

## **Exploring the strategies used to prepare student teachers to integrate English Across the Curriculum strategy in South African universities**

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### **Abstract**

South Africa is a multilingual country. However, in most academic settings, only English and Afrikaans are privileged as mediums of instruction. As a result of its function as a language of global communication, English is usually the preferred language of teaching and learning. This means that most of the learners negotiate subject learning using English language which for many is a second language. To ensure that learners develop English language skills, the Department of Basic Education advocates for the integration of English Across the Curriculum (EAC). Teachers are key in unlocking the benefits that learners could gain from the integration of language and subject learning. Yet, the ability for all high school teachers to infuse language skills and subject learning is not automatic as it requires preparation during their initial teacher education. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the preparation practices used to prepare high school student teachers to integrate English language skills in subject teaching in three South African universities. We collected data from 102 purposively selected final year student teachers who were being prepared to teach Economic and Management Sciences; Mathematics; Technology; History; Geography; Physical Sciences and Life Sciences. A qualitative multiple case study design was used as the methodological tool, and data from focus group discussions and document analysis were collected, documented and analysed. The findings of the analysis show that student teachers were prepared using structured and unstructured EAC pedagogical activities. Structured activities are subject-oriented learning processes that are largely rigid and prescriptive, while unstructured activities are sociocultural in nature rooted in the academic values and identity that are held in the institution. Although drawn from a relatively small sample, these findings may assist ITE institutions to develop a curriculum that attends to multiple strategies for developing student teachers' knowledge for implementing EAC in subject learning.

**Keywords:** English Across the Curriculum (EAC); high schools; initial teacher education; South Africa