



South African Survey of Student Engagement

Enhancing the quality of teaching and learning: Using student engagement data to establish a culture of evidence



J F Strydom, N Basson & M Mentz
SASSE 2010 project

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Published by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) in 2012

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ISBN: 978-1-919856-85-8

FOREWORD

The “revolving door” syndrome in which increased access to higher education is not matched by a concomitant increase in student success continues to characterise the higher education system in South Africa. This is illustrated by the fact that while headcount enrolments in higher education increased by 14% between 2005 and 2009, the student success rate increased by only 2%. There are a range of factors that contribute to low throughput and graduation rates, and includes, amongst others, poor schooling and the resulting under-preparedness of students to pursue higher education, lack of fluency in the language of instruction, inadequate access to financial support and student support services.

However, important as these factors are, the key to improving throughput and graduation rates in higher education lies in strengthening teaching and learning, which provides the foundation and is a necessary condition for improving the latter. In line with this, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the CHE has decided that in the next round of quality assurance, the focus will shift from auditing institutional quality assurance systems, processes and policies to reviewing the conceptual assumptions informing institutional approaches to teaching and learning and their translation into practice in relation to curriculum development and pedagogic innovation, including course design, delivery and assessment and the level of learning support for students. This focus on the coalface of the educational process in higher education will contribute to identifying the constraints and enable the development of solutions to enhance teaching and learning and through it improve student retention and success in higher education.

It is against this background that the CHE has supported the pilot study on student engagement - the South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) initiated by the University of the Free State in 2009. The pilot was extended in 2010 to include lecturers to complement and compare the students’ perspectives on student engagement with those of their teachers. In total, the 2009 and 2010 surveys reached 23 042 respondents from 11 higher education institutions, including in 2010, a private provider.

The results of the two SASSE surveys provide a rich source of data on the student experience in higher education both in terms of how students approach their studies and how institutions facilitate students to engage in meaningful learning activities, including in this report, the lecturers’ expectations of, and approach, to student learning. The results of the surveys, complemented by more detailed research into particular findings, would enable the identification of interventions – both systemic and institutional, that could contribute to the strengthening of teaching and learning in higher education.

On behalf of the CHE I would like to thank Dr Francois Strydom and his team at the University of the Free State for initiating this pilot and for their enthusiasm and professionalism in carrying out the research and in preparing this report. We trust that higher education institutions would recognise the value of the SASSE study and continue to support its development both sectorally and institutionally.

Ahmed Essop
Chief Executive Officer
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1. INTRODUCTION

Enhancing the quality of teaching and learning is a key strategic focus area in higher education. From a national perspective, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has identified the improvement of teaching and learning to be of critical importance for improving success rates and has acknowledged the strategic role of the monitoring, evaluation, and financing of teaching and learning (DHET, 2012). The importance of investment in teaching and learning is also underscored in the 10-Point Plan for higher education and training developed by the Development Bank of Southern African (DBSA), commissioned by DHET (DBSA, 2010).

Internationally, public accountability demands on higher education institutions, especially in relation to the quality of teaching and learning, are increasing and higher education institutions have to find ways of providing evidence in concrete, observable and measurable ways of what they are doing to improve teaching and learning (McCormick, 2009). Research into student engagement shows that although student engagement measures are used in countries such as the United States (US), Australia and New Zealand for external accountability purposes, the greatest value of these measures lies in the fact that they promote critical, internal self-reflection or reflective accountability (McCormick, 2009). In other words, the data from these measures help institutions to promote a culture of evidence-based decision making by providing data to identify areas of strength and weakness in the teaching and learning environment. Used in addition to existing institutional data results from the surveys they assist institutions to develop contextually appropriate interventions to improve teaching and learning.

In addition to promoting a culture of evidence-based decision making in higher education, institutional-level assessments of teaching and learning can further the development of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL). Hutchings, Huber and Ciccone, (2011) indicate that institutional-level assessment, such as student engagement surveys, can provide evidence of the impact that the development of teaching and learning scholarship has had in institutions.

In response to the strategic importance of enhancing teaching and learning both nationally and internationally, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) has proposed a framework for the second cycle of quality assurance that takes the form of institutional reviews focused on teaching and learning activities in undergraduate education.

In the context of the discussion above, the aims of this report are to:

- Introduce student engagement and show how it can help to enhance teaching and learning;
- Share relevant results and the key findings from the national study of student engagement and success; and
- Show how a range of student engagement measures can provide actionable data that can be used to further a culture of evidence that will enhance the quality of teaching and learning as well as empower institutions to develop an orientation towards critical, internal self-reflection and respond to external accountability demands.

2. WHAT IS STUDENT ENGAGEMENT?

Having reflected on the important role that student engagement could play in the enhancement of teaching and learning, we would like to provide a brief conceptual and theoretical introduction to student engagement.

2.1. DEFINING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Student engagement is defined in terms of two key components. The first is 'the amount of time and effort students spend on academic activities and other activities that lead to the experiences and outcomes that constitute student success. The second is the ways in which institutions allocate resources and organise learning opportunities and services to induce students to participate in and benefit from such activities' (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005). Put differently, student engagement can be defined by two key components: first, what students do (the time and energy they devote to educationally purposive activities) and second, what institutions do (the extent to which they employ effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things).

Therefore, instruments used to measure student engagement not only provide institutions with data on how students are learning, but also to what extent institutions are employing effective methods to help students engage in educationally purposeful activities. As indicated earlier, one of the primary applications of student engagement data is the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in higher education.

2.2. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL FOUNDATION OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Student engagement research has its origins in educational research that emerged as early as the 1900's with Tyler's focus on the importance of the amount of time spent on academic tasks (Merwin, 1969) and later longitudinal research by Pace (1980, 1984, 1990) into the effect of quality of effort on desired student outcomes (Kuh, 2009a). Over the course of more than 30 years, Astin's research on student involvement (1977, 1984, 1993, 1999) has confirmed that any form of student involvement (the amount of physical and psychological time and energy the student invests in the educational process) is positively associated with a wide variety of academic outcomes. In fact, one of the primary findings in *How College Affects Students* (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), is that the time and energy students devote to their own educational experience relates directly to student success. Student engagement scholarship places a strong emphasis on student involvement in learning in terms of the quality of effort, as well as time spent on tasks.

However, student engagement extends beyond students' time and involvement in their studies to examine the extent of student participation in effective educational practices as outlined by Chickering and Gamson in their landmark publication 'Seven principles for good practices in undergraduate education' (1987). In this publication, Chickering and Gamson outline seven principles that encompass what students should be doing during their undergraduate education to optimise their personal development and to promote effective learning. The primary

premise of their work is that when students and staff take the responsibility to devote time and effort to tasks related to these principles, student learning and success will improve (Kuh & Vesper, 1997). The principles are: student-staff interaction, cooperation between students, active learning, prompt feedback, time on task, high expectations of students, and, lastly, respect for diverse talents and ways of learning. These widely researched principles continue to influence teaching and learning practices globally (Kuh & Vesper, 1997) and recently published national longitudinal projects in the US have confirmed the continued importance of implementing them (Blaich & Wise, 2011).

2.3. WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM STUDENT ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS?

Research shows that student engagement surveys help institutions to identify levels of student involvement in activities that are likely to generate high quality learning (Devlin, Coates, & Kinzie, 2008). In the absence of reliable indicators of actual student learning, student engagement surveys are “process indicators or proxies for student learning outcomes” (Banta, Pike, & Hansen, 2009; Kuh, 2009a). Kinzie (2011) suggests that these measures can help us obtain a more direct indication of what students put into their education while simultaneously providing an indirect indication of what they get out of their education in terms of the teaching and learning experience. The surveys can also be used as diagnostic measures of how to improve learning (Devlin et al., 2008).

3. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

In the introduction we reflected briefly on how student engagement surveys can be used to contribute to the enhancement of teaching and learning quality. These surveys are able to do this as they are designed to provide institutions with actionable data. In other words, student engagement surveys provide information to higher education institutions about aspects the institutions can do something about. This section will explore the different ways in which the data from student engagement surveys can be used to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

3.1. PROVIDING ACTIONABLE DATA FOR IMPROVING STUDENT RETENTION AND PROGRESS

Higher education research indicates that the best predictors of whether or not a student will graduate are academic preparation and motivation (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Unfortunately, the only possible way to control these two variables is to employ more stringent admission and/or selection policies, which is not a viable alternative in a century where, internationally, the higher education sector has to enrol more students from increasingly diverse backgrounds. More than a decade of research into effective higher education institutions in the United States points to a third factor, namely student engagement, that – at least marginally – can enhance the prospect that students will survive and thrive after matriculating (Kuh et al., 2005; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Regarding first-year students, empirical longitudinal research reveals links between levels of student engagement and higher academic grades, higher first-to-second year persistence and graduation rates as well as a small compensatory effect on the academic grades of students who entered the institution with lower levels of academic achievement. Furthermore, African American students have also been shown to draw greater benefit than White students from increased engagement levels (Kuh et al., 2007).

In the case of senior students, increased participation in effective educational practices exercises a small yet positive impact on the academic performance, while higher levels of engagement in the early years of college have a compounding effect on students' grades at a later stage of their higher education experience (Kuh et al., 2007).

Evidence for similar relationships established through longitudinal research on student engagement in the South African context could provide institutional leaders and policy makers with the evidence needed to confidently design and implement policies that promote the use of effective educational practices in higher education nationally. Although there are limits to what institutions can realistically do to address the effects of years of educational disadvantage, all institutions can improve levels of student engagement by promoting, and even requiring, participation in educationally effective practices (Kuh et al., 2007). The investment in the two-year national research on student engagement has provided a good start for research in this field, but additional data and research is needed to explore the relationship between engagement and success.

Based on an analysis of the 20 most engaging institutions in the USA context, six common institutional characteristics and conditions essential for student engagement were identified. These properties and conditions enable student engagement to flourish and help create institutional cultures that promote student success (Kuh et al., 2005). Each of these is listed below and discussed briefly:

a) **A “living” mission and “lived” educational philosophy**

The mission of an institution should be “alive” or lived out by its staff and students. The mission should be used to explain the behaviour of staff and students and should provide an insight into the direction the institution is heading.

b) **An unshakeable focus on student learning**

Student learning must become the rationale for the daily activities of everyone in the institution. However, sustaining this unwavering focus is labour-intensive, i.e. staff members and others must “make time for students”, but in order to improve student success the whole institution has to prioritise innovation and performance around student learning (Kuh et al., 2005). In light of the concern about the quality of teaching and learning in South Africa, an emphasis on this condition could bring a new emphasis to the importance of focusing on learning (CHE, 2009).

c) **Creating learning environments that promote educational enrichment**

Physical and psychological environments within an institution should support learning and must reinforce its educational mission and values. This condition has implications for the rethinking of residence structures and campus layout, as well as providing facilities for commuter students who form the majority grouping of students in higher education across the world today (Horn & Berktold, 1998).

d) **Clarifying the pathways that maximise student success**

Students, especially first-generation students, need to be taught what the institution’s values are, what successful students do and where to find resources. These messages can be clearly and effectively communicated through first-year experience programmes and/or formal orientation programmes. In order to effectively clarify the pathways to success, appropriate investment of resources needs to be made taking into account the institutional mission and student characteristics. An early warning system as part of a more sophisticated student tracking approach is essential in getting appropriate support provided to students when they need it.

e) **Facilitating an improvement-orientated institutional culture and ethos**

Institutions that are effective at engaging and nurturing success are characterised by “positive relentlessness” (Kuh et al., 2005). These institutions are confident about what they are, where they are going, and they believe that they can always improve.

f) **Making sure that the quality of learning and student success is owned by everyone in the institution**

Everyone is an educator and everyone accepts responsibility for student learning to create a culture that nurtures and promotes student success. The importance of student success has to be endorsed by the university council, driven and championed by top and middle management, facilitated by academic staff and complemented by support staff. Therefore, an institutional network is essential for impacting on success and throughput rates. This network approach enables an institution to do many different things better and more frequently; an approach that will be more successful at reaching a substantial number of students in meaningful ways than investing large amounts of resources in one large and complicated initiative.

3.2. PROVIDING ACTIONABLE DATA TO IDENTIFY CONSTRAINTS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

As indicated earlier, student engagement surveys provide student self-report data on the extent to which students engage in educationally effective practices and the extent to which the institution makes use of these practices. Therefore, an analysis of the student engagement data will provide an institution with information about the extent to which students are engaged in effective educational practices such as studying, reading, tutoring, asking questions in class, to name a few. The same student engagement data set could be used to provide feedback on the extent to which students experience the institution as supportive, and their classroom as providing active and collaborative learning opportunities. This data can then be used to develop interventions at either the student or staff levels to address practices that might constrain teaching and learning. When combined with data from the Lecturer Survey of Student Engagement (LSSE), this data provides institutions with a student and staff perspective on engagement as well as with information on how staff say they are spending their time, providing a richer picture of possible constraints to good teaching and learning at the institutional level and across the higher education sector. The use of different student engagement surveys at the institutional and modular level is explored in section 5.

3.3. PROVIDING ACTIONABLE DATA FOR INNOVATION IN PEDAGOGIC PRACTICES

In relation to changing teaching and learning practices, a presentation by Dr Jillian Kinzie (Associate Director, Center for Postsecondary Research & NSSE Institute) at the first SASSE users' workshop in March 2010 highlighted research-based, high-impact pedagogical practices that increase retention, persistence and student success. Student success is promoted when students frequently:

1. Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions
2. Make a class presentation
3. Prepare two or more drafts of a paper or assignment
4. Work with other students on projects during class
5. Work with classmates outside of class on assignments
6. Tutor or teach other students (paid or voluntary)
7. Participate in a community - based project as part of a regular course
8. Talk about career plans with a lecturer
9. Discuss ideas from readings or classes with a lecturer outside class
10. Receive prompt feedback on their academic performance
11. Work harder than they think they can
12. Work with lecturers on activities outside coursework (committees, student life, etc.)
13. Discuss ideas from readings or classes with others
14. Spend time studying and preparing academic work
15. Have serious conversations with students of a different ethnicity and with those who differ from themselves in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.

All 15 activities are items that are included on the SASSE and can be used by an institution to reflect on the extent to which high-impact activities are present in the teaching and learning experience. The idea is not that every module on every level of undergraduate education engages students in all of these activities, but that when curricula are developed and programmes are planned, these practices are integrated throughout an undergraduate's learning experience at the institution. These practices can intentionally be facilitated across traditional academic and support lines so that all staff at the institution start focusing on their contribution to student learning.

3.4. PROVIDING ACTIONABLE DATA FOR INNOVATION IN CURRICULUM DESIGN

In 2010 the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education found a positive relationship between effective educational practices as measured by the benchmarks of effective educational practices in the NSSE and five liberal arts education outcomes, namely effective reasoning and problem solving, moral character, inclination to inquire and to make learning a lifelong endeavour, intercultural effectiveness, and personal well-being (Pascarella, Seifert, & Blaich, 2010).

Kuh (2008) also indicated that participation in certain activities during university (higher education) boosts students' performance in many areas such as critical thinking, solving real-world problems and working effectively with others. These "high-impact" activities include participating in community service learning, learning communities, undergraduate research, internships, capstone/culminating projects as well as study abroad opportunities. The 2007 Annual NSSE report, "Experiences that Matter: Enhancing Student Success and Learning", documents a number of outcomes associated with participation in these "high-impact" activities (Kuh, 2007). Amongst other things, they found that:

- learning communities are significantly associated with a number of personal development and learning gains;
- students conducting research with staff members are more likely to persist, gain more intellectually as well as personally, and choose a research-related field as a career. These students also participate more frequently in deep learning approaches and report greater personal growth and learning;
- study abroad was moderately related to deep learning and self-reported gains, even after controlling for various institutional and biographical characteristics; and
- students reported that their culminating experience contributed substantially to their abilities in a number of areas, depending on the type of culminating experience.

3.5. USING ACTIONABLE DATA IN SYSTEMATIC APPROACHES TO MONITORING OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

In the introduction we indicated that the greatest value of these student engagement surveys is that they promote critical, internal self-reflection or reflective accountability (McCormick, 2009). McCormick (2009, p. 99) indicates that:

"Reflective accountability results from consciousness of and commitment to institutional mission, and the commensurate responsibility to regularly and systematically assess the achievement of core purposes with an eye toward improvement."

Because student engagement measures provide institutions with information about aspects that institutions are able to focus on, systematically gathering data on student engagement allows institutions to develop interventions within the parameters of their own mission. Section 5 of this report will illustrate how a range of surveys can be used to develop a systematic approach to monitoring.

Additional to the value of the surveys at the institutional level, it is important to mention that if student engagement surveys were to be used more broadly within the higher education sector, this could make a significant contribution to the knowledge base of higher education in the South African context.

Having reflected on how student engagement surveys could be used to enhance teaching and learning, the focus moves to the results from the 2010 national study.

4. MEASURING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

4.1. MEASURING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT INTERNATIONALLY

Student engagement surveys emerged in the US out of the need to research the student experience in a reliable and valid way from the perspective of improving teaching and learning (Kuh, 2009b). The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was designed as an instrument to measure the extent to which students participate in educationally effective practices in undergraduate programmes across the US.

The survey requires students to reflect and report on how they spend their time at university, as well as on the intellectual, personal and social gains they have drawn from their studies (NSSE, 2010a). The survey contains 108 items and focuses primarily on student behaviours (as opposed to attitudes) directly related to engagement and success in higher education (NSSE, 2008; NSSE, 2010b). The survey asks students questions about the following domains (Kuh, 2009b): participation in educationally purposeful activities (student-staff interaction, time spent studying, participation in active learning, participation in collaborative learning, etc.); institutional requirements (for example the amount of reading and writing required of the student); perceptions of the university environment (to what extent the higher education institution offers students the support to succeed, quality of campus relationships); perceptions of their own educational and personal growth since starting at university; and background characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.).

