

***AN EVALUATION OF AN ACADEMIC LITERACY
PROGRAMME AMONG FIRST-YEAR EDUCATION
STUDENTS SPECIALISING IN LANGUAGES AT A
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY***

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DEDICATION

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether 20 or 80, anyone who keeps learning stays young. ~ Henry Ford

I dedicate this work to my mother, Toekie Barkhuizen, who raised me with unconditional love and dedication and imparted in me a genuine interest for life-long learning.

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“Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!” (Rev. 7:12)

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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENT WORK

DECLARATION WITH REGARD TO INDEPENDENT WORK

I, ELSIE SOPHIA ELIZABETH HITGE, identity number _____ and student number _____, do hereby declare that this research project submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State for the Degree MASTER OF EDUCATION: HUMANITIES, is my own independent work; and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Central University of Technology, Free State; and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any other person in fulfilment (or partial fulfilment) of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.



SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

20 November 2019
DATE

DECLARATION BY EDITOR

I, Maria Petronella Roodt, hereby declare that I have proofread and edited the research report by E S E Hitge “**An evaluation of an Academic Literacy Programme among first-year Education students specializing in Languages at a University of Technology**”.

My qualifications are as follows: BA with major in English, BA Hons (English) and MA in English (Applied Linguistics) and an MA (Higher Education Studies).

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ABSTRACT

South Africa, as a developing country, needs well-qualified professionals to help with the socio-economic development of the country. The importance of quality education to eradicate poverty and develop our human capacity to become a leading country in Africa is widely recognised. It is a well-known fact that our students do not perform as expected at tertiary institutions and they are not adequately prepared to cope academically. Although there may be several other factors influencing under-preparedness, the under-prepared student in literacy, mainly in English language and communication, creates a challenge that universities have to address. A number of studies about the standard of academic literacy of students depict a perturbing picture which raise questions about students' ability to meet the linguistic demands of tertiary study. The primary aim of this research study was to investigate the success or not of the Academic Literacy Programme that was introduced as an intervention strategy for all first-year students to eliminate the problem of "under-preparedness" of students at a university of technology. This programme was introduced as a strategy to bridge the gap between secondary school literacy and the demands needed at tertiary level. The target group was a selected group of second year students registered for a B Ed Languages degree at a South African university of technology. All participants were registered for English, a compulsory subject for the language specialization. In order to determine the success of an Academic Literacy Programme, a questionnaire with a Likert scale approach was completed by the student sample, and qualitative interviews were done with the lecturers of the Academic Literacy Programme regarding their perception on the programme used by the CUT, Welkom campus. Results indicate that the Academic Literacy Programme appears to be successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of second year B.Ed. students specialising in English although the analysis indicates that there is a difference between what the lecturers and the students perceive as a successful Academic Literacy Programme. It appears the students feel they have the adequate skills required but in reality, the lecturers are of a different opinion.

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Chapter 1

Orientation and Background to the Study

“How can one separate personality from work? They blend together to form who I am and what I wish to be”

- Bill Clinton -

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa, as a developing country, needs well-qualified professionals to help with the socio-economic development of our country. The importance of quality education to eradicate poverty and develop our human capacity to achieve our potential as a leading country in Africa is widely recognised.

The World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) emphasises that quality education has lasting benefits for individuals and communities (Department: Basic Education, 2013:3). To this end, South Africa has adopted several programmes to eradicate illiteracy and provide quality education for all. In a framework for action, one of the six global goals is “...improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence for all, so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all – especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills” (Department Basic Education, 2013:4). This goal is in line with Section 29 of the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution which declares that everyone has the right to basic education (Education Rights Project, South Africa, 2014; United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2014). The annual national budget for education, with its allocation of the largest amount to education, affirms the commitment of the South African government to basic education as well as further education (Butler-Adam, 2014).

Basic education is available to most, if not all in South Africa. However, the positive trend of growing school attendance is in sharp contrast with the quality of education (Jones, Coetzee, Bailey & Wickham, 2008:5). The general poor quality of education offered at school level becomes evident at university level where there is also a noticeable increase in enrolments, but simultaneously a high drop-out rate of first-year students. According to a report from the Council for Higher Education

“...performance in higher education is marked by high levels of failure and dropout” (2013:15).

Furthermore, the CHE reports that “...it is widely accepted that student under-preparedness is the dominant learning-related cause of the poor performance patterns in higher education” (CHE Report, 2013:16). Brussow (2010:1) supports this opinion, indicating that under-preparedness becomes evident in “...the student’s ability to read, write, take notes and take examinations”.

Matoti and Shumba claim that the poor literacy competencies of the South African student can be the “...after-effects of a problematic educational past” which, they say, is known for learning environments that do not adequately prepare students to survive challenges and demands of tertiary education (2012:131). Jones, Coetzee, Bailey and Wickham (2008:21) confirm this statement when stating that “...under-resourced, low performance, typically ex-DET schools...” contribute mainly to student under-preparedness and poor literacy abilities at tertiary level. It is a historical fact then that the students arrive at universities with a gap in their education; a weakness that must be addressed by the institutions of higher learning.

It will then also not be unfair to conclude that the mentioned poor academic performance and high failure of students are embedded in the current schooling system in South Africa. Although there may be several other factors influencing under-preparedness, the under-prepared student in literacy, mainly in English language and communication, creates a challenge that universities have to address (Brussow, 2007; CHE 2013). The disadvantage for students becomes more evident when considering that most South African universities use English as language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), which is not the mother-tongue of the majority of South African students (CHE 2013; Jones, 2008; Van Schalkwyk, 2008).

As such, universities, both nationally and internationally, implemented academic literacy interventions in the form of academic literacy programmes. These interventions were necessary to bridge the gap between the poor schooling background and the more advanced demands of tertiary institutions. Universities have implemented these literacy programmes as a subject to all first-year entrants without exception. This implementation ensures that all students have the benefit of such an intervention programme. Consequently, it was also implemented in 2010 at

the Central University of Technology as intervention strategy. The university adapted the programme mainly to ensure that a larger number of students will successfully complete their studies and contribute to the national development of South Africa.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

A number of studies about the standard of academic literacy of students depict a perturbing picture (Bharuthram, 2012; Brussow, 2007; CHE 2013; Jones, 2008; Pitts, 1999; Van Schalkwyk, 2008). These studies raise questions about students' ability to meet the linguistic demands of tertiary study. The literacy skills acquired at secondary school level may not be sufficient for the more advanced academic tasks typically found at tertiary level.

According to the CHE report, remedial measures need to be taken with special attention paid to the secondary school sector which delivers under-prepared students to the tertiary sector (2013). Furthermore, the CHE also points to tertiary institutions as a contributing factor to the high rate of failure, blaming the higher education sector "...that (it) has not yet come to terms with its developing-country environment" (CHE Report, 2013:16).

In dealing with under-prepared students, various South African universities have implemented compulsory academic language proficiency programmes as an intervention measure for first-year entrants. The aim is to equip students with some basic literacy skills required for studying in English, the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) at most universities in South Africa (CUT Calendar, 2019:180-184). Although there are numerous factors influencing student preparedness (Brussow, 2007; Matoti & Shumba, 2012; Pitts, 1999) and extensive research has been conducted in the field, it seems that most South African universities acknowledge the need for the implementation of academic literacy programmes to help alleviate the problems associated with literacy under-preparedness. Academic literacy proficiency is highlighted to be one such an intervention that will allow students to be more prepared to succeed in their tertiary studies.

Subsequently, these literacy programmes need to focus specifically on the English language and communication deficits apparent in the students. The National Benchmark Test (NBT), introduced in 2009 by the Department of Higher Education

South Africa (HESA), confirmed that only a limited number of all students who completed the literacy test, possessed adequate English competency (MacGregor, 2009:2).

Furthermore, a well-designed literacy programme encompasses more discipline-specific interventions (Bharuthram, 2012; Butler, 2013; Jacobs, 2013). There are a number of literacy models and strategies available to universities, each one with its own unique strategy and suggested outcomes (Butler, 2013; Jacobs, 2013; Weideman & Van der Silk, 2008). Universities, therefore, have the additional task to determine which intervention strategy is more appropriate to use for their specific students to benefit academically.

However, a variety of studies indicates that the existing low levels of reading and writing skills at secondary school level are not easily remedied by the intervention of an Academic Proficiency programme at tertiary institutions (Brussow, 2007; Horne & Heineman, 2012; Van Rensburg & Weideman, 2002). Since an Academic Language Proficiency programme is already implemented at the University of Technology under investigation, its effectiveness and appropriateness need to be determined (Weideman, 2008:12). The student population at the mentioned University of Technology is mainly non-mother tongue English students, a group which has very low levels of English proficiency, according to Van Rensburg and Weideman (2002). In view of the above, it would be particularly insightful to evaluate the success of the institution's Academic Literacy Programme.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The main research question for this study is:

Does the Academic Literacy Programme implemented at the target institution correlate with the English language proficiency needs of the first-year Education students specializing in Languages?

The subsidiary questions to help determine the main question are:

1.3.1 Do Gr 12-learners entering university have sufficient literacy skills to cope with the demands of tertiary study?

1.3.2 What is the background to, as well as the structure of the Academic Literacy Programme used at the participant institution?

1.3.3 Is the Academic Literacy Programme (PRE) (baseline and formative academic literacy) successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of first-year Education students specializing in Languages, at a university of technology?

1.3.4 Which problems are experienced by lecturers involved in the Academic Literacy Programme?

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to determine whether the Academic Literacy Programme of the specific institution meets the English language proficiency needs of the first-year Education students specializing in Languages.

Subordinate aims are:

1.4.1 To determine from the literature whether Grade 12 learners have sufficient literacy skills to cope with the demands of tertiary study.

1.4.2 To determine the background and structure of the Academic Literacy Programme at the participant institution from institutional records and documents.

1.4.3 To determine the success of the Academic Literacy Programme in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of B.Ed students majoring in Languages.

1.4.4 To identify the problems that lecturers involved with the Academic Literacy Programme may have regarding the implementation of the programme.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

Through policy directives, the number and diversity of students at South African higher education institutions have increased (CHE, 2013:16). As a result, this research study will first attempt to provide evidence regarding the shortcomings of secondary school literacy competencies in a tertiary environment, mainly from a lecturer's perspective.

The University of Technology at which this study will be conducted, has implemented a compulsory language proficiency programme to address the under-preparedness of students; and additionally, provide a climate conducive to academic success.

Secondly, this study is significant in its attempt to examine whether this academic literacy programme is sufficient in improving students' proficiency in English, specifically students registered for Education, specializing in Languages, on the Welkom campus. The insight gained may disclose the challenges relating to the Academic Literacy Programme as an intervention strategy: challenges for the institution, students and lecturers.

Thirdly this study aims to investigate any problems that the lecturers experience with the students' literacy competencies, and the implementation of the academic literacy programme.

Furthermore, a fourth significant contribution that this study will make is that the knowledge gained from this research study can be practically applied at other institutions of higher learning to ensure that academic success is attained; an idea supported by Bharuthram (2012), Brussow (2007) and Pitts, White and Harrison (1999). A clearer understanding of the impact of an Academic Literacy Programme at a University of Technology and its subsequent improvement could contribute to the overall throughput of students.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

A growing corpus of research (Brussow, 2007; Pitts, 1999; Jones, 2008; CHE 2013; Van Schalkwyk, 2008) indicates various factors contributing to academic under-preparedness. These include, amongst others, academic background, poor schooling systems and resources, finances and socio-cultural factors. Numerous studies focussing on the academic literacy of students in the English language, reveal a disturbing picture (CHE 2013; Van Schalkwyk, 2008). Some studies indicate that a past characterised by "social deprivation and mediocrity in education" creates challenges to tertiary institutions where English is the medium of instruction (Steyn & Kamper, 2011:2). The literacy skills acquired at secondary school level may not be sufficient to produce mastery of Academic English. First-year students lack vocabulary and they demonstrate poor usage of English (Bharuthram, 2012:172). It raises a question about learner preparedness for tertiary education.

Additionally, coming from under-resourced communities, students did not develop a culture of reading and writing while at secondary school. They display little interaction with texts, they are seldom able to develop an argument and they lack the

ability to think critically (Matoti & Shumba, 2012:131). It is then assumed by the researcher that these academic factors indicate the inferior quality of education in South African schools, and the subsequent poor matriculation results.

Following from the above, the true value of a successful completion of Grade 12 should be investigated. Several researchers (Brussow, 2007; Jones, 2008; Matoti & Shumba, 2012; Pitts, 1999) deem the current secondary school system in South Africa as incapable of providing the skills and content necessary for academic success at tertiary level. Ngidi (2007) quotes Potter and Van der Merwe who claim that the traditional use of matriculation results as university entrance is not a useful and reliable predictor of academic success. They add that “school achievement” has very limited value as a predictor of tertiary success (Potter & Van der Merwe as quoted by Ngidi, 2007).

Although this study does not focus on Grade 12 results, the impact thereof on students’ ability to read, write, analyse and understand tasks at tertiary level, must be considered (Brussow, 2007; Matoti & Shumba, 2012; Steyn & Kamper, 2011). Many students lack the necessary academic and literacy skills, because they are insufficiently prepared at secondary school level for challenges associated with tertiary studies. Intervention strategies for the literacy under-preparedness must hence be implemented at tertiary level (CHE, 2013).

Academic literacy at tertiary level deals with formal communication skills in academic reading, writing, listening and speaking of subject-related content and material (Matoti & Shumba, 2012; Van Schalkwyk, 2008). It requires more advanced skills to analyse, interpret and evaluate knowledge (Matoti & Shumba, 2012:131). These skills are a challenge to all students, irrespective of their mother-tongue. Scientific Academic Language is precise and differs from social language.

The literacy under-preparedness of students furthermore has an influence on the lecturers as well. Lecturers, by nature, have “very high expectations” of their students (Weideman, 2007:148). According to Pitts et al. (1999), poor literacy skills and subsequent lowered expectations cause a lot of frustration to lecturers. Lecturers often assume that students will become conversant with the discourse of their subject especially when it is used correctly in class. Some lecturers hope that

their students will “stumble across” information and as a result gain academic literacy by chance (Van Schalkwyk, 2008:4).

Under-performance and academic failure of students also impact negatively on the university for its own economic practises. It negatively affects government funding of the institution (Barnes, Dzanzi, Wilkinson & Viljoen, and 2009:2). It is then also economically wise for the institution to implement a successful Academic Literacy Programme. It is costly to employ staff and implement a programme that is not working, but more so, it is a waste of time and money to have a low throughput of students.

The successful implementation of Academic Language Proficiency as intervention strategy brings about advantages for students, lecturers and the institution. Such a programme must therefore be effective to overcome the challenges associated with poor academic literacy levels (Weideman, 2007:148). As such it needs to be measured against standards and models that are internationally recognised (Jacobs, 2008; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Van Dyk, 2005).

1.7 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

In terms of geographical location and population, the research study will be limited to a selected group of first-year students registered for a Bachelor’s degree in Education (B Ed) specializing in Languages at the Welkom campus of the University of Technology, Free State, South Africa.

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

It is necessary to define a number of concepts related to the study:

1.8.1 Under-preparedness:

In this research study, under-preparedness refers to the lack of competency in literacy – specifically the inability to read, write, analyse and understand tasks with the necessary comprehension - which results in an inability to successfully meet the academic demands at a University of Technology.

1.8.2 Academic Literacy: For the purpose of this study, academic literacy is defined as the ability to read, write, analyse and understand information so as to successfully communicate in English at an academic level, as English is the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) at the participant institution.

1.8.3 English Proficiency:

English Proficiency refers to the ability to use English with skill and expertise in all forms of communication and interaction.

1.8.4 University of Technology

For the purposes of this research study, a university of technology is defined as a higher education institution offering education and training in education, science, engineering and technology.

1.8.5 Education students specializing in Languages

Education students specializing in Languages refer to students studying towards a Bachelor's degree in Education with two languages as major subjects in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Technology at which the research study will be conducted.

1.8.6 Qualitative research

Leedy and Ormrod define qualitative research as a way to “collect numerous forms of data and examine them from various angles to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation” (2010:135).

1.8.7 Quantitative research

This entails more objectively measured research where statistical information can be used to prove or disapprove a hypothesis (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010).

1.8.8 Triangulation

In the process of triangulation two or more methods can be used to confirm, cross-validate or corroborate the findings of the study (Creswell, 2014).

1.8.9 Case study

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2009: 18).

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.9.1 Research Design

The case study method has been selected as the most suitable design for an “in-depth” examination of a language proficiency programme for a defined period of time at a specific University of Technology. A case study design is typically set in a real-world context and allows for investigating changes over time (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:31). It also strives toward a holistic understanding of how participants relate, interact with and make meaning of a phenomenon (Yin, 2012:18). For the purpose of this study, it is aimed at gaining greater insight and understanding of the impact of the Academic Literacy Programme on the academic literacy abilities of first-year B. Ed students, specializing in Languages.

For this case study, a mixed method design will be used, and data will be collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011, Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:31). The reason for using both quantitative and qualitative data are to merge the two forms of data to bring greater insight than would be obtained by using either one or the other (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011:28).

The research focus of this case study, i.e. first-year students’ progress, as measured in their second year of study after completing a Language Proficiency Programme, is influenced by a number of variables which may not all be controlled. However, despite this limitation, the design will clearly show differences in proficiency which may yield valuable insight into the application of the academic literacy programme.

Since all first-year entrants at the participating institution are exposed to the Academic Literacy Programme, this research will have only one group, hence there will be no control group. A typical quantitative study will not be possible since there can be no clear statistical comparisons (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011:28).

From the above- mentioned explanation, it is clear that a true quantitative research design is not sufficient in dealing with the data and that some qualitative research should also be added. Qualitative research focusses on people who behave in natural settings and describing their world in their own words (Cozby, 2006:58). This research aims at understanding a social situation from the participants’ perspectives (Creswell, 2011:13). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) point out that qualitative approaches focus on phenomena that occur in natural settings, i.e. in the real world and they involve studying those phenomena in all their complexity. For this section of the phenomenological study lecturers will be interviewed and students will complete a

Likert Scale questionnaire to determine their views on the Literacy Programme. The Academic Literacy Programme and related institutional documents will additionally be analysed and evaluated against the backdrop of the literature review.

