

Exploring Psycho-social Challenges of Underperforming Students in the Faculty of Education at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal in South Africa

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ABSTRACT The present research explored psycho-social challenges faced by students AT-RISK of academic failure in the Bachelor of Education from the second year to the fourth year students. Resiliency theory underpins this research. The study used a qualitative approach with an interpretive design. It was done through interviews, field notes and observations of a sample of students who were part of the intervention support programme for students at risk known as 'STAR PROGRAM'. In this study, 107 students colour coded as 'At-risk' of academic failure and are part of the 'STAR' program were interviewed so that the students could be given a chance to give personal reasons hindering their performances. The researchers took a week to interview every student in the 'STAR program'. This research sought to draw attention to the psycho-social challenges that students are faced with that ultimately impact on their academic performance. The data was analysed through the lenses of resiliency theory. The findings indicated that with practical intervention strategies, the students may improve their academic performance despite the psycho-social challenges. This program is providing a platform to discuss personal challenging issues and offers appropriate academic interventions to address specific needs of individual students. This program has been successful in offering a platform in which students have been able to open-up and speak on the real attributes for their failure. The research concluded that a well organized and accessible academic intervention programs are the key to student success at University of KwaZulu Natal at Edgewood Campus.