

**Exploring Pedagogical Innovation in Core Curriculum Serving  
First Year Students****Kimberley A. Porteus***University of Fort Hare, East London, Eastern Cape, South Africa  
E-mail: kporteus@ufh.ac.za***KEYWORDS** First Year Studies. Higher Education. Critical. Learning. Activity. South Africa

**ABSTRACT** This mixed method intervention case study explores the potential of pedagogical innovation in higher education to expand learning activity of undergraduate students' first year students in a university primarily serving students with little access to educational advantage. The pedagogical intervention at the centre of the study placed emphasis on learning activity and critical meaning making within an interactive learning architecture. It took the form of a semester course for all entering first year students. The intervention is presented as a third generation activity model with three interacting toolkits. This paper focuses on the reading and writing activity of the 2010 student cohort. Upwards of 70% of students suggested that their reading and writing practice had changed by the end of the course. Student narratives suggest that as motive expanded both reading and writing activity expanded and complimentary learning activity expanded. Students with less historical access to educational advantage made the strongest claims. The study suggests that under the right conditions, this combination of pedagogical elements can expand learning practice of first year students and may be particularly well aligned for appropriation by students with less access to historical socio-educational privilege.