

Annual Teaching and Learning Report 2016

MAKING AN IMPACT ON QUALITY

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UFS·UV
CENTRE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING (CTL)
ONDERRIG-EN-LEERSENTRUM (OLS)

MISSION

Scholarship-driven advancement and leadership of innovation and excellence in teaching and learning.

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Message from the Vice-Rector: Academic

Prof Lis Lange

The year 2016 was without a doubt the most difficult year for South African public higher education since the first democratic elections two decades ago. The #MustFall movement started in 2015 pointing to a variety of elements of institutional cultures and aesthetics that are reflected in the present South African universities' colonial roots. This included a critique of the curriculum for its lack of responsiveness to the African condition of the universities and its disregard for the pedagogic subject, i.e. Black students. This was followed by an increasingly militant protest about university fees and the opening of the debate about the feasibility and justice or otherwise of free higher education. The South African higher education system will never be the same again. In years to come we will talk about HE before and after #FMF. This is not only because of the financial impact that almost two years of protest have had on university finances but because the protest has forced universities and government to confront the extent and impact of HE underfunding and in particular the plight of poor students. This is because the #FMF movement put curriculum and pedagogy at the centre of the conversation. Most universities are involved, as a consequence of the protest, in different attempts to review the curriculum with student participation and it is very likely that considerable changes will be implemented in the form of teaching and learning as a consequence of this.

The student protest affected every member of the university community and demanded an enormous amount of resilience from those participating in demonstrations, those mediating the conflict, those who witnessed and experienced the effects of the protest, and those who saw it at relative distance like parents. There is no doubt in my mind that academics and students were affected the most directly.

Faced with the possibility of losing the academic year, the UFS, like other universities, had to adapt fast and move its academic offerings online. This exercise tested academics and professional staff's ability to change, it tested the robustness of the UFS learning management system and the ability of the faculties, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Student Academic Services, and ICTs to work together. In reviewing the work done in the "rescue plan", some teaching and learning managers mentioned that the UFS had achieved in a few months what under normal circumstances would have taken years to change. I would like to use the release of this report to thank every academic at the UFS for their dedication, patience and hard work under very difficult and demanding circumstances.

This Teaching and Learning Annual Report also shows that crises do not stop everything. For a year of crisis the work presented here is simply remarkable. But what is most remarkable is how since 2012, the date of the creation of CTL, there is a steady growth in evidence-based improvement of teaching and learning at the UFS and how examples of excellent work can be found across all faculties. Of particular importance is how the "theory" of the Teaching and Learning Strategy and of the Academic Strategy is finding concrete expression in academic practice. This augurs well for the achievement of our goals.

I would like to thank Prof Strydom, Director of the CTL and Tiana van der Merwe, Deputy Director of CTL, as well as their staff for yet another good year of work. My gratitude also goes to the teaching and learning managers and the faculty deans without whose leadership none of this would be possible. Research-based innovation and sustained improvement in the quality of teaching and learning are becoming a distinctive feature of the UFS. This is an achievement worth sustaining and improving on. ■

Enhancing and Supporting Quality Teaching and Learning

Prof Francois Strydom, Director: Centre for Teaching and Learning

"Never let a good crisis go to waste" – Winston S. Churchill

The year 2016 was described and experienced by many members of staff and students as a year of crisis in public higher education. Multiple iterations of #FeesMustFall protests resulted in disruptions which endangered the completion of the academic year at the UFS. Paradoxically, this crisis did serve as a catalyst for finding new ways of promoting teaching and learning and supporting students' success. As was the case at other public institutions, technology played a critical role in implementing innovation and helping institutions to complete the academic year. UFS staff and students pulled together "to not let a good crisis go to waste". Another significant change was the approval of the new Language Policy for the university.

In light of these challenges we thought it appropriate to interpret the enhancement and support of quality teaching and learning in terms of these significant shifts in UFS teaching and learning. As was the case in 2015, this report is structured using the Teaching and Learning Strategy (TLS) that was approved by Senate in May 2014. The strategy focuses on quality teaching since higher education experts indicate that it is one of the distinguishing features of international elite research institutions (Altbach & Salmi, 2011). The teaching and learning strategy identified the following objectives:

- Raising awareness of quality teaching and learning;
- Developing excellent teachers;
- Engaging students for success;
- Building an organisation for change and teaching and learning leadership;
- Aligning institutional policies to foster quality teaching and learning;
- Highlighting innovation as a driver for change
- Evidence-based change through assessment; and
- Developing graduate attributes.

On reading this report it is important to remember that assessing the impact of institutional improvement in higher education is notoriously challenging (Kuh et al., 2015). Therefore the assessment needs to focus on a specific question which would improve the quality of teaching and learning and produce multiple data sources as potential evidence. The contributions from faculties as well as the Centre for Teaching and Learning include quantitative as well as qualitative data to illustrate the impact but also to exemplify "proof of concept" for new innovation.

Raising awareness of quality teaching and learning

In light of the challenges faced in higher education in 2016 this section highlights four topics directly relevant to the quality of teaching and learning at the UFS, namely:

- Understanding UFS students' financial stress;
- Using technology to support academics and students' success;
- How the UFS supports students' language development; and
- Enhancing student educators' teaching.

The article on "Using student engagement data to understand University of the Free State students' financial stress" provides a data-driven insight into the stress under which UFS students have to study. The aim of the national research is to promote a better understanding of our students in order to find ways to strengthen support for them (p. 8). The second article on p. 15 shares the important role that technology played in supporting academics' success in rescuing the academic year and how this technology has become an indispensable part of teaching and learning in contemporary South African higher education. The third article "Innovative academic language support at the UFS – Unit for Language Development" (p. 21) shows how the university supports more than 8000 students per year to develop students' language skills essential for their academic and employment success. The case study on the "Advancement of innovative and engaged Mathematics and Science teaching and learning of student educators in the Faculty of Education" (p. 26) illustrates how student educators' exposure to the Family Math & Science programme enhances their experiences and furthers their preparation towards becoming excellent teachers.

Developing excellent teachers

Academics are confronted with highly complex challenges in today's classroom, ranging from students with varying levels of preparedness to the "disruptive" impact of new technologies. Therefore, the development of new academic staff development opportunities and support mechanisms is vital in helping to improve quality. In the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, some unintended outcomes resulting from the implementation of data analytics in that faculty, such as professional growth and scholarly achievement of the members of the scholarly work group (p. 32), have been uncovered. In another project, the Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) principles are used to prepare a new generation of tutors by providing them with a monitoring tool which can also be used by lecturers to create inclusive classrooms that support student success (p. 34).

Engaging students for success

Research on improving undergraduate education shows that student engagement data provides a data-driven student voice that can be used to create a culture of evidence in higher education institutions (McCormick, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2013). Helping students to engage in their learning not only improves the quality of the learning process, but also enhances students' chances of success. One of the initiatives that contribute to significant gains is the out-of-class student engagement initiative in the Faculty of Education. This initiative includes student representatives' attendance and participation in not only formal or informal meetings but also their involvement in student and community outreach programmes (p. 38). Another way of enhancing the student experience for success is using various academic advisory programmes to specifically target certain student needs at certain times of the year (p. 42). Similarly, undergraduate medical students who experienced some level of academic challenge consulted with the student support practitioner in the faculty. The academic guidance interviews were analysed and results indicate that academic, social and psychological factors affected students' academic performance (p. 45).

Building an organisation for change and teaching and learning leadership

Effective change towards better quality teaching and learning at an institution is only possible through internal organisational support that combines top-down and bottom-up initiatives that evolve over time. Understanding the role of various change agents (leaders, academics, students and support staff) is essential for building a quality teaching culture (Henard & Roseveare, 2012). Kuh et al., (2005) emphasise that student learning and success are not the result of one initiative, but need to become "everybody's business" through academic, support and leadership structures. The article on "Promoting a more harmonious working environment through self-mastery" highlights the importance of self-mastery in creating more harmonious working environments (p. 50). Interprofessional simulation has also proven effective for preparing healthcare students

for community-based collaborative practice, where students are sensitised to deliver patient-centred care (p. 52). The section concludes with a reflection on the impact of the Academic Leadership Programme and how it is helping to building the capacity of Heads of Department (p. 56).

Aligning institutional policies to foster quality teaching and learning

The alignment of institutional policies is critical for creating an environment that promotes quality teaching and learning for student success (Henard & Roseveare, 2012). The CTL facilitated the development of a new institutional assessment policy to enhance the development of good assessment practices at the UFS (p. 62). The new assessment policy aims to address some of the challenges highlighted by staff and students by being specific enough to clarify certain areas of uncertainty, while being sufficiently flexible in other areas to allow faculties to address other issues in a faculty-specific manner.

Highlighting innovation as a driver for change

Innovation spurred by various factors can be an important driver for the improvement of teaching quality. Innovation in teaching and learning poses the risk of threatening students and staff and therefore requires careful pre-implementation planning and conjoint monitoring to ensure that the risk of unintended consequences is addressed (Henard & Roseveare, 2012). This section starts with the article "Beyond the lecture hall" (p. 66) which illustrates how curriculum design can help to facilitate the development of skills and more authentic "real-life" assessment results. The second article in this section emphasises how Blackboard, the online learning management system (LMS), is used at the UFS (p. 69). Tool usage on Blackboard indicates that the system is still mainly used to upload content and to communicate information to students as opposed to a collaboration and assessment tool. The article on UFS101 illustrates the importance of data in development innovative teaching and learning as well as curriculum renewal approaches (p. 73). The case study on how innovative technology in the Faculty of Humanities illustrates the potential of technology in improving student participation (p. 78). This section concludes with a reflection on the impact of the GENL1408 literacy module's film club on supporting the developing the skills of second language students on the Qwaqwa campus (p. 81).

Evidence-based change through assessment

Realistic assessment of the current quality of teaching and learning at the institution is an essential starting point for improvement. This includes the use of a variety of assessment methods including qualitative and quantitative evaluations of teaching and learning.

The article illustrates how different forms of assessment are being used to develop and monitor the impact of the general English literacy course (GENL1408) on the Qwaqwa campus (p. 86). The assessment of the A_STEP tutorial programme shows how the programme continues to expand and how it benefits students (p. 88). Finally, the perceptions of various role-players on the Academic Student Tutorial and Excellence Programme in the Faculty of Education are discussed (p. 90), providing insights into the experience of the different stages of tutorials.

Developing graduate attributes

The development of graduate attributes is globally recognised as being a critical outcome of higher education (De la Harpe & David, 2012). The Higher Education Quality Committee's (HEQC) Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) underlines the critical importance of increasing the number of graduates that have attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable (HEQC, 2013).

The development of these attributes needs to take place through better alignment of the curricular and co-curricular activities and the identification of high-impact activities such as service learning. The article "An evidence-based framework for the restructuring of service learning in Management Sciences" illustrates the potential of service learning which is empowering students and preparing them for the world of work (p. 96).

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Editorial Assistant, Centre for Teaching and Learning: Annél Oosthuysen

RAISING AWARENESS OF QUALITY TEACHING

Using student engagement data to understand the University of the Free State students' financial stress

Dr Sonja Loots, Lana Hen-Boisen & Annél Oosthuysen, Centre for Teaching and Learning

This report shows the preliminary results of the Financial Stress Scale (FSS) included in the 2016 administration of the South African Survey of Student Engagement. It shows how financial stress is impacting on the University of the Free State students' daily lives, which inevitably impacts on their educational experiences.

The main findings are:

1. Students do not leave socio-economic inequalities at home when they come to university;
2. The vulnerability of Black and Coloured students in general, as well as first- generation students is quite clear;
3. The large portion of White students, in particular, contributing to their own studies through paying for themselves, taking out loans, or receiving NSFAS aid, challenge racial stereotypes about the affordability of higher education;
4. In general, only 8% of all participating students never worry about how they are going to pay for day-to-day expenses, and only 14% never worry about how they are going to pay university fees;
5. The vast majority of students (79%) indicated that they have run out of food without being able to buy more, with 30% indicating that this happens most days or every day;
6. 66% of first-generation students are hungry on most days or every day; and
7. Students who experience the most financial stress, and who have been hungry on a fairly regular basis, are the ones who have the least time to spend on their studies because they are taking care of others, travelling to and from classes, or working.

These findings provide us with a worrying picture of long-standing inequalities impacting on the educational experiences and general well-being of students. In essence, it gives some insight into the current frustrations of students and institutions about an underfunded higher education system, which impacts directly on student engagement and success.

How does financial stress impact student engagement?

As one of the vehicles for student voice, the South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) was compelled to

respond to students' concerns raised during the 2015 #FeesMustFall protests. As a result, the Financial Stress Scale (FSS) was developed and included in the 2016 SASSE administration, which took place in the lead-up to the more pronounced 2016 #FeesMustFall protests. The timing to share some of the preliminary findings is crucial, since the protests - and wide-reaching consequences thereof - are impacting on everyone linked to the South African higher education system.

To present a picture of how financial stress is impacting on UFS students' ability to engage effectively with their studies, as well as who the more vulnerable groups are who experience financial stress, we focus on the following questions:

1. Who pays for UFS students to study?
2. Who experiences financial stress?
3. What are the implications of financial stress on students' engagement with their studies?

Data Collection

A total of 1 811 UFS students completed the 2016 SASSE survey. The demographics of the sample are presented in Figure 1.

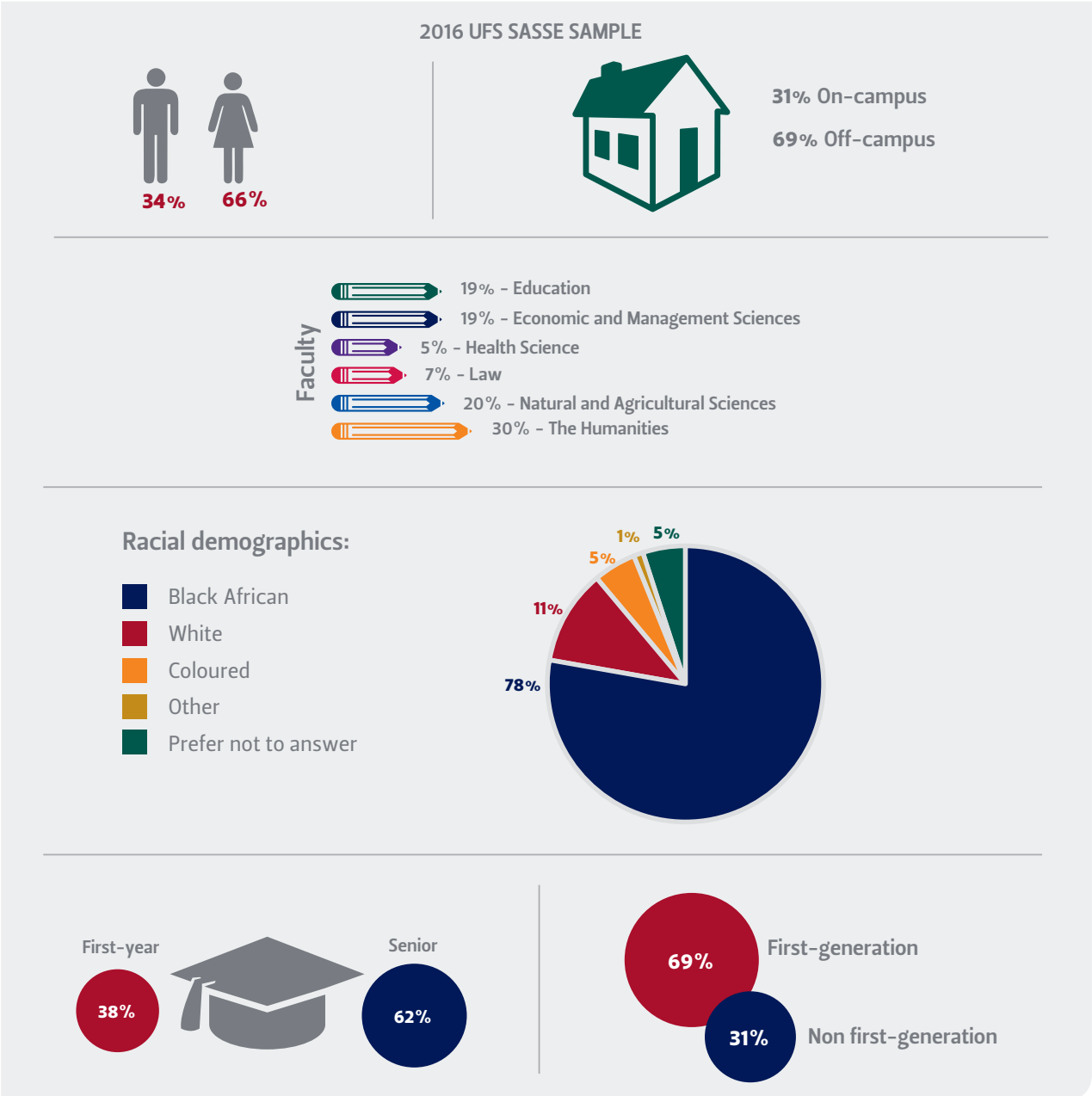


Figure 1: The demographics of the UFS students who completed the 2016 SASSE survey.

Discussion of results

Who pays for UFS students to study?

The FSS asked students to indicate how they are paying for university through identifying which source covers most of their fees. The majority (71%) indicated that their parents/guardians pay for their studies, followed by 29% who pay for themselves and 19% receive NSFAS aid. When comparing racial groups, two very distinctive profiles emerge (Figure 2). Since the profiles of White and Indian students, and the profiles of Black and Coloured students reflect very similar patterns, we only include White and Black students' responses for comparison purposes. Probably the most significant findings here are the difference between the number of students on NASFAS aid (22% Black compared to 5% White), as well as the number of students in general who either pay for themselves (24% Black and 54% White), and those whose parents pay (68% Black compared to 81% White). These findings make two very important statements: first, students do not leave socio-economic inequalities at home when they come to university; and second, the large portion of White students, in particular, who contribute to their own studies through paying for themselves, taking out loans, or receiving NSFAS aid, challenge racial stereotypes about the affordability of higher education.

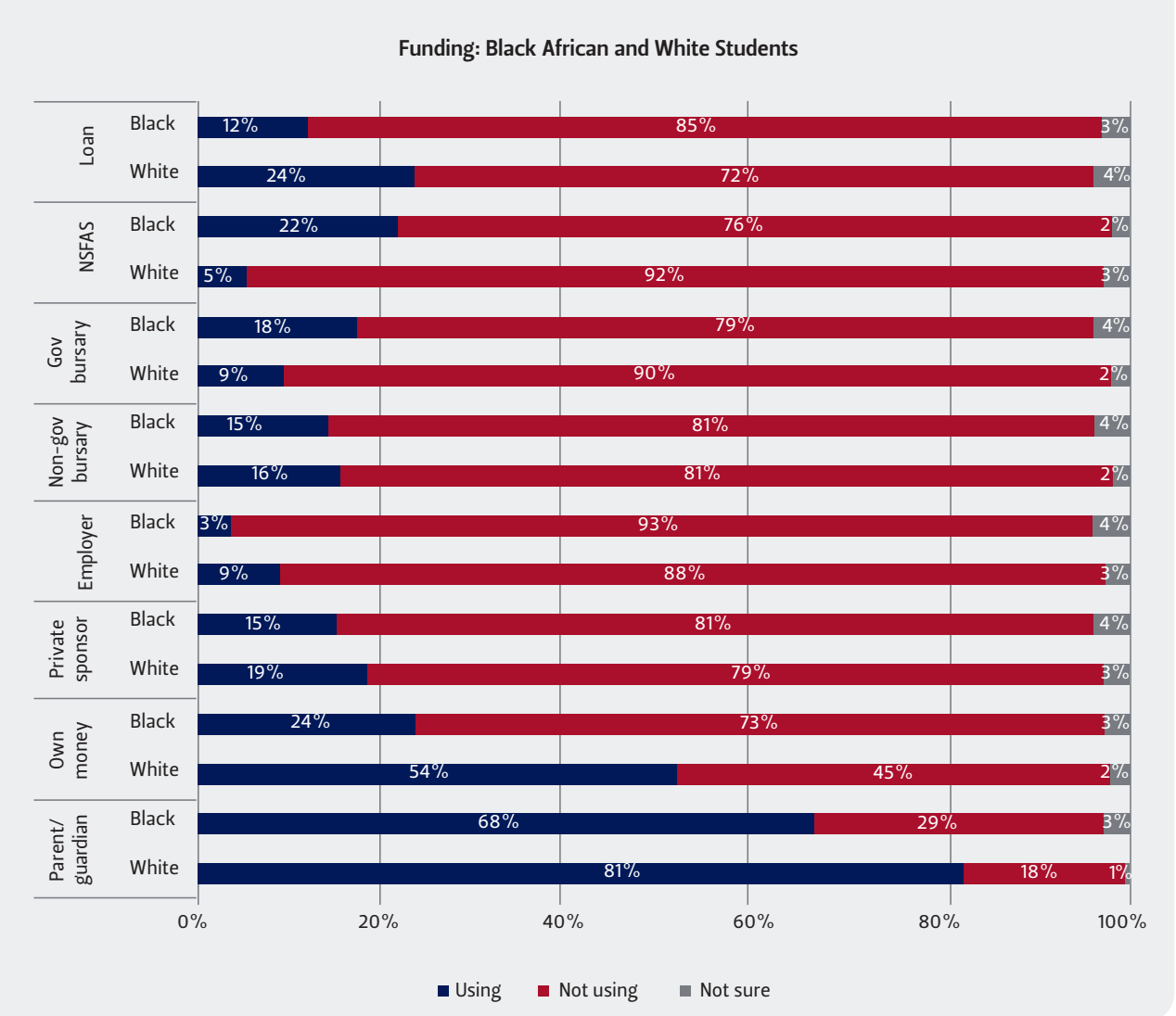


Figure 2: The reported means of funding by Black and White students.

Who experiences financial stress?

To determine to what extent students experience financial stress, the FSS asked whether they worry about being able to pay for day-to-day expenses; whether they worry about paying university fees; and whether they have ever run out food without having the means to buy more. In general, only 8% of all participating students never worry about how they are going to pay for day-to-day expenses, and 14% never worry about how they are going to pay for university fees. The majority of students (79%) indicated that they have run out of food without being able to buy more, with a worrying 30% indicating most days or every day. When comparing these same items between first-generation students and non first-generation students, the vulnerability of being a first-generation student is clear (Figure 3). For example, 65% and 64% of first-generation students indicate that they worry about day-to-day expenses and paying university fees respectively on most days or every day. This compares to 46% and 48% of non-first-generation students. Similarly, a significant difference in food resources is seen between first- and non- first-generation students, with 85% of first-generation students having run out of food without being able to buy more, with a staggering 66% of these students being hungry on most days or every day. This is compared to non first-generation students, 50% of whom indicated that they sometimes run out of food without being able to buy more, and 17% noted that they run out of food most days or every day.

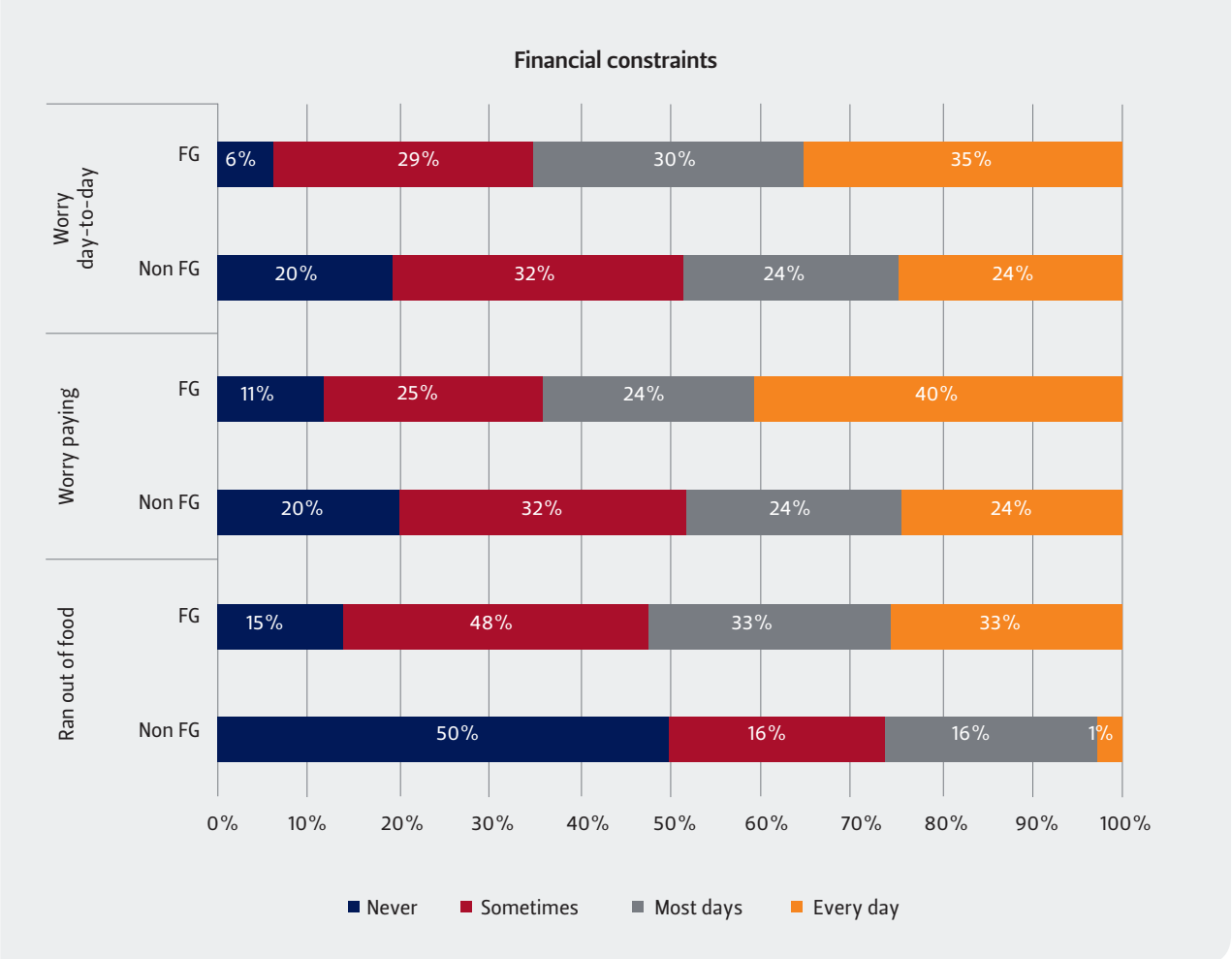


Figure 3: The financial constraints reported by first-generation and non first-generation students.

Understanding the impact of financial stress on students' lives

Exploring the difference between groups who indicated that they never worried about day-to-day expenses, paying university fees, or running out of food and those who indicated that they have sometimes (up to every day) experienced this condition, the following results were found:

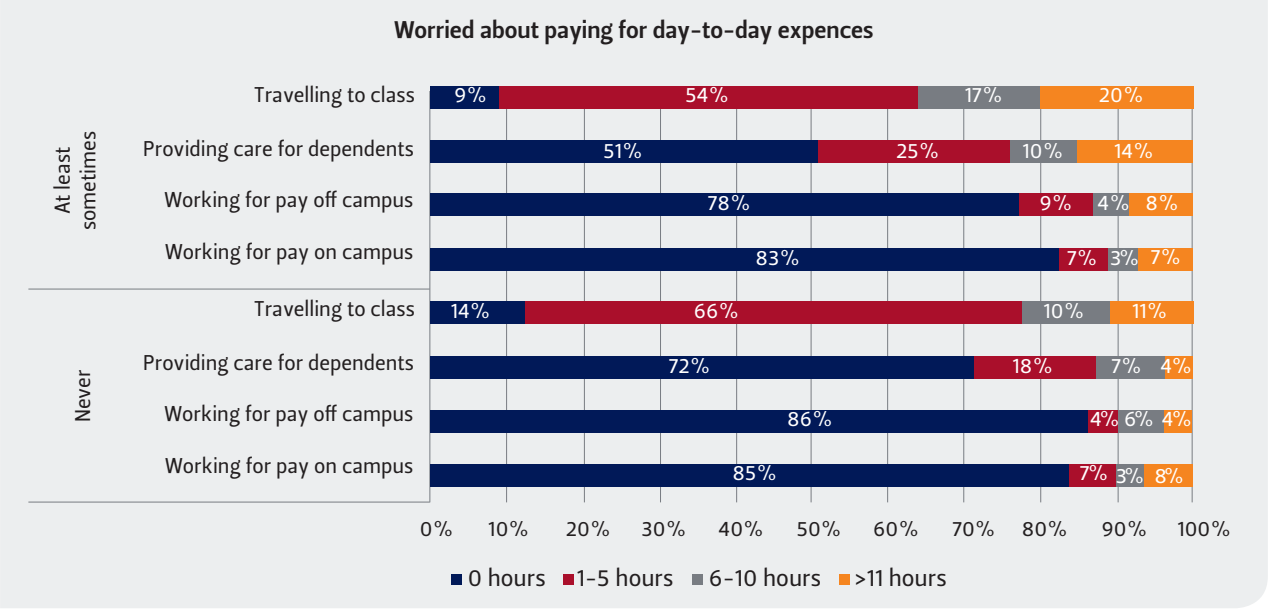


Figure 4: Students' sense of worrying to pay for day-to-day expenses compared to relevant behaviours and life demands.

Figure 4 shows that those who worry about how they are going to pay for day-to-day expenses:

a. Spend more time travelling to and from classes, with 37% spending more than 11 hours per week on this task, compared to 20% of students who state that they do not worry about day-to-day expenses.

b. Spend more time caring for dependants than those who never worry (24% spending 11 hours or more on this task compared to 10%).

c. Spend more time working off campus (22% spending more than an hour per week working compared to 14%) as well as on campus (17% spending more than an hour per week working compared to 15%).

