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STUDENT VOICES ON TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT: INSIGHTS FROM FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS IN A TEACHER TRAINING HIGHER EDUCATION MODULE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined first-year students' reactions to the School-Based Work: Integrated Learning module, drawing on Kirkpatrick's Level 1 reaction model of learning evaluation. Using qualitative data derived from student reflections and feedback, the research explored perceptions of lecturer behaviour, communication, assessment, emotional support, and mode of delivery. Findings revealed six major themes: lecturer attitude and support, communication, assessment and feedback, emotional and psychological support, teaching and learning practices, and mode of delivery. Students consistently emphasized the importance of empathy, patience, and respect in fostering engagement and belonging, particularly during the transition to higher education. The results highlight that relational and emotional dimensions of teaching are central to students' satisfaction and persistence. While some students appreciated the flexibility of online learning, most preferred face-to-face delivery due to challenges related to interaction, connectivity, and comprehension. Effective communication, timely feedback, and humanizing pedagogical practices were identified as key drivers of positive learning experiences. The study concludes that first-year student success depends not only on curriculum design and technological access but also on lecturers' ability to create supportive, inclusive, and emotionally responsive learning environments.

Keywords: first-year students; student reactions; humanizing pedagogy; lecturer support; communication; assessment feedback; online learning; student engagement