, "*I sometimes had to take complex terms and make them user friendly for the layman, and I enjoyed that process*" this demonstrates an understanding of the need to spend time teaching concepts and 'jargon' within a discipline and this strategy can be aligned, to some extent, with Sutton's (1997) concept of writing in the disciplines (WID). In addition, Michael claims, "*I like to teach them [the student] what I learnt during this time" and not all students but "some people [students] do take just me teaching you on what I've learned, on board*" (Michael). It is evident that Michael's current approach to pedagogy is influenced by the teaching practices he developed for himself while studying part time. Considering the continually shifting student demographics in South Africa we can assume that the Lecturers identity is different to that of all first-year students he is lecturing on either/or a generational and/or socio-cultural level, and according to Lea and Street (1998) AL can never be considered in a one-dimensional way under any circumstances. Michael refers to his teaching practice as "*the business model*" and acknowledges that he is "*constantly tweaking the business model to make sure it works*". This statement suggests that Michael reflects on his teaching practice and constantly adjusts it when and where he feels it is not in line with the student's needs.

Michael likes to build "a mentoring relationship" with his first-year students and proposes "*I have to take on first year modules in order for the connection to remain. Because there is a softer side to the relationship where students need to affirmations they need to be walked with, they need to be guided, directed and influenced which I believe I do*." (Michael). He describes his teaching practice as "*collaborative, engaging, I would say disciplined, I would say democratic*", he adds "*I have an outcome in mind and I like to get everyone on board and take them on a journey*" thus suggesting that an outcome focus is intrinsic to her pedagogy. Michael declares "*we need to be a conduit, I believe we need to be a go between, we are a tool in the toolbox, but we are not the toolbox*" to address "*the multiple challenges which face our first years, it is not all academic challenges, it's not all writing, speaking, it's transport, its finances, there are multiple challenges which affect the learning experience*". Thus, Michael takes an empathetic approach in his pedagogy in which there is awareness of not only AL challenges experienced by first year students, but other more practical

challenges the students face. He attests to a flexibility in his teaching practice when he claims, "*you have to adapt your teaching style depending on who you are dealing with*", this statement acknowledges an awareness of the diversity of the student's identities. Michael does consider that "*the lecturer is best suited to deal with it [AL challenges], but it is not his primary role*", he elaborates on this that a "*lecturer has to be very careful as to how he directs his resources because ultimately he is there to get through the curriculum for the class*" (Michael). Michael suggests the resource of time is a problem when it comes to dealing with AL in the classroom and elaborates explaining "*There may be other things like writing, communicating, aptitude, this needs to be, in my view, dealt with in a separate department in conjunction with the lecturer, time permitting, bearing in mind that he (the lecturer) still has an objective to complete the curriculum*" (Michael). Michael later confirms this belief when he affirms "*communication, writing, the engaging and the formulating and understanding of words, concepts as far as I know, that is valid across multiple fields*". This belief contrasts with Sutton's (1997) WID's approach and is considered by Lillis (2015) to be a normative approach to AL as opposed to a transformative approach. Michael is of the conviction that AL is the responsibility of a separate department.

Michael proposes one of the most important aspects when teaching his discipline is to contextualise the theory for concepts to be understood, he explains "*I know the importance of a lecturer, or teacher and their ability to take a subject in which I was not interested and frame it in a different way to create an interest*" (Michael) and further states "*I believe it is the Lecturer's responsibility to package it (the material) in a way that is malleable to all students*". He demonstrates this firstly by using practical application to encourage the understanding of concepts and often uses popular culture for example series on television or movies to illustrate concepts and challenge perceptions or misconceptions about her discipline, thus using his understanding of generational identity. Secondly, Michael suggests the development of a module kit for his modules "*providing them with completed module kits up front can get students to the gold quicker, and they can play around in the gold without having to make note to then convert them into a question and answer".*

There is a connection between Michael's suggestion of a module kit and the study toolkit kit Kavita has built for first year students in her discipline. Kavita explains "*I*

personally design this whole study toolkit for them in terms of different ways to study…., Like mind maps and watching YouTube videos and kind of absorbing the theory in different ways rather than just reading the textbook". This approach to AL is supported by Deane, Samuels and Williams (2009) who assert we should adapt to our current students' preferences by moving away from text books to more accessible sources such as video clips, downloadable material and web pages, they suggest that "critical thinking and writing is most effective when grounded in the relevant contexts". Kavita then loads this toolkit onto the Learning Management System (LMS) and it can be accessed by the students independently in their own time. While the content of these module kits is discipline specific, these interventions are not embedded in the discipline as advocated by McWilliams and Allan (2014) and Lea and Street (1998) in an academic literacies approach.

Michael acknowledged a disconnection between himself and technology (the LMS) as a teaching strategy and suggested "*the management of the system can sometimes be overwhelming"* but conceded *"it is a requirement of the job*". Ivanova & Smrikova's (2009) and Schwenger (2016) suggest that web-based learning could possibly have more influence on the AL of these students than Michael alone and therefore it should be an important part of a teaching strategy to improve AL in first year students. This emphasises the importance of the use of blended learning and digital literacy strategies in the tertiary classroom to overcome AL challenges students are facing. Similarly, to Michael's disconnection with the use of technology or an LMS in the classroom, Aneke doesn't consider technological tools such as an LMS to add much value to teaching practice. Aneke concedes that these tools are encouraged by the institution, but she "*prefers a traditional approach to lecturing*". Aneke posits that in her experience "*the whole blended learning is not a good thing*" and "*going more into the electronic field is a mistake in the long term*". This view is contended by Lea (2004) who argues "other aspects of today's higher education context which now need to be brought more centrally into the arena: the increasing use of ICTs in mainstream course delivery and the multimodal nature of texts, conceptualized as the move from page to screen." Further to this Schwenger (2016) contends that academic literacies and digital literacies are inextricably linked, and digital literacy should be integrated with academic literacy practices and embedded in a course. "Fostering academic literacy appropriately in a blended context is as crucial a question as it has been in a face-to-

face context" (Schwenger, 2016). Schwenger (2016) argues that for academic success both academic and digital literacies should be combined into a blended learning approach.

Aneke points out pedagogies that allow for the development of critical thinking are essential in her discipline. Aneke proposes that first year students lack critical thinking and the strategy she uses to encourage this is "*a lot of engagement in class, I will give them a difficult topic to discuss and apply to the work that we dealt with*". However, Aneke explains that the students perceive these strategies as "*a waste of time or its playful, it's not serious…. because it's not going to be in the exam*". In addition to this she has given the students group activities to do and has noticed the underprepared students "*don't know where to start or what to say or even understand the question*", however in this situation she confirmed the underprepared students learn from the more prepared students who are "*able to actually contextualise it [the question] and give something that is associated with it*", in this way both the prepared and underprepared students are developing their AL. Aneke states, "*what I have seen starting to work is to have one to one sessions, but not necessarily between Lecturer and the student but with tutors, in the tutor space, someone that is a peer, at their own level. They tend to actually ask more questions and so I think you can have more tutors.*" This success is supported by Colvin and Ashman (2010) who report there is almost always a benefit in the tutoring relationship for both tutor and tutee, however they acknowledge that the peer tutoring relationship does not happen in a vacuum there are risks that relate to power and resistance that need to be managed by the institution.

Similarly, to Aneke, Lerato posits "*I'm now looking at a more collaborative approach"* in class and feels that this often prompts the underprepared students to think "*maybe I should up my game*". Lerato concedes formal presentation of work and writing essays is a challenging area for first year students and she refers these students to the writing centre for assistance.

Other AL challenges Aneke perceives students to be facing are the ability to express oneself on paper, insight, and "*knowing how to formulate their sentences and grammar*" as well as being able to contextualise information are important to her discipline. Past papers were another strategy Aneke used but her perception was that

students "*didn't take it seriously*". She attributes the students' negative attitude towards these strategies as immaturity. With her discipline being a study subject Aneke concedes, at first year level students just want to learn it 'parrot fashion' and don't appear to be interested in digging deeper into the subject, she argues the assessment format encourages this type of rote learning and claims "*if you look at the exams and memos, it is basically very parrot like, memorising and that kind of thing, the students find that boring, that's why they will fail those subjects*". Aneke posits "*What I have seen start to work is one to one sessions, but not necessarily between Lecturer and student, but with tutors*." In these sessions the personality and circumstances of the individual student becomes apparent (perhaps a reference to the identity of the student) and individual feedback can be given, Aneke confirms that one on one consultations "*where I actually sit down with the students and ask them what their challenges are…. let's see what we can do*." Natalie acknowledges this is a successful strategy and claims" *we do one on one consultations and say what do you feel your problems are, you know, where are the areas you are stru*ggling". Similarly, Lerato asserts "*if you (the students) are struggling, I am available, talk to me, have a meeting with me and sit and talk*". Likewise, Michael claims "*but you can see when you engage one on one and you look at writing style, how are you writing that is really the conversation you need to have*". However, Michael puts this common strategy in perspective when he claims this is not practical from a time point of view "*with sixty students in first year, I probably chat with about fifteen to twenty of them in a meeting*".

Lerato claims sixty-five percent of her module is theory and studying and thirty- five percent application. She submits that using practical application examples in class built around concepts she believes this makes remembering them easier "*when a student is able to apply a concept then it is very hard for them to forget it*" *Lerato). Kavita uses a similar methodology and claims "*that it's not just giving them the theory but being able to equip them to utilise it in terms of practical experience*". Kavita suggests that this prevents them from "*just thinking they need to swot everything and just write it down*" (Kavita). Another strategy both Lerato and Kavita use are impromptu quizzes and ICE tasks (Inter-curricular engagements) in class to get a feel for understanding whether the students are understanding concepts and able to express them coherently. Both Lerato and Kavita are new to lecturing and Lerato claims "*because you're a new lecturer, it's not easy"*. Lerato makes it clear that she is

"*speaking from the standpoint of a novice*" and has much to learn. Likewise, Kavita acknowledges "*I am still trying to work by error almost, if that doesn't work then I know next time I shouldn't do it*".

