

UFS101

EVALUATION

2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive summary	3
Introduction	10
Methodology.....	11
Application of learning beyond UFS101.....	13
UFS101 content and assessments	14
Semester One.....	14
Semester Two	30
Teaching assistants	45
Suggestions & recommendations from students	49

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UFS101 is part of the High Impact Practices focus area in the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. It is a compulsory year-long credit-bearing module for all first-year students (9000+ in 2018) across the Bloemfontein and QwaQwa campuses and a prerequisite for degree completion.

UFS101 makes use of the flipped classroom approach to learning. Within this model of learning, discussions and problem-solving are key concepts that are applied throughout each class. This mode of learning encourages preparation before each discussion class which has 30-40 students each led by a Teaching Assistant (TA). The preparation consists of material specific for each unit in the module. Before each discussion class, students have to complete a multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ). To consolidate the learning that took place at the end of each unit, large class learning experiences (200-1 200 students each).

The module content and mode of delivery change each year, in response to student and Teaching Assistant feedback, as well as strategic directives from university management. The first semester of UFS101 aims to teach students academic skills, which assist with their transition from high school to university. The second semester of UFS101, running alongside the common intellectual experience, encourages students to engage with problems from multidisciplinary perspectives in order to apply critical thinking.

The themes for 2018 were leadership and social justice, as well as entrepreneurship and employability.

This report details the evaluation of UFS101 2018.

KEY QUESTION 1

To what extent do students apply what they have learnt in UFS 101 to other modules or in other areas of their lives?



Close to nine out of ten students indicated that they had applied what they learned outside of the module. Approximately half of the students had been able to apply what they learned in Semester One to some of their other modules, whilst a further third were able to apply what they learned in all their other modules. Qualitative data from the online surveys and from focus groups largely confirms the validity of this finding.

KEY QUESTION 2

Which content and types of sessions in UFS101 do students find most and least valuable, and what makes these sessions valuable/not?

Semester One



Taking the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data in the survey together with the focus groups it is concluded that four sessions emerge as particularly valuable to students in UFS101 Semester One - *Time Management, Referencing and Plagiarism, Goal Setting* and *Searching for Academic Resources*. However, the *Time Management* discussion class stands out clearly as the most valuable for students in Semester One.

The most frequently mentioned reasons why these sessions were valuable to students were the links that students saw between applying what they learnt and their success (academic and more generally), and the transferability of the skills learnt to other contexts.



There are some differences between faculties and between campuses in terms of which sessions students found least valuable. On the Bloemfontein campus in all the faculties at least one of the two orientation sessions were considered least valuable.

The two *Sign Language* sessions, and the session on leadership were rated least valuable after the orientation sessions. In contrast to the other faculties, students in the Faculty of Health Sciences were particularly positive about the *Sign Language* sessions. However, none of the faculties were highly positive about the value of the *Leadership* session. For students on the QwaQwa campus the two *Sign Language* sessions and the session on leadership were the least valuable, whilst the *Orientation* discussion class was ranked in the top half of sessions on the campus. At the faculty level this was true for all faculties except the Natural and Agricultural Sciences. The *Purpose of UFS101 Learning Experience* however was in the list of five least useful sessions on the campus. The latter session was only well received at the Faculty of the Humanities.

Reasons provided as to why the *Orientation/Purpose of UFS101* sessions was least valuable included that the sessions were too long in relation to the content covered, that the information covered did not provide students with any specific skills and that it was not necessary to have an introductory session. A few students said it was least valuable when compared to other sessions in UFS101 – although they saw the necessity of having the session. Others said that content was repetitive and suggested condensing the content from the two Orientations into one session.

The *Sign Language* sessions elicited some of the most contrasting feedback from the students. In the survey qualitative feedback, they were identified as one of the five most valuable sessions; on the other hand, they were also identified in the quantitative feedback among the less valuable sessions. These contradictory stances were also expressed in the focus groups where some students found the sessions to valuable and interesting whilst others felt they were not useful at all. The reasons why the session was not considered valuable included that students saw limited opportunity to apply what they learnt outside UFS101, and that the complex content was difficult to master in the short time available and easily forgotten.

Perhaps disappointingly the leadership session did not emerge as being one of the highly valued sessions, given that it was one of the key themes for the year. There was limited qualitative feedback to understand why this session was not considered highly valuable, but reasons included that students did not feel they learnt anything new, and those who provided feedback tended to see leadership as something innate (not teachable) or did not see themselves as being (or aspiring to be) leaders.

Semester Two



The *Community and Mental Health Discussion Class 1* stands out as the most valuable for students in Semester Two. This session was rated as most valuable on both campuses, and in all faculties (with the exception of the Faculty of Law on the Bloemfontein campus and the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences on the QwaQwa campus). Students in the Faculty of Law found the *Law and Social Justice* session most valuable and students in Economics and Management Sciences (QwaQwa) found the *IT discussion class 1* most valuable. On the Bloemfontein campus the *Entrepreneurship discussion class* was rated as second most valuable, whilst the *Community and Mental Health Discussion Class 2* was

ranked as second most valuable on the QwaQwa campus. There were also differences between faculties in terms of which session was second most valuable.

The *Entrepreneurship learning experience and the Community Health learning experiences* emerged as the most valuable for students in Semester Two, with approximately a third of students ranking these two learning experiences as the most valuable sessions. These two learning experiences were rated as the top two on both campuses. On the QwaQwa campus the *Community Health* learning experiences was the rated the most valuable, whilst on the Bloemfontein the *Entrepreneurship learning experience* was rated most valuable.

Students are more likely to rate a learning experiences positively if the content is linked to their area of study. Students in the Faculty of Health Sciences rated the *Community Health* learning experiences most positively, those in the Economics and Management Sciences (on both campuses) rated the *Entrepreneurship and Economics learning experiences* most positively and students in the Faculty of Law rated the *Law and Social Justice* learning experience in their top two learning experiences.

Given that entrepreneurship and employability were one of the themes for the year, it is encouraging to see this unit emerge among the most valuable to students.

Learning experiences vs. Discussion classes: Student preferences

Slightly more students on the Bloemfontein campus preferred the learning experiences over the discussion classes, whilst on the QwaQwa campus students have a distinct preference for the discussion classes.

The relative proportion of preference between learning experiences and discussion classes on the Bloemfontein campus was found in all faculties except the Faculty of Law where 65% of students preferred the learning experiences. On the QwaQwa campus, compared to the other faculties, a lower proportion of students in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (57%) preferred the discussion classes.

Discussion classes are found to be valuable for their level of interactivity and engagement, whilst the learning experiences are valued for the contributions of the guest speakers. A relatively similar number of students found either the discussion class or the learning experience more conducive to their learning, which affirms the value of both types of experiences in the module to facilitate learning for diverse students.

KEY QUESTION 3

Do students learn the expected skills from the UFS101 Units (and if not why)?



TIME MANAGEMENT

Eight out of ten students indicated that the time management template helped them to learn how to manage their time. The proportion of students reporting this was slightly higher on the QwaQwa campus than on the Bloemfontein campus.

On the Bloemfontein campus this assessment was least useful to students in the Health Sciences, and most valuable to students in the Faculty of Education.

WHAT HINDERED LEARNING? The reasons students did not find the assessment or session useful centred around two themes: either they already knew how to manage their time, or they found they were not able to set realistic plans and stick to the schedules that they set up.



GOAL SETTING

Nine out of ten students indicated that they learnt how to set goals through completing the Education and Career Plan. The proportion of students on the Bloemfontein and QwaQwa campus who reported this is highly similar.

This assessment was least useful for students on the Bloemfontein campus in the Health Sciences and Theology faculties, and most useful for students in Faculties of the Humanities and Education (both campuses).

WHAT HINDERED LEARNING? Reasons why students did not find the Educational and Career Plan valuable included that they did not see it as personally relevant or applicable to them, they found the assessment confusing or difficult to complete or they already knew how to set goals.



SUMMARISING

The vast majority of students (87%) indicated that they learnt how to summarise through the Leadership session assessment. The proportion of students who indicated this on the QwaQwa campus was slightly higher than the proportion on the Bloemfontein campus.

This assessment was least useful for students on the Bloemfontein campus in the Health Sciences and Theology faculties – although still useful for at least three-quarters of students in these faculties.

WHAT HINDERED LEARNING? Half of the students who indicated that they did not learn to summarise through this assessment said that this was because they already knew how to do so. Others indicated that the style of summarising taught was too restrictive and did not expose students a range of options for how to approach summarising.



PARAPHRASING

Nine out of ten students indicated that they learnt how to paraphrase in UFS101. The proportion of students on the Bloemfontein and QwaQwa campus who reported this is highly similar. This assessment was equally impactful in all faculties and on all campuses.

WHAT HINDERED LEARNING? Many of the students who did not learnt to paraphrase said they already knew how to do so before UFS101. The other two reasons were that there was not enough time or emphasis placed on the topic and that paraphrasing was difficult to master.



REASONING FROM BOTH SIDES

Nine out of ten students indicated that they learnt how to reason both sides of an argument in UFS101. The proportion of students on the Bloemfontein campus who reported this is slightly higher than on the QwaQwa campus.

This assessment appears to be least valuable to students in the Faculties of Theology and Health Sciences.

WHAT HINDERED LEARNING? Several students found the assessment difficult or confusing to complete for a range of reasons – including that the 6*6 rule was hard to apply or too restrictive, the instructions were hard to understand, or that there was too much information to sift through. A few students said that they already knew how to reason from both sides. Other students found the emphasis to be placed on PowerPoint – rather than reasoning skills.



POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

Nine out of ten students indicated that they learnt how to present information in a PowerPoint in UFS101. The proportion of students on the Bloemfontein and QwaQwa campus who reported this is highly similar.

WHAT HINDERED LEARNING? Most of the students who did not find this assessment useful said that they already knew how to create PowerPoint presentations and others said they did not learn any new skills in PowerPoint from the session. A small group of students found the assessment difficult or impossible to do due to their lack of computer/technology skills; the content covered was too much too fast for them to keep abreast.

KEY QUESTION 4

What do students like and dislike about the common intellectual experience in Semester 2, and what do they learn from these units that they can apply?

MENTAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

Most frequently students said they learnt ...

... new information about strategies for coping and problem solving for success, health and wellbeing, having a growth mindset and mental health.

In terms of what students said they had applied in their lives, the most frequently mentioned responses were cognitive and emotional strategies, self-care habits, and working on developing a growth mindset.

Students who liked Everything about the Unit



Most frequently students said they disliked...

... content that was not practical, not covered in enough detail, covered in too much detail, or covered content students already knew.

A few students mentioned specific content that they did not like, including time management (repetitive from Semester 1 or known before), the content about the brain, and the academic appeals process.

Students who liked Nothing about the Unit



ECONOMICS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Most frequently students said they learnt ...

...what entrepreneurship is, about the different types of entrepreneurs and how to be an entrepreneur.

They also learnt about how the South African economy works, what the current status is and about unemployment.

Students who liked Everything about the Unit



Most frequently students said they disliked...

...parts of the unit were that it not seen as valuable or relatable or content that was not relevant to the challenges they face.

Others thought the content was not covered in enough depth.

Students who liked Nothing about the Unit



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Most frequently students said they learnt ...

... about the links between employability and their online presence, about coding, the changing realities in IT or as a result of IT and the benefits of IT and technology.

In terms of skills, students said they learnt general IT skills, as well as how to improve their online presence, code and create a website.

Students who liked Everything about the Unit



5%

Most frequently students said they disliked...

... that there was not enough time to cover the content in depth.

For some students it was unpleasant to come to understand the potentially negative impact of IT in their lives, including that more technology and artificial intelligence may lead to fewer jobs in the future.

Students who liked Nothing about the Unit



7%

LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Most frequently students said they learnt ...

the laws, guidelines and procedures for protesting, including the actions that needed to be taken to ensure peaceful and legal protests.

Students also frequently reported learning about citizen rights and responsibilities.

Students who liked Everything about the Unit



6%

Most frequently students said they disliked...

the content because too much emphasis was placed on protests and strikes (and not other parts of the law), that the content was difficult or complicated, and that it was not covered in enough depth. .

Students who liked Nothing about the Unit



11%

KEY QUESTION 5

How effective do students in UFS101 find the TAs to be?

In both semesters and on both campuses, the majority of students (more than two-thirds in all cases) agreed to some extent that their TAs:

- encouraged the expression of diverse opinions and perspectives in the discussion classes;
- presented material in a manner which enabled them to learn;
- were well prepared for class; and
- spoke clearly and audibly in class.

In the qualitative feedback provided by students in Semester One 75% of comments about the TAs were positive comments and only 8% were negative comments (the remainder were suggestions the TAs). Similarly, in Semester Two, 72% were positive comments about the assistants, 9% were negative comments and the remainder of the comments were suggestions for how the TAs or their role could be enhanced.

KEY QUESTION 6

In what ways do UFS101 students believe that the module could be improved?

In Semester One students were asked specifically what they hoped to learn in UFS101 but did not. The most frequently requested topics were health and wellbeing, “finding your feet at UFS”, study and academic skills, and financial skills. To large extent these suggestions overlap with content already presented in UFS101. This affirms the value of the content that is already included and reiterates the feedback in several of the Units where students requested topics to be covered in greater depth.

In Semester Two students were posed a broader question: “*Do you have any further suggestions or recommendations for UFS101?*”. Many of these responses to this question were positive comments and only half of the students provided tangible suggestions. Several of the suggestions focussed on amending what is required of students to complete the module – for example that there should be fewer assignments, fewer classes or that the weighting of attendance in the final mark should be decreased. Others suggested that UFS101 should either be voluntary or that students could be exempt from the module if they passed a skills assessment test.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The majority of evidence presented in this report illustrates the value of UFS101 to many students, however there is evidence that prevailing negative sentiments about the module remain. However, several of the students in focus groups who mentioned that seniors had told them that UFS101 was boring or a waste of time, noted that their attitude toward the module changed during the year.

UFS101 has maintained a reflective and adaptive approach to both its content and delivery since the first year it was implemented, conducting comprehensive module evaluations on an annual basis. This has resulted in several drastic changes to curriculum over the years and the implementation of the blended learning approach. Although it may not be possible to eliminate negative sentiments of senior students towards the module the continued focus on improvement and innovation will enable UFS101 to remain relevant to the academic and social needs of students as they transition from high school to university.

INTRODUCTION

UFS101 is part of the High Impact Practices focus area in the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. It is a compulsory year-long credit-bearing module for all first-year students (9000+ in 2018) across the Bloemfontein and QwaQwa campuses and a prerequisite for degree completion.

UFS101 makes use of the flipped classroom approach to learning. The flipped classroom approach encompasses multiple perspectives that move away from the traditional classroom setup of authoritarian lecturers and passive students. Instead, within this model of learning, discussions and problem-solving are key concepts that are applied throughout each class. This mode of learning encourages preparation before each discussion class which has 30-40 students each led by a Teaching Assistant (TA). The preparation consists of material specific for each unit in the module. Before each discussion class, students have to complete a multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ). To consolidate the learning that took place at the end of each unit, large class learning experiences (200-1 200 students each) are presented to students in the Callie Human Centre.

The module content and mode of delivery change each year, in response to student and Teaching Assistant feedback, as well as strategic directives from university management (detailed description of content for 2018 can be found on pgs. 14 and 30). The first semester of UFS101 aims to teach students academic skills, which assist with their transition from high school to university. The second semester of UFS101, running alongside the common intellectual experience, encourages students to engage with problems from multidisciplinary perspectives in order to apply critical thinking.

The themes for 2018 were leadership and social justice, as well as entrepreneurship and employability.

This report details the evaluation of UFS101 2018. A mixed-method approach was employed (details described in the Methodology section on p.11) to answer a range of questions, including:

- to what extent do students apply what they have learnt in UFS101 to other modules or in other areas of their lives;
- which content and types of sessions in UFS101 do students find most and least valuable, and what makes these sessions valuable/not;
- do students learn the expected skills from the UFS101 Units (and if not why);
- what do students like and dislike about the common intellectual experience in Semester 2, and what do they learn from this that they can apply;
- how effective do students in UFS101 find the TAs to be;
- in what ways do UFS101 students believe that the module could be improved.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this evaluation was collected from students in two online surveys (one at the end of each semester) and through a series of focus groups.

Online surveys were mixed-method by design and included questions about the content presented during the relevant semester as well as about the UFS101 TAs. All students were invited to participate in the evaluations and had the opportunity to complete the evaluation during the last class of each semester. No incentives were given for completing the evaluation, but a detailed account of how student participation influences changes in the module were explained.

