UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

COMPARING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN MAINSTREAM AND EXTENDED PROGRAMMES AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

In the recent decade students' academic performance in higher education has become a great concern globally and in South Africa particularly. Failure or dropout rate affects most higher education institutions (HEI) in South Africa and has a negative impact on an institution's funding as well as the economy of the country. The development of the country depends highly on the number of well trained and highly skilled graduates to impact the economic growth of the country. South African universities have responded to the trend towards massisfication of higher education by public policy imperatives to redress the legacy of apartheid. Extended Programmes are used in South African HEIs as a remedy to limitations of disadvantaged primary and secondary schooling to enable students to have access in higher education. Based on the above statements, the objectives of this study were as follows: to compare academic performance of Mainstream and Extended Programme students and to critically examine the reasons for similarities and/or differences in academic performance of students in Mainstream and Extended Programmes at higher education institutions. The research questions were as follows: How do Mainstream and Extended Programme students perform in their first year of university studies at a higher education institution? How do Mainstream and Extended Programme students perform the way they do in their first year of university studies at a higher education institution? The study was aimed at comparing the academic performance of Mainstream and Extended Programmes students from 2017 and 2018. A sample size of 20 for both Extended Programme and Mainstream students was purposively selected based on the test scores which were previously collected from the department so as to reach that sample size. A qualitative approach was used to collect data using focus groups interviews in which only 15 students participated. The test scores were analyse and presented in graphs. Data collected during focus group discussions were recorded, transcribed and analysed based on the themes and the two theories. The findings were discussed and interpreted based on the literature reviewed. The study recommended that Extended Programmes as support be extended to all first year students as the findings of the study revealed that they are all affected by the issue of under-preparedness and therefore need equal support. This would improve student retention and student success.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I declare that this thesis is my work and has not been submitted in any form for any other degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education.

Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and list of references given.

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Ms RG Lekhehle

Signature   Date:

DEDICATION

To my mom Kekeletso Eunice who has been praying for my success.

To my brother Letsatsi and sister Limpho for their motivation.

To Pabatso, my son, and my niece Lipalesa.

Lastly, to all my friends.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Academic development: an open set of practices concerned with improving the quality of teaching and learning in higher education.

Academic advising: an effective intervention for the students who are considered to be at risk of failing and repeating a level or those who may drop out as well as the first generation students who, because of the fact that their parents do not have higher education experience lack the knowledge to support their children holistically, even though most of the time they support them financially Swecker, Fifolt, and Searby (2013).

Extended programme: An extended curriculum programme is one in which the minimum duration of a qualification is extended. Such a programme includes developmental courses and content, in addition to providing students with additional time (Boughey, 2010).

Mainstream programme: The normal first year of the diploma or degree (Boughey, 2010).

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CHAPTER ONE

Mainstream and Extended Programmes in perspective in South Africa

1.1 Introduction

The Extended Programmes which were commonly known as foundation programmes have been used by a number of institutions, especially historically disadvantaged institutions, to increase access to university education in South Africa (Boughey, 2013).   It seems that the foundation provision that has been in South African higher education has been used in the form of bridging programmes. The main focus of the foundation programme was to widen access to students in the sciences who could not meet admission requirements.   Harris and Moll (2015) highlight that it was recognised that there were a lot of challenges in the South African higher education and that challenges with access demanded dealing with the educational system as a whole. One of the main challenges is a high failure rate and drop-out of students that calls for effort to support retention.

As part of the academic support in higher education, Extended Programmes are identified by their uniqueness to allow access to the historically and socially disadvantaged or underprepared students. Akoojee and Nkomo (2007) state that access to higher education has been an issue in almost all African countries and not in South African higher education only. The only difference is that South African higher education was affected by apartheid. Extended Programmes are designed as a strategy to improve throughput and chosen to support the black underprepared students from poor social origins (Badat, 2010). Maphosa (2014) speculates that Extended Programmes, which were commonly known as foundation programmes, have been used by a number of institutions, especially the historically disadvantaged, to increase access to university education in South Africa.