Natalie experienced a language barrier herself when trying to study Afrikaans, this seems to have made her aware and empathetic to students when English is not their home language and takes this into consideration in her teaching practice when introducing new concepts and teaching essay writing. This resulted in the adoption of a "back to basics" approach in class similar to that advocated by Geyser and Gravett (2004). Natalie explains how she approaches essay writing "*so you start off by breaking it small and say let's do an introduction, then let's see how you structure an essay…. where are those one thousand words allocated? You know it doesn't help having five hundred words in your introduction and then the body is sparse, so actually breaking it down with them and framing it*". This suggests that she deconstructs larger pieces of work, breaking it down into smaller pieces for the students. Natalie appears to have engaged with a number of AL challenges embedded within her discipline. The difference between Natalie' s perspective and the perspective of the other four Lecturers may be as a result of her teaching qualification, possibly giving her more confidence to approach AL challenges. This phenomenon is confirmed by the findings of Jonsmoen and Greek (2017) suggesting Lecturers without a teaching background consider AL challenges as falling outside of their competencies.

Natalie appears to be using some embedded AL strategies, and Kavita is integrating academic writing into her classes, and these examples show a shift in AL interventions being implemented by some of the Lecturers as proposed by Lea and Street's (1998) transformative Academic Literacies approach. This is not surprising as the academic literacies approach is not widely used, either internationally or locally and has only been applied in a limited way by the researchers. One on one interventions were considered important by Aneke, Natalie, Lerato and Kavita and whilst often involving the discipline lecturer, these would not be considered WIC or embedded interventions as they take pace outside of the classroom. Whilst none of the Lecturers interviewed could be accused of totally abdicating their responsibility for AL there was evidence for the most part that generic interventions or the study skills approach offered by the institution were favoured, this suggests a more traditional or normative approach to

AL. Considering this, it becomes important to understand the perceptions of Lecturers with regards to the role of study skills or generic courses.

5.3.2 The use of Generic or Study- Skills intervention as an AL support mechanism for students.

The participants mentioned generic or study skills interventions as central to improving the AL of first year students. Of concern is that the study skills model "focuses on the surface features of language form and presumes that students can transfer their knowledge of writing and literacy unproblematically from one context to another" (Lea and Street, 2006). However, Sutton (1997) contends that it should not be assumed that such skills can be transferred from one context to another. Considering the well documented, historical ineffectiveness of such interventions and the presumptions the study skills model makes on transfer of AL skills from one discipline to another, it is imperative to comprehend the amount of focus given to this model in the Lecturers' narratives.

Aneke did not mention specifically a generic or study skills course as such, but focussed on tutors, one on one consultations and workshops as interventions, all of which take place outside of the classroom and the students need to proactively request assistance.

Lerato considers addressing the challenges of first year students a "*self-inflicted responsibility*", suggesting this role traditionally falls outside of her designated responsibilities. Other support mechanisms Lerato mentioned are "*what we call academic week*" which happens during orientation, she further explains "*we have the writing centre, we have the Academic Development Coordinator, as well as academic writing workshops*." Lerato refers to all of these support systems being "*well and widely advertised, they are presented in class and all of that, for the students to come and use them and be willing to use them*". Interventions proposed by Lerato to some extent mirror the interventions proposed by all Lecturers, suggesting they are thinking about AL in a similar manner. Both Lecturers' Lerato and Kavita mention they are new to lecturing and suggest that their perceptions are coming from an inexperienced point of view; this acknowledgement attests to some reflexivity on their behalf.

Kavita mentions the writing centre, one on ones and workshops, similar interventions as found in Michael, Aneke, Natalie and Lerato's narratives. Michael proposes that "*we do have student support that assist them to some extent and I think they do have tutors*". Kavita claims "*we offer them workshops which they don't attend*", she was also pessimistic about the attendance at academic workshops articulating "*we are giving them the tools, but whether they are using it and taking responsibility for it, is their problem*." Kavita proffers "*we need to put it in such a way that it is not an extra thing they need to do. Maybe in a sense that we integrate it with our lecturing…...so it seems like it is a part of your module rather than an extra thing to do*". She maintains Lecturers should particularly focus on aspects of academic writing at both formative and summative assessment times. Her solution seems to show insight into the question of the lack of attendance to academic workshops and other generic interventions and in this sense, echoes the voices of researchers such as Drennan (2015; Jackson et al. (2008), McWilliams and Allan (2014) and Bury and Sheese (2016), who argue for more integrated AL interventions as they are more explicit and subject specific connotations can be made.

All Lecturers interviewed appear to be reflective in their approach to AL, using some strategies or approaches in class to assist students with their AL challenges, however, most of the AL interventions are taking place outside of the classroom in the form of one on one meetings, tutoring at the writing centre and the intervention of the academic team. Despite the popularity of the study skills or generic AL interventions found in the narratives, these approaches have been contested for as many as thirty years. It has been claimed in the literature that when a lecturer recommends a study skills type of intervention to a student the underlying perception is that the student's AL is deficit and the student should be 'fixed' by the intervention. Bury and Sheese (2016) claim the student is stigmatised by this deficit approach and it produces negative perceptions of such courses, which lead students to avoid them. Fraser and Killen (2003) and Ngidi's (2006) study advises that the students place the blame for their failure firmly on the Lecturers' deficiencies as opposed to their deficiencies. Taking this into consideration it is unlikely that the students will see themselves as needing to be 'fixed' by a generic AL course.

Jonsmoen and Greek (2017) maintain that Lecturers' "preparedness was not as we had expected, both in terms of concrete knowledge, awareness of literacy as

inherently defined by the discipline specific culture and adequate vocabulary to talk about literacy". This could possibly explain why Lecturers feel ill equipped to take on the challenge of AL themselves.

The literature attests to the fact the generic or study skills approach has had a limited effect on the improvement of AL for more than twenty-five years (Bury and Sheese, 2016; Drennan, 2015; Hirst et al., 2004; Jackson et al., 2008: Lea and Street, 1998; McWilliams and Allan, 2014). Despite this the perceptions of Lecturers seem to be that the generic / study skills approach is still the preferred AL intervention to fall back on. Considering the narratives from the interviews it seems clear that while there is evidence that independent thought on the subject of AL is present, there is some indication that, for the most part, the Lecturers are falling back on tried and tested solutions.

5.4 Lecturers' perceptions of their relationship with education

The importance of Lecturers' responses to AL challenges faced by students is emphasised in this study. Therefore, with the responsibility for AL in first year HE students directly on the shoulders of the lecturer (Jackson et al., 2008; Geyser and Gravett, 2004) a teaching qualification becomes a legitimate consideration. There have been some compelling calls for HEI to incorporate teaching qualifications as a requirement for all Lecturers (SACE, 2011, Burns, 2012 and, Hénard & Roseveare, 2012). For this reason, the insights gained in the interviews revealing Lecturers' perceptions on obtaining a qualification in education, are of significance in the face of the AL challenges first year students face.

Previous themes have interrogated Lecturers' different perceptions of their roles in the AL development of students. Research has informed that Lecturers don't identify as teachers and consider AL outside of their domain; "it was difficult for the Lecturers to distance themselves from the role of expert in a certain discipline and reflect on literacy teaching and pedagogical principle" (Jonsmoen and Greek, 2017, p.17). Knowing the importance of AL in South Africa noted by the DoE (2008) and Maher (2011) as well as the standpoint of Jackson et al. (2008), Lea and Street (1998) and Boughey (2007) that AL should be embedded within disciplines and thus in Lecturers practice making the professional development of lecturers crucial.

5.4.1 Lecturers' perceptions on obtaining a qualification in education

When Lecturers were asked if they were in possession of a teaching qualification and if not, would they consider the addition of a teaching qualification in addition to their existing qualifications on/about AL, the narratives revealed some interesting perceptions. Natalie is the only lecturer of those interviewed to have acquired a qualification in education, she claims "*After I finished my PGCE I started teaching*", Aneke does not have a teaching qualification and concedes "*I don't see myself getting involved in that kind of thing [a qualification in education]*", Michael states "*I haven't studied education*", Lerato declares "*it is one of the things [a qualification in education] I aim at getting at some point in the next two to three years*" and Kavita argues she doesn't see value in a teaching qualification and admits "*maybe I'm wrong in that because I don't really know what a teaching qualification entails*".

Michael does not have a teaching qualification yet affirmed that any education no matter the subject is advantageous. After conceding that some formal knowledge of education may be useful he firmly acknowledged "*education is my passion, but not the formal studying of it, I'm not going to go and formalise the studying of it*". He confirmed "*my sphere is my profession [discipline]*". The dichotomy in the statement that education is a passion, but the studying of it is not, is a claim that warrants further deliberation. Michael conceded that practical workshops presenting teaching strategies, that required less time would "*help me on the ground. Practically for me I would absolutely be interested in*". As with Michael, Aneke was open to "*workshops that will take two to three maybe six hours*" and considered they would be beneficial to his teaching practice. Likewise, Kavita expressed an interest in teaching and learning workshops as she is currently working on a trial and error basis, she explains "*If that doesn't work, then I know next time I shouldn't do it*". These statements reflect the findings of Cilliers and Herman (2010) who conclude that an Educational Development course for Lecturers can improve the quality of teaching and assessment practice in tertiary education.