Fourteen focus groups were held – 11 on the Bloemfontein campus and three on the QwaQwa campus. In the focus groups on the Bloemfontein campus students were presented with a selection of the quantitative findings from the evaluation surveys and asked to share their perspectives as to why they agreed or disagreed with the findings from the surveys. On the QwaQwa campus the focus groups centred around students' experiences of the learning experiences.

SAMPLE

The Semester One evaluation survey was completed by 6928 students on the Bloemfontein and QwaQwa campuses. The distribution by campus and faculty is shown in Figure 1. In Semester One 74% of the UFS101 students on the Bloemfontein campus and 80% of the students on the QwaQwa campus completed the evaluation survey.

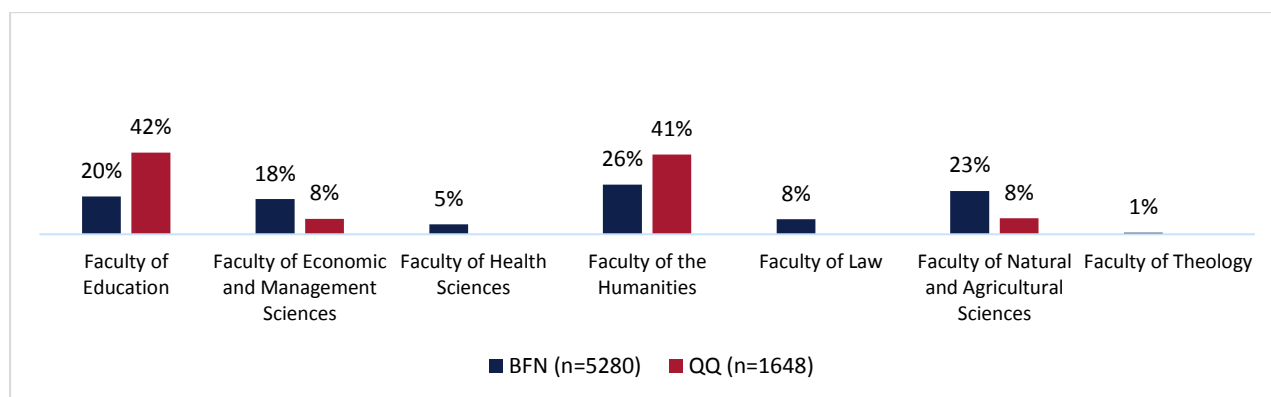


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by Campus and Faculty: Semester One

The Semester Two survey was completed by 6177 students on the Bloemfontein and QwaQwa campuses. The distribution by campus and faculty is shown in Figure 2. In Semester Two 70% of the UFS101 students on the Bloemfontein and 57% of the students on the QwaQwa campus completed the evaluation survey.

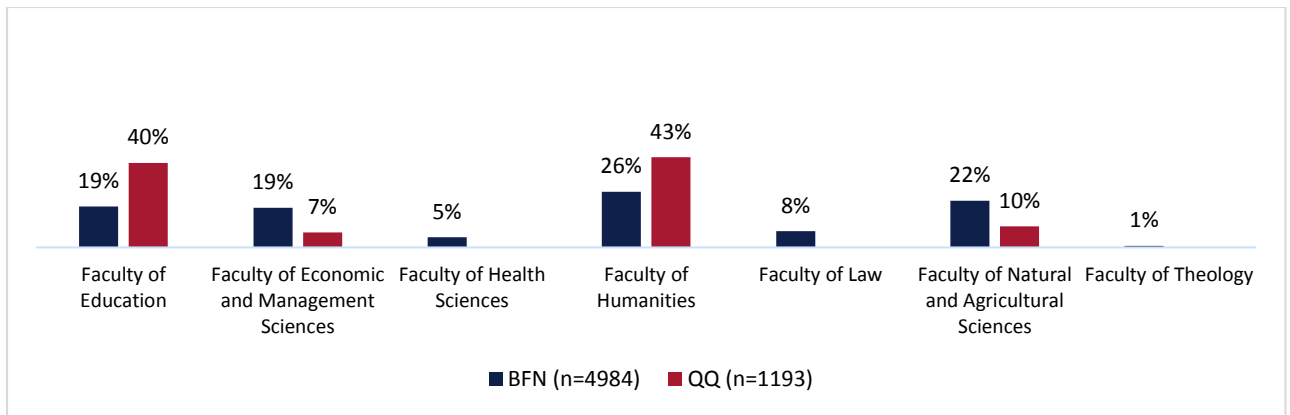


Figure 2: Distribution of respondents by Campus and Faculty: Semester Two

The distribution of respondents is highly similar for the two semesters and is highly representative of the student enrolments UFS101 for 2018. Although the response rate on the QwaQwa campus dropped steeply in Semester Two, the distribution of responses by faculty was still highly similar to the population of respondents. It is not clear what the reason for the decline in responses was for Semester Two on the QwaQwa campus.

DATA ANALYSIS

ONLINE SURVEY DATA

Descriptive statistics were determined for all quantitative questions in the two online surveys, and results were disaggregated by campus and faculty.

Random purposeful selection was used to identify a sample equivalent to 10% of students completing the surveys for the qualitative analysis of the text responses in the online surveys. The selection criteria were that the cases must be information-dense and proportionally representative of the campus, faculty and race distribution of UFS101 enrolments for 2018. The selected cases were imported into Dedoose¹ (a mixed methods data analytics tool) and thematically coded.

Qualitative data from the surveys was used for two primary purposes – to verify through triangulation the findings from the quantitative data and to clarify understanding of the quantitative results by providing a deeper insight into why students selected specific quantitative responses in the surveys.

FOCUS GROUP DATA

Focus groups were recorded (with permission from participants) and transcribed verbatim. These were provided to the analyst who used the transcriptions for the purposes of triangulation of findings from the surveys, and well as supplementing the findings with additional insights that did not emerge from the online surveys.

¹ www.dedoose.com

APPLICATION OF LEARNING BEYOND UFS101

In Semester One students were asked if and where they applied what they learned in UFS101 outside the module. Close to nine out of ten students indicated that they had applied what they learned outside of the module (see Figure 3). Approximately half of the students had been able to apply what they learned in Semester One to some of their other modules, whilst a further third were able to apply what they learned in all their other modules.

A comparison by faculty shows that more than a quarter of students in the Faculty of Health Sciences, and 20% of students on the Bloemfontein campus in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences were not able to apply what they learned in UFS101 in any other context. In all other faculties, the proportion of students who did not apply what they learnt in any other context was lower than 15%. On the QwaQwa campus, more than a third of students – regardless of faculty – indicated that they applied UFS101 to all their modules.

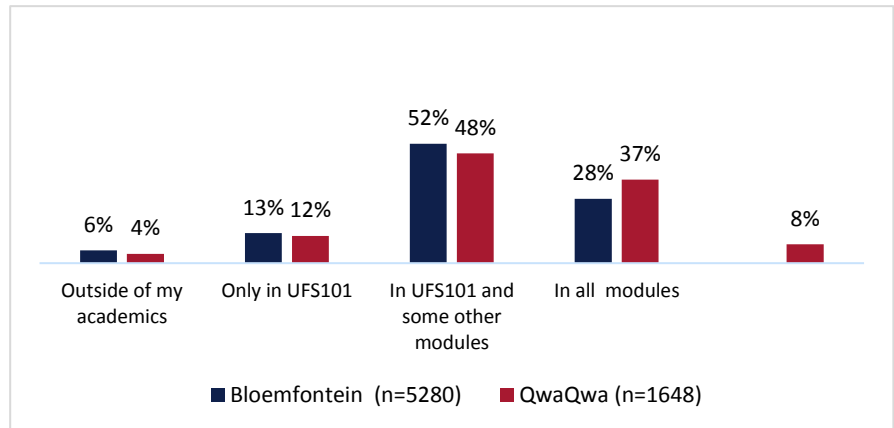


Figure 3: Application of UFS101 outside the module: Campus comparison

The focus groups conducted on the Bloemfontein campus largely verified the findings from the survey regarding whether students applied what they learnt in UFS101 to their other modules. Most (and in some cases all) students in each of the 11 focus groups said that they had applied what they learnt in UFS101 in at least one other module or context. Most students had applied what they learnt in some of their other modules, while some provided examples of how they applied what they learnt outside of the classroom.

"I have applied a lot of things that I've learned from UFS 101...in everything that I have done ... mostly in my modules [I] know a lot of things I didn't know before I came to school so it really helped me a lot to do my assignments and just get done with a lot of things." [Focus group participant]

"So, as a first year when we get into a university, you don't really know how to behave, how to study, how to do those things, but then, getting ... in a class of UFS101 they teach how to have a right mindset, how to manage your time, how to cope with other things like how to use the resources in a campus, uhm, ... so for me, as I am a first student, I really really applied most of the things because I really didn't know how to manage my time... so ufs101 really taught me how to do it." [Focus group participant]

In two of the focus groups however some students disagreed with the finding that most students are able to apply what they learn from UFS101. They reported that students did not take UFS101 seriously and suggested that students may be simply filling in the survey without paying attention to their responses.

"According to the students from what I know, this is a lie. They just answer questions so that it would look as if they apply uhm UFS 101 content to their modules, which they don't. Some student go to UFS 101 for the fact that they have to pass UFS 101. And when they have to do quizzes online, they will ask a friend to do it for them, and some of them are copying from other students. So, it is just so that they can pass UFS 101 and get it over and done with." [Focus group participant]

However, despite these more negative sentiments, the bulk of evidence presented throughout this report confirms that for a large number of students, UFS101 does equip them with one or more skills that benefit them academically and personally.

UFS101 CONTENT AND ASSESSMENTS

SEMESTER ONE

CONTENT

The topics, mode of delivery and outcomes for each class in Semester One is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: UFS101 outline of Semester One content

Name of class	Type	Outcomes: After the completion of the unit students should be able to:
How will you learn in UFS101?	Discussion Class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know UFS101 module outcomes 2. Understand expectations of students in UFS101 and how to successfully complete the module 3. Know how to navigate Blackboard (content, assessments, announcements)
Purpose of UFS101	Learning Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain purpose of UFS101 2. Know how students will benefit from the module
How learning works at university	Discussion Class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate how to learn, retain, and recall information 2. Explain how memory is formed 3. Describe good academic habits, such as preparing for and attending class
Time management	Discussion Class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain what module codes mean in terms of notional learning hours, and apply to registered modules 2. Divide time into class A, B and C activities 3. Create a daily academic plan to demonstrate one of the strategies for managing time 4. Name at least five (5) time management strategies to improve time management
Goal setting	Discussion Class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflect on time management principles applied 2. Demonstrate goal setting and strategies to achieve goals 3. Complete academic plan 4. Complete career and educational plan
Growth mindset	Learning Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflect on failure 2. Explain the relationship between failure and success 3. Explain the concept of mindset 4. Explain Fixed vs Growth Mindset 5. Explain why mindset matters 6. Explain how to develop a Growth Mindset
Reading academic text	Discussion Class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehend academic text by building vocabulary 2. Skim an article 3. Read for main ideas 4. Summarise academic text 5. Apply the SQ3R method as a study method
Searching for academic resources	Discussion Class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a broad search for resources via search engines such as Google Scholar 2. Use databases to find articles 3. Use KovsieCat to find books 4. Evaluate the validity of sources
Referencing and plagiarism	Discussion Class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define plagiarism 2. Explain how to avoid committing plagiarism 3. Cite and reference a variety of sources in the style required by relevant faculty 4. Paraphrase a section from an article
Sign Language 1	Learning Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide examples of Sign Language myths and assumptions 2. Describe elements of Deaf culture 3. Demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet and sign their own name
Sign Language 2	Learning Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce self in South African Sign Language 2. Ask basic questions in South African Sign Language 3. Demonstrate knowledge of basic sentences 4. Demonstrate knowledge of sentence structure
Communication skills	Discussion Class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognise appropriate and inappropriate verbal and non-verbal behaviour 2. Explain the link between communication skills and being a successful student 3. Explain the link between communication skills and employability 4. Practise active listening during a conversation 5. Reason above emotion and from both sides of an argument 6. Create a basic PowerPoint

Characteristics of a successful student	Discussion Class	1. Discuss the characteristics of successful UFS students 2. Identify characteristics applied in semester 1
Leadership	Learning Experience	1. Reflect on own capacity to be a leader and how to take on issues that require change in the community through leadership 2. Summarise the leadership content covered in semester 1, with specific reference to horizontal leadership characteristics

MOST VALUABLE SESSIONS

Students were asked to rank the Semester One content in order from what they found most valuable to least valuable (on a scale of 1-14). The frequency heat map (Figure 4) shows the number of students placing each session at a particular rank order. Green cut offs indicate the cumulative percentage of students ranking a session in the top five for the semester.

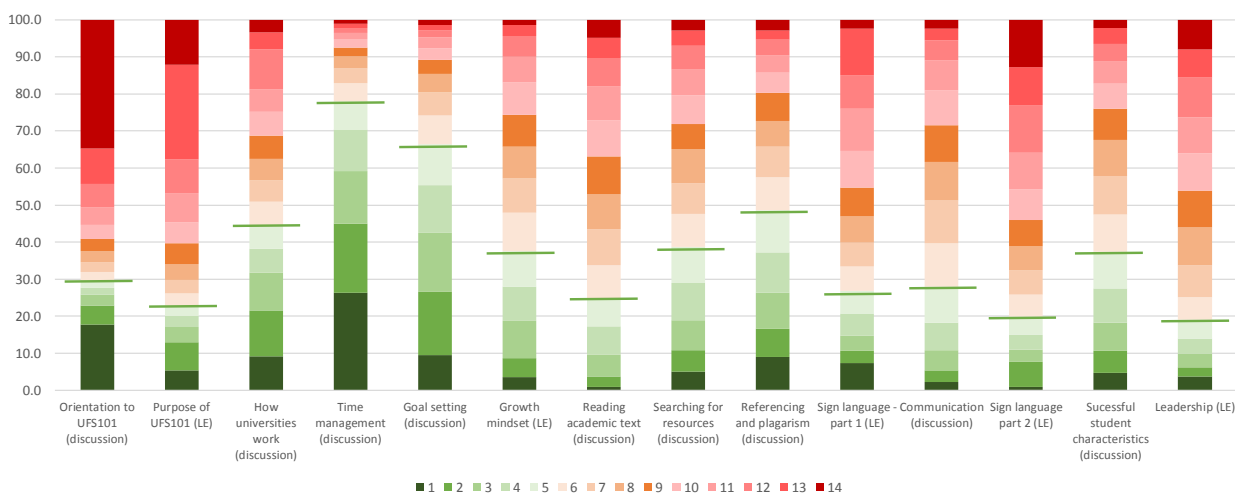


Figure 4: Frequency heat map ranking sessions for Semester One

Five discussion classes stood out as being the most valuable in Semester One with more than 40% of students ranking them in the top 5 (Figure 4). Table 2 below shows these five discussion classes along with the rank each received most frequently from students (the mode), the average rating for the session and the proportion of students who ranked the session as either their most or least valuable.

Table 2: Five sessions ranked as most valuable in Semester One

Topic	Overall ranking	Most frequent rank	Average ranking	% ranking least valuable	% ranking most valuable	Comment
Time management	1	1	3.8	1%	26%	Half of students ranked this in the top 3
Goal setting	2	2	4.9	1%	9%	Half of students ranked this in the top 4
How learning at universities works	3	2	6.7	3%	9%	Half of the students ranked this in the top half of their rankings
Referencing and plagiarism	4	5	6.2	3%	9%	Half of the students ranked this in the top half of their rankings
Searching for academic resources	5	4	7.0	3%	5%	

The *Time Management* discussion class stands out clearly as the most valuable for students in Semester One, with 26% of students ranking it as their most valuable session and with a mode of 1. Furthermore, 50% of students selected this session in their top 3. This session was rated as most valuable on both campuses, and in all faculties.

"I've found time management very valuable to me because it did not teach me to manage my time for only UFS101 but it taught me to be organised time wise in all my modules and also in life generally. Yes, I am still not yet 100% in my time management but after this session of time management I can see the difference and improvements and the manner in which I get committed to wisely using all the I have." [Faculty of Education, QwaQwa Campus student]

The *Goal Setting* and *How Learning Works at Universities* sessions both received a mode of 2 with 9% of students indicating this as their most valuable session. However, the average score for *How Learning Works* was 6.7 – compared to an average score of 4.9 for the *Goal Setting* session. The *Goal Setting* session was rated as second most valuable on both campuses. In all faculties except for Health Sciences and Theology, the *Goal Setting* discussion class was ranked under the top two classes. For Health Sciences and Theology, *Referencing and Plagiarism* was ranked as the second most valuable class.

