

The Challenges of Implementing Peer Academic Support Programmes at a University in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

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ABSTRACT The aim of this paper is to examine the challenges that are faced in the implementation of peer academic support programmes, namely supplemental instruction (SI) and Language and Writing Advancement Programmes (LWAP) at a university in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Using a qualitative research design, a sample of 22 participants made up of peer facilitators, students who use academic support services and coordinators of these programmes was chosen. Data was collected using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The data collected was coded to get sub and main themes that were analysed to make meanings of shared experiences of participants. The results show that there are numerous challenges facing the implementation of these programmes at the university under study. These include, among others, poor attendance at sessions, low participation by the students, large classes, under-representation of many departments as peer facilitators, and poor remuneration. The paper recommends longer training of peer facilitators, equal representation of departments in the programmes, good incentives, 'buying in' from departments, amongst others.