Maphosa (2014) further posits that Extended Programmes are part of the academic support programmes which are based on the deficiency theory, as the students are viewed as lacking certain knowledge and skills which lead to poor performance. As a

matter of fact, academic developments were initially intended by higher education institutions to intervene in the areas of learning, teaching and curriculum with the aim of allowing access and success and curbing retention, especially when it comes to students who have an educational disadvantaged background (epistemological access). Epistemological access means that the university is being responsive to the larger societal needs by widening access to knowledge, which means giving the majority an opportunity to learn (Liccardo, Botsis, & Dominguez-Whitehead, 2015). Research suggests that the rate at which students fail and drop out points to the schools in which they have studied (Modisaotsile, 2012). Modisaotsile further notes that basic education has not improved to the level of helping students acquire the needed skills prior to university education. As Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld (2005) suggest, this problem places a burden on the institutions of higher learning where some programmes have to have an additional year to allow more access and to improve retention.

For students under Extended Programmes, the best way to deal with retention seems to be during the early part of the course before students can be affected and before they can embark on the normal first year of their university studies (Boughey, 2010). The focus has to be on the learning and teaching strategies. This is where they differ with the mainstream students who embark on the normal first year of their diploma. Hutchings and Garraway (2010) say that even after more than thirty years, academic development practitioners still value foundation programmes or Extended Programmes. As it was the case then, the word 'under-preparedness' is still used to identify students who are from disadvantaged societies. The study aims at comparing the academic performance of Mainstream and Extended Programme students.

1.2 The research problem

The primary aim of this study was to explore academic performance through a comparative analysis of the two streams at a university.

South African universities use Extended Programmes to provide epistemological access and participation by integrating academic skills and subject content (Lecanides-Arnott, 2014). Similarly van Schalkwyk, Bitzer, and van der Walt (2010) also outline that there

was a need to intervene in order to give the underprepared students epistemological access and facilitate their success. articulate that the regular year content is spread over a longer period to allow for an additional year so that students can do foundation courses. As Wilcox et al. (2005) suggest, this problem places a burden on the institutions of higher learning where some programmes have to have an additional year to allow more access and to improve retention.   (Lubben, Davidowitz, Buffler, Allie, & Scott, 2010) state that Extended Programmes are aimed at assisting students to perform better and have skills that will assist them to cope with the academic work before they enter the mainstream. While the claims for the necessity of Extended Programmes are clear, it is not yet fully known or understood whether the interventions contribute meaningfully to access and success as intended.

1.3 Research objectives

To compare academic performance of the two streams, Extended Programmes and Mainstream, the study objectives were to:

1. Compare academic performance of Mainstream and Extended Programme students at a higher education institution.
2. Critically examine reasons for similarities and/or differences in academic performance of students in Mainstream and Extended Programmes at a higher education institution.

1.4 Research questions

The objectives were supported by the following research questions:

1. How do Mainstream and Extended Programme students perform in their first year of university studies at a higher education institution?

2. Why do Mainstream and Extended Programme students perform the way they do in their first year of university studies at a higher education institution?

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings of this study make a significant contribution to the enhancement of policies pertaining to student access and success as the study provides insights and

knowledge to policy makers in institutions of higher learning and government departments.

1.6 Limitations of study

Limitations of the study are provided as follows:

1.6.1 The sample size

The intended sample size was twenty (20) for academic scores and for focus group interviews. However, I managed to get scores for twenty of the intended participants and only fifteen participants for focus groups interviews. This affected the results in that it was difficult to make full comparisons. However, the study did achieve its aim to engage with the academic performance of the students generally.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the perspective of Mainstream and Extended Programmes in South African higher education. The chapter has outlined the historical background of the programmes and the challenges of access and success experienced in the sector. The research problem, objectives of the study, questions as well as significance and limitations have been highlighted. The major claim is that there is a need to explore academic success of Mainstream and Extended Programmes in South Africa in order to understand how the Extended Programmes contribute to university success.