1.9.2 Validity, reliability and triangulation

According to Leedy and Ormrod "...the validity and reliability of your measurement instruments influences the extent to which you can learn something about the phenomenon you are studying... and the extent to which you can draw meaningful conclusions from your data" (2010:31). Data from the individual interviews will be combined with information from the questionnaire and an analysis of the literature overview.

Quantitative designs have very specific guidelines for reliability and validity. Internal validity is the extent to which a cause-effect relationship between variables can be indicated. Furthermore, reliability of scores mean that scores can be repeated and are consistent over time (Creswell, 2010). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), the measuring instrument is valid insofar as it measures what it intends to measure.

Qualitative designs focus on credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Qualitative reliability will be achieved through analysing the data from questionnaires. Member-checking and triangulation will be used as quality strategies. Member-checking will allow the researcher to take summaries of the findings of the case study back to the participants to check for accuracy (Creswell, 2010), should the need arise. This approach will allow the researcher to draw on the expertise of peers, the other academic literacy lecturers and subject specialists to validate the data. Thorough checking, double-checking and analyses of the situation will then be combined with member-checked information from the interviews and questionnaires.

Another approach is triangulation of data during which process findings will be compared and contrasted to literature and other data collected.

Creswell and Plano-Clark state that triangulation of the different methods assist to validate findings "...in order that they may be mutually corroborated" (2011:62). The empirical study will combine qualitative and quantitative methods to cross-validate the findings with regard to the effects of the academic literacy programme on the

academic literacy abilities of first-year Education students specializing in Languages at the participating institution.

An in-depth literature review will acknowledge the contributions of national and international research done on language proficiency and student preparedness. Additionally, a variety of academic literacy models will be used to interpret and evaluate the effectiveness of the academic literacy intervention programme used at the University of Technology. In a triangulation process, the findings of the study through these various methods will be compared and contrasted to existing knowledge. Leedy and Ormrod claim that accuracy provides validity and reliability (2010:35).

1.9.3 Population and Sampling

A research population is generally a selected number of individuals who are the main focus of a scientific study (Singh & Nath, 2009:1). In this study all the first-year entrants for the B. Ed, specializing in Languages at a University of Technology campus will be included.

The subjects for the sample are mostly South African students from a variety of ethnic groups. The age group ranges from late teenagers to those in their early twenties. The students are all first-year students. They are allowed into the programme with a minimum M-Score of 27 based on their matriculation results. A convenience sample is used as all subjects that are available to participate in the research study form part of the sample.

There is no control group, since the Academic Literacy Programme is compulsory for all the first-year entrants in all courses (C U T Calendar, 2014).

1.9.4 Data Collection

A literature study will acknowledge the contributions of national and international research done on language proficiency, English proficiency programmes and student preparedness. This will form the foundation for the research study.

The qualitative component of the study will comprise open-ended questionnaires and interviews with the lecturers to determine their perspectives on the literacy programme and the students' English proficiency. Additionally, Likert-scale

questionnaires will be completed by the students to allow them to express their opinions on the academic literacy programme.

In the triangulation process, the findings of the study through the mentioned various methods will be compared, contrasted and interpreted to gain an in-depth understanding of the studied phenomenon.

1.9.5 Data analysis

Once the questionnaires and interviews had been collected, the information was analysed by an external service provider, namely Quantemna. The data collected needs to be integrated. One of the basic characteristics of a mixed method research design is the integration of qualitative and quantitative data to reach a conclusion (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011:30). They also state that the integration must be done continually during the research process when the qualitative research questions must compliment the quantitative research hypothesis. A mixed methods questionnaire and interview strategy will then lead to a combined display of quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell 2011:104).

Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib and Rupert (2007:22) describe strategies to “quantitize” qualitative data and then compare it to the quantitative data separately. Unfortunately, qualitative data are “multidimensional” and the rich qualitative data will then be lost in quantizing it (Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib & Rupert, 2007:26).

The information gathered from the open-ended questionnaires and interviews will be analyzed by a registered company – organizing it into themes and categories (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011:31).

1.9.6 Administration

Permission to conduct the research study was obtained from the Department Manager of the Department of Education, Welkom campus. Hereafter, a venue and a date were determined for all Education students specializing in Languages to complete the questionnaires in a group setting. This was done in accordance with the requirements set by the Institution, Welkom campus.

Upon completion, the material was collected from the subjects by the researcher. The data were analysed by Quantemna and made available to the researcher.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011:35), as well as Leedy and Ormrod (2010:99) warn that the researcher must respect all stakeholders during the research process. Care must be taken not to harm beings “with the potential to think, feel and experience physical or psychological distress” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:101). They summarize the ethical issues into four categories:

- Protection from harm
- Informed consent
- Right to privacy
- Honesty with professional colleagues. (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:101).

The following ethical measures incorporate the above categories and are taken into account during the research:

1.10.1 Professional ethics

- In this study the researcher will search and report on the truth and knowledge gained in the research process as prescribed by Creswell (2011:62).
- The researcher will refrain from falsification of data and misinterpretation of results.
- The researcher will endeavour not to marginalize or disempower the participants.

1.10.2 Publishing ethics

In order to acknowledge all contributions by other researchers, references were made and listed in a reference list (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011:103).

1.10.3 Accountability

Research and results must be conducted in an open and transparent manner and results must be accessible (Creswell, 2011:64). This was achieved in the following manner:

- Full permission from the Department of Communication Science, Welkom Campus was gained to conduct the research with the selected Education students specializing in Languages Students.

- A written consent section is included in the cover letter to the questionnaires and signed before students engage in the research.
- Research results will be open and available for all.

1.10.4 Relationship with subjects

Seeing that the students are recruited to participate in the study, Leedy and Ormrod suggest that "...they should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice of either participating or not participating." (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:101).

Furthermore, since they volunteer to participate, they can also withdraw from the study at any time, and without any reason. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) also prescribe that respondents have the right to privacy and anonymity at all times, and list the following requirements:

- The questionnaires and interviews will be free from any bias against gender, race, disability or age.
- Anonymity and privacy of respondents will be respected at all times. Subjects will have the right to have their viewpoints expressed.
- A summary of the rationale of the research project will be explained to respondents at the beginning of the interviews as well as in the cover letter to the questionnaire (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:121).

1.10.5 Publication of results

The findings of the experimental studies need to be available for all and to the benefit of society (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011:107).

- An unambiguous and clear report will finalize the research and be presented as part of the study that can be used again for other purposes of interest.

1.10.6 Trustworthiness

According to Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) and Leedy and Ormrod (2010) trustworthiness refers to the way in which the inquirer is able to persuade the audience that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the

research is of high quality. Trustworthiness is achieved through triangulation by the researcher, member check and prolonged engagement (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Except for triangulation (discussed above), member check will help to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the study. Member checking allows the participants the opportunity to judge the accuracy and credibility of the interpretations after data analysis and interpretations and before findings are drawn (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field include building trust with participants, learning the culture, and checking for misinformation that stems from distortions introduced by the researcher or informants (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

A synopsis of this study has been presented to the research committee and accepted.

1.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the background to the study, the research questions, aims and objectives and the research methodology were discussed. Specific attention was paid to the research design, as well as the ethical considerations to undertake this study with first-year B Ed. students at a university of technology. Various concepts used in the study were also explained. The next chapter will provide an overview of the relevant literature reviewed.

Chapter 2

Academic Literacy

**“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn,
the more places you’ll go!”**

- Dr Seuss -

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As indicated in the previous chapter, the student population in South Africa increased (Republic of South Africa Department of Education, 1997; Republic of South Africa Ministry of Education, 2001; Department of Basic Education, 2013; CHE Report, 2013). However, learners who obtain senior certificates in the South African schooling system cannot be assumed to be adequately prepared to meet the demands of tertiary education (Boughey, 2013:1; Miller, Bradbury & Pedley, 1998:103; Ngidi, 2007:117). These matric results act as an indicator of the academic abilities of students into the tertiary education system.

Parallel to the matric results a report by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) indicates that “...performance in higher education is marked by high levels of failure and dropout” (CHE Report, 2013:15). It seems the students experience challenges to advance their tertiary studies.

2.2 REASONS FOR POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Academic failure of first-year students is a national and international problem (Department Basic Education, 2013; CHE Report, 2013; McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001). It is no consolation that South Africa is not the only country which suffers. The worldwide statistics as mentioned by McKenzie and Schweitzer above is also thoroughly true for South Africa. Van Dyk (2005) quotes research statistics for South Africa indicating that 25% of all first-year students dropped out (quoted from Mamaila, 2001) and 40% of all historically disadvantaged students in 2004 dropped out (quotation from Mkhabela & Malan, 2004). Alarming, statistics did not improve from 2005 when Van Dyk’s study was done. In 2013 it was reported that “less than 5% of black African and coloured youth” are successful in their

tertiary studies. Alarming, the same studies indicate that more than half of all first-year entrants never graduate at all” (Macfarlane, 2013:1).

The recent secondary school system, which feeds the tertiary education system, indicates a similar picture. Even as recent as the matric results of 2017 there was no real improvement in the quality of education. Dawood analysed the matric results for 2017 and is supporting the view of Equal Education that the matric results of 2017 are “superficial and misleading” (2018:1). They claim that a dropout rate of 45% of total enrolments for the class of 2017 indicates “inequality and social discontent.”

Added to these statistics, she states that 78% of Grade 4 learners are “functionally illiterate” (Dawood, 2018:3). During February 2017 a report for the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD) was published which indicated that Grade 9 learners in poor schools have “a backlog of approximately 3.5 years.” That report finds that education is a “critical input” in advancing the most vulnerable citizens into economic success; but they also indicated that “...the majority of South Africa’s (mostly black) learners attend schools...(which) produce poor cognitive outcomes.” Furthermore, they state that the majority of learners from the schooling system receive insufficient learning which “leads to poor access to tertiary education and poor labour market outcomes” (Moses, Van der Berg & Rich, 2017:2-3). These learners are captured in a cycle of poverty.

The statistics seem to indicate that the increasing larger numbers of students do not contribute to improve the economic success for the majority of young people in South Africa. The schooling system in South Africa is producing learners who are under-prepared and not ready to face the challenges of the twenty first century. Universities assume that students will be able to manage themselves and the study material and opportunities they have to offer. Most if not all universities, have to use matric results as an indicator of such abilities. But alarmingly, in South Africa it seems universities cannot rely purely on these results.

The general poor quality of education offered at school level becomes evident at university level (Matoti & Shumba, 2012:1). According to the CHE Report (2013:15), some remedial measures need to be taken with special attention paid to the secondary school sector which delivers under-prepared students to the tertiary

sector (CHE, 2013). Bradbury and Miller find that the success or failure for students at tertiary level is not simply to reproduce content, but it also includes an inappropriate “form of responses that the students generate in engaging with different kinds of questions” (Bradbury & Miller, 2011:1). It may seem that when a student responds correctly, or makes the “right noises”, that student is mostly assumed to be successful. Reproducing the content, or retelling the same content, does not mean that a student has successfully gained knowledge and understanding of new content; or is successful. It is not an indication that the student can use that knowledge to solve problems or to communicate with others on the topic. The student must be able to “engage” with the new content; to “generate” a new frame of reference. Reproducing, on the other hand, simply means that the student can reproduce desired outcomes.

Bradbury and Miller furthermore pinpoint the unequal, disadvantaged schooling system with the “low level(s) of skill and training among teachers, inadequate infrastructure and paucity of equipment and books” (Bradbury & Miller, 2011:1). This time around they definitely aim at the teachers. Their study investigated the disparities within the schooling system and focused strongly on disadvantaged schools where the legacy of apartheid education is still lingering; a statement that is strongly supported by Matoti and Shumba (Bradbury & Miller, 2011:2; Matoti & Shumba, 2012:1).

Additionally, higher education institutions often do not offer a setting that encourages academic achievement (CHE Report, 2013:15; Fourie, 2003:129). The previously mentioned CHE Report also points at tertiary institutions as a contributing factor to the high rate of failure, blaming the higher education sector “...that (it) has not yet come to terms with its developing-country environment” (CHE Report, 2013:16).

Existing research is inconclusive regarding the causes for the low levels of performance and failure, and listed factors such as basic knowledge and skill levels; student attitudes and behaviour and student -coping behaviours as contributing factors (Pitts, White & Harrison, 1999:3). Their research determined that first-year students may not be academically successful as they are, amongst others, not academically prepared for higher education, and “an important aspect of such under-preparedness is their academic literacy” (Van Schalkwyk, 2008:5). Van Dyk

(2005:1) states that the low levels of academic literacy are mostly contributing to the high rate of failures at tertiary institutions. He further indicates that the language of learning, meaning where knowledge transfer takes place, is widely seen as “one of the main reasons for the lack of academic success among South African undergraduate students” (Van Dyk, 2005:3). These statements of renowned researchers offer an opportunity to rethink the role of the tertiary institutions in the success or failure of students at tertiary level.

As a solution, various South African universities have implemented compulsory academic language proficiency programmes as an intervention measure for their first-year entrants. The aim is to equip students with some basic literacy skills required for studying in English, the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) at most universities in South Africa (CUT Calendar, 2016:176).

Extended degree programmes seem to bridge the gap between inadequate schooling and the more advanced university environment. Academic literacy programmes were introduced to the Welkom campus of the Central University of Technology in 2009 after a meeting of the Council (Resolution CR 13/09/03). The aim is to assist students to be more prepared to succeed in their tertiary studies. However, it is important to understand academic language literacy and its background before attempting to evaluate the programme used at the Welkom campus.

Subsequently, it is crucial to recognise academic literacy as one of the factors that influence academic success. For purposes of this study, academic literacy, assumed as a basic knowledge and skills, is only one such factor, and should not be seen as the ultimate factor determining academic success. The importance of academic literacy – and this chapter to the research study – has thus been ascertained.

This chapter will investigate the construct of academic literacy. In so doing, it will commence with the historical development of academic literacy leading to conceptualizations of academic literacy. Thereafter the development of a modern approach to academic literacy will follow with a discussion of certain modern trends and literacy models and theory.

The influence of such an academic literacy programme at the Welkom campus of the Central university of Technology will subsequently be discussed. Both the role of an academic literacy programme – and the contributions of prominent researchers in the field – as well as the analysis of its influence on academic achievement will be explained. Criticism of, as well as support for, the influence of an academic literacy programme will be provided.

2.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC LITERACY

In her research, Van Schalkwyk (2008:15) mentions Pierre Bourdieu, who had already indicated three cornerstones of academic literacy in 1965; namely the role of academic discourse in higher education; misunderstandings due to our “frame of reference” and power relationships between the student and lecturer. At that stage already, it was established that “lecturer expectations differed from student abilities” and that the student’s background is closely related to his language abilities; that include both the socio-economic and academic background (2008:16). The background for such a programme during the 1960’s was to introduce Standard English with theory that stemmed from British Standard English (Boughey, 2013:23). According to Boughey’s research, this programme was later expanded to include textbooks and other descriptive methods to assist in better communication between lecturers and students. As such it was an effective programme to learn the correct, standard way of communication with rules for grammar and punctuation (Boughey, 2013:26). The logic of such a programme seems to be that lecturers and students in a variety of learning environments would follow the rules and be successful! Even this researcher remembers those days where you had to learn long lists of words and bear the consequences if words were spelled incorrectly.

Butler claims that academic support is not something new in South Africa. He indicates that even before democracy in 1994 many universities and technikons offered support in the form of bridging courses. One of the focus areas that he highlights of such intervention strategies was the development of what was seen at the time as the “inadequate language ability of students” (Butler, 2013:73).

Researchers must have been relieved. Through these strategies, a name was linked to a deficiency! A problem was diagnosed; a certain gap was identified and

could be dealt with. It could be traced to an origin; this was something that universities received from the schooling system: students with “inadequate language ability.” The school system was the one creating or causing deficiencies. This implies that there was not enough done at the secondary level of education to ensure a better language and literacy level for students at tertiary level. First-year students were not well-prepared for tertiary education in the secondary school system.

As such, many remedial classes were introduced at schools and tertiary institutions alike. Lecturers and teachers were trained to deal with the deficiencies of the literacy component of the school curriculum. To the researcher, it looks as if literacy was treated as an aid; something extra to be added, like a vitamin supplement would be added to a deficient diet. The deficiency was diagnosed with certain symptoms and then treated with the correct dosage of a certain supplement. The desired treatment should lead to the desired changes in behaviour. Students who had to receive these remedial treatments, were not good enough themselves and were labeled as such (Butler, 2013:73).

This furthermore implied that students undergoing this treatment need only the treatment and then would be adequately prepared at the end of their treatment “to meet the demands of tertiary education” (Miller, Bradbury & Pedley, 1998:103), but the results were not so obvious. Statistically it is indicated there were still a huge number of students with ‘inadequate language ability’ (Butler, 2013:73). Literacy and the affirmative action related to it were not sufficient as a cure to the problem.

As highlighted by Boughey (2013:26), the influence of culture and its values on the human being should not be underestimated. She drew on Halliday’s research (1973 & 1978) which indicated that the set of values, beliefs and attitudes of a student will have an impact on the student’s academic performance. As such, language teaching and communication is not socially, politically and culturally neutral.

The ability to read and write is seen as “social practices that vary with context” (Street, 1984, 1995). Van Schalkwyk learned from Bourdieu that a large number of university students cannot cope with “the technical and scholastic demands made on

their use of language” (Bourdieu, as quoted by Van Schalkwyk, 2008:16). Socially acceptable practices of communication in a formal setting vary from those of an informal setting. As an example, reading, writing and mathematical skills used in everyday experiences, were not sufficient for an academic environment. The communicator, the student in this case, should know the difference of the varying environments and adjust the communication style accordingly. Boughey (2013:26) illustrates it with the following example:

“In academic contexts, such understandings would prompt us, for example, to use the word ‘child’ rather than ‘kid’ to refer to a young human being or to spell the word ‘you’ as ‘Y-O-U’ rather than using the shorthand ‘U’”.

According to Van Schalkwyk (2008:16), the development of literacy is also extended to include “acquiring knowledge itself and the code of transmission (the discourse)”. She quotes Bourdieu’s stance that:

“pedagogical communication is characterized by a determined effort to eliminate misinterpretation and teaching is at its most effective not when it succeeds in transmitting the greatest quantity of information in the shortest time..., but rather when most of the information conveyed by the teacher is actually received” (2008:17).