The overarching aim of the survey is to provide high-quality data to institutions that allows for data-driven change management strategies inside the institution (Kuh, 2009b). Data collected through the survey can be used diagnostically to provide information to institutions that is actionable and can enhance the discourse about quality in education from the perspective of teaching, learning and effective educational practices (Gonyea, 2010).

Participating institutions receive annual reports detailing student responses to all items. However, in order to allow inter-institutional benchmarking and to provide a common framework for reporting, a number of item clusters were identified. These clusters of activities are referred to as the benchmarks of effective educational practice and are reported on annually (Kuh, 2009b). The benchmarks, constructed through a combination of empirical and conceptual analyses (Kuh, 2009b), represent important student behaviours and institutional factors related to student success (Kuh et al., 2005) and can be used by an institution to assess the prevalence of effective educational outcomes as an estimate of the efficacy of their improvement efforts (Kuh, 2003), and as a proxy measure for the quality of undergraduate education (Kuh et al., 2001). The five benchmarks are named level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment.

Since the first administration in 2000, more than 1300 different colleges and universities in the US and Canada have participated in the NSSE (NSSE, 2010a). The survey was designed in 1998 and piloted at 75 American institutions during 1999. Thereafter, approximately 275 institutions participated in the first administration during 2000. The growing popularity of the survey can be partly attributed to the fact that it focuses attention on aspects of student and institutional performance that can be addressed almost immediately (as opposed to focusing on issues or characteristics that institutions have no control over, such as individual characteristics or traits) (Kuh et al., 2005c).

Since its inception a number of related surveys have been intentionally designed to complement the NSSE, including the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) which has been administered since 2003 and has involved over 140 000 USA staff members. The FSSE provides information on: staff perceptions on how often students engage in different activities; the importance that staff attach to various areas of learning and development; the nature and frequency of staff-student interactions; and how staff organise their time, both in and out of the class. The data from the staff survey can be used for staff development programmes, SOTL initiatives, assessment and improvement, institutional research, and curriculum reform.

4.2. MEASUREMENT OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.2.1. SOUTH AFRICAN SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (SASSE)

The measurement of student engagement in South Africa is a far newer practice than in the US. In 2006, the Division of Student Development and Success (SDS), now part of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), at the University of the Free State (UFS) requested permission from the NSSE Institute to adapt the NSSE for use in South Africa and to administer the revised survey, known as the SASSE, for field testing purposes. The original survey was contextualised, translated (and thereafter back-translated) and piloted at the UFS for two consecutive years.

After examining the psychometric reliability and validity in the South African context at the UFS (Strydom et al., 2010), the SDS conducted a national pilot of the SASSE at seven South African institutions during 2009 (Strydom & Mentz, 2009; Strydom & Basson, 2010). Before being used in the 2009 national pilot study, the content of the SASSE was reviewed by representatives from each of the institutions participating in the 2009 pilot. Demographic questions on the survey that caused difficulty or confusion for students in the 2009 data collection were reassessed and adjusted. The measure used in the 2010 data collection process was very similar to the 2009 measure, with minor adjustments to difficult questions. The SASSE also has five benchmarks which are conceptually similar to the NSSE benchmarks. A brief conceptual description of each benchmark is provided below, and a list of the items used to construct each benchmark can be found in Appendix 1.

4.2.2. BENCHMARKS OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE AT ENGAGING INSTITUTIONS

The benchmarks that are reported annually in the Australasian (AUSSE), South African (SASSE) and the American (NSSE) study are “broad conceptual categories that represent important student behaviours and institutional factors” that, according to higher education research, are related to various desired higher education success outcomes (Kuh et al., 2005). The five benchmarks can be used by an institution to assess the prevalence of effective educational outcomes and to estimate the efficacy of their improvement efforts (Kuh, 2003, p. 25). These indicators are based on 42 survey items that capture many of the more important aspects of the student experience. The benchmarks included in the SASSE are:

- a) Level of Academic Challenge focuses on whether students find their academic work intellectually challenging and creative since this is regarded as central to student learning and quality. Universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasising the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance. This benchmark includes questions about the number of hours students spend studying, the amount of reading and writing that has to be completed, questions based on Bloom's taxonomy and the emphasis that the campus environment places on studying and academic work (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 11).
- b) Active and Collaborative Learning is based on the premise that students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and are required to reflect on their learning. This cluster of items asks about the extent to which students are active in class either through discussions, questions or presentations, whether they are involved in tutoring, in community-based projects and engaged in out-of-class discussions with others (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 11).
- c) Student-Staff Interaction (student-faculty interaction) asserts that by interacting with staff members inside and outside the classroom, students learn how experts think first-hand and how to solve practical problems. The benchmark asks students to what extent they discuss their grades, future plans and ideas with staff, whether they have worked with staff on activities outside of class and how prompt assessment feedback is (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 12).
- d) Enriching Educational Experience focuses on the number of complementary learning opportunities students participate in that augment their academic programmes. The benchmark reflects experiences, use of IT for collaboration, internships, community service and capstone experiences as a means to integrate and apply knowledge (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 12).
- e) Supportive Campus Environment asks students about how they experience the campus environment and the quality of their relationships with other students and staff members on campus (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 13).

4.2.3. LECTURER SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (LSSE)

The LSSE is based on the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), has been in use since 2003 and has involved over 140 000 USA staff. The LSSE is therefore designed to complement the SASSE and focuses on:

- staff perceptions of how often students engage in different activities;
- the importance that staff attach to various areas of learning and development;
- the nature and frequency of staff-student interactions; and
- how staff organise their time, both in and out of the class.

The LSSE provides extremely valuable information on what staff think is important in teaching and learning, as well as information on how lecturers' perspectives agree and disagree with those of students. The data from the LSSE can be used for:

- staff development programmes;
- SOTL initiatives;
- assessment and improvement;
- institutional research; and
- curriculum reform.

In 2010, the Division of Student Development and Success (SDS), now part of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), at the UFS requested permission from the NSSE Institute to adapt the FSSE for use in South Africa and to administer this version, the Lecturer Survey of Student Engagement (LSSE), for field testing purposes. The original FSSE instrument is only available in English and so, to optimise its use in the South African context, it was translated into Afrikaans. Back-translation was performed to ensure the content validity of the Afrikaans version. The measure was piloted as part of the 2010 national study.

5. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT PATTERNS: RESULTS FROM THE 2010 STUDY

5.1. THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Data collection for the 2010 study was done either by means of online data collection or was done by data collection teams trained and managed by the SDS. Institutional representatives were given the option to decide whether online or paper data collection would work optimally at their institution. Three institutions collected data by means of a paper-and-pencil collection, where a stratified, systematic sampling strategy was used to produce a robust, generalisable and representative estimate of first-year and senior student engagement. The remaining four institutions collected data by means of an online form of the SASSE survey. A census approach was taken with the institutions collecting data via the online survey, where institutions provided e-mail addresses of all their registered students and invitations to participate in the SASSE study were sent to each student at the specific institution. A maximum of four reminders were sent out to students at the online participating institutions.

The completed paper-and-pencil surveys were scanned, while the online data was retrieved from the online survey management system and analysed to prepare the institutional and national reports on student engagement. In total, the data of 9442 students was captured and used in the development of the reports.

The LSSE survey was administered at three of the four institutions that administered the SASSE survey online. Similar to the SASSE, the institution provided the e-mail addresses of all staff members at the institution and an invitation was sent to staff members to invite them to participate in the LSSE. In total, the data of 466 lecturers was captured and used in developing the reports.

Each institution was provided with a report detailing their results, as well as the raw data files with the responses of their institution's students, and, where applicable, the results and raw data of the lecturers.

5.1.1. PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

The SASSE was administered at the UFS for a period of 2 years prior to the national pilot study. One of the aims of these local administrations was to investigate the psychometric properties of the survey in the South African context. Results show that the SASSE is reliable for the South African higher education context, and comparable to NSSE reliabilities (Kuh, 2004). The psychometric properties of the SASSE are discussed in an article entitled "Enhancing success in higher education by measuring student engagement in South Africa." This article can be downloaded under the "Useful Resources" link on the SASSE website (<http://sasse.ufs.ac.za>).

Reliability, also referred to as internal consistency, measures the degree to which a set of items consistently measures the same thing across respondents and institutional settings (Kuh, 2004). In their conceptual framework of the NSSE, Kuh (2004) discusses the reliability of four different sets of items, namely: university (college) activities, educational programme characteristics, educational and personal growth, and student opinions and satisfaction. The university activities set of items includes the first 22 items on the SASSE, and constitutes educationally effective

activities that students engage in inside and outside the classroom. The set of items on educational programme characteristics includes the five items related to Bloom's taxonomy. The educational and personal growth set relates to the 15 SASSE items that ask students to what extent they have developed in key areas as a result of their experience at the institution. Finally, the student opinions and satisfaction set of items includes the SASSE items that ask students what their views are on important aspects of their university environment.

Table 1 below indicates the reliabilities for these sets of items for the 2010 SASSE project compared to reliabilities of the 2009 SASSE pilot study. The SASSE 2010 and SASSE 2009 reliabilities are also compared to the reliabilities of these item sets for the NSSE (Kuh, 2004).

Table 1: Reliabilities for item sets

| Item Set | SASSE 2010 | SASSE 2009 | NSSE 2004 |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| University (college) activities | 0.82 | 0.79 | 0.85 |
| Educational programme characteristics | 0.7 | 0.68 | 0.7 |
| Educational and personal growth | 0.9 | 0.88 | 0.9 |
| Student opinions and satisfaction | 0.8 | 0.77 | 0.84 |

From the table above, it is clear that the reliability coefficients on all four sets of items for the SASSE are acceptable and comparable to the corresponding NSSE reliabilities. The 2010 SASSE reliabilities show a slight improvement from the 2009 SASSE reliabilities and compare even more favourably with the 2004 NSSE reliabilities.

Continuous research into the psychometric properties of the SASSE benchmarks is being conducted, as well as into newly developed scales and sub-scales.

5.2. 2010 NATIONAL SAMPLE

5.2.1. 2010 SASSE SAMPLE

The total sample for the 2010 SASSE study comprised of 9442 respondents. The 2010 sample included students from seven institutions across South Africa; including 2923 (31%) from universities, 1812 (19%) from the comprehensive university, 4264 (45%) from universities of technology and 443 (5%) from a private institution. Within the sample, 41% of students were first-years and 59% were senior students.

The sample was broadly representative of the overall participating student population, with 55% female and 45% male respondents. The majority of respondents (73%) were Black African, and the rest of the sample indicated their ethnicity as follows: 3% Coloured, 7% Indian, 0.4% Asian and 11% White. A total of 5% of the sample indicated that they preferred "not to answer" the question regarding ethnicity.

The majority of the students in the sample were commuters (73%), 95% were studying full-time and 91% were South African citizens.

5.2.2. 2010 LSSE SAMPLE

A total number of 290 lecturers completed the LSSE during 2010, of which 45% were male and 55% female. The majority of the lecturers indicated they are White, 20% indicated Black African, 2% indicated Coloured, 10% indicated Indian and 12% preferred not to indicate their ethnicity.

The majority of the lecturers who completed the survey were employed either at the lecturer (47%) or senior lecturer (19%) level, with only 15% employed at the professor/associate professor level. As many as a third of the lecturers had more than 15 years experience, and approximately a quarter of the lecturers had less than 4 years experience. A total of 39% of the lecturers had obtained their doctorate, and 44% had obtained a Master's degree.

Almost a quarter of the lecturers have 4 years or less teaching experience, 29% have between 5 and 9 years and 17% have between 10 and 14 years teaching experience. A third of the lecturers in the sample have 15 years or more teaching experience.

5.3. SOUTH AFRICAN BENCHMARK PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE

This section of the report provides a summative perspective on each of the benchmarks. A description of the items used to construct each benchmark can be found in Appendix 1.

Each benchmark is discussed below in terms of the overall sample's performance on the benchmark and associated subscales, providing an overall picture of engagement in the South African context. This is provided for the overall sample, for first-years and for seniors. A descriptive cohort comparison is shown between the 2009 pilot study and the 2010 SASSE study. Thereafter, each benchmark is discussed in terms of the key statistical differences between two selected sub-groups of interest, namely self-reported ethnic groups and gender. For the purposes of this report, a first-year is defined as any student who entered the institution for the first time at the start of the year in which the survey was administered. A detailed table of the frequency distribution on each of the items in the benchmarks can be found in Appendix 2.

All the benchmarks illustrated in Figure 1 indicate the scores for the sample of participating institutions for the 2010 SASSE study. All benchmark scores are mean scores for the benchmark out of a maximum of 100. In the 2010 SASSE sample first-years and seniors differed significantly on all five benchmarks. Seniors in the 2010 SASSE sample reported significantly higher levels of academic challenge than first-years in the sample. Similar to Level of Academic Challenge, senior students reported significantly higher levels of participation in active and collaborative learning activities than first-year students. On the Student-Staff Interaction benchmark, senior students reported significantly more interaction with staff than first-year students. Overall, participation in Enriching Educational Experiences was low although senior students reported significantly more participation in these activities than first-year students. For the Supportive Campus Environment benchmark, first-years reported experiencing significantly higher levels of support from the campus environment than seniors. An in-depth investigation of these overall benchmark results will be discussed under each benchmark section.

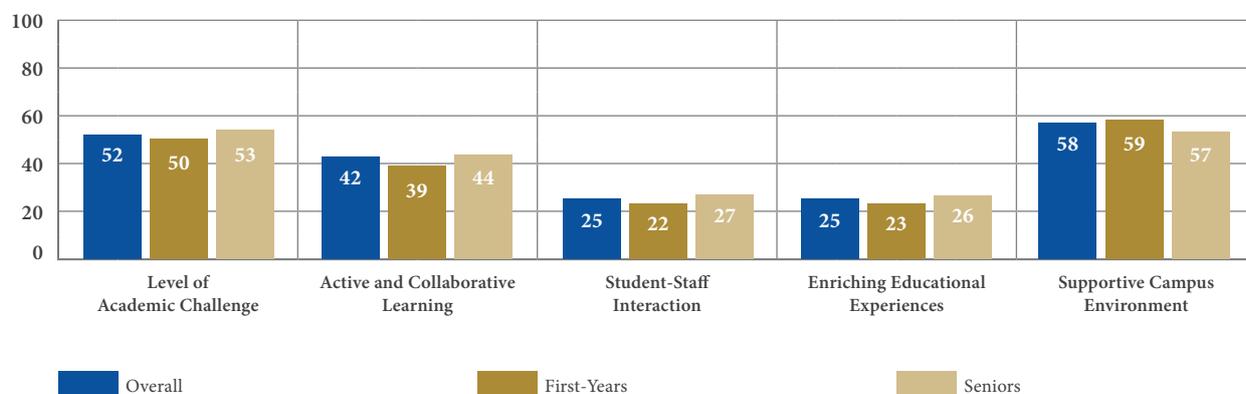


Figure 1: Benchmark Performance SASSE 2010

Although benchmark means are provided for 2009 and 2010 in later discussions, this comparison is of a descriptive nature and any comparison of the scores must be interpreted in the light of the fact that the institutions participating in 2009 and in 2010 were not the same. Furthermore, longitudinal comparisons must also take into account that not the same students participate each time. Student responses from year to year have not been matched.

5.3.1. INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARK COMPARISON

Beyond the comparison between first-year and senior students in the South African system, it is also possible to compare trends in the South African context with engagement trends internationally. The figure below shows the overall benchmark performance (for first-years and seniors) for the 2010 SASSE, the 2010 NSSE (USA) and the 2011 AUSSE (Australia and New Zealand). International comparisons, similar to institutional comparisons, should be made cautiously as differences within institutions are always greater than differences between institutions. In addition to this, international comparison should be viewed in the light of different institutions functioning in different contexts and systems.

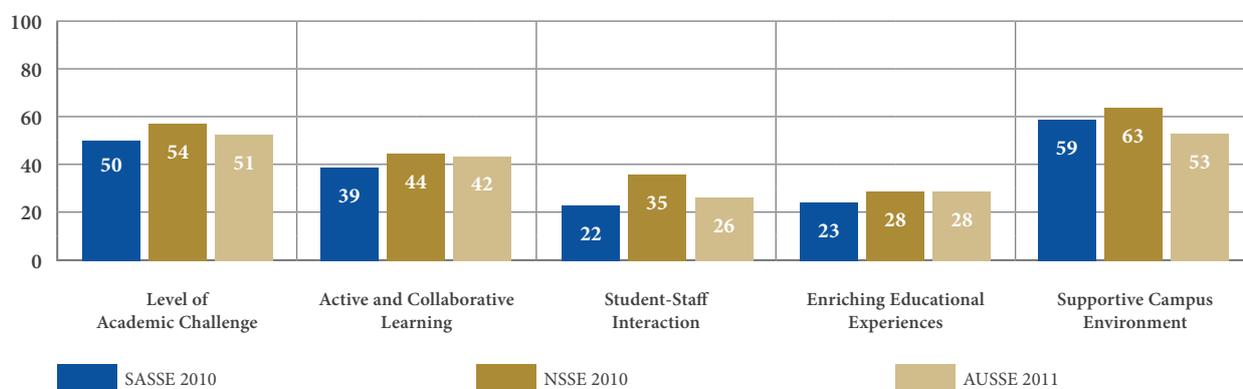


Figure 2: International Comparison: Benchmark Performance for First-Year Students

From Figure 2 it is evident that the South African mean for the benchmarks is lower than the mean for the first-year students in the USA in all cases. Except for the Supportive Campus Environment Benchmark, the South African mean is lower than the mean in the Australasian study for all the other benchmarks.

