



UNIVERSITY OF <sup>TM</sup>  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
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# Students' Learning Experiences in Second Year Augmented Economics

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EDGEWOOD CAMPUS



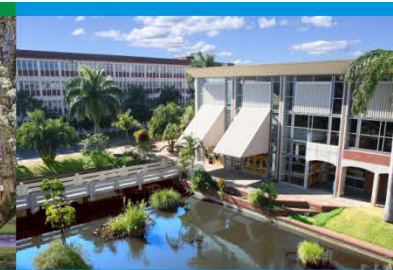
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# Outline

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- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Literature review
- ◆ Theoretical framework
- ◆ Methodology
- ◆ Ethical issues
- ◆ Findings
- ◆ Discussion
- ◆ Conclusion

# Introduction

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## ✧ Background

- Access initiative
- Equity (DoE, 1996; CHE, 2007)
- Redress (DoE, 1996)
- Effectiveness (Shahan & Meyer, 2001)

## ✧ Academic development (AD)

- Gate keeper

# Research Questions

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Three research questions:

1. What institutional factors affected students' learning experiences in second year augmented economics.
2. How did the students experience learning in second year augmented economics?
3. What was the relationship between the students' learning experiences & the learning outcomes in 2<sup>nd</sup> year augmented economics?

# Literature review

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- Much work done in Australia & Western Europe (Ramsden, 1991; Biggs, *et al*, 2001).
- Very little done on SA (Horn & Jansen, 2008; Smith & Ranhod, 2012)
- SA context of low throughput and gross participations rates, high dropout and attrition rates, and skills shortages in critical areas (CHE, 2007; DoE, 1997 and Erasmus & Beier, 2009)
- Dominant areas of research are course experience (Ramsden, 1991; 1993) and student approaches to learning (Marton & Saljo, 1976; Biggs, 1991; Biggs *et al*, 2001)
- Contradictory findings

# Theoretical & Conceptual Frameworks

- Biggs' 3P Model

Presage

## **STUDENT FACTORS**

Prior knowledge (Gr12 marks)  
Gender

Process

## **LEARNING FOCUSED ACTIVITIES**

Deep approach  
Surface approach

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Academic outcomes  
Generic skills

Product

## **INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS**

Good teaching, Appropriate workload, Appropriate assessment, Clear goals

# Methodology

- Judgment sampling
  - Students registered for 2<sup>nd</sup> year augmented econ.
  - 110 total, response rate was 53% : 23 (62%) females, 14 (38%) males, 3 (7.5%) responses incomplete.
  - Age range: 19 to 25
  - APS 26 to 36 vs 31 to 42 for mainstream
- Instrument a combination of Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) (Ramsden, 1991) and Approaches to Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) (Entwistle, *et al*, 2000).
- 26 items on 5-point Likert scale & 3 qualitative items.
- Only quantitative item responses used

# Ethical Issues

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- Clearance sought and received from the institution's Ethics Committee
- Students informed and signed informed consent forms.



# Findings

## Pearson Correlational Scores

	<b>Good Teaching</b>	<b>Appropriate Assessment</b>	<b>Clear Goals</b>	<b>Appropriate workload</b>	<b>Grade 12 marks</b>	<b>Age</b>
Good teaching	-					
Appropriate assessment	0.790					
Appropriate workload	0.538	0.104				
Clear goals	0.459	0.480	0.402			
Grade 12 marks	0.720	-0.190	0.061	-0.074		
Age	-0.02	0.078	0.048	0.031		

# Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Subscale	Mean	SD	Alpha Coefficient
Learning environment	Good teaching	3.81	0.78	0.787
	Clear goals	3.86	0.47	0.166
	Appropriate Work load	3.12	0.77	0.487
	Appropriate assessment	3.30	0.97	0.429

# Discussion

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- Students strongly agreed with Biggs' 3P model as seen from strong positive correlation between students' & institutional factors.
- Presage factors influence students' learning experiences
- Matric results questionable as a determinant of university admission.
- Good teaching an important finding in view of the role played by academics in teaching & learning
- Importance of considering presage factors when planning and delivering 2<sup>nd</sup> year augmented economics.
- Statistically significant differences in academic outcomes between surface and deep approaches to learning by students.
- Possible explanations are quantitative nature & examination structure of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year augmented economics. Further research encouraged.
- Importance of generic skills encouraging.

# Conclusion

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- On the 3 research questions:
  1. Qtn 1:
    - a) T-test and mean scores showed students perceived good teaching & clear goals as positively influencing students' learning experiences.
    - b) Appropriate workload & appropriate assessment were perceived by the students according to their academic performance
  2. Qtn 2:
    - a) Students generally perceived themselves as adopting both approaches to learning, depending on the situation they faced.
  3. Qtn 3:
    - a) Students adopting surface approach to learning did better than those who adopted deep approach. This finding warrants further research on the subject.
    - b) No significant gender differences found.
    - c) Age is not a significant factor.

# Study Limitations

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- Small sample limited the generalizability of the results.
- Focus was on students' perceptions only, with no follow up or interviews, due to time constraints.
- Longitudinal and a larger sample strongly recommended.

# Thank you for listening

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- Questions?