This quote clearly illustrates that Bourdieu had already developed a model to limit misunderstanding between the teacher and the learner. Vocabulary was developed and taught to students within context and in specific subject content in order to avoid misunderstandings and to ensure clarity in the teaching-learning environment. Bourdieu changed “a rhetoric of despair” into “academically appropriate-sounding words” for specific “communities of practice” (Van Schalkwyk, 2008:16).

Boughey (2013:27) also acknowledges this model and states that it was refined by Cummins to include the distinction to be made between Basic Interpersonal Communication (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). It implies that specific jargon was developed for a specific subject. Learners will no longer be stigmatized if they use the correct words in a specific context. Students just

need to “master the language” to be successful (Starfield as quoted by Boughey, 2013:27). These researchers hoped to eliminate all misunderstandings through their models and students would then become academically literate! Again, the solution to the very complex problem is opportunistic. The reality is that there are still a large number of students who do not have the academic literacy competence to cope at tertiary level. The concept “academic literacy” will now be analyzed.

2.4 ACADEMIC LITERACY

Through the decades academic literacy distinguished itself as separate from the term “literacy” the noun: lit-er-a-cy. A simple definition of literacy is:

“...1. the ability to read and write; 2: knowledge that relates to a specified subject” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2016).

But still there were gaps. Based on the work of social constructivists such as Piaget and Vygotsky, a study skills model was developed with writing and literacy as a cognitive personal skill (Johnston & Anderson, 2005:3). “This (refined) approach” will only focus on the surface features of language form. Minor language problems were not treated as a problem anymore. It also presumes that students can transfer their knowledge of writing and literacy “unproblematically from one context to another” (Lea & Street, 2006:369:). It implies that if a student mastered the jargon and knowledge transfer in one area of work, it will smoothly be applied in another field of study. It seems then that students’ progression from lower order learning patterns into more advance learning skills is something that can be practiced and learned and, as with other skills, remedial exercises can assist into gaining these new skills.

Simultaneously and overlapping each other, an academic socialization model as well as an academic literacy model were two popular models that were developed from the same psychological perspectives and influences, namely social constructivism (Lea & Street, 2006:16).

The academic socialization model emphasized the need to offer a learning context where students are “inculcated into a new culture, that of the academy” (Van Schalkwyk, 2008:22, quoting Jones, Turner & Street, 1999). Meanwhile, the academic literacy model was also “concerned with meaning making, identity,

power and authority” (Lea & Street, 2006:18). This was also a scaffolding model building from lower order learning patterns into more advance learning skills; and focused on developing an own identity in a new culture or social environment where there are certain power structures. Students must know their words and know their place in the hierarchy of learning. They were supposed to treat those who know better with respect and follow their lead.

Additional to these, a similar but differently named study skills model required students to adapt to the academic world at universities. This model expected students to learn a set of skills that would ensure them to be academically literate (Van Schalkwyk, 2008:22). It corresponded with Bourdieu’s “rhetoric of despair” (as quoted by Van Schalkwyk, 2008:18), claiming that university students cannot cope because lecturers communicate beyond the understanding of students. Students will only survive as long as they use all the “academically appropriate-sounding words in their texts” (Van Schalkwyk, 2008:18:). However, carefully comparing these models from Bourdieu, later on Jones, Turner, Lea (1999:) and Lea and Street (2006:18), there seems to be no difference between these models. It only adds to the confusion of an academic environment full of expectations but with no practical solutions. It can then be derived that some of the confusion seems to be the fact that a number of programmes were introduced that had the same context but differed in the names and terms used for it.

According to Johnston and Anderson (2005:3), all of these models relied heavily on techniques

“such as mindmapping and the host of ‘creativity’ and ‘critical thinking’ models and heuristics (which) are potentially relevant to both study skills and information literacy in that they provide the means by which individual pupils might enhance their skills in these areas”.

The large variety of models represents a number of “creative” models for tertiary institutions to choose from. Institutions can successfully assist students at tertiary level to become academically literate, because there is such a large variety available. Ideally spoken, students will then be able to cope with their studies and know how to learn what they are supposed to learn; they will know how to convey

this newly gained knowledge in a specific environment without misunderstanding. There are enough models available to institutions, but according to a report by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) "...performance in higher education is marked by high levels of failure and dropout" (CHE Report, 2013:15). It seems there should be less confusion and more solutions to the problem of academic literacy!

The above mentioned and limited examples briefly highlighted and indicated the background and historical development, as well as the complexity of academic literacy.

It becomes even more confusing when researchers use different terms for the same basic model. Johnston and Anderson (2005:5) capture this confusion in stating that

"(t)he term 'study skills' refers to the conscious and deliberate use of the processes of learning to achieve effective study practices. The term 'learning how to learn' is used to denote a similar idea. There is a great deal of overlap between what one will find in an up-to-date textbook or web site on study skills and a similarly up-to-date textbook or web site on learning to learn. Both deal with the idea that pupils and students can and should be helped to develop conscious, deliberate control over the mechanisms of their own learning".

As such, the concept "academic literacy" needs to be defined before any recent models can be discussed. It must be determined if it is the same as an academic socialization and study skills model.

2.5 CONCEPTUALISATION OF ACADEMIC LITERACY

As stated above, the concept of "academic literacy" is an imprecise construct. An in-depth literature review has revealed many definitions of academic literacy and emphasizes that a concise and explicit definition of academic literacy, containing all the fundamental facets, is challenging. Indeed, Baynham (1995:2) states that literacy cannot be "neatly and easily defined" and that there is no broadly agreed-upon sole definition of academic literacy. Kern (2000:23) states that "(L)iteracy is an elastic concept" with different meanings for different disciplines and that the

meaning differs in each discipline. Section 2.4 of this chapter highlights the confusion created by these differences.

Academic literacy seems to be the major problem in itself. It shifts the boundaries every time that some researcher wants to fence it in. The dynamics of academic literacy itself are the stumbling blocks that the current researchers tried to deal with. This phenomenon is not modern in itself. It cannot be defined, labeled and then neatly be boxed with a remedy and prescription attached to the problem. Van Dyk (2005:41) highlights the three major responsibilities of an academic literacy programme to help define it:

“The first ... responsibility ... is the assessment of new first-year students’ academic literacy by means of a reliable, valid and standardized measuring instrument. Its second task is to supply adequate (language) support to those students who are at risk of not completing their studies in the minimum time allowed, by teaching fully credit-bearing support courses to them. ... (L)astly (it is) required to teach several other language and language related courses to students who are not at risk as determined by the academic literacy measuring instrument. This includes academic reading, academic writing, legal discourse, communication for organizations, communication skills for engineers, etc.”.

This study attempts to support Van Dyk’s research which exposed that to be of real value, an academic literacy programme must be able to determine the needs of the student (2005:41). This baseline assessment must be an indicator if there are any needs that will classify the students into a category: “at risk”-students have certain shortfalls or deficiencies; and the problems that exist, require the implementation of specific “remedies”. These remedies must be in the form of support. But, according to Van Dyk (2005:41), support must not be offered to the “at risk”-students only: it must be for all first-years. All first-year students will need different kinds of support to complete their studies, but all will definitely receive academic literacy support, due to the specialized language needs at tertiary level.

Weideman (2009: vi) also supports this view by stating “Language proficiency is an important predictor of learner success”. Both Weideman (2009) and Van Dyk

(2014) emphasize that the important value of the academic literacy programme is not only for at risk students, but for all first-year entrants who will be following such a specific academic literacy programme. It is important to socialize all students gently into the academic world. They both claim that “at risk”-students must not feel labelled and stigmatized by the support. This programme should not label students as deficient or lacking certain skills but be regarded as part of a process of induction into any tertiary course. All students who are introduced to a course will be supported by an academic literacy programme as a field of study.

Furthermore, to enhance the academic literacy programme, students must be credited for the achievements during the support process. The holistic value is to present academic literacy to “students who are at risk, academically, because they are tripped up by language” (Weideman, 2009:vii); but also to assist all students in the transfer of knowledge in a specific field of study to be proficient in the language or jargon of the course. Therefore, it is essential that such a programme would allow students to communicate their newly gained knowledge in a proficient way, without any misunderstanding since they understand the jargon to be used.

This implies that researchers must look beyond the obvious indications of an inability to read and write in an academic environment. They should allow themselves as academics and their academic practices to be researched as well to find a solution to the problem of deficient academic literacy among students. There seems to be a wider context to look for the problems associated with academic literacy, with a more flexible definition to capture the problem. A modern approach is needed for an old problem, which was seemingly regarded a student-centered problem only.

2.6 RECENT MODELS AND THEORY ON ACADEMIC LITERACY

Henderson and Hirst quote Ivanic (1998) who stated that a large number of the research on academic literacy focused on how to socialize students into “proper” academic practices without being critical of the practices themselves” (Henderson & Hirst, 2007:5). As mentioned before, the problem seems wider than just reading, understanding and writing. It needs to include the social environment and context in which these practices take place. There seems to be fewer problems when students

discuss academic problems between themselves than when they present those in a formal situation; especially in a traditional format of writing or reading.

According to the above-mentioned opinions, it seems more obvious that the students' competence may not be the only problem, but that there might be problems in other areas as well. As a point of departure, the academic environment where the teaching and learning take place, may be a huge stumbling block to the transfer of knowledge due to the power structures in such an academic environment.

2.6.1 Skills-neutral Perspective

Previously the student was seen as the variable that needs to change. The programmes were created and implemented with the emphasis on the students to adapt to a new environment. They must become “sufficiently literate and proficient in reading, writing and communicating to obtain academic success” (Weideman 2009: vi). To successfully do so, the students must be able to convey this newly gained knowledge in an academic sound situation by means of academically appropriate-sounding words in their texts (Bourdieu, as quoted by Van Schalkwyk, 2008:26).

Van Dyk (2014:135), who is a seminal researcher in academic literacy, claims the older models have an “outdated concept of language”. He states that to be academically literate, a student must be able to interact with content and context and not only acquire “knowledge of sound, vocabulary, form, and meaning”. According to him current models emphasize a “much richer view of language competence,” and they are less concerned with the successful usage of academic language. “The focus has shifted from discrete language skills to the attainment of academic literacy” (2014:135).

Although Weideman and Van Dyk agree to a change in this “outdated and inaccurate division of language into ‘skills’” (2014:ix), Weideman also thinks that students still experience the inability to use academic discourse; to them it is a “hurdle”, with “reading ability” identified by him as a “primary problem” (Weideman, 2014:xi). He claims this problem has a strong link to insufficient first language training (2013:1). In South Africa, this gap in first language education is relevant, as the majority of

learners in post-apartheid South Africa are taught through the medium of English, which is not their mother tongue (Weideman, 2013; Horne & Heineman, 2012).

The above-mentioned researchers claim that because of the poor training in their first language or Language of Teaching and Learning (LOLT), learners still do not know how to use the language of teaching and learning to their benefit. They still lack the manipulative skills of language to do what they want to do with their newly gained knowledge. They still lack the ability to transfer their new knowledge which they have read in a text and have taken notes from a lecture. They lack the ability to communicate their academic experiences in an academically sound manner to their lecturers to understand their work sufficiently to assess it. Weideman states that a focus on reading, writing and mathematical skills, even refined to include the skills of reading, writing, taking notes and taking exams, did not change much to the students' success.

A change in perspective of the skills-based academic literacy programmes, need to focus more on the design of a skills -neutral perspective. In reality students work with all skills, those of reading, writing, speaking and listening, integrated and closely linked together (Weideman, 2013:3 – 4). Both Weideman & Van Dyk (2014, 2017) suggest a “skills-neutral” definition for academic language “...imbued with cognitive as well as analytical processing” (Weideman & Van Dyk, 2014:2). It should entail a holistic support system where students can gather information, process that information and produce new information, sometimes with many other voices (Weideman & Van Dyk, 2014:1). Therefore, students must put together all their skills and resources to gather information, to process it and to control it in a meaningful manner before they can progress to the next level of learning. They must also be able to manipulate their language in a meaningful, academic sound manner, taking into consideration their environment and the context of the work to be done.

This view is supported by Seligmann and Gravett (2010:2) who describe academic literacy as fundamental for students who should be able to “engage with texts”. They suggest that students treat academic reading and writing as important “tools” that will enhance their studies, but also to be used in their future careers. For them, it is very important that students have a firm control over their language abilities, not only for

their academic work, but for their professional future as well. As previously mentioned, they propose that students should be able to adapt to their social and professional environment in a convincing manner (2010). Furthermore, it seems vital that students have a proper command of the jargon used in their field of study to also convince their colleagues and the working environment of their ability to perform their professional tasks to a satisfactory level. Academic literacy now extends into their future!

Likewise, Matoti and Shumba say that writing at a higher educational institute involves “the use of the specific academic language... (and) students are expected to be critical, to process information, to use the correct terminology, to follow a logical order and to make references” (2012:2). Although their focus seems to be on writing skills, it may include the other communication skills and abilities as well. According to them, the necessity for academic language and academic literacy is not without credibility, but it is an expectation created by the academic environment. It is therefore vital that the newly qualified graduate should be able to communicate his ability to perform practically.

2.7 NEW LITERACIES

Another researcher, Gee (2008:2), posits that academic literacy “should be conceived as being multiple or comprising different literacies”. According to him, the traditional concept of reading and writing and communication in general has changed. “Visual images and literacies” and “multimodal literacies” are changing and need to be placed in context (Gee, 2008:3). A shift in the way we look at texts must allow a broader view to tolerate different modes of communication. Thus, as we have changed our ways in thinking regarding mathematics and the numeracy tables that were taught, it seems that Gee wants us to reconsider reading different “kinds of texts in ways that meet our particular purposes in reading them” (Gee, 2008:3). This seemingly will allow the student to communicate his newly gained knowledge in a different “kind of text”. The student may not necessarily use the traditional print-based format but may use multimodal literacies to communicate his understanding of the knowledge. This seems to shift the focus from the student to the text. The academic world must have a broader view of communication to accommodate these differences away from the traditional “print-based texts” (Gee, 2008:3).

Gee (2008) explains the text is the traditional spoken and printed narrative that is widely used in the academic world. Students use these texts to study from. Students enhance these texts with more texts and notes that are created by them to make meaning of their situation and their new knowledge that need to be assessed by the academic world. They discuss these notes and texts with their friends, often via technology and social media, and show their own understanding thereof. But then they lack the ability to convey the message to their lecturer sufficiently to receive the academic credits they need to succeed in their studies. Gee (2008:3) appeals for a modern approach which requires the transfer of knowledge to be more flexible and in line with technology. Once again, the academic world needs a new approach to literacy.

2.7.1 New Literacies as a Social Practice

The researcher wants to introduce a scenario to explain this new literacies model. For example, a student and his friends use social media (a common social practice among students) which seems to open up the world of learning for the student. The students are still exposed to new information. The students still need to internalize this information and still need to apply it. These are all skills as advocated by Weideman, (2014); Matoti and Shumba, (2012); Seligman and Gravett, (2010). These are basic requirements for any tertiary qualification. It seems our students must still be able to use language, based on their past experience and prior knowledge. The student must “do things with language like explain, define, compare, contrast, classify, agree, disagree, illustrate, elaborate, make claims, see implications, infer, exemplify, anticipate and conclude” (Weideman & Van Dyk, 2014). All the mentioned skills can be applied through a modern approach.

Street (2003:77) also supports this deviation from traditional academic literacy by explaining that the New Literacies Model deals with thinking of literacy as a “social practice” and not so much of the literacy skills associated with academic literacy. Tertiary qualifications require a specific method to “explain” or to “define” or to “list”. When the student cannot explain, define or list, due to a lack of interpretation or to a lack of communication abilities, that student

underachieves. This is where the New Literacies Model fills the gap, as students can use multimodal literacies (Gee, 2008:3). They are not limited to print-based texts and notes.

Street (2003) and Gee (2008) emphasize the use of technology. The previously mentioned student can be regarded as the prototype of a typical young South African today. It is common practice to find the younger generation explaining and demonstrating the complex operations of a cell phone. They may not be able to define the technicalities or to list the various components that are needed to complete a cell phone message, but they have used their prior knowledge to master the new knowledge. They are adventurous enough to make mistakes and find a new way around problematic situations, with unique problem-solving skills. They internalize new knowledge and recognize it as a tool to progress and explore new opportunities. They did not wait for the academic vocabulary or jargon to make a change and to use modern technology to their benefit.

Van Schalkwyk (2008), quoting Baynham and Prinsloo (2001:83), is of the opinion that these New Literacies Studies, typify literacy researchers who have “taken both a social turn and a discourse analytic turn in their research”. Lecturers for these post-modern students must adjust and employ a new approach. They must adapt to the new, post-modern approach which the younger generation are exploiting in a fast-developing world.

She summarizes the model as based on “the difference between lecturer expectations and student abilities, and the extent to which students are able to manipulate language” (2008:18). It therefore seems that for this approach to literacy, an “academic literate student” will be able to adapt to the academic environment with little interference, or disturbance, from his background, his identity or his language abilities. His academic performance will depend on his ability to operate and control, amongst others, his language; in a socially acceptable way for his lecturers, his friends as well as his future working environment.

2.7.2 Cultural sensitive Perspective or Ideological model

This view supports the New Literacies perspective and opens up a more flexible way of communication which leads to a culturally sensitive perspective. Boughey and McKenna (2016:3) express themselves against the use of English Academic Literacy that was used in response to the language problem. In South Africa English was mainly used for academic purposes. It is not the mother tongue of the majority of students (CHE, 2016). This is especially noticeable in the difficulty when students need to convey complex and abstract concepts in an academic environment. What the students need is not "... a set of allegedly neutral reading and writing 'skills' in the belief that this was what students needed to succeed in the academy" (Boughey & McKenna, 2016:3; Street, 2003). The academy should allow students to develop their own identity in their search for knowledge. The academy must be adventurous enough to accept a post-modern approach based on more socially acceptable solutions to problems in the society.