"Goal setting [was most valuable] because it helps me a lot to set my goals. To know where I am where am I going and what I want to achieve. It helps me to know what my short-term goals, what are my medium-term goal and what are my long- term goals are. It even makes you want to do many things in life. I even think of some of the things I never thought I would love to or want to do". [Faculty of Education, QwaQwa Campus student]

There are differences by campus in terms of how valuable the *How Learning Works* session was, with the session receiving the third highest mean score and a mode of 2 on the QwaQwa campus, compared to a mode score of 12 on the Bloemfontein campus.

Students were asked in an open-ended question to describe the most useful content in UFS101 Semester One. Table 3 shows the five sessions mentioned most frequently in the qualitative feedback, disaggregated by campus and faculty.

Table 3: Top 5 most valuable sessions: Percentage of students mentioning session in qualitative feedback

	Time management	Referencing and Plagiarism	Goal setting	Sign Language	Searching for resources
All students	38%	16%	13%	13%	10%
Bloemfontein	39%	17%	13%	14%	11%
Education	45%	16%	9%	14%	7%
Economic & Man Sciences	38%	19%	13%	14%	10%
Health Sciences	31%	24%	7%	28%	14%
The Humanities	34%	21%	16%	12%	11%
Law	34%	17%	22%	10%	15%
Natural & Agric Sciences	43%	12%	13%	11%	12%
Theology**	60%	0%	0%	20%	0%
QwaQwa	33%	11%	13%	11%	6%
Education	41%	14%	12%	12%	5%
Economic & Man Sciences	45%	9%	18%	9%	0%
The Humanities	25%	8%	10%	12%	8%
Natural & Agric Sciences	27%	9%	36%	9%	9%

* percentages in red indicate cases where a lower proportion of students in the faculty mentioned the session (compared to the total proportion on the campus). Percentages in green indicate cases where a higher proportion of students in the faculty mentioned the session (compared to the total proportion on the campus).

**small samples sizes in this faculty influence the percentage values

The qualitative findings confirm to a large extent the quantitative results, with the *Time Management*, *Goal Setting*, *Referencing and Plagiarism*, and *Searching for Academic Resources* sessions emerging in the top five. There were no large differences between campuses in terms of how frequently the sessions were mentioned in the qualitative feedback, although there were some differences between faculties on the campuses.

As was the case in the quantitative responses, the *Time Management* session was particularly well received by students on both campuses (mentioned in the qualitative data by 38% of the students). With only one exception this session emerged in the qualitative feedback as the most frequently mentioned session on all campuses and in all faculties. The exception was on QwaQwa campus in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences where the *Goal Setting* session was mentioned most frequently. The *Time Management* session was particularly valuable to students in the Faculties of Education (both campuses), Theology and Economic and Management Science (QwaQwa campus).

The *How Learning Works* session was the one session that was in the top five for the quantitative feedback which did not feature in the top five for the qualitative results (it was ranked 6th).

Focus group data was used to triangulate the findings from the online evaluation survey. In all focus groups at least one of the participants found the *Time Management* session to be most valuable for them, with most students agreeing that this session was one of the most valuable sessions. In several focus groups students ranked the *Referencing and Plagiarism* session as more valuable than the *Goal Setting* session, and in a four of the 11 groups *Searching for Academic Resources* was identified as one of the most important sessions for students.

" And then searching for academic... Resources! It was very important because I didn't even know that there was something like Kovies cat or.... you would go to the library and search for a book. I mean, the whole day not knowing where to look. You know, sometimes we have this pride especially maybe if you get to a place which is you don't want to seem lost or out of, you just go there and you search the whole day because of your pride... I don't like to be seen lost so I would go to the library search for a book the whole day because you just don't want to ask but with this class it was very easy because you could go there just type the book that you want and then it just shows you where the book is... so for me it just made my life easier and it ... lowered the burden." [Focus group participant]

Taking the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data in the survey together with the focus groups it is concluded that four sessions emerge as particularly valuable to students in UFS101 Semester One - *Time Management*, *Referencing and Plagiarism*, *Goal Setting* and *Searching for Academic Resources*.

WHAT MAKES SESSIONS VALUABLE TO STUDENTS?

In addition to indicating which sessions were most valuable students were asked to describe why a session was valuable to them. The three sessions which emerged as the most useful to students in both the quantitative and qualitative responses are expanded upon in the sections below.

Time management

Most students (82%) who indicated in the qualitative feedback that the *Time Management* session was most valuable to them spoke about what they learned (summarized in Figure 5).

"I learnt how to plan and stick to my time, this also helped me to stop postponing, and prioritize my work ... The time management discussion class helped me to eliminate the unnecessary things that I used to spend my time on and to keep my focus on those that are important. If I know how to manage my time well, starting now this might benefit me in my career" [Faculty of Economics, QwaQwa Campus student]

Students found it particularly valuable to learn about how to allocate their time according to priorities.

A quarter² of the students said that the *Time Management* session was the most valuable as it was integral to their success at university and/or in their future careers.

Other students (11%)² described how they valued the transferability of the time management skills learnt. In

fact, a small proportion of students (6%)² already attributed their improved academic performance to the fact that they applied the time management skills in their academic life.

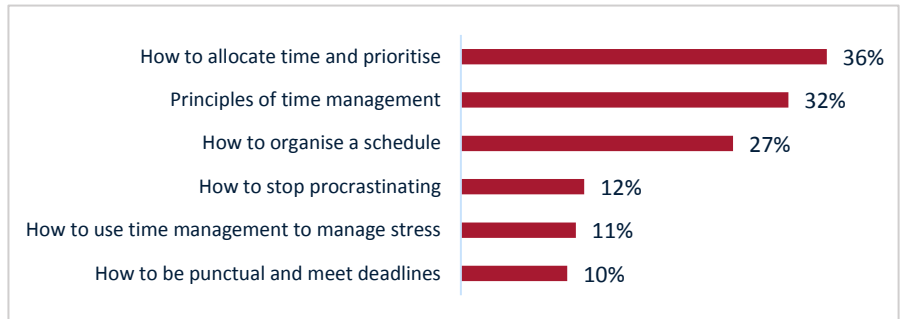


Figure 5: What students who found time management most useful learnt

Goal setting

Students who found the session on *Educational and Career Planning* (which deals with goal setting) most useful reported that the learnt why setting goals was important (25%)³ and how to set and achieve goals (56%)³.

Goal setting is also seen as one of the skills that students can apply outside of UFS101 (mentioned by 14%)³ and is considered an important life skill for success (25%)³. Students found that the content motivated and inspired them to set goals for themselves, and importantly to work hard towards those goals.

"I found that the goal setting classes were very helpful because moving from the high school environment to the university environment is not as easy as it may seem, these classes helped me set realistic and SMART goals and they motivated me to actually study hard and do reasonably well in all my modules, these classes have helped me realize why I am here and what I hope to achieve whilst I am here." [Faculty of Humanities, Bloemfontein campus student]

Although only limited in number (n=4), some students mentioned that applying the skills from this session had already helped them to improve their performance and achieve the goals they set for themselves.

Referencing and plagiarism

Most students (70%) who indicated in the qualitative feedback that the *Referencing and Plagiarism* session was most valuable to them, spoke in their qualitative feedback about what they learned in the session. Specifically, students learnt about what plagiarism is (42%)⁴, why it is important to avoid plagiarism (15%)⁴ and how to reference accurately according to the different referencing styles (46%)⁴.

"In high school we took everything we see on the internet and books and put it as it is in our assignments, we did not know that we are stealing someone 's work and it is against the law So

² of students who rated the *Time Management* session as most valuable

³ of the students who rated the Education and Career Planning session as most valuable

⁴ of students who rated *Plagiarism and Referencing* as most valuable

being taught to give that certain author credit is something I learned." [Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, Bloemfontein campus student]

"In my faculty we take plagiarism very seriously and they expected proper referencing from us without teaching it and without us having learned how to reference properly in the past. It taught me the basics so that I had more confidence to do my assignments." [Faculty of Humanities, Bloemfontein campus student]

Referencing skills were seen as important for academic success (15%)⁴ and some students mentioned that the application of these skills has already improved their academic performance (10%)⁴. Many students who found this content most useful considered it to be an important skill that they could use in all aspects of their academic life (28%)⁴.

LEAST VALUABLE SESSIONS

The two sessions which students rated least valuable in Semester One were the introductory sessions *Orientation to UFS101* and the *Purpose of UFS101*. Both these sessions had average rankings higher than 9. An interesting contradiction however is that although the *Orientation to UFS101* received a least valuable ranking by 35% of students, 18% of students ranked it as most valuable (the second highest proportion after the *Time Management* session).

Table 4: Sessions ranked as least valuable in Semester One

Topic	Overall ranking	Most frequent rank	Average ranking	% ranking least valuable	% ranking most valuable	Comment
Orientation to UFS101	13	13	9.2	35%	18%	Half of students ranked this at 12 or higher, but 2nd highest proportion indicating it the most valuable
Purpose of UFS101	14	14	9.4	12%	5%	Half of students ranked this at 11 or higher

There are some differences between faculties and between campuses in terms of which sessions students found least valuable.

On the Bloemfontein campus in all the faculties at least one of the two orientation sessions were considered least valuable (receiving ratings most frequently of 13 and 14). The two *Sign Language* sessions, and the session on leadership were rated least valuable after the orientation sessions. In contrast to the other faculties, students in the Faculty of Health Sciences were particularly positive about the *Sign Language* sessions (mean scores under 7 – i.e. top half, and mode of 1 or 2). However, none of the faculties were highly positive about the value of the *Leadership* session.

For students on the QwaQwa campus the two *Sign Language* sessions and the session on leadership were the least valuable. The *Orientation* discussion class was ranked 6th on the QwaQwa campus and its most frequently assigned rank was a 1. At the faculty level this was true for all faculties except the Natural and Agricultural Sciences. The *Purpose of UFS101 Learning Experience* however received a rank of 13 most frequently and was in the list of five least useful sessions on the campus. The latter session was only well received at the Faculty of the Humanities (with a mode of 2).

Qualitative data provide insight into why students found the above-mentioned sessions least valuable. A total of 224 students⁵ indicated in their qualitative feedback that the *Orientation/Purpose of UFS101*

⁵ out of the 633 qualitative responses analysed

sessions were least valuable. Reasons provided as to why the session was least valuable included that the session was too long in relation to the content covered, that the information covered did not provide students with any specific skills and that it was not necessary to have an introductory session. A few students (n=14) said it was least valuable when compared to other sessions in UFS101 – although they saw the necessity of having the overview and introduction to the module. Approximately a third of the students⁶ said that content was repetitive and shared information that they already knew. Students repeating the module in particular found the session added very little value for them as they already knew what the purpose of UFS101 was and how to navigate all the online platforms. Several students suggested condensing the content from the two Orientations into one session.

The *Sign Language* sessions elicited some of the most contrasting feedback from the students. As noted in the section above, they were identified as among the five most valuable sessions in the survey qualitative data (although not in the quantitative data). On the other hand, they were also identified in the quantitative feedback among the less valuable sessions. These contradictory stances were also expressed in the focus groups where some students found the sessions to be valuable and interesting whilst others felt they were not useful at all.

Students (n=119)⁵ provided a range of reasons why the *Sign Language* sessions were least valuable to them. The reasons provided included that:

- Students had limited opportunity to use what they learnt outside of UFS101 (n=42) or that the skills learnt were not transferable to other contexts (n=15);
- The content was difficult or too complex to master in the time available (n=26) and it would be difficult to remember what was taught (n=27);
- The classroom conditions were not optimal – students were noisy, and the class was too large for the type of content in the session (n=10);
- The sessions were boring or not interesting (n=6).

A very limited number of students mentioned that the session brought up negative emotions for them (n=5), in that they felt sorry for deaf people or that it made them want to cry.

The focus group discussions reiterated the findings from the online survey, specifically the stance that students found the sessions interesting and even fun, but they are seen to have little value outside the module and students often said they forget what they learnt immediately after the class.

"...about the sign language, yes it was very interesting and important but it was very complex and I feel like just that one hour of having these basic things and we just walk out of there everything is just gone because we are not in touch with sign language the whole time but I also understand that we are to understand, that there are people with disabilities that communicate in that way. So yeah I think it was important but not for me". [Focus group participant]

"Sign language I feel like, uhm, if we had to have like a course for it will actually become more valuable for us, but then we had like two classes, and once you leave the venue, you forget what you learned about. It was not really valuable for me" [Focus group participant]

Perhaps disappointingly the leadership session did not emerge as being one of the highly valued sessions, given that it was one of the key themes for the year. Students (n=41)⁵ provided a range of reasons why the *Leadership* session was least valuable to them. The reasons provided included that:

- they did not learn anything new about leadership in the session (n=11) – several mentioned that they had learnt all the content at school;

⁶ of those who indicated the session was least valuable

- they believed leadership was an innate gift/talent that could not and/should not be taught (n=10);
- they did not see the content as valuable or relevant to them (n=8) often because they did not see themselves as leaders or did not aspire to leadership positions;
- the content in the discussion class and the learning experience were seen as repetitive (n=3);
- the presenters were not well-prepared or convincing (n=3).

ASSESSMENTS

In the Semester One evaluation, students were asked whether each assessment activity helped them to acquire a specific skill. If students did not learn the expected skill, a follow up question enquired as to why they believe they did not learn the skill. All students were then asked how the assessments could be improved.

Time management template

Eight out of ten students indicated that the time management template helped them to learn how to manage their time. The proportion of students reporting this was slightly higher on the QwaQwa campus (86%) than on the Bloemfontein campus (78%). On the Bloemfontein campus this assessment was least useful to students in the Health Sciences (where two-thirds of students indicated they learnt how to manage their time), and most valuable to students in the Faculty of Education where close to nine out of ten students learnt how to do so (see Figure 6).

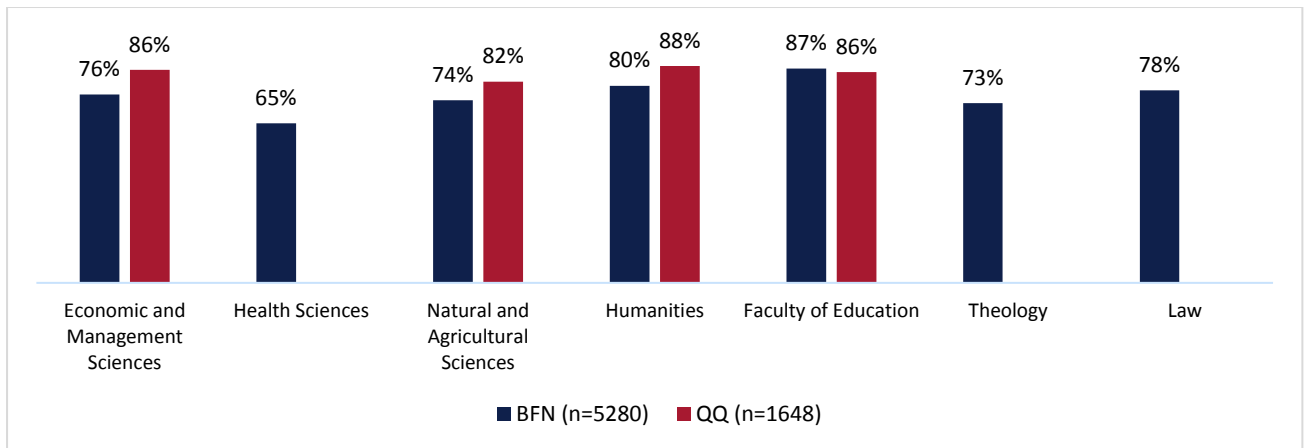


Figure 6: Proportion of students who learnt to manage their time by Campus and Faculty

The reasons students did not find the assessment useful in helping them to learn how to manage their time centred around two themes: either they already knew how to manage their time, or they found that they were not able to stick to the schedules that they set up for themselves in the time management template. Some students found it challenging to develop time management templates that were realistic, and others found that unexpected events (personal and academic) hampered their best intentions to stick to the time management template they set for themselves. Students also found that the pressures in their studies escalated as the semester progressed and the time management plans they set up earlier in the year were not realistic in the long term. Others reported that the template was too rigid and only required them to set up a timetable for a single day. This meant that its practical application was limited.