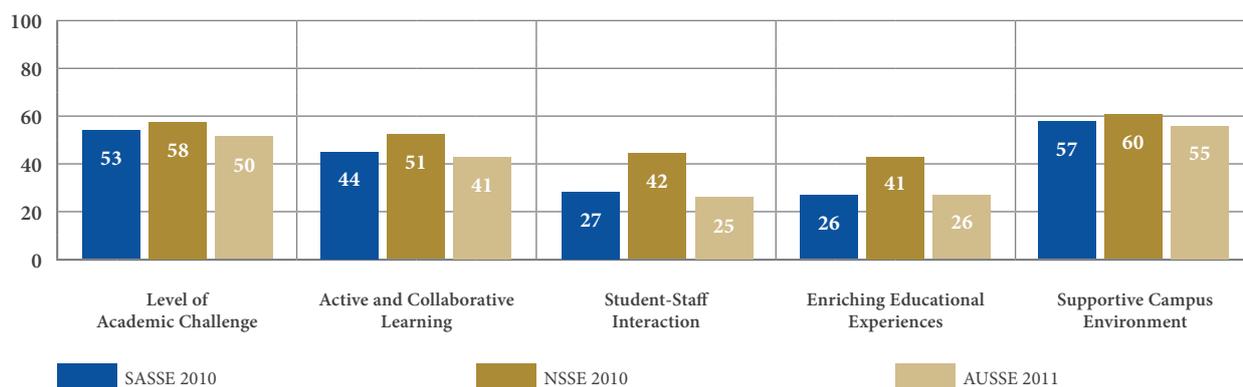


Figure 3: International Comparison: Benchmark Performance for Senior Students

The figure above compares the benchmark scores of senior students on the three continents. As was the trend with the benchmark scores of the first-year students, the South African mean is consistently lower than the mean for the USA context. For the Student-Staff Interaction and Enriching Educational Experiences benchmarks, the

South African mean is dramatically lower than the USA mean. Except for the Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark, the South African mean is higher than the mean for the Australian context on all the other benchmarks.

5.3.2. LEVEL OF ACADEMIC CHALLENGE

Level of Academic Challenge focuses on whether students find their academic work intellectually challenging and creative as this is regarded as central to student learning and quality. Higher education institutions promote high levels of student achievement by emphasising the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance. This benchmark includes questions about the number of hours students spend studying, the amount of reading and writing that has to be completed, questions based on Bloom’s taxonomy and the emphasis the campus environment places on studying and academic work (Kuh et al., 2005).

In addition to the Level of Academic Challenge benchmark score, other concepts of concern for this benchmark include the Deep Learning scale. The deep approaches to learning scale investigates the underlying meaning of an issue, not just surface knowledge, emphasising a commitment to understanding and reflecting on relationships between pieces of information rather than rote memorisation. Such learning involves applying knowledge to real-life situations and successfully integrating previous learning. Other items that are of interest for this benchmark are topics related to time on tasks. These will be discussed in this section.

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

First-year students in the 2010 SASSE study reported significantly lower levels of academic challenge than seniors, as well as significantly less participation in deep learning activities than seniors. The majority of students who participated in the study indicated that their institution placed significant emphasis on spending time studying and on academic work (85%). A total of 60% of senior students reported often working harder than they thought they could to meet a lecturer’s standards or expectations, with 55% of first-years reporting this. Seniors reported their coursework emphasises analysing, synthesising, making judgements and applying theories significantly more than the coursework of first-years. Senior students also reported engaging significantly more often with diverse and different ideas and concepts and integrating and including these sources into assignments and discussions. While 77% of seniors and 67% of first-years reported often working on an assignment or project that requires integrating ideas or information from various sources, 55% of seniors and 48% of first-years reported putting together ideas or concepts from different courses or subjects when completing assignments or during class discussions. Seniors reported being significantly more challenged by their assessments during the academic year than first-year students. First-years and seniors did not show significant differences in terms of the amount of time spent preparing for class.

COHORT COMPARISON

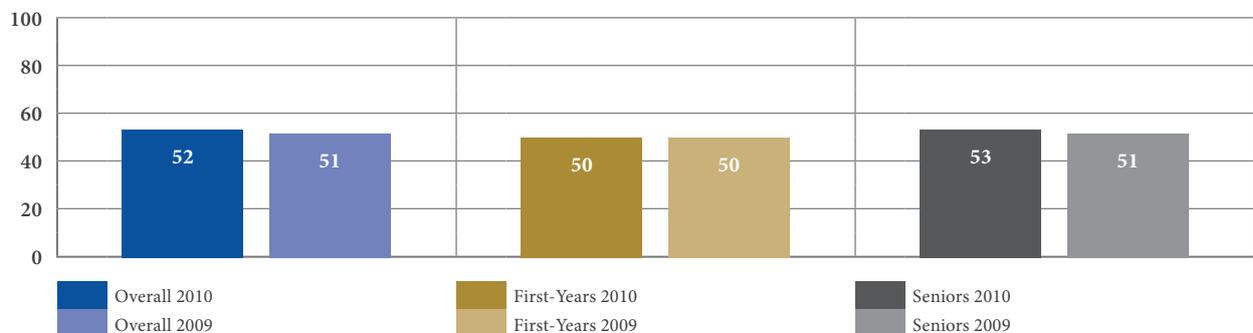


Figure 4: Cohort Comparison: Level of Academic Challenge SASSE 2010 and SASSE 2009

The mean scores for the Level of Academic Challenge benchmark remained fairly consistent from 2009 to 2010 (as seen in figure 4 above).

Related to the level of academic challenge in 2010, 56% of students reported that they spent at least 6 hours a week preparing for class, while in 2009, 57% reported spending at least 6 hours a week on this. Slightly more students in 2010 reported that they worked harder than they thought they could to meet a lecturer’s standards and expectations (58%) than students reporting the same in 2009 (54%). Similar to the mean differences reported between first-years and seniors in 2010 regarding their Level of Academic Challenge, the senior students in 2009 reported more coursework emphasis on analysing basic elements, integrating and organising ideas, making judgements as well as applying theories than coursework emphasis on the same reported by first-years in 2009.

DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: ETHNICITY AND GENDER

In the overall sample, no significant differences were found between the scores of the different ethnic groups (for either first-years or seniors) in terms of the level of academic challenge. Asian students reported significantly less participation in deep learning activities than the other ethnic groups, while Black students reported the most participation in deep learning activities. This holds true for the senior students too. No significant differences were reported for first-year students of different ethnic groups regarding their participation in deep learning activities. The different ethnic groups did not report significant differences in terms of the number of pages written for academic work.

In the overall sample no differences were reported between male and female students regarding their levels of academic challenge. A similar gender trend was noted for seniors, although first-year male students reported significantly higher levels of academic challenge than their first-year female counterparts. Overall, male and female students did not differ significantly in terms of their participation in deep learning activities or in the number of pages written for academic work per year.

5.3.2.1. TIME USAGE

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

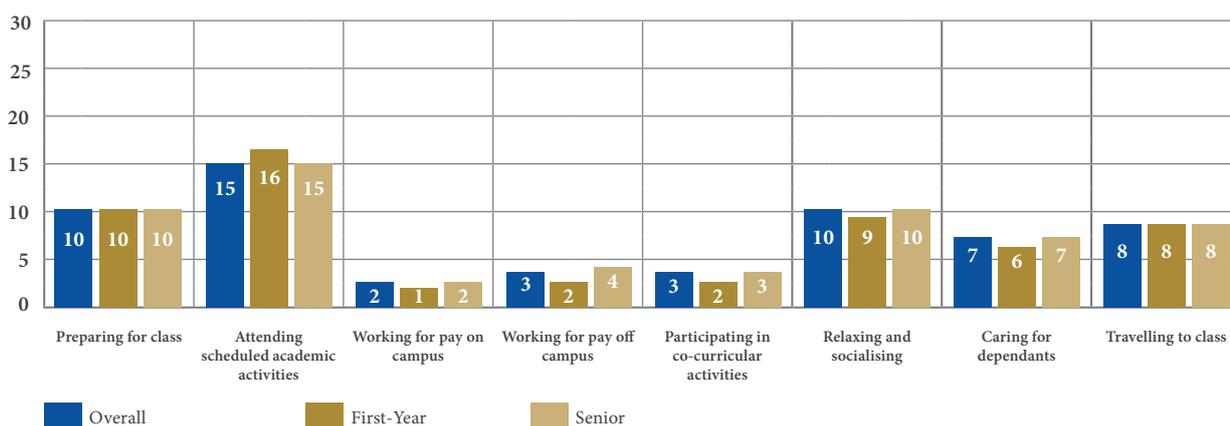


Figure 5: Time Usage SASSE 2010

Students in the 2010 SASSE sample reported that they spent an average of 10 hours per week preparing for class and 15 hours per week attending scheduled academic activities. Furthermore, just over half of the sample reported spending at least 6 hours a week preparing for class, while 79% of the sample reported spending at least 6 hours a week attending scheduled academic activities. Figure 5 illustrates that students, on average, spend very little time

working, but they reported slightly more time spent working off campus (3 hours a week) than on campus (2 hours a week). While the sample reported spending an average of 10 hours a week relaxing and socialising overall, only 3 hours a week were spent on participating in co-curricular activities. While first-years and seniors reported spending the same amount of time preparing for class, seniors reported spending an hour less per week attending scheduled academic activities than first-years. Seniors reported more time per week working on campus as well as off campus, as well as more time a week participating in co-curricular activities and socialising. Almost 56% of first-year students reported spending more than 6 hours per week relaxing and socialising, compared to 63% of seniors. Seniors and first-years reported spending on average the same amount of time travelling to class.

COHORT COMPARISON

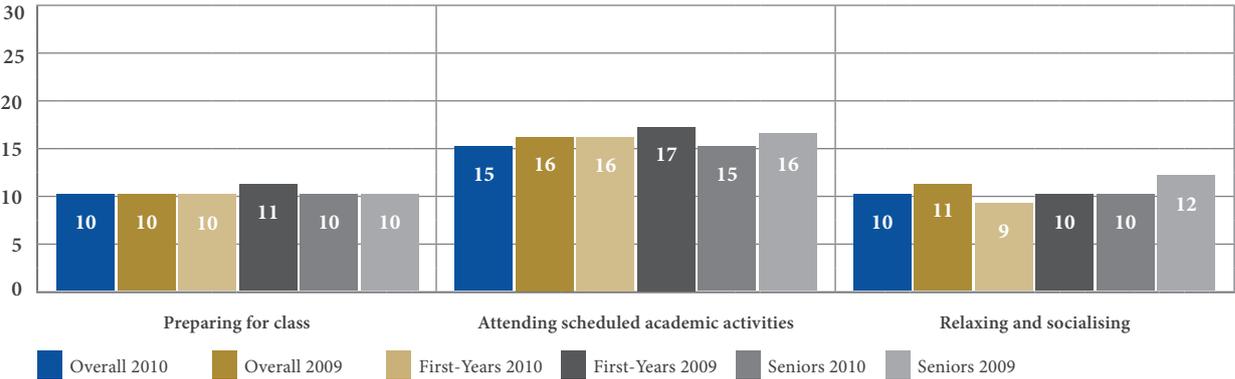


Figure 6: Cohort Comparison: Time Usage SASSE 2010 and 2009

Figure 6 above illustrates the time usage differences and comparisons between the 2009 and 2010 SASSE samples. The time students spent preparing for class remained constant (overall, 2010 and 2009 students reported 10 hours a week), with 56% of the 2010 SASSE sample and 56% of the 2009 SASSE sample reporting that they spent at least 6 hours a week preparing for class. Similar to this, 79% of the 2010 SASSE sample and 80% of the 2009 SASSE sample reported that they spent on average 6 hours or more a week participating in scheduled academic activities. Similar trends are reported between the cohorts for time spent participating in co-curricular activities, as well as caring for dependants. In both the 2010 and 2009 SASSE samples, first-year students reported spending more time preparing for class, as well as more time attending scheduled academic activities than senior students.

DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Overall, Black African students reported spending the most time preparing for class (10.5 hours per week), a mean that is significantly higher than three other ethnic groups. Both Black African first-years and seniors reported spending the greatest amount of time preparing for class (10.5 hours and 10.4 hours respectively). Black African first-years reported spending significantly more time than four other ethnic groups preparing for class, while senior Black African students reported significantly more time spent on this than three other ethnic groups. In accordance with this, Black African students reported the least time spent on relaxing and socialising (9.6 hours per week). White students reported spending significantly more time attending scheduled academic activities (16.5 hours per week) than Black African, Asian, Coloured and multi-ethnic students. A similar trend was seen for seniors of the different ethnic groups, while first-years of different ethnic groups did not reveal significant differences in terms of attending scheduled academic activities. Interestingly, Asian students reported spending the most time participating in co-curricular activities (4.5 hours per week), a mean that is significantly higher than three other ethnic groups, while Coloured students reported the least time spent participating in co-curricular activities (1.4 hours per week).

Overall, male students reported spending significantly more time per week preparing for class (10.5 hours per week) than female students (9.9 hours per week), with a similar trend reported between male and female first-year students (11 hours and 9.7 hours respectively). No significant difference was reported between male and female students with regard to the time spent attending scheduled academic activities. Overall, male students reported spending more time participating in co-curricular activities (3 hours) as well as more time socialising (10.4 hours a week) than their female counterparts (2.4 hours and 9.9 hours respectively).

5.3.3. ACTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Active and Collaborative Learning is based on the premise that students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and are required to reflect on their learning. This cluster of items asks about the extent to which students are active in class either through discussion, questions or presentations, whether they are involved in tutoring, in community-based projects and engaged in out-of-class discussions with others (Kuh et al., 2005).

In addition to the overall Active and Collaborative Learning benchmark total score, active learning experiences were grouped together and analysed separately. The same was done for collaborative learning experiences.

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

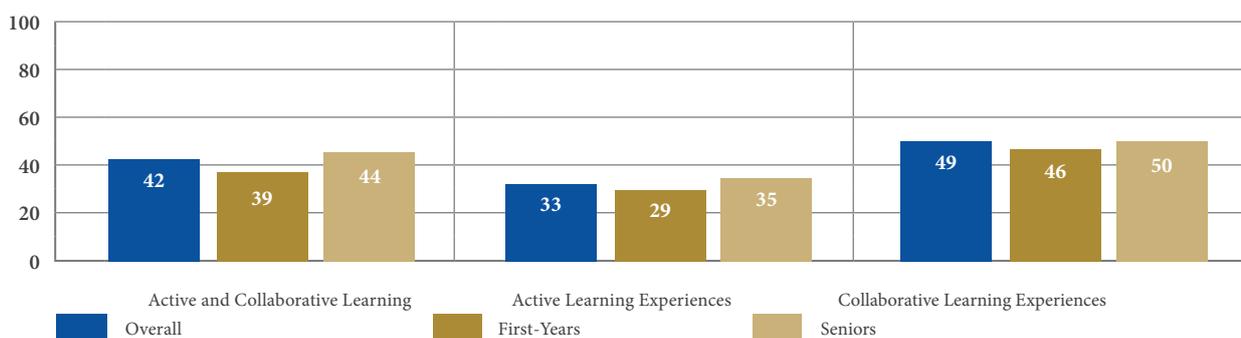


Figure 7: Active and Collaborative Learning SASSE 2010

Evident from Figure 7 is that senior students in the sample participated in more active and collaborative learning than first-year students. However, all students, regardless of the year of study, participated in more collaborative learning than active learning experiences.

In terms of active learning experiences, senior students asked significantly more questions in class or contributed to class discussions significantly more than first-years. A total of 30% of first-year students often did this, compared to the 36% of seniors who had often done so. Furthermore, senior students made significantly more class presentations and worked significantly more frequently on projects with their classmates during class time when compared to first-years. A noteworthy difference was found between first-years and seniors with regards to the number of presentations made during class, with 19% of first-years often having made a class presentation and 29% of seniors reporting the same.

In terms of collaborative learning experiences, seniors reported working with classmates significantly more often than first-years, both inside and outside the classroom. While 46% of first-years often worked with classmates during class to complete an assignment, 53% of seniors reported doing this often. In addition to this, 61% of seniors often worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments, while 55% of first-years often did so. Seniors also reported tutoring other students significantly more often than first-years.