Their view is in response to Brian Street's previous critique against a "neutral and universal" literacy which "disguises the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin it" (Street, 2003:77). According to Street, the autonomous, skills-neutral approach "is simply imposing western conceptions of literacy on to other cultures", and he suggests a more "culturally sensitive view" (Street, 2003:77). For Street, both reading and writing are practices in response to text. Both must create meaning in their community. The knowledge gained must add value to the students' community and must be transferred in a sensitive manner; sensitive towards the values and principles of that community.

2.8 CHALLENGES

To be credible and reliable, to be academically successful, communication relies firstly on satisfying the expectations of the course lecturer; that is, to supply the answers that the lecturer wants. But it is equally important for the student to use language and to do things with language; to use it and to control it, which is typical manipulative behaviour. The student must successfully convince his "community" of his point of view; and "it must be valued in the academy" (Boughey & McKenna, 2016:3), a competence that every tertiary student must have. This evidence-based knowledge must make use of language in a variety of ways, according to Gee (2008). However, this creates a challenge for the majority of students in South Africa

to say and do it in an unfamiliar language, the language of learning and teaching which is not their mother tongue or first language.

Weideman (2013) believes that in South Africa most first languages lack “appropriate material in that language ... and ... the likelihood of transferring reading proficiency in one’s first language to such an additional language”. He continues to mention that

“(t)he low status of African languages in the minds of their own first language speakers remains unaltered... (with) an enduring scarcity of first language reading material for children who have an African language as first language. Often as a result of the deliberate choice of their parents, many of them are exposed to their additional language, English, before they have a settled competence in their first ... They therefore do not have an adequate, generic reading proficiency to transfer to an additional language” (Weideman, 2013:7).

This opinion is supported by Horne and Heinemann (2012:15), quoting Ngugi wa Thiong’o:

“One’s home/mother language is an important cognitive and communication tool. At present I do not believe that we Africans are doing justice to this noble cause of safeguarding our languages. On the contrary, we seem to be doing everything possible to bastardise and downgrade our beautiful languages.”

In a strongly worded article Boughey and McKenna (2016:2) emphasize that

“the problem of mainly black students in higher education because of ‘language issues’ is a liberal one that allowed a seemingly virtuous move away from previous apartheid explanations of cognitive difference. ...The difficulty of engaging with complex abstract concepts in a language other than one’s home language is ...the convenient catch-all explanation for the racially differentiated success rates which continue to this day (quoted from CHE, 2016).

Gee had already warned that the higher education sector is contributing to the problem in 1990. Boughey and McKenna support his view and elaborate that they are of the opinion that the higher education sector simply “reinforces the inequalities of the status quo of uneven access to a graduate qualification” (Boughey & McKenna, 2016:4). The academic world seems to have a secret “code” that students need to break without anyone assisting or “explaining how it works” (McKenna, 2012). The student with limited exposure to Academic Discourse (quoted from Gee, 1990) will have limited access to the academy and will feel alienated and lost in that community. They will only understand and convey meaning once they can communicate in a known way to their own identity; an alternative way where they have meaning of the concepts and where they are able to explain it in their own way. Boughey and McKenna (2016:6) plead for a “decolonisation” of language; to claim their new knowledge; to decontextualize literacy. “To be able to produce evidence-based knowledge claims, students not only need to know that this is what is valued in the university but also to ‘give themselves permission’ to try to make those claims (Boughey & McKenna, 2016:6).

Language is not only an academic tool but is socially constructed to convey meaning and understanding within a context. It must allow students to convey value systems and understanding of complex concepts to give meaning and to add value to their community. It must allow them access to tertiary knowledge that can add value to who they are and what they do in their community. Students must be allowed to make mistakes, to redo their work after feedback until they can be what they need to be and what they want to be. They must be given space to familiarize themselves into the world of the academe, which is exactly what tertiary institutions are, and both the lecturers and the students are responsible for a space that is conducive to learning. Teaching and learning should take place in a joint venture. The gap that exists from secondary teaching to tertiary teaching must be addressed in this space, “especially when dealing with students who have been exposed to inadequate schooling and limited resources” (Paxton, 2007:48). Students need to adapt to the new environment; that of the academe and need to learn a new set of values and social practices to achieve the desired outcomes. Language is a tool to use, but it is also a value to embrace in this culturally sensitive space. However, the researcher is not convinced that universities have the space and time to deal with such a relaxed

concept in the South African context, mainly if the goals of transformations must be kept in mind as well.

2.9 MULTIMODAL LITERACIES

In the light of the above evidence, Boughey and McKenna (2016) claim that the reason why the academic literacy courses are unsuccessful, is the lack of understanding that students must be allowed to function through multiple literacies. Their lecturer must allow space for each student to develop a new identity; to refine writing abilities through constant feedback and exposure to the desired outcomes to be reached; something that is desired, but highly unlikely to happen. Tertiary institutions rely on written work for assessment purposes and as a communication strategy to convince the lecturer of a student's ability to master the new knowledge.

Weideman states that what precedes writing is the ability to gather academic information; to process academic information and to produce this information "in collaboration with many other voices" (2014:1).

"The point is ... to use language for academic purposes we need to *gather* information (perhaps by listening, but also by writing, or reading up, or speaking with others), *process* that information (either by thinking how to write it up in summary form, for example by tabulating it or presenting it graphically), and finally *produce* it (which we can do by speaking, or presenting it for discussion, or writing it)" (Weideman & Van Dyk, 2014:2).

The above view corresponds with the opinion of Gee (2008:2) as mentioned earlier in this chapter (2.7) and is affirmed by Thesen and Van Pletzen (2006). These multimodal literacies require not only reading and writing skills from the students and lecturers, but also require some modern technology to be implemented. Computer literacy is an added dimension in the academic literacy package that needs to be imported into the programme. However, Thesen and Van Pletzen are of the opinion that it can only add value to students who may be disadvantaged, since they will then be exposed to new literacies: those of their voices and movement (2006). These students will be able to gather information, process that information and

produce their understanding of information in other than the traditional written format as commonly expected.

2.10 DEVELOPMENT AND AIM OF ACADEMIC LITERACY

From this very brief background, it is evident that academic literacy is a complex phenomenon. The different models and approaches are not clearly defined, and new trends and tendencies often emerge. Each new approach seems to fill in the gaps left by previous models, but simultaneously, through practice and experience new shortfalls arise.

In practice, lecturers are constantly complaining and requesting assistance to help students to read more efficiently, to write more logically and to communicate in general more effectively. Lecturing staff, including myself, complain in general about the quality of language used, which includes the basic language structures, vocabulary and grammar structures. The institutions introduced programmes to rectify the problem, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, (2.2).

Primarily, the aim of an academic literacy programme is to equip students with some basic literacy skills required for successful studying in English, the language of teaching and learning (LoLT) at most universities in South Africa, including the Central University of Technology (CUT Calendar, 2018).

2.11 MODELS USED AT A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

As this research study aims to examine an academic literacy programme at a specific institution, the next section will examine the development of an academic literacy programme as presented by the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus.

2.12 BACKGROUND OF ACADEMIC LITERACY AT CUT

In 2009 a compulsory programme was introduced to all first-year students by the newly formed Central University of Technology (Council resolution CR 13/09/03). It was implemented in 2010 and driven from the Bloemfontein campus, but with its own co-ordinator in Welkom. A revised but similar programme was later introduced by

Kabello Sebolai from Central University of Technology, but since it was grounded in the work of Van Wyk, the focus will be on the original programme.

The programme used was developed by Van Wyk, from the University of the Free State. The programme was introduced as a joint venture by the CUT and UFS, with two main objectives, namely, to develop reading skills and secondly to enhance writing skills (2010:3). The programme aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- “By completing comprehension-based activities and problem-solving tasks, learners will be able to develop their English language-reading skills.
- Learners will be able to express their opinions about a variety of issues fluently, critically as well as creatively in the mode of oral discussion.
- Learners will be able to express information and opinions clearly and with appropriate organisation in the written mode.
- On completion of the course learners will be able to:
 - Use a particular strategy to organise and comprehend texts;
 - Identify and understand the functions of discourse markers in texts;
 - Make inferences based on a given text;
 - Accurately complete comprehension-based and problem-solving tasks in the mode of written presentation;
 - Extend their vocabulary;
 - Write paragraphs and expository essays based on passages read;
 - Summarise the main ideas of a written text”.

Based on the above evidence, the programme relies heavily on a skills-based approach. Students were required to use grammar structures properly and with correct vocabulary to produce the desired texts to convince their lecturers that they have gained some new knowledge. The carefully selected texts were used with dictionaries to expand vocabulary and were assessed formally with a series of assessments and presentations. Oral presentations were carefully prepared, and students increasingly read, wrote and spoke to achieve good results for this subject. Just as in many other South African universities, there was the expectation that this programme was all that was necessary to curb the problem of poor academic literacy skills amongst students.

2.13 SHORTCOMINGS OF ACADEMIC LITERACY PROGRAMME

What seems to be neglected is that academic literacy is more than just reading, writing and speaking, as mentioned in the section on the New Literacies Model above. It entails more than finding information, reproducing information and presenting it in a new format. One of the outcomes was to complete “comprehension-based activities and problem-solving tasks” (Van Wyk, 2010:3). Comprehension, according to the researcher’s own understanding, means to grasp a concept; or to understand exactly what is meant. Lecturers, including myself, still find that students do not understand exactly what is meant; very often they do not read the complete instruction and will only complete the first section of an instruction.

Another restriction on the programme developed by Van Wyk, is the generic, multi-disciplinary approach. This programme was introduced to all first-year entrants across the spectrum. A more focused programme was suggested with a stronger disciplinary focus.

From the above it is clear that academic literacy is not about language and language structures, it is a social practice (Boughey, 2013; Street, 2003:77); more so in the multicultural environment of the Central University of Technology, Welkom. In line with policy of Central University of Technology, the language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) is English. For the majority of students on the Welkom campus the language of teaching and learning is not their mother tongue. A large number of students are not educated in their mother tongue, because they received their secondary level of training also in English. Academic literacy should allow them access into the world of the academe where they will compete with and learn from experts in their field of study. They need to gather information and use that information to confidently change and transform their environment.

2.14 NEW CURRICULUM FOR B ED PROGRAMME

In a resolution approved by The Council of CUT, no CR 16/11/06 of 2014, a decision was taken that with the new curriculum of the Baccalaureus Educationist qualification, the programme for Education Students would be changed. According to this resolution, the generic, multi-disciplinary approach was changed to a more

focused curriculum. The newly introduced subject, Academic Literacy and Communication Studies would be added “(T)o provide non - first language speaker students with fundamental language proficiency skills in that language” (2014:17) and it would then be expanded to include Language of Teaching and Learning 1 and Language of Teaching and Learning II. This would allow students to familiarize themselves with “... knowledge and skills in learning and teaching language” and also “(t)o enable the students to extend their knowledge and understanding of language required for their professional role, and improve their ability to use English both generally and for classroom purposes” (2015:16).

The current programme includes a range of skills and techniques that students can use to acquaint them into the world of the academe. The programme follows the work as described in the textbook, *Academic Literacy*, with seminal authors Beekman, Dube, Potgieter and Underhill. In the foreword, Potgieter mentions the problems of first-year students to include “demanding schedules, classes taught by people who seem to speak another language, and tests and assignments” (2016:1). The aim of the programme is to help students find their own “voice and be able to use it effectively when you argue and explain academic concepts, when you write assignments and examinations and when you interact with people” (2016:1). The focus is still strongly on reading, writing and speaking, but with online resources made accessible to students, they also become familiar with modern technology and have the ability to use technological advanced web links and exercises to add to the traditional voice they had.

Furthermore, the programme also includes a more culturally sensitive and social approach. They introduce the programme to enable students to:

- “demonstrate an understanding of the demands of academic study;
- “know what knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are required to succeed in higher education;
- Understand the requirements of academic tasks and assignments;
- Understand the requirements of academic reading and writing; and
- Understand what links reading, thinking and writing in academic study” (Beekman et al., 2016:4).

The new programmes were introduced in 2016. Although the literacy programme is more focused on teaching and learning for Education students, it still lacks a discipline focus; it is not really “disciplinary literacies within disciplinary domains” as suggested by (Jacobs, 2015). Her suggestion to have academic literacy specialists in each department that will focus on the needs of that department, has still not been implemented. According to Beekman et al., a student needs to have the “basic academic skills” such as “reading and writing”, but it must develop to include more critical skills such as thinking and communication which are “skills that all employers expect from employees” (Beekman et al., 2016:4).

Academic literacy, as suggested above, includes more than basic reading and writing and vocabulary or subject-specific vocabulary. It reaches beyond to include amongst others, academic argument, plagiarism, assignment writing and examination skills. Students will be supported to use paraphrasing to avoid plagiarism (Beekman et al., 2016: iii-vi).

Although it seems that academic literacy is a vague concept, it must still be recognised as a subject with real significance. It needs to undergo constant changes to keep up with the dynamics of the student corpus, and it needs to develop with the changes in the academic literacy domain.

2.15 CONCLUSION

The construct of academic literacy was explored in this chapter. Various conceptualizations of academic literacy were provided. The historical development of academic literacy was provided, and attention was given to models and theory. Furthermore, the development and implementation of a programme was analyzed as it is presented at the Central University of Technology, Welkom Campus.

In the next chapter the researcher will discuss the research methodology suggested for this study.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

“Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

-Francis of Assisi -

3.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Greater pressure is put on both students to succeed and universities to increase their throughput rates (refer to chapter 2). Students are seemingly under-prepared for teaching and learning at the tertiary institutions. According to Van Schalkwyk, these first-year students may not be academically successful as they are, among others, not academically prepared for higher education, and “an important aspect of such under-preparedness is their academic literacy” (Van Schalkwyk, 2008:24). This was also supported by Van Wyk (2010:3), who was one of the first developers of such a programme for the Central University of Technology (refer to Chapter 2).

Universities include academic literacy programmes to bridge the gap between inadequate schooling and the more advanced university environment. As mentioned in Chapter 2, (refer to Section 4), academic literacy programmes were also introduced to the Welkom campus of Central University of Technology in 2010 with the aim of assisting students to be more prepared to succeed in their tertiary studies.

Previous research done by seminal authors and mentioned in Chapter 2 (refer from 2.5 onwards) provided a background to the development of these academic literacy programmes. More research was conducted to determine the effect that the selected programme had specifically on the Welkom campus of the Central University of Technology and on the academic success of these students.

This chapter will discuss the methodological design and procedures employed in the research study to ascertain the evaluation of an academic literacy programme among first-year Education students specializing in Languages at a university of technology in South Africa; namely the Welkom campus of the Central University of

South Africa. The rationale for the study will be stated briefly.

3.2. RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

Although a variety of academic literacy programmes were introduced to South African universities, it seems not obvious that these programmes are successful (Van Wyk, 2001:220; Weideman, 2013:3-4; Brussow, 2007; Horne & Heineman, 2012; Van Rensburg & Weideman, 2002; Weideman & Van der Silk, 2008). This research study will focus mainly on the effects of such an academic literacy programme at a University of Technology in the Free State, namely the Welkom campus of the Central University of Technology, as mentioned in Chapter 1.

3.2.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Since an Academic Language Proficiency programme is already implemented at the University of Technology under investigation, its effectiveness and appropriateness need to be determined (Weideman, 2008:1). The study needs to find out if the academic literacy programme is working effectively. The problem seems to be that the students are still not academically prepared for the needs of the university.

In Welkom, the student population is mainly non-mother tongue English students, a group which has very low levels of English proficiency, according to Van Rensburg and Weideman (2002:153) and mentioned in Chapter 1. In view of the above, it would be particularly insightful to evaluate the success of the Academic Literacy Programme of the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus.

3.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to find answers for the research problem as stated above, the following questions seem to lead to appropriate answers.

The main question is: Does the Academic Literacy Programme implemented at the target institution, correlate with the English language proficiency needs of the first-year Education students specializing in Languages?

Subsequent questions to assist in determining the main question are:

3.2.2.1 Do Gr 12-learners entering university have sufficient literacy skills to cope with the demands of tertiary study?

3.2.2.2 What are the background to and the structure of the Academic Literacy Programme used at the participant institution?

3.2.2.3 Is the Academic Literacy Programme (PRE) (baseline and formative academic literacy) successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of first-year Education students, specializing in Languages, at a university of technology?

3.2.2.4 Which problems are experienced by lecturers involved in the Academic Literacy Programme?

3.3 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The Central University of Technology presents a qualification where students who qualify, can practise as professional teachers in Languages. This tertiary qualification is offered in the Faculty of Humanities at the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus.

The research will be done on the Welkom Campus of the Central University of Technology. This is the campus where the researcher is based and where the researcher experiences the efficiencies of lack of it on a daily base. The researcher is also familiar with the operations on the campus and knows the formalities to get permission to continue with the study. The data collection process could begin once permission had been obtained from, and appointments made to conduct the research with, both the Programme Head of the Education programme as well as the lecturers of the Academic Literacy Programme from whom the data was collected.

3.4 POPULATION

As mentioned, this study is aimed at getting information from a selected group of second year students. This will be the population of the study; which is a “complete set of events, people or things to which the research findings are to be applied.” (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee 2006:184). The Welkom Campus population for B Ed Languages is 114 second year students registered at the Welkom campus of the Central University of Technology, but only 95 students were attending class . The population were mostly black students from various ethnic groups. They were all in their late teenage years or early twenties.

The population were specifically Education students specializing in Languages. It refers to a tertiary qualification where successful candidates graduate after a minimum of four years of study with a Bachelor degree in Education.

The research data are collected from second year students. All of them would have completed the Academic Literacy course as prescribed by the Central University of Technology.

The Academic Literacy course is a compulsory course for all students at the Central University of Technology and is offered in the second semester of the first-year of study for all Education students. The study will only be administered after the completion of the course, hence in their second year of study.

The research is non-experimental as no attempt was made to change participants' behaviour in the research study. The participants were measured once.

Furthermore, seeing that all the Language students registered formed part of the research study, whole-frame sampling will be used based on the characteristics of a convenience sample, since the sample for data collection will be from a population who are conveniently available to participate in the study (Researchnet, 2018:1)

3.5 ETHICS

Written permission to conduct the research study was obtained from the Programme Head, Education, on the Welkom campus where the study was conducted (Addendum C). Once permission was obtained from the Programme Head, the Education students registered for Languages were consulted and permission obtained from them to participate in the research study. An appointment was made with them to administer the questionnaires.