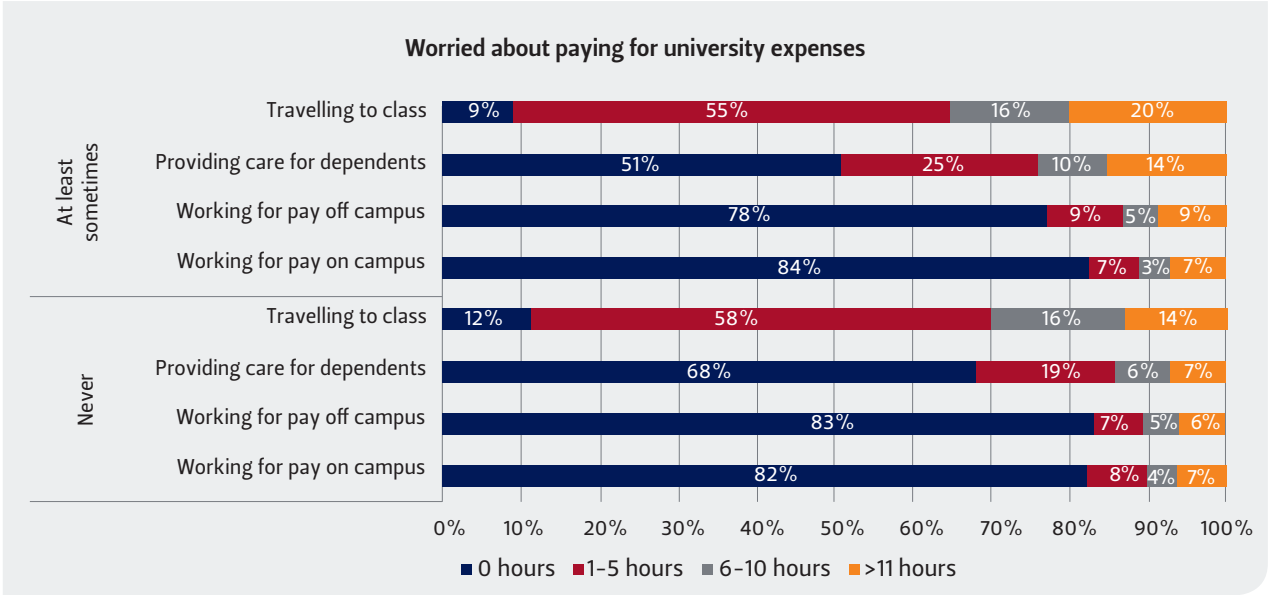


Figure 5: Students' sense of worrying about paying for university expenses compared to relevant behaviours and life demands.

Figure 5 shows that those who worry about paying university fees:

a. Travel longer to and from classes, with 21% travelling more than 11 hours per week compared to 13% of those who never worry.

b. Spend more time caring for dependants, with 15% spending more than 11 hours per week on this task compared to 6% of those who never worry.

c. Spend more time working off campus than those who do not worry (18% working more than one hour a week compared to 13%).

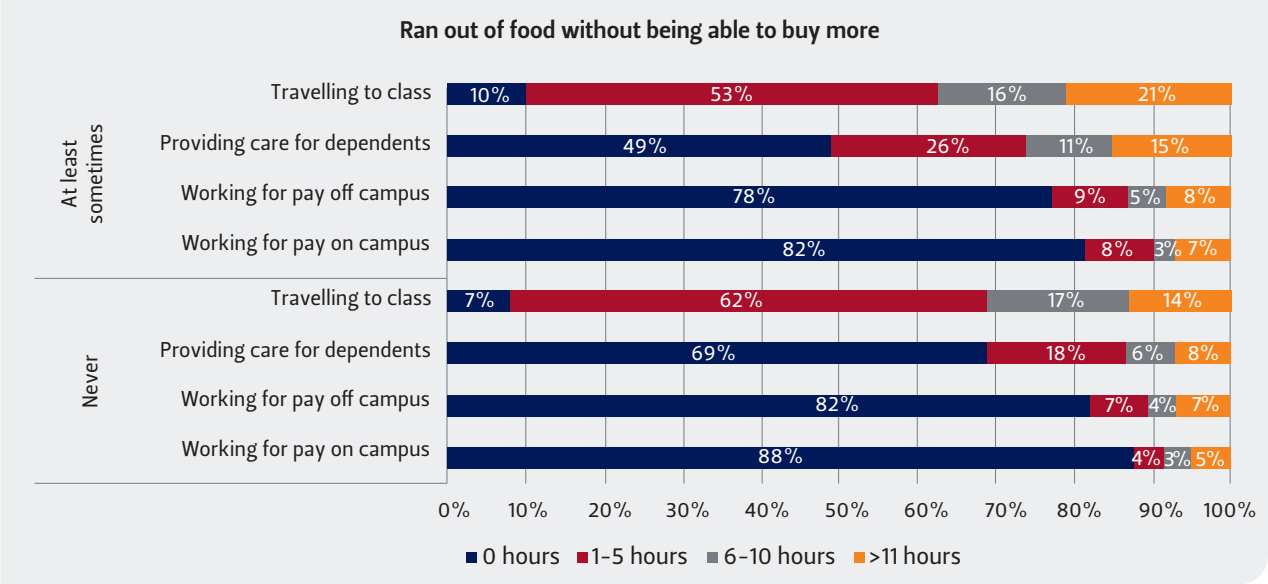


Figure 6: Students' responses that they ran out of food without being able to buy more compared to relevant behaviours and life demands.

Figure 6 shows that:

a. 21% of students, who could not afford to buy more food, travel more than 11 hours per week to and from classes compared to 14% of those who have never run out of food.

b. Those who indicated that they could not afford to buy more food also spend more time caring for dependants, with 14% spending more than 11 hours on this task compared to 7% of students who never ran out of food without being able to buy more.

c. Students who could not afford to buy more food work more hours off-campus than students who never ran out of food without being able to buy more (22% and 18% respectively).

d. Students who are not able to buy more food also work more hours on campus compared to students who never ran out of food without being able to buy more (18% and 12% respectively).

What are the implications of financial stress on students' engagement with their studies?

Taking the UFS student sample as a whole, Figure 7 shows that more than half of the participating students feel that their financial concerns have had an impact on their studies, while 33% have considered dropping out due to financial reasons. Analysing the differences between race and generational status, the findings show that more Black students have felt an impact on their studies compared to White students (55% and 37% respectively), and similar findings regarding generational status, with 58% of first-generation students feeling the impact of financial stress compared to 41% of non first-generation students. With regard to students who have considered dropping out due to financial stress, 35% of Black students and 37% of first-year students indicated that they have considered

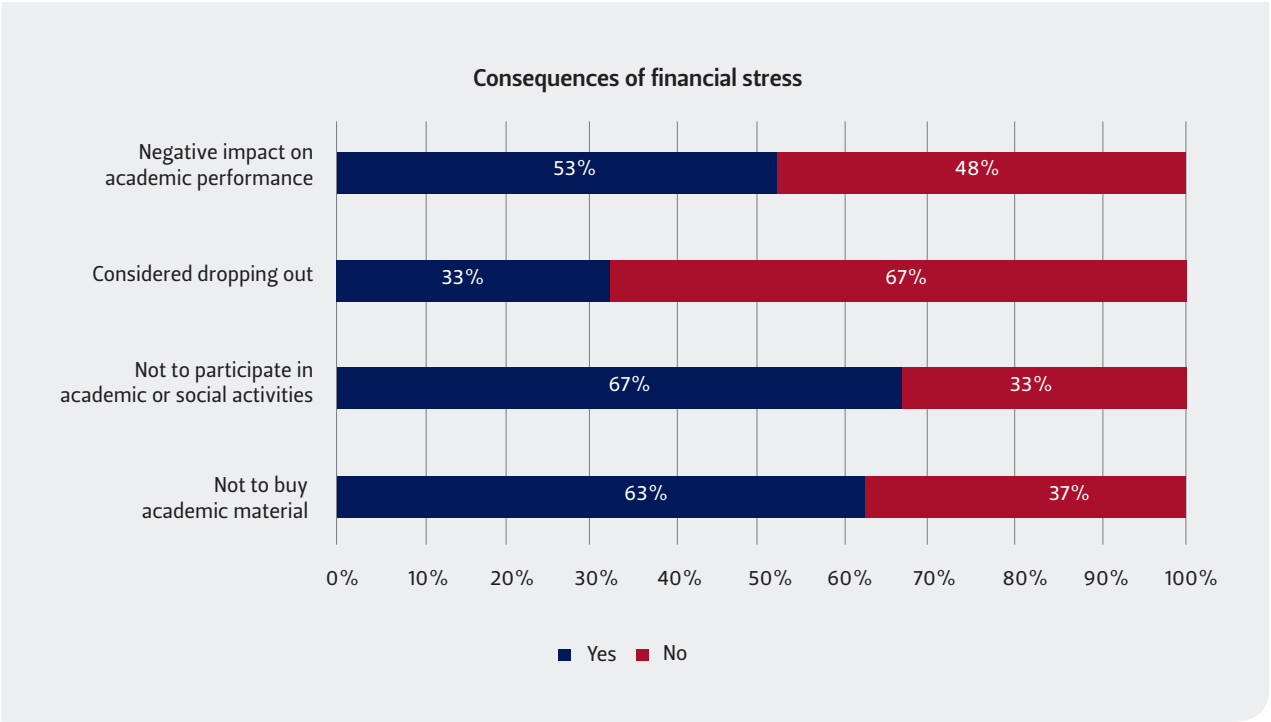
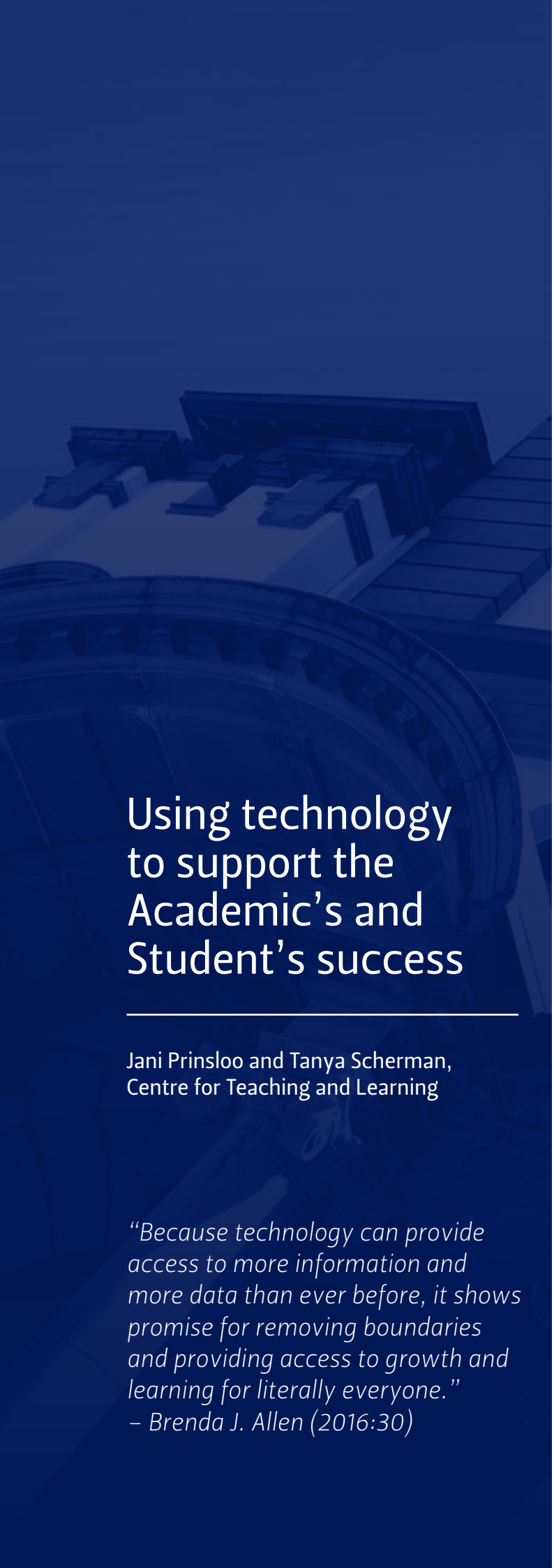


Figure 7: The impact of financial stress on students' relevant behaviours and life demands.

dropping out, compared to 25% of both White and non first-generation students respectively. Compared to the level of stress and even lack of basic food resources as indicated above, this figure is relatively low and could point to the significant role higher education is deemed to play in helping families break free from poverty and inequality. Interestingly, the majority of students – irrespective of race or generational status - also indicated that they have chosen not to participate in campus social events or not to purchase academic materials because of the cost.

Even from these preliminary findings it is clear that financial stress impacts on different areas of students' lives at the UFS. It is also clear that the impact is magnified for those who are already vulnerable, such as Black students who come from poor families, and first-generation students, who may struggle to adapt to university culture. Moreover, students who worry about being able to pay for their day-to-day expenses, about being able to pay for university, and who have been hungry on a fairly regular basis, are the ones who have the least time to spend on their studies because they are taking care of others, travelling to and from classes, or working. When these results between groups are compared, the findings for the group as a whole also do not present an ideal picture – irrespective of the hidden inequalities. In essence, there is justification for the legitimate frustrations of students and institutions about an underfunded higher education system which impacts directly on student engagement and success.

Even though the plight of student hunger has been recognised through initiatives such as the No Student Hungry campaign, the data suggests that these need to be significantly expanded. Other examples of where institutions could intervene include shuttle services to address commuter challenges, having on-campus access to day-care for children, or actively helping 'deserving' students to obtain funding. That said, institutional responses are, however, limited by resources and capacity, which begs the question whether system intervention would help to create an environment that better supports student success. ■



Using technology to support the Academic's and Student's success

Jani Prinsloo and Tanya Scherman,
Centre for Teaching and Learning

"Because technology can provide access to more information and more data than ever before, it shows promise for removing boundaries and providing access to growth and learning for literally everyone."
– Brenda J. Allen (2016:30)

2016 proved to be a trying year for higher education institutions across the country. Student protests disrupted the completion of the academic year by forcing face-to-face classes, and the writing of formal assessments to be cancelled. Academics were challenged to find alternative methods to be able to continue and complete the academic year. Universities faced a growing demand for moving their traditional face-to-face contact sessions to ones of a more blended nature, and find alternative types of assessments by making use of eAssessments. It is for this reason that the Academic Staff Development (ASD) and Curriculum Delivery and Innovation (CDI) focus areas within the Centre for Teaching and Learning saw a need for existing and future staff to bridge the gap between staff expertise and student needs.

Creating a platform for support

Blended-learning institution lecturers have the opportunity to work in an online environment to enhance their students' learning by using various educational technology tools. The online environment usually consists of a learning management system which is a software application used by lecturers to manage, inform, assess, collaborate and share content with their students. This gives the lecturers the opportunity to reach the students anywhere anytime, which is important because students want to be 'both together and apart – and to be connected to a community of learners anytime anywhere, without being time, place, or situation bound' (Garrison, 2004:96). Lecturers were trained and supported by ASD and CDI in using the technologies tools available on the UFS Learning Management System (Blackboard) to their advantage. The rapid growth of blended learning models in higher education recognizes the advantages in integrating the use of technology with traditional face-to-face teaching methods to meet economic challenges and student demand for flexibility (Twiggs, 2003:28-30). Another educational technology tool lecturers are using is Office Mix which is an add-on to PowerPoint that is used to create lecture captures. In such a lecture capture the audio of lectures, video of the presenter and on-screen shared content are recorded. The lecture capture is then shared with the students in video format through the learning management system. Students then have the opportunity to watch the video as many times as they need to understand the content, they can pause at key moments and recap examples given by the lecturer (Davis, Connolly & Linfield, 2006:5). Benefits staff can get from lecture captures include 'professional development opportunities arising from lecturers being able to critically review their own performance' (Balfour, 2006:3) and using

these lecture captures to implement the new teaching approaches such as the flipped classroom approach.

Staff were provided with various support structures. These included training workshops and the learning management system, Blackboard. The Blackboard organisation available to all staff, called 'Staff Buddy', was used to create an online Resource Hub during the time of campus disruptions. Staff could access information about the 'UFS Academic Support Tool Box 2016', as well as access other course design and Blackboard support resources. This platform provided staff with information necessary to make planning their online activities more successful. Staff were supported and encouraged to use the three core steps when planning online activities, namely 1) inform students; 2) develop, adapt and share content; and 3) create assessment alternatives. This organisation is still in use and has proved to be a great source of support for academic staff.

Additionally, the Tip of the day, was sent to staff through the Blackboard organisation Staff Buddy, to offer additional 'Tech Tips' providing staff with answers to frequently asked questions. Faculty Learning Designers worked with each individual Teaching and Learning Manager to best support their lecturers through individual consultations, 'Hot-seat sessions' and online Blackboard organisations. Their details were also purposefully displayed on the audio and visual distribution poster, as seen in Figure 3.

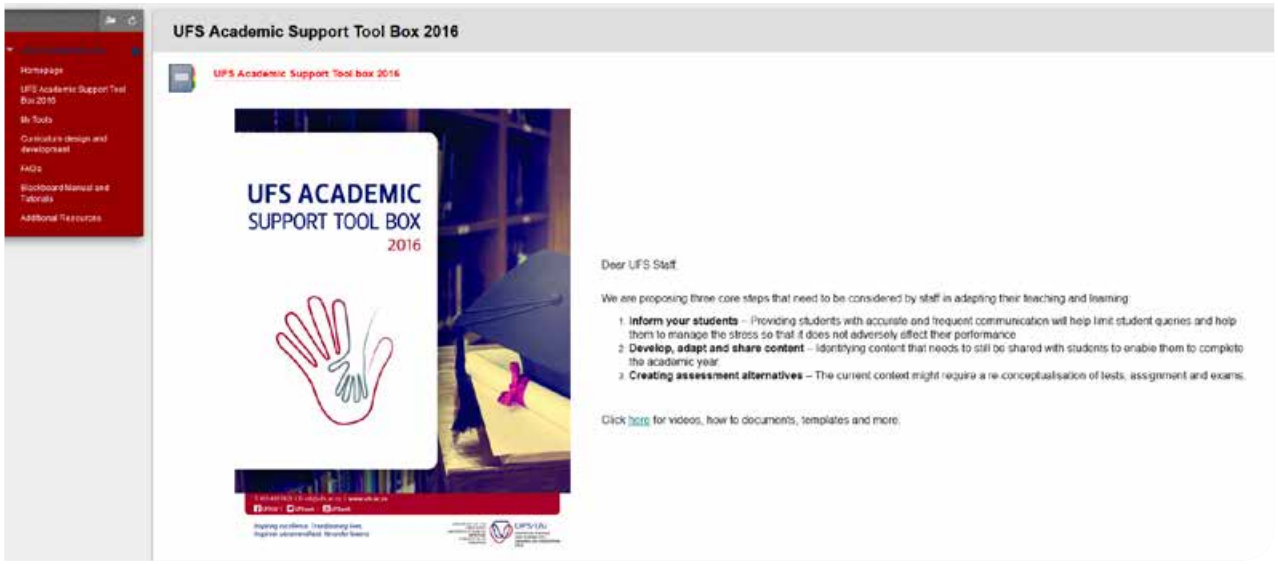


Figure 1: The landing page to the Blackboard 'Staff Buddy' organisation.

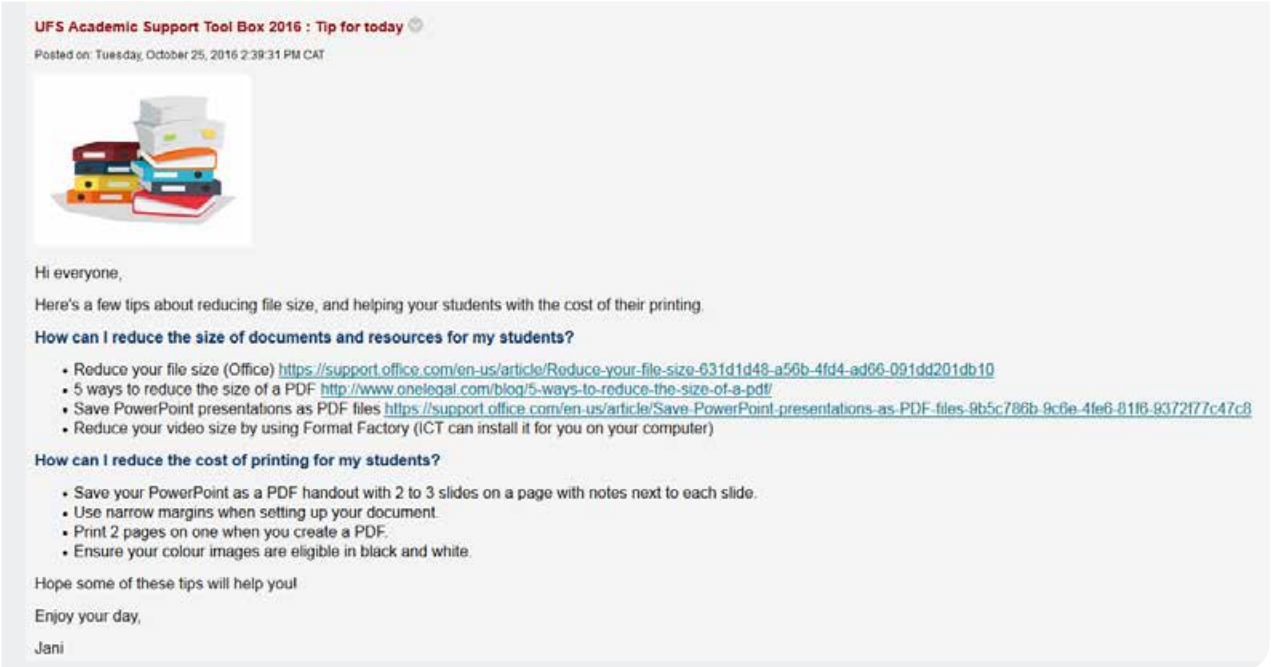


Figure 2: Tip of the day (25 October 2016).

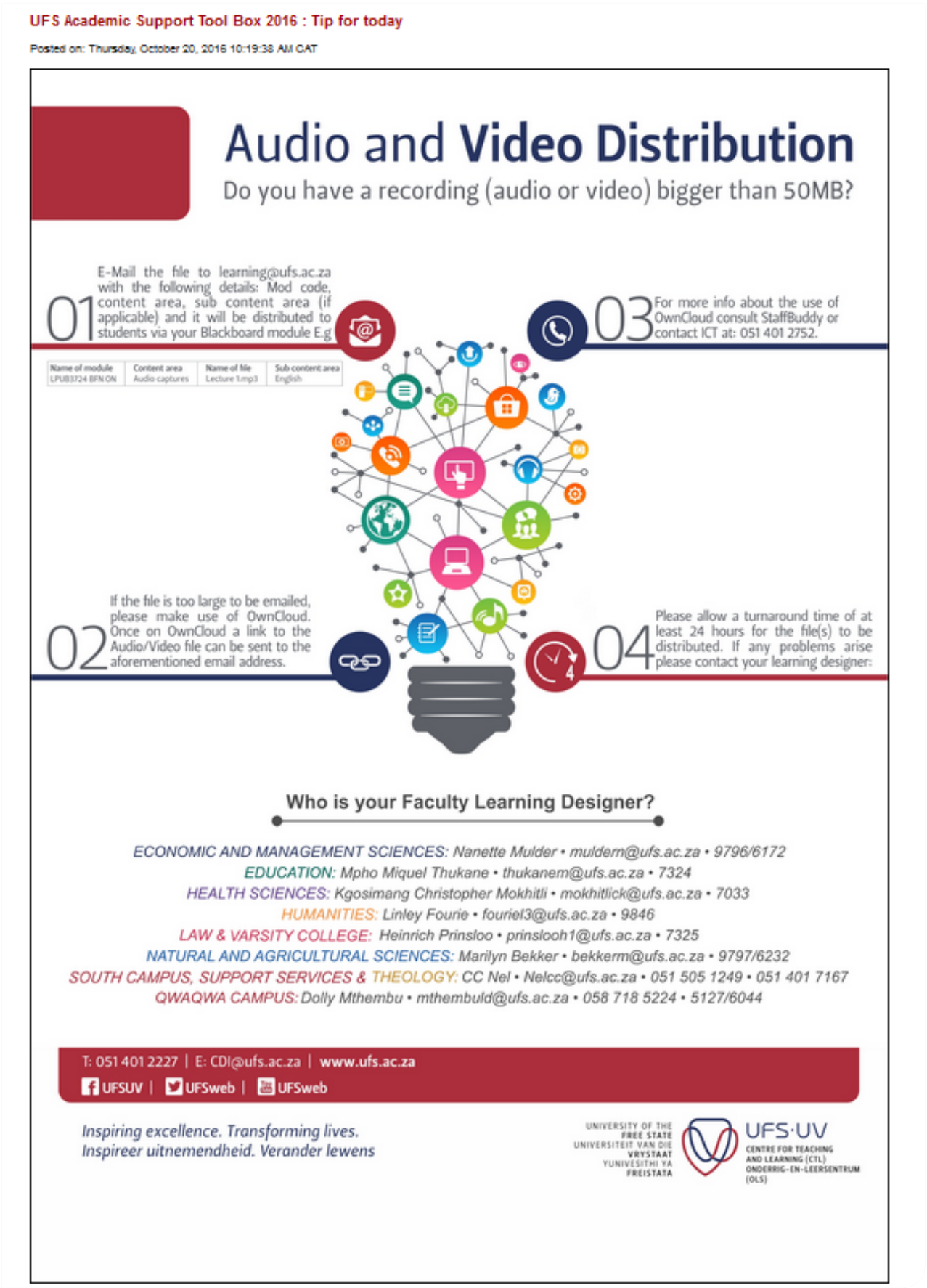


Figure 3: Tip of the day (20 October 2016).

In addition to the general support platform Staff Buddy, Interfaculty Blackboard Training sessions were presented throughout the course of the two week preparation period (Table 1). The training topics were developed to cover all three core steps identified in the UFS Academic Reboot Tool Box 2016 and served as part of the 'rescue' strategy presented during October 2016.

A total of 252 staff from across the Bloemfontein campus made use of the training sessions from 20-27 October 2016, representing all 7 faculties on campus (Figure 4).

Date	Time	Topic	Attendance
20 October 2016	09:00-11:00 and 14:00-16:00	How to make a lecture/screen capture (video) using Office Mix	79
21 October 2016	09:00-11:00	Blackboard Tests and Blackboard Assessment Overview	41
25 October 2016	09:00-11:00	Blackboard Basics – Using Blackboard to communicate information to your students, and Uploading different types of content to Blackboard (incl. Audacity and Format Factory)	33
26 October 2016	09:00-11:00	Blackboard Assignments and Turnitin	44
27 October 2016	09:00-11:00	Blackboard Tests	37
27 October 2016	14:00-16:00	How the Blackboard Grade Center works	18
Total			252

Table 1: Blackboard training dates, support topics presented by CDI and attendance per training session.

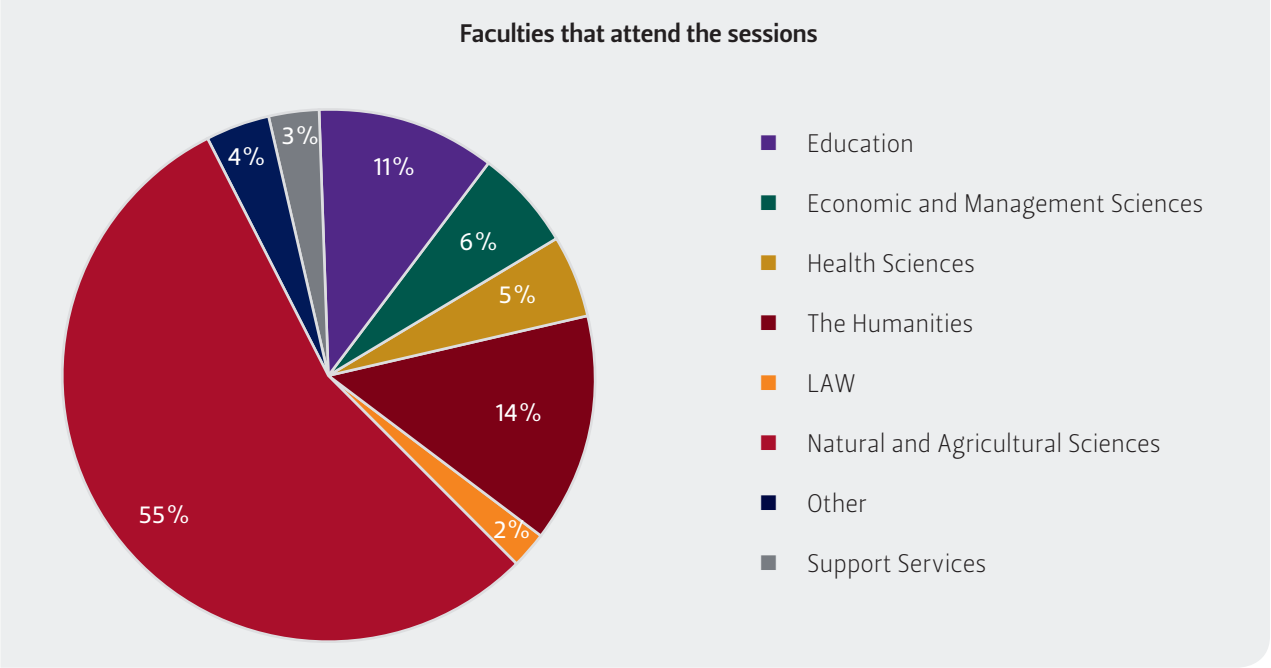


Figure 4: Attendance per faculty/division.