1.8 Chapter outline

Chapter one has presented the introduction to the study as already noted.

Chapter two reviews the literature associated with access and success in higher education.

It specifically deals with the following: The Extended Programmes concept, Extended Programmes offered at the institution under study, challenges affecting students'

success, institutional readiness and enhancement of curriculum. Through the literature review, a gap that relates to limited studies or the value of extended progress in contributing to success is established.

Chapter three discusses the methodology of the study.

The chapter describes the methodology and the methods which were used in this study. These include the paradigm of the study, the theoretical frameworks underpinning and guiding the study which assisted me to understand my study results. The research instruments, the processes as well as the issues of trustworthiness were discussed to give a clear picture of the challenges experienced by both Extended Programmes and Mainstream students.

Chapter four presents results of the study.

This chapter analyses the results of the study from document analysis, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. The data collected was analysed using Excel and thematic description.

Chapter five discusses the results of the study.

In this chapter the findings of the study will be discussed and interpreted adhering to aspects of Abraham Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs as well as Astin's Theory of Involvement. The results are also reported and recommendations are suggested for the future of institutions of higher learning and for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

After presenting the scope of the study in chapter one, this chapter reviews the literature relevant to the topic under study with the intention of responding to the questions pertaining to Mainstream and Extended Programmes and highlighting the background to the topic. The literature is organised in six main sections as follow:

- The Extended Programmes concept
- Extended Programmes at the institution under study
- Challenges affecting students' performance
- Institutional challenges or readiness
- Enhancement of curriculum

2.2 Conceptualising the Extended Programmes

According to (Boughey, 2013) the political transition in South Africa and the integration of foundation programmes in higher education brought about the Extended Programmes concept. The Extended Programmes (i.e. extended curricula) in South African higher education were considered to be the best response to mitigate the issue of the articulation gap in higher education institutions instead of labelling students as disadvantaged. As such the Extended Programmes were aimed at improving the performance of students in higher education by ensuring effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness and production of quality.

The background to these programmes was recognising that in the South African higher education there is lack of quality graduate throughput (Scott, 2018). Any country needs to produce knowledgeable graduates who will be able to develop that country. As such, it becomes worrisome when, despite increased university access, only a few students succeed. Ideally, students are expected to take the expected duration of their respective degrees or diplomas at institutions of higher learning. A glaring concern in South Africa is that the higher education sector is characterised by a high level of

failure and dropout rate. Extended Programmes are considered a feasible and strategic intervention to deal with dropout and promote graduate output. Extended Programmes are still the normal degree or diploma programmes which are supported by the incorporation of foundation provision (Lubben et al., 2010).

Even the 1997 White Paper on Higher Education considers Extended Programmes as the policy strategised to facilitate student success. The policy was reaffirmed in the National Plan for Higher Education in 2001 and got recognition for funding in the funding framework which was introduced in 2004 (Coleman, 2018).

Due to the fact that almost all higher education institutions introduced such provision, state funding has been provided. This has been noticed to be the great intervention for the higher education sector in South Africa, although the level of maturity and resourcing of Extended Programmes from institution to institution differs (Case, Marshall, & Grayson, 2013) . In some cases, these programmes have developed in such a way that the institutions utilise permanent staff, those with specific specialities and even those who were on part-time and short-term contracts. The exiting mainstream curricula have not benefitted or been responsive to the needs of the majority of the students who are talented but affected by the issue of under preparedness. The purpose of Extended Programmes is therefore to provide an alternative curriculum structure to assist in that area. The Extended Programmes are the answers to the articulation gap (Case et al., 2013) .

