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Challenges for Educators in Meeting the Needs of Students Bridging into Tertiary Education

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Abstract

Tertiary pre-entry programmes are designed to assist students in attaining an academic qualification that will allow entry into undergraduate study programmes. This study explores the challenges that educators encounter in meeting the needs of students bridging into tertiary education. It includes a review of programme purposes from historical, political and social viewpoints. It also describes the traditional and current profile of students accessing such programmes. The educator role within tertiary pre-entry programmes is outlined, interlinked with teaching and learning theory.

Integral to the study is an exploration of the philosophical assumptions underpinning current teaching practice in relation to students, programmes and the future direction of tertiary pre-entry education. However, it is difficult to isolate an educator perspective from institutional and political perspectives. Hence this study addresses all these. The various perspectives all closely connect to create the learning environment that comprises current tertiary pre-entry programmes.

The study identifies a number of tension areas between philosophical assumptions and practice that educators need to consider in meeting current student needs in their learning endeavours. These areas are:

- The learning environment that students encounter
- The people who interact in these environments
- Future directions of tertiary pre-entry programmes.

The study makes recommendations, from an educator's perspective, on what is required to lessen the tension and successfully meet the needs of the diverse student populace accessing tertiary pre-entry programmes.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Chapter One: Background	1
Introduction	1
An Evolving Perspective	3
Personal Transition	4
Relationships	6
Embracing Change	7
My Current Role	8
Chapter Two: Literature / Resource Review	10
Introduction	10
Tertiary Pre-entry programmes	11
Historical Orientation	11
The Purposes of Programmes	13
Political Purpose	14
Social Purpose	16
The Student Profile	17
Adult Educator Role	20
Teaching and Learning	22
Contemporary Learning Theory: Illeris (2002)	23
Four Component Model of Learning: Cantwell (2001)	25
Interaction Approaches to Learning	26
Andragogy	29
Summary	35

Chapter Three: Methodology	36
Introduction	36
The Research Question	36
The Research Method	37
Ethical Considerations	39
Research Process	39
The Participants	39
The Process	40
Data Collection	42
Individual Interviews	42
Post Interview	44
Data Analysis	45
Validity	47
Summary	47
Chapter Four: Findings	48
Introduction	48
Purposes of Programmes	49
Demystifying Academia	53
Engaging in a Learning Environment	54
Educator Orientation	57
Theoretical Orientation	57
Social Orientation	61
Educator Practice	63
Meeting Student Academic Needs	63
Meeting Student Emotional and Social Needs	64
Creating Learning Environments	65
Future Directions for Tertiary Pre-Entry Programmes	68
Summary	70

Chapter Five: Discussion	72
Introduction	72
The Environment	74
The People	78
Personal Connectedness	78
Group Connectedness	79
Academic Connectedness	81
Institutional Connectedness	82
Developing a Philosophical Framework	83
The Future	86
Equity of Access	86
Processes	88
Partnership	88
Summary	89
Chapter Six: Reflections	92
Reflections	92
Recommendations	93
Future Research	93
Appendices	95
1 Participant information sheet	95
2 Consent form	97
3 Interview questions	98
4 Data analysis	99
References	100