

**Closing the Loop between Access and Success:
Early Identification of At-risk Students and Monitoring
as Key Strategies Used by a South African University**

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ABSTRACT In the present research, it is argued that early identification of at-risk students is at the heart of improving student success, especially for those who enter higher education with gaps in their knowledge. The main objective of this study was to present a comprehensive strategy used by a South African institution of higher education to identify at-risk students and to monitor and evaluate their progress after interventions had been made. The social cognitive theory informed the study on which this study is based. The design was analytical. In the present study, it is proposed that although early identification and intervention by lecturers are critical, students at risk of failure could use their individual and collective human agency to overcome the challenges that threaten to minimise their opportunities for success. One of the commendations is that for higher education institutions to improve students' output and throughput rates, they should develop comprehensive strategies that promote early diagnosis and progress monitoring of at-risk students.