Aneke does not have a teaching qualification and is similarly contesting the need for a qualification in education. When reflecting on a qualification in education as an addition to her existing qualifications, she affirmed that it was not something she particular wanted to do when claiming "*I don't see myself getting involved in that kind*

of thing, but if it is required then yes, I will probably have to." The rationale behind this statement was interesting and based on the feedback she has received from students about Lecturers who have done additional teaching qualifications. When speaking to students in class about teachers with teaching qualifications she professed "*knowing that a lot of Lecturers' here have done additional qualifications and they have applied it in class, speaking to the students on feedback about it, they were very negative. Negative about for example the one approach I got from them, it might be accurate or inaccurate, where they sit for example in a group and then teach each other from the textbook".* Aneke argued the students felt these AL strategies being employed by lecturers with teaching qualifications were "*a waste of time, they'd rather not come to class, that's the basic feeling*", however Aneke was not able to elaborate any more on this point. This feedback from the students has confirmed for Aneke that a teaching qualification may in fact hinder her engagement with the students and their AL challenges. Her standpoint is based on hearsay from the students and perhaps could benefit from some reflection.

Lerato admits to having limited experience as a lecturer thus far, however her family background is one that was infused with the value of education, having a parent who is a teacher. In contrast to both the previous Lecturers, Lerato perceived a teaching qualification to be beneficial to Lecturers and posits "*I think it [a teaching qualification] is very important, personally it is one of the things I'm aiming on getting at some point in the next two to three years"*. Lerato's perception contested those of Aneke and argued that Lecturers with a teaching qualification "*are able to address it [lecturing] in a different way, compared to somebody who just has teaching experience*". Despite this assertion Lerato conceded it is more important for her to do a discipline specific master's degree at this point and would think about a teaching qualification when the master's degree is complete. To elaborate on this point Lerato claims "*right now I am getting support in terms of Lerato's development*" and explained that this support comes from the institution and takes the form of "*using different teaching methods in terms of the new structure that we want to put into place of building a more accountability angle from the students*". Lerato explained she would probably consider a PGCE but wouldn't "*go as far as a post graduate diploma*" in Higher Education. Thus, she indicated a preference for the well-respected PGCE, a level 6 on the NQF, rather than the second

option offered by the institution, a Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education, a level 8 on the NQF. Lerato professes that she would like to "*lay the foundation of what it is to be not just a lecturer more of a teacher*". This statement demonstrates a perception that a lecturer is not a teacher, even though a criterion is to transfer knowledge. Her perception of the need for Lecturers to obtain a teaching qualification was in contrast to Lecturers A, B and E and could provide valuable insights into this theme, particularly as she is a less experienced Lecturer and perhaps more open to the institution encouraging teaching qualifications for its Lecturers.

Similar to Lerato, Kavita has only been lecturing for a short time. When asked about the possibilities of a formal teaching qualification to add to her lecturing practice she was initially unsure of her views, but as she reflected on the question a narrative emerged. Kavita argued that while a teaching qualification may be "*a basic foundation but I feel like we change things so quickly, like last year everything was about online learning and next year everything is about self-directed learning*". While Kavita has a point about the changing trends in education, the same point of view could be applied to any discipline, for instance; should we study Business Management, Marketing or Public Relations when there are new trends, developments or changes taking place every day? To further rationalise this perspective Kavita argues "*I think for teaching it's all about the experiences and the way you interact with students, I don't think it is so much the qualification*." However, Kavita concedes she may be wrong "*because I don't really know what a teaching qualification entails*." I would surmise that the lack of knowledge regarding teaching qualifications acknowledged by Kavita is a common thread amongst Michael, Aneke, Lerato and Kavita when considering some of the perspectives expressed in their interviews. These perspectives could be placed on a continuum moving from a flat 'I wouldn't be interested to study education' to 'I may possibly be interested in the future'" There was modesty shown by both Lecturers' D and E in admitting that the perspectives they expressed came from a position of 'we don't know what we don't know.'

Natalie is the only participant who has a teaching qualification, a PGCE. Her undergraduate qualifications were not related to education but are in a teaching subject. Natalie has worked as a teacher in schools and is now lecturing Education students. Besides being a Lecturer and having a qualification in education she has knowledge of both the school environment and the HE environment. Her perception

of Lecturers having a qualification in education comes from the standpoint of an educational qualification for Lecturers being "*very, very important, even something as basic as a PGCE*." Natalie argues that an education qualification is important for Lecturers and teachers because education "*is constantly developing and changing*". This standpoint is in direct contrast to Kavita's argument that constant change is a reason not to study education. Whilst Kavita admits this perspective comes from a point of not knowing what studying education entails, we know that Natalie's perspective comes from a standpoint of understanding what studying teaching entails. The contrast in Natalie's standpoint compared to other participants results in some valuable insights, in particular that Lecturers may not be aware of the benefits of a teaching qualification.

Natalie argues that Lecturers without a qualification in education "o*ften don't know the structure of a lesson, how to introduce a topic, to create a link with the previous topic, what key questions to ask, how to introduce them (students) to knowledge*". In conjunction with this she touches on other key teaching and learning practices that teachers learn to employ.

Natalie is very aware of the resistance towards studying education from Lecturers who lecture in other disciplines; she mentions a Lecturer in the Bachelor of Commerce space who hold a master's degree in their discipline at NQF level 9 in their discipline feel affronted when asked to do a PGCE at NQF level 6. This is a valuable insight as it submits that a lecturer who holds a master's degree or higher considers it beneath their current academic status to study at a lower level. The assumption appears to be that this would be a waste of their time and offer no benefit to them. Natalie claims subject matter experts react to the suggestion of studying education as a criticism of their current lecturing practice and by doing so are relegating their current qualification and saying, "*it is worth nothing*." Natalie reveals an incident with a marketing lecturer in which the marketing Lerato declared she was too busy "*to do all that stuff*". Natalie uses another example of a peer review quality assurance process in place at the HEI she lectures at and challenges the efficacy of such short-term initiatives claiming, "*some Lecturers are very resistant to this type of assistance and guidance and they will often stay and listen to what you've got and then revert back to their old ways*." The rationale behind the resistance to studying education is complex and the result of not just one factor but multiple factors.

Natalie points out the practice of another private tertiary institution in South Africa she has worked for which has partnered with an institution offering teaching qualifications to train their Lecturers. This example reiterates that the trend for Lecturers to have teaching qualifications is not only international but being embraced by HE in South Africa.

The above perceptions of the Lecturers articulate a significant amount of resistance from the participants in this regard. I am confident that at some time in the future an educational qualification will be instituted for Lecturers, either compulsory, or as a strong preference, in line with international trends. I acknowledge this because I am of a similar mind set to Natalie, in that I believe a teaching qualification will substantially improve the teaching and learning practices of Lecturers and thus assist them in their role of overcoming the AL challenges of students. SACE (2011), Burns (2012) and Hénard & Roseveare (2012), when calling for an educational qualification for Lecturers make a compelling argument and consider the role of teachers in HE is changing, and they require strong pedagogical skills to transmit knowledge; "universities should change and reconfigure themselves to produce the type of graduates the economy requires and help make the South African economy more competitive in this new globalisation era" (Reddy, 2004). Finally, when it comes to the neoliberalist sentiment, massification, productisation and globalisation of education, where the qualification is the product and the consumers are the students, the consumers will simply demand the Lecturers have qualifications (Burns, 2012).

5.5 Chapter Summary

When starting out in a new discipline, students need to obtain a variety of abilities. These abilities are characterised by AL, it is widely recognised that AL is required for a student to perform successfully in tertiary education and is particularly important in second language environments (like South Africa), Wingate (2015). From the interviews the lecturers were clear in their perceptions of their role in the AL of first year students. However, the lecturers' ways of addressing AL was often varied and at other times were remarkably similar. The approach to AL, their students and their role in the AL of students were complex, sometimes contradictory, yet always unique. The individual narratives illustrated the interplay between the identity of the lecturer and

their journey in education and the approach they adopt towards the AL of their first-year students. The following chapter summarises the findings of this study.

Chapter 6

Summary of findings and beyond

6.1. Introduction

The overriding purpose of this study was to investigate the lecturers' perceptions of their role in the AL challenges of first year students at an institute of higher education. In addition to this it was important to understand the lecturer's approaches to AL challenges and their perceptions of their students' identities. Finally, the purpose of this study is to understand lecturer's perceptions with regard to pursuing an additional qualification or training specifically in Education to better equip them to understand the AL challenges of their students.

Taking into consideration the motivation behind this study the main research question is: How do lecturers perceive their role and the challenges of first year students in AL? To address this question the research focused on three sub questions:

a) How do lecturers describe the AL challenges in their disciplines when considering the academic success of first year students?

b) Have lecturers identified any possible strategies for addressing the challenges in academic literacy their students face?

c) What are lecturers' perceptions on furthering their studies or participating in education-specific training, to further assist first year students with their academic challenges?

As discussed in previous chapters, there is a dearth of information that specifically investigates lecturers' perceptions of their roles in promoting AL in their students within the context of their disciplines and how they address AL challenges. My experiences of this problem motivated me to explore and unpack the conceptualisations of academic literacy in my teaching context. Whereas much of the research available focuses on either the students or the efficacy of interventions themselves, less focus has been given to the lecturers' perceptions of current and possible strategies. This study has afforded me the opportunity to gain insights into the lecturers' perception of their role in the AL of their first-year students by understanding their approach to AL

challenges in their disciplines, the teaching strategies they employ in the classroom, and their openness to further education specific qualifications or training.

