

## Interrogating Factors Affecting Students' Epistemological Access in a South African University

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**ABSTRACT** The study sought to establish lecturers' views on factors affecting students' performance in one School in a South African University. This qualitative study utilised a case study design in which twenty-three purposefully selected practising lecturers participated in the study. Data were collected through individual interviews with participating lecturers in one School in a rural-based university in South Africa. Interview proceedings were audio-taped, transcribed and analysed. The results were cross-checked with the participants. Data were analysed through content analysis where emerging themes were noted. The study found that there were numerous positive factors that affected students' academic performance that included the existence of some lecturers with teaching qualifications and some who had attended professional development courses in teaching, assessment and moderation, the use of varied ways of presenting module content and effective handling of assessment and feedback. There were also negative factors such as general students' under-preparedness, inability to use available resources, the unavailability of teaching and learning space, laboratories as well as students challenges in academic writing and study skills. The study concludes that positive factors should be tapped to improve student academic performance while negative factors need redress. Recommendations were made in the light of key findings of the study.