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Author

CLARENCE, Sherran (ALBERTUS, Latiefa; MWAMBENE, Lea)

Title

Building an evolving method and materials for teaching legal writing in large classes / Sherran

Clarence ; Latiefa Albertus ; Lea Mwambene

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Abstract

In South Africa and in other parts of the world, many professions are bemoaning the poor ability of many graduates to communicate their skills and knowledge effectively once they enter the workplace. Increasingly, pressure is placed on higher education to do more in terms of equipping future professionals with the necessary critical reading, research, thinking and writing skills the workplace demands. However, in South Africa especially, the demand for access to higher education is resulting in increased admissions, and in many lecturers standing in front of larger classes filled with students from a wide range of home and educational backgrounds with ?variable? commands of English as a medium of instruction and communication (Greenbaum and Mbali in S Afr Linguist Appl Lang Stud 20:233?244, 2002). This makes the task of equipping these students with disciplinary knowledge and skills a challenge. In responding to this challenge, the Law Faculty at the University of the Western Cape, in collaboration with a writing specialist, initiated a project aimed at transforming the way in which legal writing was taught at first year level. The overall aim was to start training students, from

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first year, to adapt their thinking and writing to the kinds of knowledge and practice required by academic study as well as the legal profession. The project was successful in achieving its modest aims, but certain challenges remain. This paper reflects critically on the development and evolution of the model for teaching legal writing in large classes. It argues that teaching legal writing in large classes requires creative and sustainable approaches so that students can become active and critical writers, readers and thinkers over time in this, or any, field.(HRK / Abstract übernommen) Clarence, Sherran, E-Mail: sclarence@uwc.ac.za