
*STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING STAFF AND STUDENTS'
RESEARCH IN
SOUTH AFRICAN TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS*

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In any successful teacher education institution, the scholarship of teaching and learning must be combined with the scholarship of research. Research remains the basis on which meaningful or evidence based teacher education can be built. Therefore the improvement of research capacities within a teacher training institution is of crucial importance. Three approaches are generally foregrounded for the enhancement of research capacities in tertiary institutions namely; the research-led teaching approach, inquiry based learning approach and the research led teaching and learning approach.

In this qualitative study, some 47 teacher educators were selected through a combination of purposive and convenient sampling from three universities in South Africa. Data analysis was conducted by means of a thematic content analysis. Participants were asked to provide their insight on ways of improving staff and student research in their respective institutions.

Findings indicate that a variety of strategies are important for the improvement of student research. These include: introducing the concept of research early in the undergraduate years, provide support for academic writing skills and provide opportunities for students to carry out small research projects to gain practical knowledge. For the improvement of staff research, data highlight the importance of peer support, staff development for research skills as well as the allocation balanced workloads. In a nutshell, this study builds on the three approaches for research capacity enhancement and extends them through the examination of specific elements pertinent to the South African context.