In terms of its framing, the study used the academic literacies model theoretical framework reasoned by Lea and Street (1998). Narrative analysis was chosen as an analytical framework and method of gathering rich phenomenographic data on the lecturer's perception on their role in AL. Considering the data was collected through narrative analysis it was important to be very particular when choosing the themes as many possibilities presented in the data. Of particular importance in narrative analysis is the social construction of identity (Rosenweld and Ochburg, 1992). This method integrated well with the AL framework of Lea and Street (1998) who consider identities of the student, lecturers and institutions in their approach.

A summary of the findings of this study is presented in this final chapter, in relation to the research questions defined in chapter 1. A discussion of the significance of this study both internationally and in South Africa, will follow. Following this discussion, the limitations of the study and its implications will be deliberated. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research, emphasising the need for further research into lecturer's perceptions of their roles in the AL of their first-year students.

6.2 Summary of findings

One of the major findings of this research was that while lecturers spoke freely about the generational identities of the students very little was said, except by Natalie, of the diverse socio-cultural identities of the students as well as the impact of English as a second language for the majority of the students. While we know lecturers are aware of the linguistic and socio-cultural diversity of the students it was not addressed (except by Natalie) in their narratives on the subject of AL. This unconsciously leads to a monolinguistic approach being adopted towards the students' AL challenges, and Yeld (2013) asserts such an approach to AL is damaging in a multilingual society. Not only in South Africa but globally there is a shift "from an elite to a mass higher education system where there is greater cultural, linguistic and social diversity than in the past" (Lillis, 2003) and this should be addressed in any conversation around academic literacy. The recognising of the socio-cultural and linguistic identity of both the student and Lecturers are essential in an AL intervention (Lea and Street, 1998 & Coffin, 2012)

The generational differences mentioned by the lecturers appeared to be a frustration and the lecturers felt the students' approach and attitude towards AL in mastering the content was to blame for their lack of success. The generational differences are a valid point that has been researched in depth, and millennials perceive "that school is boring and largely irrelevant for life outside school" (Considine, Horton and Moran, 2009, p.473), which may account for the phenomenon that lecturers are experiencing. Considine, Horton and Moran (2009, p.475) suggest lecturers should ask the question, "How can we as educators develop the critical and academic literacy skills that are the foundation for success both in and out of school?" The lecturers' frustration with the students' attitude towards education, leads to a remedial approach to AL which inadvertently puts the blame firmly on the shoulders of the students which is not constructive, however it is equally not constructive to blame the lecturer, as most lecturers are not trained teachers (Biggs, 1999), but these two factors together lead to the lecturers recommending generic interventions led by the institution. However, it is important to remember that in the status quo lecturers are not required to engage with the academic literacy of their students, as part of their role. (Wingate, 2015). While there was evidence in these findings of lecturers conducting some AL interventions in the classroom, it would be true to say of this study that "many lecturers may do this [AL] to some extent, and I assume rather implicitly, there is no systematic and consistent support" (Wingate, 2015, p.3).

AL challenges were often described by the lecturers in terms of grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure, suggesting a misunderstanding of the differences between language and literacy. Lea and Street (1998) argue that lecturers often attribute weak performance of students to grammar, sentence structure and other surface features of language and are often unable to recognise the students' fundamental literacy problems. Lillis and Scott (2007) refer to this as 'textual bias', where language and writing is viewed as a 'linguistic object'. This misunderstanding can lead to the lecturers' misperceptions of the fundamental AL and learning needs of the students and that AL is external to the disciplines. Therefore, AL is not considered within the context that it is created and consumed (Wingate, 2015). The surface features or the 'textual bias' approach to AL is what leads lecturers to believe that AL is the responsibility of the institution, in particular the writing centre, the tutors, the academic team, Project Borderline (one on ones), none of which has privilege of practice over

text. Colvin and Ashman (2010) acknowledge that tutoring relationships are not exempt from negative perceptions by students, who may consider it a deficit intervention or may see the inherent power relations embedded in the tutor / tutee relationship. The student's resistance to normative AL interventions has been well documented by Bury and Sheese (2016) and these perceptions can result in resistance from the students who most need the intervention.

Once lecturers have an understanding of academic literacies of academic literacy practice or discourse deeply embedded in the context within which it is located, they will be more likely to recognise the fundamental literacy problems of the student and be less likely to advocate AL programs driven by the institution such as separate modules, bridging courses or writing centres, often referred to as WAC initiatives (Russel, Lea, Parker, Street and Donahue, 2009) These add-on, generic intervention have been perceived as the answer to students AL challenges for more than twenty-five years but have proved to be of little effect. In an academic literacies approach "practice is privileged above text" (Lillis and Scott, 2007, p.10).

When considering the literature, the links between the diversity of the first-year students in the South African context with its history of inequalities and AL are undeniable. Boughey and McKenna (2016) propose a connection between the #feesmustfall campaign and the call for decolonisation are linked to AL challenges in HE. They clarify further by explaining what these protests have to do with AL "we argue that, depending on the understanding of literacy one adopts, they have a great deal to do with the mastery of a 'way of being' required of students as they engage with higher education, which in turn are part of how the protests can be understood" (Boughey and McKenna, 2016). A transformative pedagogy such as Lea and Street's (1998) academic literacies model, challenges the neutrality of language and takes "language firmly into the domain of the social where structures such as class, gender and race intersect each other and intersect in turn with other social structures such as disciplinary norms and institutional culture" (Boughey and McKenna, 2016).

In considering Geyser and Gravett (2004) and Van der Slik and Weideman's (2007) argument that lecturers can no longer ignore the AL challenges of their students, it is important that lecturers equip themselves with the skills to enable them to take on a

proactive role in the AL of students in the context of their discipline. The findings suggest the implementation of this will require a mind-set change from the lecturers, as currently it is not a formal requirement of their teaching and research role. This would mean that lecturer training and development of some kind should take place. Recently there has been a call for lecturers to complete a qualification in education to be able to better assist students not only in their AL challenges but to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning (SACE, 2010). In countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia such initiatives are being implemented. The findings of this study showed that generally the lecturers had a negative response to doing an additional qualification in education (with the exception of Natalie, who already has a PGCE and Lerato who would maybe consider undertaking one after completing another degree in her discipline). There was a strong sense that the lecturers as a whole do not identify as teachers, but rather professional specialists. Of interest was that some lecturers consider an education qualification that is of lower status on the NQF framework than their highest qualification unappealing as an option. A second option would be further training, workshops and continuous lecturer development particularly focused on the AL of students in the classroom, however institutional and lecturer buy in as well as a mind-set change is required for these to be successful (Bury and Sheese, 2016) On the whole the lecturers interviewed were more open to short training courses and workshops as this required less commitment.

Reflecting on these findings holistically it seems clear that while there is significant concern for the AL challenges of first year students, there is currently no consistency in lecturers' perceptions of the problem, what is expected of them and pedagogical strategies for dealing with the problem. There is a strong need for lecturer training to be comfortable approaching discipline specific AL in their classrooms and embedding the development of AL in their teaching practice. "The first step would be staff training which helps lecturers understand the complexity of academic literacy and their role in students' acquisition of it" (Wingate, 2015, p.5).

6.3. Significance and Implications of the Study

This study is significant as there is a dearth of information on the experiences, thoughts and perceptions of lecturers and their understanding of the role they play in the first-year students' academic literacy. The methodology: phenomenography and narrative

analysis have allowed for high quality, descriptive and nuanced data reflecting the unique identities of the lecturers and their perceptions that are individually unique, yet at the same time similar, thus making the findings of this study a valuable contribution to the field of HE. The experiences, perceptions and thought elicited from the lecturers give us a window into the minds of five lecturers and an opportunity to understand their worldview and their AL teaching practice.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

A possible limitation is that the data for this study was collected at a private institute of higher education, which is a different environment from a public institution in that it is smaller, and it is less research focussed. The value proposition of the college is to prepare the students for work, more individual attention and smaller classes (Independent Institute of Education, 2018). This context and frame of reference may result in the perceptions of the lecturers being influenced by the culture of the institution they work for. A second limitation may be the limited scope of the study which was conducted for a Master's in Education with Course Work and therefore data were collected at one HEI. In this phenomenographic research I cannot claim universal truth however, I can claim I have contributed something valuable to HE.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

This study highlighted the study skills model as an intervention for AL is still favoured by lecturers and while many institutional initiatives are proactively being put in place they tend to be in the form of normative approaches that do not fall within the realms of the transformative academic literacies approach advocated by Lea and Street (1998), Lillis (2015) and Boughey and McKenna (2016). If further advances in the treatment of AL in tertiary education are to be made through a movement towards embedded or contextualised AL, further research is crucial to ascertain how successful they are in promoting disciplinary learning. In addition, this phenomenographic research has produced data in the form of the narratives from the lecturers that is very rich and detailed and shows considerable insights into the subject and builds a strong foundation for more research to be conducted in this area. I would like to use the findings of this research as a springboard to do a further research project at Ph.D. level.

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Appendix A: Letter to principal
30/10/2017

Dear David McConnell

My name is Jane Pinnoy, I am a lecturer at Varsity College Waterfall.

I am doing research on the **'Lecturer's perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Higher Education'**

I will be audio recording unstructured interviews with five lecturers of first year students. The length of these interviews will be approximately 40 minutes. I will coordinate with administration to organise a private room on campus to conduct these interviews.

