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RECONCEPTUALIZING ACADEMIC LITERACY IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR EPISTEMOLOGICAL ACCESS

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a case study conducted in a School of Education in KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. The study sought to investigate students' writing practices and experiences in one academic literacy module. The study employed an interpretive paradigm, qualitative analytical approach, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and documentary evidence. However, the findings presented in this paper are those from the interview-based data. The findings revealed that academic literacy, when taught in an isolated, generic way, fails to enable epistemological access to various disciplinary writing practices. Hence, we argue in this paper that, until academic literacy is reconceptualised to allow for epistemological access within discipline-specific contexts, our efforts to enable epistemological access into disciplinary discourses will remain a paper fantasy with no real practical manifestation.

Keywords: Academic literacy, discipline-specific teachings, epistemological access, first-year students, literacy.