COHORT COMPARISON

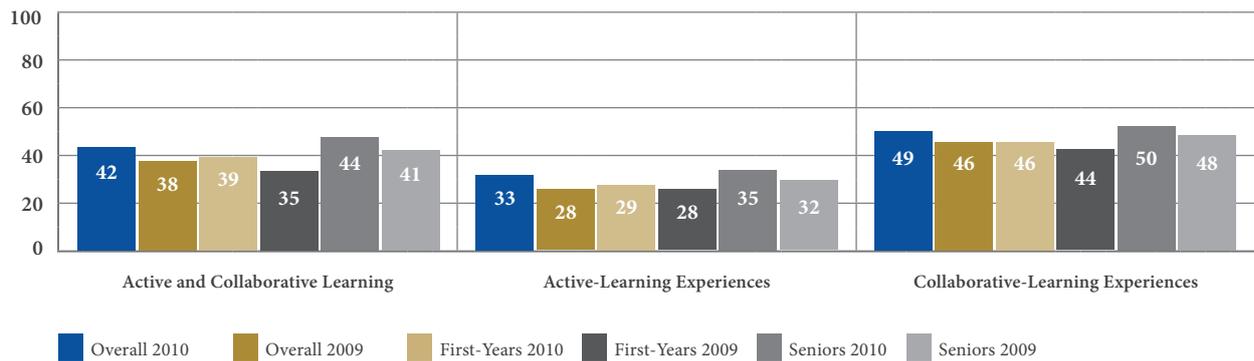


Figure 8: Cohort Comparison: Active and Collaborative Learning Experiences SASSE 2010 and 2009

From Figure 8 it can be seen that students in the 2010 SASSE sample reported similar participation in active and collaborative learning experiences when compared to students in the 2009 SASSE sample. In both the 2009 and 2010 samples, seniors reported more active and collaborative learning activities than first-years. Seniors reported asking more questions in class or contributing to class discussions more often than first-years, with 31% of seniors in the 2009 sample and 36% of seniors in the 2010 sample reporting often having done this. Seniors also reported significantly more participation in community-based projects as part of a regular course than first-years, with 16% of seniors in the 2009 sample and 20% of seniors in the 2010 sample reporting often having participated in a community-based project.

DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: ETHNICITY AND GENDER

No significant differences were reported between the ethnic groups in terms of their active and collaborative learning activities, nor with regard to their active learning activities. Indian and Black African students, however, reported significantly more participation in collaborative learning activities than all other ethnic groups. Furthermore, Asian students reported the least participation in collaborative learning activities. When first-years and seniors were analysed separately, no significant differences were reported between the various ethnic groups in terms of their active and collaborative learning experiences.

No significant differences were found between males and females in terms of their active and collaborative learning experiences, regardless of the type of activity (active vs. collaborative) or the year of registration (first-year vs. senior).

5.3.4. STUDENT-STAFF INTERACTION

Student-Staff Interaction asserts that by interacting with staff members inside and outside the classroom, students learn how experts think first-hand and how to solve practical problems. The benchmark asks students to what extent they discuss their grades, future plans and ideas with staff, whether they worked with staff on activities outside of class, and how prompt assessment feedback is (Kuh et al., 2005).

In addition to the overall Student-Staff Interaction benchmark total score, interactions relating to course-related matters were grouped together and analysed separately. The same was done for out-of-class matters.

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

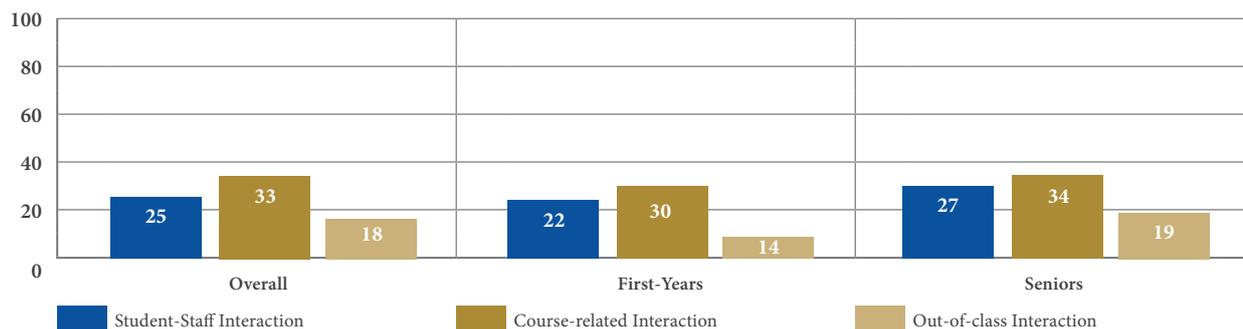


Figure 9: Student-Staff Interaction SASSE 2010

The mean scores across the whole sample is low for this benchmark, indicating that, generally, students are not interacting with staff on a regular basis. Overall, students in the 2010 SASSE sample interacted with staff members more frequently for course-related matters than for activities outside of the classroom environment. Almost a third of the students reported that they often discussed their marks or assignments with a lecturer or tutor, whereas only 14% of students reported often having worked with staff members on activities other than coursework. Approximately a third of the sample often received punctual feedback on their academic performance from lecturers and only 19% of students often discussed ideas from class with their lecturers outside of class.

Furthermore, senior students interacted with staff significantly more frequently than first-years – both for course-related and out-of-class matters. In terms of course-related interactions, seniors reported significantly more discussions regarding marks and assignments, significantly more discussions regarding their ideas from readings outside of class as well as significantly more punctual feedback on their academic performance. While just over a quarter of first-years reported often discussing their marks or assignments with a lecturer, 32% of seniors reported often having done so.

Although outside-of-class interactions are generally less frequent, seniors reported significantly more interactions of this nature than first-years. Very few seniors reported having worked on a research project with a staff member outside of their course requirements (9%), but this was still more than the 5% of first-years who reported often having done so. Senior students reported speaking to lecturers or counsellors significantly more often about their career plans than did first-year students – where 53% of first-years had never spoken to a lecturer or counsellor about their career plans, 44% of seniors reported never having done this.

COHORT COMPARISON

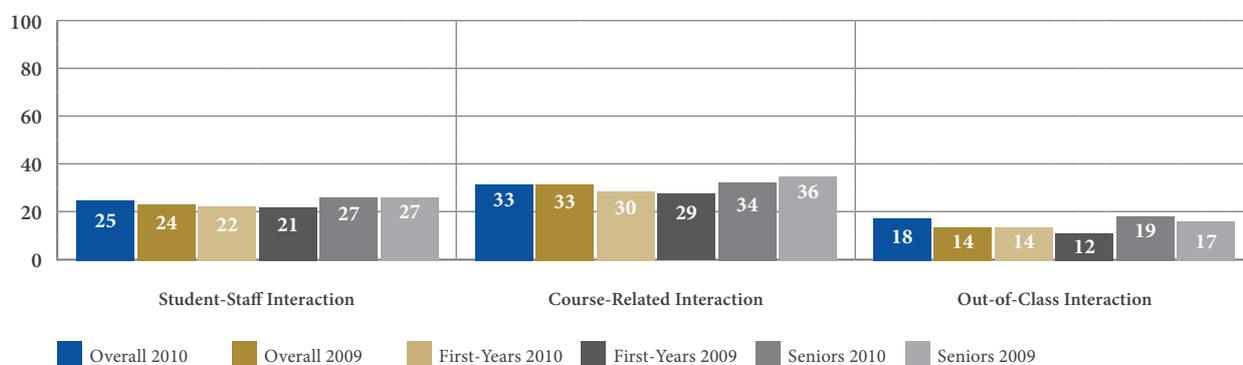


Figure 10: Cohort Comparison: Student-Staff Interaction SASSE 2010 and 2009

The figure above illustrates a similar trend in Student-Staff Interaction from 2009 to 2010. In both 2009 and 2010, seniors interacted more frequently with staff than did first-years. Students in both 2009 and 2010 showed more frequent interactions with staff for course-related as opposed to out-of-class matters. The 2009 SASSE sample reported that half of the first-years in the sample had never discussed ideas from their readings or classes with a lecturer outside of class, while 40% of seniors had never done this. Similar to this, the 2010 SASSE sample indicated that 50% of first-years and 39% of seniors had never discussed ideas from their readings or classes with a lecturer outside of class. Regarding students' discussion with lecturers about their marks or assignments, in 2009, 32% of first-years and 19% of seniors had never done this and in 2010, 34% of first-years and 25% of seniors reported that they had never discussed their marks or assignments with a lecturer.

DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Overall, students of different ethnic groups did not show significant differences in terms of their interaction with staff members, nor did they differ in terms of their course-related interactions. Black African students reported significantly more out-of-class interaction with staff members than White, Coloured and Asian students. Similarly, no significant differences were reported for first-year ethnic groups or for the senior ethnic groups in terms of their overall student-staff interaction as well as their course-related interaction. Furthermore, senior students from different ethnic groups did not report significant differences in terms of out-of-class interaction, although Black African first-years reported significantly more out-of-class interactions with staff than White, Asian and Coloured first-year students.

Male students reported significantly more interaction with staff members – both course-related and out-of-class – than female students. Similar trends were reported for first-year male and female students. Although senior male students reported significantly more overall student-staff interaction than senior female students, they did not report a significant difference in terms of course-related interactions although a significant difference was noted for out-of-class interactions.

5.3.5. ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom have been shown to augment the academic programme. Experiencing diversity teaches students valuable things about themselves and other cultures. Used appropriately, technology facilitates learning and promotes collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships and community service provide students with opportunities to synthesise, integrate, and apply their knowledge. Such experiences make learning more meaningful, and, ultimately, more useful because what students know becomes a part of who they are (Kuh et al., 2005).

In addition to the overall Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark total score, scales investigating students' IT usage were calculated. This section also reports on the experiences that students have with diverse peers.

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The overall sample mean for participating institutions on the Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark was 25, with a mean of 26 for senior students and a mean of 23 for first-years. Although these benchmark scores appear to be low, the scores compare to both the USA and Australian scores, with the only exception being that the senior USA scores are higher than the senior scores for SASSE and the Australian score. Overall, 15% of students spent at least 6 hours on average a week participating in co-curricular activities, with 17% of seniors and 12% of first-years reporting this. Senior students reported participating in significantly more enriching educational experiences than first-years, and reported noticeably more participation in practicums. While just 6% of first-years reported having done a practicum, internship, field experience or clinical assignment, 16% of seniors reported having done this. Of interest is that although only 13% of students had completed a practicum, internship field experience or

clinical assignment, 64% of students planned on doing this at some point in the future. Senior students also reported significantly more volunteer or community work, forming part of an academic student society and developing a community project based on university knowledge when compared to first-years. Double the amount of seniors had developed a community project using their university knowledge to address a problem in their community (12%) when compared to first-years (6%). While just over half of the students in the sample planned on developing a community project, 11% of the sample reported that they had no plans to develop a community project in which university knowledge is used to address a problem in their community. Although few students had completed a foreign or additional language course or had done a course for non-degree purposes, seniors reported doing this significantly more often than first-years.

COHORT COMPARISON

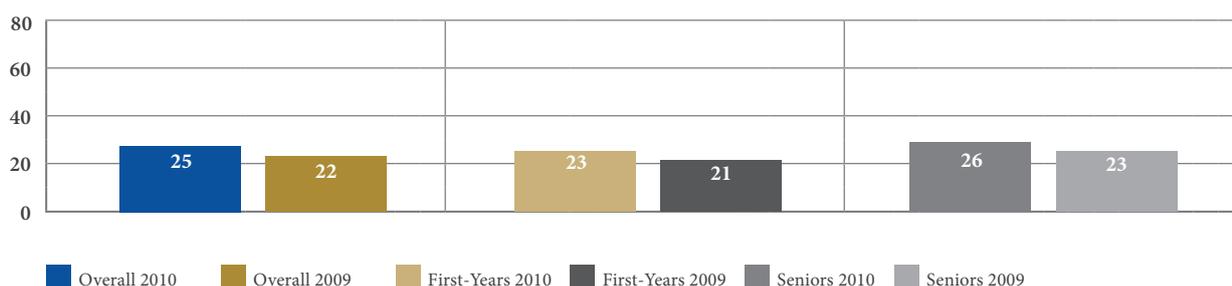


Figure 11: Cohort Comparison: Enriching Educational Experiences SASSE 2010 and 2009

Evident from Figure 11 is that participation in Enriching Educational Experiences remained fairly consistent from 2009 to 2010. Similar to 2009, seniors in 2010 reported participating in enriching educational activities more often than did first-year students. In 2009, 17% of seniors reported that they had done a practicum, internship or field experience, with 16% of seniors in 2010 reporting having done this. In 2010, 10% of students reported that they had developed a community project in which they addressed a community problem by applying their university knowledge. Similar to this, 7% of students in the 2009 sample reported having completed such a project.

DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: ETHNICITY AND GENDER

For the overall sample, Indian students participated in significantly more Enriching Educational Experiences than any of the other groups. First-year Black African students reported significantly less participation in these activities than their Indian and Asian counterparts, with Asian first-years reporting the most Enriching Educational Experiences. Indian senior students also reported the most frequent participation in Enriching Educational Experiences, with a mean higher than the Black African and Asian seniors.

Overall, female students reported participating in significantly more Enriching Educational Experiences than male students. A similar trend was noted amongst senior students, whilst male and female first-year students did not differ significantly in terms of their reported participation in these experiences.

5.3.5.1. USE OF IT IN ACADEMICS

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The majority of the sample (82%) indicated that their institution placed significant emphasis on the use of IT in academic work and 86% of the sample indicated that their experience at the institution had contributed very much to their personal development in the area of using computers and IT. Senior students in the 2010 SASSE sample

reported using IT for academic purposes significantly more often than first-years, i.e. 49% of first-years and 54% of seniors reported often using an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment. Furthermore, 26% of first-years reported often using e-mail or SMS to communicate with a lecturer or tutor, while 36% of seniors reported often doing so.

COHORT COMPARISON

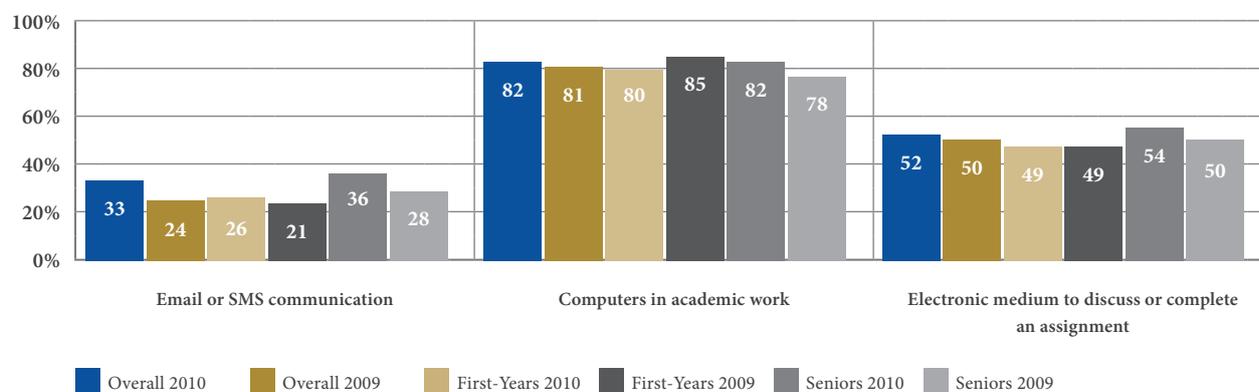


Figure 12: Cohort Comparison: IT use for Academic Purposes SASSE 2010 and 2009

Figure 12 illustrates the IT use of students in 2010 compared to the IT use of students in 2009. As can be seen from this figure, the 2010 sample and the 2009 sample reported similar IT use for academic purposes. In 2010, 33% of students reported that they often used e-mail or SMS to communicate with a lecturer or tutor, with 24% of the students in the 2009 sample reporting often having communicated with lecturers or tutors through e-mail or SMS. The majority of students in both the 2009 and the 2010 samples reported that their institution places significant emphasis on using computers in academic work. While just over half of the students in both 2009 and 2010 reported that they often used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment, seniors reported doing this more often than first-years – both in 2009 and 2010.

DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Overall, Indian students reported the greatest use of IT for academic purposes, i.e. significantly higher usage than three other ethnic groups. First-years from various ethnic groups did not differ significantly in terms of their usage of IT for academic purposes. Senior Indian students also reported the greatest IT use, a score significantly higher than all other ethnic groups.

Female students – both first-year and senior – made significantly more use of IT for academic purposes than male students.

5.3.5.2. DIVERSITY EXPERIENCES

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Overall, 54% of the students indicated that their institution placed adequate emphasis on encouraging contact between students of different economic, social, and ethnic backgrounds. Only 48% of the 2010 SASSE sample reported often having serious conversations with students from different ethnic groups, whilst 54% reported often having serious conversations with students very different from themselves in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions and personal values.

COHORT COMPARISON

Students' experiences with diverse peers remained constant from 2009 to 2010. In both the 2009 and the 2010 SASSE samples, first-years reported more diversity experiences than seniors. Just less than half of the 2009 and 2010 samples reported that they often had serious conversations with peers who differed from them in terms of ethnicity, with slightly more students in both samples often having serious conversations with peers who had very different religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values to their own. Although only half of students in 2009 and 2010 indicated that their institution placed adequate emphasis on encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, or ethnic backgrounds, first-years experienced a greater emphasis on this than seniors – in both 2009 and 2010.

DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: ETHNICITY AND GENDER

White students (first-years and seniors) reported the least interaction with diverse peers, a mean significantly lower than the Coloured and Indian students. Indian students – both first-years and seniors – reported the greatest number of experiences with diverse peers.

Overall, females interacted significantly more frequently with diversity than males. Male and female first-year students did not differ in terms of the number of diversity experiences they reported, whilst senior females interacted with diverse peers significantly more often than their male counterparts.

5.3.6. SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

Students perform better and are more satisfied at universities that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus. Supportive Campus Environment asks students about how they experience the campus environment and the quality of their relationships with other students (Kuh et al., 2005).

In addition to the overall Supportive Campus Environment benchmark total score, students' experience of support for student success and their overall satisfaction scale will be reported on in this section.