The reason why I have chosen your campus is because it is convenient to me as I work as a lecturer here and I am inviting lecturers from your campus to participate in this research.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

I have attached my ethical clearance from the University of Witwatersrand as well as my clearance by the IIE. Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Pinnoy

30 The Carriage Gate

10 Riley Road

Bedfordview

jane@strappini.co.za

0828820554

Appendix B: Information sheet: Lecturers
2017/02/01

Dear Lecturer

My name is Jane Pinnoy and I am a student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on the '**Lecturer's perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Higher Education'**

I will be audio recording unstructured interviews with five lecturers of first year students. The length of these interviews will be approximately 40 minutes. I will coordinate with administration to organise a private room on campus to conduct these interviews.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because I am a Lecturer at Varsity College Waterfall Campus.

Your name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Your participation is voluntary, so you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and you will not be paid for this study.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Pinnoy

30 The Carriage Gate

10 Riley road

Bedfordview

jane@strappini.co.za

0828820554

Appendix C: Lecturer's Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

Lecturer's perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Higher Education'

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to review/collect documents/artefacts	**Circle one**
I agree that (SPECIFY DOCUMENT) can be used for this study only.	YES/NO
Permission to be audiotaped	
I agree to be audiotaped during the interview or observation lesson	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO
Permission to be interviewed	
I would like to be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

Appendix D: Interview guidelines for unstructured interviews33

Interview guidelines for unstructured interviews

Jane Pinnoy

Student Number: 1542591

Lecturers' perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Higher Education

Interview guideline for unstructured interviews:

The questions below are more guidelines or prompts to steer the interview and make sure the correct data is collected and the research question is addressed during the interview:

Introduction of the topic and main questions as above.

Background:

Encouraging the lecturer to build a narrative by reflecting and discussing:

- their cultural, socio-historic background / experiences and their own educational background,
- their particular discipline and qualifications
- their career trajectory, leading to how they started lecturing and how much experience they have lecturing.
- Their perceptions about their professional responsibilities to VC

Questions:

1. Reflecting on your background in education from school until now, what stands out to you?
2. Were you teaching or being educated in the Apartheid Era?
3. Did you get your qualifications when you left school, or did you acquire them later in life, if so at what time of your life did you acquire your qualifications?
4. What was your career path, was it always in education, if not how did you get to where you are now?
5. How do you perceive the scope of your professional responsibilities at VC currently?
6. What disciplines do you lecture first year students in?

Lecturers' perceptions on the academic preparedness of first year students

1. How do you feel about schools preparing students to enter tertiary institutions?
    a. In what ways are they prepared?
    b. In what ways aren't they prepared?
2. What challenges are you finding with first year students in your discipline?

3. How do these challenges affect your lecturing of the subject?
4. What strategies, qualities or resources do first year students bring to the classroom with them?
5. If you had to reflect on the difference between a strong, prepared student 'Student A' and a weak, underprepared student 'student B'.
6. What positive/ negative aspects do the prepared students bring to class?
7. What positive/ negative aspects do the underprepared students bring to class?
8. How would the maturity of the students play into their success or lack thereof?

Lecturers' perceptions of their role in assisting students to be successful in their discipline.

1. Are there certain areas in your discipline which you consider to be common sense and assume a student will understand?
2. If the students bring certain qualities and resources with them to the classroom, are you able to tap into these qualities and resources as a subject matter expert in your discipline, with both:
    a. student A (strong student)
    b. and student B (weak student).
3. In your role as a subject matter expert and lecturer of student B are you able to identify and address the challenges?
4. If there were no time, financial or other resource constraints, what would you do to address the challenges of student B?
5. Do you think it is your role as a lecturer and subject matter expert to address the challenges experienced by student B?
6. What do you think VC as a college can do to address these challenges?

Lecturers' perceptions on further teachers' training for lecturers either in workshop form, or qualification, for example PGCE and PGDHE etc.

1. Do you currently have a qualification in teaching and if so what qualification do you have?

IF YES

2. If you have a qualification how does this assist you in addressing the needs of both student A and student B
3. Do you think a teaching qualification is beneficial when lecturing first year students?
4. Do you think it is important for lecturers with no teaching qualification to pursue further training in teaching and learning or a qualification?
5. Do you think workshops driven by the institution would be sufficient to fill this gap?

IF NO

1. If you have no teaching qualification as a subject matter expert, do you think it would be easier for you to assist students with their challenges if you had more knowledge of teaching and learning?

2. If you had the time and funds, do you think it would be beneficial to yourself as a lecturer to do a teaching qualification?
3. Do you think you would benefit from teaching and learning training or otherwise teaching and learning workshops for lecturers? Why? Or Why not?

Close of the interview by thanking participant for their support and asking them if they have any further questions they would like to ask regarding the research.

Appendix E:IIE Ethics Clearance Letter

THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

ADvTECH House
Inanda Greens
54 Wierda Rd West
Wierda Valley
2196

P.O. Box 2369
Randburg 2125

Tel: (011) 675 8021
Fax: (011) 782 2674

REF: R3017
Enquiries: research@iie.ac.za
Date: 21 August 2017

REQUEST FOR RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED ON AN IIE SITE/S

Dear Ms Pinnoy

The committee considered the evidence of your application and have approved this request - on condition that you strictly adhere to the conditions stipulated below. This approval is based on the assumption that the information you have provided is true and factually correct. Approval is granted for:

Initial and Surname:	J. Pinnoy
Student number:	Not provided
Institution where registered:	University of the Witwatersrand
Qualification:	Master of Education
Year in which research will be conducted:	2017
Year in which you aim to graduate:	TBC
Supervisor:	Laura Dison
Title of study:	Lecturers' perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Education

Directors: RJ Douglas (UK), JDR Cosch (non executive), A Isaakidis (non executive) **Company Secretary:** D Dickson
The Independent Institute of Education (Pty) Ltd is registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training as a private higher education institution under the Higher Education Act, 1997 (reg. no. 2007/HE07/002). Company registration number: 1987/004764/07.

Appendix F: Ethics Clearance Letter

Interview guidelines for unstructured interviews

Wits School of Education



27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Tel: +27 11 717-3064 Fax: +27 11 717-3100 E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za Website: www.wits.ac.za

01 August 2017

Student Number: 1542591

Protocol Number: 2017ECE013M

Dear Jane Pinnoy

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate, has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Lecturers' perceptions of their role in addressing academic literacy challenges faced by first-year students at a Johannesburg Institute of Higher Education

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely,

MMabeka

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

cc Supervisor - Dr Thabisile Nkambule and Dr Laura Dison

Appendix G: Interview Transcript Michael

Researcher	Michael
First, I would like to ask you a little bit about your background, if you reflect on your background in education from school until now, what stands out most for you?	So, my major learning point if I look at it from school until now and education, because of my energy levels that is connected to engagement and the amount of engagement I was able to give really determined what I got out of it. The less engaged I was the less I got out of it, the more engaged I was the more I got out of it from an education point of view.
Are you naturally engaged?	It depends if I am interested or not, interest determines my engagement if I am interested in the topic, the subject matter. I found later on when I did my later degrees when I had more idea of what I was interested in I excelled, because my level of engagement was a lot higher.
And how was that different from school, where you had a variety of subjects?	In the context of school this was something I was forced to do, not something that I would have necessarily chosen to do, because school is school we all have to go to school, what got me engaged was not necessarily the tuition or the curriculum but the add on, the sport and the interactions and relationships, so for me that brought my energy and then my energy was available and I used that for certain subjects that I was interested in, if that makes sense. I wasn't a top A student at school at all I was more there for the sport, I didn't fail, but was very mediocre. So, my energy was channelled into the other things I could get because of school but knowing also that I had to pass school. But there were certain subjects that I was better in than others, I was not good at Maths, I was not good at Science, I failed it and ended up dropping it in Standard 8 because it pulled my average down, so I did the business subjects, the accounting, the geographies, the Biologies, English, Afrikaans etc.
So, would it be correct to say that you have also experienced subjects where you haven't excelled?	Absolutely!
How does this affect you having empathy for underprepared students?	Absolutely, I know the importance of a lecturer or teacher and their ability to take a subject in which I was not interested and frame it in a different way to create an interest and for the purpose of being engaged. I do believe a teacher has a massive responsibility in order to take a subject that you might not be good at and frame it in a way that you can still engage and still pass or excel in the thing, specifically in your numbers modules, the stats, the science, the maths and stuff like that, I do believe in those subjects , because they come across as dry, you either get

	it or you don't, what's the purpose of doing this, when you do get it and it's not dry and you can excel at it. I believe lecturers have a responsibility to package it in a way that is malleable to all students. Because, I do believe these are core disciplines. If I was approached in those ways for maths and science and numbers I believe I would have been able to do those things. But it was always as if I failed to get it and therefore I wasn't good at it, if I get it and I understand it I can marshal the energy because I am engaged.
So, am I right in saying that you are suggesting that something was lacking in the school system for you to excel in the subjects that you feel you otherwise could have?	Absolutely, if you look at…. and this was then when I was at school and I matriculated in 1991, so it is a long time ago, but for me that maths and science system was geared to weed out the people that couldn't do it and focus on those that proved they could. So, a lot of the resources were channelled at the guys who did best in class and at rechannelling those that couldn't towards other modules or subjects. Whereas if I had stuck to it with the right person with the patience to figure out how I needed to receive the content based on ME, I would have been able to do that up until Matric, but I didn't and that came back to haunt me a little bit later, when I did my MBA, then suddenly I had to do maths heavy subjects and I had to learn it from scratch.
And how did that go?	It went very well because now I understood the purpose of those things and I was more engaged and I passed stats MBA, masters level, I passed some of the research methodology modules where statistical analysis was required and financial management which was mathematical, all the calculations, I dropped that in Standard 8, I didn't do that to Matric.
So as soon as you realised what the purpose of it was…...	Ja, then I could marshal my resources and irrespective of being uncomfortable, because I knew it was a huge leap, I was still motivated to get it done, because I knew I wouldn't graduate with an MBA without it and the narrative was guys this is one of your modules , we have to get it in order to get the package, there's a way to do it, you don't have to become mathematical professors, but there are certain core things you have to get from this, suck it up let's do it, I'll show you to do it, I'll show you how, you know, just that walking with you and knowing that ok, fine, I can do this, we can do this, if you are engaged I'm engaged. The Financial Management professor, brilliant, obviously he was light years ahead of all of us but understood what we needed for the course and how we could receive it and that it was possible, even though you didn't have it up until Matric.
You graduated your Matric in 1991, so that means you matriculated in	I went to a co-ed school, it was called model C, I think then, it was a school that was still separated, if that makes sense,