Feedback from interfaculty training evaluations

Attendees provided the following feedback and comments regarding the Blackboard training sessions:

> *"It was a worthwhile training session that will be put to use when teaching."* ***Participant 206***

> *"Thank you very much. It will definitely help in our current situation."* ***Participant 241***

> *"The training was excellent and to the point - thank you"* ***Participant 217***

> *"The training was very helpful to me. The pace of presentation accommodated everybody. Thank you"* ***Participant 238***

The majority of staff members (95%) strongly agreed or agreed that they could use and apply the information learned in their teaching and learning practice.

Conclusion

Academic Staff Development and Curriculum Design and Innovation provide systematic, encouraging assistance through comprehensive staff development programmes. Through these programmes we aim to:

- Raise awareness of staff's approaches to meeting learning needs and of what technologies are available to them;
- Enable staff to develop skills needed to implement systematic change;
- Integrate pedagogy, learning design and support technologies to enable successful learning.

To borrow from the author Brenda J. Allen (2016:38): "To optimise the promise of technology in service to an increasingly diverse society, we will need to prepare all faculty and staff to be proactive in both areas – technology and diversity – separately and combined". Because of the rapid change in technology, pedagogy and practice, professional development is an ongoing process, one that we will keep evolving with.

Figure 5 and 6: Staff interacting during a training session.

Figure 8: CDI Staff Trainers from left: Jani Prinsloo, Heinrich Prinsloo, Linley Fourie, Kgosimang Mokhitli, Nanette Mulder, CC Nel, Miquel Thukane.

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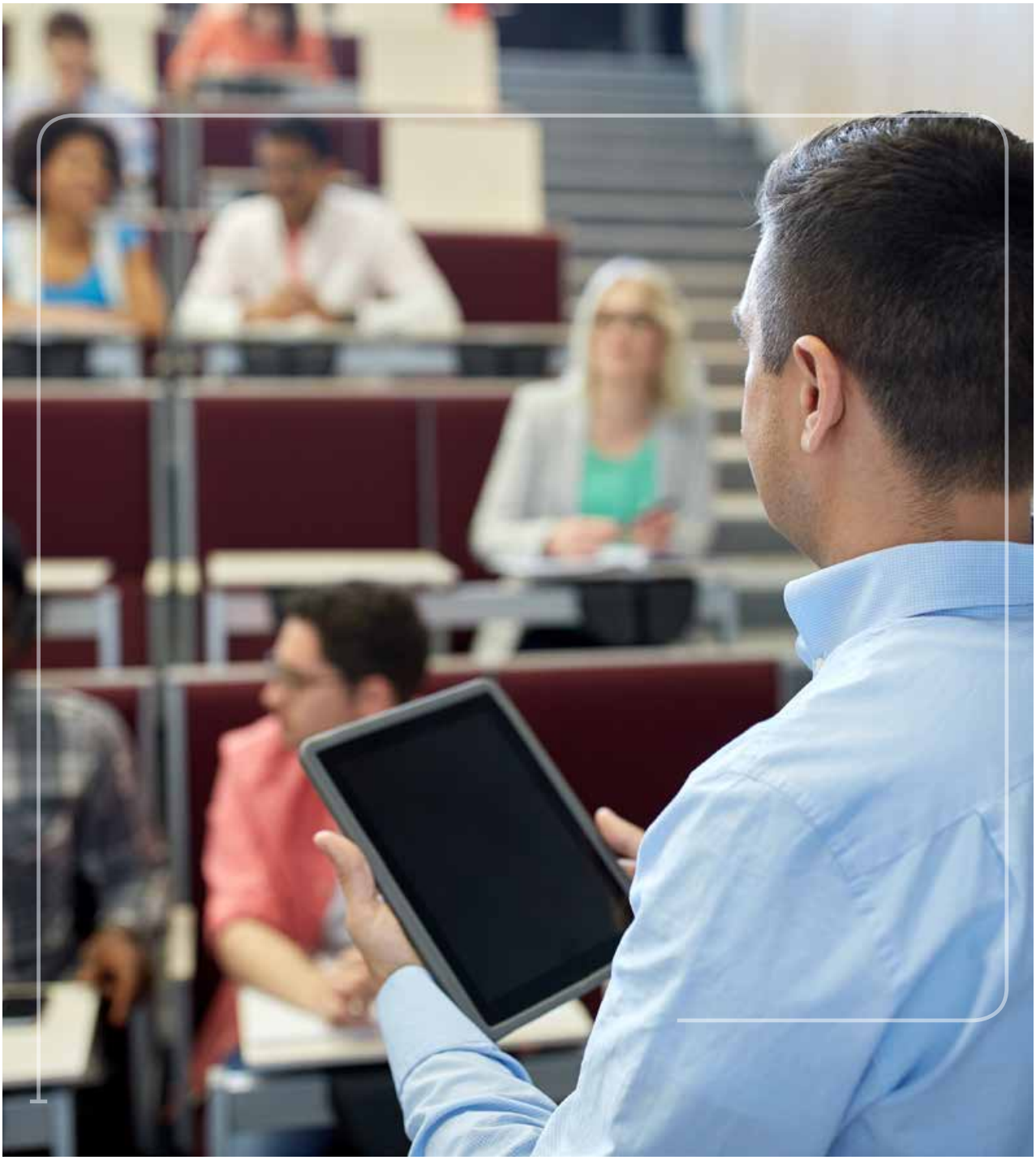


Innovative academic language support at the UFS – Unit for Language Development

Dr Annette de Wet, Laura Drennan, and Marike Potgieter, Centre for Teaching and Learning

The function of the Unit for Language Development (ULD) includes the delivery of academic literacy courses and academic writing assistance via the writing centre (Write Site).

Academic literacy is not easily defined, as various researches provide different definitions based on the focus of their work. For the purpose of this article, however, it suffices to say that the academic literacy interventions offered by the ULD focus on developing students' cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) skills, as defined by Cummins (1980). Cummins (1980) emphasises the distinction between cognitive academic proficiency and basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS).

In short, BICS refers to conversational fluency in social contexts. Cummins (1984) describes CALP as the context-reduced language used in academic classrooms and in written form, and English second-language learners require between five and seven years to become proficient in the language of the classroom. The reason for this is that academic language tends to be relatively abstract and the literacy demands are very high, as textbooks are written beyond the language proficiency of the majority of English second-language students.

Of the students who write the National Benchmark test (NBT), only 25 to 30 percent obtain a proficient score on the academic literacy component of the test. This confirms that the majority of our students are under-prepared in terms of the CALP skills necessary to make a success of their studies. The total number of student enrolments in the various literacy courses on all the campuses for 2016 which include mainstream, extended degrees and UPP, amount to a total of 8159 students.

Bloemfontein	4396
South Campus	1214
Regions	2303
Qwaqwa	2303
Total	8159

Table 1: Student enrolments in various literacy courses on various campuses in 2016.

The Literacy courses

Content-Based Instruction

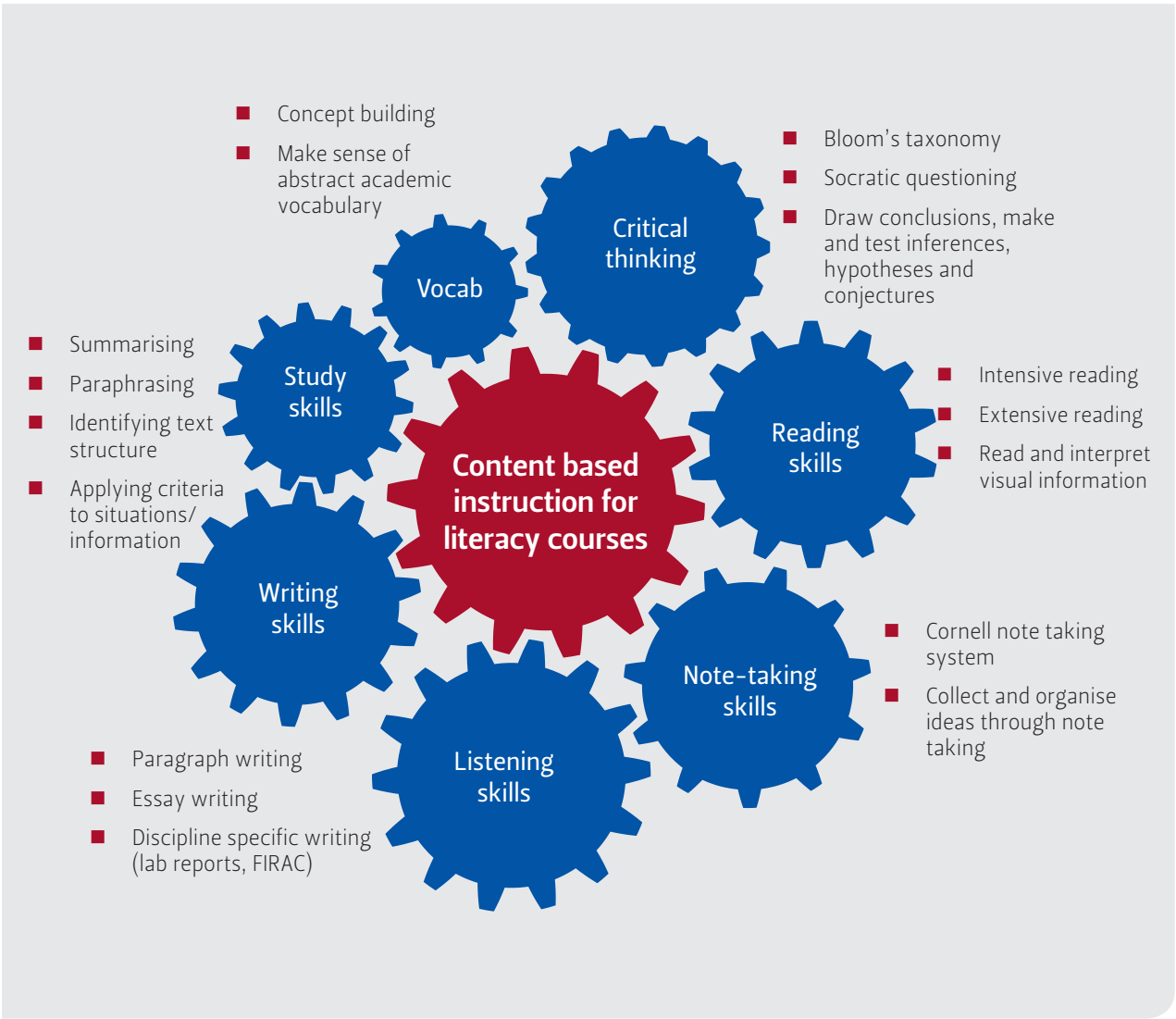
The academic literacy courses at the UFS make use of a Content-Based Instruction (CBI) approach that utilises the content from a specific content area as a vehicle to teach academic language skills. The essential features of such an approach include: "Learning a language through academic content, engaging in activities, developing proficiency in academic discourse, and fostering the development of effective learning strategies" (Crandall 1999, 604). Thus, this curricular approach focuses on "learning about something, rather than learning about language" (Crandall 1999, 604). CBI topics are selected based on themes, texts and tasks specific to the content area in which a certain cohort of students study.

The goal of the UFS academic literacy courses is to support students' access to content materials by having them practice academic tasks required at the university through authentic, content-based instruction. These tasks are carefully scaffolded to provide students with "contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified language, teacher modelling, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning" (Ovando, Collier & Combs, 2003: 345). Therefore, the academic literacy facilitator has to break down or scaffold tasks and activities into achievable chunks for the students until their language abilities in a particular area improve. The scaffolding is gradually removed as students become more proficient in the practised academic skill.

Outcomes of the courses

The academic literacy courses are designed to support students studying across the disciplines. These courses focus on:

- Critical reading skills, which refers to the ability to extract the main ideas and key details of an academic text



- Academic writing skills, which refers to the ability to express information and opinions clearly and with appropriate organisation in the written mode;
- Oral skills, which refers to the ability to express their opinions about a variety of issues fluently, critically, as well as creatively in the mode of oral discussion;
- Critical thinking skills, which refers to the ability to apply, analyse, and/or evaluate information; and
- Listening and note-taking skills, which refers to the ability to collect and organise important ideas.

Even though all of these skills are covered in the literacy courses, the main focus is on reading and writing.

Firstly, for the reading component the courses make use of both intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading "calls attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationships, and the like" (Brown, 1994). Extensive reading, on the other hand, is an approach to the teaching and learning of second-language reading in which learners read large quantities of books and other materials that are well within their linguistic competence. If successfully implemented, extensive reading holds a variety of positive effects for students as Grabe (1995) illustrates; developing a large recognition vocabulary, enhancing students' background knowledge, and enhancing students reading comprehension, proficiency, and reading strategies. For the extensive reading component, the literacy courses make use of the M-Reader programme, an online assessment tool. This programme provides a means of tracking student progress and acts as a motivational tool for students to read. The literacy programme requires students to read six to eight graded readers every semester. The majority of students meet and exceed this target (70% of the students in the course completed 6 or more quizzes every semester). During the entire year some students completed up to 36 quizzes on the M-reader programme.

Secondly, for the writing component of the courses a process writing approach is used. Thus, ideas are generated through discussion and brainstorming in class, students then extend their ideas into graphic organisers which they submit to receive constructive writing input from their facilitator that focuses on higher order issues, such as organisation and coherence. Afterwards, students receive their writing back, incorporate the feedback and then write their first draft. The input process is repeated, however, during this phase the facilitator also looks at lower order issues, such as usage and mechanics. Students receive input again, and rework the necessary sections of their work for final submission.

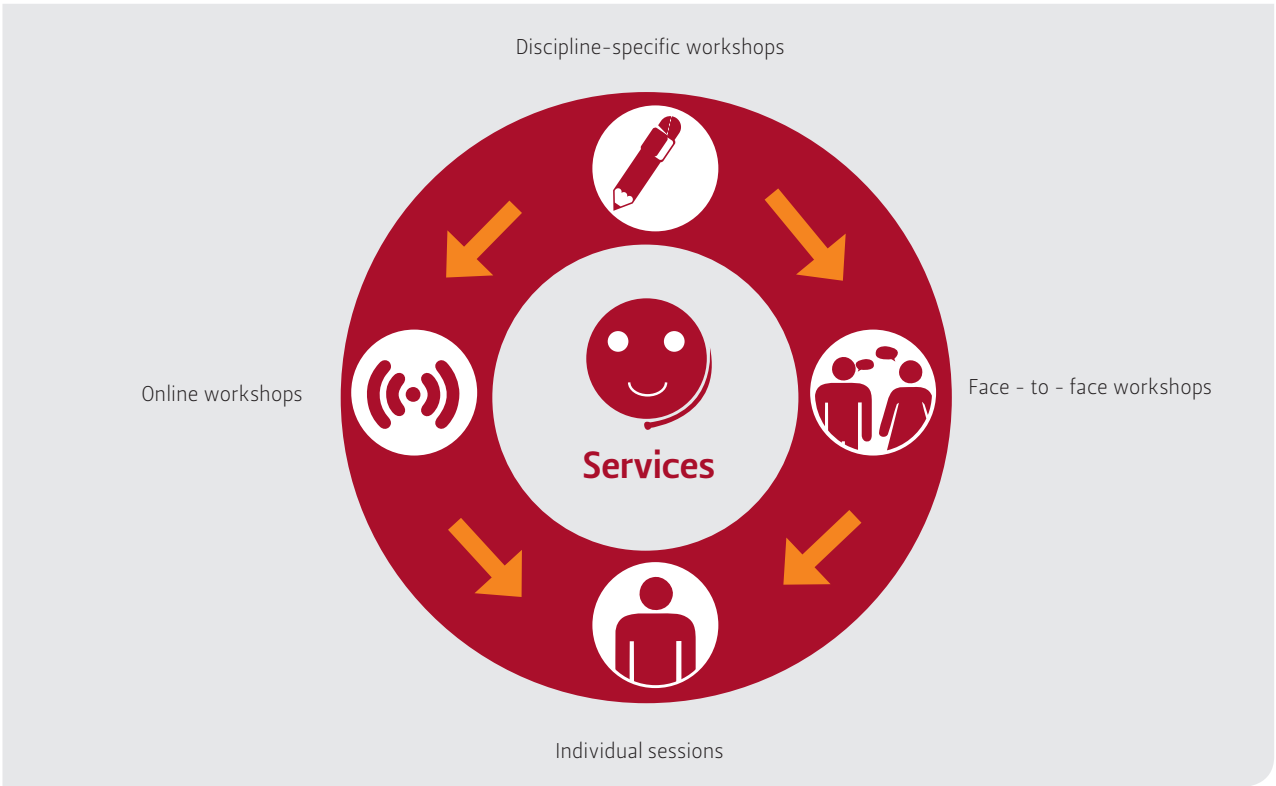


Figure 1: Services offered by Write Site.

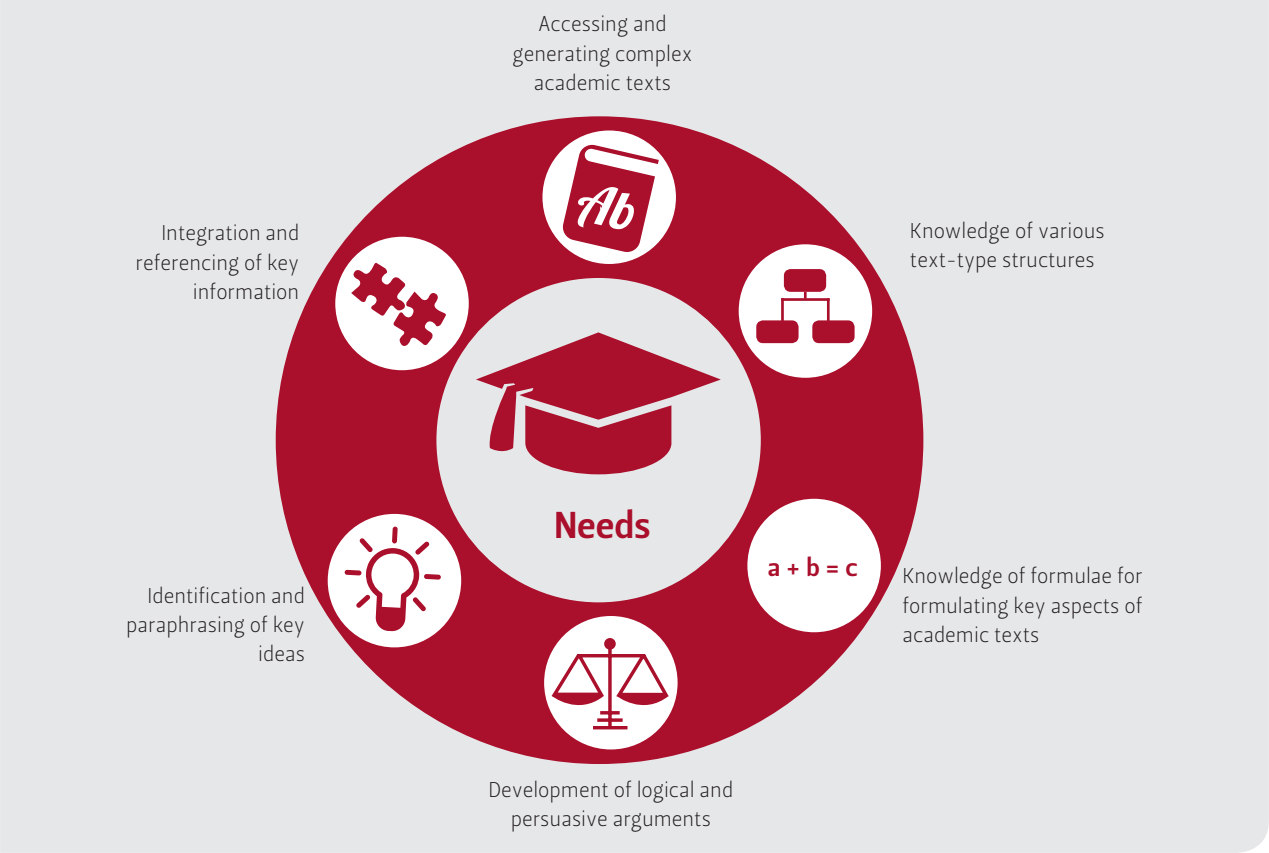


Figure 2: Student academic writing needs.

The Write Site

Writing is a central process through which students learn new subject content and gain discipline-specific knowledge (Lea & Street, 2006, p.158). This process involves becoming familiar with and adhering to the conventions of academic writing in specific fields of study so as to become recognised members of particular communities of knowledge (Lea & Street, 2006; Gee, 2001). The teaching of writing conventions therefore needs to be positioned in the disciplines, as writing is what individuals 'do' as situated actors in a particular knowledge community (Archer, 2008; Lea & Street, 2006; Burke, 2008).

In pursuit of epistemological access, the Write Site aims at establishing collaborative relationships with content lecturers across faculties to meet students' subject-specific writing needs. Discussions with content specialists inform the development of tailor-made online and face-to-face workshops around particular assignments due in the disciplines. The online workshops are a fairly recent addition to the services offered, which enable the writing centre to reach large cohorts of students and bypass issues around capacity and venues. Furthermore, students are able to work through the online materials at their own pace. All workshop materials include authentic, discipline-specific texts geared towards addressing writing aspects, such as the structure of specific text types, thesis statement formulation, development and support of arguments, paragraph formulation, synthesis, paraphrasing and summarising, referencing, and the like.

The aspects addressed in workshops are further expanded on and applied during individual sessions at the writing centre. Students are free to book one-on-one sessions online via Blackboard with writing consultants who are trained to address students' individual writing needs. The individual sessions encourage discussions around meaning-making, which is key to developing students' academic writing skills and facilitating their transition towards autonomy (Condon & Rutz, 2012; Britton, 1972). The overarching goal of the Write Site is to develop better writers, not necessarily produce perfect assignments.

During the course of 2016, the Write Site assisted more than 6000 students via workshops and individual sessions. Students comment that the interventions at the Write Site "are interactive and [they] make it fun to remember the work"; that what they learn "can also [be] used in other modules". Students state that the questions in the workshop materials "help [them]

apply the knowledge [they] have acquired [during] the workshop" and that this is "very helpful". Most students comment that they feel such writing interventions are necessary to help them approach their writing tasks effectively. Further, students remarked that '[they] liked the manner in which everything was explained with examples; it [was] simpler to visualise and understand what is expected of [them regarding their] assignments". According to one student, "everything was simplified and explained in a way that could [be] underst[ood]."

Another student also stated that the writing consultant "took time to go through the assignment with [her] to [identify] errors and ... it was really helpful." Students appreciate "getting someone else's perspective and input on [their] work ... and hearing different ideas" regarding "how [they] can improve [their] work.

Academic staff feel that "students really benefit [from the interventions] and it "can been seen how [students'] style and technique improve throughout the year". One subject specialist thanked the Write Site for the "key impact that [the Write Site] has on [students]" and that "these are skills that they will never lose".

The writing centre serves as an intermediary between students and academic staff. By means of collaborative partnerships between the Write Site and disciplinary experts, discipline-specific writing interventions can facilitate students' acquisition of and fluency in specialised discourses. These interdisciplinary collaborative efforts are essential in engaging students for access and success within higher education.

In conclusion

The efforts of the academic literacy courses and the Write Site have a positive effect on student proficiency within the academy. These initiatives aim to improve students' proficiency with regard to the CALP skills they need to be successful at university, with a specific focus on reading and writing. The small class interaction offered by the literacy courses and the individual attention students receive in the Write Site are of immeasurable value for their academic development.

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Advancement of innovative and engaged Mathematics and Science teaching-and-learning of Student Educators in the Faculty of Education

Dr Cobus van Breda, Faculty of Education

Science-for-the-Future (S4F) from the Faculty of Education co-exists and works in collaboration with the School of MNST[1] as well as other UFS entities[2] towards the advancement of effective Mathematics and Science teaching-and-learning. Although the target population includes the education community in general, e.g. in-service educators, learners, parents and the general public, the following summary will indicate the relevance and impact of such initiatives on the teaching-and-learning of student educators from the Faculty of Education.

Rationale

The challenges regarding Mathematics and Science teaching-and-learning in South Africa are common knowledge. In the research report "*From laggard to world class: Reforming maths and science in South Africa's schools*" the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) clearly indicated that success in Mathematics and Science teaching-and-learning is linked to the teachers' content knowledge, the teaching skills they developed prior and during their in-service training as well as the scope of their experience (Bernstein, 2004:12). In this regard Hanuscin, Lee and Akerson (2011:148-149) refer to the development of Pedagogical Content Knowledge.

In order to address these fundamental pedagogical issues student educators from different Schools in the Faculty of Education are exposed to *Family Math & Family Science* training sessions to enhance their teaching-and-learning experiences during initial teacher training, resulting in better equipped teachers, not only for the school environment but also the community in general.

Family Math & Family Science training sessions and Service Learning

During the *Family Math & Family Science* training sessions, student educators are exposed to real-life and hands-on Mathematics and Science teaching-and-learning, based upon constructivist principles. Apart from the training sessions, the student educators also conducted *Family Math*

1 School of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology Education at the Faculty of Education.

2 For example, Early Childhood Development at the Faculty of Education and Boyden Observatory, the Naval Hill Planetarium and the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences.

& Family Science sessions with learners in the community, under supervision of the S4F facilitators. The latter is additional to the standard practical teaching component of Initial Teacher Education and also contributes towards Service Learning. The following groups of students were exposed to the *Family Math & Family Science* programme during 2016.

Intermediate Phase Mathematics (MTBI 2503)

The MTBI sessions were attended by 187 students on the Bloemfontein campus and they were divided into 5 smaller groups for the contact sessions because of the hands-on nature of the classroom practice. Each group attended a total of 6 one-hour Family Math training sessions.

The unit outcomes of the MTBI Intermediate Phase Mathematics module and the Family Math activities were aligned to accommodate an integrated approach. After attending all the Family Math training sessions and conducting the sessions at local schools, a total number of 74 second-year students completed a survey regarding the outcomes of the Family Math training programme. An overwhelmingly positive response towards the achievement of the outcomes has been recorded in Table 1.

Foundation Phase Life Skills (DLS 122)

According to Smith (2006:156) a life skill can be the application of an attitude or knowledge and during the *Family Science* training sessions, fourth-year DLS Foundation Phase student educators were empowered to integrate the teaching-and-learning of Natural Sciences (as part of the Basic Knowledge curriculum) and Life Skills. The three 1-hour *Family Science* training sessions were conducted during the second semester of 2016. During these sessions the focus was on how to integrate the teaching of Life Skills when doing Science activities. The sessions were attended by 96 Foundation Phase Student Educators on the Bloemfontein campus and 58 Foundation Phase Student Educators on the Qwaqwa campus.

A total of 135 student educators completed a survey and an extract from feedback regarding integrated Science and Life Skills teaching-and-learning is represented in Table 2. The feedback reflects a better understanding of the interaction between Science and Life Skills teaching-and-learning.

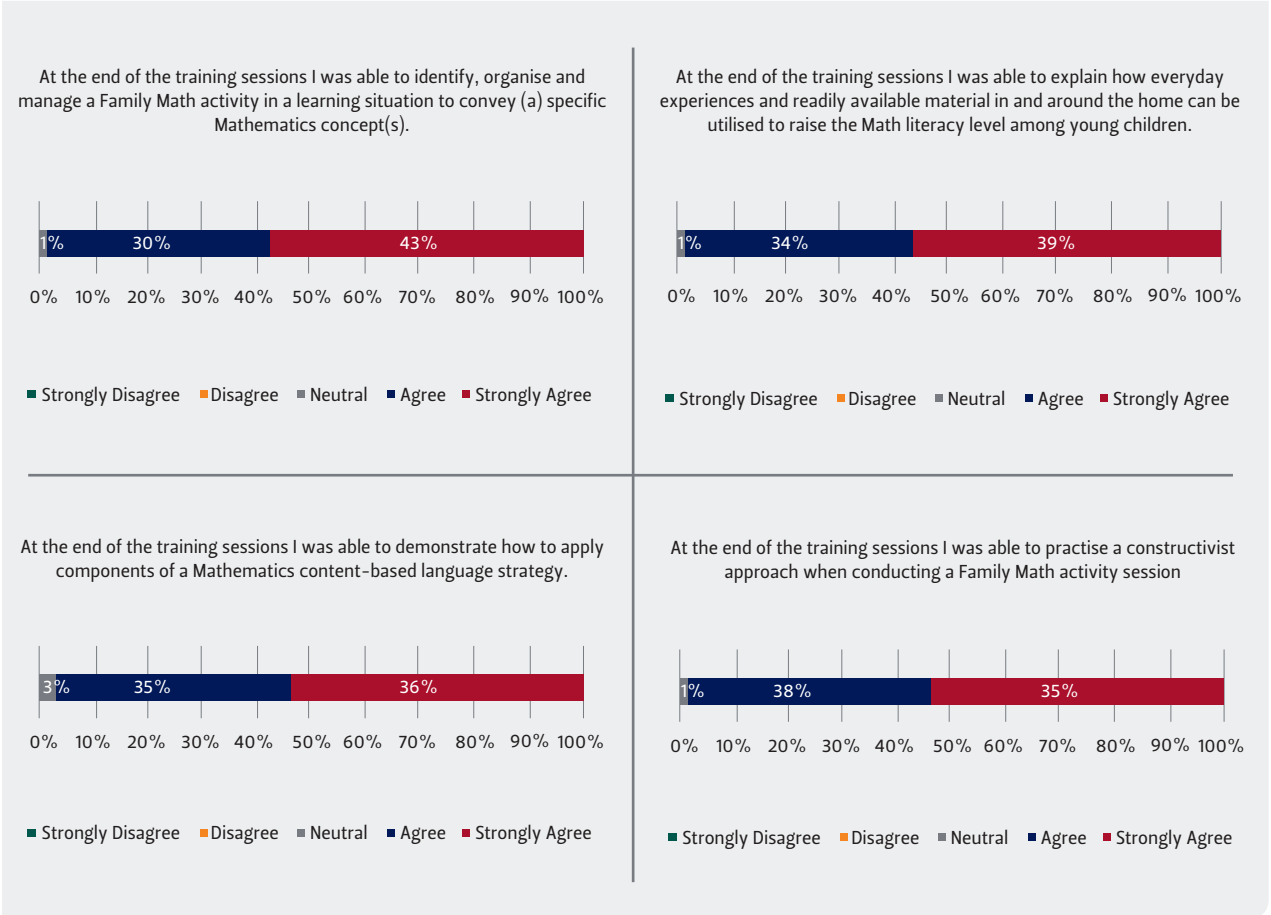

Table 1: Students' responses towards the *Family Math* outcomes for MTBI 2503.