The researcher personally kept the various appointments and administered the questionnaires to all Education students registered for Languages. Students were assured that participation was voluntary and that all data obtained would remain both confidential and anonymous. To ensure such anonymity, Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011:66) recommend that the names, as captured on an attendance list, be kept separate from the questionnaires and student responses. The researcher administered those two documents, namely the attendance registers and the questionnaires, to ensure that good ethical principles were followed.

An appointment to conduct the research interviews was made with the lecturers for the Academic Literacy module. Emails to confirm their availability for the interviews were sent to the individuals after a request for their participation was done by their Head of Department in their quarterly meeting. Their Programme Head was informed of the appointment dates and time with the lecturers.

The researcher personally honoured the various appointments and interviews lasting on average 12 minutes were held with the lecturers. They were assured that the participation was voluntary, and responses are treated as confidential.

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research study will broaden prior research by investigating the influence of an academic literacy programme on students at the Welkom campus of the Central University of Technology. A comprehensive literature study was completed to ensure a solid foundation for the research study.

Additional to the literature study, the data form part of a case study as described by Yin (2012:2). Research was conducted in the form of a mixed method research design, discussed below. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were utilised due to the specific nature of the research questions. This will allow the study then to use a mixed method design, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

3.6.1 CASE STUDY

A case study design is typically set in a real-world context and allows for investigating changes over time (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:137). They claim that case studies allow researchers to obtain a holistic understanding of how participants relate, interact with and make meaning of a phenomenon (Yin, 2012:2). For the purpose of this study, it is aimed at gaining greater insight and understanding of the impact of the Academic Literacy Programme on the academic literacy abilities of the first-year students in Education, specializing in Languages. There is a noticeable overlap between what Yin describes as a case study (2012) and what Leedy and Ormrod describe as a mixed method design (2010). The overlap allows for both strategies to be used to “avoid gross misfits” (Yin, 2012:5).

For the purpose of this research study, the single group of Education students studying Languages fitted the requirements of being a case study, as they were not studied individually.

3.6.2 MIXED METHOD RESEARCH

Furthermore, this study followed a mixed method research design. It consists of both qualitative and quantitative methods to determine the influence of an academic literacy programme on Education students at a university of technology. It also comprises both questionnaires from students and includes observations made by their lecturers as obtained during interviews. Those results were triangulated against the literature as presented in Chapter 2. These terms, namely qualitative research design, quantitative research design and mixed method research design will now be presented.

3.6.2.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Applying a qualitative research design, the researcher uses words and terms to evaluate and describe a phenomenon. It allows a flexibility where the researcher does not have a “fixed agenda” (Schultze, 2007:36). As such, qualitative research allows a holistic view, and it allows the researcher to “reformulate research questions” when needed; called an inductive approach to research (Schultze, 2007:36). Simultaneously, it will allow the researcher to understand phenomena in the state where it “naturally occurs” (Schultze, 2007:36; Yin 2012:2). This is similar to the mentioned scenario in Education where a phenomenon is described; in this case, to evaluate the influence of an Academic Literacy programme on a single group of students, allowing it to be a case study. The influence of such a programme will be noticed or observed by the academic corpse working with this specific group of students. These influences of the programme cannot be measured in numbers, but must be described in words and themes.

For this case study data will be collected in the form of open-ended questions asked during interviews with lecturers and recordings of their responses. They will formulate their own opinions about the academic literacy ability of students and will have an opinion about the value of an academic literacy programme as observed by them through student responses.

Leedy and Ormrod (2014:135) recommend qualitative research for similar studies because it will allow the researcher to “collect ... and examine (data) from various angles to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation”. There is a relationship between the different situations: between the academic literacy programme and the students, as observed by their lecturers.

A total of 7 interviews was held with lecturers of the Academic Literacy Programme at the Welkom campus of Central University of Technology. That is the total number of lecturers for the Academic Literacy Programme.

Of the 7 interviews administered, none were not completed or only partially completed. This implies a response rate of 100%. Neuman (2000:267) states that a response rate of 75% is usually acceptable. The response rate in this research study is therefore viewed as acceptable.

3.6.2.2 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

In general, this will be a more objectively measured research design where statistical information can be used to prove or disapprove a hypothesis or problem statement (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

In quantitative research, the focus will be more on the quantities of participants and to “describe patterns of behaviour in a group” (Schultze, 2007: 37). In this case study, descriptive statistics were used to describe or evaluate the influence of an academic literacy programme. By using Likert scale questionnaires, the researcher was able to determine the average students’ opinions about their own literacy abilities and the effect of an academic literacy programme on that mentioned literacy ability. The items are rated on a five-point Likert scale with “Strongly disagree” and “Strongly agree” as opposing anchors.

A total of 95 questionnaires will be administered to 95 Education registered students regularly attending classes for Languages at the Welkom campus. Respondents will answer 25 questions on a Likert scale (See Addendum A).

Of the 95 questionnaires administered, 80 were completed or only partially completed. This implies a response rate of 84,2%. Neuman (2000:267) states that a response rate of 75% is usually acceptable. The response rate in this research study is therefore viewed as acceptable.

3.6.2.3 MIXED METHOD DESIGN

Having mentioned the values of both the quantitative and the qualitative designs, it is necessary to recognise that both of them have a valuable contribution to make to this case study. Both the results from the qualitative and the quantitative design are necessary to draw a conclusion on this complex situation. As such, it is suggested by Creswell (2013:53, 60) that a mixed method design will be desirable.

Additionally, since neither qualitative nor quantitative methods were considered to be greater, Creswell described the synergistic approach to mixed methods research as explained by Hall and Howard (2011:59). According to this approach, it will create an “effective combination” of methods and its “analysis could work together within a mixed method design” (Creswell 2013:60). Creswell, Plano-Clark, Leedy and Ormrod all agree that greater insight into a complex area of research, such as academic literacy, can be achieved through a mixed method design (Creswell, J & Plano-Clark, V, 2011; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:97). Hence the research design will from now on be labelled as a mixed method design. This research design will then evaluate the effects of an academic literacy programme on Education students.

3.6.2.4 INTERVIEWS

The rationale for using interviews is based on the research done by Boyce and Neale who claim that interviews are “conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation” (2006:1). Because all interviewees will be interviewed using the same questions and in the same sequence, they are also labeled as structured interviews. The interviewees are all the lecturers for Academic Literacy, Welkom campus of the Central University of Technology (See Addendum B).

3.6.2.5 LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONNAIRES

Data were collected quantitatively using the following research tool, namely Likert scale questionnaires. Likert scale questionnaires are an acceptable instrument or tool to measure opinions, perceptions and behaviour across cultural groups. Pornel and Saldana quote Uebersax (2006) who listed 4 main characteristics for using Likert scales, namely ease of construction, administration, response and interpretation (Pornel & Saldana, 2013:12).

The Likert Scale for this research is a 5-point scale that offers a range of answer options — from one extreme attitude to another, like “extremely likely” to “not at all likely.” Typically, they include a moderate or neutral midpoint. This will allow for degrees of opinion to be discovered.

An added advantage to use the Likert scale is that it offers the participants options. When the participants have to think out broad answers, it may frustrate them or allow them to wander off the topic. It also allows the participants to answer specific

questions derived from the research questions. The researcher was available in the venue to assist the participants if they needed clarity on any question.

For ethical considerations and reliability, the researcher used unbiased language at an appropriate level to unpack the research questions (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011).

3.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability refers to the consistency of results. The findings must be believable and consistent.

The quantitative component of the data, Likert scale questionnaires, can be verified and proven with numbers and expressed as figures. To ensure maximum reliability and validity, a service provider, Quantemna, will do the analysis of these questionnaires.

The qualitative data, namely the interviews from the lecturers, is very subjective and credibility must be confirmed. The same service provider, namely Quantemna, will be used to analyse the transcriptions of the interviews. Triangulation is also a commonly used method for verifying accuracy that involves cross-checking information from multiple perspectives

(https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/research_ready/qualitative/validity). Triangulation will now be discussed.

3.7.1 TRIANGULATION

The rationale for mixing the methods are not only because they are equally strong and useful as Creswell (2013:60) suggested, but also to combine the results of both quantitative and qualitative research through triangulation to corroborate and correspond with each other (Creswell, 2013). He quoted Brynam (2006) as well as Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) to emphasize that multiple choices are used to justify mixing methods (Creswell, 2013), but also to cross validate results “in order that they may be mutually corroborated” (Creswell, 2013:62). It furthermore suggests that “employing both approaches enhance the integrity of findings” (Creswell, 2012:62), which is another valuable contribution to the study.

The case study will furthermore be triangulated against the literature used and discussed in the literature review, refer to chapter 2. It will be speculated upon for its relevance and the information gained.

The researcher has followed procedures to ensure reliability and validity as mentioned above. It can therefore be stated with confidence that the research study is reliable and valid.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Analysis refers to the “categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing of data to obtain answers to research questions and to test research hypotheses” (Creswell 2013). Data were collected personally by the researcher and analyzed using the mixed method design as described in 3.6.2.3. The analysis will be done by a private service provider, namely Quantemna.

In order to ensure maximum congruence between the research problem and the questions (refer to Chapter 1) the analysis and interpretation of the data are of the utmost importance.

The researcher used a tape recorder to capture the responses of the lecturers; which is the qualitative component of the data that were captured. These interviews were transcribed and sorted under the themes as presented by the research questions by Quantemna.

The quantitative data, which comprised the Likert scale questionnaires as completed by the students, were collected from the students after a hard copy of the questionnaires were distributed in their group. Announcements were made by the researcher regarding the two opposing anchors of the Likert scale, namely 0 to represent “Strongly disagree” and 5 representing “Strongly agree” on the scale. These questionnaires were collected by the researcher after completion and data were analysed by a professional analyst for maximum credibility and reliability. As recommended by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011:66) the researcher will “disassociate names from responses” to ensure maximum anonymity of the individual participants as mention previously in section 3.5.

All the original evidence, including the tape recorded interviews and the questionnaires from the students, will be made available as a back-up resource for the professional analysts, Quantemna.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the research design and methodology. The problem statement and the resulting research questions were provided. A description of the population was provided. Detailed information on the data collection was presented. A mixed method, non-experimental design was employed in this research study. The rationale for using the measuring instruments – both interviews and Likert scale questionnaires - were described. The procedures followed in the administration of the two measuring instruments were delineated as well as the ethical considerations surrounding the research study. The procedures utilised for the analysis of data were discussed. The research study was proven to have reliability and validity.

In chapter four, the results of the research study will be presented for the purpose of interpretation.

Chapter 4

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data with regards to the Research Questions

If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?

-Albert Einstein -

4.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the problems that South African universities struggle with is the policy directive for increased access, causing an increase in both student numbers as well as student diversity (Republic of South Africa Department of Education, 1997; Republic of South Africa Ministry of Education, 2001). Currently, the student populations of universities are more varied in terms of educational experience, cultural factors and social background than at any other time in the past (CHE Report, 2013). This increase in student numbers has led to an escalation in the number of students who may not be sufficiently motivated or prepared for higher education. Greater pressure is put on both students to succeed and universities to increase retention and throughput rates. Jones, Coetzee, Bailey and Wickham (2008:21) confirm this statement and state that "...under-resourced, low performance, typically ex-DET schools..." contribute mainly to student under-preparedness and poor literacy abilities at tertiary level.

As mentioned before, the risk for students becomes more evident when considering that most South African universities use English as language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) (CHE 2013; Jones, 2008; Van Schalkwyk, 2008), which is not the mother-tongue of the majority of South African students. Although the mentioned disadvantages, namely under-preparedness and English as Language of Learning and Teaching, must not be overestimated, the focus for this study is mainly on academic literacy to assist students to cope with the academic demands at tertiary level.

Academic literacy was regarded as a solution to bridge the gap between the poor schooling background and the more advanced demands of tertiary institutions. Therefore, a better understanding of academic literacy and the related factors that impact on student success in higher education is most important. The aim of this

study was to determine if the academic literacy programme implemented at Central University of Technology, Welkom, was indeed successful to bridge the gap for first-year students in B Ed Languages.

However, an understanding of the nature of the sample used in this study, will also assist in understanding the universality of the problem. The background and secondary school education of the sample is necessary to understand a little more about the respondents. It is not intended to be the only factors contributing to their background, but solely to be an indication of the complexity of their secondary school background.

Descriptive statistics of the sample will now be presented as an introduction, followed by an analysis and the interpretation of the data.

4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND DISCUSSION: THE SAMPLE

4.2.1 Biographical data

Biographical data are mainly a categorical analysis of the sample. The aim of these categorical measurements is mainly to determine if a significant association exists between the different variables. This may indicate a field for further study to open more possibilities for comparison in the success of academic literacy.

It is also necessary to indicate that the research was conducted during an English class, since English is compulsory for all Language students in the B Ed programme. The students were alerted of this test and all requirements followed as set out in Chapter 3. It was therefore a convenience sample as described in Chapter 3.

4.2.1.1 Gender distribution of the respondents in the sample

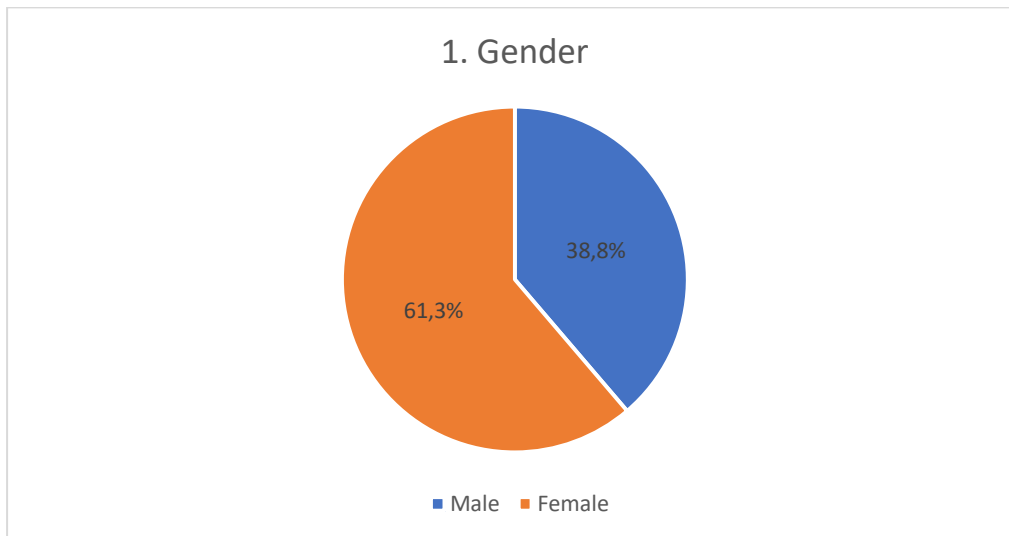


Figure 1 Gender distribution

1. Gender	
Male	Female
38,8%	61,3%
31	49

Table 1

A discussion of the graph (Figure 1) and the tabular breakdown as in Table 1 will now be presented.

The sample consisted of 80 students in the B Ed Languages programme. They are distributed as 38.8% males and 61.3% females. As the subjects in the sample are registered for B Ed (Languages), this could explain the slightly higher incidence of females in the sample, as Education is traditionally viewed as an accepted profession for females. Upon analysis, the impact of gender on the approaches to academic literacy is statistically insignificant as the study did not aim to determine any gender-based differences.

4.2.1.2 Ethnicity and Population group

Figure 2 is a graphical representation of the population group of the sample.

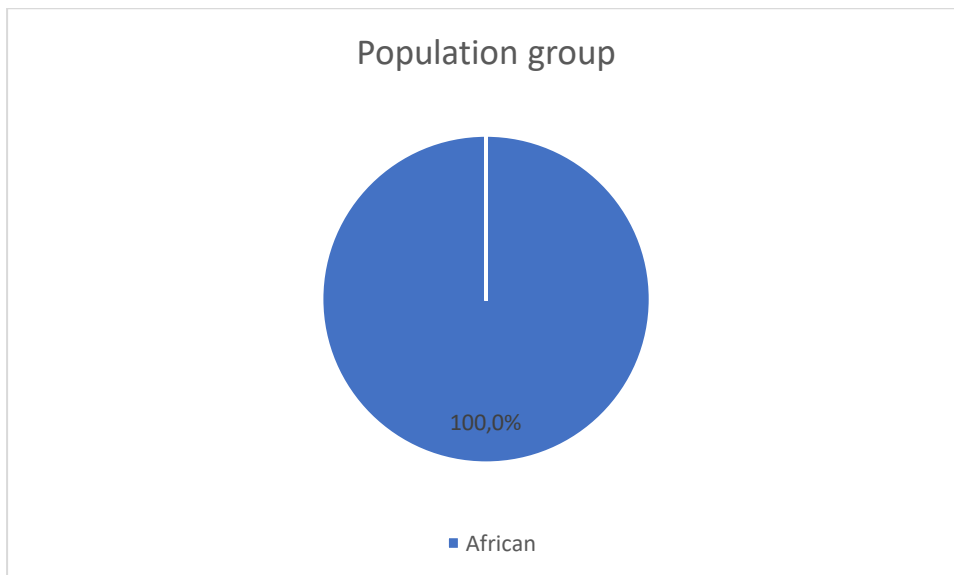


Figure 2: The population group of the sample

As the Central University of Technology, Welkom, at which the research study was conducted, is situated in Thabong, Welkom, it may explain the predominance of African respondents. Thabong is a traditional African township in Welkom.

Furthermore, the marketing strategy of the CUT relies heavily on open days for schools. It may also suggest that the location of CUT, Welkom campus, (Thabong) is seen as unsafe for traditional town learners. The adjacent township learners are familiar with the institution and feel comfortable to attend classes. The majority of Brown, Indian and White learners may not want to study in a township area. Table 2 will now be presented to indicate the origin of this assumption.

School attended / completed		
Township	Former Model C	Private School
85,0%	7,5%	2,5%
68	6	2

Table 2

As can be noted in Table 2, the majority students (85%) come from a township background.

Ethnicity and school background, as a categorical confounding variable, was not considered significant in this research study as all the respondents were African, mainly from township schools (68 of the 80 students). The few students who came from former Model C schools (6 of them) and the 2 from private schools, (10% in

total) are not regarded as a significant influence on the success of the academic literacy programme.