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

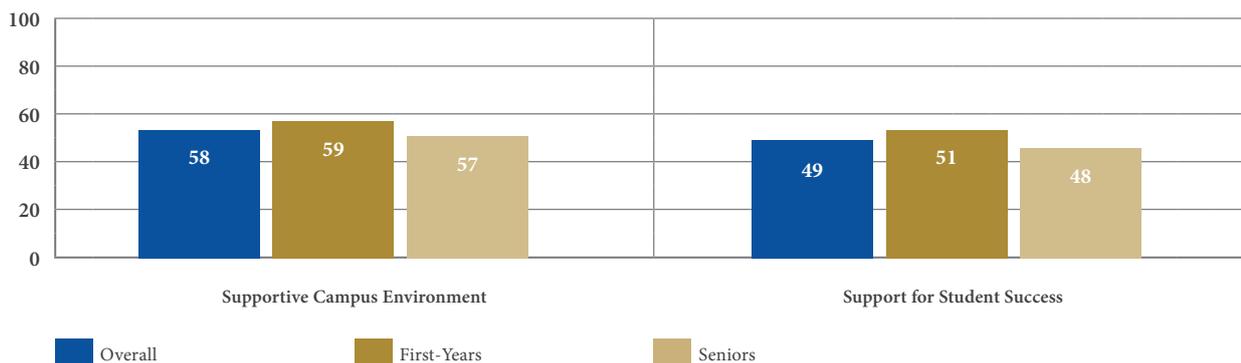


Figure 13: Supportive Campus Environment SASSE 2010

Nationally, first-year students reported experiencing significantly more support from the campus environment than seniors. Almost 80% of first-years and 74% of seniors reported experiencing sufficient support to thrive academically, while only 36% of first-years and 32% of seniors reported experiencing sufficient support to cope with their non-academic responsibilities. Similarly, 40% of first-years and 36% of seniors reported experiencing sufficient support to thrive socially.

Although first-years reported experiencing significantly more support to thrive academically, socially and to cope with their non-academic responsibilities, senior students reported that they have significantly more positive relationships with other students than first-years. More than 80% of seniors reported a positive relationship with peers (a score of at least 5 on a 7-point Likert scale) and 78% of first-years reported the same.

COHORT COMPARISON

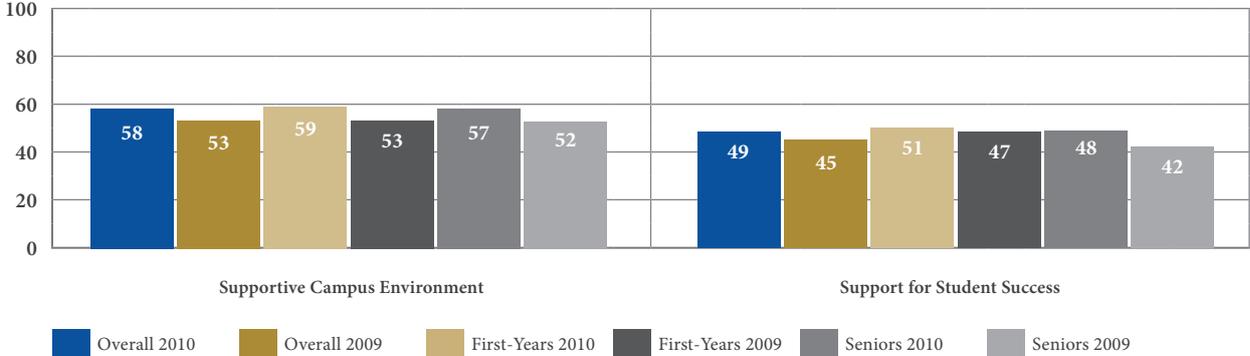


Figure 14: Cohort Comparison: Supportive Campus Environment SASSE 2010 and 2009

Slight increases were reported between the 2010 and 2009 cohorts in overall supportive campus environment and support for student success. Similar to the 2009 cohort, the 2010 first-years reported experiencing more support from the campus environment than 2010 seniors, as well as more support for student success. Three-quarters of the 2010 SASSE sample reported experiencing significant support to succeed academically, with 71% of the students in 2009 experiencing significant support to succeed academically. Students in both 2009 and 2010 reported experiencing less support to thrive socially and to cope with non-academic responsibilities, i.e. in 2009, 29% of the students reported experiencing significant support to cope with non-academic responsibilities and in 2010, 33% of the students reported the same. Although no significant differences were reported between first-years and seniors in terms of their relationships with academic staff and administrative offices – both in 2009 and 2010 – less students reported positive relationships with administrative offices than with academic staff.

DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: ETHNICITY AND GENDER

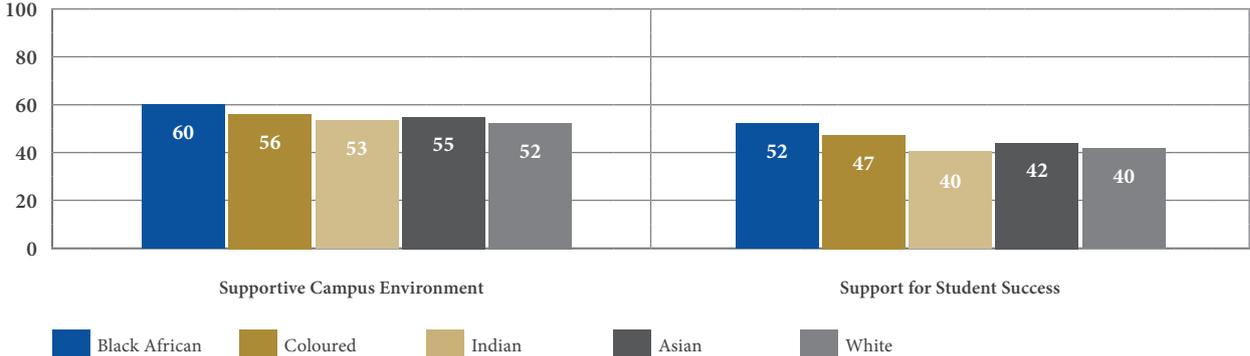


Figure 15: Comparison by Ethnicity: Supportive Campus Environment

Overall, Black African students (first-years and seniors) reported experiencing the most support from the campus environment, as well as the most support for student success. White students reported experiencing the least support from the campus environment, with a mean score significantly lower than one other ethnic group. Indian students experienced the least support for student success, with a mean significantly lower than two other ethnic groups.

Female students experienced significantly more overall support from the campus environment and reported significantly more support for student success. First-year male and female students did not differ significantly in terms of the support they experienced from the campus environment and the support experienced for student success. Senior female students reported significantly more support from the campus environment and significantly more support for student success than male students.

5.3.6.1. OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCE

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Overall, 74% of the students in the 2010 SASSE sample reported that they would choose to return to their institution if they were given the opportunity to start their studies over. The majority of students in the sample reported that their entire educational experience at their institution was positive (80%). Significantly more first-years than seniors reported that they would return to their institution and reported an overall positive educational experience.

COHORT COMPARISON

Similar to the satisfaction experienced by students in 2009, the majority of students in the 2010 SASSE sample reported that they would return to their institution if given the opportunity to restart their studies. The majority of students in both 2009 and 2010 reported that their entire educational experience at their institution had been positive.

DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Overall, Black African students were significantly more satisfied with their overall experience than Indian and Asian students. No differences were reported in terms of overall satisfaction with the institution for first-year students or senior students of different ethnic groups.

Overall, female students in the 2010 SASSE sample reported significantly more satisfaction than male students. Although no significant differences were reported between female and male first-year students, senior female students reported significantly more satisfaction than their male senior counterparts.

5.4. LECTURER PERSPECTIVE ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

As part of the CHE's investigation into the development of a 4-year undergraduate curriculum and undergraduate education, the Lecturer Survey of Student Engagement (LSSE) was conducted to corroborate the 2010 SASSE results. The LSSE is designed to measure lecturer expectations of student engagement in effective educational practices that are empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. The survey also collects information about how lecturers spend their time related to professional activities and the kinds of learning experiences emphasised by their institution. The information generated from the LSSE provides additional results, which, when used to substantiate SASSE results, could lead to an improved understanding of student engagement at institutions. LSSE results can be used to identify areas of institutional strength as well as aspects of the undergraduate experience that may warrant attention. The information is intended to be a catalyst for productive discussions related to teaching, learning and the quality of students' educational experiences.

5.4.1. STUDENT-LECTURER COMPARISON

AREAS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN LECTURERS AND STUDENTS

This section reports on activities where lecturers' perceptions correlate with student behaviours.

Both lecturers and students in the sample reported that their institution placed little emphasis on supporting students in non-academic areas. Only a third of the lecturers perceived adequate (very much or quite a bit) institutional emphasis on helping students cope with their non-academic responsibilities and only 33% of students perceived adequate emphasis on this. Along similar lines, only 32% of lecturers and 37% of students perceived very much or quite a bit of institutional emphasis on providing students with the support they need to thrive socially. However, the majority of lecturers experienced adequate institutional emphasis on requiring students to spend significant amounts of time studying and on academic work, as well as on providing students with the support they need to succeed academically. Students concurred with this as 87% of students perceived adequate institutional emphasis on spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work, while 75% of students reported experiencing significant support to succeed academically. Lecturers and students also agreed that institutions placed above average institutional emphasis on encouraging students to use computers in their academic work.

In addition, lecturers also reported that they perceived that students have often worked on an assignment or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources, with students agreeing that they had often done this. Students also reported that they have often worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments, while lecturers also reported that this happens frequently.

There are a number of activities with low student participation where lecturers accurately perceived student non-participation. These include participating in a community-based project as part of a regular course, using e-mail or SMS to communicate with a lecturer, talking about career plans with a lecturer and making a class presentation. Both students and lecturers reported that students did not often work with staff members on activities other than coursework.

AREAS OF DISCREPANCY BETWEEN LECTURERS AND STUDENTS

This section reports on activities where lecturers' perceptions did not correlate with students' behaviours.

Some of the discrepancies reported in the perceptions of lecturers and the behaviour reported by students include the fact that lecturers perceived that students frequently asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions, regularly received punctual written or oral feedback from lecturers and often discussed marks or assignments with a lecturer or tutor. Students, on the other hand, reported infrequently asking questions in class or contributing to class discussions, rarely receiving punctual feedback and seldom discussing marks or assignments with a lecturer or tutor. In addition to these discrepancies, lecturers reported that students often attended class without having completed readings or assignments while students reported that they seldom did this. Furthermore, lecturers reported that students hardly ever had serious conversations with students different to themselves in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values and with students of a different ethnic background. Lecturers also perceived that students infrequently hand in two or more drafts of an assignment before final submission.

In contrast to this, students reported frequently having serious conversations with students who are very different in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values and with students of a different ethnic background. Furthermore, students reported often preparing two or more drafts of an assignment before final submission (a mean of 2.5 or more on these items). Only 19% of lecturers reported that students often discussed ideas from their classes with others outside of class, while 64% of students reported that they did this often. Students also reported that they often worked with classmates during class, while lecturers reported that this does not occur frequently.

Even though 80% of lecturers reported that it is important or even very important that students take part in a practicum, internship, field experience or clinical assignment, only 15% of students reported that they had done this, although 62% of students planned on doing so. Almost two-thirds of the lecturers reported that it is important for students to develop a community project in which students use their university knowledge to address a problem

in the community. However, only 14% of students reported having done this, while 56% planned on developing a community project in the future. A positive finding is that almost a third of students have taken part in community service or volunteer work while 58% of lecturers indicated that this is important or very important.

5.4.2. LECTURES' INDICATION OF STUDENTS' RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

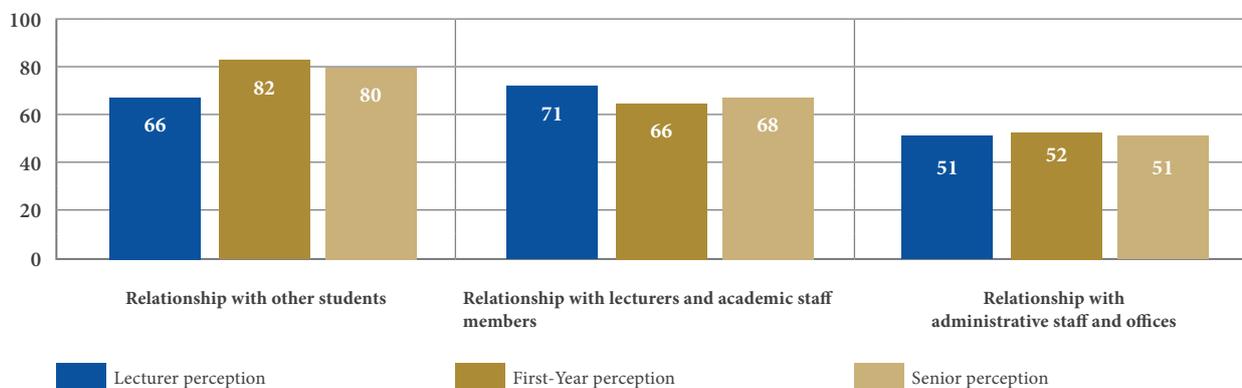


Figure 16: Student And Lecturer Perception Of Positive Campus Relationship: Percentage Of Respondents

Two-thirds of the lecturers perceived students' relationships with other students as positive, while 82% of first-years and 80% of seniors perceived their relationships with other students as positive. Lecturers and students reported similar perceptions of students' relationships with lecturers and academic staff, with 71% of lecturers, 66% of first-years and 68% of seniors perceiving students' relationships with lecturers and academic staff as positive. All three groups perceived students' relationships with administrative staff and offices as least positive. For example, only 51% of lecturers, 52% of first-years and 51% of seniors perceived students' relationships with administrative staff and offices as positive.

5.4.3. LECTURER PERCEPTION AND EXPECTATION FOR STUDENT TIME USAGE

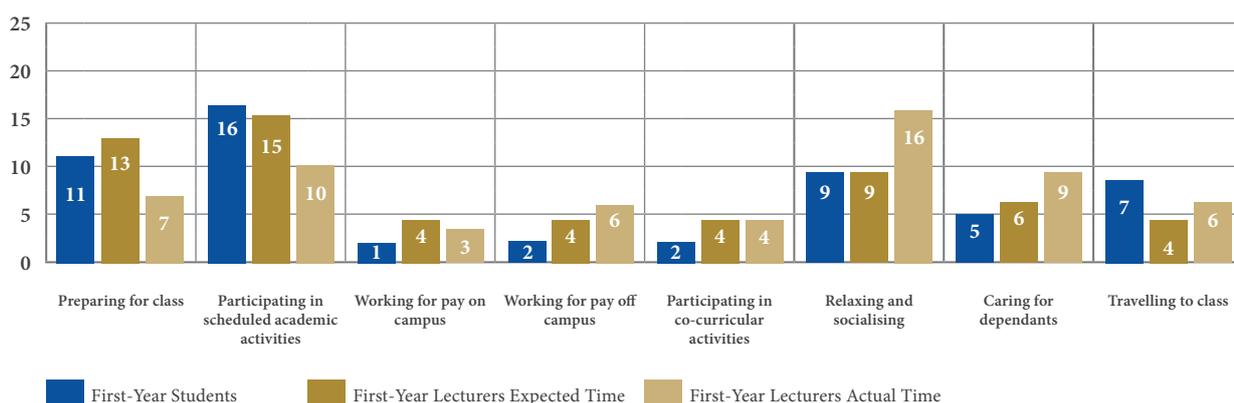


Figure 17: First-Year Time Comparison

First-year students in the 2010 SASSE sample reported spending more time preparing for class (11 hours a week) than lecturers' estimate of what they were actually spending (7 hours a week). Although first-years were found to spend more time preparing for class, this was still less than lecturers expected them to spend in preparation for class (13 hours a week). First-years were found to spend more time participating in scheduled academic activities (16 hours a week) than lecturers expected them to (15 hours a week) or that lecturers estimated they were actually spending (10 hours a week). Lecturers expected that first-years spent 9 hours a week relaxing and socialising which is the exact number of

hours that first-years reported spending in this way. Interestingly, lecturers actually estimated that first-years spent much more time relaxing and socialising (16 hours a week). First-years were found to spend more time travelling to campus (7 hours a week) than what their lecturers actually thought they spent travelling to class (6 hours a week).

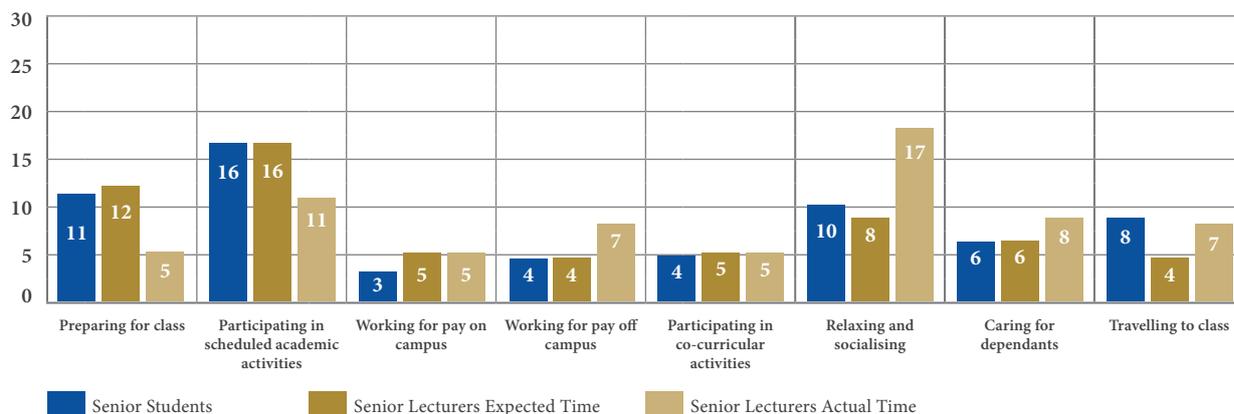


Figure 18: Senior Time Comparison

Senior students were found to spend approximately the same time preparing for class (11 hours a week) as what their lecturers expected them to (12 hours per week), while their lecturers estimated that they actually only spent 5 hours a week in preparation for class. Seniors reported the same amount of time spent participating in scheduled academic activities (16 hours a week) than what their lecturers expected, but this was more time than lecturers estimated they actually spent on scheduled academic activities (11 hours per week). Lecturers expected senior students to spend 8 hours a week relaxing and socialising, but estimated that they actually spent 17 hours a week doing so. Senior students, however, reported that they spent 10 hours a week relaxing and socialising. Senior students reported spending more than double the time travelling to class (8 hours a week) compared to what lecturers expected (4 hours per week).