Certification ceremony

Certification ceremonies for the student educators from the respective modules were held on 31 August 2016 (MTBI) and 7 September 2016 (DLS) and students received certificates to testify that they had successfully completed the *Family Math & Family Science* training sessions and had managed and conducted *Family Math & Family Science* sessions at primary schools in their region.

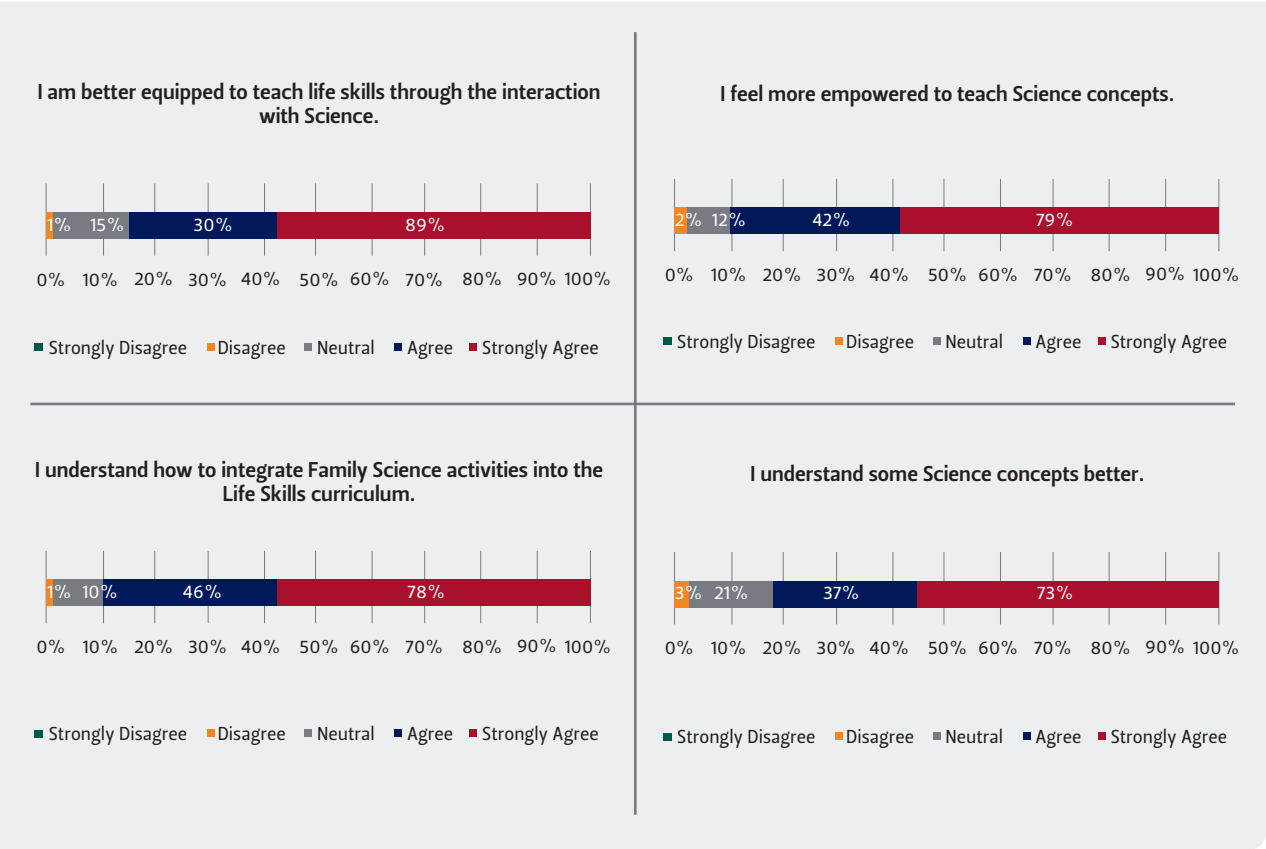

Table 2: Extract from feedback regarding integrated Science and Life Skills teaching-and-learning.

Figure 1: *Family Math* MTBI student educators.

Figure 2: A DLS Community outreach at a local school in the community.

Conclusion

The exposure of student educators to the *Family Math & Family Science* programme is a strategy to enhance the scope of their mathematics and science Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) experiences and thus furthers the quality of their preparation towards their professional teaching careers.

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DEVELOPING EXCELLENT TEACHERS

The unintended outcomes resulting from the implementation of a data analytics framework in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Dr Corlia Janse van Vuuren, Teaching and Learning Manager: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Introduction

The development of data analytics in higher education has in recent years focused on the potential of involving academic staff in the process. Campbell and Oblinger (2007) point out that the involvement of academic staff in data analytics may contribute to the improvement of student success, implementation of more effective teaching practices and enhancement of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Chatti et al. (2012) also place special emphasis on the importance of putting the "teacher" into the data analytics domain. They suggest that a teacher focus might be of particular value in stimulating academic staff to reflect on their current teaching practices. Such self-reflection may assist academic staff to adapt their current teaching practices and potentially enhance the effectiveness - and thus the quality - of their teaching. This notion of improved self-reflection in academic staff through data analytics is in accordance with the existing practice of integrating the SoTL and faculty development (Hutchings et al. 2011).

A data analytics framework was implemented in EMS in 2014 in order to collect data to enhance evidence-based decision-making and improve the poor student success rates in the faculty at that time. The implementation of this framework, however, led to a surprising level of self-reflection – even beyond the possibilities as indicated above and yielded a number of unintended outcomes. The nature and extent of these outcomes are explained in the next section.

Scholarly engagement, motivation and unintended quality enhancement

The focused approach that the EMS framework provided for the collection and interpretation of data within teaching and learning fostered an inquiry orientation in the faculty. This critical reflection in a collaborative, supportive environment motivated further inquiry into the theory and practice of teaching and learning. This approach enabled the author (the teaching-and-learning manager in the EMS faculty) to implement two emergent but related dimensions of applied learning analytics in higher education, namely critical reflection and the development of the SoTL as an integral part of the implementation of the EMS framework. The motivation gained through the scholarly development of academic staff emanating from the implementation of the EMS framework and the critical reflection on the data in small groups (also referred to as communities of practice),

gave academic staff confidence to start sharing their adapted practices with other academics at various teaching-and-learning forums, which included increased participation and performance in processes for annual teaching-and-learning award opportunities. In 2015, for example, the EMS faculty won six of the ten institutional awards (representing all four categories, namely student engagement and learning, assessment practices, community service learning and the Vice-Chancellor's awards).

The increasing number of academic staff interested in the SoTL served as the inspiration for the establishment of a multidisciplinary teaching-and-learning "work group" in EMS. At the beginning of 2016 this group was initiated and currently the members meet on a weekly basis. The meetings are facilitated by an expert in the SoTL. Members are engaged in both the theoretical foundations and the practical applications of teaching and learning in their own environments. Engagement and critical reflection in these sessions are strongly linked to the data collected through the implementation of the EMS framework. The members of the work group have been supported in developing scholarship in the domain of higher education teaching and learning. In 2016 this work group has submitted three abstracts to the HELTASA/ICED Conference and three research reports for inclusion in the institutional teaching-and-learning annual report. Members will furthermore present a paper at the inaugural (institutional) teaching-and-learning conference and presented two papers at the 2016 HELTASA/ICED conference. Currently they are also finalising a number of articles and conference abstract submissions. This level of professional development, although "small-scale" in the context of a larger faculty, can be described as "a giant leap" for developing the SoTL in a positivist-inclined disciplinary environment.

Implications for practice

The implementation of the EMS framework in the entire faculty, the resulting scholarly engagement with the data through the reporting sessions, and the scholarly work group have created a ripple-effect which is still spreading wider. As intended, quality enhancement has become evident in the noticeable improvement in student success rates in many modules. The implementation of the EMS framework, however, has elicited a far more critical view on teaching-and-learning practices in the faculty than intended or expected. The level of professional growth and the scholarly achievements of the members of the scholarly work group were not part of the original plan. The challenge, however, remains to address preconceived ideas about teaching and learning in largely inflexible disciplinary environments and motivate more academics to be continuously involved in scholarly teaching-and-learning activities. Teaching-and-learning managers/leaders/facilitators can play a determining role in directing the interest created by the availability of focused data and strengthening appropriate motivational conditions for successful collaboration in small groups or communities of practice.

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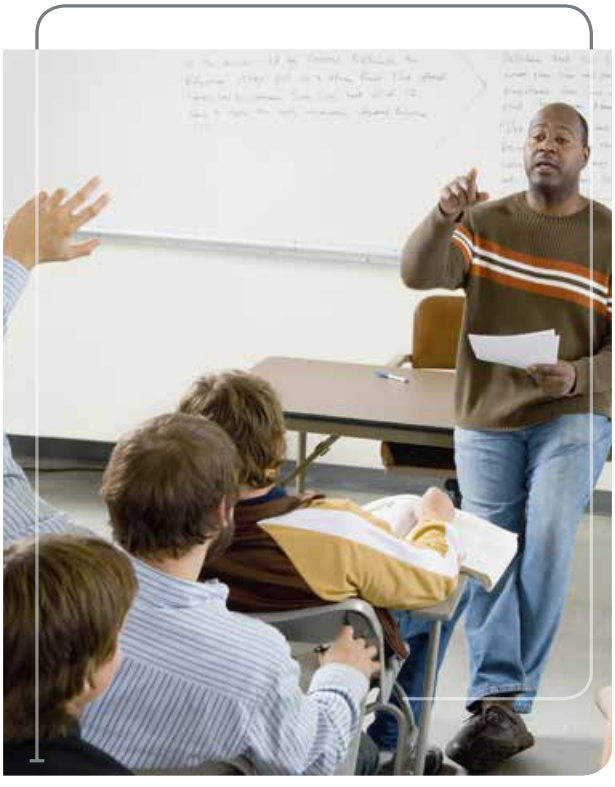

Designing a Universal Design tutorial session monitoring tool for tutors

Dr Charity Ndeya-Ndereya, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Tutors play a pivotal role in providing effective academic support to students with a wide range of characteristics and learning needs. Therefore, in the quest to enhance the academic success of a diverse student body, the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) made an effort to apply Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) principles (Scott, McGuire & Shaw, 2001) in tutor preparation. This approach to teaching involves the purposeful design of learning environments and educational practices to meet the needs of a broad range of users (Burgstahler, 2012:1). In particular, consideration is given to individual learner differences by use of a flexible, technology-rich curriculum that provides options for addressing the diverse needs of students (Rose & Strangman, 2007:381). Thus, the Universal Design principles could be described as inspiring a caring support, because accessibility, flexibility, equity and inclusivity form the core of these principles.

Tutoring a diverse student population

Following the initial tutor training for newly appointed tutors at the beginning of each semester of the 2016 academic year, a special UDL introductory workshop was organised for the tutors. In total, 45 tutors participated at the Bloemfontein Campus, while 95 tutors participated at the Qwaqwa Campus.

Semester	Campus	Number of tutors
1	Bloemfontein	33
	Qwaqwa Group 1	27
	Qwaqwa Group 2	22
2	Bloemfontein	12
	Qwaqwa Group 1	24
	Qwaqwa Group 2	22
Total		140

Table 1: Tutor participation at the Universal Design workshops.

During the workshop, tutors engaged in a number of activities focusing on how to tutor a diverse student population. The workshop activities focused on the principles of Universal Design for Instruction. Towards the end of each workshop the tutors were required to devise, collaboratively, UD-inspired strategies they would use when facilitating their tutorial sessions during the course of the semester. The workshop facilitator and the faculty Teaching and Learning Coordinator (TLC) who was

involved in the UDL sessions considered the strategies submitted and distilled them to produce a Universal Design tutorial session monitoring tool.

Displayed below is the shortened version of the instrument (*indicating only one strategy per principle, due to considerations for publication space*) developed from the strategies of the workshops conducted on: Tutoring a diverse student population. The tool was designed for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the extent of the application of the Universal Design principles during tutorial sessions.

Tutor: **Module:**	**Tutee/Group:** **Date:**		
Principle	**Strategy**	**Attainment**	**Date**
1. Equitable use	Posting tutorial notes, including slides, charts and summaries as well as audio and video learning material on Blackboard for easy access;		
2. Flexibility in use	Allowing tutees to use various resources to execute a learning/assessment activity, e.g. dramatization/role play, presentation, singing, writing and reading a poem, etc. to achieve the same learning objective;		
3. Simple and intuitive	Using contextualized/real life examples that all students can relate to and understand;		
4. Perceptible information	Using videos with sub-titles;		
5. Tolerance for error	Allowing students to try new/innovative methods of solving problems;		
6. Low physical effort	Allowing students to use recording devices, such as digital voice recorders and smartphones for note-taking, avoid writing and listening to the tutor simultaneously;		
7. Size for approach and use	Ensuring that space is equitably distributed to all students for ease of reach and participation;		
8. A community of learners	Creating a WhatsApp group or a Facebook group page to facilitate communication, interaction and engagement;		
9. Instructional climate	Not allowing othering and marginalization of any student.		

Table 2: UD tutorial session monitoring tool.

The way forward

This instrument has been piloted during some observations of tutorial sessions at the UFS, Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support. The application of the UDI principles was encouraging. In the 2017 academic year, the instrument will be utilized across the university. On completion of tutor evaluations, the use of the tool will be analysed and findings will be considered for honing the tool and enhancing the Universal Design aspect of the tutor-education programme.

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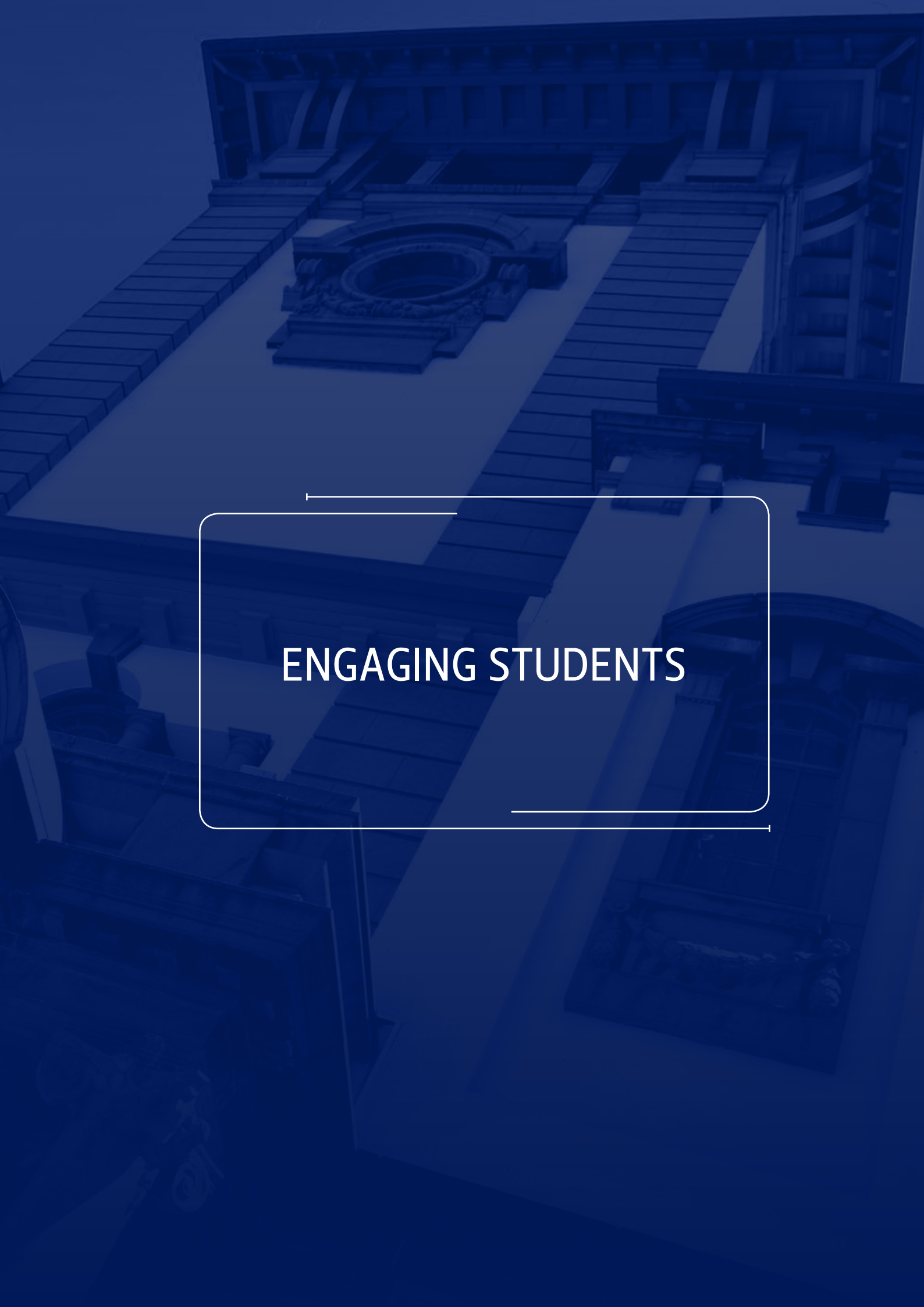

ENGAGING STUDENTS

Out-of-class student engagement in the Faculty of Education

Prof Adri Beylefeld, Teaching and Learning Manager: Faculty of Education

"Meaningful student involvement is the process of engaging students as partners in every facet of school change for the purpose of strengthening their commitment to education, community and democracy." -Adam Fletcher (2003)

Introduction

The Faculty of Education acknowledges the well-documented idea that the education experience of students is a complex interaction between the formal curriculum, the informal curriculum and the learning environment. In alignment with this view, the Teaching and Learning Unit in the Dean's office interprets its role as "support-giver" as one of also actively engaging students in quality improvement initiatives. To borrow from Ganzel (2004:562), we see it as our duty to:

- Develop students' skills in enhancing the environment in which they learn by improving their satisfaction with their educational experience; and
- Connect them more closely to the management and administration of the Faculty as a whole.

Resuscitation of the student representative system

A Student Representative System (SRS), initiated in 2012, gained new momentum in 2016 when the following steps were taken to engage students as stakeholders and partners in the teaching-and-learning process, as well as in the management and administration of the faculty. Firstly, students were invited, via social media platforms, to apply for the different portfolios on faculty committees, including the Faculty Management Committee and the Faculty Board. On 10 March 2016, these students were welcomed by the Dean (Figure 1), and thereafter workshopped on their roles, duties and responsibilities facilitated by Professor Beylefeld and Mr Wiets Botes (Figure 2a and 2b).

To enhance their visibility, student reps were issued with branded portfolio files and T-shirts. On 16 March 2016, Mr Letsika Leqoalane (SRC member: Academic Affairs) was consulted to decide on the procedures that would be followed to enable Education student reps to democratically organise themselves into an Education Student Council. The president of this council would sit on SRC committees.

Apart from involving students in every facet of the educational process by means of their participation as student representatives on faculty committees, development objectives included the following: firstly, enabling students to demonstrate self-responsibility by organising and chairing their own meetings. Secondly, encouragement of student reps to set goals for themselves as far as the planning and implementation of faculty-related projects - that are in line with the UFS academic and human projects – are concerned. Finally, enabling students

Figure 1: 2016 Student reps welcomed by the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof Sechaba Mahlomoholo.

Figure 2a and 2b: Students participating in the start-up workshop led by the Teaching and Learning Manager, Prof Adri Beylefeld.

to demonstrate a commitment to streamlining the flow of intelligence to and from UFS decision-making structures and the education student body.

Roles and functions of student representatives

Student reps in the Faculty of Education are well informed about what the faculty expects of them. These expectations were summarised as "take-home messages" at the end of the 10 March workshop:

- Attendance of, and participation in the meetings of Committees and School Boards that they serve on;
- Play a role in the resolution of student complaints by adhering to the faculty's grievance procedure;
- Set an example of maintaining high academic standards;
- Cross racial and language barriers in leadership and service to all;
- Give fellow-students a sense that they are being heard
- Volunteer to participate in faculty events such as Open Day;
- Submit a portfolio of evidence at the end of the year to show how you have served the faculty, how you have grown.

Student expectations

Examining students' own words was seen as a sure way of revealing their understanding and meaning-making of their positions as student leaders. Table 1 is a summary of the structured feedback that was captured at the workshop.

Typical free-response items included the following:

- *I am expected to be some sort of a messenger/the middle man between the management and student. I am expected to assist students with their academic needs (advice, guidance on the right protocol to report their problems with me next to them of course.*

- *My expectations of being involved in the faculty of education is to take part in every activity that will need me in my faculty. To help many students as possible and to be responsible for my actions.*
- *I see myself as a catalyst for voicing out values that are felt by the students. I feel this because the faculty of education thought (sic) me that I am being trained to become an agent of change. It may not be easy but it is worth it.*
- *My expectations as a student rep is to be asked many questions and I must be able to answer to them. I expect to be given appointments with any lectures (sic) in my faculty including the dean himself. I expect to work with professional colleagues and to make a change within my faculty and to change someone's life to the better.*

Theme	Category	Agree (n=17)	Disagree (n=17)	No response
Benefit	I do not see any benefit for myself	2 (12%)	12 (70%)	3 (18%)
	I can see potential	16 (94%)	-	1 (6%)
	I am aware of my pioneer role	12 (71%)	-	5 (29%)
Trust	I already enjoy the trust of my fellow-students	12 (71%)	1 (6%)	4 (23%)
	Trust of fellow-students still has to be earned	12 (70%)	3 (18%)	2 (12%)
Tangible results	Aspects of teaching and learning will improve because of the student voice	16 (94%)	-	1 (6%)

Table 1: Students' feedback after attending the workshop.

Student rep action in the form of faculty-related projects

Prominent among examples of the student reps' commitment to engaging other students in the creation of supportive learning environments and their enthusiasm for civic engagement are: A "Get-to-know-your-student-rep" Day was held on 17 May 2016. By using "Let's get physical" as a theme, students were encouraged to take care of their bodies and overall wellbeing by being active. Student reps took the lead in demonstrating stretching exercises and they shared tips with their fellow-students on posture and the importance of taking breaks while studying. A community outreach project was launched on 19 August 2016. Through close collaboration with the student reps, the Teaching Practice Office and the Teaching and Learning Unit, the Legae Intermediate School was identified as a "school-in-need". The following action steps, scheduled to commence on 16 September, were drafted for implementation:

- A motivational talk by student reps to motivate Legae School learners to aspire to being responsible future citizens.
- Extra lessons in English, Natural Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences and Mathematics to be provided by student reps and other student volunteers.
- Collection of sanitary towels for donation to the school has already started. Financial support for this initiative was secured from the SRC and colourful posters are being used to request support from the university community.
- Start-up of a vegetable garden and a general clean-up of the school premises, with student reps, other Education students and Legae School learners as participants.

Student reps as part of a transformative cycle

Engaging students outside the formal curriculum is seen as a key component of change in the Faculty of Education. Opening up management and governance structures for student participation, as well as the student reps' practical and empowering involvement in student and community outreach projects, shows that the faculty has managed to move beyond "listening to the student voice" towards meaningful student contribution to the educational process and community building. The way in which the student reps system currently functions is not a finite model; rather a small, evolving cog in the bigger transformation and quality assurance cycle of the faculty. As such, we will continue to re-examine, re-conceive and re-develop the system as new student participants enter the system every year.

Figure4a-c: Student reps in action during the "Get-to-know-your-student-rep" Day.

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Enhancing the student experience for success using the academic advising lens

Gugu Khanye and Natalie Rossouw,
Centre for Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning, access, transformation and success remain on the agenda for higher education leaders in South Africa. Two of the most important influences on student learning and development are: meaningful interactions with a variety of campus community members and effort put into academic efforts (Workman, 2013)

To best foster these influences Kuh (1996) suggests creating meaningful collaborative partnerships among professionals across campus. Kuh further stresses that it is important to create learning environments for students to connect in-and-out of classroom experiences.

Workman (2013) describes academic advising as "the hub of the wheel that establishes lines to all other support services on campus". They also view it as an important factor that aids students' successful transition to a university, achieve their educational goals and promote a sense of belonging.

One of the imminent focal points within the South African higher education space is academic advising and student success as a blend to help students survive and succeed. With a plethora of research defining advising as a developmental process, at the University of the Free State (UFS) it is defined as an ongoing process engaging students holistically and guiding them towards academic success. Academic advising is further equated to a series of intentional interactions that guide the synthesis of the students' learning experience directing them to self-actualise, realise and connect their educational and career aspirations.

With the vision to provide students with a supportive institutional atmosphere that promotes student success through the alignment of setting and achieving educational and career aspirations, advising at the UFS plays a central role in enhancing student engagement.

This article explores the institutional approach and students' experiences of advising initiatives throughout the academic year that form the full circle of the academic advising and student success blend at the UFS. The process explores: advising at registration (the initial conversation), the connection conversation (Get-Advising-Services) and the mid-year reflective conversation (Wired-In-Navigating-Graduation-Success). The focus of the findings in this article uses the data gathered as reflection by students voluntarily as a result of their experience of advising.

The initial conversation

Academic advising is viewed as a way to connect students to the campus and help them feel that someone is looking out for them (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, 2010). The initial advising conversation took place during the annual registration process from 11 January – 28 February 2016. During registration, academic advising assists students in the clarification of their life/career goals and in the development of educational plans for the realisation of these goals. It is a decision-making process by which students realise their maximum educational potential through communication.

Figure 1 below represents the faculty distribution of students who consulted an academic advisor during the initial conversations in annual registration process of 2016.

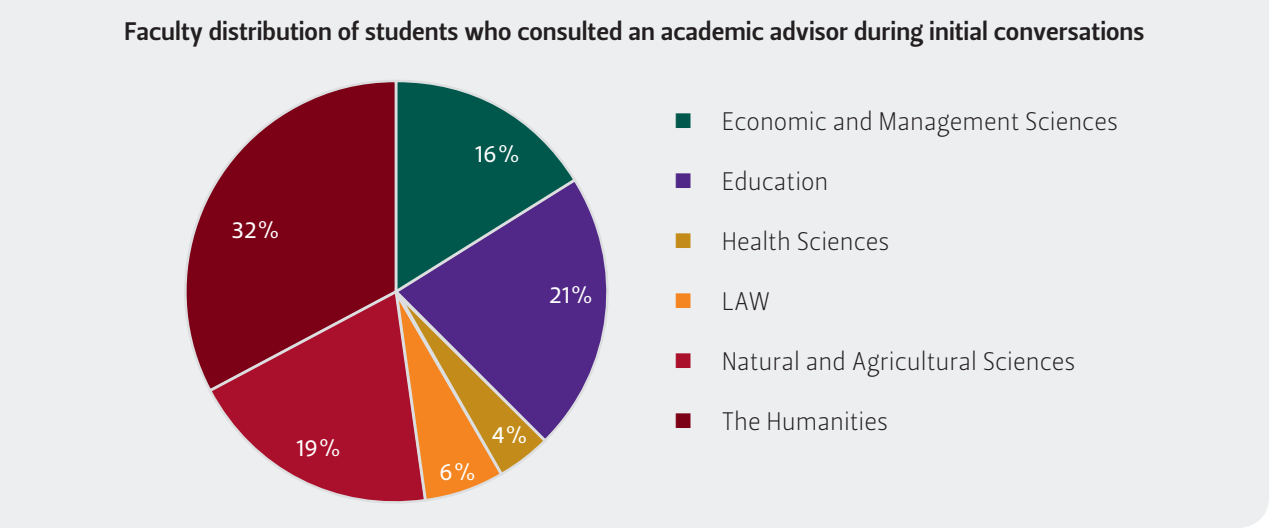

Figure 1: Faculty distribution of students who consulted an academic advisor (initial conversation engagement).

Students were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire online regarding the academic advising session during registration. To help students reach their potential, the results from this questionnaire were used to evaluate what students deem important about academic advising. The top themes that emerged from this question are as follows:

- Continued academic advice;
- Career advising;
- Curriculum advising; and
- Assistance regarding their finances.

Findings from the initial conversations reveal that students are becoming more and more interested in academic advising and its benefits to students. The themes that emerged from the evaluation results are an example of what students are most concerned about and what academic advising at the UFS should elaborate and continue focussing on in the future.

The following comments from students are supportive of the top themes that emerged from the findings:

"Meeting regularly with your advisor affords you an opportunity to get to know a faculty member well and to obtain quality counselling and mentoring from someone with direct experience of the program and the campus"

"The academic advisor should be specific when it comes to explaining what you can actually do with your degree in future. Yes, its also our responsibility to find out more about the degree we want to venture. i feel that is would me more safer for the to advise us more."

"That they inform us more of the different work opportunities that are available in relation with the courses that we taking. Explain to us what one would be doing in that specific job."

"If I have enough credits to graduate on time, which modules are compulsory and how can my electives benefit me."

"To inform about any available bursary that I can apply for funding my studies and the registration fee at the institution."