4.2.1.3 Registered qualification

This research study aimed to determine if the academic literacy programme is successful in bridging the gap between secondary school level English and tertiary level English; specifically aimed at Education students. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the participants are registered for the B Ed qualification.

The aim is to determine if the academic literacy programme is indeed an aid and helping students, specifically B Ed Language students, to cope with the academic demands at tertiary level.

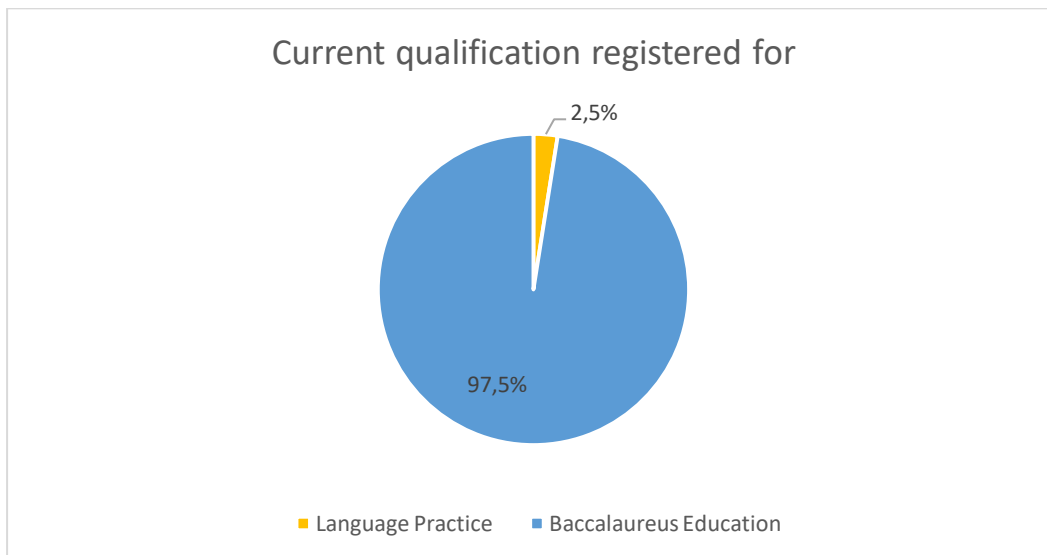


Figure 3: Qualification registered

Current qualification registered for				
Information Tech	Marketing	Office Management	Language Practice	Baccalaureus Education
0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	2,5%	97,5%
0	0	0	2	78

Table 3

The majority of students are registered for B Ed Languages. Of the 80 participants, only 2 are registered for Language Practice.

Since the Central University of Technology offers the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) to diplomandi from other fields of learning, it is possible that these 2 students are diplomandi from the National Diploma in Language Practice who

enrolled for the PGCE qualification. In the past it was prescribed that these diplomandi will additionally follow B Ed-language courses as Language Practice lacked the focus on literature as presented in the B Ed programme. These 2 students may have voluntarily registered for non-degree purposes to attend the second-year language classes; a practice that is still commonly occurring.

The attendance of these 2 Language Practice students is insignificant since their qualification is related to language in general and was not separately mentioned as an option.

4.2.1.4 Registered academic level of qualification

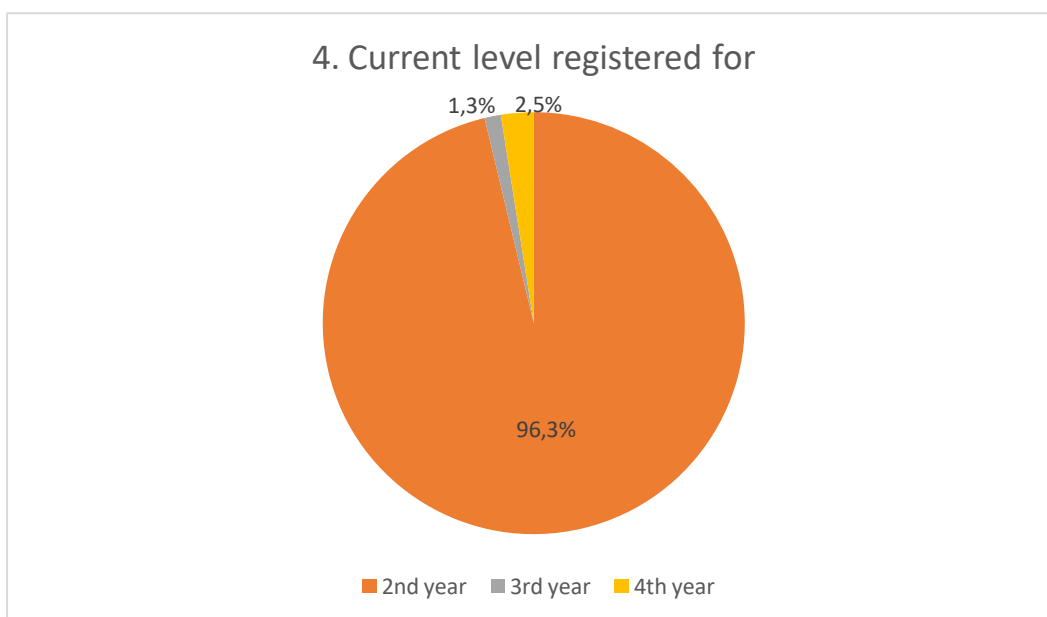


Figure 4: Academic level of qualification

This information is also presented as Table 3.

4. Current level registered for					
1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	Honours	Masters
0,0%	96,3%	1,3%	2,5%	0,0%	0,0%
0	77	1	2	0	0

Table 4

As the subjects in the sample are registered for B Ed Languages, and as the research study is concerned with the impact of the Academic Literacy Programme, it is aimed at the second year students as explained in Chapter 3. The presence of third year students (1 student) and fourth year students (2 students) may be that they

had failed English II, the course in which this study was conducted. Upon analysis, the impact of these three students (3.8%) are considered to be statistically insignificant to the success of academic literacy.

4.2.1.4 Language of Teaching and Learning (LOLT) at school level

Although all the students are African, and it is assumed that they have been raised according to the African culture, but it is interesting to note that the Language of teaching and learning during high school is predominantly English. Of the 80 students who participated in the research study, 60 completed their secondary school education in English. That means 75% of them were raised as Africans but taught in English.

The statistical data also reveal that 28.8% (23 students) were taught through the medium of Sesotho at secondary school. Six (7.5%) respondents were taught in Afrikaans, followed by one (1,3%) Xhosa respondent.

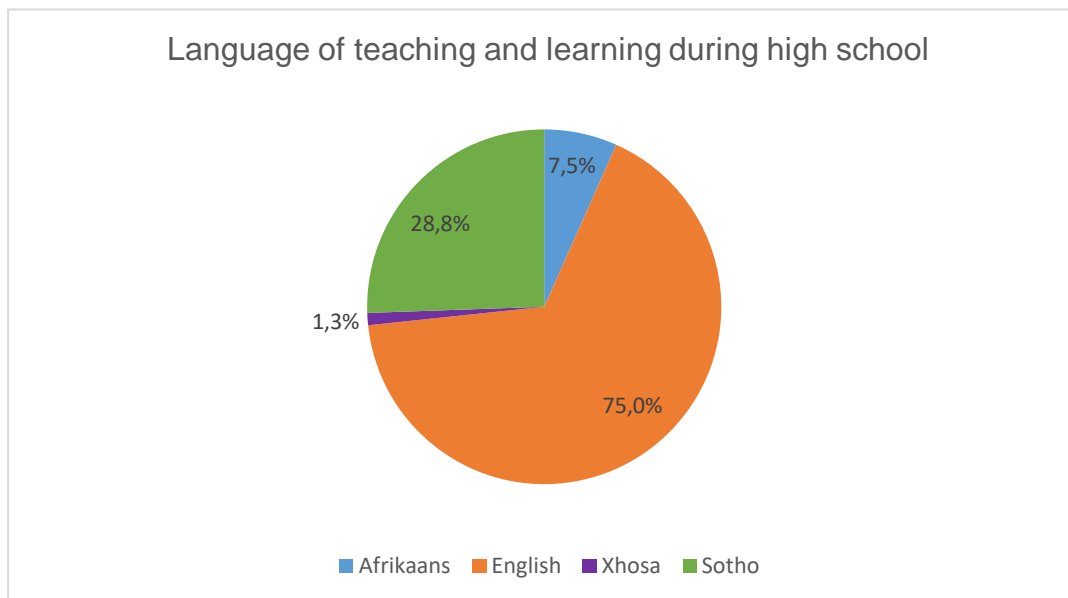


Figure 5 Language of teaching and learning during high school

It is also presented in tabular form as Table 5

7. Language of teaching and learning during high school						
Afrikaans	English	Tswana	Zulu	Xhosa	Sotho	Other
7,5%	75,0%	0,0%	0,0%	1,3%	28,8%	0,0%
6	60	0	0	1	23	0

Table 5

The statistical data as presented in both Figure 5 and Table 5, indicate that, in terms of secondary level of education, the majority of respondents were taught in English (75%) as medium of instruction, followed by Sesotho (28,8%). The higher appearance of Sesotho is plausible, as CUT is situated in a predominantly Sesotho-speaking area. However, if it is calculated correctly, it did not make sense. The calculation adds to be 112.6%.

This discrepancy may be an indication of the confusion that languages in education create. If carefully considered, English was the Language of Teaching and Learning for 75% of the respondents. A significant number of students, roughly 28.8%, were taught in Sesotho, while 7.5% (6) were taught in Afrikaans and 1.3% (i) was taught in isiXhosa. This may be an indication that some students were taught in a bilingual environment, where English seemingly was the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) and supplemented by another language. It also corresponds with research done by Weideman, as well as by Horne and Heineman, stating that the majority of learners in post-apartheid South Africa are educated in English, which is not their mother tongue (Weideman, 2013; Horne & Heineman, 2012).

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ANALYSED

Chapter 3 provided a solid foundation to present the methodology of the research done with a select group of students at the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus. The research questions were investigated with questionnaires and interviews, as indicated in Chapter 3.

This chapter presents the results of the questionnaires from students and the interviews done by lecturers in a tabular and written format, followed by discussion and an interpretation.

Firstly, as guided by the research questions, the study aimed to determine if the students perceived themselves as adequately prepared in English to study at tertiary level, and in addition to that, to determine if the lecturers perceived the students to be adequately proficient in English for tertiary studies.

For each graphical analysis, the Likert-scale relevant to the question or questions will be indicated.

4.3.1 Research question 1: Would the levels of English proficiency of prospective first-year students be adequate to cope with the demands of studying through the medium of English?

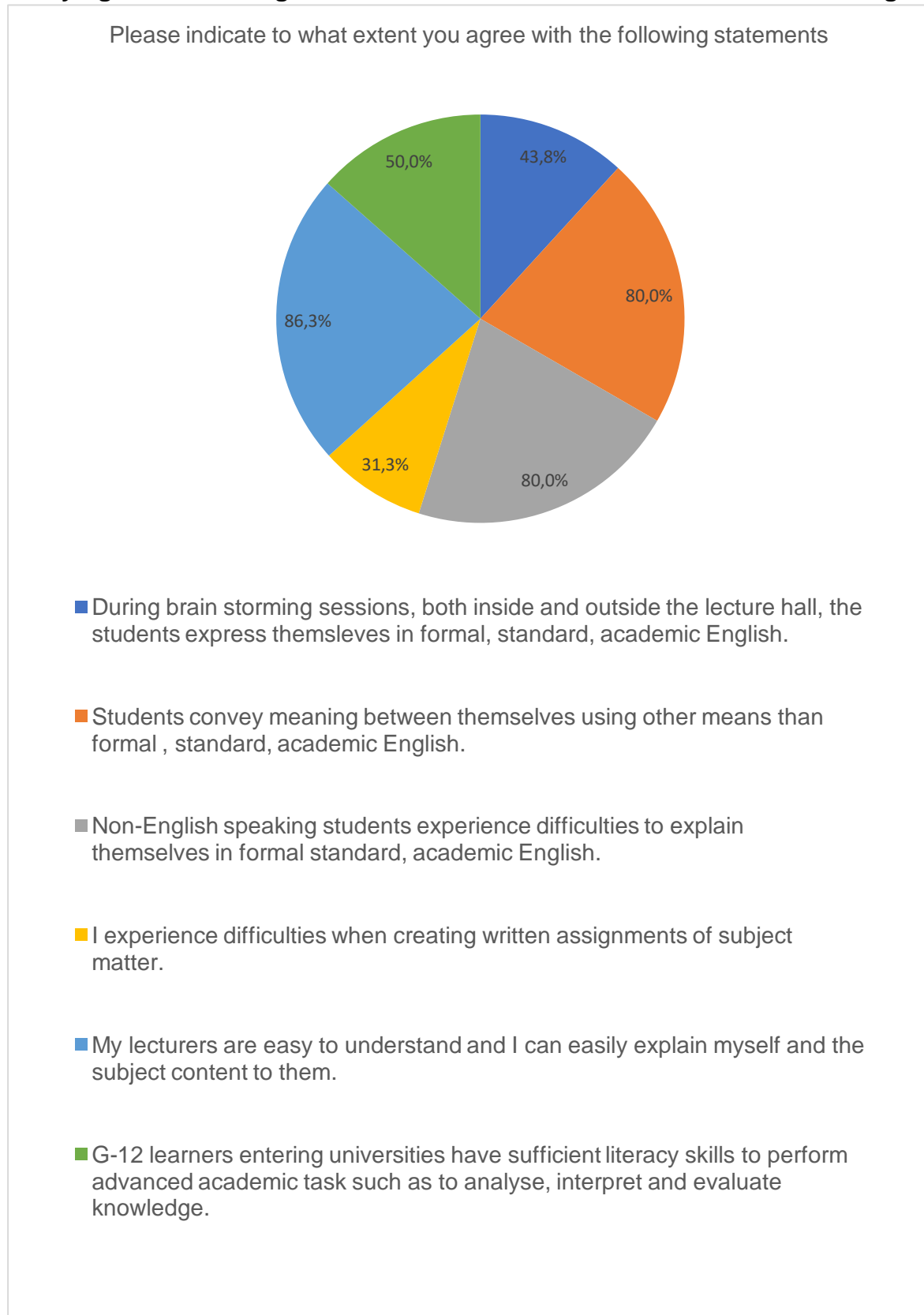


Figure 6: Questionnaire Q10, Q13, Q17, Q20, Q21 and Q22.

A tabular breakdown of the information pertaining to research question 1 from the interviews is presented below.

Table 6

Codes	Number of times code applied	% of total interviews (n=7)
Yes	4	57,1%
• Only a small percentage	2	28,6%
• Students can use English at an advanced level	1	14,3%
• It just requires time	1	14,3%
No	4	57,1%
• Translation is often required	2	28,6%
• A lot of the aspects need to be simplified for the students	1	14,3%
• Students struggle with application	1	14,3%
• Students lack basic skills	1	14,3%

Table 6: Interview Q6 - Do you think that students are able to use English to perform advanced academic skills such as to analyse, to interpret and to evaluate knowledge?

Table 7

Codes	Number of times code applied	% of total interviews (n=7)
Often	2	28,6%
• When introducing a new topic	1	14,3%
• Even after simplifying it in English	1	14,3%
Not often	2	28,6%
Not translate but explain and simplify	4	57,1%

Table 7 Interview Q7 - How often do you have to translate content terminology for your students?

4.3.1.1 Discussion of data

Figure 1 shows that the results are more or less split for whether or not the level of English proficiency of prospective first-year students is adequate to cope with the demands of studying through the medium of English. Half (50%) of the questionnaire respondents (students) agreed to some extent (agree and strongly agree) that Grade 12 learners entering universities have sufficient literacy skills (questionnaire question 10). The majority (86.3%) of the students agreed to some extent that their lecturers are easy to understand (questionnaire question 13) while 55% disagreed to some extent (disagree and strongly disagree) that they experience difficulties when creating written assignments of subject matter (questionnaire question 17). Contradictory to this, 80% of the students agreed to some extent that non-English

speaking students experience difficulties to explain themselves in formal academic English (questionnaire question 20) and that they use other means than formal, standard, academic English to convey meaning between themselves (questionnaire question 21). Furthermore, only 43.8% agreed to some extent that they express themselves in formal, standard, academic English during brain storming sessions (questionnaire question 22).

The qualitative analysis showed similar results with half of the interview participants (lecturers) saying that the students are able to use English to perform advanced skills (interview question 6), while the other half stated that the students are not able to use English to perform advanced skills (Table 1). Table 1 further shows that lecturers who said students are able to use English to perform advanced skills are in the minority (only a small percentage of the students are able to do this). Although 28.6% of the lecturers stated that they often have to translate (Table 1), the majority (57.1%) of the lecturers said they do not translate but rather further explain and simplify (interview question 7, Table 2).

“In my classes I never translate, in fact I further explain in simpler English that makes sense to them” – Interview with a CUT lecturer.

4.3.2 Research question 2: How was the current Academic Literacy Programme used at CUT structured and developed?

A historical perspective is included in Chapter 2, section 5. This study wants to determine what the students and the lecturers expect from the course and how they perceive it to be helpful for students to cope with the academic challenges of studying at tertiary level.

To determine if the students experienced the Academic Literacy Programme as helpful to cope with their work, they were asked if language has an impact on the teaching and learning process.