"It was a great idea and at first it looked like it was going to help me a lot because it made me realise how much time I was wasting but I am a science student and we write tests every week which meant that I had to re-do it. There were just too many surprises during my week besides

the surprise tests it just was not realistically possible for me to follow it." [Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, QwaQwa Campus student]

Students provided a range of suggestions as to how this assessment could be improved, including suggestions related to improved content or teaching of the content (n=72) and improved assessment (n=129). The suggestions were thematically coded, and the emerging themes summarised in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5: Suggestions for improving the delivery and/or content of the Time Management session

Suggestion for improvement in delivery and/or content of the session	n
Expand contents or provide more detailed information about time management	47
Allocate more time to discussing time management or more classes on this topic	9
Follow-up or remind students about the importance of following their plan	7

*includes suggestions provided by 5 or more students

The *Time Management session* was identified as the most valuable to students in UFS101, and it is thus not surprising that the most frequent suggestion from students related to content was for more information or content on time management to be provided. The specific additional content suggested focussed on practical information that would help students to apply time management principles, overcome procrastination, prioritise under pressure and manage time when unexpected events occur. Some students suggested that more time should be spent on the topic in UFS101, allowing for time management to be covered in greater depth. Other suggestions that students provided linked directly to the challenges that students had in practically applying time management to their daily lives.

"Please for that class include tips on how to stick to your time template instead of just showing us how to make it, this is because making it is not a problem but sticking to it is." [Faculty of Health Sciences, Bloemfontein campus student]

A few students suggested that there should be follow-ups or reminders from UFS101 to encourage them to update and/or stick to the plans that they had made.

Table 6: Suggestions for improving the Time Management Assessment

Suggestion for improvement in assessment	n
Improve the template for the assessment	69
Use a different platform for creating the time management plan	20
Find a way to monitor if students are sticking to their time management plans	16
Conduct follow up assessments to see if students are following their plans	9

*includes suggestions provided by 5 or more students

In terms of the assessment, students most frequently suggested improvements to the actual time management template used. Students used words such as "rigid" or "inflexible" to describe the structure of the current template. They also suggested that it would be more useful to have students work on a week-long template rather than a template for a single day.

“Make it so the student can import his own weekly timetable and the rest of the time can evolve around that. The current template does not provide for this. There are different times for different classes so making one template does not help for every day. We all have different days with different hours of classes” [Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Bloemfontein campus student]

A smaller proportion of students suggested a different platform for creating and submitting the assessment. Some suggested the development of the plans could be done in groups so that students could hear how others think about setting up their schedules, and a few suggested that students should present their templates/time plans in the discussion classes to get feedback from the group. Students also requested that they should be able to print the templates they had created so that they could carry them around with them.

Similar to the theme on how to improve the content, students suggested that there should be a way for UFS101 to follow-up whether or not they are implementing their plans as part of the assessment processes. Suggested ways for doing so were through doing additional assessments on time management later in the semester or tracking students through regular check-ins or surveys.

Education and Career Plan

Nine out of ten students indicated that they learnt how to set goals through completing the Education and Career Plan, and the proportion of students on the Bloemfontein and QwaQwa campus who reported this is highly similar. This assessment was least useful for students on the Bloemfontein campus in the Health Sciences and Theology faculties, and most useful for the students in the Faculties of Humanities and Education (both campuses) (see Figure 7).

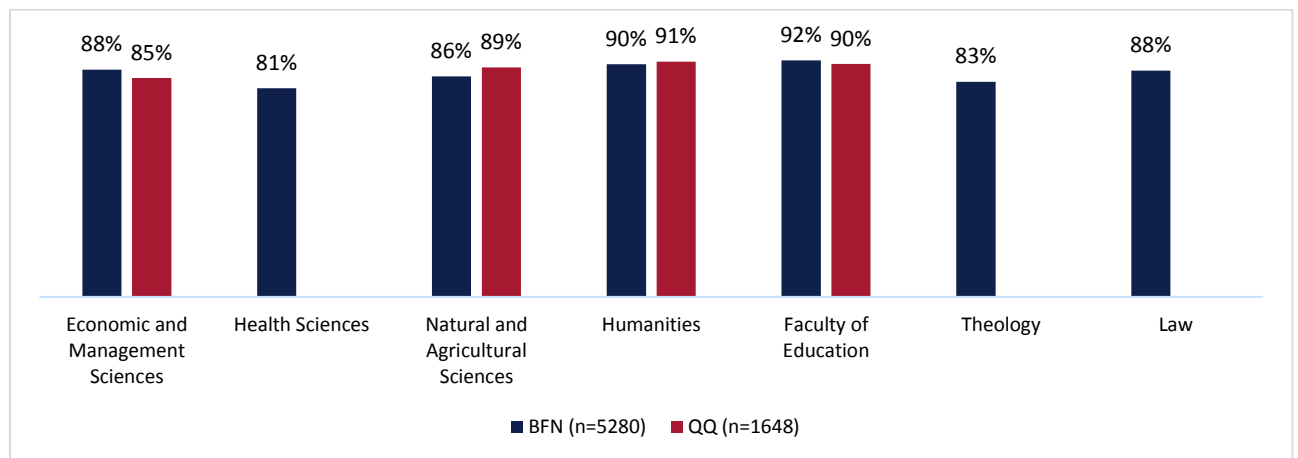


Figure 7: Proportion of students learning to set goals through the Education and Career Plan by Campus and Faculty

Reasons why students did not find the Educational and Career Plan valuable (n=63) included that they did not see it as personally relevant or applicable to them (40%)⁷, they found the assessment confusing or difficult to complete (17%)⁷ or they already knew how to set goals (22%)⁷. Students who did not see the goal setting exercise as relevant to them found it irrelevant for one of the following reasons (i) it was too early in their career to set goals, (ii) their plans were likely to change later, (iii) goal setting was not relevant to this phase of their lives, or (iv) they did not like to set goals in general.

Some students said that the method of goal setting which was taught was not effective or innovative (17%)⁷. Some, for example, were interested in setting goals about other areas of their life not only

⁷ of those who did not find the *Educational and Career Plan* valuable

their studies; others said the assessment only helped them to write down the goals they already had, not to develop new goals.

Students (n=116) provided a range of suggestions as to how this assessment could be improved⁸. However, most suggestions (63%) related to the content or delivery of the session rather than to the assessment itself.

Table 7: Suggestions for improving the delivery and/or content of the Time Management session

Suggestion for improvement in delivery and/or content of the session	n
Expand contents or provide more detailed information about goal setting	36
Change scope or type of goals covered	13
Make more relevant	5

*includes suggestions provided by 5 or more students

In terms of additional content to be covered students were interested in additional academic advising or career guidance (specifically relating to whether their career goals were suitable for them), content on setting goals outside of the academic/job environment and content on how to set realistic goals. Students were also interested in tips and guidance on how to stay motivated to stick to their goals (particularly when facing obstacles), and how to be adaptive in managing one's goals over a period of time.

Although only mentioned by a very small number of individuals, students suggested that they should (i) be required to talk to an academic advisor as part of UFS101, (ii) be required to do some research on their future careers as part of the assessment, or (iii) be assigned to TAs in their line of study for this specific session/assessment.

A small group of students found the content too focussed on the long-term; they found this focus unhelpful since they as students face many uncertainties at this point in their lives.

As was the case in the session on time management, students suggested that there should be a way for UFS101 to follow-up with them regarding the educational goals that they set for the year and provide them with further guidance on how to revise goals during the course of the year in an adaptive-management type approach.

"A part two could have been added to the assessment maybe a few weeks or months after the first part of the assessment to help remind us about our goals and to check if we had made any progress in achieving goals, or to check if our goals had changed" [Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Bloemfontein campus student]

A few students suggested that the goal setting exercise could be done in the discussion class context so that students could discuss their goals (and the rationale for selecting or setting certain goals) before developing and submitting their plans.

Students requested that instructions and terminology in the assessment be clearer – for example the difference between career and educational goals was not clear to some of the students.

⁸ Most students (80%) did not provide suggestions for how the assessment should be improved.

Summarizing leadership article

The vast majority of students (87%) indicated that they learnt how to summarise through the *Leadership session* assessment. The proportion of students who indicated this on the QwaQwa campus (91%) was slightly higher than the proportion on the Bloemfontein campus (86%). This assessment was least useful for students on the Bloemfontein campus in the Health Sciences and Theology faculties – although still useful for at least three-quarters of students in these faculties (see Figure 8).

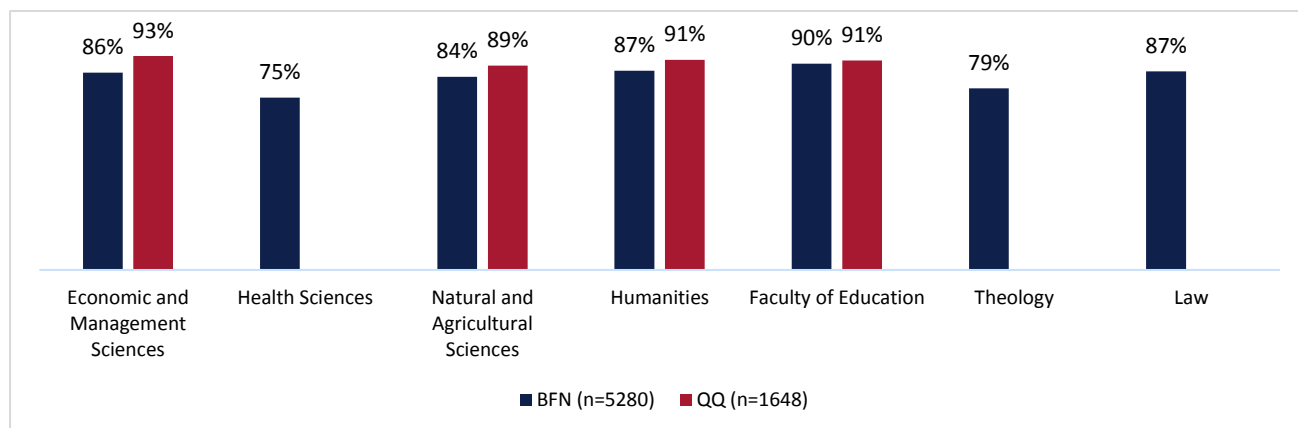


Figure 8: Proportion of students who learnt to summarise by Campus and Faculty

Half of the students who indicated that they did not learn to summarise through this assessment said that this was because they already knew how to do so. Others (15%)⁹ indicated that the style of summarising that was taught in the session was too restrictive and that it did not expose students a range of options for how to approach summarising. Some felt that the approach presented in UFS101 was not as effective as their current methods of summarising (which they learnt at high school).

"Make students aware of various summarizing methods and let them choose which summarizing method to use. Everyone has their own personal preference." [Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Bloemfontein campus student]

Mastering the art of good summarisation takes practice and a few students (15%)⁹ felt that they had not yet learnt to summarise effectively. Linked to this, some students (15%)⁹ found summarising to be confusing or difficult – including a few students who found it particularly hard to apply the “6*6” rule.

Students (n=200) provided a range of suggestions as to how this assessment could be improved¹⁰. In terms of session content, students (22%)¹¹ requested more detailed content on the technical aspects of summarising, including more training on the 6*6 method and more detailed guidelines on how to summarise (including examples of a good summary). For the discussion classes students requested that an example of how to summarise should be done in the class to demonstrate practically how to apply the 6*6 rule (5%)¹¹. Linked to their feedback on why the assessment was not useful students suggested that other methods of summarising be covered in UFS101 (7%)¹¹.

To help them master the art of summarising students requested more detailed, individualised feedback on their assessments (2%)¹¹ or an opportunity to repeat the assessment if they did not

⁹ of those who said they did not learn to summarise

¹⁰ 380 out of 599 students did not provide any suggestions in their qualitative feedback.

¹¹ of the students who provided suggestions

perform well. Some students (10%)¹¹ suggested that more of the assessments in the module should be focussed on assessing their summarisation skills.

“I think that more summaries should be done so that we can practice it in and learn how to do it really well. I think that only one summary is not sufficient enough and that at least 3 summaries should be done before the I would be able to know how to do it well.” [Faculty of the Humanities, Bloemfontein campus student]

Student feedback (n=56) on the article they were required to summarise was not unanimous – some thought the article should be longer or more complex (n=7), other that it should be shorter and easier to comprehend (n=19). Other suggested that a different topic should be selected (n=17) or that students should be able to select an article of their choice from a range of articles available (possibly linked to field of study) (n=10).

Searching for academic resources

The vast majority of students (92%)¹² indicated that they learnt how to search for academic resources through the assessment. The proportion of students who indicated the assessment helped them to learn how to search for academic resources was highly similar regardless of campus or faculty (see Figure 9).

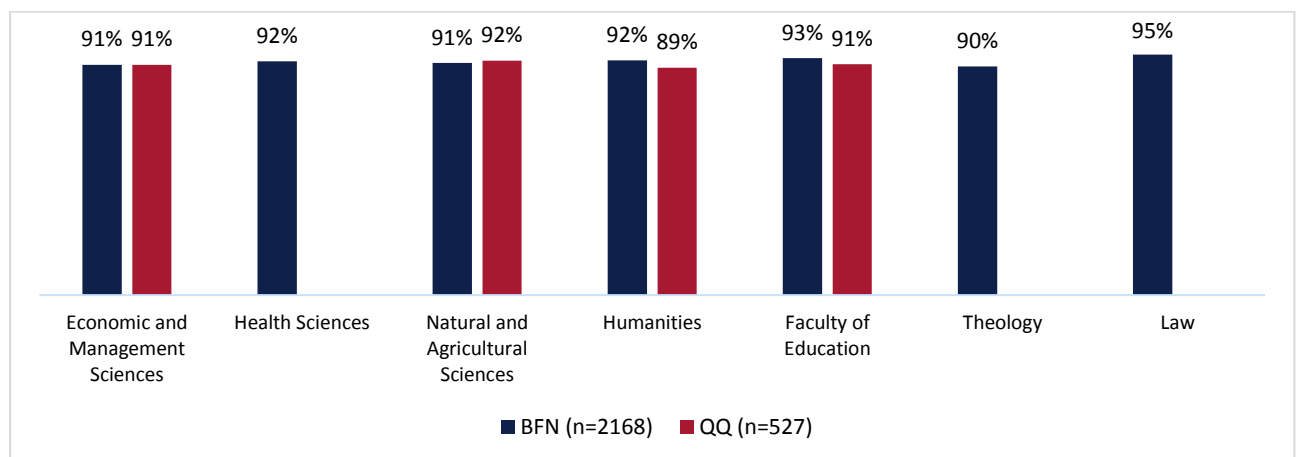


Figure 9: Proportion of students who learnt to search for academic resources by campus and faculty

Only 14 students provided comments on why the assessment on searching for academic resources was not useful. The reasons they gave were that (i) they already knew how to do so (n=3), (ii) the content was difficult or confusing to them (n=3), and (iii) that they did not currently need this skill (n=5).

Most students (73%) did not provide suggestions for how the assessment should be improved. The suggestions that were provided focussed primarily on increasing the emphasis on developing the skill of searching for academic resources. Specific requests were for:

- more in depth information on searching for academic resources (n=15),
- more than one session on how to do effective searches (n=12),
- more than one assessment on doing academic searches to help with skills and knowledge retention (n=12),

¹² This question included a “Not applicable option” – which all of the other questions related to the assessments did not. A total of 60% of students selected this option. The percentages in this section are based on the proportion of students for whom the question was applicable.

- more detailed information on how to use external databases (n=6),
- more examples of how to do effective searches (n=5),
- faculty or discipline specific search skills (n=3),
- how to find hard copy resources (n=2).

"I do believe that searching for academic resources helped me this semester. This was extremely beneficial for me. The only suggestion that I would have is to try and go into a bit more detail for this assessment or rather for the content and to maybe do it a little slower and in more depth." [Faculty of Education, Bloemfontein campus student]

A limited number of students had issues with internet and/or computer access to complete this assessment.

Paraphrasing

Nine out of ten students indicated that they learnt how to paraphrase in UFS101, and the proportion of students on the Bloemfontein and QwaQwa campus who reported this is highly similar. As is seen in Figure 10 this assessment was equally impactful for students in all faculties and on all campuses.