The connection conversation

The "Get advising services" (GAS) week was held 2 months after the annual registration and aimed to help students connect to their respective faculty and thus the university. This was a great opportunity for the students to learn about the available resources within their faculty and how they can take advantage of the relevant resources. Figure 2 represents what students found most valuable of this initiative.

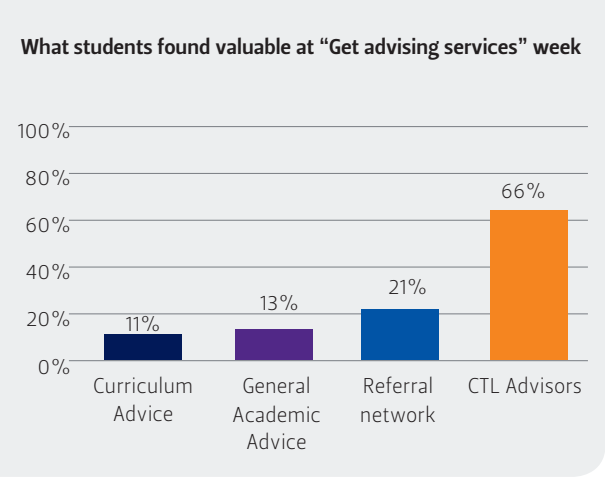

Figure 2: What students found valuable at GAS.

Students demonstrated an appreciation of the Centre for Teaching and Learning's (CTL) advisors. A student mentioned that it was appreciated *"Actually meeting someone who is willing to help me through my studying period and willing to advise me on time management and study skills"*.

The mid-year reflective conversation

Wired-In-Navigating-Graduation-Success (WINGS) consultation sessions aimed at supporting students with queries during second semester registration from 18 July to 22 July. Students were asked to elaborate on the reasons why they visited the WINGS stations. Determining the reasons why students visited the WINGS station ought to provide advisors with a better understanding of students' needs at this time of the academic advising cycle, and how initiatives can be adapted to have an intentional focus on addressing the specific student needs. Figure 3 represents the students' reasons for visiting WINGS.

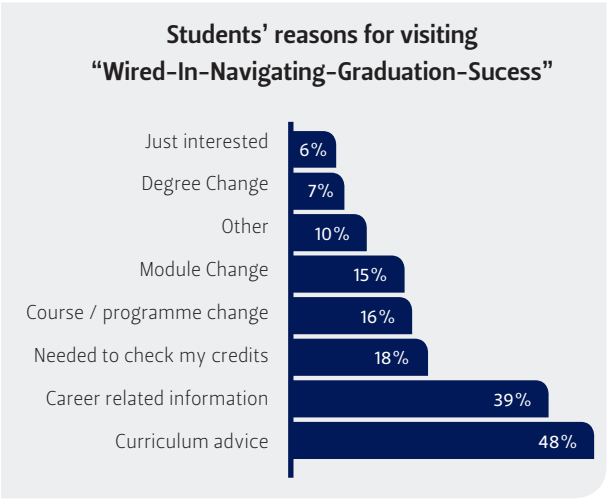

Figure 3: Students' reasons for visiting WINGS.

Students were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire regarding the sessions online. Results indicate that the majority of students reported that their main reasons for visiting WINGS were for curriculum advice as well as career- related information. Such feedback from students is vital for structuring the academic advising programme in the future to address students' needs as well as to inform support structures about problem areas experienced by students.

The three-stage process of academic advising at the UFS: advising at registration (the initial conversation), the connection conversation (Get-Advising-Services) and the mid-year reflective conversation (Wired-In-Navigating-Graduation-Success) have all received overwhelming positive feedback from students. The data gathered from each of the three processes have provided the academic advising team with valuable information on how to structure the advising programme according to UFS students' specific needs in the future. The academic advising team strives to continuously improve the academic advising programme with evidence-based data to enhance student success at the UFS.

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Academic guidance for undergraduate medical students

Dr Mpho Jama, Division of student learning and development: Faculty of Health Sciences

Introduction

In medical education, increased volume of complex material, ineffective time management and study skills, limited time for self, and personal and exam problems affect the academic performance of undergraduate students (AlFaris *et al.*, 2014). Regarding gender, females tend to out-perform males (Moagi-Jama 2009; Salem *et al.* 2013). Regarding racial comparisons, in South Africa and United Kingdom there are high attrition rates among black students (Moagi-Jama 2009; Esmail & Roberts 2013). In higher education, there is poor retention during the first year of study (Sperry 2015). In medicine, the poor retention also occurs during the second year (Lehmann, Andrews & Sanders 2000; Moagi-Jama 2009). Little is known about medical students' ***own*** perceptions of factors influencing their academic performance (Todres *et al.* 2012). Medical teachers and advisors must develop a deeper understanding of the web of complex challenges that this particular group of students face.

Context

Undergraduate medical training in the School of Medicine in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State is offered in a Programme for Professional Medicine leading to conferral of the degree Medicinae Baccalaureus and Chirurgiae Baccalaureus (MBChB). The programme is structured in three phases and spans a minimum of five years of full-time study. Phase I commences in Year 1, Semester 1; Phase II commences in Year 1 Semester 2 up to Year 3 Semester 5, with Phase III commencing in Year 3 Semester 6 up to Year 5 Semester 10. In Phase I and II, the content of the curriculum is arranged in thematic or system-based modules, while Phase III is devoted to clinical medicine. Students commence their clinical training in Year 3 Semester 6 and continue to Year 5 (final) Semester 10. A programme director manages the programme with the assistance of phase chairpersons for each of the three phases. Furthermore, each module has a module leader.

The main focus of the Division Student Learning and Development in the Faculty of Health Sciences is to contribute to the academic success of students and is achieved by designing and implementing programmes, strategies and mechanisms to develop and support students. The development and support is provided by an academic staff member referred to as the student support practitioner.

The following process is followed to identify students who have academic problems:

i. The phase chairpersons and module leaders send all test and exam results to the programme director;

ii. After receiving the results, the programme director notifies all students with a mark below 55% to consult a student support practitioner;

iii. At times the module leaders also refer students with academic problems directly to the student support practitioner;

iv. The student support practitioner conducts academic guidance interviews with the students referred by the programme director and/or module leaders; and

v. Students can also decide by themselves to visit a student support practitioner.

Method

Eighty-nine semi-structured individual academic guidance interviews were held with undergraduate medical students who were identified as having academic problems between 2012 and 2015. The main aim of the interviews was to determine students' own perceptions of factors that affected their academic performance.

The individual academic guidance interviews were semi-structured. An interview guide was used to capture the following data: gender, race, year of study, previous and recent tests and examination results and students' own perceptions of their academic performance.

Results and Discussion

Firstly, 61% of the students with poor academic performance were male. Secondly, more black students (59%) were provided with guidance for poor academic performance. Lastly, most students who reported with academic challenges were in the first and second year of study (41% and 47%, respectively).

The following three main recurring themes were identified in the analysis of data:

- *Academic factors*

Most students felt that one of their challenges was the unmanageable academic workload, with one student stating that she was "struggling to get through the massive content". Some students reported a challenge with managing their time effectively because of the workload. Notably students seemed to struggle to answer integrated questions as the School of Medicine has adopted an Integrated Medical Curriculum (IMC). Unlike the traditional methods of assessment, the assessment in the IMC consists of an Integrated Medical Assessment (IMA). Instead of the usual test and exam covering the work dealt with in one particular module, the IMA questions integrate the content of three to four modules in one paper, thus requiring a student to study the content of all these modules when preparing for an assessment. For example, in the first year of study, one of the IMA question papers consists of four modules, namely General Skills, Psychology, Community Health and Concepts of Health and Disease.

- *Social factors*

As expected, students reported social factors such as deaths in the family, financial problems and involvement in extracurricular activities in residences. One black female student reported that her mother had been a domestic worker and they were both living in a one-room dwelling at the back of the employer's house. In a country such as South Africa, the employer in such a case is more likely to be a white person and the employee a black person. Among the many other problems that this student shared, was an incident in which she forgot to close the main gate, and her mother's employer shouted at her and made utterances such as she "doubts if she will be a good doctor if she cannot even follow as simple instruction such as closing a gate". According to this student, this statement had remained in her mind, made her to doubt her intellectual ability and consequently, she developed a low self-esteem.

Another case is a black male student who came from one of the small rural towns and could not be accommodated in the university residences. Eventually he also went to stay in a one-room dwelling at the back of an uncle's place. Unlike the previous student, this particular student stayed with a family member. However, the problem was that the uncle was selling liquor and his "customers" were noisy, and he could not study effectively.

- *Psychological factors*

The most common psychological factors that students mentioned were feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, panic attacks, negative feelings, loss of self-esteem, loss of motivation and sleeplessness. One student reported that she had been 'bulimic' for over three months and did not want her mother to know that she was depressed due to her parents' marital problems.

Figure 1: Dr Mpho Jama with a medical student during an academic guidance session.

Conclusion

As compared to the usual questionnaire surveys that are used to determine factors affecting the academic performance of students, the rich qualitative data collected during the academic guidance interviews reveals critical, real insights and understanding of the web of challenges that this group of students experience. Just like any other institution, the School of Medicine in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State has an obligation and is committed to providing academic, social and psychological support to the best of its ability once it admits a student. The data from the academic guidance interviews provides evidence and guides the development and design of targeted student development and academic interventions.

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BUILDING ORGANISATION FOR CHANGE AND TEACHING LEADERSHIP

Promoting a more harmonious working environment through self-mastery

Prof Milagros Rivera[1] and Tamika Otto[2]
[1]Department of Communication Science,
[2]Centre for Teaching and Learning

International trends have alluded to the emphasis of development of new staff training for university members. However, there is little indication of continued development (Parsons, Hill, Holland & Willis, 2012). Considering that universities are entrusted with the challenging task of developing students, it could be asked how this would be possible without continued development of university staff members (Hibbert & Semler, 2016).

During 2016, a total of 46 University of the Free State (UFS) staff members comprising mostly of members from the Department of Communication Sciences and the Centre and Teaching and Learning (CTL) enrolled in personal development through self-mastery. Self-mastery is a process of enabling staff members to cope during trying times when work environments have the possibility of becoming a minefield of interpersonal conflicts, a source of stress, and a drain on energy. While completely eliminating stressors from the workplace may not always be possible, the reduction of conflict and stress is possible through self-mastery and mindfulness. That is possible because self-mastery and mindfulness are not about eliminating problems but learning to view them and life differently (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Table 1 showcases the content of this year-long development workshop.

The course focused on helping staff to learn how to notice their perceptual biases, judgments and projections and how these can influence the way they perceive and judge others—e.g. their words, non-verbal language and actions—and themselves. Through self-reflection, one-on-one interactions and group sharing, participants learned to be comfortable with vulnerability, engage in honest reflection, and recognise (with the goal of eventually embracing) their own flawed humanness. They also learned that they have a choice on whether to unconsciously react (Goleman, 2005) or mindfully respond (Lynn, A., 2006) to others.

Positive feedback from the participants included the following observations:

- Participant 7 noted that the course aided personal development and to view oneself differently.
- Participant 4 stated that the workshops provide support on a personal and professional level that will positively impact leadership skills.
- Participant 32 indicated the importance of skill development to master emotions before these emotions govern behaviour.

Session	Name of Session	Content
Session 1	Introduction to Self-Mastery	The first session reflects on participants' assumptions and judgments about things, individuals and situations.
Session 2	The Subjective Nature of Reality	Through introspection participants are encouraged to reflect on how they communicate and interpret the communication and actions of others.
Session 3	Mindfulness, Mental Models and Inner Conversations	This session highlights, in addition to other content, the difference between mindful responses and unconscious reactions.
Session 4	The Shadow (Part 1)	This two-part session focuses on personal attributes participants conceal because these attributes are perceived as unwanted as well as virtuous traits participants struggle to accept.
Session 5	The Shadow (Part 2)	
Session 6	Grievances and Forgiveness (Part 1)	The final module clarifies how grievances come into being and provides perspectives on how to promote forgiveness.
Session 7	Grievances and Forgiveness (Part 2)	

Table 1: Content of the Self-Mastery Course.

In order to create a comprehensive approach to staff development, constant innovation and flexibility are required (Duță & Rafailă, 2014). The focus of staff development at the UFS will remain on empowering individuals to contribute to institutional culture.

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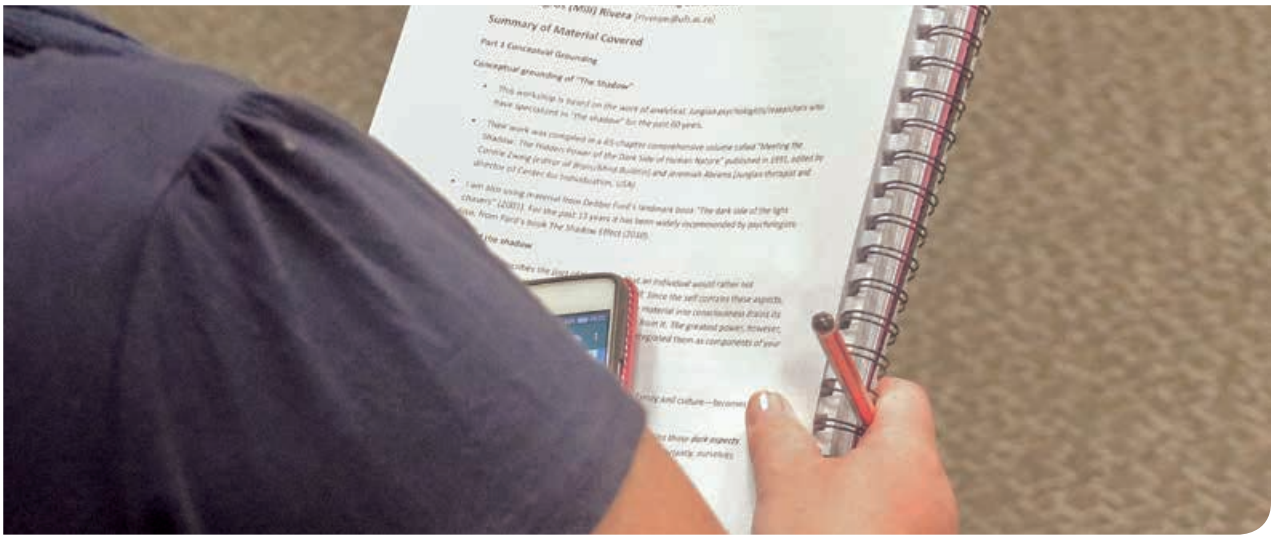

Interprofessional simulation as preparation for community-based collaborative practice

Prof Yvonne Botma[1]& Dr Mathys J Labuschagne[2]
[1]School of Nursing, [2]Clinical Simulation and Skills Unit, School of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences

A number of global and local initiatives necessitated the establishment of interprofessional education (IPE) in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State (UFS). Due to fragmented healthcare services and in order to improve health outcomes, the World Health Organization (WHO) has promoted interprofessional education and collaborative practice since 2010 (WHO, 2010; WHO, 2013). Olenick and Allen (2013), as well as Bajnok, Puddester, Macdonald, Archibald and Kuhl (2012) claimed that interprofessional collaboration would decrease preventable deaths.

In response to the global strategy of universal access to health, the South African government reengineered the primary level of healthcare and introduced clinical specialist teams at district level (South African Department of Health, 2012). In addition to the mentioned strategies, the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) adapted the CanMEDS graduate attributes that include collaboration with other professions (HPCSA, 2014). During the 69th Global Health Assembly, a call went out to institutions training healthcare professionals to adopt a competency-based learning approach to develop healthcare professionals that are able to work collaboratively in interprofessional teams. Furthermore, these healthcare professionals should have the knowledge and skills to identify and address social determinants of health (WHO, 2016).

With a view to extend and implement local healthcare reform initiatives and health professions' board requirements in South Africa, the authors obtained a research grant from the National Research Foundation (NRF) to develop and establish an interprofessional education programme for students in the Faculty of Health Sciences, UFS. We support Baldwin and Baldwin's (2007) viewpoint that students should learn the principles and processes involved in collaborative patient-centred care before they can apply it in their professional practice. Students who are trained in using an interprofessional education (IPE) approach are more likely to become collaborative interprofessional team members who show respect and positive attitudes towards each other, and work towards improving patient outcomes. The interprofessional education sessions are a Faculty of Health Sciences initiative to prepare the students for providing collaborative patient-centred care at the community-based rural clinical platforms in Trompsburg and Springfontein in the Free State Province.

The interprofessional education sessions were initiated in 2014. In 2015, all students in the Faculty of Health Sciences

in their fourth year of graduate study participated in the IPE sessions. All interprofessional groups included at least one student from the following seven professions: Biokinetics, Dietetics, Medicine, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Optometry and Physiotherapy. The facilitators were lecturers from these various professions.

In 2016, 306 fourth-year students from all three Schools in the Faculty of Health Sciences representing the seven healthcare professions participated in the IPE sessions. The students were divided into 30 interprofessional groups, each group with a facilitator and simulated patient. Facilitators from the UFS and Central University of Technology's (CUT) Department of Radiography were trained and participated. In 2017, Radiography students from the CUT will be included in the sessions.

Skilful facilitation of interprofessional groups promoted meaningful dialogue and transformative learning. Intensive facilitator training added value to the standard of the facilitation and debriefing provided. The common professional attributes and interprofessional competencies were addressed by facilitators who acted as role models to demonstrate respect, professionalism, communication, collaboration and shared decision-making to the interprofessional student groups.

Four consecutive sessions were presented in the IPE intervention developed for the Faculty of Health Sciences (see Figure 1). The first session was an introduction to IPE that involved introducing the group members, orientation and a short didactic component where students were familiarised to the concepts of professional attributes and specifically collaborative practice, and value clarification in the group.

The second session was a simulation session attended by the interprofessional group. During the simulations, Kolb's theory of experiential learning was applied directly (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Students were exposed to a concrete experience of an interprofessional ward round with a standardised patient simulating a patient with diabetes mellitus. The groups had to compile an interprofessional care plan for the hospital phase of the patient. During the reflective observation phase, the students reviewed their interactions with the patient and each other. The focus was on collaborative practice principles and not on clinical treatment options. Debriefing was done according to the Plus/Delta method on which the facilitators received instruction during the facilitator training sessions (Fanning & Gaba, 2007).

Active experimentation with their proposed actions was encouraged during the third contact session, which was the second simulated session. The third session was a follow-up simulation with the same group, facilitator and SP, where some team members declared the patient ready for discharge with pressure from the medical aid, while members from other professions proclaimed the patient unfit for discharge from the hospital. Leadership shifted from the medical and nursing students to the physio- and occupational therapists. The team had to work collaboratively with the patient to reach consensus on the best options for this patient. The following debriefing session, which included

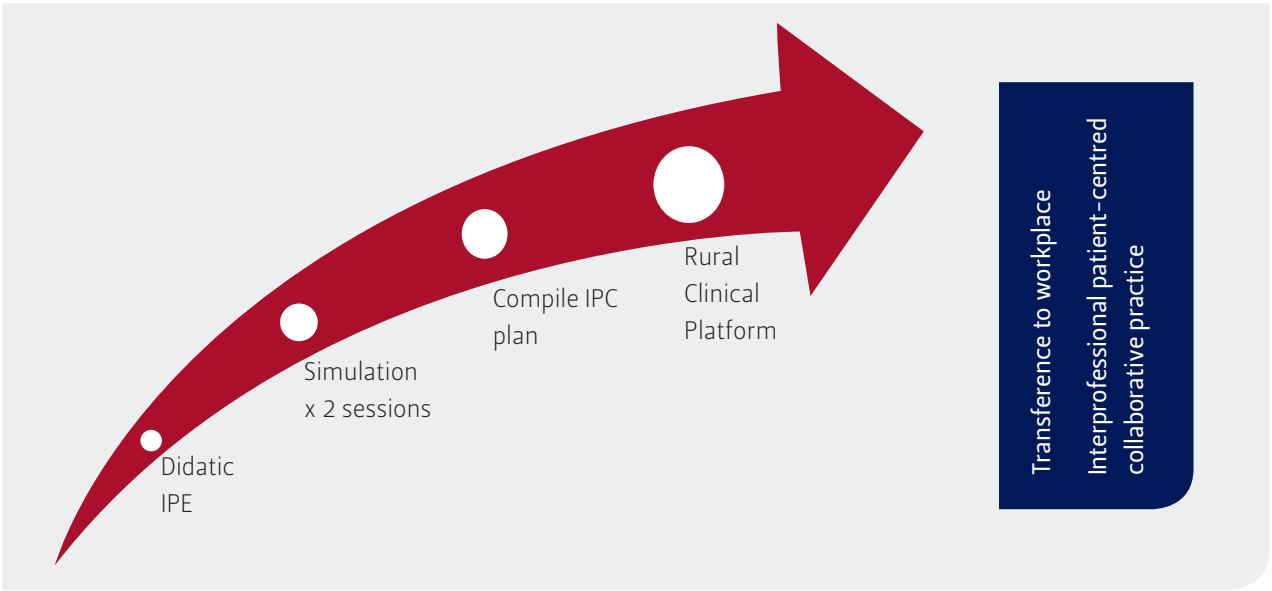

Figure 1: Consecutive interprofessional education sessions.

the facilitator and the SP, specifically focused on the collaborative teamwork in the group.

During the fourth session, each interprofessional student group was tasked to create a visual representation of collaborative practice in the form of a poster. These representations were evaluated against a rubric to assess the students' understanding of the principles of interprofessional collaborative practice. The group of students in 2015 participated in focus group interviews as part of a Master's student's research project. The overall perception was positive and transcripts of the focus group interview responses included the following verbatim examples:

"I just wanted to say something about stereotypes. I do think it was a very sobering experience also for us, especially for the medical students who think that their course might be more difficult than some of the other medical professions just to sit there and to realise, okay, but wait, these guys (allied health professions) know much more about how to handle this patient than we do so, um, I think that was very necessary for some of the students just to realise what our place is but that the other professions definitely have their place, and its none less than us"

"[Regarding the SP] It was really nice 'cause they couldn't critique what you were saying really but they gave you an honest human opinion and say, I'm a human too, you respect me, I'm part of this cause I'm here. Just because I can't speak doesn't mean I can't hear you……he gave us constructive feedback and we actually improved a lot on the second time when he was there as well".

"Then afterwards, it's very nice, the feedback from the person who was (the SP), 'cause she said to us but you weren't talking to me and we never realised that we had to do that…"

"But in the clinical area I'm not so intimidated by the students anymore 'cause now I know them, they've been with us. And sometimes go speak to them and be like, what are they saying about this patient, what's going on and we'll talk about it then".

"…I think it's (communication) the key to all multidisciplinary teams, talking and not being afraid to share your opinion if someone is wrong, 'cause that happened one or two times in our groups but no-one took offence. But hopefully that will be the same in the future…"

"….it's important to reiterate to the students that like, you should work together and if you and I are treating the same patient then why don't we have a conversation about what we're doing with the patient……go and ask and see what's happening and in that way you're going to learn to be more comfortable around each other….."

Interprofessional collaborative practice can serve as an agent for change to break down silos and professional tribalism and stimulate critical thinking. Students are sensitised to deliver patient-centred care by means of a biopsychosocial-spiritual approach, putting the needs of the patient first, as opposed to professions' "self-protectionism".

Acknowledgement: Dr Daleen Struwig, Medical Editor for editing the text.

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Academic Leadership Programme: Building Capacity

Tamika Otto, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Background

The pilot of the Academic Leadership Programme (ALP) for the University of the Free State (UFS) aimed at supporting current and future Heads of Department (HoD) emerged during a critical time for leaders on this campus. Deans received the opportunity to identify talented employees for leadership development. A pivotal step in creating a paradigm that emphasises the unique needs of the leaders involved in the programme entailed in-depth discussions with deans, nominees for the programme and other stakeholders. From this comprehensive needs analysis a versatile approach to leadership development was followed.

Theoretical framework

Gmelch and Buller (2015) amended a corporate model for leadership, namely the 7-S model, for the purpose of sustainable leadership development in higher education (see Figure 1). This model combines hard- and soft skills to facilitate and maintain the evolution from academic to academic leader.

In the context of the UFS, the 7-S model has been structured to accommodate different skills highlighted by deans and other stakeholders. A concise description of each element is as follows:

- ***Strategy*** necessitates a department to function at maximum capacity by understanding the internal- and external pressures that govern decision- making.
- ***Structure*** alludes to the different role-players within the UFS that enable departments' functionality in terms of expenditure, human resources, marketing et cetera.
- ***Systems*** suggest a cyclical process of contemplation and execution that drive change in departments.
- ***Staff*** encapsulate people-centred leadership that drive achievement.
- ***Style*** necessitates leaders to become acutely aware of the culture that entices departmental conduct.
- ***Skills*** development cultivates goal-driven leadership whilst managing uncertainty in the pursuit of opportunity. At the core, ***shared values*** nurture the aforementioned competencies by building a sense of community to support the HoD in reaching institutional goals.

Whilst the aforementioned elements can be defined separately, they are interlinked and jointly function as a unit creating a commanding approach to leadership. Within this framework several workshops were represented to cultivate leadership pedagogy. A summary of alignment between the ALP workshops and the 7-S model follows below in Table 1.The column titled Average Rating provides the reader with a quantitative rating from participants.

In addition to quantitative data collected during the workshops, qualitative data was used as a guiding tool to determine critical aspects of success. Qualitative feedback pertaining to the programme follows:

> *"Overall it was excellent to realize the turmoil I'm going through is actually quite a common occurrence amongst many. And that there are support structures in place to assist in the future." Participant 12*

"I made mistakes, mostly due to ignorance but now I know who to consult on which issues if still in doubt." Participant 22

"This programme really contributed to my understanding of my role as HoD. It afforded me the opportunity to reflect on my own initiatives and I am comfortable that I am on the right path and identified key networks who could assist me forwards achieving my leadership objectives." Participant 32

"Excellent content. Very useful to implement in daily functioning and personal development..." Participant 8

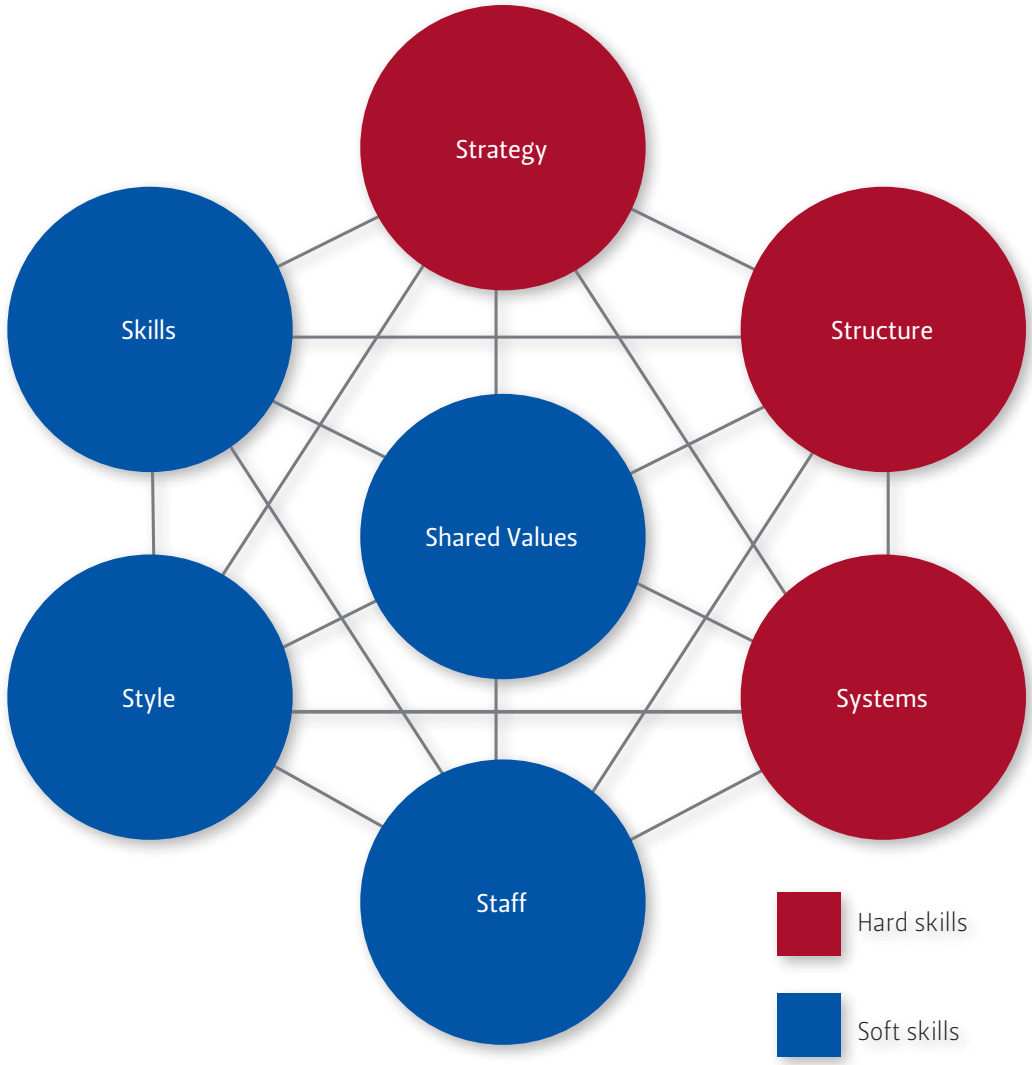

Figure 1: Model for building academic leadership capacity (Gmelch & Buller, 2015).

