

## **Workshop Interventions to Facilitate Students' Access to Knowledge: A Dental Technology Case Study**

**Anisa Vahed\* and Gillian Cruickshank\*\***

*\*Department of Dental Sciences, Dental Technology Program,  
Durban University of Technology (DUT), Ritson Campus, Durban, South Africa, 4001  
Fax: 0027 31 3732047, E-mail: anisav@dut.ac.za*

*\*\*Faculty of Health Sciences, Durban University of Technology (DUT),  
Ritson Campus, P.O. Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001  
E-mail: gillianc@dut.ac.za*

**KEYWORDS** Epistemological Access. Literacy Practices. Co-Constructivism. Higher Education

**ABSTRACT** The higher education landscape in South Africa has changed dramatically over the last two decades. The types, size and shape of tertiary institutions were reconfigured. Concomitantly the intake of students also changed, resulting in a large number of students coming from the previously disadvantaged communities who are deemed as being underprepared. Challenges were posed to educators and learners. First-year students in the Dental Technology programme at the Durban University of Technology struggle to cope with the transition from secondary school life into higher education. With this in mind, two workshops involving activities and tasks were designed to enable students to gain awareness of the academic and social practices of Dental Technology. An interpretive research design and an action research case study strategy were adopted. Data gathered by means of questionnaires, a focus group interview, and direct observations via video recordings were used. Further expansion and incorporation of using workshops to access knowledge in the curriculum is recommended by the authors.