the apartheid regime, so what type of a school did you go to during that period?	it was still in apartheid, there were no other groups besides white groups in my school. It was a few years after that when the school system opened up and became more diverse.
So, your experience in school did influence you views on education moving forward?	Absolutely!
In the ways you just described? Or were there any other ways at all?	In the ways I described, I'm thinking about, I was fortunate to have a life changing couple of years, that was just my fortune, then the changes were perceived as curses really, but I realised they were blessings after the fact, and I had to make certain changes about fifteen years ago. I was a different animal to the one that matriculated. So, I went into the academic sphere for a second time after having come out of it the first time, so first time I started in 1991, graduated in 1995, alright? Finished my first degree, first degree was a law degree, also still mediocre, I carried the mediocrity into my first degree which was still sport heavy, I was there on a bursary and it was like just getting through it, I was half applied, not fully applied to my studies. The varsity system then was just number, no real engagement, big classes, public universities, you get on with it or you fail, so I never failed but, I never really excelled, I got more than 60% but was a mediocre student. However, the three-year degree took me 5 years to get, if that makes sense, so that was the type of person I was when I went into industry, did my thing, then had my life changing moment and realised what I needed to be in order to get the life I wanted, went back to university having transformed through that period, a different person. The second degree and the third degree, totally different, from an academic experience.
And which degrees were these?	That was my LLB and the MBA, where I realised what I needed to bring in order to get the most from what the lecturers were bringing., so there was this joint…, I realised my responsibility in the process and it was a massive responsibility, previously you just sat and were a receiver, the quid pro quo for me was getting this.
And the second time, was that studying part time?	Unisa was part time, absolutely, I was more mature then, more of an adult I could then study on my own which I did, but still engaged with groups and still engaged with the lecturer on and then the MBA was also part time. For me, the change in experience was the maturity to know what was expected of me and what is my responsibility and where I fit into the academic equation, and what I need to do to pass this subject, because it is my degree and not the lecturer's and that for me was a paradigm shift, I then channelled engaged and then I excelled.

And that paradigm shift that you had while you were there, how are you able to bring that to class?	As a lecturer?
Yes	I love having this conversation with my students because I like to teach them what I learned through that period, it can only be done successfully with a joint and common purpose, not only as a lecturer, but also the student, but the challenge is maturity levels, because I cannot presume my learnings at my maturity level; when I learnt them, I was in my 30's and then. Whether a student that is 19/20 is able to truly take them on board, so sometimes I feel it is words and some of them are landing for some of the people, but not all of the people. Because for me it landed not only because of the words, but because it was coupled with an experience and that life changing experience made the words mean something and have effect or have power.
So, your maturity, your shift in paradigm, all of that, to bring that to a 19-year-old?	It's very tough, because generally 19-year olds learn the way I learnt as a nineteen-year-old, how do we learn, well we must feel, immature people don't really learn by listening, but they have to learn by feeling. Sometimes you learn what a subject requires by first feeling the feeling of failing the subject, then coming back and realising, sweet lord, I've got to do THIS in order to pass this subject…. and that was the animal I was, I know I am generalising but not everyone is like that, but some people do take just me teaching you on what I've learned on board. But I feel many students need to go through experience and the lesson of it and need to know what a subject demand of me by not bringing it in the first place and having failed it.
What did you work at before you decide to go back and study, where you feel you were more successful the second time?	I was in the working environment which also plays a very important role, because now you realise the true standards in industry and what is expected of you and the value of knowledge and the value of degrees and how society treats you differently when you have your papers, that to me was also a driving force, going back the second time and knowing I want this thing because this is truly a stepping stone, not only in word, but also in deed, because I've been there. But for students it is in word they haven't been in industry yet, so they don't know or feel, when you say, 'guys this is going to change your life', because their life is still unchanged they are still studying it. So, I often have that chat about papers and what it does for you personally and what it does for you professionally. Papers being a degree, what it does for you in industry depending on what your vocation is. It truly changes your life or has the power to change your life.
And you experienced that?	My thing is I try and give that to my students in a pep talk, at the beginning or during exam period, whether I frame it

	as pathway to where module monsters are just modules for now, some of them you are going to love, some of them you are going to hate, but if you want to change the reality you are going to need them. We collect them first year, and we count them and weigh them, we collect them third year and we count them and weigh them; one of the years you are going to collect them and weigh them, and you are going to have enough to qualify for a degree. So, the long game, we need to play the long game, in other words we are just collecting credits, right let's go.
And what brought you down the path to be a lecturer, you studied when you left school, there was a time of working and then you went back and studied part time, how did this bring you to lecturing?	It was the second time and it was the part time law degree, through Unisa, with no direct contact with lecturers , but indirect contact online and then having to teach myself, because I need to be taught, so I taught myself, so what I did was I made audios and I went through a little bit of a ritual every night teaching myself the content and I enjoyed the feeling I felt when I felt I had mastered it and was teaching myself in that way. And that to me, I knew I somewhere somehow would be in some form of instruction or teaching, facilitating and another thing as well was when I was in financial services industry, also a highly technical field, lot of knowledge, and being in marketing and to convey that information to the brokers, financial advisors and accountants and, and, and I had to sometimes take complex terms and make it user friendly for the lay man, I enjoyed that process.
In the scope of your professional responsibilities at VC currently, how do you perceive those? If you had to reflect on your professional responsibilities at VC what comes to mind?	My responsibilities are lecturing and academic support, from a lecturing point of view I really feel that all of us are constantly working towards a sweet spot , how we configure our days, how we configure our modules, some modules you don't always get to choose , some of them might not be the ones you want or would choose in the first place, obviously this is a work in progress, so from a lecturing point of view I'm loving it and I really enjoy my students, but constantly tweaking the business model to make sure that it works. Am I in the area where I am strong, am I moving to areas where I am strong. From an academic support point of view that is something challenging although I love it because you get to see the student in front of you, the calibre of the students and that answers some of the questions as to what you think is lacking from the competencies and capabilities of students. And I know what we need as a minimum standard in order to pass, so the academic support kind of raises those issues.
What disciplines do you lecture in, just first years? Let's talk about first year.	First year? So, first year consists of a lot of introductory modules, so you are looking at Introduction to the Fundamentals of Law, which is just rudimentary, what is our legal system built on? What are the classifications of law, what are the sources of law, the constitution, and

	stuff like that. I enjoy that. But I'm lecturing first year more for the connection than the module, being the ability to connect with that student at the beginning of their journey to translate some of this information that I am sharing with you now to them and build a bit of a mentoring relationship with some of the students, to be able to walk through. We actually learnt something on this campus last year that from a load point of view, obviously first year students have a higher load, so I did not lecture a first-year student in my second semester and I felt that I lost a bit of connection with the group. So, I have to take on first year modules in order for the connection to remain. Because there is a softer side to the relationship where students need affirmation they need to be walked with, they need to be guided, directed and influenced which I believe I do.
What do you see as the nature of learning in your discipline, so you mentioned before figures, is it a pure study subject, is it concepts?	It is a study subject, which, the law answers questions when you are in an adversarial system where the winner takes all, he who wins the argument wins everything. Depending on what dispute resolution you are going for whether its facilitation, arbitration, mediation, negotiation or litigation so those are the different ways we can solve problems, but, ultimately problems are solved by providing the most suitable answers to questions. So, it's a question and it's an answer, but the material comes in bulk so it's the ability to develop the techniques to be able to extract questions to which the theory provides the answers and then contextualise it. The contextualisation is by reference to a set of facts, so we deal with real life problems which is the set of facts.so it is to try and weave or mould the context of the set of facts around the theory to give people that practical application. Johnny meets sue in the parking lot, he sells his cell phone to her for R100, is there a valid contract would be the question.
What you are saying is applying a set amount of laws or rules to a variety of different contexts?	Absolutely, so the nature there is get to the bulk, take the bulk, take the explanations, the reasons why out and formulate questions and answers. This is the question, this is the answer, and then be able to apply it to a set of facts and the more we get up to the different years, first year, second year, third year, fourth year on an LLB is the ability to synthesize and translate bulk into answers to questions which you know facts will pose. So, for example, is there a valid contract in the context of Johnny and Susie in the parking lot, the context demands the question, is there a valid contract? The theory provides the answer. So, it's a dynamic theory base, because the theory is constantly wound around a different set of facts. So just because the theory is the same the outcome might not be the same. It's to think like that, if you are not comfortable in that