Workshop	Description	Main focus within the 7-S Model[1]	Number of Attendees	Average Rating[2]
An Insider Perspective	A current HoD shares personal experience and best practice, provides an overview of the changing UFS environment and governing philosophies.	Style Skills	52	4.3
Arbinger	This practical process facilitates change in departmental culture by changing attitudes.	Staff Style	14	4.7
Becoming a Departmental Leader	A reflection on the meaning of leadership, the role of an HoD and the necessary skills that a leader must develop to execute the role.	Strategy Skills	57	4.6
Conflict Management	Attendees reflect on their own perceptions of conflict and the results thereof. This workshop includes a process of awareness and mindfulness to manage conflict at departmental level.	Staff Style	54	4.8
Creating An Effective Team, But I Do Not Even Like You	Through introspection attendees get the opportunity to understand normal differences between colleagues in terms of preferred decision- making styles, how they gather information, what energises them and basic lifestyle choices.	Staff Style	57	4.4
Employee Relations Management	Attendees are familiarised with policies, procedures and legislation that govern employee relations at the UFS. They are made aware of the role- player and support structures set in place to support them.	Strategy Structure	54	4.5
Fundamentals of Finance	Attendees get the opportunity to become familiarised with their department's finances through an interactive workshop.	Strategy Structure	28	4.3
Human Resources: A Strategic Perspective	An in-depth discussion on the strategic challenges facing the UFS from the perspective of the Human Resource Department in terms of legislation, responsibilities and current changes to procedures at the UFS.	Structure Systems	53	4.6
Coaching for Change	Leaders are exposed to the fundamentals of goal-driven coaching to support team members in achieving departmental goals.	Staff Systems	11	4.6
Leadership Community	Leaders have the opportunity to build a support network outside of their departments that would not have been possible without a platform.	Staff Skills	9	NA[3]
Strategic Discussion with Professor Lange	Leaders receive the opportunity to discuss their departmental goals and interests with higher management in smaller, more intimate groups.	Strategy Structure	35	4.1
The Teaching and the Research Component	Increasing the value of teaching and learning as well as research output by providing support options to HoDs and making them aware of already existing support systems at the UFS.	Strategy Systems	52	4.3
Time Management	A practical guide to managing time more efficiently.	Systems Style	53	5
What a Departmental Leader needs to Know	The emphasis is on the internal - and external environment of an HoD as well as preparing for the role as departmental leader.	Strategy Structure	57	4.4

Table 1: Workshops for nominated ALP participants in 2016.

Figure 2: Academic Leadership nominees attend an orientation session in July 2016.

The way forward

The CTL will work in partnership with the Human Resource Department to ensure the programme remains adaptable in order to address the current needs of leaders at the UFS. Continuous alignment to the latest literature and needs analysis of participants and stakeholders will serve as the point of departure for all workshops developed in 2017.

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1 All workshops include shared values. Only the two most pertinent elements within the 7-S model are listed in the table.

2 Scale 1 to 5, with 1="Unsatisfactory" and 5= "Excellent".

3 Due to the nature of the workshop, only qualitative data was collected.

ALIGNING INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES TO FOSTER QUALITY TEACHING

New institutional Assessment Policy to promote good assessment practices at the UFS

Anneri Meintjes, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Assessment is the cornerstone for standards and quality in higher education. Evidence gathered through various avenues including the curriculum review, peer reviews and reviews from professional bodies indicated a need to review the UFS assessment policy. The review process started in 2014 when CTL conducted research to better understand assessment challenges experienced by staff and students, which can be addressed through the revision of the policy. Qualitative data was gathered through focus groups and interviews with 95 staff members and 23 students.

From a staff perspective, challenges around the assessment of large classes, including the use of markers, were the most prominent. These challenges include the use of markers and providing feedback. Staff development needs in terms of training in different assessment methods, training of new staff members, and training for innovative ideas on assessment of large classes were also highlighted in the staff focus groups. Furthermore, staff stressed the need for the inclusion of e-assessment guidelines in the assessment policy. Assessment challenges students experience include the lack of quality and timeous feedback on assessment activities and the high stakes associated with few assessment opportunities.

The findings suggested a number of assessment challenges that could be addressed through the revision of the policy. The previous assessment policy did not include sections on markers, was not specific in terms of feedback, and did not address e-assessment. These issues could thus be addressed in the revision of the policy. Staff development, however, was addressed in the previous policy. This emphasised the importance of the implementation of the policy which needed to be considered in the review of the policy.

The assessment policy review was an extensive, consultative process that, in addition to the focus groups and interviews with staff and students, included faculty and campus consultations and opportunities to submit written feedback. Figure 1 below illustrates the timeline and process followed in the review of the policy:

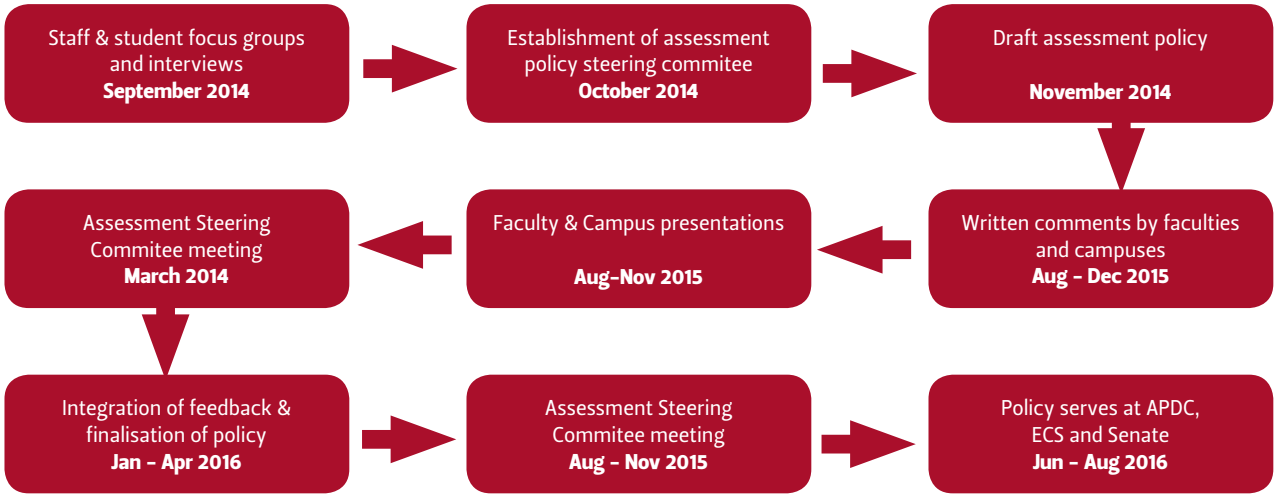


Figure 1: Timeline and process followed in the review of the policy.

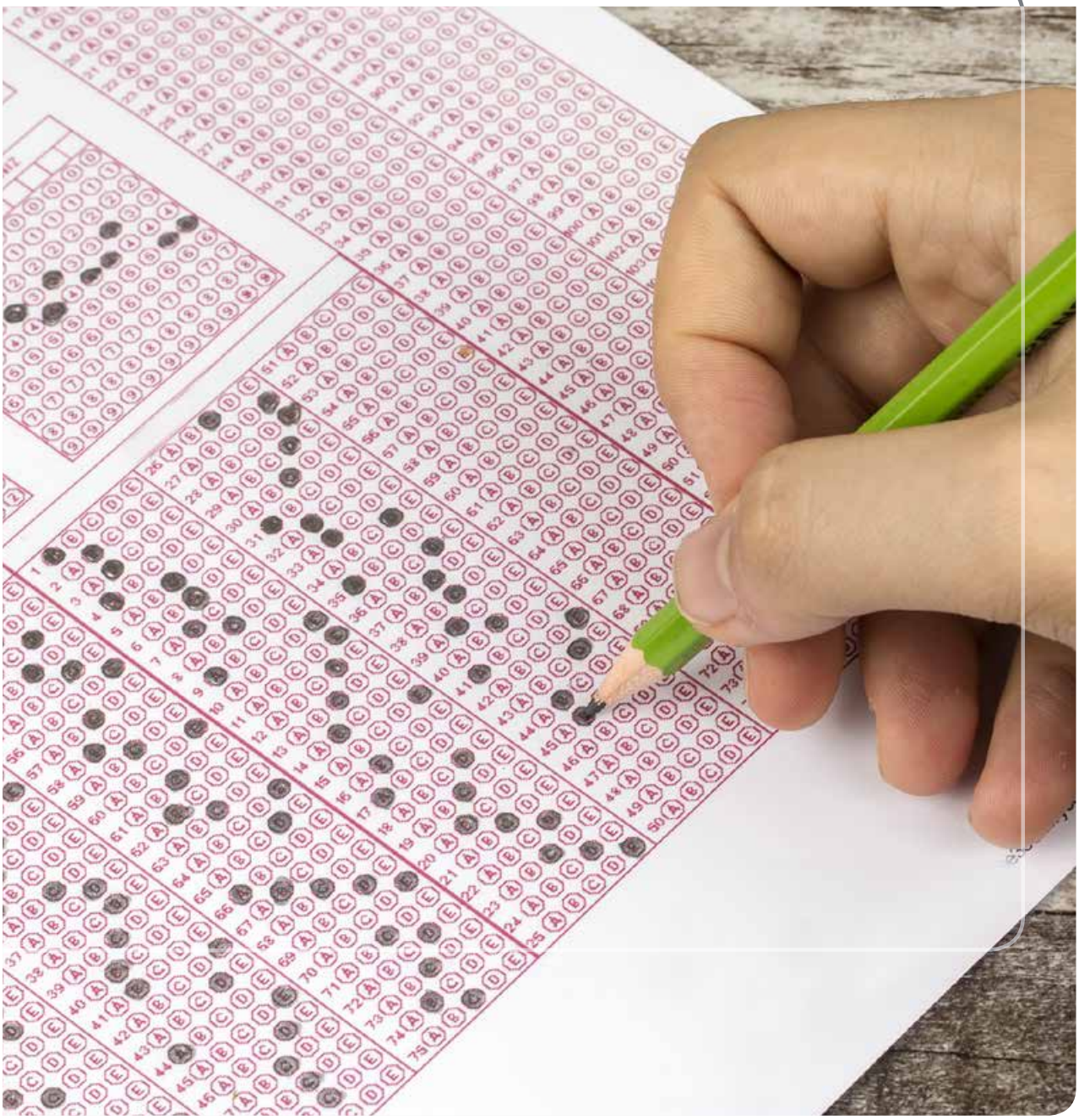
In addition to the focus groups and interviews with staff and students, an assessment steering committee with representatives from faculties, campuses, students, and other stakeholders such as the Examination Division, DIRAP, and ICT Services was established. A draft policy was presented at faculties and campuses towards the end of 2015 and an opportunity was granted for written feedback until the end of 2015. From January to April 2016 feedback received from faculties and campuses was integrated and the policy was finalised. Two more assessment steering committee meetings followed to further refine the policy which then served at the Academic Planning and Development Committee, the Executive Committee of Senate and which was approved by Senate on 23 August 2016. The most notable changes to the policy are highlighted in Table 1.

Policy Change	Implication
Emphasis on multiple assessment opportunities	Multiple assessment opportunities per module at a balance of formative and summative and or continuous assessment are prescribed. A minimum number of assessments will be specified per faculty in the Faculty Assessment Rules and Regulations
Early assessment	A first assessment must take place within four weeks of the commencement of a module. This assessment can be formal or informal.
Uploading grades	All marks must be uploaded to an authorised institutional system which includes the Grade Centre on Blackboard and Gradebook on PeopleSoft. Annual deadlines for the submission of final marks will be set by DIRAP.
Marks display	In accordance with the POPI Act marks may no longer be displayed on notice boards or in any other way which allows students to see other students' marks.
Making past exam and test papers available	Past examination and or test papers must be made available to students. Examples of the type of questions students can expect may also be made available if a lecturer does not want to make test / exam papers available.
E-assessment	Only UFS approved systems and technology may be used for e-assessment. Section 6 in the policy addresses e-assessment.
Use of markers	Section 7 of the policy addresses markers and specifies that, for undergraduate marking, a marker should have at least completed the module successfully. For postgraduate marking, the marker should have a relevant postgraduate degree. All markers must undergo training.

Table 1: Notable changes to the policy.

In addition to the changes outlined in Table 1, a section was added on roles and responsibilities. This section aims to address the implementation of the policy by outlining the different roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the policy. A person may have more than one role, one may, for instance, be a lecturer but also be a head of department. This section of the policy clarifies the responsibilities linked to each of these roles. A section on Faculty Assessment Rules and Regulations was also added to the policy based on the feedback from faculties that indicated a need for flexibility in the implementation of some aspects of the policy. This section outlines which policy aspects need to be addressed per faculty. This includes feedback, which was highlighted by students as one of their primary assessment concerns.[1]

The new assessment policy has aimed to address some of the challenges highlighted by staff and students by being specific enough to clarify certain areas of uncertainty, while simultaneously being flexible enough in other areas to allow faculties to address other issues in a faculty-specific manner. ■



1 The assessment policy can be retrieved from http://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/default-source/all-documents/assessment-policy-on-the-ufs-coursework-learning-programmes.pdf?sfvrsn=0.

HIGHLIGHTING INNOVATION AS A DRIVER FOR CHANGE

"Beyond the lecture hall": Designing a learning context and content for real-life results

Bianca Naude, Department of Political Studies and Governance

The Millennial student faces a number of important challenges, and so does the university preparing the next cohort of graduates for entry into the labour-market. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) estimates the number of students enrolled at tertiary education institutions in 2009 to be 500% greater than those enrolled for tertiary studies in 1970, resulting in an oversaturated labour-market that offers little to no employment opportunities for the hundreds of thousands of graduates released into the job market annually (Flood, 2014:5). Despite the growing number of university graduates competing in the labour-market today, however, employers are generally less satisfied with the young graduates that enter their organizations (Economist, 2013).

Reasons for this dissatisfaction with new recruits fall somewhere between inadequate training offered at tertiary education institutions, and an overemphasis on conceptual knowledge acquisition without commensurate exposure to practice. Most importantly, employers complain that graduates lack 'real life' experience and skills (OECD, 2001:99-113). "Skills-mismatches" are largely the result of poor education, but are also attributable to a general lack of investment in, and promotion of, skills development, including in "academic" fields. This stresses the need for higher education institutions to incorporate skills-building activities into their curriculum, which will both set students apart from their thousands of degree-toting peers, and prepare them for the actual job they will occupy (Johnson, 2002: 1-6).

Curriculum design for skills development

While the focus of this paper does not specifically deal with the complexities of the curriculum transformation discourse, the essence of the research project presented here speaks to the issue of curriculum redesign for skills-building through activities designed to deliver "real-life" results, which necessarily addresses assessment practice. Specifically, this paper argues that curricular transformation should encompass a reconceptualization of the types of assessment activities that are set for students, where assessments form part of the skills-development exercise that should equip students with practical "know-how"(*savoir-faire*). Moreover, assessment activities need to be tailored to job-specific requirements for the subject field, and should serve to validate the student's capacity to enter the workforce (Berns & Erickson, 2001:4-6). In the case study to be discussed below, the objectives of

conceptual knowledge creation and practice-oriented skills-building are achieved through a scaffolded report-writing exercise.

Scaffolded integration of conceptual knowledge in an applied project: Case study from a first-year political science class

Data for this paper was collected during a 2016 semester course on introductory political science for first-year students at the Qwaqwa campus of the University of the Free State. Data is used with written consent from students, where the purposes of the research project were explained to students in detail, along with ethical issues relating to privacy and anonymity.

The total enrolment for the course was 245 students. Two two-hour contact sessions were supported by a one-hour tutoring class, which consisted of groups of 30 students. Contact sessions focused mainly on the transfer of conceptual knowledge, comprising discussions of prescribed readings, supported by integrated multimedia materials like documentaries and public lectures on issues of relevance to the weekly lecture topic, which was simultaneously made available to students through Blackboard. Tutoring classes were designed to complement lectures by guiding students in applying conceptual knowledge from lectures to a pre-selected case study. This process is derived from Karl Popper's Three Worlds Ontology (1978), where abstract concepts are mastered through a traversing of the second and third worlds of knowledge, so that the student is finally able to integrate, apply and reproduce scientific concepts in meaningful ways using their own signifiers and examples to illustrate hypotheses.

Leading up to the submission of the final assignment by mid-term, students were required to submit a written paragraph weekly via Turn It In on Blackboard weekly. Facilitators were briefed on the main elements that students were expected to identify and discuss in their paragraphs at the start of each academic week. Paragraphs were graded either by the lecturer or the facilitators on a weekly basis, providing feedback on the analytical and technical aspects of the written work, and suggesting ways in which to improve the analysis for the final assignment. At the end of the fifth week, students were required to combine each of the paragraphs into a single, written report, adding an introduction and conclusion, to be submitted as their final assignment.

Assignments were assessed according to flexible criteria, taking into account progress shown throughout the semester in the submission of paragraphs, and the extent to which the student has integrated and applied corrections into the final work. Considering the ultimate objective of encouraging independent analysis and practical application of conceptual knowledge to a real-life case study, emphasis in marking was placed on the degree of independent analysis evident in the final report, and the clarity with which students articulated or defended their choice of theoretical paradigm from which to explain their case study. Less emphasis was placed on the mastery of the technical requirements of academic writing, although an overall impression mark was given based on the degree of conformity to the conventions of academic writing. Assignments containing more than 35% similarity to other academic works were awarded a grade of 0, with the option to resubmit the assignment.

Lecturer reflections on impact

In most instances, plagiarism was virtually eliminated. First, because students were required to make use of Turn It In plagiarism detection software, which forced them to confront the reality of plagiarized materials present in their work, and the grade-specific implications of plagiarism on their semester mark. This conclusion is based on feedback received from students during one-on-one consultations to discuss their grades. Of the students who were penalized for plagiarism, more than two-thirds resubmitted a revised version of the assignment, free of plagiarism. Second, as the activity required of students to apply theoretical knowledge to a practical case study, the information required to complete the task simply was not available online to be plagiarized. Another result of the activity is the mastery of the language of the subject area: because students were guided in every step of the composition of the final written work, they received continuous feedback on the best ways to present their thoughts logically, coherently and in accordance with the linguistic requirements of academic work. Students were further guided to make use of discipline-specific words and concepts throughout the process, which served to improve the quality of the final submitted document, while broadening the student's vocabulary meaningfully. The success of this strategy was most tangible in the quality of essay-type answers in exams, where students were better able to express their thoughts using the correct language, and including practical examples from their own assignment for illustrative purposes.

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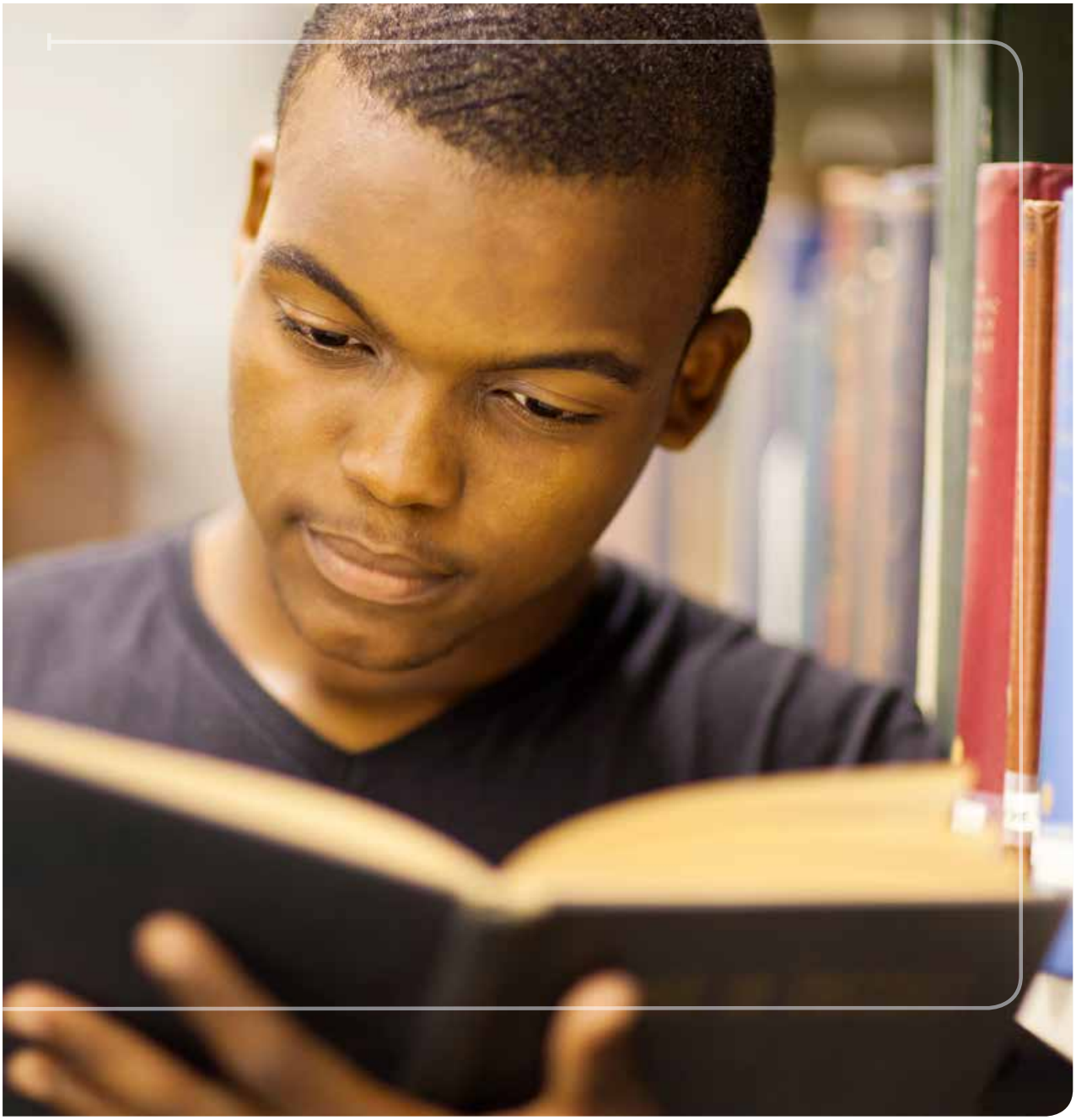

An analysis of the use of Blackboard at the UFS

Anneri Meintjes, Centre for Teaching and Learning

The LMS (Learning Management System) is one of the most widely used technology applications worldwide to support teaching and learning activities in higher education. Despite the high percentages of LMS adoption within higher education institutions worldwide, relatively few academic staff members use more advanced LMS tools and features: "Faculty and students value the LMS as an enhancement to their teaching and learning experiences, but relatively few use these systems to their full capacity" (Brown, 2015, 24). Only 41% of surveyed academic staff reported the use of the LMS to promote interaction outside the classroom (Brown, 2015; Brown, Dehoney & Millichap, 2015). According to Brown et al. (2015) the LMS has been a central application in enabling the *administration* of learning, but less so in enabling learning itself. This includes tasks such as distributing materials and content, as well as grade centres, which are invaluable to the management of the course, but these resources contribute only indirectly to the learning success.

Based on the abovementioned, it is imperative that a clear understanding is gained on the use of the LMS at the UFS. This will allow for evidence-based planning and decision-making about investment, resources and staff as well as student development that are needed to provide a supportive electronic teaching and learning environment at the institution of which the LMS is a central part. To this end, a quantitative analysis of all modules on Blackboard was conducted by CTL at the end of 2015 and again at the end of the first semester of 2016. A similar analysis will be done bi-annually to keep track of how Blackboard usage changes over time.

In 2015, 61% of all modules on PeopleSoft were on Blackboard. A total of 71% of undergraduate (UG) modules were on Blackboard while 47% of postgraduate (PG) modules were on Blackboard (Bb) (see Figure 1).

Disaggregated results further show a larger percentage of honours-level modules on Blackboard (62%) than modules at master's (33%) and doctoral levels (13%). Honours qualifications typically have a large teaching and learning component whereas many master's modules and most doctoral level modules would consist of a larger research component, which explains the more prominent presence of honours-level modules on Blackboard.

Despite registering modules on Blackboard being a voluntary process at the university, a relatively large percentage of modules on Blackboard did not make use of any Blackboard tools and were classified as 'empty'. These modules were thus registered on Blackboard, but were not used at all. The percentage of empty modules was slightly smaller among second semester and year

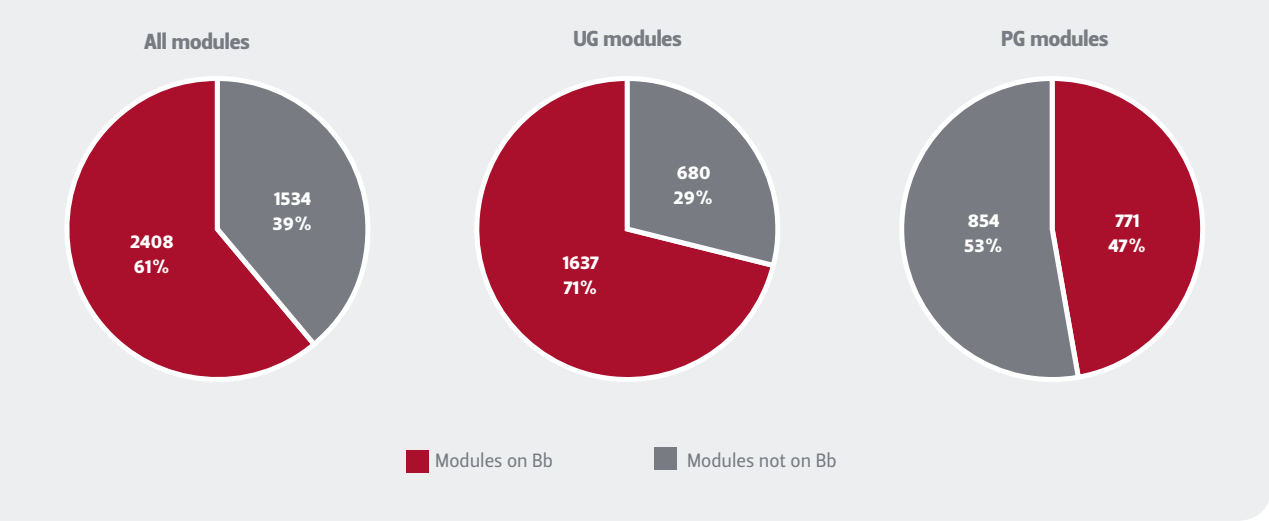

Figure 1: Blackboard presence per qualification level.

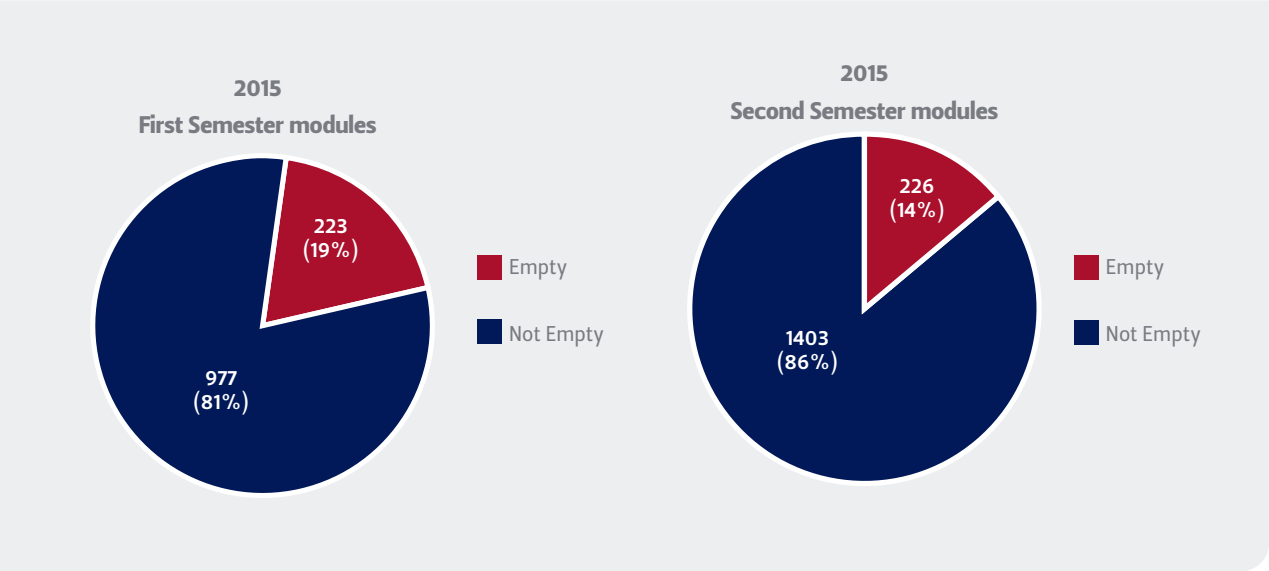

Figure 2: Blackboard presence per qualification level.

modules in 2015 than first semester 2015 modules. Figure 2 below illustrates the total modules registered on Blackboard and the proportion of these modules that were empty in 2015.

In order to better understand the use of the LMS at the university, Blackboard tools were classified into four categories: content, collaboration, information, and assessment. Only tools that had not been identified as empty were included in the analysis. Figure 3 provides an overview of all the Blackboard tools used across the UFS in 2015. This graphic illustration shows that the LMS is mainly used for content sharing, particularly by making class slides and additional material available to students. Collaboration tools are not frequently used, with the most popular collaboration tool, discussions, only used in 10% of modules on Blackboard. Among the information tools, announcements are by far the most prevalent, with 68% of modules making use of this tool. Assessment tools are more frequently used than collaboration tools, but no more than 22% of modules incorporate any of these tools. The most popular assessment tools are Blackboard assignments, and Turnit-in assignments which are both used in 22% of modules. Furthermore, in 22% of modules memos have been made available to students via Blackboard.