5.4.4. LECTURER ACTIVITIES

TIME SPENT ON ACTIVITIES

Table 2 shows the number of hours lecturers spent per week on certain activities.

Table 2: Time Spent by Lecturers on Various Activities

| | Lecturers for first-years | Lecturers for seniors | Lecturers for first-years and seniors | Total |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Teaching undergraduate students in class | 9.91 | 9.24 | 9.28 | 9.38 |
| Teaching postgraduate students | 1.89 | 5.79 | 5.86 | 5.06 |
| Marking papers and exams | 7.58 | 7.84 | 8.91 | 7.94 |
| Giving other forms of written and oral feedback to students | 5.96 | 6.03 | 8.21 | 6.33 |
| Preparing for class | 8.18 | 9.27 | 9.02 | 9.03 |
| Reflecting on ways to improve teaching | 6.61 | 5.62 | 6.28 | 5.91 |
| Research and scholarly activities | 8.44 | 11.57 | 11.83 | 11.01 |
| Working with undergraduates on research | 2.54 | 3.02 | 4.21 | 3.09 |
| Advising undergraduate students | 6.11 | 5.43 | 6.07 | 5.65 |
| Supervising internships or other field experiences | 1.54 | 3.04 | 2.56 | 2.68 |
| Supervising postgraduate students | 2.86 | 6.80 | 5.93 | 5.91 |
| Working with students on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) | 1.91 | 1.78 | 2.74 | 1.94 |
| Other interactions with students outside of the classroom | 3.45 | 2.73 | 4.17 | 3.07 |
| Conducting institutional service activities (i.e. membership of institutional committees, reviewer for external journals, etc.) | 2.95 | 5.08 | 4.60 | 4.60 |

The sample of lecturers spent 9.4 hours per week teaching undergraduate students in class, with lecturers teaching mostly senior modules spending an average of 9.2 hours per week doing this and lecturers teaching mostly first-year modules spending 9.9 hours per week teaching undergraduates in class. Lecturers who teach mostly first-year modules spent 1.9 hours per week teaching postgraduate students, while lecturers teaching mostly senior modules spent on average 5.8 hours per week doing this. Lecturers who teach equal amounts of first-year and senior modules spent the most time per week giving students other forms of written and oral feedback (8.2 hours). Lecturers who teach mostly first-year modules indicated spending the most time per week advising undergraduate students (6.1 hours). Overall, lecturers spent 9 hours a week preparing for class and 5.9 hours reflecting on ways to improve their teaching.

PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ON ACTIVITIES DURING CLASS

Just under a half of the lecturer sample indicated that they spent 50% or more of their class time lecturing, with 63% of lecturers teaching equal amounts of first-year and senior modules and 46% of lecturers teaching mostly senior modules reporting that at least half of their class time was spent lecturing. Just over a quarter of the sample of lecturers reported that between 10% and 19% of their class time was spent on lecturer-led discussion, with 25% of lecturers teaching mostly senior modules also reporting this. While 11% of the lecturers indicated that more than half of their class time was spent on lecturer-student shared responsibilities such as seminars and discussions, 18% of lecturers teaching equal amounts of first-year and senior modules reported this. Overall, 40% of lecturers reported that students never use computers in class time, with 44% of the lecturers teaching mostly senior modules indicating that students never use computers in class time, and 39% of lecturers teaching equal amounts of first-year and senior modules reporting the same. The majority of lecturers in the sample indicated that a small percentage of class time was spent on small group activities (19% or less). Overall, 40% of the lecturers indicated that no in-class writing occurred during classes.

PARTICIPATION IN TEACHING IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The majority of the lecturers in the sample indicated that they attended 5 or more individual consultation sessions as part of their teaching improvement during the current academic year (45% of lecturers teaching first-year modules, 56% of lecturers teaching senior modules and 73% of lecturers teaching first-years and seniors attended at least 5 individual consultations). Just over two-thirds of the lecturer sample reported that they had at least 2 classroom observations with feedback as an activity to improve their teaching. Just more than 70% of the sample reported having 3 or more meetings with a small group of colleagues, with 68% of lecturers teaching mostly senior modules and 80% of lecturers teaching equal amounts of first-year and senior modules reporting at least 3 small group discussions. More than 80% of the lecturers reported having attended at least one workshop as part of improving their teaching during the current academic year, with 85% of the lecturers teaching equal amounts of first-year and senior modules and 84% of lecturers teaching senior modules reporting having attended at least one workshop. Almost three-quarters of the lecturers attended at least one conference session as part of their improvement.

6. AN APPROACH TO CREATING A CULTURE OF EVIDENCE THROUGH STUDENT ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS

The discussion of results above showed how information from the SASSE and LSSE can be used to inform a sectoral understanding of teaching and learning. We would like to move from the sector perspective back to an institutional perspective to illustrate how student engagement data could be used to create a culture of evidence. Banta, Pike and Hansen (2009) show how assessment tools, including student engagement surveys, can be used “...to reinforce a cycle of activities that creates an institutional culture of planning and decision making based on evidence.” Figure 19 below provides a graphic illustration of the cycle.

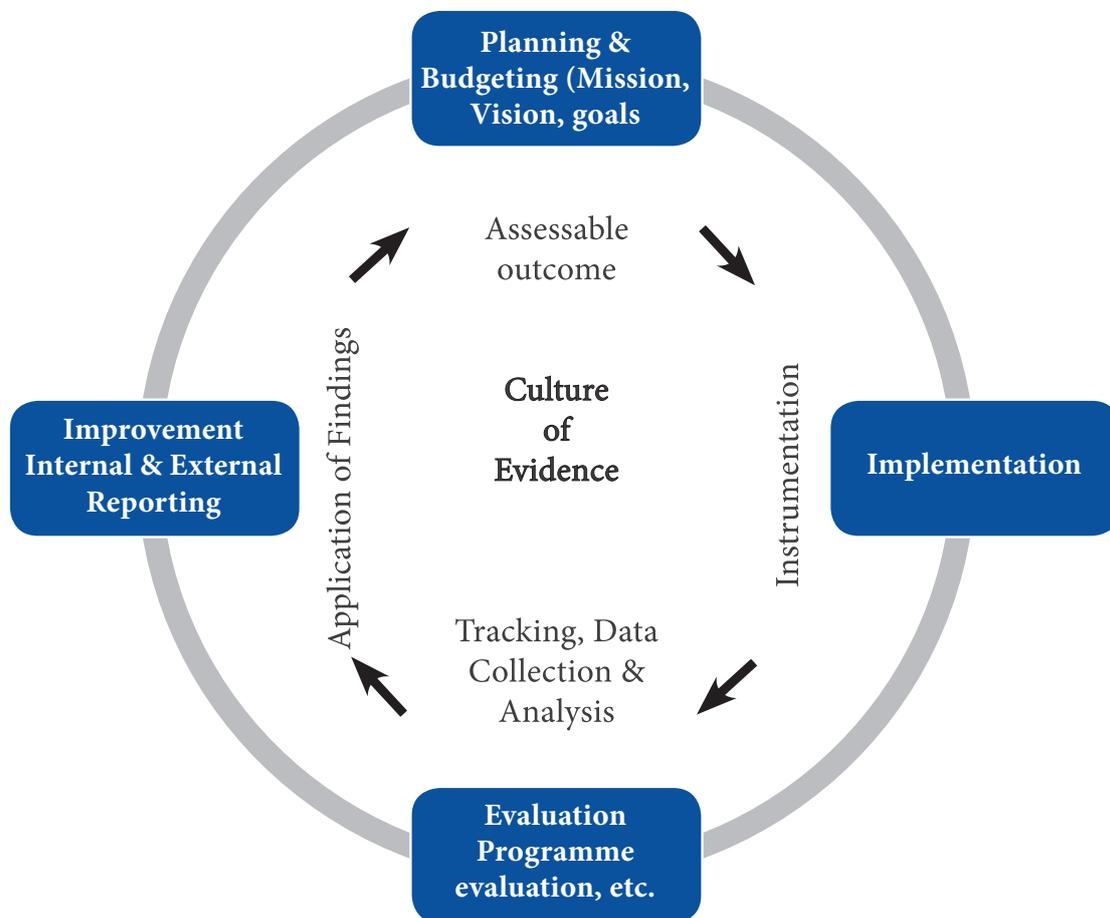


Figure 19: Cycle of institutional culture of planning and evidence-based decision making (Adapted from Banta et al., 2009)

Figure 19 shows how institutional planning (goal setting) and budgeting needs to be based on or informed by assessable outcomes. The implementation of action plans needs to consider which instrument will be used to gather data to monitor implementation. The evaluation of whether goals have been reached needs to take account of how data will be tracked and finally, improvement plans need to be based on evidence collected throughout the process.

6.1. ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE: IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING AT SASSEVILLE UNIVERSITY

We would like to illustrate how student engagement data can be used to enhance the quality of teaching and learning using the cycle of institutional culture for planning and evidence-based decision making.

If one were to imagine that the sectoral results discussed above are in fact results of a university, for example Sasseville University, one could ask: What do the SASSE and LSSE results suggest about teaching and learning at Sasseville? Here are some examples of the kinds of critical questions Sasseville University could ask itself based on the data:

Questions from SASSE data:

Level of academic challenge

- Do we have a nuanced understanding of how students spend their time?
- How can we identify and overcome the factors contributing to lower levels of participation in scheduled academic activities by Black African students?

Active and collaborative learning

- How can pedagogy be changed to empower female students?

Student-Staff interaction

- Should we find ways of getting staff and students to interact more?

Enriching educational experiences

- Should we stimulate more serious conversation between students from different ethnicities, views and backgrounds?

Supportive campus environment

- Should we be worried that White and male students experience less support and are less satisfied?
- How do we understand the finding that African students feel supported and satisfied, yet they are the least successful in terms of throughput and graduation?

Questions from LSSE data:

- Are lecturers accurate in their perception of the students in front of them?
- How can lecturers facilitate more active participation in diverse, massified contexts?
- To which extent is there alignment between what lecturers think is important in teaching and learning and the institution's strategic direction in relation to teaching and learning?

These questions can inform goal setting or institutional planning in relation to the enhancement of teaching and learning, based on the goals identified within the parameters of the institution's mission after which budget can be allocated and interventions can be developed. The interventions can be tracked and evaluated to inform external and internal reporting and to inform improvement. The cycle illustrates how reflective accountability would be operationalised within an institution.

6.2. TOWARDS A SYSTEMATISED APPROACH FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING

Having illustrated how student engagement data could be used to further the development of a culture of evidence-based decision making and reflective accountability, we would like to propose an approach to the institutional reviews. The approach provides longitudinal data as well as multiple perspectives (student and lecturer) on different institutional levels (institutional and course/module level). We do want to stress that we are using student engagement data as an example, and that other measures could be used. It is also critical to mention that student engagement data is most powerful when used in conjunction with other data.

6.2.1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE MEASURES

A number of related student engagement surveys exist. The four surveys which will be under discussion in this report are the SASSE (completed by undergraduate students at the end of the academic year), the BUSSE (completed by first-time entering students at the beginning of the academic year), the LSSE (completed by lecturing staff at the end of the year) and the CLASSE (Classroom Survey of Student Engagement; completed by both staff and students within the context of a specific module). Table 3 provides a summary of the instruments together with the specific focus of each instrument.

Table 3: Summary of student engagement surveys

| Institutional level measures | Modular level measures |
|--|--|
| <p>SASSE (South African Survey of Student Engagement) Perspective of first-year and senior undergraduate students Focus: Extent of participation in educationally effective teaching and learning practices</p> | <p>CLASSE (Classroom Survey of Student Engagement) Focus: Extent of participation in educationally effective teaching and learning practices within a specified module</p> |
| <p>LSSE (Lecturer Survey of Student Engagement) Perspective of staff lecturing undergraduate students Focus: Lecturer expectations of student engagement in effective educational practices and how lecturing staff spend their time</p> | <p>CLASSE (Staff) (Classroom Survey of Engagement for lecturing staff) Focus: Extent to which lecturing staff value and perceive engagement practices as important within a specific module</p> |
| <p>BUSSE (Beginning University Survey of Student Engagement) Perspective of first-time entering students at the time of entry Focus: High school engagement and expectations for engagement during the first year in higher education</p> | |

6.2.2. PROPOSED APPROACH

This section will focus on how each of these surveys can be used to complement each other in a 5-year cycle as a means to develop reflective accountability and gather evidence for formal quality assurance processes. By administering the student engagement surveys in this cyclical fashion, institutions will be able to provide evidence over time of how they have systematically identified problem areas in the realm of teaching and learning, how action plans are being developed and implemented and how improvement efforts and change are being monitored. Figure 20 provides a graphic illustration of the proposed approach.

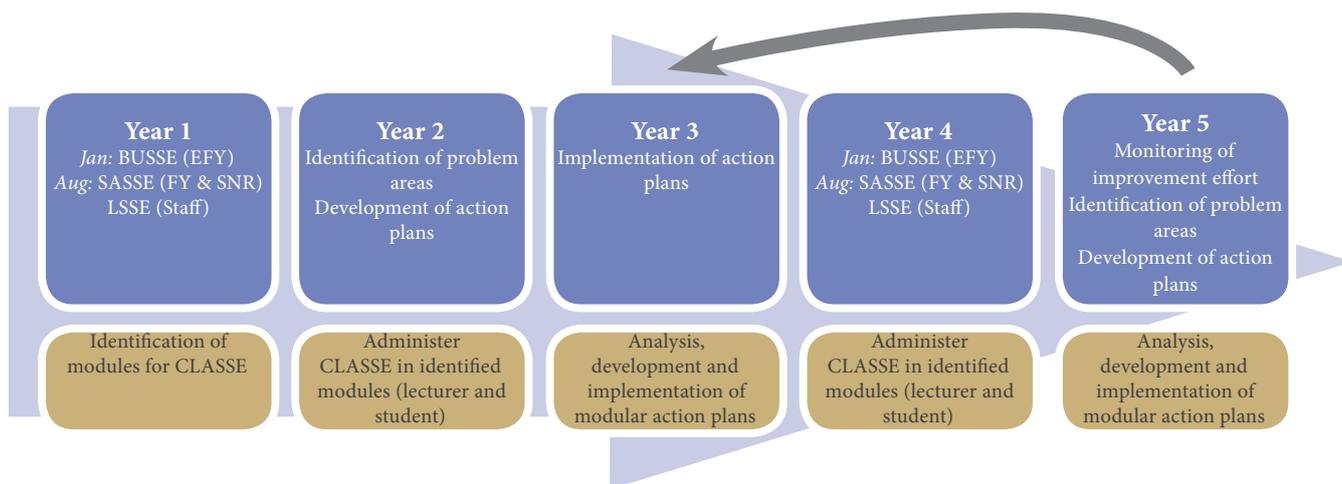


Figure 20: Graphic illustration of the systematic approach to improving teaching and learning

Figure 20 illustrates that the use of these four surveys is most effective within a 5-year cycle. The cyclical approach allows for the gathering of data at both institutional level (blue cubes) as well as the course/modular level (brown cubes). In order to do so, it will be critical to pay attention to a purposive sampling methodology in order to ensure that students at the identified course/modular level within departments and schools are adequately represented (and identifiable) in the sample in order for the information gathered from the surveys to be most meaningful in the institutional review process. However, a broader approach to obtaining a sample that is truly representative of the undergraduate population is essential in order to move towards a reflective accountability approach.

The discussion below will elaborate on how the data obtained at each of these points can be used in both a cross-sectional and longitudinal manner.

The data obtained from administering the surveys in the cycle proposed above is useful to the institution as both cross-sectional and longitudinal data (Kinzie, 2011), as illustrated in the points below:

YEAR 1

Institutional level

- i. BUSSE data obtained in Year 1 (January) can be used as baseline data for understanding and profiling a cohort of entering students, allowing for an understanding of their high school engagement behaviours and their expectations to engage during the first year at the institution, as well as their self-expectations. This data can be used almost immediately within the context of support services (academic advising, orientation, etc.), teaching and learning development, as well as institutional research.
- ii. Data obtained from first-years in Year 1 (August) is matched with Year 1 BUSSE data to examine the match between student expectations and experiences in the first year at the institution. This data can be used to understand the extent to which an institution has been successful in getting students to engage in an active and purposeful manner during their first year.
- iii. Data obtained from senior students in Year 1 (August) is used to understand the current status quo regarding overall engagement in educationally effective activities among undergraduate students.
- iv. Data from the SASSE is supplemented by the data collected from lecturing staff by means of the LSSE at the end of Year 1. Combining the SASSE and LSSE data allows for a more holistic understanding of the teaching and learning environment from multiple perspectives.

Course/Modular level

- v. If an institution will be collecting data using the BUSSE and the SASSE in Year 1 it is suggested that the CLASSE should not be used at course/modular level as this will result in the over-surveying of students. Therefore, an institution will have to exercise its own discretion on whether to make use of the CLASSE at course/modular level. The institution might decide to use this year to identify high-risk courses/modules that will be surveyed in Year 2 using the CLASSE staff and student versions.

