

## **The Effect of a Reading Program on the Reading Performance of First-Year Students at a Higher Education Institution**

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**ABSTRACT** Reading proficiency is an important predictor of academic achievement in higher education and cannot be left to random accomplishment. As a lack of reading skills may contribute to the termination of studies, reading development programs should be high on the priority list of scaffolding processes aimed at first-year students. The purpose of this paper was to determine the effect of the *LectorSA* reading program on the reading performance levels of 120 first-year B.Sc. students in the Access Program. The quantitative research design comprised a quasi-experimental method with a pretest, posttest non-equivalent control group design. Results indicated that first-year students read at distressingly low levels, but eight sessions on the reading intervention program significantly contributed to the improvement of the students' reading performance. Including a reading development program in the scaffolding processes of first-year students may contribute to academic literacy development, which includes reading ability.