Tool usage on Blackboard indicates that the LMS is still mainly used to upload content and to communicate information to students. Collaboration and assessment tools are rarely used. One reason for this may be that teaching several classes, teaching large classes, and required research outputs add to the workload of academic staff. Time constraints and large workloads contribute to the limited use of the LMS. To fully optimise

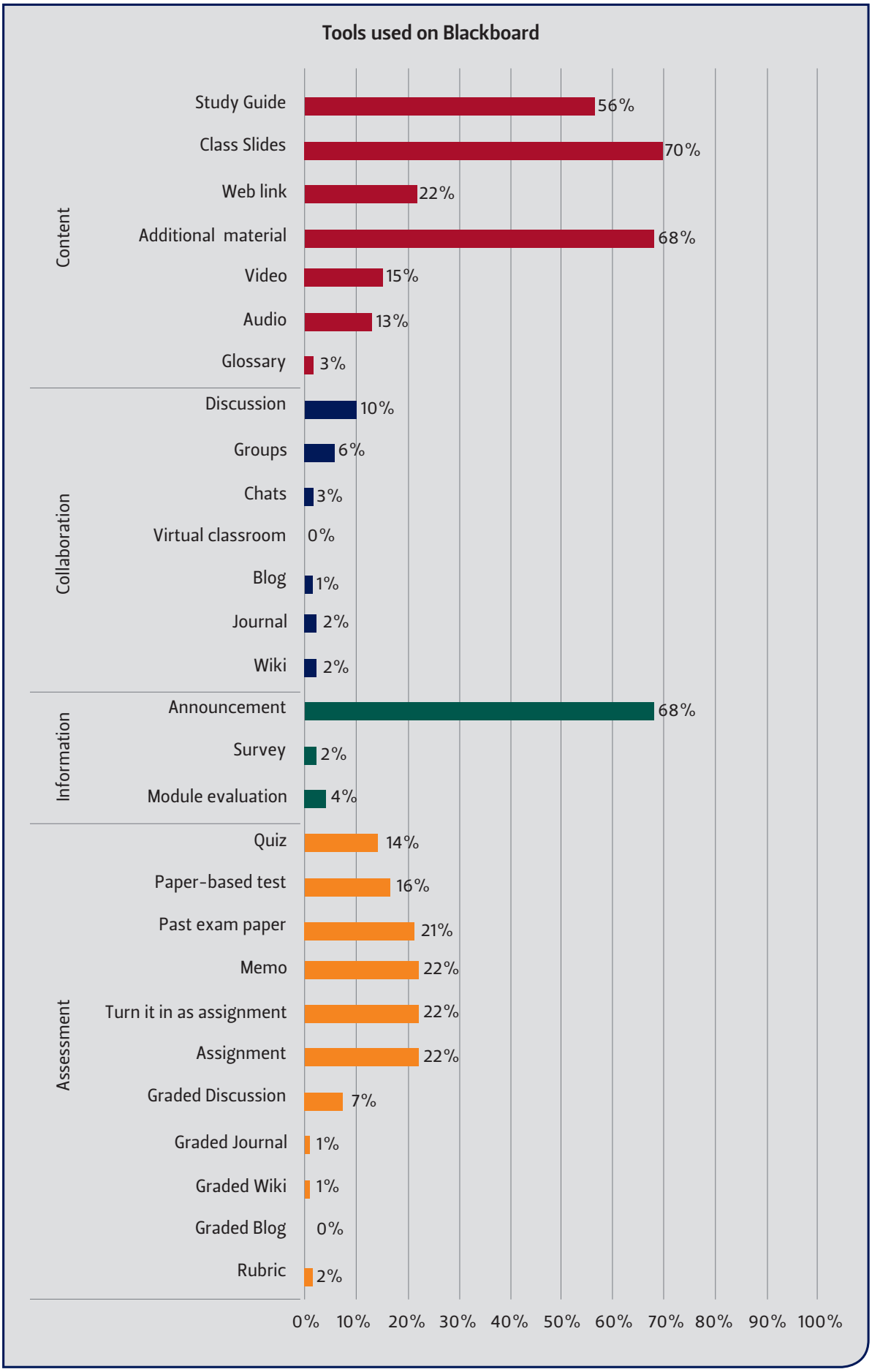

Figure 3: Use of Blackboard tools at the UFS in 2015.

the use of Blackboard a time investment is required in the planning and integration of technology in teaching and learning. Another possible reason for the reluctance to make use of collaboration tools may simply be that these tools are not user-friendly.

The UFS has invested in Blackboard Collaborate which has been available from July 2016. Blackboard Collaborate provides an integrated solution to encourage student collaboration through technology. This platform can be used for a live chat with an entire group of students, to pre-record a lecture or feedback to students or as a discussion board (to mention a few). The availability of Blackboard Collaborate may increase the use of collaboration tools on Blackboard from the second semester in 2016 onwards. In addition, national protest forced most universities to make more effective use of online learning platforms to complete the academic year. Therefore, continuous monitoring of the LMS use at the UFS is necessary to allow for evidence-based planning to optimise Blackboard use at the institution.

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UFS101: Using strategic teaching and learning to support innovative curriculum renewal

Lauren Oosthuizen, Centre for Teaching and Learning

A detailed annual evaluation is conducted on UFS101 each year to gather data on the student experience of the module. The student voice is pivotal in improving the module each year in order to cater to students' academic needs and to ensure material is scaffolded to meet them where they are at. The module thus undergoes a process of curriculum renewal each year – this process involves careful planning and implementation of the appropriate teaching and learning methods to support these annual changes. For the purposes of this article, I will focus on the following changes in the programme: addition of Sign Language learning experiences in the first semester and re-curriculation and restructuring of content in the second semester.

Sign Language learning experiences in Semester 1 of 2016

The UFS101 team worked with the Department of Sign Language in 2016 to create three unique learning experiences for the 6000+ first-year students enrolled in the module. The aim of the learning experiences was to promote social inclusivity, with the hope to lead to a more integrated and united student population through exposing hearing students to Deaf culture, the role of the sign language interpreter in classes, and the fact that South African Sign Language is recognized as one of our 12 official languages. Students also had the opportunity to learn very basic signs, for example how to introduce themselves, and how to fingerspell their names.

A survey was circulated at the end of the first semester - for both the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campus. More than 70% of the students agreed that the Sign Language learning experiences increased their interest in learning Sign Language; taught students a basic understanding of Sign Language; helped hearing students be more comfortable around hearing-impaired students; and increased students' understanding of Deaf culture. Some of the feedback is detailed on the next page:

> *"I think it was n great way of learning about different students and their different needs and ways, it made me more open to helping other people and see life on campus in a different way and perspective." Participant 23*

"I loved the sign language classes I wish ...I could add it to my modules and study it as my extra module. wow it I had a wonderful it was fantastic wow wow...I learned something." Participant 356

"I desperately wish that it could be part of my full-time studies or my modules." Participant 148

Content development in Semester 2 of 2016

In conjunction with the presenters (lecturers from the faculties) for each unit, the feedback from the students, as well as new developments in the respective field, are considered in order to edit the content each year. The tables below provide an overview of the module content in 2012 and the module content in semester 2 of 2016. In 2012, each unit had a large class lecture (1000 students per class), three of the units had a learning experience (1000 students in an interactive class, with the focus on simulating out of class / work experiences in the classroom) only, one unit had a tutorial (discussion and practical of the content) only and three units had both a learning experience and a tutorial. Given the big questions asked in UFS101, it became more evident through the year that more time had to be spent on each unit, thus by 2013 each unit had a learning experience and a tutorial. In 2014 the flipped classroom approach was implemented (see "UFS101" Flipping the core" in the 2014 Annual Teaching and Learning Report). In 2015 UFS101 had evolved to focus on the transition from high school to university as well as the development of critical thinking skills by teaching academic success skills in semester 1 (see "UFS101: Moving towards high-impact practices" in the 2015 Annual Teaching and Learning Report). In 2016, the majority of the units that form part of the multi-disciplinary approach to teaching in UFS101 were re-curriculated to answer the big questions that have become more pressing nationally and internationally in the last two years.

Figure 1: More than 1000 UFS101 students participating in a Sign Language learning experience.

EXPOSITION OF UNITS PRESENTED DURING 2012	
History: How do we deal with our violent past?	
LE: Screening of the War Museum Documentary, followed by discussion	Tutorial: Evaluate medical admission policies
Law: What does it mean to be fair?	
LE: Moot court with High Court Judge	
Astronomy: Are we alone?	
LE: Astronomy Fair	Tutorial: Discussion of the SKA
Economics: Why is the financial crisis described as global?	
LE: Lecture by Governor of the SA Reserve Bank	
Anthropology: How do we become South Africans?	
	Tutorial: What in South Africa would illustrate an imagined community?
Chemistry: How green is green?	
LE: Chem-Magic Show	
Theology: Did God really say?	
Screening of the movie "Joan of Arc"; LE: Free talk on the use and misuse of God	Tutorial: Analysis of "God says" discourse

EXPOSITION OF UNITS PRESENTED DURING 2016		
History: How do we deal with our violent past?		
DC 1: Reflect on the link between their memories, second-generation memories and lived experiences	DC 2: Design a reconciliation project	LE: Interview with Candice Mama about forgiveness and reconciliation
Law: Your rights vs my rights?		
DC 1: Evaluate a protest from the perspective of different stakeholders	DC 2: Protests on social media and cleaning up one's digital footprint	LE: Panel discussion on the culture of protests
Astronomy: Are we alone here?		
DC 1: Exoplanets, habitable zones and Mars	DC 2: Characteristics required to survive on Mars	LE: Astronomy talk: Are we alone here?
Economics: Why is the financial crisis described as global?		
DC 1: Globalisation from the perspective of the South African drought	DC 2: Youth unemployment	LE: Multiculturalism in Business - interactive talk with Dr John Mphapule

Anthropology: How do we become South Africans?		
DC 1: Explore difference, sameness and spheres of influence	DC 2: Active listening, social cohesion and education and democratic citizenship	LE: Panel discussion on social cohesion, democracy and solidarity
Agriculture: How do we provide food for the next generation?		
DC 1: The use of genetically modified crops	DC 2: Globalisation and agriculture	LE: Historical perspective of Agriculture
Social Psychology: How do people change?		
DC 1: Conformity and obedience: discussion of Asch and Milgram experiments	DC 2: Leadership, Power and Persuasion	LE: The Media and Relationships

In the survey circulated at the end of 2016, students were asked what their favourite part of the module was; a few of the responses are highlighted in the table below:

History
"Firstly, was i found interesting in this unit was to have a vivid picture above our background, what really happened and the initiative that has been taken to find a way forward for the future. Furthermore, learn the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation, which are the main components to move from the past and live for the future."
"I learnt the importance of placing reason above emotion without downplaying the emotion felt. This is a skill that I did not have before."
Law
"Talking about things i never took seriously, like the part we talked about digital footprint. That part made me consider a lot about my decisions and be careful about what i post."
"I was previously not familiar with the protesting act and the ways in which the constitution protects the protester, non-protester and the institution. When I learnt those this things, I gained a new found respect for our law."
Astronomy
"I found it interesting how many components need to be taken into consideration for things like excursions to Mars and how scientists have to make sure that they've covered every aspect before sending an astronaut into space"
"I got to learn a few things about Mars, and before UFS 101 i didn't know anything about Mars."
Economics
"I found almost everything interesting in this topic. The way the economy is. How countries work together to decrease the rate of unemployment around the world."
"That globalisation is a way of life and that it is one of the main linking factors for global interaction. As well as the fact that obtaining a job is still possible after obtaining my degree."
Anthropology
"It made me realise that we don't need to be the same in order to understand each other and that people need to be good listeners to achieve their goals as a community or society"
"Addressing the concept of social cohesion, it was something i was never took notice of until the learning experience."

Agriculture
"The technological methods that farmers are actually implementing to fight scarcity and famine and increase food yields and production amid global warming."
"Everything I have learnt in Agriculture have an impact in everybody's live. What I found most interesting were the ways that we came out with to ensure food sustainability."
Social Psychology
"I enjoyed the second discussion class material, in which we explored social influence, as someone who enjoys observing human behaviour and interaction, I found this topic very informative and fascinating."
"How to apply the principles of persuasion and what they are, and also how people change and what could possibly make them change."

The success of the module was largely dependent on how teaching and learning took place in the small class discussion classes (ratio of 1:40). A discussion class guide, detailing the activities and amount of time spent on each activity for each class, was issued to the teaching assistants. This ensured standardisation of the information conveyed in class. Teaching assistants had to come prepared to the bi-annual training and were then randomly selected to present the discussion classes to their peers – the teaching assistants reported that they appreciated this strategy and that it prepared them to appropriately facilitate the content with the first-year students. The teaching assistants also received unexpected visits to their classes by the UFS101 team – during these visits they were evaluated against pre-set criteria and they received immediate feedback as part of their professional development in this programme.

More than 80% of the students on both the BFN and QQ campus agreed that UFS101 teaching assistants were well prepared and friendly and that they made students feel respected and welcomed different perspectives in class. Examples of feedback include:

> *"I am so much impressed with the UFS101 teaching assistants that I met they were always respectful, they gave students the opportunity to express their views which made everyone feel welcomed in a discussion class." Participant 14*

> *"All of them are very helpful and make you feel at ease in the class. They are also interactive with all the students and I think that students then tend to pay more attention during class." Participant 36*

> *"Teaching assistants were really amazing, they allowed us to express our opinions in the discussion classes. And the things that they taught us in class were helpful when completing our online tests." Participant 851*

More than half of the Bloemfontein students and more than 80% of the Qwaqwa students reported that other South African universities should also offer this module:

> *"Students in other universities could also do with this module to fill the gap from high school to university, to learn how to socialise with people from different backgrounds and to handle all sorts of problems encountered with studies as well as peer pressure or time management. I think it's vital that every student gets that knowledge." Participant 458*

In conclusion, it is evident from the data that innovative curriculum renewal as a driver for change is possible when supported by the appropriate teaching and learning methodologies. ■

Innovation in the Faculty of Humanities using technology in the Department of Communication Science and the Department of Anthropology

Jackie Storer[1];Jolandi Bezuidenhout[2], Rentia Engelbrecht[2], Jamie-Lee Nortje[2]; Liezel Bloemerus[3], Ingrid Juries[3], & Motsaathebe Serekoane[3].

[1]Teaching and Learning Manager, Faculty of Humanities; [2]Department of Communication Science; [3]Department of Anthropology.

The idea of using social media to engage with students is not new in South African higher education. In the Faculty of Humanities, tutors and lecturers have been using "WhatsApp" groups to connect with their students and to pass along messages or course requirements for a while now. This year, however, two departments, Anthropology and Communication Science, made concerted efforts to engage first-year students in their department via other social media platforms more deliberately and more constructively.

First-year students enter the Humanities programme with a number of misconceptions as evident in the 2016 Beginning University Survey of Student Engagement (BUSSE) 2016 survey results (UFS BUSSE Report 2016). More than half of the UFS first-year students reported that they expect that their first year at university will not be more difficult than their matric year. Similarly, the vast majority of first-year students (88%) also reported that they are adequately prepared to think critically and analytically in their first-year.

Beuhl and Alexander (2001) conducted a thorough study of available literature on the relationship between beliefs and learning. Their conclusions show that while beliefs about knowledge were multidimensional and multi-layered, they significantly impact on how students learn. The study also confirmed that general beliefs about knowledge can influence domain-specific beliefs. When one considers this connection between beliefs and learning, one can see how expectations such as the above can have a distinct impact on a student's capacity to cope with the first year at university.

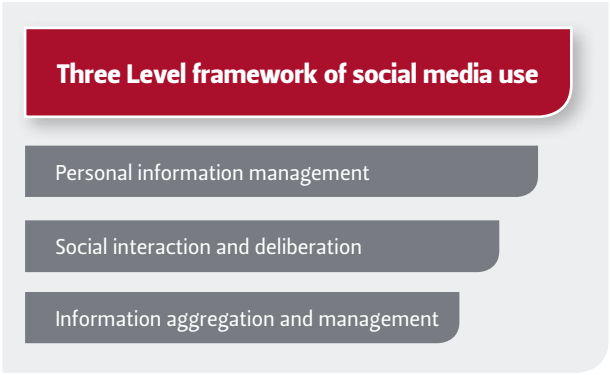
Given this background, one of the most important teaching-and-learning challenges with first year students is to communicate with them in a way that influences these beliefs and gives them the confidence and learning dispositions that will aid them to become successful students.

Department of Anthropology

The Department of Anthropology has approached this challenge from the perspective of personal learning environments (PLEs). PLEs are an offshoot of the concept of virtual learning environments (VLEs) (Juarros et al., 2014). VLEs refer broadly to the idea of teaching through technology. A PLE on the other hand focuses the attention on incorporating personally generated content using popular sharing and communicating tools

to encourage active engagement with material while empowering students to become independent learners. In their pilot, Anthropology made specific use of the online platforms of journaling and discussion groups on Blackboard and WhatsApp alongside their formal lectures and academic support sessions.

The Anthropology department relied on Zimmerman's (2000)Three-Phase Model of Self-Regulated Learning to guide their efforts to make their first-year learning experiences engaging and empowering. Zimmerman's model requires that an individual who is seeking self-regulated learning would need to invest in some forethought, some public performance and a lot of self-reflection in order to create personal meaning from learning material. Translating this to practical issues results in a three level framework of social media use, depicted as follows:



What Anthropology has experienced this year has been the challenge of encouraging students to take responsibility for moving themselves through the phases of the Zimmerman model.

We often assume that students are all "tech savvy", however, Anthropology's experience this year has shown us that the basics of helping students to understand and use the 3 levels of social media is the first hurdle. Without insight into their own personal information management, they battle to interact with academic deliberation in the social environments. The self-reflection required to make meaning and then share this meaning is not something first-years coming to university know how to do.

Support structures in the form of basic technology manipulation, rubrics that help a student to challenge their own cognitive levels while interacting on social platforms and structures to help students work through the self-reflective, critical and analytical questioning that creates meaning from information are all vital to the process. This year has been a learning experience for the Anthropology department but the innovative use of technology to empower independent learners will continue.

Department of Communication Science

This department deals with an average of 800 – 1 000 first-years. Using an integration of the theories of *Socratic questioning*, team-based and problem-based learning, first-year Communication Science lecturers engage students in interactive learning processes via videos and worksheets, paired activities and small group interactions. This is the beginning of the students' team-based learning experiences. As a dynamic and energetic group of lecturers who are all comfortable with using technology as a teaching tool, the 'teachers' manage their large classes with aplomb.

In order to consolidate learning and to provide structured academic support these students are divided into 40 tutorial groups of about 25 students each. The challenge here has been to create a standard student experience given that these groups are facilitated by 6 or 7 different tutors. To do this, two of the lecturers take the lead in designing instructional materials that guide each facilitator for the weekly activity. Worksheets are copied and distributed via our friendly Xerox centre (sometimes it is basic technology that has been around for years that facilitates the learning environment) and each facilitator gets a written guide to the activity each week. The activities are meant to consolidate the team and problem-based learning experience.

The challenge has been to get students to participate in and prepare for tutorials. This is where the use of the WhatsApp platform was brought into the learning space during 2016. Facilitators place questions on the platform which the students then have to either respond to within a certain period or use to prepare for an activity during the tutorial. The result has been an increase in student preparedness and student response to material. Students have also responded by attending more tutorials because, as they say, they now know what they are going to do and make a decision about the value of attendance.

Conclusion

Both departments have found themselves faced with challenges they did not expect. Communication Science's pilot of one platform has made their results easier to see but Anthropology's ambitious venture into PLE's has created a base for deeper exploration and building on Communications Science's success.

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Implementing a film club as part of GENL1408, an English Literacy module for Second-Language learners

Eleanor Bernard, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Introduction

A new English literacy module (GENL1408) was implemented in 2014 on the Qwaqwa Campus of the University of the Free State, which would ultimately aid students in their academic performance.

All of these students are first-year Humanities students in the extended programme. To be allowed into this programme they need an admission point of between 25 and 29. They also need to have passed English Additional Language with 50% or more.

The English language module is structured in such a way as to promote Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS, Roessingh, 2006: 91) on an intermediate English level. This module offering comprises real-life texts (like newspaper articles), real-life interviews, songs and invented videos.

One problem we experience with developing our students' language is their surroundings. Exposure to and social interaction in English is quite limited, which was also a finding of this study.

Thus, an integrated approach was considered in creating an English film club as part of the module in order to try to expose them to authentic English and an environment for social interaction in English.

Literature Review

Several factors are influential when learning a new language. Language input that learners receive during Second-Language Acquisition (SLA) is one such factor (Gámez & Lesaux, 2012:1316).

In general, many different forms of technologies can be used in language education (Chau & Lee, 2014:2). Why then make use of feature films as a means of audio-visual input? Firstly, films model the use of authentic language and natural speech, which is not usually available in textbooks (Nádasdi, Mougeon & Rehner, 2005 in Abrahms, 2014:57; Goodwin, 2004:231 in Abrahms, 2014:58; Stempleski, 1992 in Bahrani, Sim & Zuraidah, 2014:2; King, 2001:510). Secondly, movies are deemed fun and part of popular culture (Sweeney, 2006:28) and present students with a fresh approach to learning English (King, 2002:510). Thirdly, DVDs come with a variety of special features, which provide a number of pedagogical options (King, 2002:509). Fourthly, various studies show promise in using feature films (Qiang, Hai & Wolff, 2007:42; Hidayet Tuncay,2014:56; Chapple & Curtis, 2000:421).

Methods

The screenings of films was integrated with content already discussed in class. After the screening of the film students had to participate in a discussion in an online learning environment called Blackboard.

At the end of the year students had to complete a three-section questionnaire with questions regarding the film club.

The first section was a set of seven demographical questions. The second section consisted of twenty five-point Likert-type scale questions (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree), regarding their exposure to English audio-visual materials and their attitudes towards the film club. The third section comprised an open-ended question where they could comment about the film club.

This questionnaire was completed online by a total of 366 students from a group of 449 registered students. 83.4% of the participants watched two to three of the film club films that were screened. These completed questionnaires were uploaded to a programme called Questback, and statistical results with graphs were available within 24 hours.

Discussion and Results

Data regarding the students' profile suggests that most of them are younger than 24, two-thirds are female and they are mostly Zulu and Sotho home-language speakers. This information will have an influence on future implementation, especially the choice of the genre of the film, as well as the language of the film.

Their exposure to and usage of English is quite limited as most of them watch less than two hours of TV per day, and most listen to African language radio stations. With regards to English usage, 44.3% do not speak English at home. Two-thirds of the students use English in class, but their mother tongues outside of class when talking to their peers. It is thus evident that there is place for improvement regarding the amount of English exposure (input) they receive and the amount of English they use (output).

Students' willingness to participate in the Blackboard discussions and their comments suggest that the screening of the films and the discussions that accompany these screenings provide these students with a platform for social interaction in English. Although students feel positive towards the films as tools of improving their BICS and language proficiency, their opinion alone cannot be seen as adequate evidence for this. A more empirical study would need to be done to prove this (which would include control groups and pre- and post-tests).

More than 80% of students enjoy watching the films, which is an indication of motivation and that the screenings do indeed serve as an exciting, comfortable space in a usually daunting academic setting. The idea that they learn more than English, like aspects of the world, can be played into and tested in a next study.

Regarding the implementation of the film club, most of the tips drawn from literature were helpful and spot-on. With reference to students' completed surveys, more dramas, comedies and romances could be shown. (Still, it has to be taken into consideration that 61% of the participants were female, which could be a reason for a low preference for action films.)

Problems and Limitations

Clashes with other modules accounted for the main limitation in the screening of the films.

The Way Forward

This project will be continued next year, but with a few adjustments in mind.

Most importantly, to establish the film club's efficiency regarding influence on students' BICS and English proficiency, control groups need to be created with pre- and post-tests added as instruments for data collection.

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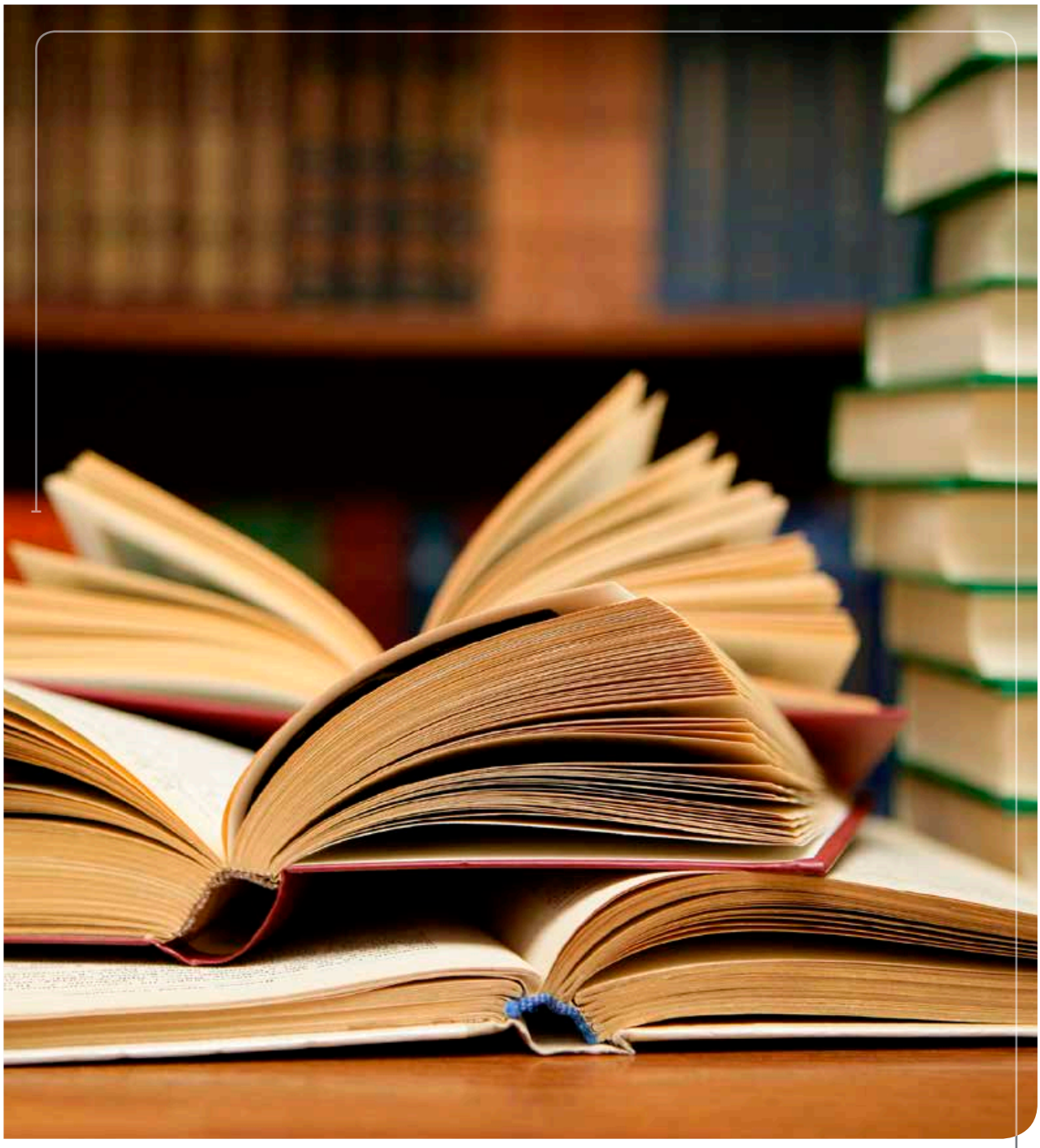

EVIDENCE-BASED CHANGE THROUGH ASSESSMENT

General English Literacy Course (GENL1408) on the Qwaqwa Campus

Dr Marga Stander, Centre for Teaching and Learning

1. Introduction

The General English Literacy Course (GENL1408) was introduced in 2014 on the Qwaqwa Campus. The reason for implementing this course is that students still lack Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS[1]). The Academic Literacy course (EALH), which was implemented on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa Campuses before 2014, assists students in achieving academic success. This course focuses on students' Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP[2]), which equips students with the ability to classify, compare, identify cause and effect, and to interpret complex texts. But students are not able to do this if they have not mastered BICS first. Therefore, the GENL1408 course was introduced in order to provide students with the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills.

Currently the GENL1408 course is offered to students in the BA-degree programme and students who completed this course in their first year will enrol for the EALH course in their second year.

2. Rationale for implementing GENL1408

Since the English linguistic competence of first-years entering the Qwaqwa campus presents many challenges, Prof Arlys van Wyk drafted a document, titled "A general language course for first-year 'Access' and Extended Degree Programme students in the Faculty of Humanities on Qwaqwa campus: A rationale".[3] In this document it is mentioned that this course will address accessing textbooks, writing academically, taking notes in class and interacting in lectures. To be able to achieve this, students need basic language skills, or BICS, which are skills used to communicate on a daily basis, for example buying articles in a shop or reading an email or magazine. Most of our students come from schools in the surrounding rural areas where English is not their home language and they have not acquired these skills at school. For most of the teachers in these schools, English is not their home language either and they are not proficient in English themselves and therefore 75% of learners are not exposed to CALP at school.[4] The 2012 DIRAP report also states that students obtain low scores on linguistic testing instruments.[5] The GENL1408 course aims to develop critical thinking, reading, writing, and language abilities through a series of tasks and activities that include exercises in grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing and oral competencies. The main focus is to build on and develop students' general English literacy.

3. Structure and organisation of GENL1408

3.1 Classes

Students need to attend two classes of two hours each per week, i.e. four hours per week. The ideal number of students per group is 35, but due to timetable clashes, the number of students can be less than 20 or more than 35. However, we try not to make the groups bigger than 40 per class. This year, 2016, there were a total number of 670 students who were divided into 18 groups with eight facilitators.