	ambiguous environment, because I'm telling a student, ok, these are the rules, but the outcome might not be the same in every circumstance. So, to hear me interpret that the rules might be different in every circumstance, but it's not. The rules stay the same, the situations differ, and that is the nature of law.
In your time at Varsity college and as a lecturer what do you see yourself spending your time doing, or what would you like to see you have done with your time here as a lecturer going forward?	For me, lecturing I'm passionate about, I'm passionate about being with the students, that's really, I know that there is greater demand for an administrative system that manages your relationship with your student, as students are becoming more demanding, your time is less direct face to face lecturing the class it is coupled with online systems, administrative systems , ok, so I am feeling a little bit challenged in the management of the student relationship from a system point of view and then just lecturing. So, I can tell someone yes, your responsibilities are, you are a lecturer, I love standing up there for two hours doing my thing, but that doesn't complete the circle, there is a heavy administrative load and that load is something that needs to be managed. So, for me, as you know, it's a one size fits all package deal, so for me I am finding my interest and my passion lies in the actual connecting, lecturing, and I'm not so on fire for the administration that has to support it. But because the students are in need of those touch points whether it's the form of technology you are using or what resource you are using and a variety, students want variety each one wants to engage in his own little way with the material and the system has to provide that the management of that system can sometimes be overbearing. But it is a requirement of the job I suppose.
If you had to reflect on your lecturing style how would you describe that?	I would say collaborative, engaging, I would say disciplined, I would say democratic absolutely, collaborative, I would say strategic absolutely. I have an outcome in mind and I like to get everyone on board up front and take them on a journey, firm and fair as well. I understand that there is a power differential between a Lecturer and a student and that comes from school, first years bring that in from school, all powerful teacher and a powerless student and that I try to balance straight away. I try to really treat people like adults, initially, I don't set arbitrary rules for these people as these can be demeaning, as long as there is respect, I respect you, you respect me. But I try and get them so that there is no power differential, but there is responsibility, in other words I'm not higher than you, I'm not better than you, but I do have a responsibility to control the class for the benefit of the class, not because I'm better. Because it's a transaction, people will only engage in that transaction if they are receiving something that makes them feel good

	and then they are prepared to give, you cannot study law on one track, you have to have that question that engages with the facts to make these people comfortable.
I just want to go back a bit, just to your actual qualifications if you can just let me know what they are.	So, it's a B. Juris, is a law degree it's an LLB which is an honours law degree, it's a Post Graduate Certificate in Legal Practice and it's a Master's in business Administration.
We are going to talk a little bit more about the students now, in your discipline are their parts of it, as an attorney you feel are common sense, or that students should understand, from the beginning, are there any areas……	No, I like to embark on a blank canvas, I don't have any presumed knowledge, I don't presume students know anything about law, because law is a specialised field, rules are different, I do know that people have had experience with rules just growing up, they also come from a school system with rules. The students don't always know the difference between rules and laws. What is the difference or between an ethic and a moral, so this is a taught discipline, it is a learned discipline, it cannot be learned unless it is taught and either its taught through face to face or through manual guides, but I don't believe you will get the full understanding unless things are questioned, unless people provide answers to questions and there is that level of engagement.
Do you think the first-year students come in with preconceptions about law?	Absolutely and that comes from TV, some people watch these law programs and law movies and they don't know the distinction between the different legal systems around the world, so they would automatically repeat what they have heard, or what they think about what they heard or what they saw or what they perceived and that is good, that creates a good story, it really does, it creates a good class vibe. Because then you can let people engage with what it really is, then they normally give their 5 cents worth because they may have been labouring under that misconception for a period of time
And if it is a misconception how do you go about turning that around?	It's interesting because I like to try and get the set of facts and you try and play on fairness, that's what I like to do, put ourselves in the position of the problem and then how would we feel the best way is. And it is not always the legal way, so we ask the question Why? What are the interests we think are being served by this solution as opposed to that solution, so it's not really who was right and who was wrong which answer was righter or more wrong? What is the purpose of the law what is the reason in this circumstance for the law.
Is it easy to then change the student's perceptions?	Lights come on for things, for example I'll give you an example, many people have a look at crime and I like to pose this question what is the solution to crime? 'Bring back the death penalty', why, this place has the death penalty and that place has the death penalty. But there is a specific reason why we don't have the death penalty,

	that makes the death penalty in our country unpalatable, but what is that reason? But if you don't know the reason, you may say the death penalty may fit because we have a crime problem. Other countries have it, so why don't we have it. People are quite passionate when they say bring back the death penalty and they will stand by it until they actually understand the reason why we don't have it and why its linked to our constitution and if the death penalty must have a purpose it is to reduce crime. What happens if we know it's not reducing crime? Are we just killing people for the sake of killing people? Then people change their minds or views.
So, you challenge their conceptions in a way they can understand?	We can't just kill people for the sake of killing people that doesn't even feel right and that's what we would be doing. So, we try and provide reasons and get them to engage with it.
Are their certain qualities and resources that you feel the first-year students bring to the classroom with them when they arrive in the classroom on the first day?	It is the preconceptions, it is sometimes a blank canvas, because there is always argument. It is also relative, because the rules and applications change per scenario its based-on argument. So, it is to encourage people to formulate an argument.
Are you able to tap into that, you actually touched on it previously, how you were able to tap into their perceptions of law from TV? Are you able to tap into the resources they bring from school, from a more academic point of view, at all?	I'm not sure what you mean by school resources?
The way they arrive in your classroom, a lot of the time they come from Matric and into tertiary education and there might be different circumstances, but when they arrive in your classroom, do they have resources to be able to take on tertiary education?	Well the resources I know they will need, the skills they need are reading, writing, it's engaging, attention, it's communicating, and some students come with a varied set of those skills, or a varied configuration of those skills. Some people arrive very weak in those areas, some people arrive stronger in those areas. Some people speak more than others, some people perform better than others, initially and it's a reflection of what they arrive with, the talents and skills.
Are you able to tap into that in your subject, in first year, tap into those resources, obviously you will pick up who are the stronger students and who are the weaker students?	I don't know, there is no specific thing for me to tap into, I don't quite know what you are saying?
If we have student A who is a very prepared student and student B who is an underprepared student, in your	You have to adapt your teaching style depending on who you are dealing with and its quite difficult with 60 students, you can't deal with 60 students individually in a

classroom they come with two different sets of needs. How can you work with that, or how do you work with that?	class, but I try and moderate the message at a level where everybody is able to at least understand it. A lot of those mixed resources come in when it comes for them to start doing something. I'm not a big fan of students helping students, specifically in the first year because that's the blind leading the blind in certain circumstances. They are welcome to form their own groups, they can do that, which they do anyway – study groups, but I don't think it's a student's responsibility to help the other students.
So, when you talk about collaborative, you are talking more about you collaborating with them as opposed to them collaborating with each other?	Well it's good to have discussion groups because law is based on argument, argument can be more right or less right or wrong or blatantly not even rational. That's fine if people collaborate and share each other's ideas, when you have a legal team they collaborate amongst themselves to formulate an idea, if you look at first year we have moot court, you have your different guys formulating arguments, so there it is not that necessarily important, whether you are right or you are wrong in your argument, it is that collaboration to be able to formulate ideas and thinking, so we are not questioning the thinking or the right or the wrong of the argument it's just to get people to engage in the argument. But when it comes to examinable material then we need to be very careful, when I'm putting a first-year student in charge of a group as a mentor, because law needs to be unpacked and unpacking is important.
You mentioned before you have a class of about 60 students in first year, student B was the under prepared student how easy is it for you then to identify challenges as well as which students have challenges?	It's not difficult once you have had an assessment, if you have had an assessment and you engage with it, whether it is an assignment or test you can see from a results point of view, our net to catch that right here is results. That is my first opportunity in a class of 60 to see where and who is where and what. Just because someone didn't do well in a test doesn't mean he is lacking in skills, he may just have had a bad assessment. But you can see when you engage one on one and you look at writing style, how you are writing, that is really the conversation you need to have. So, you take your 60 students and then after your first assessment, strictly speaking you need to be able to have a sit down individually with all of them, there is no time for a sit down.
That leads to the next question, you have 60 students it is very difficult to do, but if there were no time, financial or resource constraints, how would you address this?	The reality is a one on one conversation, I could suss that out in 15 minutes. but the reality is I cannot have a direct face to face one on one conversation with 60 students in first year. I probably chat one to one with about 15 or 20 of them in a meeting.
Do you think it is your role as a Lecturer and the subject matter expert to address the challenges of	I think we need to be a conduit I believe we need to be a go between we are a tool in a tool box, but we are not the toolbox. The toolbox I believe is the system that provides the means for the conduit. We have a platform, that