YEAR 2

Institutional level

- i. The combined data obtained from all three surveys in Year 1 can be used for the identification of areas of strength and areas for improvement in undergraduate teaching and learning at the institution.
- ii. The identification of problem areas/strengths can be done either through a criterion-based or norm-based approach (depending on the number of participating institutions).
 - a. Criterion-based approach: set criteria within an institution based on the institutional mission, national priorities or specified student populations of interest/concern.
 - b. Norm-based approach: Benchmarking with other institutions in South Africa, as well as other institutions within a given typology. This will only be possible if the survey is administered on a national level.
- iii. Based on the identification of the areas for improvement, action plans and implementation plans can be developed by the institution to be implemented and monitored at both the institutional and course/modular levels.

Course/Modular level

- iv. In this year the institution can administer the CLASSE student and staff surveys in identified modules. Asking similar questions to those in the SASSE and LSSE, but focusing on the modular level, the CLASSE has the potential to identify specific factors in the context of a specific classroom impacting on success in teaching and learning.

YEAR 3

Institutional level

- i. During the third year of the cycle, there is time for the institution to begin with the implementation of the action plans developed after the first round of administrations.

Course/Modular level

- ii. The analysis of course/module level CLASSE data can inform the development of course-specific reports which can be used to implement various interventions ranging from staff development to course redesign.

YEAR 4

Institutional level

- i. The surveys (BUSSE, SASSE, LSSE) are administered again in Year 3. The data which is obtained at this point can be interpreted both from a cross-sectional, cohort, and longitudinal perspective.
 - a. Cross-sectionally it can be used in the same way as in Year 1 – to identify areas in need of improvement as well as areas of strength.
 - b. Longitudinally the data can now be used to assess the impact of the improvement efforts that have been implemented since Year 1.
 - c. Additional to this cohort analysis (by means of matched data sets), qualitative interviews can be conducted with the students who entered at Year 1 and are still registered at Year 3. This will provide an understanding of how student behaviours in the teaching and learning context change/remains constant over time.

Course/Modular level

- ii. The process for analysis of high risk modules identified in year one can be continued through the administration of the student and staff CLASSE in identified modules.

YEAR 5

Institutional level

- i. In this year the institution needs to reflect on the improvement efforts in Year 3 to get a sense of whether institutional-level improvement efforts were successful.
- ii. Evidence on the success of improvement efforts can inform institutional planning, and facilitate critical reflection on whether the institution is true to its mission and strategic objectives.

Course/Modular level

- iii. The analysis of course/module level CLASSE data can inform the development of course-specific reports which can be used to implement various interventions ranging from staff development to course redesign.

The aim of this description was to provide an example of how student engagement surveys can be used to provide actionable data for the enhancement of teaching and learning at an institutional and course/modular level. The specific activities in every year at these two levels will differ from institution to institution.

7. CONCLUSION

This report attempted to show how student engagement data can be used to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. We explained how student engagement surveys provide actionable data, the value of which lies in its potential to promote critical, internal self-reflection or reflective accountability within institutions whilst simultaneously enabling institutions to respond to external accountability demands. The actionable nature of the data empowers institutions to influence or do something about the quality of teaching and learning. Finally, we showed how actionable data provided by student engagement surveys can help to further a culture of evidence-based decision making by integrating student engagement data into the institutional planning cycles.

Finally, whilst this document has outlined the usefulness of the surveys in the context of a single institution, there is also tremendous potential to improve the higher education sector's understanding of teaching and learning practices as well as student behaviours if the surveys are administered on a national level. This would allow for cross-national benchmarking and, if administered in a cyclical manner, as proposed in this document, it will allow for a comprehensive understanding of how institutions change over time and which teaching and learning practices work. What may be of particular value is to be able to make these comparisons between institutions of similar typology and/or mission (Kinzie, 2011).

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BENCHMARKS FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

The benchmarks are based on 42 key questions from the SASSE survey and capture vital aspects of the student experience.

Active and Collaborative Learning

Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others to solve problems or master difficult materials prepares students to deal with the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter daily during and after university.

Activities:

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Made a class presentation
- Worked with other students on projects during class
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
- Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)
- Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
- Discussed ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

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Level of Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and institutional quality. Universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasising the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance.

Activities and conditions:

- Time spent preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, and other activities related to your academic program)
- Worked harder than you thought you could to meet a lecturer's standards or expectations
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length course packages or subject readings
- Number of written pages or assignments of 20 pages or more
- Number of written pages or assignments between 5 and 19 pages
- Number of written pages or assignments fewer than 5 pages
- Coursework emphasised: Analysing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory
- Coursework emphasised: Synthesising/ integrating and organising ideas, information, or experiences
- Coursework emphasised: Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods
- Coursework emphasised: Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Institution emphasised: Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work

Enriching Educational Experiences

Complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom augment the academic program. Experiencing diversity teaches students valuable things about themselves and other cultures. Used appropriately, technology facilitates learning and promotes collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships and community service provide students with opportunities to synthesise, integrate, and apply their knowledge. Such experiences make learning more meaningful and, ultimately, more useful because what students know becomes a part of who they are.

Activities and Conditions:

- Talking to students with different religious beliefs, political opinions, or values
- Talking to students of a different race or ethnicity
- An institutional climate that encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Using electronic technology to discuss or complete assignments
- Participating in:
 - o Internships or field experiences
 - o Community service or volunteer work
 - o Foreign or additional language coursework
 - o Study abroad
 - o Study of a subject or course for non-degree purposes
 - o The development of a community project using knowledge obtained at university
 - o Co-curricular activities
 - o Academic student societies (law, psychology, etc.)

Supportive Campus Environment

Students perform better and are more satisfied at universities that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.

Conditions:

- Campus environment provides support needed to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support needed to help you thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with lecturers and staff members
- Quality of relationships with administrative staff and offices

Student-Staff Interaction

Students see first-hand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with staff members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning.

Activities:

- Discussed marks or assignments with a lecturer or tutor
- Talked about career plans with a lecturer or counselor
- Discussed ideas from readings or classes with a lecturer outside of class
- Worked with staff members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)
- Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from lecturers on performance
- Worked with a staff member on a research project

APPENDIX 2

BENCHMARK ITEMS FREQUENCY REPORT

LEVEL OF ACADEMIC CHALLENGE

| | Variable Name | Response Options | Overall Sample Count | Overall Sample % | First-Year Students Count | First-Year Students % | Senior Students Count | Senior Students % | |
|----|--|------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------|
| 4r | Worked harder than you thought you could to meet a lecturer's standards or expectations? | workhard (AC) | Never | 807 | 8.62% | 381 | 9.94% | 426 | 8.10% |
| | | | Sometimes | 3081 | 33.10% | 1337 | 34.92% | 1744 | 32.38% |
| | | | Often | 3562 | 38.64% | 1396 | 35.91% | 2166 | 39.72% |
| | | | Very Often | 1886 | 19.63% | 737 | 19.23% | 1149 | 19.79% |
| | | | Total | 9336 | 100.00% | 3851 | 100.00% | 5485 | 100.00% |
| 5b | Analysing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory, e.g. by examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components | analyze (AC) | Very little | 557 | 5.62% | 252 | 6.61% | 305 | 5.23% |
| | | | Some | 2355 | 24.71% | 1028 | 26.56% | 1327 | 23.97% |
| | | | Quite a bit | 3673 | 41.04% | 1504 | 39.21% | 2169 | 41.77% |
| | | | Very much | 2713 | 28.63% | 1052 | 27.61% | 1661 | 29.04% |
| | | | Total | 9298 | 100.00% | 3836 | 100.00% | 5462 | 100.00% |
| 5c | Synthesising/integrating and organising ideas, information or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships | synthesz (AC) | Very little | 957 | 9.26% | 450 | 11.73% | 507 | 8.28% |
| | | | Some | 2834 | 30.37% | 1228 | 32.37% | 1606 | 29.58% |
| | | | Quite a bit | 3346 | 36.32% | 1359 | 34.97% | 1987 | 36.85% |
| | | | Very much | 2128 | 24.05% | 787 | 20.94% | 1341 | 25.28% |
| | | | Total | 9265 | 100.00% | 3824 | 100.00% | 5441 | 100.00% |
| 5d | Making judgements about the value of information, arguments or methods, e.g. by examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the accuracy of the conclusions | evaluate (AC) | Very little | 1242 | 12.01% | 594 | 14.79% | 648 | 10.90% |
| | | | Some | 2790 | 30.28% | 1148 | 30.87% | 1642 | 30.04% |
| | | | Quite a bit | 3095 | 33.85% | 1283 | 33.20% | 1812 | 34.11% |
| | | | Very much | 2153 | 23.86% | 817 | 21.14% | 1336 | 24.95% |
| | | | Total | 9280 | 100.00% | 3842 | 100.00% | 5438 | 100.00% |
| 5e | Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations | applying (AC) | Very little | 524 | 5.27% | 248 | 6.57% | 276 | 4.74% |
| | | | Some | 1778 | 18.48% | 798 | 20.87% | 980 | 17.52% |
| | | | Quite a bit | 3104 | 34.00% | 1298 | 33.25% | 1806 | 34.30% |
| | | | Very much | 3903 | 42.26% | 1507 | 39.31% | 2396 | 43.44% |
| | | | Total | 9309 | 100.00% | 3851 | 100.00% | 5458 | 100.00% |
| 6a | Number of assigned textbooks, books or book-length course packages or subject readings | readasgn (AC) | None | 248 | 2.20% | 85 | 1.62% | 163 | 2.43% |
| | | | 1-4 | 2674 | 28.26% | 983 | 26.86% | 1691 | 28.81% |
| | | | 5-10 | 3738 | 39.84% | 1632 | 42.18% | 2106 | 38.92% |
| | | | 11-20 | 1657 | 17.61% | 755 | 19.33% | 902 | 16.93% |
| | | | More than 20 | 1006 | 12.09% | 384 | 10.01% | 622 | 12.91% |
| | | | Total | 9323 | 100.00% | 3839 | 100.00% | 5484 | 100.00% |
| 6c | Number of written pages or assignments of 20 pages or more | writemor (AC) | None | 3471 | 36.57% | 1642 | 43.22% | 1829 | 33.92% |
| | | | 1-4 | 2861 | 31.54% | 1081 | 28.84% | 1780 | 32.61% |
| | | | 5-10 | 1449 | 15.52% | 547 | 13.42% | 902 | 16.36% |
| | | | 11-20 | 843 | 8.81% | 310 | 7.76% | 533 | 9.23% |
| | | | More than 20 | 669 | 7.56% | 253 | 6.76% | 416 | 7.87% |
| | | | Total | 9293 | 100.00% | 3833 | 100.00% | 5460 | 100.00% |

| | | Variable Name | Response Options | Overall Sample Count | Overall Sample % | First-Year Students Count | First-Year Students % | Senior Students Count | Senior Students % |
|--|---|---------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| LEVEL OF ACADEMIC CHALLENGE (continued) | | | | | | | | | |
| 6d | Number of written pages or assignments between 5 and 19 pages | writemid (AC) | None | 1692 | 17.66% | 829 | 22.74% | 863 | 15.64% |
| | | | 1-4 | 3882 | 41.29% | 1625 | 42.84% | 2257 | 40.67% |
| | | | 5-10 | 2244 | 24.50% | 865 | 21.23% | 1379 | 25.80% |
| | | | 11-20 | 1013 | 11.32% | 359 | 9.30% | 654 | 12.13% |
| | | | More than 20 | 448 | 5.22% | 153 | 3.88% | 295 | 5.76% |
| | | | Total | 9279 | 100.00% | 3831 | 100.00% | 5448 | 100.00% |
| 6e | Number of written pages or assignments of fewer than 5 pages | writesml (AC) | None | 2360 | 24.77% | 807 | 21.19% | 1553 | 26.20% |
| | | | 1-4 | 3974 | 42.32% | 1736 | 44.85% | 2238 | 41.32% |
| | | | 5-10 | 1565 | 17.00% | 678 | 17.97% | 887 | 16.61% |
| | | | 11-20 | 773 | 8.75% | 339 | 8.87% | 434 | 8.70% |
| | | | More than 20 | 655 | 7.16% | 290 | 7.12% | 365 | 7.17% |
| | | | Total | 9327 | 100.00% | 3850 | 100.00% | 5477 | 100.00% |
| 12a | Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analysing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities) | acadpr01 (AC) | 0 Hours | 237 | 2.36% | 96 | 2.49% | 141 | 2.31% |
| | | | 1-5 Hours | 3953 | 41.59% | 1610 | 41.33% | 2343 | 41.69% |
| | | | 6-10 Hours | 1921 | 20.44% | 793 | 20.55% | 1128 | 20.40% |
| | | | 11-15 Hours | 1028 | 11.23% | 430 | 10.95% | 598 | 11.33% |
| | | | 16-20 Hours | 852 | 9.76% | 357 | 9.07% | 495 | 10.03% |
| | | | 21-25 Hours | 544 | 5.77% | 233 | 5.92% | 311 | 5.71% |
| | | | 26-30 Hours | 375 | 3.95% | 164 | 4.27% | 211 | 3.82% |
| | | | 30+ Hours | 429 | 4.91% | 177 | 5.42% | 252 | 4.70% |
| | | | Total | 9339 | 100.00% | 3860 | 100.00% | 5479 | 100.00% |
| 14a | Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work | envschol (AC) | Very little | 304 | 2.65% | 133 | 2.98% | 171 | 2.53% |
| | | | Some | 1202 | 12.76% | 469 | 11.59% | 733 | 13.22% |
| | | | Quite a bit | 2975 | 30.75% | 1224 | 30.66% | 1751 | 30.79% |
| | | | Very much | 4808 | 53.84% | 2003 | 54.77% | 2805 | 53.47% |
| | | | Total | 9289 | 100.00% | 3829 | 100.00% | 5460 | 100.00% |

BENCHMARK ITEMS FREQUENCY REPORT: ACTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

| | | Variable Name | Response Options | Overall Sample Count | Overall Sample % | First-Year Students Count | First-Year Students % | Senior Students Count | Senior Students % |
|----|---|----------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 4a | Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions? | clquest (ACL) | Never | 1137 | 11.99% | 569 | 14.20% | 568 | 11.11% |
| | | | Sometimes | 5122 | 53.59% | 2132 | 55.97% | 2990 | 52.64% |
| | | | Often | 2189 | 23.70% | 828 | 20.06% | 1361 | 25.15% |
| | | | Very Often | 972 | 10.72% | 362 | 9.76% | 610 | 11.11% |
| | | | Total | 9420 | 100.00% | 3891 | 100.00% | 5529 | 100.00% |
| 4b | Made a class presentation? | clpresen (ACL) | Never | 3506 | 35.33% | 1851 | 46.92% | 1655 | 30.70% |
| | | | Sometimes | 3585 | 38.69% | 1317 | 33.76% | 2268 | 40.66% |
| | | | Often | 1643 | 18.67% | 544 | 14.89% | 1099 | 20.18% |
| | | | Very Often | 672 | 7.31% | 177 | 4.43% | 495 | 8.46% |
| | | | Total | 9406 | 100.00% | 3889 | 100.00% | 5517 | 100.00% |
| 4g | Worked with other students on projects during class? | classgrp (ACL) | Never | 1548 | 15.28% | 788 | 19.58% | 760 | 13.56% |
| | | | Sometimes | 3048 | 33.30% | 1317 | 33.97% | 1731 | 33.03% |
| | | | Often | 2898 | 31.94% | 1159 | 30.85% | 1739 | 32.38% |
| | | | Very Often | 1873 | 19.48% | 616 | 15.60% | 1257 | 21.03% |
| | | | Total | 9367 | 100.00% | 3880 | 100.00% | 5487 | 100.00% |

**BENCHMARK ITEMS FREQUENCY REPORT:
ACTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING**

| | | Variable Name | Response Options | Overall Sample Count | Overall Sample % | First-Year Students Count | First-Year Students % | Senior Students Count | Senior Students % |
|----|---|----------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 4h | Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments? | occgrp (ACL) | Never | 1046 | 11.61% | 502 | 13.50% | 544 | 10.85% |
| | | | Sometimes | 2587 | 28.96% | 1206 | 31.89% | 1381 | 27.79% |
| | | | Often | 2927 | 32.67% | 1208 | 31.93% | 1719 | 32.96% |
| | | | Very Often | 2740 | 26.77% | 939 | 22.69% | 1801 | 28.39% |
| | | | Total | 9300 | 100.00% | 3855 | 100.00% | 5445 | 100.00% |
| 4j | Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)? | tutor (ACL) | Never | 4762 | 51.04% | 2078 | 54.05% | 2684 | 49.84% |
| | | | Sometimes | 2834 | 29.06% | 1167 | 29.78% | 1667 | 28.77% |
| | | | Often | 1108 | 11.91% | 421 | 10.46% | 687 | 12.49% |
| | | | Very Often | 689 | 7.99% | 222 | 5.71% | 467 | 8.90% |
| | | | Total | 9393 | 100.00% | 3888 | 100.00% | 5505 | 100.00% |
| 4k | Participated in a community-based project (e.g. service learning) as part of a regular course? | commproj (ACL) | Never | 5499 | 58.61% | 2497 | 63.31% | 3002 | 56.74% |
| | | | Sometimes | 2175 | 22.96% | 813 | 21.30% | 1362 | 23.62% |
| | | | Often | 986 | 10.65% | 349 | 9.59% | 637 | 11.07% |
| | | | Very Often | 717 | 7.78% | 222 | 5.80% | 495 | 8.57% |
| | | | Total | 9377 | 100.00% | 3881 | 100.00% | 5496 | 100.00% |
| 4t | Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)? | oocideas (ACL) | Never | 725 | 7.77% | 316 | 8.14% | 409 | 7.63% |
| | | | Sometimes | 2903 | 30.73% | 1169 | 29.30% | 1734 | 31.30% |
| | | | Often | 3279 | 34.93% | 1351 | 35.74% | 1928 | 34.60% |
| | | | Very Often | 2490 | 26.57% | 1046 | 26.82% | 1444 | 26.47% |
| | | | Total | 9397 | 100.00% | 3882 | 100.00% | 5515 | 100.00% |