3.2 Learning materials

The course material was carefully chosen by Prof Arlys van Wyk and is called "English File Third Edition", developed by Christina Latham-Koenig and Clive Oxenden. This includes a student's book with a DVD-ROM, workbook and teacher's book with a test and assessment CD-ROM. There are 10 files in total and we teach 4 files per semester.

3.3 Assessments

Because the GENL1408 course is a developmental course and a one-year module, students do not need to write a formal examination. The final mark for 2016 will be calculated from the following assessments: multiple choice quizzes that test their grammar and vocabulary (done on Blackboard through the Respondus application); written assignments per semester; reflective writings per semester; a written essay; and summative semester tests. Rubrics and answer sheets are provided to the facilitators to ensure that the standard of marking is maintained in all the groups.

3.4 Pre- and post-test

Students need to write an entry test (pre-test) at the beginning of the 1st semester, testing their general grammar and vocabulary knowledge. The same test is written at the end of the 2nd semester (post-test). Students do not need to prepare for either of the two tests. The results of the two tests in Table 1 show that there was an overall increase of grammar and vocabulary knowledge by 4,63% from the pre- to the post-test. The standard deviation decreased from 9,54 to 3,98.

	Pre-test	Post-test
Average (out of 50)	40,64	42,96
Standard deviation	9,54	3,98
Percentage	81,28%	85,91%

Table 1: Students' Pre- and Post-test Results

4. Conclusion

The GENL1408 course has proven to be a success on the Qwaqwa campus. It would be beneficial to compare the marks of students in the EALH course who have followed the GENL1408 course to the marks of those students in the EALH course who did not follow this course (students before 2014). These results suggest that the GENL1408 could help support student academic performance. In light of these findings the course could be extended to three other faculties on campus, namely Education, Economic and Management Sciences and Natural and Agricultural Sciences. ■

1 BICS: a term developed by Cummins, J. (1980). Psychological assessment of immigrant children: Logic or intuition? Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 1, 97-lll. doi: 10.1080/01434632.1980.9994005.

2 CALP: a term developed by Cummins, J. (1980).

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A_STEP expands quality tutorial support on a cost-effective basis

Evodia Mohoanyane, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Background

Peer-facilitated learning has been proven as a leading teaching-and-learning pedagogical model internationally, therefore the University of the Free State (UFS) has incorporated it into its tutorial system. The tutorial system at the UFS initially started out as the New Academic Tutorial Program (NATP) in 2007, but evolved and is now known as the Academic Student Tutorial and Excellence programme (A_STEP). The latter is characterised by centralised training, based on internationally benchmarked Supplemental Instruction (SI) principles, and is contextualised to meet the unique needs of UFS students and can therefore be considered a hybrid model. The peer-facilitated tutorial programme focuses on creating an innovative academic support network for students.

How it works and what we hope to achieve

The A_STEP encourages regular attendance of tutorials, both online, using Blackboard, and face-to-face, and believes that continued participation over time plays an important role in student success. This hybrid model's desired outcomes are:

- Create a new approach to the support and development of student learning to maximise throughput and success rates;
- Integrate and contextualise cutting-edge international, electronic resources and teaching-and-learning approaches, through the development of a Blackboard interface into the training and development of tutors;
- Contribute to the development of a new generation of future academics that are skilled in teaching and learning and cultivate students who are independent and take ownership of their learning and success.

How we manage and coordinate

This ever-growing network of student academic support is coordinated by a team of 8 Teaching and Learning Coordinators (TLCs) and interns who ensure the day-to-day deployment of more than 300 tutorial sessions daily across the Bloemfontein, Qwaqwa and South campus. As the model developed over the past 10 years of implementation it improved the quality of teaching and learning through 55 tutors in 2007 and 332 in 2016.

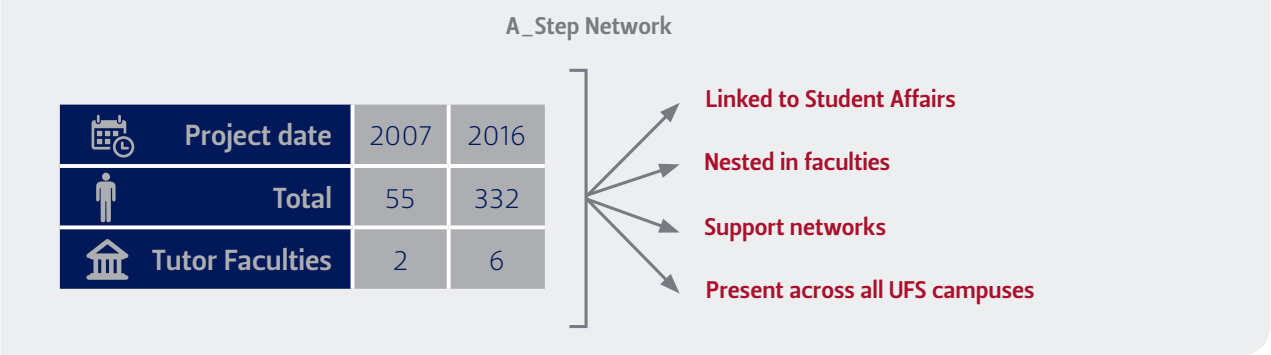
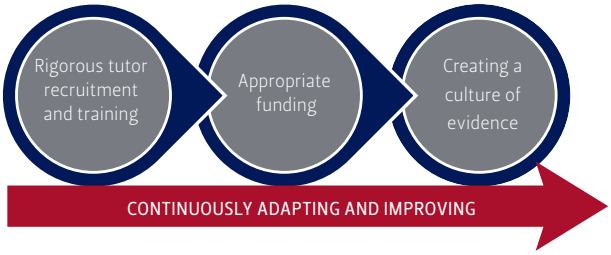


Figure 1: The evolving A_Step Network from 2007 to 2016.

Evolving through the use of data

Through the use of data we have been able to identify gaps in the model; implement evidence-based solutions; channel and modify support; improve management, monitoring and quality assurance processes as well as provide frequent and accurate feedback to the various stakeholders and data is now displayed on the interactive tracking dashboard. We have used this data to help us streamline operations and create better efficiencies in the programme. The new approach has had a major impact on the human component by enabling resources to focus on other tasks within the ASTEP model. Instead of just punching in numbers, we are able to make more sense of what these numbers tell us and push timeous support to students.

Continuously Adapting and Improving



Results

Since 2013, tutorial attendance has increased by 72%, while time tutors dedicated to tutorial session have also increased from an average of 62 hours a week to 98 hours a week in 2016.

	Hours Tutored	Sessions Presented*	Attendance
2013	8746.35	7304	66641
2014	11346.11	9415	90429
2015	12993.77	10445	111527
Oct. 2016	9804	7130	92461

Table 1: Tutorial session details from 2013 to 2015 and October 2016.

*Attended at least one session

To date, A_STEP covers approximately 60% of our undergraduate student population compared to 20% coverage in 2013. Furthermore, this way of working has allowed us to cut the cost of a tutorial per student by 9% in 2015, while tutorial attendance increased by 23% and tutor appointments by an additional 24%.

Conclusion

Due to the A_STEP's increase in attendance rates since 2007, it is clearly necessary that the A_STEP should continuously adapt and improve its programme for the success of its ever-increasing number of students. The content should continue to be evaluated and should reflect the efficiency of this tutorial system and how data can be used to improve practice and effectively manage a fully scaled tutorial programme at the UFS. ■

The perceptions of various role-players on the Academic Student Tutorial and Excellence Programme in the Faculty of Education

Wiets Botes, Teaching and Learning Coordinator: Faculty of Education

Background

Since 2007, the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) prioritized the academic support for UFS students through the introduction and implementation of a formalized and well-structured tutor programme. In line with the CTL objective to 'engage students for success', the Academic Student Tutorial and Excellence Programme (A_STEP) aims to advance student throughput in historically challenging modules across faculties at the UFS. A typical A_STEP tutorial is characterised by a small-group, collaborative, student-centred learning environment where the role of the A_STEPer[1] is to facilitate the learning process of his/her A_STEPeers[2].

A_STEP impact on student success

According to the 2015 Annual A_STEP Faculty report, the tutor programme has shown to have had a substantial impact on students' academic success in the Faculty of Education (FoE). A correlation of students' tutorial attendance with their academic performance indicated a clear relationship between tutorial attendance and academic performance as illustrated in Figure 1.

Faculty role-players in the A_STEP

The sustainability and effectiveness of the A_STEP is a product of the continuing support and relationship between relevant role-players (teaching and learning coordinator, module lecturers, tutors and tutees) in the faculty (De Smet, Van Keer, De Wever & Valcke, 2010). This relationship is graphically portrayed in Figure 2.

In an effort to continuously nurture the relationship between relevant role-players, the faculty's TLC embarked on an investigation to determine how both faculty lecturers and tutors perceived the A_STEP in general. The investigation entailed a series of personal interviews held with lecturers that were familiar with the A_STEP. Thereafter, an attempt was made to unravel tutors' experiences as learning facilitators. This was done through a thorough analysis of tutors' portfolio submissions made.

1 A_STEPer: A tutor in the A_STEP tutor programme.

2 A_STEPeer: A student/tutee being tutored by the tutor or A_STEPer.

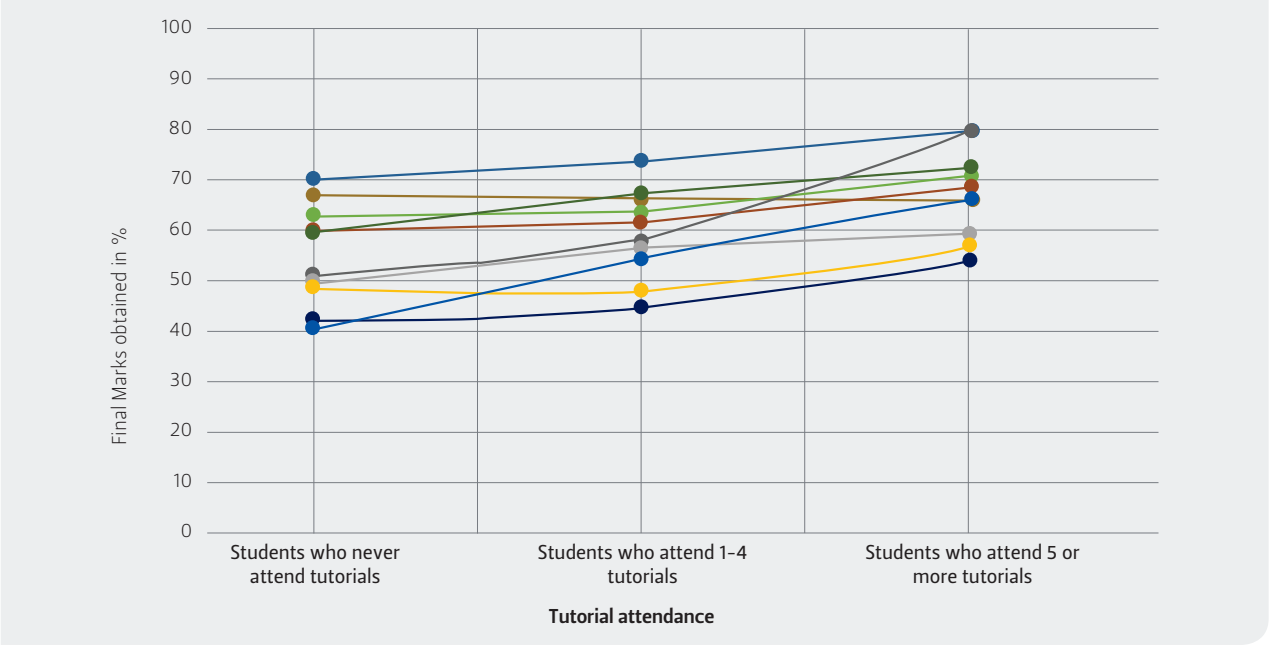


Figure 1: A-STEP impact on student performance.

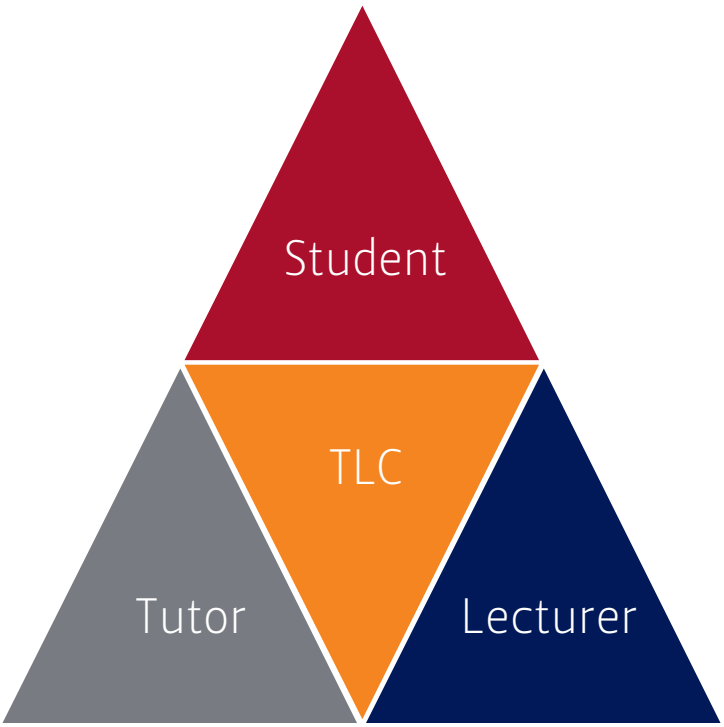


Figure 2: Faculty role-players in the A_STEP.

Lecturers' perceptions of tutoring provided

The purpose of the personal interviews was to inquire how lecturers experienced tutor support in their various modules. Lecturers were randomly selected, subject to their availability in the faculty. Various open-ended questions were posed to the lecturers, and their responses were recorded. Verbatim transcription, followed by content analysis, rendered the conceptual map portrayed in Figure 3, which served to support the interpretation of the findings.

Lecturers' responses rendered mostly positive feedback on the role of tutors as an academic support structure for students. They also agreed that the innovative teaching strategies utilised by tutors positively impacted on the academic success of students.

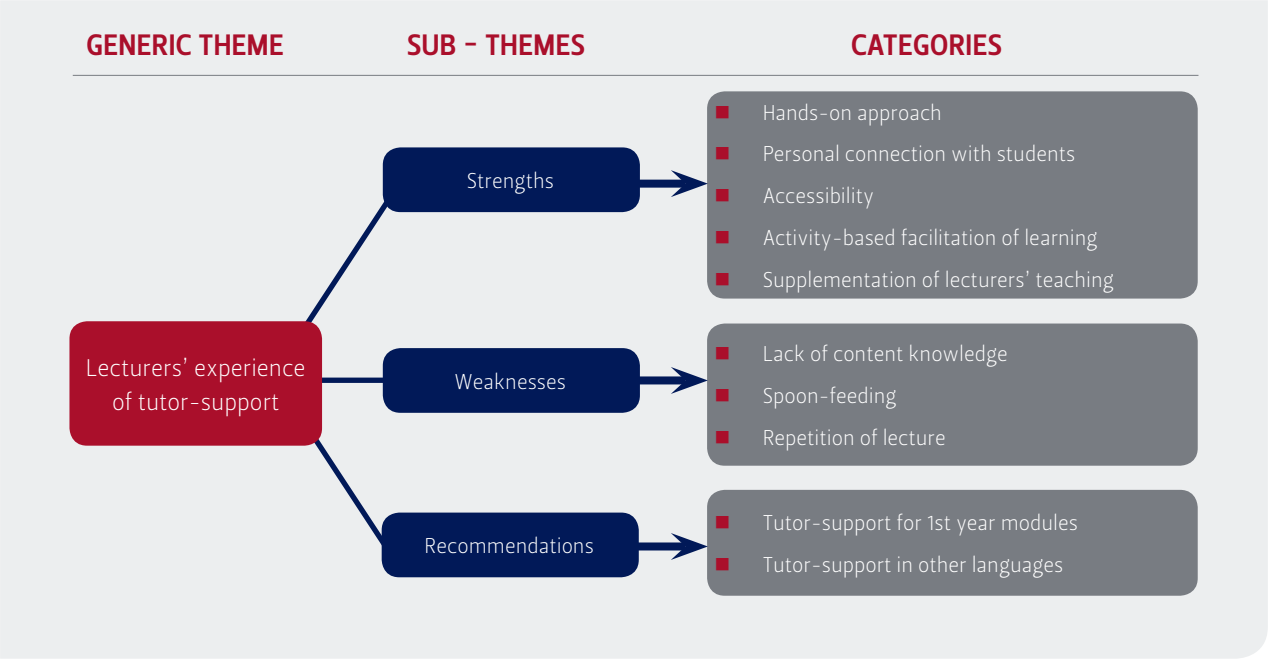


Figure 3: Findings from semi-structured interviews with lecturers.

What concerned them, however, was the potentially negative effect of intensive assistance on the academic development of tutees. They also suggested that tutor support should be made available in different languages (e.g. English, Sesotho, Afrikaans) in all 1st-year undergraduate modules in the faculty.

Tutors' end-reflection on the overall A_STEP tutoring experience

One of the tutors' key responsibilities was to compile a portfolio that served as an end-reflection on their tutoring careers. A total of 30 portfolios were voluntarily submitted for analysis during the 2015 academic year.

All 30 portfolios were analysed with the intention to unravel tutorship experiences in the faculty over a period of two semesters in 2015. A frequency count revealed that tutors referred 95 times to experiences they had had during the 'early' (47 references) and the more 'advanced' (48 references) stages, respectively, of their tutoring careers.

Tutors' end reflections were characterised by signs of emotion and self-critique during both early and advanced stages of their tutoring careers. The extent to which their emotions and self—critique tainted these experiences will now be illustrated in tables 1 - 3.

	Comments containing emotional wording	Qualifying verbatim responses
Emotional experiences	'Doubt', 'intense', 'exciting', 'anxious', 'scared', 'fun', 'uncertain', 'nerve wrecking' and 'disappointed'	*... [I] must admit I was very nervous and didn't know what to expect. Some of the students were older than me and I had no idea of what am I going to do should they try to disrespect me. I kept asking myself "what if they don't like me" or "what if I can't answer the questions that they pose", what will I do then?* ***Tutor 18*** *My first tutorial session with the tutees was insightful and a positive experience. I was not nervous to talk to them. They were very open towards me in asking questions or talking about the work they struggled with.* ***Tutor 9***

Table 1: Early-stage tutoring experiences.

Similarly, mixed emotions regarding tutors' own facilitative teaching approach also characterised the early beginnings of their tutorship as shown in the table.

	Words pointing towards self-critique	Qualifying verbatim responses
Self-critique	'boredom', 'disengagement', 'great cooperation', 'struggled', 'unable to manage discussions', 'made learning easier' and 'spoke too quickly'	*... in my head all I could think about was whether I was making learning easier for them by using the teaching method that I was using. It felt like I could not get them going in having discussions in groups. I wanted them to feel free to talk about controversial issues such as racism and prejudice.* ***Tutor 17*** *... about ten minutes into the presentation I realised that I had lost my group or it was merely boredom setting in because I was in fact "re-lecturing". There was a sense of complete disengagement and lack of true and meaningful learning.* ***Tutor 4***

Table 2: Early-stage tutoring experiences.

	Comments containing emotional wording	Qualifying verbatim responses
Emotional experiences& self-critique	'confident', 'in control', 'familiar', 'comfortable', 'relaxed', 'enthusiastic', 'proud' and 'motivated'	*... once I became familiar with the process, I became confident, and I was not nervous of them [tutees] asking a lot of questions anymore. I respected my tutees and I got the same in return from most of them.* ***Tutor 17*** *... as time went on I became more confident. This made me feel proud and motivated to carry on and better my work. Now I come into my classes and my students are already there and I always have a smile on my face. I am very motivated and passionate about my career and my work.* ***Tutor 20*** *... my role was clearer to me because at this point I understood that my responsibility as a facilitator was to manage the learning processes and to focus on their learning. It became clear to me that there is a difference between facilitating and lecturing.* ***Tutor 17***

Table 3: Advanced-stage tutoring experiences.

Advanced-stage tutoring experiences

Feedback on the more advanced stages of tutoring revealed that tutors' negative emotional state evolved to a more positive one as they became more familiar with the tutoring process. Their positive emotions also triggered a more positive outlook and experience of their own tutoring approach, as seen in Table 3.

Even though greater self-confidence is an expected outcome of prolonged practice, it was encouraging to note that the tutors in an advanced stage of tutorship had not become complacent, but rather more dedicated to the goal of facilitation and the cultivation of independency among tutees.

Concluding comments

This report provided an overview of the potential impact of the A_STEP as a teaching-and-learning support structure capable of engaging students for success. The report also shed light on relevant role-players' experiences of the tutor programme. Apart from the positive feedback provided by lecturers, their concerns (weaknesses and suggestions) should also be considered (see Figure 3). Tutors' perceptions of being a learning facilitator, on the other hand, included feelings of "highs" and "lows". The introduction of a possible mentor structure can be seen as a strategy to support and assist beginner tutors through the gruelling first tutorials.

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DEVELOPING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

An evidence-based framework for the restructuring of service learning in Management Sciences

Dr Elanie Myburgh, Teaching and Learning Coordinator: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Background

"Our Faculty is very much theory-focused. Once graduates start working, it is like a three-year-old thrown into a swimming pool."

The above comment made by a former student in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) demonstrates the need that students have concerning the practical application of their theory, knowledge and skills when entering the world of work. Employers are increasingly looking for graduates with a complete skills set, namely work experience, practical application of knowledge, communication skills, leadership, working with diverse people and computer skills, to name a few. In an attempt to address the growing need for such skills, also referred to as employability skills, Sapp (2000) states that institutions of higher education should begin shifting the emphasis to providing instruction according to a teaching philosophy geared to producing authentic learning. One way of including authentic learning in curricula is through service learning. Service learning is a form of experiential learning, created through a spirit of civic responsibility (Binard & Leavitt, 2000); it exists as a means to bring ownership to the learning process and enable students to develop – through experience – the employability skills mostly required in the workplace. In an effort to address the needs of students entering the world of work, the EMS faculty targeted service learning as the vehicle to create awareness of and foster the development of discipline-specific employability skills. The question arose, however: How would a cohort of BCom students perceive and experience the effect that service learning activities had on their employability skills before and after employment? This knowledge could guide the faculty in restructuring their service learning programme according to the expressed needs.

Methodology

Through the collection of qualitative data as part of an exploratory case study design I was able to address the burning question. A purposeful and comprehensive sample of 293 BCom students took part in the first phase of the study in 2013. Data included an open-ended pre-implementation questionnaire, letter to a friend, PowerPoint presentation assessment task, reflective journal and an open-ended post-implementation

questionnaire. The second phase of the research that was conducted in 2015 included focus group interviews with 40 students that successfully completed the module in 2013. The purpose was to determine, after employment, whether they experienced the skills acquired through the service learning as useful or not.

Results of the study

The majority of the 2013 cohort students acknowledged that service learning helped them to acquire employability skills like improved communication skills, time management, conflict management skills and working with diverse people. However, the overarching theme that was revealed by all of the data was that students felt empowered because they could practically apply their theoretical knowledge. Two years later (2015) I invited 40 former students back for focus group interviews. In the focus group interviews the students acknowledged that they did not fully appreciate the need for the module or skills in 2013. Only when they started to apply for positions and, in particular, on entering the world of work did they realise the importance of the employability skills acquired. The students were convinced that, as a result of their service learning experiences, they were able to handle conflict better, found it easier to work with diverse

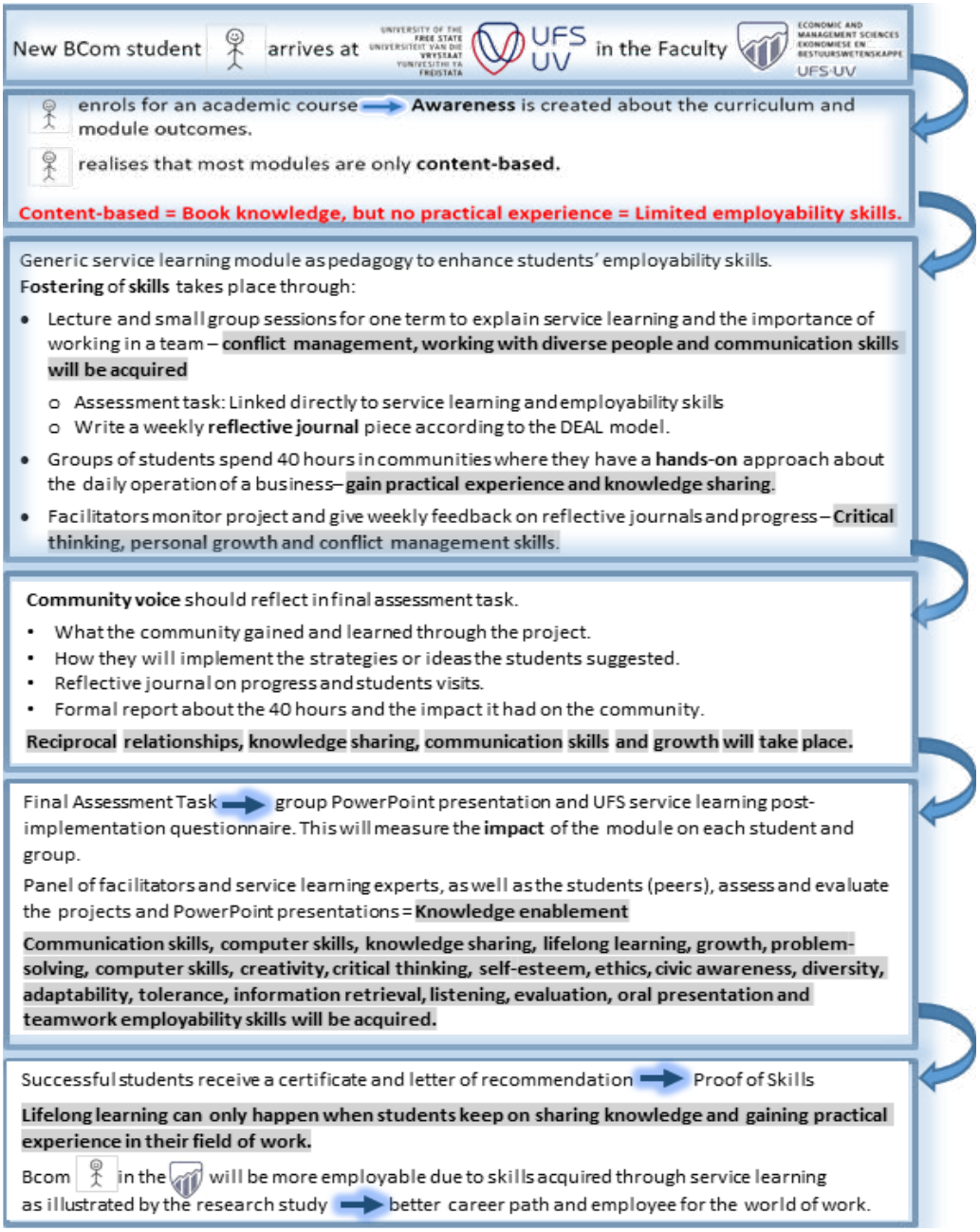

Figure 1: Proposed framework (Author's own).

people, write good quality reports, had acquired better time management skills and improved self-esteem. The improved self-esteem that they reported was due to the fact that they felt comfortable to share and apply their theoretical knowledge. The mentioned employability skills are crucial for the world of work. Consequently a possible framework along with a set of guidelines was developed that focuses specifically on the use of service learning to enhance employability skills.

Proposed framework

The proposed framework is meant to be a practical, step-by-step and user-friendly tool for academic staff or HEIs. The most important aspect of the framework is that academic staff members involved in service learning should integrate and make students aware of the employability skills that are linked to the service-learning pedagogy in their service-learning projects, as well as other teaching-and-learning activities and assessment tasks. The framework depicted in Figure 1 requires that employability skills and service learning should not be viewed in silos, but rather as a type of pedagogy that can have an impact and improve the students' chances of employment in the world of work. Students need to be able to adapt to the changing world of work and labour market through practical experience and application of skills.

Way forward 2017

The proposed framework and set of guidelines will be implemented in the faculty during the 2017 academic year. Adherence to the framework can potentially enhance students' employability skills and also create awareness on the "skills gap" that students need to overcome before leaving the university. It is believed that companies will also receive a better prepared graduate that can cope better with the adjustment into to world of work.

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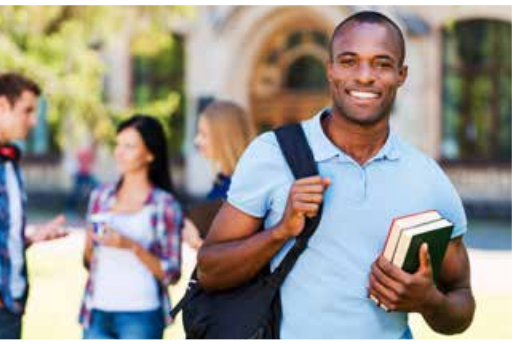

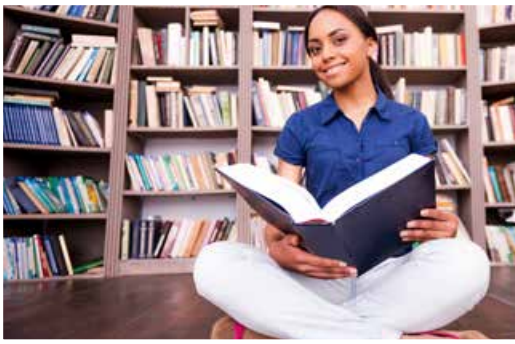

CONTACT US

University of the Free State
PO Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
South Africa

205 Nelson Mandela Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein

T: +27 (0)51 401 7421

E: ctl@ufs.ac.za