Much as Extended Programmes are viewed as best interventions, there are constraints since they have been formed over the existing old curriculum. This was a challenge in the sense that the designing was difficult as the key subjects were nearly discontinued due to some complexities such as the volume of work which increased. On the other hand, integration of knowledge and skills development could not be sufficiently practiced and, at the same time, some of the disciplines were reluctant to strengthen the Extended Programme or to accept it (Coleman, 2018).

Case, Marshall and Grayson (2013b) argue that Extended Programmes can effectively address the issue of the secondary-tertiary articulation gap and it is assumed that they are readily prepared for that as a curriculum.

Because of the fact that Extended Programmes students are less prepared and more at-risk than the regular intake, this implies that their performance needs to be regularly assessed. Based on the analysis of the performance pattern indicators, the majority of students should benefit from the Extended Programmes' intervention and yet only the minority seem to benefit (Boughey, 2013). The intervention depends on the funding that is only provided for a few students which is a big challenge (Kloot, Case, & Marshall, 2008). To some extent Extended Programmes students are not regarded as important by some institutions, stakeholders as well as students and tend to be stigmatised.

2.3 Extended Programmes at the institution under study

The university under which the study is located, like other historically disadvantaged universities, attempted to improve access, success and throughput rates by introducing Extended Programmes in 2007 (Extended Programmes Policy, 2009). To some extent it may have taken some time for some academic staff and their heads of departments to understand the importance of Extended Programmes. One of the reasons could be that the inclusion of an additional year comes with a lot of preparations meant to cater for students for their Mainstream Programmes. This may also include the setting of time-tables to suit everyone involved. Even though that is the case, it is said that to some lecturers this is an opportunity for them to be involved in this kind of programme as they are interested to see how the two programmes are progressing (Coleman, 2018).

The Centre for Learning and Teaching Development at this institution conducts workshops to train different stakeholders, especially academics, on the importance of Extended Programmes for the future of higher education in South Africa, but most importantly for our university as the calibre of students is normally seen as "underprepared", requiring more support to enhance their performance. However, even though there seems to be an understanding about the Extended Programmes at the university, there are still issues which need attention or to be addressed. Some of these issues concern infrastructure where the classrooms, for example, are not enough to accommodate all students, and there is a shortage of academic staff with

proper qualifications. (Boughey, 2013) in most cases, even some students who enrol into South African universities straight to Mainstream are affected by the issue of under-preparedness and fail to progress as expected.

2.4 Factors affecting students' performance

The South African higher education opened access to the majority of citizens who could not afford tuition fees for higher education. This was achieved in the form of providing financial aid via the National Students Financial Scheme (NSFAS) to poor students to give them the opportunity to access higher education. The majority of students enrolled based on this kind of provision (de Villiers, 1996). There are challenges associated with the number of students flocking to universities. The main challenge which affects institutional funding and which has always been an issue of concern is students' academic performance. More funding is injected into the institutions of higher learning depending mostly on the performance of students and throughput rate. When it comes to good or poor performance of students a number of factors may be identified and it has been recognised some of these factors overlap. I will discuss the following factors that affect students' performance: personal and environment factors, poverty, lack of self-esteem and poor schooling.

2.4.1 Personal and environmental factors

Guarino, Reckase, and Wooldridge (2015) suggest that some students are affected by their background. To this effect, Stephens, Hamedani, and Destin (2014) state that first generation students have been identified as struggling when it comes to their studies as compared to students who come from families who have at least one parent with a degree. To some extent, such students are affected by poor performance or dropping out of higher education more than those who have at least one parent with a university degree. Their background does not only affect their grades, but they are also affected by the fact that the issue of suffering financial problems is common among them and some of them are unable to afford textbooks or other study materials that they need to be successful. However, while financial resources and academic skills are necessary there is no guarantee that when students are well resourced, they will perform well in higher education (Stephens et al., 2014). As a matter of fact,