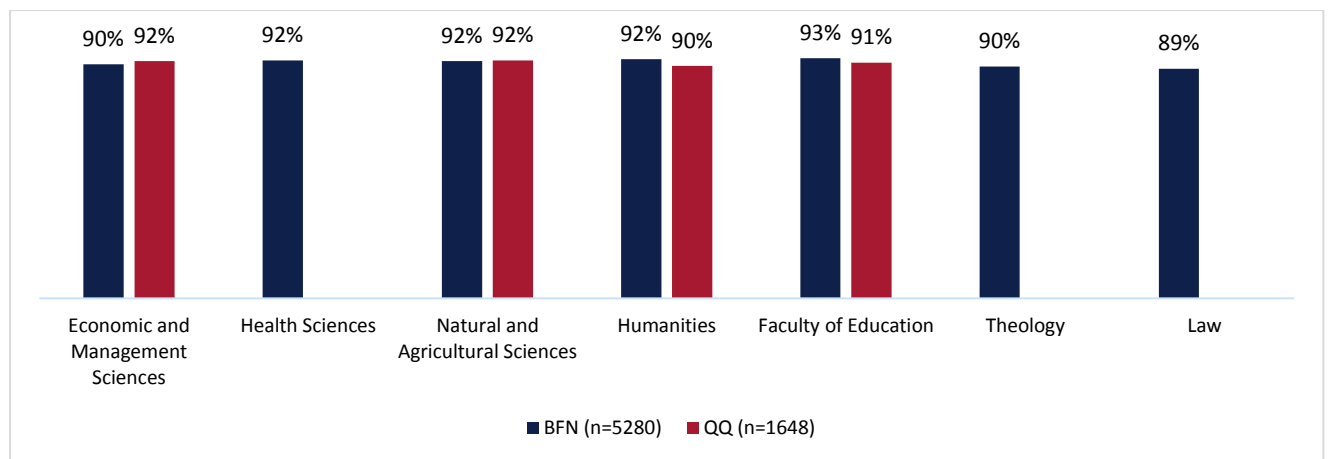


Figure 10: Proportion of students who learnt to paraphrase by campus and faculty

Only 38 students provided comments as to why the assessment on paraphrasing was not useful. A quarter of these students indicated the session was not useful as they already knew how to paraphrase. The other two reasons (mentioned by 5 or more students) were that there was not enough time or emphasis placed on the topic to master the skill of paraphrasing and that paraphrasing was difficult to master.

"As much as we went through it in class it wasn't a skill that I acquired because we didn't really focus on it and put a lot of emphasis on it. So as much as I have a little bit of knowledge about it I can't say I have acquired the skill of properly paraphrasing" [Faculty of Law, Bloemfontein campus student]

Most students (73%) did not provide suggestions for how the assessment should be improved. The suggestions that were provided focussed on three core themes (i) improving the approach to teaching/presenting the content (n=40) (ii) changes to the assessment itself (n=33) and (iii) changing the excerpt that students had to paraphrase (n=20).

Most of the suggestions to improve the approach to teaching and presenting the content were requests for more time to be spent on explaining and practising paraphrasing (n=13), more detailed guidelines on how to paraphrase (n=8) or more examples on how to paraphrase to be given to students (n=12).

Approximately two-thirds of the suggestions on how to improve the assessment focussed on providing more assessments or opportunities for students to practice the skill of paraphrasing – either through multiple assessments or through requiring students to paraphrase several excerpts.

Students who suggested that the excerpt be changed requested that it be more relevant/relatable (n=7), more interesting (n=4), more challenging and longer (n=3) or shorter (n=3). Requests for content to be more relevant included a few requests for discipline specific or faculty specific content to paraphrase.

Social inclusion case study in PowerPoint

Nine out of ten students indicated that they learnt how to reason both sides of an argument in UFS101, and the proportion of students on the Bloemfontein campus (92%) who reported this is slightly higher than on the QwaQwa campus (88%). As is seen in Figure 11 this assessment appears to have been least valuable to students on the Bloemfontein campus in the Faculties of Theology and Health Sciences.

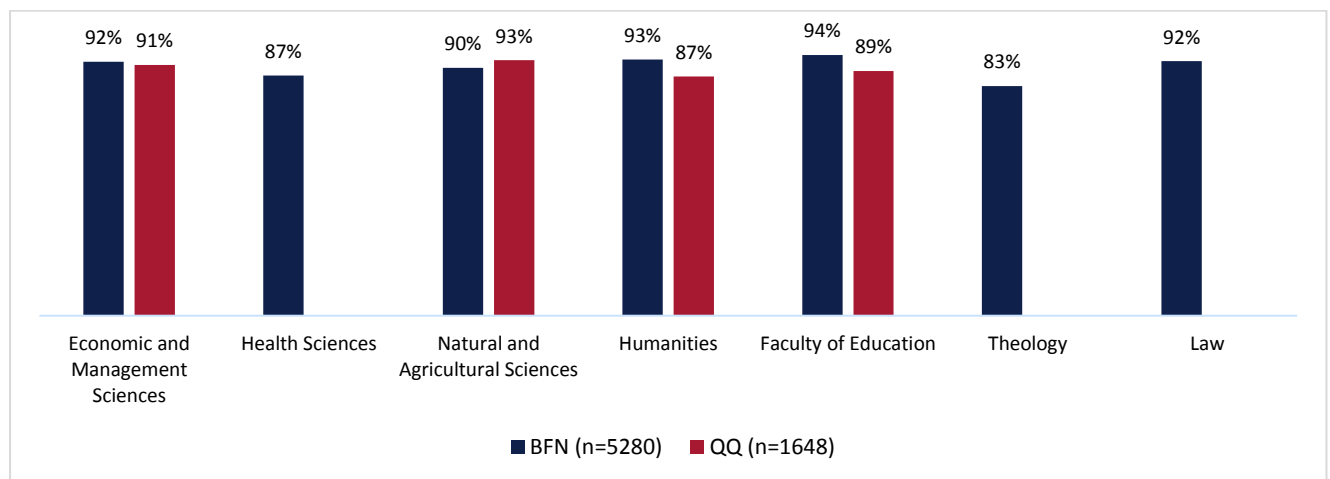


Figure 11: Proportion of students who learnt to reason both sides of an argument

Only 42 students gave reasons why the assessment was not valuable in terms of helping them to reason both sides of an argument. A quarter of these students found the assessment difficult or confusing to complete for a range of reasons – including that the 6*6 rule was hard to apply or too restrictive, the instructions were hard to understand, or that there was too much information to sift through. A few students said that they already knew how to reason from both sides (n=7). Other students found the emphasis to be placed on PowerPoint – rather than reasoning skills and thus what they learnt mostly from the session was related to PowerPoint.

Nine out of ten students indicated that they learnt how to present information in a PowerPoint in UFS101, and the proportion of students on the Bloemfontein and QwaQwa campus who reported this is highly similar. This assessment was particularly useful for students in the Faculty of Theology (see Figure 12).

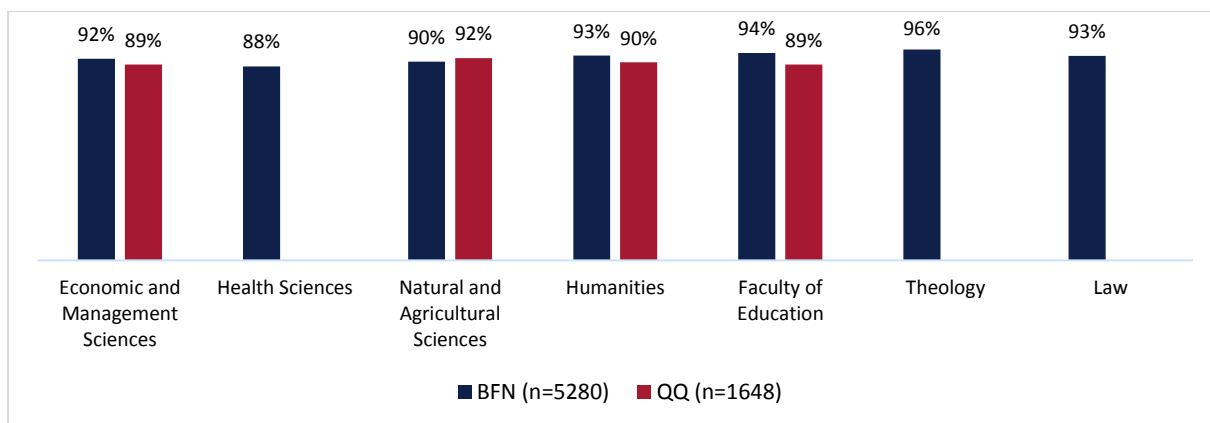


Figure 12: Proportion of students who learnt to use PowerPoint by Campus and Faculty

Most of the students who did not find this assessment useful (40%)¹³ said that they already knew how to create PowerPoint presentations and others (20%)¹³ said they did not learn any new skills in PowerPoint from the session. A small group of students (18%)¹³ reported that they found the assessment difficult or impossible to do due to their lack of computer/technology skills. The content covered was too much too fast for them to keep abreast.

Students were asked to answer two questions on how the assessment could be improved – once related to the reasoning skills and a once related to their PowerPoint skills. The qualitative responses to these questions are discussed together as many students did not differentiate in their answers to the two questions. Most students (more than 70% in both cases) did not provide any suggestions for how the assessment should be improved.

As is the case with several of the other assessments, students suggested that they needed more time or more practice in order to be able to master the skills that were required of them. This was relevant both in terms of their reasoning skills and their PowerPoint skills. Some suggested additional classes or opportunities to practice before submitting their assessments (n=13), whilst other suggested that more in-depth information or examples must be provided to students in the discussion classes on how to master the skills required for the assessment (n=20).

One of the challenges encountered with this assessment is that students with very limited computer literacy skill struggled to complete the PowerPoint presentation, and they did not get extra support to help them “catch up” on this skill. On the other hand, a relatively similar proportion of students (who are highly tech-savvy) found that the PowerPoint assessment was too rudimentary and restrictive.

In terms of the assessment criteria, several suggestions were made by only one or two students. The only suggestion made by more than five students was to relax the criteria around the 6*6 rule which they found to be too restrictive (n=15). Some students (n=10) suggested that greater clarity was needed in the assessment instructions.

Students who made suggestions related to the topic of the case study (n=40) primarily suggested that the case study should focus on more than one type of “exclusion” but should also include other social issues such as gender, race sexuality and religion, as well as other disabilities. Several suggested students should be able to choose from several case studies which they would like to do their assessment on.

¹³ of the 40 students who did not find the assessment useful

SEMESTER TWO

CONTENT

The class topics, mode of delivery and key content for each class for Semester Two is summarized in Table 8.

Table 8: Semester 2 Content Outline

Theme	Name of class	Type	Unit Outcomes
Mental Health & Community Health	Strategies for Success 2.0	Learning Experience with 2 discussion classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on your achievement of goals in semester 1. • Reflect on time management in semester 1, and plan time management for semester 2. • Explain Growth Mindset and provide an example of its role in your studies. • Define mental well-being, and list contributing factors, specific to being a university student, that can impact mental well-being. • Compare unhealthy vs healthy methods that students might use in order to manage academic load. • Explain REBT and apply the principles to a case study • Outline the process of controlling one's emotions.
Economics and Entrepreneurship	How do I become an Entrepreneur in South Africa?	Two learning experiences and one discussion class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the current economic climate in South Africa and its impact on youth employment • Discuss how the fourth industrial revolution impacts your future career opportunities • Explain the differences between the entrepreneur; intrapreneur and hybrid entrepreneur as career options. • Define critical skills required for idea generation, namely: problem solving; critical thinking and creative thinking. • Illustrate the difference between radical and incremental ideas in the creative thinking process • Apply problem solving skills to a case study
Information technology	How do I position myself in a 21st century workforce?	2 discussion classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the items that should and should not be included in your curriculum vitae; • Explain the benefits of creating a LinkedIn profile; • In alignment with goal setting, create a future LinkedIn profile; • Describe what you would use your website for; • Discuss the link between your social media presence and employability, with specific reference to your digital footprint; and • Discuss the link between IT skills and employability, with specific reference to your chosen career path.
Law and social justice	What is your role, as a leader, in the social justice movement?	Learning Experience with 1 discussion class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the following democratic values in which the South African constitution is embedded: human dignity, equality and freedom • Illustrate knowledge regarding the key intended outcomes of the constitution (human rights and social justice) • Discuss why protests take place, what shapes them and how to ensure that peaceful protests are conducted • Interpret the role of law in facilitating order in society, specifically during protests • Demonstrate respect for diversity (of opinions, morals, etc.); and • Demonstrate the ability to interpret the above issues using reading, writing and argumentation skills.

MOST VALUABLE SESSIONS

Students were asked to rank the Semester Two content in order from what they found most valuable to least valuable – this was done separately for the discussion classes (on a scale of 1-7) and the learning experiences (on a scale of 1-4).

The frequency heat map (Figure 13) shows the number of students placing each discussion class at a particular rank order. Green cut offs indicate the cumulative percentage of students ranking a session in the top three for the semester.



Figure 13: Frequency heat map discussion classes Semester 2

Table 9 below shows the seven discussion classes along with the rank each received most frequently from students (the mode), the average rating for the session and the proportion of students who ranked the session as either their most or least valuable.

Two discussion classes stood out as being the most valuable in Semester Two with more than 50% of students ranking them in the top 3 and with mode scores of 1.

Table 9: Ranking of discussion classes in Semester Two

Topic	Overall ranking	Most frequent rank	Average ranking	% ranking least valuable	% ranking most valuable	Comment
Community and Mental Health Discussion Class 1	1	1	3.05	2	23	60% of students ranked this session in top 3
Entrepreneurship discussion class	2	1	3.33	6	22	More than half of students ranked this in top 3
Community and Mental Health Discussion Class 2	3	2	3.74	4	4	Approximately 50% of students ranked in top 3
IT discussion class 1	4	5	3.74	3	13	
Law and Social Justice Discussion Class	5	6	4.17	15	15	
IT discussion class 2	6	6	4.53	10	2	
Orientation and activity sign-up	7	7	5.15	52	19	

The *Community and Mental Health Discussion Class 1* stands out as the most valuable for students in Semester Two, with 23% of students ranking it as their most valuable session and with a mode of 1. Furthermore, 60% of students selected this session in their top 3. This session was rated as most valuable on both campuses, and in all faculties (with the exception of the Faculty of Law on the Bloemfontein campus and the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences on the QwaQwa campus). Students in the Faculty of Law found the *Law and Social Justice* session most valuable and students in Economics and Management Sciences (QwaQwa) reported the *IT discussion class 1*.

The *Entrepreneurship discussion class* session also received a mode of 1 and 22% of students ranked this as the most valuable session. There are however differences between campuses in terms of how valuable this session is perceived to be. On the Bloemfontein campus the session was rated as second most valuable, whilst the *Community and Mental Health Discussion Class 2* was ranked as second most valuable on the QwaQwa campus. There were also differences between faculties in terms of which session was second most valuable.

On the Bloemfontein campus, the *Entrepreneurship discussion class* was rated among number two for the Faculties of the Humanities, Education and Theology. The *Community and Mental Health Discussion Class 2* was rated number two for the Faculty of Health Sciences, whilst the *IT discussion class 1* was rated among the number two for the Faculties of Economic and Management Sciences and Natural and Agricultural Sciences. On the QwaQwa campus, the *Entrepreneurship discussion class* was rated top two for the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, whilst the *Community and Mental Health Discussion Class 2* was rated among the top two for the Faculties of Humanities and Education.

There was no particular discussion class which was mentioned consistently in the focus groups as being the most valuable to students. Students mentioned several different discussion classes (which covered all of the units. When students were presented with the data from the survey and asked to comment on it, a few noted that referring to the discussion classes by number (either 1 or 2) was somewhat confusing as they were not always able to remember in which order content was presented. This may also have been the case for students completing the survey, although it is not possible to determine to what extent (if at all) this affected their rating of the classes.

The frequency heat map (Figure 14) shows the number of students placing each learning experience at a particular rank order. Green cut offs indicate the cumulative percentage of students ranking a session in the top two for the semester.