**BENCHMARK ITEMS FREQUENCY REPORT:
STUDENT-STAFF INTERACTION**

| | | Variable Name | Response Options | Overall Sample Count | Overall Sample % | First-Year Students Count | First-Year Students % | Senior Students Count | Senior Students % |
|----|---|----------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 4n | Discussed marks or assignments with a lecturer or tutor? | facgrade (SSI) | Never | 2658 | 27.25% | 1294 | 33.73% | 1364 | 24.66% |
| | | | Sometimes | 3918 | 42.48% | 1581 | 40.74% | 2337 | 43.17% |
| | | | Often | 1939 | 21.62% | 695 | 18.60% | 1244 | 22.82% |
| | | | Very Often | 856 | 8.66% | 305 | 6.93% | 551 | 9.35% |
| | | | Total | 9371 | 100.00% | 3875 | 100.00% | 5496 | 100.00% |
| 4o | Talked about career plans with a lecturer or a counsellor? | facplans (SSI) | Never | 4346 | 46.19% | 2022 | 52.56% | 2324 | 43.65% |
| | | | Sometimes | 3109 | 33.71% | 1143 | 29.08% | 1966 | 35.55% |
| | | | Often | 1331 | 14.05% | 484 | 12.63% | 847 | 14.62% |
| | | | Very Often | 581 | 6.06% | 224 | 5.73% | 357 | 6.19% |
| | | | Total | 9367 | 100.00% | 3873 | 100.00% | 5494 | 100.00% |
| 4p | Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with a lecturer outside of class? | facideas (SSI) | Never | 4065 | 41.81% | 1963 | 49.57% | 2102 | 38.72% |
| | | | Sometimes | 3540 | 38.90% | 1322 | 34.76% | 2218 | 40.55% |
| | | | Often | 1298 | 14.70% | 434 | 11.64% | 864 | 15.92% |
| | | | Very Often | 435 | 4.59% | 142 | 4.03% | 293 | 4.81% |
| | | | Total | 9338 | 100.00% | 3861 | 100.00% | 5477 | 100.00% |
| 4q | Received punctual written or oral feedback from lecturers on your academic performance? | facfeed (SSI) | Never | 3355 | 35.58% | 1534 | 40.02% | 1821 | 33.82% |
| | | | Sometimes | 3016 | 34.05% | 1140 | 29.80% | 1876 | 35.75% |
| | | | Often | 2010 | 21.37% | 791 | 21.21% | 1219 | 21.43% |
| | | | Very Often | 957 | 9.00% | 388 | 8.97% | 569 | 9.00% |
| | | | Total | 9338 | 100.00% | 3853 | 100.00% | 5485 | 100.00% |

**BENCHMARK ITEMS FREQUENCY REPORT:
STUDENT-STAFF INTERACTION (continued)**

| | | Variable Name | Response Options | Overall Sample Count | Overall Sample % | First-Year Students Count | First-Year Students % | Senior Students Count | Senior Students % |
|-----|---|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4s | Worked with staff members (lecturers or other) on activities other than course-work (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)? | facother (SSI) | Never | 6092 | 63.88% | 2751 | 71.68% | 3341 | 60.78% |
| | | | Sometimes | 2050 | 22.14% | 705 | 18.33% | 1345 | 23.66% |
| | | | Often | 830 | 9.55% | 279 | 6.82% | 551 | 10.63% |
| | | | Very Often | 402 | 4.42% | 136 | 3.17% | 266 | 4.92% |
| | | | Total | 9374 | 100.00% | 3871 | 100.00% | 5503 | 100.00% |
| 10d | Work on a research project with a staff member (lecturers or other) outside course or programme requirements | resrch04 (SSI) | Have not decided | 3100 | 33.11% | 1318 | 34.46% | 1782 | 32.57% |
| | | | Do not plan to do | 1741 | 18.86% | 702 | 17.80% | 1039 | 19.28% |
| | | | Plan to do | 3758 | 40.23% | 1642 | 42.85% | 2116 | 39.19% |
| | | | Done | 754 | 7.81% | 202 | 4.89% | 552 | 8.97% |
| | | | Total | 9353 | 100.00% | 3864 | 100.00% | 5489 | 100.00% |

**BENCHMARK ITEMS FREQUENCY REPORT:
ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES**

| | | Variable Name | Response Options | Overall Sample Count | Overall Sample % | First-Year Students Count | First-Year Students % | Senior Students Count | Senior Students % |
|-----|---|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4l | Used an electronic medium (SMS, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment? | itacadem (EEE) | Never | 1897 | 19.54% | 839 | 21.73% | 1058 | 18.67% |
| | | | Sometimes | 2659 | 28.12% | 1124 | 29.16% | 1535 | 27.70% |
| | | | Often | 2252 | 25.11% | 911 | 23.98% | 1341 | 25.56% |
| | | | Very Often | 2597 | 27.23% | 1009 | 25.14% | 1588 | 28.07% |
| | | | Total | 9405 | 100.00% | 3883 | 100.00% | 5522 | 100.00% |
| 4u | Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own? | divrstud (EEE) | Never | 1800 | 16.49% | 797 | 18.63% | 1003 | 15.64% |
| | | | Sometimes | 3279 | 35.99% | 1283 | 33.19% | 1996 | 37.11% |
| | | | Often | 2451 | 26.93% | 1021 | 27.19% | 1430 | 26.83% |
| | | | Very Often | 1841 | 20.58% | 774 | 20.98% | 1067 | 20.42% |
| | | | Total | 9371 | 100.00% | 3875 | 100.00% | 5496 | 100.00% |
| 4v | Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values? | diffstu2 (EEE) | Never | 1280 | 12.70% | 592 | 14.47% | 688 | 11.99% |
| | | | Sometimes | 3096 | 33.20% | 1245 | 31.70% | 1851 | 33.79% |
| | | | Often | 2677 | 29.03% | 1079 | 27.97% | 1598 | 29.45% |
| | | | Very Often | 2350 | 25.08% | 966 | 25.85% | 1384 | 24.77% |
| | | | Total | 9403 | 100.00% | 3882 | 100.00% | 5521 | 100.00% |
| 10a | Practicum, internship, field experience or clinical assignment | intern04 (EEE) | Have not decided | 1585 | 16.73% | 788 | 21.10% | 797 | 15.00% |
| | | | Do not plan to do | 531 | 5.63% | 234 | 6.11% | 297 | 5.43% |
| | | | Plan to do | 6018 | 64.28% | 2606 | 67.12% | 3412 | 63.14% |
| | | | Done | 1216 | 13.36% | 237 | 5.67% | 979 | 16.43% |
| | | | Total | 9350 | 100.00% | 3865 | 100.00% | 5485 | 100.00% |
| 10b | Community service or volunteer work | volntr04 (EEE) | Have not decided | 1671 | 16.51% | 719 | 17.19% | 952 | 16.25% |
| | | | Do not plan to do | 934 | 9.31% | 375 | 8.38% | 559 | 9.68% |
| | | | Plan to do | 4370 | 46.89% | 1980 | 53.17% | 2390 | 44.40% |
| | | | Done | 2382 | 27.29% | 789 | 21.27% | 1593 | 29.68% |
| | | | Total | 9357 | 100.00% | 3863 | 100.00% | 5494 | 100.00% |

BENCHMARK ITEMS FREQUENCY REPORT:
ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES (continued)

| | Variable Name | Response Options | Overall Sample Count | Overall Sample % | First-Year Students Count | First-Year Students % | Senior Students Count | Senior Students % | |
|-----|---|------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------|
| 10c | Participation in academic student societies (law, psychology, etc.) where students engage in topics related to their subject | lrn-com04 (EEE) | Have not decided | 2865 | 30.30% | 1222 | 31.31% | 1643 | 29.90% |
| | | | Do not plan to do | 1960 | 20.62% | 765 | 18.49% | 1195 | 21.46% |
| | | | Plan to do | 3543 | 37.19% | 1607 | 42.88% | 1936 | 34.93% |
| | | | Done | 963 | 11.89% | 262 | 7.32% | 701 | 13.71% |
| | | | Total | 9331 | 100.00% | 3856 | 100.00% | 5475 | 100.00% |
| 10e | Completion of a course in a foreign or additional language | forlng04 (EEE) | Have not decided | 2724 | 29.55% | 1082 | 28.27% | 1642 | 30.06% |
| | | | Do not plan to do | 3316 | 35.15% | 1410 | 35.87% | 1906 | 34.86% |
| | | | Plan to do | 2823 | 29.35% | 1219 | 31.87% | 1604 | 28.35% |
| | | | Done | 479 | 5.95% | 149 | 3.99% | 330 | 6.72% |
| | | | Total | 9342 | 100.00% | 3860 | 100.00% | 5482 | 100.00% |
| 10f | Participation in an international exchange programme | stdabr04 (EEE) | Have not decided | 3004 | 31.56% | 1223 | 31.94% | 1781 | 31.41% |
| | | | Do not plan to do | 1985 | 23.02% | 712 | 18.33% | 1273 | 24.88% |
| | | | Plan to do | 4150 | 43.65% | 1843 | 48.25% | 2307 | 41.83% |
| | | | Done | 181 | 1.77% | 66 | 1.48% | 115 | 1.88% |
| | | | Total | 9320 | 100.00% | 3844 | 100.00% | 5476 | 100.00% |
| 10g | Study of a subject or course for non-degree or non-diploma purposes | indstd04 (EEE) | Have not decided | 2509 | 27.61% | 1073 | 28.30% | 1436 | 27.33% |
| | | | Do not plan to do | 3402 | 33.60% | 1547 | 37.92% | 1855 | 31.89% |
| | | | Plan to do | 2535 | 28.27% | 975 | 26.89% | 1560 | 28.82% |
| | | | Done | 859 | 10.52% | 242 | 6.89% | 617 | 11.96% |
| | | | Total | 9305 | 100.00% | 3837 | 100.00% | 5468 | 100.00% |
| 10h | Development of a community project in which you use your university knowledge to address a problem in your community | snrx04 (EEE) | Have not decided | 2199 | 23.37% | 974 | 24.70% | 1225 | 22.84% |
| | | | Do not plan to do | 1033 | 10.75% | 440 | 10.40% | 593 | 10.89% |
| | | | Plan to do | 5175 | 55.61% | 2190 | 59.16% | 2985 | 54.21% |
| | | | Done | 937 | 10.26% | 252 | 5.74% | 685 | 12.05% |
| | | | Total | 9344 | 100.00% | 3856 | 100.00% | 5488 | 100.00% |
| 12e | Participating in co-curricular activities (organisations, campus publications, involvement in SRC projects, residence duties, inter-residence sports, community services, etc.) | cocurr01 (EEE) | 0 Hours | 5993 | 64.86% | 2656 | 70.10% | 3337 | 62.76% |
| | | | 1-5 Hours | 1888 | 19.78% | 700 | 18.32% | 1188 | 20.36% |
| | | | 6-10 Hours | 622 | 6.93% | 231 | 5.63% | 391 | 7.45% |
| | | | 11-15 Hours | 302 | 3.22% | 100 | 2.51% | 202 | 3.50% |
| | | | 16-20 Hours | 204 | 2.44% | 69 | 1.77% | 135 | 2.71% |
| | | | 21-25 Hours | 109 | 1.21% | 35 | 0.83% | 74 | 1.36% |
| | | | 26-30 Hours | 60 | 0.73% | 13 | 0.36% | 47 | 0.88% |
| | | | 30+ Hours | 86 | 0.84% | 21 | 0.48% | 65 | 0.98% |
| | | | Total | 9264 | 100.00% | 3825 | 100.00% | 5439 | 100.00% |
| 14c | Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social and racial or ethnic backgrounds | envdivrs (EEE) | Very little | 1637 | 18.55% | 621 | 16.27% | 1016 | 19.45% |
| | | | Some | 2619 | 27.88% | 1087 | 28.91% | 1532 | 27.47% |
| | | | Quite a bit | 2842 | 30.41% | 1149 | 29.46% | 1693 | 30.79% |
| | | | Very much | 2130 | 23.15% | 947 | 25.35% | 1183 | 22.28% |
| | | | Total | 9228 | 100.00% | 3804 | 100.00% | 5424 | 100.00% |

BENCHMARK ITEMS FREQUENCY REPORT:
SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

| | | Variable Name | Response Options | Overall Sample Count | Overall Sample % | First-Year Students Count | First-Year Students % | Senior Students Count | Senior Students % |
|-------|---|-----------------|---|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 11a | Relationships with other students | envstu (SCE) | 1 = Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of alienation | 116 | 1.17% | 60 | 1.42% | 56 | 1.07% |
| | | | 2 | 174 | 1.72% | 80 | 1.95% | 94 | 1.63% |
| | | | 3 | 441 | 4.80% | 210 | 6.05% | 231 | 4.30% |
| | | | 4 | 1232 | 12.76% | 512 | 12.17% | 720 | 12.99% |
| | | | 5 | 1844 | 19.42% | 807 | 20.00% | 1037 | 19.19% |
| | | | 6 | 2056 | 20.10% | 810 | 20.08% | 1246 | 20.11% |
| | | | 7 = Friendly, Supportive, Sense of belonging | 3433 | 40.03% | 1365 | 38.34% | 2068 | 40.71% |
| Total | | | 9296 | 100.00% | 3844 | 100.00% | 5452 | 100.00% | |
| 11b | Relationships with lecturers or academic staff members | envfac (SCE) | 1 = Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic | 247 | 2.41% | 94 | 2.18% | 153 | 2.51% |
| | | | 2 | 467 | 4.23% | 213 | 4.90% | 254 | 3.96% |
| | | | 3 | 937 | 9.62% | 392 | 9.89% | 545 | 9.51% |
| | | | 4 | 1922 | 19.39% | 790 | 19.67% | 1132 | 19.27% |
| | | | 5 | 2157 | 24.16% | 857 | 21.79% | 1300 | 25.11% |
| | | | 6 | 1658 | 17.07% | 696 | 18.10% | 962 | 16.65% |
| | | | 7 = Available, Helpful, Sympathetic | 1901 | 23.13% | 802 | 23.47% | 1099 | 22.99% |
| Total | | | 9289 | 100.00% | 3844 | 100.00% | 5445 | 100.00% | |
| 11c | Relationships with administrative staff and offices | envadm (SCE) | 1 = Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid | 850 | 8.22% | 336 | 8.36% | 514 | 8.17% |
| | | | 2 | 981 | 10.75% | 384 | 10.00% | 597 | 11.05% |
| | | | 3 | 1340 | 14.33% | 556 | 14.10% | 784 | 14.42% |
| | | | 4 | 1889 | 19.81% | 783 | 20.12% | 1106 | 19.68% |
| | | | 5 | 1677 | 18.02% | 679 | 17.85% | 998 | 18.08% |
| | | | 6 | 1127 | 11.29% | 482 | 12.05% | 645 | 10.99% |
| | | | 7 = Helpful, Considerate, Flexible | 1425 | 17.58% | 619 | 17.52% | 806 | 17.61% |
| Total | | | 9289 | 100.00% | 3839 | 100.00% | 5450 | 100.00% | |
| 14b | Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically | envsuprt (SCE) | Very little | 480 | 4.94% | 158 | 3.61% | 322 | 5.46% |
| | | | Some | 1850 | 19.99% | 718 | 17.76% | 1132 | 20.87% |
| | | | Quite a bit | 3453 | 37.37% | 1413 | 37.33% | 2040 | 37.39% |
| | | | Very much | 3470 | 37.70% | 1524 | 41.30% | 1946 | 36.28% |
| | | | Total | 9253 | 100.00% | 3813 | 100.00% | 5440 | 100.00% |
| 14d | Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) | envnacadm (SCE) | Very little | 3524 | 38.61% | 1373 | 35.78% | 2151 | 39.73% |
| | | | Some | 2611 | 28.04% | 1085 | 27.93% | 1526 | 28.08% |
| | | | Quite a bit | 1907 | 20.23% | 808 | 21.26% | 1099 | 19.83% |
| | | | Very much | 1203 | 13.12% | 545 | 15.03% | 658 | 12.36% |
| | | | Total | 9245 | 100.00% | 3811 | 100.00% | 5434 | 100.00% |
| 14e | Providing the support you need to thrive socially | envsocial (SCE) | Very little | 2620 | 28.47% | 1007 | 25.87% | 1613 | 29.49% |
| | | | Some | 3145 | 34.13% | 1281 | 34.10% | 1864 | 34.15% |
| | | | Quite a bit | 2215 | 23.90% | 948 | 25.59% | 1267 | 23.23% |
| | | | Very much | 1215 | 13.50% | 543 | 14.44% | 672 | 13.13% |
| | | | Total | 9195 | 100.00% | 3779 | 100.00% | 5416 | 100.00% |



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Published by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) in 2012
1 Quintin Brand Street
Persequor Technopark
Brummeria, Pretoria
South Africa

Tel: +27 12 349 3840
Website: <http://www.che.ac.za>

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ISBN 978-1-919856-85-8