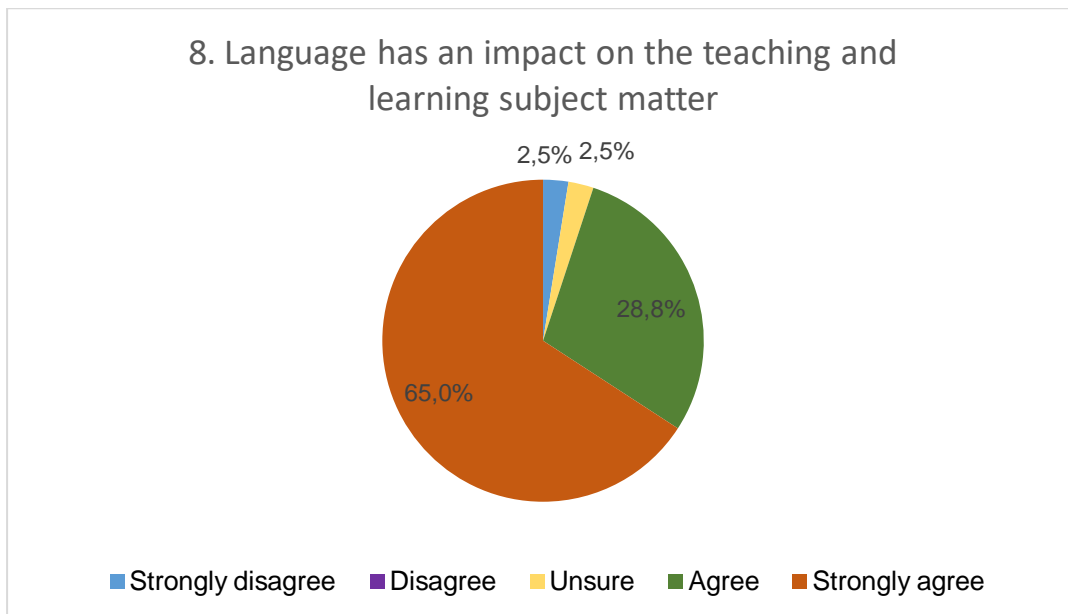


Figure 7 Language has an impact on the teaching and learning of subject matter.

Table 8

Codes	Number of times code applied	% of total interviews (n=7)
Explain terminology in simpler terms	5	71,4%
• Give clear explanations	5	71,4%
Guide them by giving an example of what is expected	1	14,3%
Rely on written instructions	1	14,3%

Table 8: Interview Q9 - When handing out assignments to students, do you explain content terminology in simpler terms as used in the contact session, or do you rely on the written instructions only? Supply reasons for your answer.

Table 9

Codes	Number of times code applied	% of total interviews (n=7)
Yes	5	71,4%
• Encourages engagement	4	57,1%
• Gain self confidence	1	14,3%
Not always	2	28,6%
• Working in pairs can sometimes be successful	1	14,3%

Table 9: Interview Q10 - Do you allow class discussions in order for students to explain themselves in smaller groups?

Table 10

Codes	Number of times code applied	% of total interviews (n=7)
Yes	7	100,0%
• Limited due to lack of resources	2	28,6%
• Make use of visual aids	4	57,1%

Table 10: Interview Q13 - Do you make use of other communication strategies, for example power point slides, pictures, internet articles, drawings and designs, to communicate subject content to your students?

4.3.2.1 Discussion of Data

From the graph (Figure 7) it is evident that the majority of students (65% strongly agree and 28.8% agree) perceive language as an important factor when teaching and learning take place. Only a very few students (2.5%) were unsure, while 2.5% strongly disagreed that language plays a role in teaching and learning.

For lecturers the language structure is equally important. The tables above, namely Tables 8, 9 and 10 indicate the perspective from lecturers. They were also interviewed to elaborate on the different strategies that they use in the classroom to indicate they understand the value of the Academic Literacy Programme. When making use of assignments as part of the Academic Literacy Programme, terminology is often (71.4%) explained in simpler terms and clear explanations are given (Table 3). Table 4 indicates that the majority (71.4%) of the lecturers allow class discussions to form part of the Academic Literacy Programme (interview question 10). Furthermore, Table 10 shows that all lecturers indicated that they make use of other communication strategies which include PowerPoint slides, pictures, internet articles, drawings and designs to communicate subject content to their students (interview question 13).

4.3.3 Research question 3: Does the current Academic Literacy Programme implemented at the CUT, meet the English language proficiency needs of the first-year B.Ed. students specializing in English?

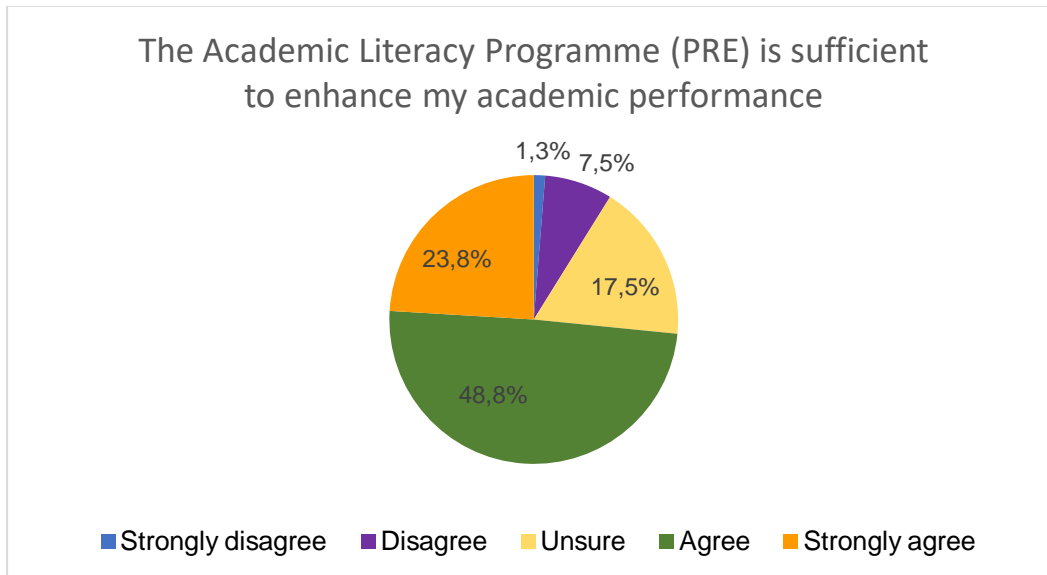


Figure 8: Questionnaire Q12. The Academic Literacy Programme is sufficient to enhance my academic performance

Table 11: Interview Q5 - Does the Academic Literacy Programme implemented at the Central University of Technology correlate with the English language proficiency needs of the first-year B Ed (SP & FET) language students?

Codes	Number of times code applied	% of total interviews (n=7)
Yes	3	42,9%
• We address the basic skills of English	2	28,6%
• The chapters are appropriate	1	14,3%
No	2	28,6%
• Too complex for students who lack the basics of academic English	2	28,6%
Partly	1	14,3%
• Students struggle but we guide them	1	14,3%
Haven't been teaching the subject long enough to answer	1	14,3%

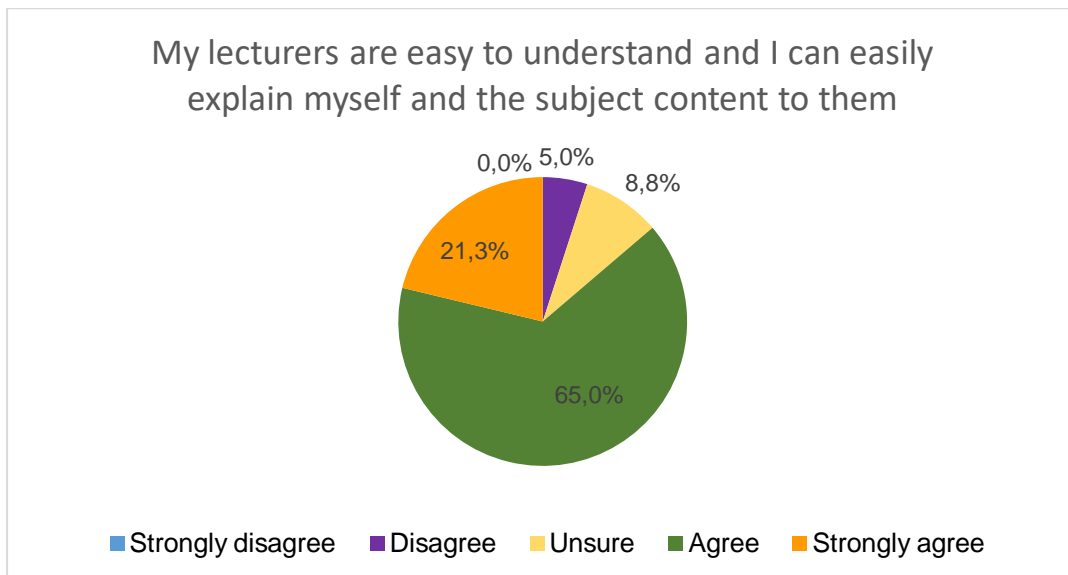


Figure 9: Lecturers are understood and students can explain themselves and the subject content.

Table 12: Interview Q11 - Do you think the English Academic Literacy Programme contributes to the students' ability to communicate with you about the content of the subject?

Codes	Number of times code applied	% of total interviews (n=7)
Yes	5	71,4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It improves their English language skills 	1	14,3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students gain confidence in the English language 	2	28,6%
No	1	14,3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can't apply what they've learnt 	1	14,3%
There's not enough content	2	28,6%

Table 13: Interview Q12 - Do you perceive students to express themselves effectively, both orally and in writing and to convince you of their mastery of the subject content?

Codes	Number of times code applied	% of total interviews (n=7)
Yes	2	28,6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing in the form of essays and orally in the form of presentations 	1	14,3%
The more they use the language the more they improve	1	14,3%
Better equipped in oral form than written form	2	28,6%
Some better than others	1	14,3%
Students understand better in their home language	1	14,3%
Students are afraid to use the language	2	28,6%

4.3.3.1 Discussion of data

Figure 2 above shows that the majority of the students (72.6%) agreed to some extent (agree and strongly agree) that the Academic Literacy Programme is sufficient in enhancing their academic performance (questionnaire question 12).

Although the qualitative data analysis from the lecturers in Table 11 agrees with this, the percentage is much lower. Only 42.9% of the lecturers said that the Academic Literacy Programme correlates with the English language proficiency needs required (interview question 5). In addition, 28.6% of the lecturers indicated that it is too complex for students who lack the basics of academic English.

“The programme for the new beginners such as first-year students who are just from secondary school without any exposure of academic English, it's been a complicated and complex situation to understand, especially terminology which was new in almost every subject taught in English, need was for translation” – Interview with CUT lecturer

Most (71.4%) lecturers stated that the English Academic Literacy Programme contributes to the students' ability to communicate with the lecturer about the content of the subject (interview question 11). This corresponds closely with the same

perspective from the students, yielding a total of 21.3% of them who strongly agreed and 65% who agreed with the statement (Figure 8).

Furthermore, 28.6% of the lecturers stated that the students gain confidence in the English language (Table 12), suggesting the English Academic Literacy Programme meets the English language proficiency needs. Contradictory to this, qualitative data from interview question 12 indicates that 28.6% of the lecturers feel that the students are better equipped to communicate orally rather than in written form and that students are afraid to use the language (Table 13).

“Lacks fluency. They are more, or better, equipped to do it orally than in a written form. In a written form the mistakes are more obvious than in the oral form.” – Interview with CUT lecturer.

“The problem with students, they are afraid to speak, they are afraid to raise their hands, they are afraid to even ask questions which is a problem I experience with some of my students.” – Interview with CUT lecturer

4.3.4 Research question 4: Is the Academic Literacy Programme (ALP) (baseline and formative academic literacy) successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of first-year B.Ed. students specializing in English?

The researcher groups it with Research Question 5. Answers to both these questions are derived from questionnaire Q11, Q14, Q16, Q18 and Q25 together with interview Q4.)

4.3.5 Research question 5: Which problems are experienced by lecturers involved in the Academic Literacy Programme?

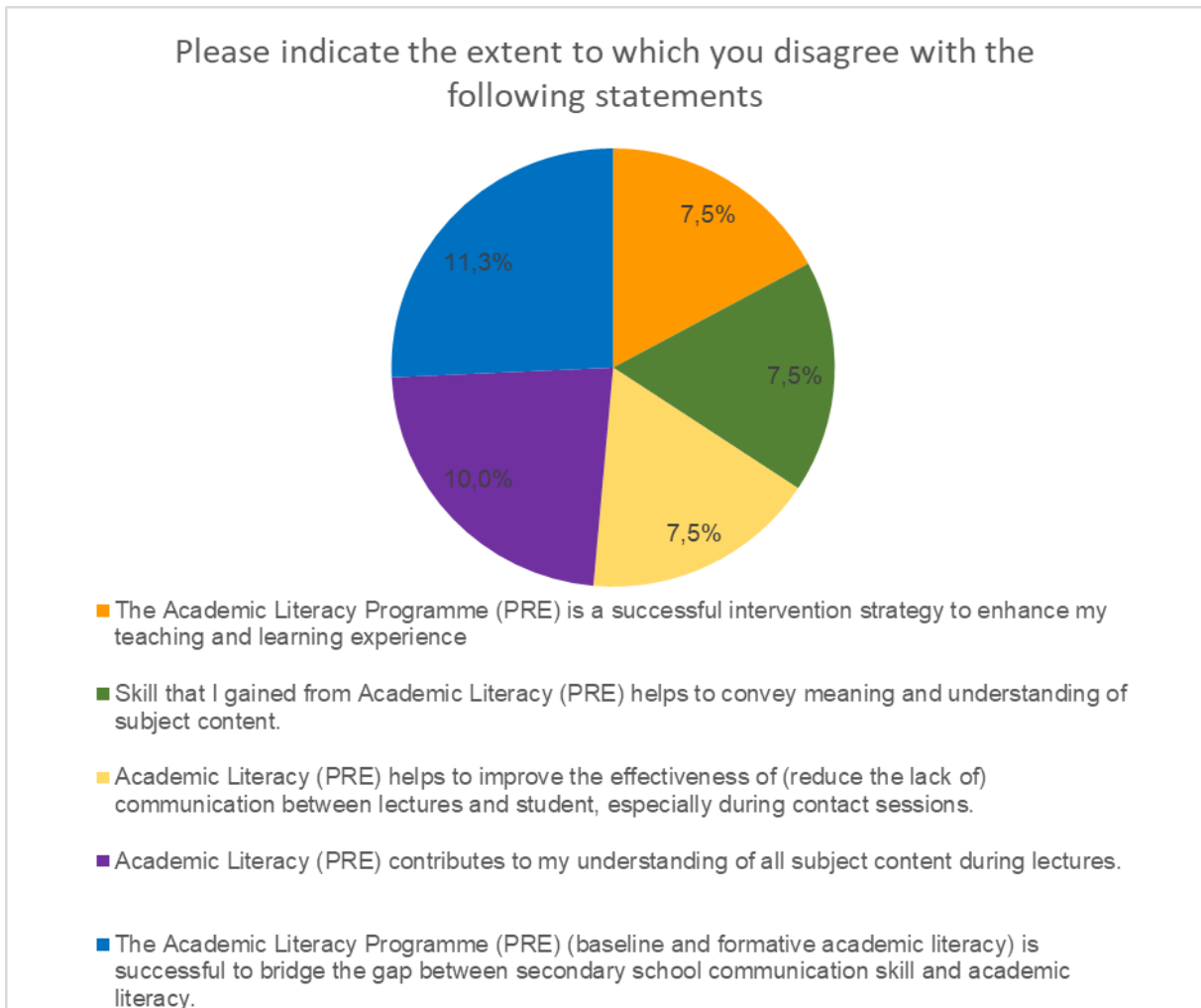


Figure 10: Questionnaire Q11, Q14, Q16, Q18 and Q25

Table 14: Interview Q4 - Do you perceive the Academic Literacy Programme as successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of first-year B Ed (SP & FET) language students at the Central University of Technology?

Codes	Number of times code applied	% of total interviews (n=7)
Yes	4	57,1%
• Improves their communication skills	2	28,6%
• Assists in the adoption of the English language	2	28,6%
• The content is sufficient to bridge the gap	2	28,6%
No	3	42,9%
• High school students lack the basis, forcing us to lower our standards	3	42,9%
Partly	1	14,3%
• It depends on the students' involvement	1	14,3%

4.4 DISCUSSION OF DATA

The Academic Literacy Programme appears to be successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of first-year B.Ed. students specialising in English (questionnaire question 11) with 71.3% of the students agreeing to some extent (agree and strongly agree) with this statement (Figure 3). Figure 3 above indicates further support for the statement as more than 71% of the students indicated that the Academic Literacy Programme contributes to their understanding of the subject matter (questionnaire question 14), improves communication between lecturers and students (questionnaire question 16), helps convey meaning of subject content (questionnaire question 18), and enhances the students teaching and learning experience (questionnaire question 25).

The qualitative data analysis of lecturer interviews supports the quantitative findings, albeit at a lower percentage. Compared to the 71.3% of the students, only 57.1% of the lecturers perceived the Academic Literacy Programme as successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements (interview question 4). Furthermore, as seen in Table 14, 42.9% of the lecturers indicated that high school students lack the basics, forcing them to lower

their standards. This also corresponds with Table 11, which additionally indicates that lecturers assist the students towards a better understanding of what is needed.

“It differs, a large group of the students that I work with have come from school with a very basic level of language proficiency, others are much better. The content of the programme, yes, I think that would be successful in bridging the gap, but in practice, because of what the students are equipped with that sit in front of me, it is sometimes a big challenge to bridge the gap, especially their writing skills, they are really lacking.” – Interview with CUT lecturer.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Based on the sample of data, and as discussed above, the analysis indicates that there is a difference between what the lecturers and the students perceive as a successful Academic Literacy Programme. In a purely speculative approach, it appears the students feel they have the adequate skills required but in reality, the lecturers are of a different opinion. This could explain why sometimes the students have much higher percentages for some questions compared to those of the lecturers.

Although fleetingly discussed here, the researcher will draw certain conclusions and make recommendations regarding the Academic Literacy Programme in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

“Without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry, or savor their songs.”

Nelson Mandela

Chapter five commences with the aim of the study as well as the rationale for conducting this research study as set out in Chapter one. Hereafter, the specific objectives emanating from the aim will be listed. A summary of the results obtained (and which were discussed and interpreted in detail in Chapter four) will then be provided. Hereafter, the limitations of the study as well as recommendations – both for the research community as well as for higher education institutions – will be discussed.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this research study was to investigate the success or not of the Academic Literacy Programme that was introduced as an intervention strategy for all first-year students to eliminate the problem of “under-preparedness” of students at a university of technology. This programme was introduced as a strategy to bridge the gap between secondary school literacy and the demands needed at tertiary level. The research study was undertaken for four major reasons:

- As the researcher is a language lecturer at a university of technology, it often happens that other lecturers complain about the poor academic literacy skills, specifically reading and writing or spelling, and how these factors influence their daily tasks.
- The declaration and implementation of policies pertaining to higher education (Republic of South Africa 1997; Republic of South Africa Department of Education 1997; Republic of South Africa Ministry of Education 2001) which resulted in an increase in both student numbers as

well as student diversity at institutions of higher learning. Unfortunately, many of these students may not be sufficiently prepared to meet the academic demands at these institutions. Subsequently, it is vital that a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence academic success must be attained (Brussow, 2007; Matoti & Shumba, 2012; Pitts, 1999, Weideman, 2007). Academic Literacy was regarded as a suitable intervention strategy and therefore implemented.