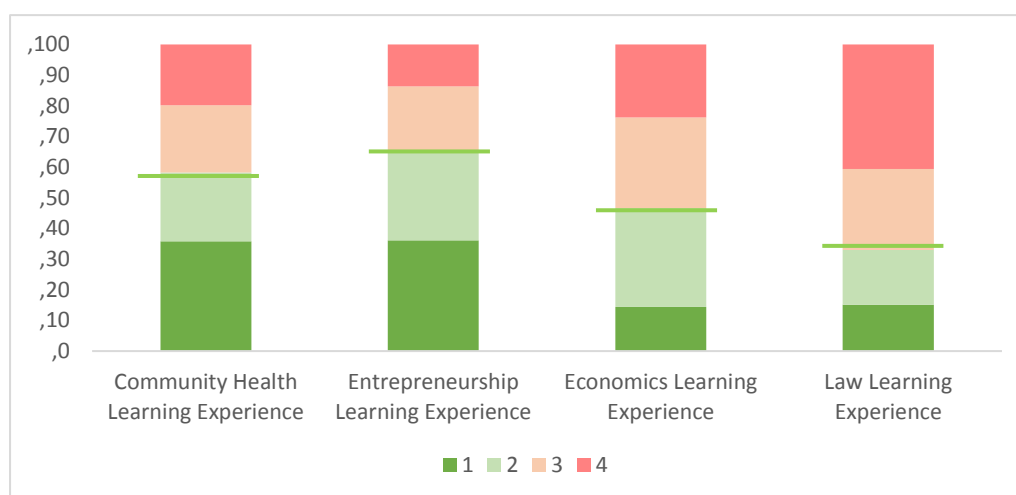


Figure 14: Frequency heat map of learning experiences Semester Two

Table 10 below shows the four learning experiences with the rank each received most frequently from students (the mode), the average rating for the session and the proportion of students who ranked the session as either their most or least valuable. Two learning experiences stood out as being the most valuable in Semester Two with more than 50% of students ranking them in the top 2 and with mode scores of 1.

Table 10: Ranking of learning experiences in Semester Two

Topic	Overall ranking	Most frequent rank	Average ranking	% ranking least valuable	% ranking most valuable
Entrepreneurship learning experience	1	1	2.13	13%	34%
Community Health learning experience	2	1	2.26	19%	35%
Economics learning experience	3	2	2.63	23%	14%
Law learning experience	4	4	2.92	39%	15%

The *Entrepreneurship learning experience* and the *Community Health learning experience* emerged as the most valuable for students in Semester Two, with approximately a third of students ranking these two learning experiences as the most valuable sessions (both receiving a mode of 1). These two learning experiences were rated as the top two on both campuses. On the QwaQwa campus the *Community Health learning experiences* was the rated the most valuable, whilst on the Bloemfontein the *Entrepreneurship learning experience* was rated most valuable.

Students are more likely to rate a learning experiences positively if the content is linked to their area of study. Students in the Faculty of Health Sciences rated the *Community Health learning experiences* most positively, those in the Economics and Management Sciences (on both campuses) rated the *Entrepreneurship and Economics learning experiences* most positively and students in the Faculty of Law rated the *Law and Social Justice learning experience* in their top two learning experiences.

As was the case with the discussion classes in Semester Two, students in the focus groups described all four of the learning experiences as being valuable to them. The range of experiences and perspectives on the various learning experiences affirms the value of all the units to students (albeit a subset within the larger cohort for each unit). Furthermore, student descriptions of what made a particular session valuable reiterated what was noted from the quantitative data – students generally display interest in subjects more closely related to their field of study.

“I think economics learning experience should be below [ranked lower], because I'm doing education, so why do I have to listen about the economics stuff, because I'm not interested in it, so yeah.” [Focus group participant]

In a limited number of the focus groups a few students did speak about the value of being exposure to a range of disciplines outside of their field of study – although this was not a frequently mentioned narrative.

“I like about it is that we are mixed. There are people from other courses, like people are doing law and psychology and what and that brings about a platform that we can understand how things have been done or maybe how other people think different ... and that helps you, you shouldn't be like focused only on your discipline that you are studying in but you should be broad and be willing to understand how things are done in other fields. That was very helpful because the second semester content was like broad... so that was very helpful for me.” [Focus group participant]

The value of this multidisciplinary exposure and of the common intellectual experience not a frequently mentioned theme in the student feedback about Semester Two. Finding ways to highlight these objectives along with their benefits to the student may increase the appreciation for these underlying foundations of the module among students.

REASONS STUDENTS PREFER DISCUSSION CLASSES OR LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Students were asked whether they found the discussion classes or learning experiences more valuable (see Figure 15). Slightly more students on the Bloemfontein campus preferred the learning experiences (56%) over the discussion classes, whilst on the QwaQwa campus students have a distinct preference for the discussion classes (74%).

The relative proportion of preference between learning experiences and discussion classes on the Bloemfontein campus was found in all faculties except the Faculty of Law where 65% of students preferred the learning experiences.

On the QwaQwa campus, compared to the other faculties, a lower proportion of students in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (57%) preferred the discussion classes.

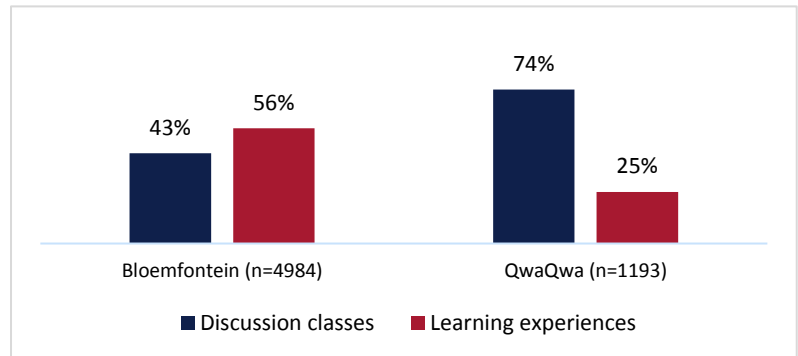


Figure 15: Preference for discussion classes vs learning experiences by campus

A follow-up qualitative question probed students as to why they preferred either the learning experiences or the discussion classes. Table 11 shows the key reasons why students indicated a preference for either type of session. Discussion classes are found to be valuable for their level of interactivity and engagement, whilst the learning experiences are valued for the contributions of the guest speakers. A relatively similar number of students found either the discussion class or the learning experience more conducive to their learning, which affirms the value of both types of experiences in the module to facilitate learning for diverse students.

Table 11: Reasons students provided for preferring discussion classes or learning experiences

Reasons students preferred discussion classes (n=335)	Reasons students preferred learning experiences (n=284)
They are interactive and engaging (n=242)	The speakers (n=173)
Consider it more conducive to learning (n=152)	Consider it more conducive to learning (n=137)
The teaching assistants (n=49)	They are interactive and engaging (n=29)
	Do not have to actively participate (n=12)

An analysis of the focus group data confirms the reasons why students find discussion classes and learning experiences valuable. All of the themes identified in the coding of the qualitative survey data (as outlined Table 11) data were mentioned by one or more students in the focus groups. However, the focus group data suggests that although students may prefer one type of session, they often saw both as valuable or mentioned that they gleaned different benefits from different sessions. The quantitative question in the survey did not have an option that allowed students to indicate “they were equally beneficial” or “I liked both equally”, and the inclusion of this option should be considered in future surveys as focus groups suggest this is true for at least some of the students.

Detailed analysis of why discussion classes are preferred

In their qualitative feedback students (n=242) provided a range of reasons as to why they found the discussion classes engaging and why this was valuable to them. The primary reason these students gave for preferring a discussion class was the opportunity to individually participate in the sessions. Half of the students who preferred the discussion classes said that it was easier for them to share their opinions and perspectives or to ask questions in this context (compared to the learning experience setting). A third of these students said that they preferred the discussion classes as they were an opportunity to collaborate with peers, and one in ten said that they preferred a more personal setting to a large class setting.

Students who found discussion classes more conducive to their learning (n=152) reported that this was because of the smaller size of the groups and classes were less crowded (n=37%)¹⁴ and that content could be explored in greater depth (23%)¹⁴ which improved their understanding (23%)¹⁴. Several students (17%)¹⁴ mentioned that the more practical nature of the discussion classes was valuable and helped them to gain skills. A small number of students reported that these sessions were more helpful in preparing them for the assessments (n=5). The physical environment (which was described as calmer and more orderly than the learning experiences) was important to some of the students (18%)¹⁴ as they experienced fewer distractions and they were able to hear clearly.

"I was one of those who said that I prefer the discussion classes. Both are equally important, but I felt like the discussion classes was more interactive and more interesting, because there we had to think for ourselves, we had to come up with new ideas, we had to reflect on the stuff that we read about and watched for our quizzes and try to remember that and see how that applies to our own lives. Where as in the learning experience we basically just go there and we go and sit there and then we have external speakers just give us in depth information about what a certain topic is about and I felt like that, they could have just given that to us in video or something" [Focus group participant]

The more personal setting and the opportunity to engage directly with the TAs (n=49) was valuable for the students as it provided a space where concepts and content could be elaborated on and engaged with more deeply. Some TAs brought an energy and vibe to their sessions which students found motivating.

Detailed analysis of why learning experiences are preferred

In their qualitative feedback students (n=173) provided a range of reasons as to why the speakers in the learning experiences made these sessions particularly valuable to them. In particular two-thirds of these students valued the expertise that they were exposed to through the speakers. Not only were the speakers considered experts, but students (20%)¹⁵ had deep appreciation for the practical life and professional experience that they brought to the sessions. It was motivating for the students (20%)¹⁵ to learn from those whom they considered to have "made it" in a real-world context, despite the challenges they may have faced.

"I feel like the guest speakers had more knowledge on the subjects and when people weren't forced to join in the discussion it had a more natural flow and got right to the point instead of waiting for emotive responses from mostly apathetic students. The learning experiences felt almost like TEDx talks which was very nice and they were a lot more stimulating than the discussion classes" [Faculty of Humanities Student, Bloemfontein Campus]

¹⁴ of students who said discussion classes were more conducive to their learning.

¹⁵ Of those who preferred the learning experiences because of the speakers

Students (n=137) who found the learning experiences more conducive to their learning reported that this was because the sessions were more in-depth (28%)¹⁶, more understandable to them (24%)¹⁶, fun and interesting (18%)¹⁶, provided more practical insights into real-world experiences (18%)¹⁶ and provided more useful information than the discussion classes (15%)¹⁶.

In the online survey small group of students indicated that they preferred the learning experiences as they were not “forced” or required to participate if they did not want to. Focus group data affirmed that this was one of the reasons that students preferred the learning experiences, and reasons students provided as to why they did not want to be required to participate in a group discussion included introversion, confidence and not wanting to “look stupid” in front of their peers if they did not have something to add to the conversation.

“I think that, well, i personally prefer the learning experience rather than the discussion rooms because in the discussion rooms you're kind of forced to participate and some of us we are not so social, you know, we can't answer things in front of people because we're afraid we might get laughed at and stuff like that. So i think the reason why people prefer the learning experience is in the learning experience you get a chance to listen and then after you listen you obtain information and stuff and then you are being asked questions and you have to answer and yeah. It's uncomfortable for many people to answer questions in front of people so yeah.” [Focus group participant]

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF SEMESTER TWO UNITS

In the Semester Two online survey, students were asked in a series of qualitative questions what they liked and disliked about each unit, as well as what they learnt that they could apply outside of UFS101.

Mental and Community Health

Of the 615 students who provided responses to the question “*What did you like about this Unit?*”, 7% said they liked “*Everything*” and 3% said they liked “*Nothing*”. Of the four units in this Semester, this unit had the highest proportion of students saying they liked “*Everything*” and the lowest proportion saying they liked “*Nothing*”.

In response to the question, the vast majority of students spoke about elements of the unit content that they liked. The content was described as interesting and informative (n=31), helpful (n=24), relevant and practical (n=13), as well as important because it raised awareness around important issues such as mental health (n=16). Some students (n=49) mentioned specific parts of the Unit that they liked. Most frequently mentioned was the content related to the growth mindset (n=22) and cognitive strategies (including REBT) (n=14) .

In a follow-up question, students were asked about what they learnt that they could apply in their lives or in the future. The majority of students spoke about knowledge or information they acquired in the unit (n=475). A lower proportion of students described behaviours or skills that they had acquired (n=223) or shifts in attitudes and perceptions (n=22).

The highest proportion of students gained new information about strategies for coping and problem solving for success (n=171), followed by knowledge and information on health and wellbeing (n=146), the growth mindset (n=119) and mental health (n=109). Table 12 lists the most frequently mentioned knowledge/information which students said they gained from the unit which they will be able to apply to their lives.

¹⁶ Of those who said the learning experiences were more conducive to learning.

Table 12: Knowledge and information students learnt in the Mental & Community Health Unit that they can apply¹⁷

New knowledge and information	n
Strategies for coping and problem solving for success	163
<i>Cognitive and emotional strategies (including REBT, ABC method)</i>	59
<i>Strategies to enhance academic success and learning</i>	39
<i>Strategies for positive thinking</i>	39
<i>Time management and prioritisation</i>	22
<i>Strategies for managing stress</i>	14
<i>Healthy vs. unhealthy coping</i>	14
Health and wellbeing	146
<i>How self-care positively impacts on health and wellbeing</i>	55
<i>How substance abuse negatively impacts on physical health</i>	39
<i>The importance of following a healthy diet</i>	26
<i>The interrelationship between dimensions of health and wellness</i>	24
Growth mindset	119
<i>What the growth mindset is and how it compares to a fixed mindset</i>	35
<i>Persistence and hard work can lead to success</i>	22
<i>The power of "Yet"</i>	11
Mental Health	109
<i>The importance and seriousness of taking care of mental health</i>	42
<i>What positively impacts on mental health</i>	39
<i>When and where to seek support for mental health concerns</i>	14

In terms of what students said they learnt from the unit and had applied in their lives, the most frequently mentioned responses were the cognitive and emotional strategies, self-care habits, and working on developing a growth mindset (see Table 15).

"[I liked] the REBT method which aimed at changing irrational thoughts to rational ones. In simple terms this method taught me how to change my negativity to positivity and also to take responsibility of my actions. There is no time for blaming yourself or any other person." [Faculty of the Humanities student, Bloemfontein campus]

Table 13: Skills and behaviours students acquired in the Mental and Community Health Unit that they have applied¹⁸

New skills or behaviours acquired (already applied or intend to apply)	n
<i>Cognitive and emotional strategies taught in UFS101</i>	63
<i>Self-care</i>	31
<i>Working on developing a growth mindset</i>	31
<i>Tracking own academic performance</i>	14
<i>Time management</i>	11

¹⁷ mentioned by more than 10 students

Although the proportion of students who reported shifts in their attitudes and perceptions was smaller than those who reported acquiring new knowledge or skills, a few students reported that the unit changed the way they viewed various aspects of their own and others' mental health and abilities.

"I like that it enabled me to expand and broaden my horizon about how I view things. At one point I believed that I had a fixed mindset which limited my scope of learning and gaining wisdom. I also like how it gave me sufficient insight of how the brain works, as well as how to keep it healthy." [Faculty of Law student, Bloemfontein campus]

Approximately half of the students (n=277) provided comments on *what they did not like* about the Mental and Community Health Unit, of whom only 10 students said they disliked everything about the unit.

Just more than half of the students (n=155) who spoke about what they did not like in this unit mentioned content-related elements. Reasons for disliking the content included that it was not seen as practical enough (n=14), not covered in enough detail (n=17), covered in too much detail (n=12), or covered content students already knew (n=20). A few students (n=20) mentioned specific content that they did not like, although most components mentioned were noted by less than 5 students. Elements which were mentioned included time management (it was repetitive from Semester 1 or known before UFS101), the content about the brain, and the academic appeals process.

A handful of students said they did not like that they had to learn "unpleasant facts" about the use of psychostimulants by students who do not have ADHD (n=10). Some found it unpleasant to learn that they should not be using the psychostimulants, others found it upsetting that students were using stimulants in this way, and a few thought exposing students to this trend would encourage more students to use psychostimulants (even though the Unit clearly demonstrated the negative impact).

Economics and Entrepreneurship

Students were asked to indicate what they liked about the unit on Economics and Entrepreneurship. Of the 620 students who provided responses, approximately 5% each said they liked either "Everything" or "Nothing".

When asked about what they learnt that they could apply in their lives or in the future the majority of students spoke about knowledge or information they acquired in the unit (n=500). A lower proportion of students described behaviours or skills that they had acquired (n=248) or shifts in their attitudes and perceptions (n=56).

The highest proportion of students gained new information about entrepreneurship (n=320), followed by information/knowledge about the economy and how it works (n=171). Table 14 lists the most frequently mentioned knowledge/information which students said they gained from the unit.

