

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE EFFECTIVE READING: REFLECTIONS FROM UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Lydia Ayako Mareri

Egerton University

ABSTRACT

University educators in Kenya often decry the inability of undergraduate students to read widely. This is because university learning is expected to be a collaborative effort between the lecturers and the students. The lectures delivered to students during the scheduled class hours should serve as detailed guidelines to the anticipated in-depth information which the students need to seek in their free study time. When responding to examination questions, the students often reproduce the lecturers' notes verbatim. When they prepare research based assignments, the students seem to reproduce the lecturers' note or plagiarize already existing pieces of work with minimal evidence of interpretation of the facts therein. This is an indication of lack of wide reading skills. The aim of this paper is to identify, describe and discuss prevalent factors that influence university undergraduate students' limited self and wide reading initiatives. The description and discussion is based on information established from participants in a focused group discussion forums organized with first year first semester Bachelor of commerce students, of Egerton University. These focused group discussions were done the Eighth week of the semester. These focused group discussion forums were intended to help identify undergraduate students' reading experiences in their early days in the university. The experiences indicate that there are many factors that hinder university students from reading widely that range from simple to complex. This paper therefore recommends strategies that university educators can use to encourage undergraduate students to read academic information widely.