- The above is exacerbated by the fact that very often higher education institutions do not provide a climate that is conducive to academic success (Biggs, 1992:9; Fourie, 2003:129). Furthermore, the perceptions that students have pertaining to their preparedness, or under-preparedness, impact directly on the learning approach adopted by the students. The success and usefulness of an Academic Literacy Programme as an intervention strategy to cope with the academic challenges will contribute to greater participation by students and ultimately to their academic success. In other words, the achievement of student academic success is more attainable.
- Previous research studies conducted on academic literacy highlighted the complexity of the various programmes to be implemented (Butler, 2013; Jacobs, 2013; Weideman & Van der Silk, 2008). The research study therefore aimed to further the knowledge on, and provide a deeper understanding of, the programme that is used at CUT, Welkom campus. The knowledge gained from this research study could be implemented at institutions of higher learning to ensure that they adopt the most suitable Academic Literacy Programme for their needs.

Five objectives were propagated to ensure that the aim of the research study was achieved. The research study, according to the research questions in Chapter 1, are:

- To ascertain whether the Academic Literacy Programme implemented at the target institution correlates with the English language proficiency needs of the first-year Education students specializing in Languages.

- To ascertain whether Gr 12-learners entering university have sufficient literacy skills to cope with the demands of tertiary study.
- To determine the background to and the structure of the Academic Literacy Programme used at the participant institution.
- To establish whether the Academic Literacy Programme (PRE) (baseline and formative academic literacy) is successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of first-year Education students, specializing in Languages, at a university of technology.
- To determine which problems are experienced by lecturers involved in the Academic Literacy Programme.

The above-mentioned aim and objectives were limited to a selected group of second year students registered for a B Ed Languages degree at a South African university of technology. All participants were registered for English, a compulsory subject for the language specialization.

In order to determine the success of an Academic Literacy Programme that the sample attended, the researcher gathered data using two measures:

- A questionnaire with a Likert scale approach was completed by the student sample. Biographical data was also collected;
- Qualitative interviews were done with the lecturers of the Academic Literacy Programme regarding their perception on the programme used by the CUT, Welkom campus.

After obtaining permission and ensuring an optimum time and venue, the above questionnaires and interviews were conducted and completed by 80 respondents registered for the B Ed Languages programme at Central University of Technology, Welkom campus as well as with the 7 lecturers of the Academic Literacy Programme. Hereafter, the data was statistically analysed by a registered service provider of CUT. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were conducted to establish if it can statistically indicate if the Academic Literacy Programme as

introduced at CUT is successful in bridging the gap between secondary school level English and the English used at tertiary level.

A summary of the results was obtained from the statistical analysis. A detailed presentation and accompanying discussion of these results are provided in Chapter four.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF SUMMARISED FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

Biographical data (as the categorical confounding variables of gender and language and the quantitative confounding variables of kinds of secondary school attended, level of education and educational language) were analyzed descriptively.

Whole-frame sampling was employed in which 80 second year B Ed Languages students at Central University of Technology, Welkom, participated in the study to ascertain the efficiency of their literacy levels when enrolling for a university module. The sample consisted of 31 males and 49 females (refer to Section 4.2.1.1. & Table 1). This disparity can be explained by the fact that Education – for which these students are registered – is traditionally a female-dominated occupation.

The respondents in the sample are primarily from township schools (refer to 2), but 75% were mainly educated through the medium of English (Section 4.2.1.2; 4.2.1.3 & 4.2.1.4, figure 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 also Table 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The reason for this can be that the majority of learners in post-apartheid South Africa are taught in English, which is not their mother tongue (Weideman, 2013; Horne & Heineman, 2012).

The impact of the above biographical variables on Academic Literacy is statistically insignificant, except for the disparity of a 100% African sample population of which 75% were educated through the medium of English (refer Section 4.2.1.4, figure 5, Table 5). As described by Weideman (2013), this seems to be primarily the reason for the poor command of English at tertiary level. According to Weideman (2013) and Horne and Heineman (2012), it may be the main reason why poor training in their first language or Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) yield learners who still do not know how to use the language of teaching and learning to their benefit. As students, where a more complex and higher command of Academic Literacy is

needed, they still lack the manipulative skills of language to perform academic tasks as required from them. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Section 2.6.1) they lack the ability to transfer new information that they have read in a text and have taken notes from a lecture. They lack the ability to communicate their academic experiences in an academically sound manner for their lecturers to understand sufficiently to assess those. Weideman states that a focus on reading, writing and mathematical skills, even refined to include the skills of reading, writing, taking notes and taking exams, did not contribute much to the students' success (2013). This result from literature research corresponds with Research question 1 of this study, namely whether Gr 12 learners entering tertiary courses have adequate literacy skills to cope with the academic literacy demands of a tertiary course. It confirms that poor academic literacy competence is indeed a barrier towards effective tertiary teaching and learning.

A more detailed analysis of the research questions, as well as the graphical analysis and tables is found in Chapter 4. In terms of the aims and objectives of the study, as formulated in the research questions, starting from Research Question 1, the following summarised results were obtained after analysis.

5.2.1 Gr 12-learners entering university have sufficient literacy skills to cope with the demands of tertiary study.

- Half (50%) of the questionnaire respondents (students) agreed that grade 12 learners entering universities have sufficient literacy skills (questionnaire question 10).
- The majority (86.3%) of the students agreed that their lecturers are easy to understand (questionnaire question 13).
- 55% disagreed to some extent that they experience difficulties when creating written assignments of subject matter (questionnaire question 17).
- Contradictory to this, 80% of the students agreed to some extent that non-English speaking students experience difficulties to explain themselves in formal academic English (questionnaire question 20).
- Students use other means than formal, standard, academic English to convey meaning between them (questionnaire question 21).

- Furthermore, only 43.8% agreed to some extent that they express themselves in formal, standard, academic English during brain storming sessions (questionnaire question 22).

The qualitative analysis showed similar results with half of the interview participants (lecturers) saying that the students are able to use English to perform advanced skills (interview question 6), while the other half were of the opinion that the students are not able to use English to perform advanced skills (Table 1).

Table 1 further shows that lecturers who say students are able to use English to perform advanced skills are in the minority (only a small percentage of the students are able to do this). Although 28.6% of the lecturers said that they often have to translate (Table 1), the majority (57.1%) of the lecturers said they do not translate but rather further explain and simplify (interview question 7, Table 2).

Research question 2: How was the current Academic Literacy Programme used at CUT structured and developed?

The historical analysis as in Chapter 2 (refer to section 5.1) discusses the historical development of an Academic Literacy Programme at CUT, Welkom. According to the statistical analysis from the sample (students as well as lecturers) this was not a question. The information which dealt with the development of the Academic Literacy Programme at CUT mainly reveals that the current programme is derived from “comprehension-based activities and problem-solving tasks” (Van Wyk, 2010:3). The success of the development of this programme is not clearly determined in this study, as revealed in the data analysis.

Research question 3: Does the current Academic Literacy Programme implemented at the CUT meet the English language proficiency needs of the first-year B.Ed students specializing in English?

The statistical analysis reveals a statistically significant difference about the Academic Literacy Programme as perceived by the students and the lecturers. Furthermore, the needs of the students may be confused with other academic-related needs, for example needs for resources and spatial needs. However, statically it indicates the following:

The majority of the students (72.6%) agreed to some extent that the Academic Literacy Programme is sufficient in enhancing their academic performance (questionnaire question 12). Although the qualitative data analysis from the lecturers in Table 6 agrees with this, the percentage is much lower: only 42.9% of the lecturers stated that the Academic Literacy Programme correlates with the English language proficiency needs required (interview question 5). In addition, 28.6% of the lecturers indicated that it is too complex for students who lack the basics of academic English.

In a breakdown of the research questions, it reveals a similar discrepancy. 71.4% lecturers said that the English Academic Literacy Programme contributes to the students' ability to communicate with the lecturer about the content of the subject (interview question 11), while only a limited number of lecturers were of the opinion that the programme enhances the self-confidence of the students; as 28.6% of the lecturers said the students gain confidence in the English language (Table 7). The latter analysis suggests the English Academic Literacy Programme does not meet the English language proficiency needs, namely to communicate with confidence in English. This observation opens up the need to rethink research question 4.

Research question 4: Is the Academic Literacy Programme (ALP) (baseline and formative academic literacy) successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of first-year B.Ed students specializing in English?

Although The Academic Literacy Programme appears to be successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of first-year B.Ed students specialising in English (questionnaire question 11) with 71.3% of the students agreeing with this statement (Figure 3); and although it helps convey the meaning of subject content (questionnaire question 18), and enhances the students' teaching and learning experience (questionnaire question 25), it yields substantially lower percentages of agreement from the lecturers, especially when research question 5 is considered.

Research question 5: Which problems are experienced by lecturers involved in the Academic Literacy Programme?

The qualitative data analysis of lecturer interviews supports the quantitative findings as discussed above (research question 4), albeit at a lower percentage. Only 57.1% of the lecturers perceived the Academic Literacy Programme as successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements (interview question 4). Furthermore, as seen in Chapter 4, Table 9, 42.9% of the lecturers indicated that high school students lack the basics, forcing them to lower their own standards of teaching and learning.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

Firstly, the sample used in the research study was a convenient sample and was not selected through a strict sampling process (refer to section 3.4). The results obtained are therefore limited to the selected group of B Ed students registered for Languages at a South African university of technology. Subsequently, generalizations cannot be made concerning second year students registered for a module other than Languages or concerning students registered at higher education institutions other than a university of technology.

The sample size ($n=80$) is also small and is derived from one institution of higher learning. As such, bigger samples, as can be expected at other tertiary institutions, may yield different results.

Thirdly, the research results rely entirely on self-report measures. Students may not have been comfortable in divulging personal information or may not have been motivated to answer truthfully. Students may also not have understood what was required of them. Additionally, not all students may have completed the questionnaires, although it was not picked up during the analysis. To combat these limitations, students were not forced to participate in the study, and the importance of and the rationale for the study were explained to the students. In addition, they were also assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher was present in the venue to answer any questions and explain any uncertainties pertaining to the completion of the questionnaires. The data was also obtained cross-sectional and from only one administration of the questionnaires and interviews. The data obtained therefore could be influenced by factors (for example, emotional state, illness) beyond the control of the researcher.

Regardless of these limitations, the researcher trusts that the research study has made a valuable contribution to the fields of research in general and of the higher education landscape specifically.

Recommendations for various stakeholders regarding future research so as to improve on the present research study will now be discussed.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher confirms that this study would benefit greatly from a bigger sample size. Students from other B Ed programmes should be included to draw a holistic conclusion on the success of the Academic Literacy Programme. It is therefore recommended that more research on this topic be executed.

It is also recommended that the needs of the students be specified. A very basic analysis could lead to misunderstanding and wrong interpretation.

A focus on student preparedness and the demands of tertiary education could also increase the understanding of first-year students' needs. Student preparedness as described in Chapter 2 (refer to section 2.2) barely scratches the surface of the urgent need for ongoing research with regards to levels of literacy among students in South Africa. It is recommended that research will be conducted on student preparedness and student needs at the Central University of Technology.

Lastly, it is recommended that a comparison is drawn between the Academic Literacy Programme and the B. Ed curriculum for Language of Teaching and Learning 1 as well as Academic Literacy and Communication Studies. Both modules are also compulsory for B. Ed students and may overlap in the curriculum. From informal discussions there seems to be an overlapping of content, while it is described as different subjects with different content.

It is recommended that students and staff, lecturers and management be made aware of the importance of the research findings on the success of the Academic Literacy Programme and the link of it to academic success. More compulsory,

practical and subject-specific academic literacy modules should be included in the curriculum of qualifications offered at institutions of higher learning. These modules must be made meaningful and relevant to the students and, as such, will motivate them to adopt a focused approach to learning, thus positively impacting on their academic success.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The aim of the research study as well as the rationale for conducting this study was provided. This was followed by a presentation of the specific objectives deriving from the aim. The measures for data gathering and analysis were very briefly listed. A summary of the results obtained in the research study was provided. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study as well as with recommendations – both for the research community and for higher education institutions.

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ADDENDA

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		

Addendum A: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Please indicate with an x :

1 GENDER

MALE	FEMALE
1	2

2 RESPONDENT

STUDENT	OTHER
1	2

3 POPULATION GROUP

AFRICAN	ASIAN	COLOURED	WHITE
1	2	3	4

4 CURRENT QUALIFICATION REGISTERED FOR

National Diploma: Language Practice	National Diploma: Information Tech	National Diploma: Marketing	National Diploma: Office Management	Baccalaureus Education:
1	2	3	4	5

5 CURRENT LEVEL REGISTERED FOR

1 ST YEAR	2 ND YEAR	3 RD YEAR	4 TH YEAR	HONOURS	MASTERS
1	2	3	4	5	6

6 SCHOOL ATTENDED / COMPLETED

TOWNSHIP	FORMER MODEL C	PRIVATE SCHOOL
1	2	3

7 LANGUAGE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING HIGH SCHOOL

AFRIKAANS	ENGLISH	TSWANA	ZULU	XHOSA	SOTHO	OTHER (Indicate)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION B: Please indicate the extent in which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Do you (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Unsure, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree?

8 Language has an impact on the teaching and learning of subject matter.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

9 The preferred language to analyse, interpret and evaluate subject matter is in my mother-tongue.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

10 Gr 12-learners entering university have sufficient literacy skills to perform advanced academic tasks such as to analyse, interpret and evaluate knowledge.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

11 The Academic Literacy Programme (PRE) (baseline and formative academic literacy) is successful to bridge the gap between secondary school communication skills and academic literacy.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

12 The Academic Literacy Programme (PRE) is sufficient to enhance my academic performance.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

13 My lecturers are clear to understand and I can easily explain myself and the subject content to them.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

14 Academic Literacy (PRE) contributes to my understanding of all subject content during lectures.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

15 Teaching and learning take place during lectures with advanced literacy skills such as analytical skills, interpretation of subject matter, application of knowledge and problem-solving skills.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

16 Academic Literacy (PRE) helps reduce the lack of communication between lecturers and students, especially during contact sessions.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

17 I experience difficulties when creating written assignments of subject matter.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

18 Skills that I gained from Academic Literacy (PRE) help to convey meaning and understanding of subject content.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

19 I support peer discussions and study groups where subject content can be discussed with peers using basic communication skills and informal language.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

20 Non-English speaking students experience difficulties to explain themselves in formal, standard, Academic English.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

21 Students convey meaning between themselves using other means than formal, standard, Academic English.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

22 During brain storming sessions, both inside and outside the lecture hall, the students express themselves in formal, standard, Academic English.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

23 Students can study effectively when given opportunities to work in a variety of whole class and small group settings, facilitated by a lecturer, using various communication strategies.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

24 Students can express themselves effectively, both orally and in writing, to convince their lecturers of their mastery and proficiency of Academic English.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

25 The Academic Literacy Programme (PRE) is a successful intervention strategy to enhance my teaching and learning experience.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Addendum B INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LECTURERS (Academic Literacy)

I am having an interview with at (time) On (date)..... Thank you for participating in this research project to gain information for research on evaluating an Academic Literacy Programme at C U T Welkom Campus.

- 1 (Name) What is your home language?
- 2 Does it differ from your Language of Teaching and Learning that you use at CUT?
- 3 What was your own Language of Teaching and Learning? Briefly explain it for your secondary level as well as your tertiary qualification.
- 4 Your participation in this research project is based on your involvement with the academic literacy programme. Do you perceive the Academic Literacy Programme as successful in bridging the gap between secondary school communication skills and the academic literacy requirements of first-year B Ed (SP & FET) Language students at Central University of Technology?
5. Does the Academic Literacy Programme implemented at the Central University of Technology correlates with the English language proficiency needs of the first-year B ED (SP & FET) Language students?
6. Do you think that students are able to use English to perform advanced academic skills such as to analyse, to interpret and to evaluate knowledge?
7. How often do you have to translate content terminology for your students?
8. Do you experience difficulty to explain yourself and the subject content to your students in English as required by the Central University of Technology?
9. When handing out assignments to students, do you explain content terminology in simpler terms as used in the contact session, or do you rely on the written instructions only? Supply reasons for your answer.
10. Do you allow class discussions in order for students to explain themselves in smaller groups?
11. Do you think the English Academic Literacy Programme contributes to the students' ability to communicate with you about the content of the subject?
12. Do you perceive students to express themselves effectively, both orally and in writing, to convince you of their mastery of the subject content.
13. Do you make use of other communication strategies, for example power point slides, pictures, internet articles, drawings and designs, to communicate subject content to your students?
14. Which problems do you experience in the Academic Literacy Programme?
15. Do you want to change anything in the Academic Literacy Programme?

Thank you for participating in this research project.

Addendum C

Letter of Permission to conduct research

2 Schreiner Street
Welkom
9460
10 July 2018

Dear Dr Bahia

Re: Permission to conduct research – B Ed FET & SP Language students

I am a post-graduate student at the Central University of the Technology (Welkom) and was accepted to conduct research among the language students registered for B Ed FET & SP phase (BEDSFL) on the Welkom campus. I attach a confirmation letter from the TRC, Welkom.

The title of the research is: “An evaluation of an Academic Literacy Programme among first year Education students specialising in Languages at a University of Technology.”

Please allow me to conduct and administer questionnaires and tests to the target group of students on the Welkom Campus. If given permission, the study will involve:

- obtain information from the B Ed Languages students in their second year of study.
- administer a structured questionnaire to the students.
- Conduct interviews with the lecturers involved in the programme.

I guarantee that the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

I would like to commence with the questionnaires as soon as possible – preferably within the next two weeks.

I trust that my request will be favorably attended to. If you so wish, I can furnish you with a copy of the completed research.

Yours faithfully



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