Table 14: Knowledge and information students learnt in the Economics and Entrepreneurship Unit that they can apply ¹⁸

New knowledge and information	n
About entrepreneurship	320
<i>The different types of entrepreneurs</i>	109
<i>What entrepreneurship is</i>	108
<i>The qualities, strategies and characteristics of successful entrepreneurs</i>	54
<i>How entrepreneurship creates opportunities and employment</i>	32

¹⁸ mentioned by more than 10 students

<i>The benefits and advantages of being an entrepreneur</i>	34
<i>The importance of being self-sufficient</i>	16
<i>The challenges and risks of being an entrepreneur</i>	7
About the economy	171
<i>How the South African economy works, its current status and unemployment</i>	107
<i>How to improve or contribute to the economy</i>	46
<i>4th industrial revolution</i>	19
<i>How higher education contributes to the economy</i>	18
General life or business lessons	139
<i>The importance of creativity and innovation</i>	51
<i>Learnt about problem solving</i>	19
<i>The value of perseverance and patience</i>	17
<i>The importance of hard work</i>	16
<i>Learnt about goal-setting and planning for the future</i>	16
<i>The importance of self-belief and self-awareness</i>	14
<i>The importance of focus and passion</i>	12
About employability	29
<i>How to improve employability</i>	14

In terms of the skills students said they learnt in the unit, the most frequently mentioned responses were that they learnt how to become an entrepreneur, how to contribute positively to the economy and to apply critical thinking skills (see Table 15).

"I liked the fact that it had tools that one can use in life if things don't work as planned, and also how this unit made use of the possible responses to the unemployment rate in South Africa. It really motivated me a lot to know that there are ways in which we can use our creativity to become self-dependent and contribute to the growth of the economy." [Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, QwaQwa campus]

Table 15: Skills and behaviours students acquired in the Economics and Entrepreneurship Unit that they can apply¹⁹

New skills or behaviours acquired (already applied or intend to apply)	n
<i>How to be an entrepreneur</i>	82
<i>How to contribute positively to the economy</i>	41
<i>Critical thinking skills</i>	38
<i>Skills to be successful in business</i>	22
<i>Developing plans and goals (in general and in business)</i>	19
<i>How to budget, save and spend wisely</i>	16

Although the proportion of students who reported shifts in their attitudes and perceptions was smaller than those who reported acquiring new knowledge or skills, several students reported that the unit changed the way they viewed the economy and entrepreneurship (see Table 16).

"It opened my mind in to actually making me see that I myself, coming from a particular home with a particular back ground, with the right skills and characteristics can be an entrepreneur"

¹⁹ Mentioned by more than 10 students

because it's all about self-discipline and being prepared to push to greater heights" [Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Bloemfontein campus]

Table 16: Shifts in attitudes and perceptions as a result of the Economics and Entrepreneurship Unit

New attitudes and perceptions	n
Changes in motivation to:	44
<i>become an entrepreneur</i>	13
<i>work on improving their skills and empowering themselves</i>	8
<i>work towards being successful</i>	4
<i>set new goals for themselves</i>	3
<i>be open to new opportunities</i>	3
<i>take risks and try new things</i>	3
Changed understanding about entrepreneurship: anyone can be one	31
Changes in perception around the future of work and the uncertainty of employment	11

Approximately half of the students (n=303) provided comments on *what they did not like* about the Economics and Entrepreneurship Unit, of whom only 14 students said they disliked everything about the unit.

Just more than half of the students (n=171) who spoke about what they did not like in this unit mentioned content-related elements. Reasons for disliking the content included that it was not seen as valuable (n=13), or relatable and relevant (n=32) as students were not studying or interested in economics, or they found it not relevant to the challenges they face at university.

About 20% of students who mentioned content-related elements said that the material in the unit was not covered in enough depth – this included those who wanted more information about the topics covered and students who said that there was not enough time allocated to cover all the contents in the unit. A third of the students who said content was not covered in enough depth wanted more practical tips and guidelines on how to be an entrepreneur.

One in ten students did not like that they had to learn “unpleasant facts” about the economy (n=39), employability (n=4) or entrepreneurship (n=22). Some of these students describe the content as discouraging or scary. Students who found facts about the economy and employment unpleasant mentioned they were discouraged to learn about the “state of the economy” as well as the lack of jobs (even for graduates) and the potential impact of the 4th industrial revolution on jobs in the future. Students who found the facts about entrepreneurship “unpleasant” talked about how they came to realise the many challenges that entrepreneurs face and the risks associated with it.

One in ten students did not like elements of the way that the unit was presented (n=37), with half of these students mentioning that they did not find the presenter in the learning experience engaging. Of the 20 students who mentioned that they specifically did not like the learning experience in this unit, 15 found it boring and five found it the material it covered too complex. Only one student mentioned that they did not like the discussion class.

“The learning experience was boring there was too much information given in a really short period of time and it was mostly the lecture talking and the student listening which to a lot of students falling asleep and losing focus, basically the lecture did not engage with the students.” [Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences student, Bloemfontein campus]

Information technology

Students were asked to indicate what they liked about the unit on Information Technology. Of the 631 students who provided responses, approximately 5% said they liked either “*Everything*” and 7% said they liked “*Nothing*”.

The vast majority of students (82%) spoke about elements of the content that they liked for the unit, including new information/knowledge that they learnt (n=338), new things that they learnt how to do (n=330) and ways that the unit changed their attitudes and perceptions (n=87). The content of this unit was described as practical, useful and valuable, as well as informative and relevant.

“I enjoyed the whole thing ... it was very helpful and applicable (although many of the students don't agree), it is very important for students to understand the impact and immense growth of IT in our world today.” [Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences student, Bloemfontein campus]

The highest proportion of students gained new information about the links between employability and their online presence (n=132), followed by information about coding (n=83), the changing realities in IT or as a result of IT (n=57) and the benefits of IT and technology (n=41). Table 17 lists the most frequently mentioned knowledge/information which students said they gained from the unit.

Table 17: Knowledge and information students learnt in the Information Technology Unit that they can apply²⁰

New knowledge and information	n
Link between employability and an online presence/IT skill	132
<i>What LinkedIn is and why a profile is important</i>	68
<i>What a CV should look like and include</i>	36
<i>The benefits of a professional online presence</i>	16
<i>The need for IT skills in the world of work</i>	11
<i>How one's online presence can negatively affect employability</i>	10
Coding	83
<i>Why having coding skills is important</i>	19
<i>Anyone can learn to code</i>	11
Changing realities in IT or as a result of IT	57
<i>The role of IT in society continues to increase</i>	21
<i>The fourth industrial revolution</i>	13
<i>IT is continuously improving</i>	13
<i>The importance of keeping abreast with changes in technology</i>	10
Benefits of IT and technology	42
<i>IT can make work or general life easier</i>	17

In terms of the skills students said they learnt in the unit, the most frequently mentioned responses were that they learnt how to improve their online presence, general IT skills, how to code and how to create a website (see Table 18).

“What i liked about the Information and Technology unit is that it made me realize that nowadays technology is replacing paperwork ... it taught me that nowadays people can

²⁰ mentioned by more than 10 students

create their CV online through the app called LinkedIn ... it also made me to realize that when we post messages and talk to our friends on Youtube, Facebook and other social media we have to always type positive things as this text goes viral once posted and that can have negative impact when we apply for jobs. It taught me on how my CV should look and how to clean my digital footprint so that social media does not hurt my job prospects." [Faculty of Education Student, QwaQwa campus]

Table 18: Skills and behaviours students acquired in the Information Technology Unit that they can apply²¹

New skills or behaviours acquired (already applied or intend to apply)	n
Improved online presence for employability	194
<i>How to create a LinkedIn Profile</i>	93
<i>How to create a CV</i>	85
<i>How to create a positive and professional presence online</i>	49
<i>How to use social media effectively</i>	34
General IT skills (including searching for information on the internet, using MS Office products)	57
How to code	42
How to create a website	22

Although the proportion of students who reported shifts in their attitudes and perceptions (n=87) was smaller than those who reported acquiring new knowledge or skills, several students reported that the unit changed their mindsets. More than a third of the students who reported a shift in perception as a result of the unit, realised that they needed to improve their own IT skills. In this unit, students also came to realise how the role of IT in society is continuously increasing (n=19) and that this may make jobs in their field of study irrelevant (n=10).

"This unit broke the stereotype of 'only men do coding' or 'only nerds do coding'. It taught us that even women can do coding and that they are actually the ones needed in this technological era." [Faculty of the Humanities student, Bloemfontein campus]

Approximately half of the students (n=298) provided comments on *what they did not like* about the Information Technology Unit, of whom only 15 students said they disliked everything about the unit.

Four out of ten students (n=120) who spoke about what they did not like in this unit mentioned content-related elements. The most frequently mentioned reason why students did not like the content is that there was not enough time to cover it in depth (n=20). Some of the students (n=14) found the content boring, whilst others said that it was too difficult or complicated (n=15). Only a handful of students mentioned that the content was not relevant (n=11).

Four out of ten students did not like that they had to learn "unpleasant facts" about IT in the Unit. For one third of these students it was unpleasant to come to understand the potentially negative impact of IT in their lives, including that more technology and artificial intelligence may lead to fewer jobs in the future. On a more personal level, a third of the students found it unpleasant to learn of the potential impact of their digital footprint and identity can impact on their job prospects. Students also mentioned the inequality of access to technologies and the cost of technology as unpleasant facts learnt in the Unit. For a handful of students said it was unpleasant to realise that their own IT skills were not at an adequate level.

²¹ Mentioned by more than 10 students

Law and Social justice

Students were asked to indicate what they liked about the unit on Law and Social Justice. Of the 620 students who provided responses, 6% said they liked “Everything” and 11% said the liked “Nothing”. This unit had the highest proportion of students indicating that they liked “Nothing” about the Unit.

The vast majority of students spoke about elements of the content that they liked in the unit, including new information/knowledge that they learnt (n=298), new things that they learnt how to do or could apply (n=30) and ways that the unit changed their attitudes and perceptions (n=10).

Several students (n=116) mentioned specific parts of the Unit that they liked (see Figure 16). Most frequently mentioned was the content about the role of laws and regulation in society, protest action and Ubuntu.

The highest proportion of students gained new information about protests (n=217), followed by

information/knowledge about laws and regulations (n=198), dispute resolution (n=69), Ubuntu (n=62), democratic values (n=41) and social justice (n=24). Table 19 details the most frequently mentioned knowledge/information which students said they gained from the unit.

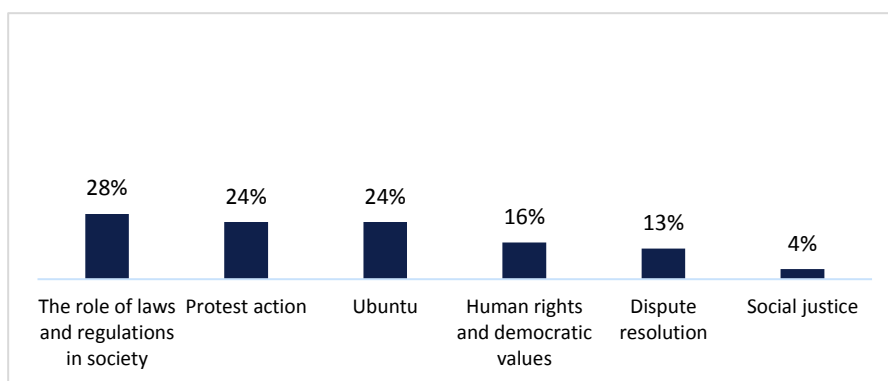


Figure 16: Aspects of the Law and Social Justice Unit that students said they liked

“Law and social justice taught me about the democratic values that the South African constitution is embedded, the Gathering Act 3. It also taught me about the concept of Ubuntu which simply means caring about other people... and i also realized that people when they protest, they do not have to by damaging properties, there are other ways or forms of protest which includes stay away, go slow, silent marching. I have also liked the fact that it taught us about alternative disruptive dispute resolution and embedding mediation in justice which was very important.” [Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences student, QwaQwa campus]

Table 19: Knowledge and information students learnt in the Law & Social Justice Unit that they can apply²²

New knowledge and information	n
About protests	217
Guidelines and procedures for protests (including dos and don'ts)	82
Types and ways of protesting	38
Right to protest	16
The role and value of protests	14
About Laws and regulations	198
Laws and regulations around protests (including the rights of protesters)	71
Citizen rights and responsibilities in the context of the law	108
Value of laws and their role in society	23
Equality of all before the law	15
About Dispute resolution	69

²² mentioned by more than 10 students

About Ubuntu	62
About Democratic values	41
<i>The Constitution</i>	16
<i>The importance of upholding and standing up for democratic values</i>	4
About Social Justice	24

In terms of the skills students said they learnt in the unit, the most frequently mentioned responses were related to how to take protest action that was peaceful and legal, how to apply mediation strategies and how to apply Ubuntu in their lives.

Table 20: Skills and behaviours students acquired in the Law and Social Justice Unit that they can apply²³

New skills or behaviours acquired (already applied or intend to apply)	n
Actions to take to ensure peaceful and legal protests	63
How to apply mediation strategies	46
How to apply Ubuntu in daily life	16

Although the proportion of students who reported shifts in their attitudes and perceptions was small, a few students reported that the unit changed the way they viewed the role of the law in society or the way that they thought about protests.

"Most of the time students are very unaware of the Law and the regulations that it comes with. So it was an eye opener for me personally as its actually very important to know these things before making decisions that you may regret later on." [Faculty of Health Sciences Student, Bloemfontein campus]

Approximately two-thirds of the students (n=393) provided comments on *what they did not like* about the Law and Social Justice Unit, of whom 22 students said they disliked everything about the unit.

Slightly more than a third of the students (n=148) who spoke about what they did not like in this unit mentioned content-related elements. Reasons for disliking the content included that it boring (n=26), too much emphasis was placed on protests and strikes (and not other parts of the law) (n=21), that the content was difficult or complicated (n=17), and that it was not covered in enough depth (n=13). One in ten students who did not like the content said that it was too political or sensitive in nature, and a handful of students felt that it encouraged protest action.

Thirteen percent of students did not like that they had to learn "unpleasant facts". Examples of what students considered unpleasant facts are the risks, dangers and consequences of protesting (n=15), that there is not yet justice for all (n=7), that striking without permission is restricted (n=6), and that there are inherent contradictions and biases within the law (n=10).

Only a very small percentage of students did not like elements of the way that the unit was presented (n=15), and the most frequently mentioned aspect that students did not like was the lengthy videos they needed to watch. Of the 28 students who mentioned that they specifically did not like the learning experience in this unit, five said they found it boring, but most did not specify reasons for disliking the learning experience. Only five students mentioned that they did not like the discussion class.

²³ mentioned by more than 10 students

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

In each semester students were asked to rate their TAs on four criteria – (i) whether they encouraged expression of diverse opinions and perspectives in discussion classes, (ii) whether they presented material in a manner that helped students learn, (iii) if they were well prepared for class, and (iv) if they spoke clearly and audibly.

EXPRESSION OF DIVERSE OPINIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

In both semesters and on both campuses, the majority of students agreed to some extent that their TAs encouraged the expression of diverse opinions and perspectives in the discussion classes (see Figure 17).

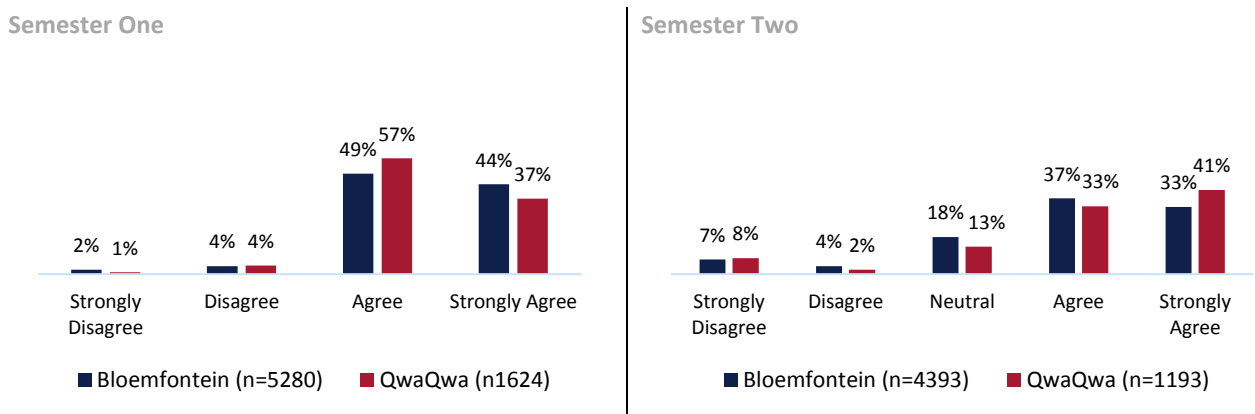


Figure 17: Student ratings of teaching assistants' encouragement of diverse opinions: Semester One and Two

In Semester One, more than 90% of students on both campuses agreed that the TAs encouraged diverse opinions and perspectives. The proportion of students who disagreed was slightly higher in Semester Two on both campuses – however at least 70% of students (dependent on campus) agreed that the TAs encouraged this.