student B, the underprepared student?	platform can address a multitude of issues, some of which are skills shortages, some are the challenges, there are multiple challenges which face our first years and it is not all academic challenges, it's not all writing speaking, it's transport, its finances, there are multiple challenges which affect the learning experience. Some students arrive here in a state because they haven't been admitted onto the campus, they had to be walked to reception and allowed in by security because a bill wasn't paid. That student is going to be less receptive to a message in class, they are sitting there with a special receipt that's allowed them in, so there are multiple challenges. So, we are not there to fix all of them, but I do believe from an academic point of view we are a conduit.
That brings us to my next question very nicely: If we are a tool in the toolbox and Varsity College is the toolbox. What do you think Varsity College can do to address the challenges that an underprepared student faces?	That is a major focus of the academic department working with students they call 'at risk', that is a synonym for challenged, as far as I'm concerned. So, a challenged student, for whatever reason is not quite making the number that is not the total responsibility of the lecturer. A lecturer has the primary responsibility to get through the curriculum for the class, that class has assessments the class needs to be prepared, within that class there are a group of challenged, at risk students, this lecturer has to be very careful as to how he directs his resources because ultimately, he is there to get through the curriculum for the class. Dealing with at risk students is a specific field within that area. The lecturer is best suited to deal with it, but it is not his primary role. why would he be best suited, well because he deals with that student and he knows that students and he really have a touchpoint, but the reality is those challenges might not be subject specific. There may be other things like writing, communicating, aptitude, this needs to be in my view dealt with in a separate department in conjunction with the lecturer, time permitting bearing in mind that he still has an objective to complete the curriculum for the whole class and will have more than one module to do that.
In law there is a jargon and language around law, does this change the way the problem should be dealt with. If this is a law student and this is a marketing student, do we handle them in the same way?	I think most subjects are languages, you just have to pick up the jargon, the vocabulary and work with it the more you deal with it the better you get at it. But fundamentally it is how you interact with the subject matter and people, which for me the rudimentary again, communication, writing, the engaging, the formulating, the understanding of words, concepts, and as far as I know that is valid across multiple fields. The meaning of words, meaning what is described, explain, what is asked of me with those action words.
Are you talking about these words in exams or assessments?	I'm talking about when communicating, explain what you mean, describe that, synthesise this, it's upskilling the

	meaning, what do things mean because law is a language, and everything hinges on meaning the words you use determine the meaning you want people to get and can change everything. It's that level which, if I'm honest also determines pace. You can't rush a language you need to…
So, pace is another area which may challenge under prepared students?	Absolutely, also for prepared students, not only underprepared students. Because the pace at which you have to get through things to get through the curriculum means you are not always able to pick up the language as quick as you need to. Because the level of practice is not as much as you are needing particularly in some areas. Alright so I'm moving on to new rules before we've articulated, the base, the foundation, the beginning rules.
Considering the pace and the language challenges that you as a lecturer don't have the time to address in class, do you have any ideas about what Varsity College should put in place to assist with this?	One of the things I have suggested, and it's a catch 22, if you do it you are providing a benefit but if you do it you are also taking away another benefit. One would be, I call it a module kit. A lot of the learning comes from the student doing things themselves, but students being new at first year, it takes them time to do it, while figuring out what they need to do. So, I thought that by providing them with completed module kits up front can get students to the gold quicker, and they can play around in the gold without having to read, to make notes, to then convert it to question and answer.
So, by module kit, we are talking about more comprehensive material?	The unsynthesised material, then the synthesised material, then the exam prep notes. A series of resources done for the student that takes away a lot of the unnecessary, well not unnecessary because it is necessary, it just takes them too long to come up with summaries. They are not even summarising the material and sometimes it takes them a year to learn how to do that, well after 3 months you don't have a year because you are writing test one. So generally, evidence of the inability to do that up until the second semester is through test results.
So, if they have this module kit in the beginning it makes it easier for them at initial assessments? How will that then help them moving forward?	A lesson of the unsynthesised work which they would have had to do and run it as a parallel, a separate, in other words, the inbuilt learning we expect from a student in the module and are expected by the module learnings, why? Because it is those that are causing some people to fail the module. I would have that as a separate stream. So, guys we now need to learn how to summarise and engage with material, but whether you get it or don't get it, it's not going to cost you a module. For the module itself I'm going to do it for you. And then eventually make it second year or third year, you are on your own. In other words, I've built in a year initially to get you familiar with the process. Familiar with the process of doing what? In raw material, reading it summarising it putting it in your own words able to identify the main points. All these side learnings.

Are these side learnings more generic, or subject specific?	I believe they are more generic. I've applied this system in legal studies I've applied it in MBA studies, it's the ability to get to grips with a subject within modules to identify what is the heart and lungs of this course. So, I can take out of the subject Learning Unit 1-12 and I can take out the relevant content, by understanding that without this content this learning Unit wouldn't be called what it is, therefore this is important. Without this, this wouldn't be that.
Are you suggesting a course on how to decipher the course material and how to decide on how to best use the course material, is that what you are suggesting?	In order to strategize and determine how this material is going to be brought down to study able content.
And this would be a separate subject?	It's different if I can give you three subjects right here and right now and your experience will tell you there might be a different method I'm going to inculcate this. This is really bulk, this is a point, and this is more story. There is an innate ability you have learnt believe it or not over time. You will do it naturally, but it's not natural, you learnt that during your study career.
So, we are assuming that that is common sense, we are assuming that the students can do this common-sense activity, because to us it has become common sense	Yes, because it's not common sense.
What I hear you saying, and I'm not sure if I'm right, is that we are teaching the students to make assessments of material, you said, they assess what's bulk, what's to the point. So, the learning curve here may be their ability to assess material.	I'm saying we have a curriculum to get through I'm saying over and above the testing of it there are other learnings that a student has got to get in order to fare well in those assessments. The side learnings. The side learnings are then in their brain to do the mental maths to determine how they are going to get to grips with the material. That we are not really teaching them directly. We expect them to go through the material and fundamentally make those choices for themselves. I'm saying that those aren't inbuilt they have to learn them. That is not natural knowledge and the assessment 1 results reflect a lack of that knowledge to the detriment of the module. If you give something in a raw format, there is the text book, there is the guide, get on with it, we'll see how you do in test 1. So, I'm testing two things, number 1 did you study the material, but before that number 2 did you get the material in a study able format. That presumes you know what format you should have used to do that. I am presuming that, I'm not teaching it. I'm presuming it. Now I'm saying that presumption is letting students down because some of them are not able to make those choices and its affecting their test 1 results. I'm saying give them a kit with that already done for them in the first year you

	have your notes in raw format after that, summarised format, after that this is what you learn.
So, are we saying in first year especially in the first semester that we should baby them a little more than we do?	Absolutely
To get them to the next level?	Give them a look, see and touch of what it needs to look like and then run a parallel course to show them how to get it in that way. Whereas right now people are failing test 1, not because they didn't study, but because they chose the wrong format to study with.
Do you think that they are aware of why they failed in the way that you are, you have broken it down?	No, they are not, I'll tell you why, that takes a one on one engagement or an engagement in front of the whole class and that engagement is based on question and answer. Then they can see they got the answer wrong because it wasn't the right answer for this question. But the bigger answer is you probably didn't study it correctly because you studied the wrong format, or your notes were incorrect, or you made notes, but you didn't put the answer in your notes, you summarised the wrong thing., or you wrote too much, or you wrote too little, these are the side issues.
Do you think that this is the difference between prepared and under prepared students, that prepared students are more skilled in the type of skills you are talking about and the underprepared aren't?	It depends on how you define prepared.
So, let's say the ones who can already do quite well at first assessment.	Oh absolutely, you should see the notes of someone who does well and the notes of someone who doesn't, generally. You will see a nice question and point form answer where did you get it from, where did you get your notes from? The material. So, you took the material, and this is your notes, brilliant. And then you've translated that into answers in the test, fantastic. You have two schools of students.
And where does drive and motivation and accountability come into this with your first-year students?	Drive and motivation. I'll be honest with you, a lot of my first years are motivated, I sell it. It's easy to sell law, you sell the lifestyle, you sell a career, you sell the TV they were watching, even though it is a lot different. The unfairness is when people get their results and they don't reflect the amount of work they've put in and it's because of the skills shortage, not only the writing the reading the communicating, the softer skills. The softer skills are the skills to look at something and know how to get it in a format that I'm going to chew it and inculcate it and remember it in the test or exam. That is a learning curve

	and we need at least 12 months to get that ball rolling. For the first 12 months lets provide them with a kit, because some are failing because they don't know how to do this.
Do you have a teaching qualification?	No nothing**.**
In terms of a teaching qualification do you think that knowledge of teaching strategies or formal education in teaching would assist you?	It would absolutely, I profess to acknowledge the sciences and not acknowledge the teaching side.
Looking as Student A (Prepared) and student B (underprepared) do you feel you would perhaps be more prepared to deal with the challenges student B may face, if you had a teaching qualification?	The advantage any education gives you whether it is in the education space, legal space, medical space. Absolutely. If I had the time and inclination to go into pedagogical studies.
So**,** if time and funds were available you feel it would be beneficial to yourself?	Absolutely it would help. I am only commenting now from my experience I'll be honest with you, on the recording, it is formally uneducated. I haven't studied education. So, these are my experiences whether I've expressed them correctly or incorrectly you'll probably get a professor in teaching or someone that has been in teaching, he would have chosen different words to explain what I've just explained. But this is my dynamic, I haven't studied education.
But it's not about the words either, it's about the strategies maybe. So, if you had time funds etc. you would embark on something like that?	Not
You wouldn't?	No
Why?	Because it's not my passion.
So, education is not your passion?	No, education is my passion but not the formal studying of it. I'm not going to go and formalise the studying of it. My sphere is the legal profession that's where I'm at and facilitating and instructing, but from a time point of view where I am in my business point of view and where I am in my career point of view. I want to do a doctorate on an area of Law, because that's if you know what I'm saying. But I'm passionate about education, I myself am still studying, I'm still a student of education.
Would you be interested in teaching and learning workshops, something that covered teaching strategies?	Yes, it would have to be something for me that is in a bite size. I've also learned that in getting a paper there's a lot of peripheral to make the course weight. You've got to jump through those hoops in order to get the goal that you want. But within a 12 module post graduate

	certificate in teaching, there would probably only be two or three real things that interest me. In other words that would help me in the classroom. I'm all for help in the classroom, but I don't want to do a three-year degree in order to learn it. I will do a six-month practical workshop on teaching strategies, that would interest me, because that would help me on the ground. Practicality for me, I would be absolutely interested in.
Thank you for your time the interview has ended.	Ok, thank you.