PRESENTATION OF MATERIAL TO ENABLE LEARNING

In both semesters and on both campuses, the majority of students agreed to some extent that their TAs presented material in a manner which enabled them to learn (Figure 18).

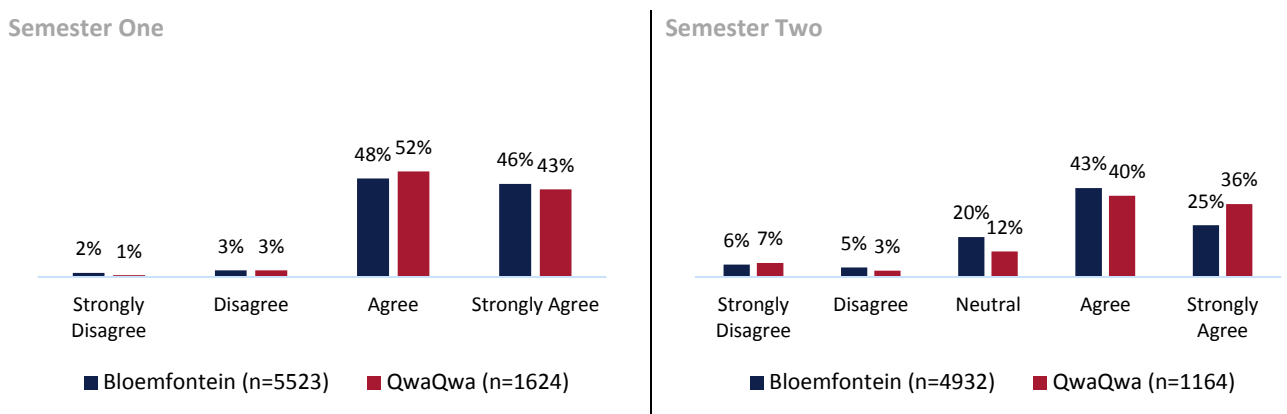


Figure 18: Student ratings of teaching assistants' presentation of material: Semester One and Two

In Semester One, more than 90% of students on both campuses agreed to some extent that the way TAs presented the materials enabled them to learn; this proportion decreased on both campuses in Semester Two. On the Bloemfontein campus the proportion of students who strongly agreed

decreased dramatically from 46% to 25%. However, the inclusion of a neutral category in the Semester Two evaluation saw most of the shifts in responses move to the neutral rather than to the disagree response options.

LEVEL OF PREPARATION FOR CLASS

In both semesters and on both campuses, the majority of students agreed to some extent that their TAs were well prepared for class (Figure 19).

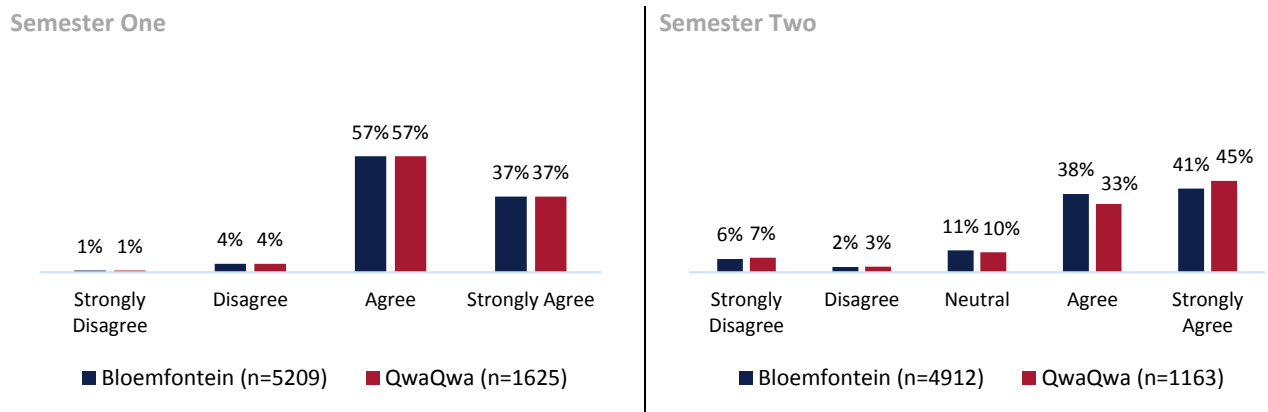


Figure 19: Student ratings of teaching assistants' level of preparation: Semester One and Two

In Semester One, more than 90% of students on both campuses agreed to some extent that the TAs were well prepared for class; this proportion decreased on both campuses in Semester Two. Although there was a slight increase in the proportion of students who strongly disagree on both campuses, most of the shift in positive responses was to the neutral category (which was only included in Semester Two). In fact, the proportion of students who strongly agreed increased slightly for both campuses in Semester Two.

TEACHING ASSISTANT VERBAL PRESENTATION

In both semesters and on both campuses, the majority of students agreed to some extent that their teaching assistants spoke clearly and audibly in class (Figure 20).

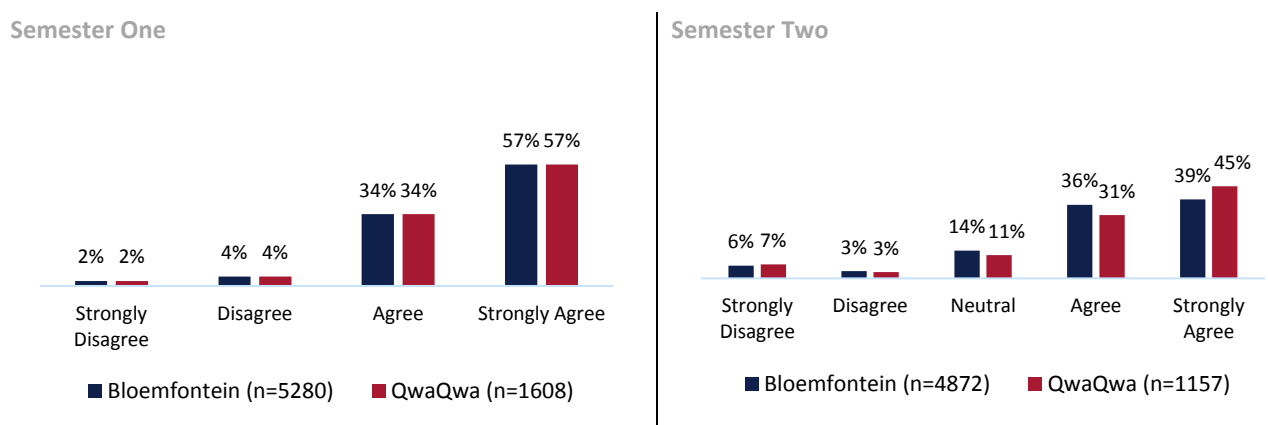


Figure 20: Student ratings of whether teaching assistants spoke clearly and audibly: Semester One and Two

In Semester One, more than 90% of students on both campuses agreed to some extent that the TAs spoke clearly and audibly; this proportion decreased on both campuses in Semester Two. Although there was a slight increase in the proportion of students who strongly disagree on both campuses, most of the shift in positive responses was to the neutral category (which was only included in Semester Two).

TEACHING ASSISTANTS: WHAT STUDENTS SAID

Semester One

In Semester One 440 students gave additional comments about the TAs – of these 75% were positive comments and 8% were negative comments. A quarter of the responding students gave suggestions about how the TAs or their role could be enhanced.

More than half of the positive comments (56%) were general, for example “they are good” or “their work is excellent”. Other positive remarks were that the TAs:

- helped students to learn or understand the work (n=85 out of 334)
- encouraged diverse opinions in class, were fair and did not discriminate (n=53 out of 334)
- were well prepared (n=32 out of 334)
- inspired and motivated students (n=10 out of 334)
- were punctual and always on time (n=7 out of 334)
- were attentive and listened to students (n=7 out of 334)

In their comments about the TAs students described the characteristics they appreciated in a TA. Students appreciated TAs who were supportive and helpful (n=60), kind and friendly (n=52), approachable and open (n=21), lively and bubbly (n=11), serious about their job/role (n=16), patient (n=8), respectful of students (n=5), strict (n=4) and had a good sense of humour (n=2). A small group of students (n=4) described their TAs as rude or unkind).

“It really overwhelms me to being taught by such kind and patient people like the UFS101 teaching assistant. They really made me change the way I do things with regards to my academics. They really understand the true meaning of educating us. Indeed, they have inspired me to do good all the time... I enjoy the semester activities we did.” [Faculty of Education student, QwaQwa campus]

A handful of students mentioned that TAs did not speak loudly enough in the discussion classes (n=5), that they were not effective in presenting the materials (n=8) or that they were not prepared for class (n=2).

A few students also indicated that they would have preferred to have the same TA for the whole semester (n=3).

Semester Two

In Semester Two 178 students gave additional comments about the TAs. Of these, 72% were positive comments about the assistants, 9% were negative comments and the remainder of the comments were suggestions for how the TAs or their role could be enhanced.

Most of the positive comments (n=72) were general, for example “they were great” or “TAs should keep up the fantastic work”. Other positive remarks about the TAs were that they:

- helped students to learn or understand the work (n=17),
- were punctual and always on time (n=3),
- encouraged diverse opinions in class, were fair and did not discriminate (n=5),
- were well prepared (n=9).

Students appreciated TAs who were kind and friendly (n=14), supportive and helpful (n=7), lively and bubbly (n=3), patient (n=2) and serious about their job/role (n=2). A small group of students (n=6) described their TAs as rude or unkind, or that they displayed favouritism (n=3).

One or two students mentioned that TAs did not speak loudly enough in the discussion classes or that they were not effective in presenting the materials.

Given that students are not allocated to a single TA for the semester some students (n=3) noted that their experiences of the TA varied with some being good, and others subpar.

"They vary, and they are changed frequently. So if I'm not satisfied about another one, and satisfied about the other, I'm forced to generalise my feelings about them on this survey by saying they were good, though I'm not satisfied about the other." [Faculty of the Humanities student, QwaQwa campus]

Suggestions for improving the role of the teaching assistants

The following suggestions were offered (combined from Semester One and Two) as to how to improve the effectiveness of the TAs. They should

- be kind, friendly, patient and positive;
- not talk too fast, but clearly and audibly,
- focus on effective presentation (for example do not walk around too much when presenting or try too hard to be funny);
- use several examples in their explanations and always be well-prepared;
- manage time in the discussion classes better so as not to run overtime;
- not force students to participate but encourage engagement and participation through activities, open discussions and innovative teaching techniques.

Other suggestions from students in the online evaluation (in response to the question on general recommendations) included that there should be a platform for reporting grievances about TAs, that high performing students should be invited to become TAs and that additional training was needed for some of the TAs to improve their performance.

SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STUDENTS

In Semester One students were asked in an open-ended qualitative question what they would like to have learnt in UFS101 but did not. Table 21 summarises the skills or content mentioned by 10 or more students.

Table 21: Additional content students would like to cover in UFS101

	Bloemfontein	QwaQwa
Nothing	135	26
Mental / Physical health & wellbeing	77	15
<i>Coping skills</i>	68	13
<i>Physical health</i>	8	2
Finding your feet at UFS		
<i>Adapting to university in first year, finding way around campus, where to find help, how to get involved in campus activities, rules and regulations of the UFS, how to be a successful student, etc.</i>	66	9
Study and academic skills		
<i>How to prepare for exams, study techniques, memorization techniques, how to write academic essays, note taking skills</i>	33	9
Financial skills		
<i>Budgeting, saving effectively and how to make money while at university</i>	32	6
Writing skills	29	11
ICT skills		
<i>General computer skills, access information online, typing skills, MS Word and/or Excel, programming skills</i>	20	9
Another language/s	18	5
<i>Other SA official languages, international languages, braille</i>		
Workplace / Professional skills or preparation		
<i>Job markets and employer expectations, management skills, how to look and apply for a job, what skills are needed in the work place, how to present oneself in the workplace</i>	13	2

The most frequently requested topics were health and wellbeing and “finding your feet at UFS” (mentioned by more than 50 students each). Other topics (mentioned by more than 30 students) were study and academic skills, and financial skills. To large extent these suggestions overlap with content already presented in UFS101. This affirms the value of the content that is already included and reiterates the feedback in several of the Units where students requested topics to be covered in greater depth.

In Semester Two 170 students provided comments in response to the question “Do you have any further suggestions or recommendations for UFS101?”. Many of these responses were positive

comments (n=73), with only a handful of negative comments (n=16). A further 85 students provided suggestions.

Positive comments about the module included that it was fun and exciting (n=5), interesting and informative (n=13), as well as useful and valuable (n=10). One or two students each said they improved their self-confidence (including to speak up in class in front of other students), self-insight, critical thinking, IT skills, business savvy and time management. A number of students said that the module helped them adapt to life at the UFS (n=9). In many of the focus groups students affirmed that UFS101 did in fact help them to transition from high school to university, often referring specifically to the academic skills they learnt in UFS101 such as referencing and how to avoid plagiarism.

"And ahhh I think UFS 101 in general it is a very helpful module when it comes to transitioning between high school and tertiary. I think UFS 101 is helping us to cope with varsity life, because varsity is very different from high school." [Focus group participant]

Several of the suggestions focussed on amending what is required of students to complete the module. Two students suggested that there should be fewer tests and assignments, three that there should be fewer classes and three that classes should be shorter. Five students suggested that the weighting of attendance in their final marks should be decreased. A further five students suggested that the total duration of the module should be shortened.

"I did not like the fact that we had to do tasks like every week, we had to complete tasks, because some of us have practical's every day. I have online tasks every week. I have assignments every week. So ufs101, I mean, they should understand that we're not only studying ufs101, we have other modules that demand our attention. And for me personally, I would always do my ufs101 task on a Sunday evening because during the week, I'm busy and I don't even have time to sit down properly and plan because I have to prioritise. Not that I'm saying ufs101 is not important, but then I have other modules that I need to look at, so for this semester, I think the tasks were like a bit too much. That's how I feel." [Focus group participant]

One in ten students in the online evaluation who provided suggestions said that UFS101 classes (or the module itself) should be voluntary. In the focus groups students suggested that UFS101 should be for first year students – regardless of whether they are in extended programmes or not. In other focus groups they suggested that UFS101 could be made compulsory only for some students. They noted that students who transitioned from South campus to Bloemfontein campus had already covered most of the Semester One material in their year on South campus and it was thus less useful to them. Others noted that they have covered a great deal of the material in high school and that students could possibly be exempt from doing Semester One of UFS101 if they passed a skills assessment test.

"I feel like UFS 101 similar to English, you can get exempted from doing it if you have obtained a certain mark for your NBT's, so there should be some kind of test or something to see if whether you really do need the content in UFS 101 especially in the first semester" [Focus group participant]

While three students in the online evaluation suggested that the learning experiences should be removed and one student suggested there should be fewer of them, seven students suggested that there should in fact be more learning experiences. Three students requested that the learning experiences should have fewer students in them. Two students suggested fewer discussion classes and one that the discussion classes should be removed.

Students (n=25) also provided suggestions around module content. Most of the suggestions were made by one or two students. The suggestions focussed on ensuring that content is relevant to real-life challenges students face and is presented in a way that is interactive and engaging. The most

frequent suggestion (n=7) was that content should be focused on practical skills that students can apply.

Negative comments in the online survey included that UFS101 was boring, that students did not like the module, that UFS101 was time consuming or difficult and that that Semester One topics were not valuable for all degrees. Each of these comments was mentioned by either one or two students only.

The majority of evidence presented in this report illustrates the value of UFS101 to many students, and the proportionally low ratio of negative sentiments expressed in the online survey responses confirms this. However, focus group discussions showed that some negative sentiments prevail and that students may be influenced by senior students who have a negative view of UFS101. However, several of the students in focus groups who mentioned that seniors had told them that UFS101 was boring or a waste of time, noted that their attitude toward the module changed during the year.

"I think what I didn't like, I think the problem was the stigmatization that people gave to UFS101 when I got here, everyone gave me that attitude that that was the most boring module that you can do, so I think, I did not like it at first, because I came with that attitude of everybody says it's boring, so it is boring, so I actually found that it wasn't actually that boring, the problem was attending classes so that was the only problem, so I didn't have anything, that I didn't like. " [Focus group participant]

UFS101 has maintained a reflective and adaptive approach to both its content and delivery since the first year it was implemented, conducting comprehensive module evaluations on an annual basis. This has resulted in several drastic changes to curriculum over the years and the implementation of the blended learning approach. Although it may not be possible to eliminate negative sentiments of senior students towards the module the continued focus on improvement and innovation will enable UFS101 to remain relevant to the academic and social needs of students as they transition from high school to university.