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psychological resources are believed to be necessary for first-year students to prepare their mind-sets so as to adjust to the environment which they may find challenging. This will give them the insight on how to approach their studies in higher education as their background and the lack of knowledge may affect their performance. At the university where the study was conducted, some of the important activities meant to support and enhance students' performance are orientation of the first year students which is followed by the induction programmes conducted by Academic Advisors. Charleston, Hayman-White, Ryan, and Happell (2007); Jacobs and Pretorius (2014) posit that 'orientation' comes from 'orientate' which is to adjust to new circumstances, surroundings and or facts. In these orientation programmes, new students - especially those in the Extended Programmes - are guided towards the requirements of their course structure. This is vital since they need to understand that their first year is divided into four semesters spread over two years before they get into their second year. The purpose of induction workshops is to assist first entering students with adjustment skills in the new environment. They are introduced to the culture of the institution so as to help them bond with their different faculties (Jacobs & Pretorius, 2014). There are also follow-up interventions to which students are referred by their lecturers when they do not perform well, i.e. to academic advisors. This is done so that they can improve performance in their future work.

2.4.2 Poverty

Scott, Yeld, and Hendry (2007a) argue that poverty affects many students and they need support. Maree (2015a) suggests that poverty continually makes a negative impact on the access and success of students in higher education. In terms of financial constraints, there is support although it does not seem to be enough for students' needs. A lot of students are in need to such an extent that they are affected academically since they cannot afford the needed resources for studying. They lack finance since there is no one to provide as some lost one or both parents. It may be for different reasons such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In this case the extended family members such as significant others, friends, neighbours as well as the community at large may play a huge role in making sure that these orphaned students are provided with the resources to which they do not have easy access. This supportive network

may even go further and intervene in cases where households are starving since they are affected by poverty. They may be the only source of their survival (Ssewamala, Karimli, Han, & Ismayilova, 2010). In some cases students live in areas where crime is a factor that affects them in one way or another (Hutchings & Garraway, 2010). (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995) state research indicates that students from disadvantaged groups are resilient when it comes to educational values or goals, that is, they tend to score as high as non-disadvantaged groups when it comes to educational aspirations, although they may consider them as something that is not able to be achieved. It has also been noticed that poor or minority students have competing values when they feel that the educational environment is not fulfilling when it comes to their needs for belonging and identity. In this case and as a way of dealing with this, schools should come together with the community where everyone will have freedom of speech in trying to deal with issues of anti-achievement groups. There are students who are from socially advantaged groups who are not very much affected since they have people such as family or friends who advise them by stressing the importance of education and personal goals, and also that it is possible for one to achieve them (Ssewamala et al., 2010). I believe that it can be argued, though, that even the students who are from a socially advantaged background are affected by under-preparedness when they get to university. Some of the students in this university depend solely on NSFAS, Funza Lushaka and Mathew Goniwe for survival.

2.4.3 Self-esteem

 Booth and Gerard (2011) define self-esteem as a positive or negative attitude towards the self. However, the degree to which socio-cultural context influences this positive or negative attitude remains uncertain.

The advice and the support others offer may assist the students to have self-esteem. When students have high self-esteem they stand a better chance of being active when it comes to their education as compared to those with low self-esteem (Van Heerden, 2005) . They also actively participate in class which leads to their success. Students' learning and success are also affected or influenced by various things such as the support students get from their parents or other members of the family, lecturers and

other institutional stakeholders such as counsellors or academic advisors (Snyders, Vawda, Taljaard, Brophy, & Plaatjes, 2005). The reasons are that when a student succeeds academically, society or the nation at large develops economically. However, sometimes students' success may depend on other factors such as their personality, time management skills or study habits employed as well as their self-esteem or self-concept (Kim, Newton, Downey, & Benton, 2010). Self-esteem is said to be affecting students' achievement in class; however, it is not something that is constant as it sometimes changes depending on the situation and the more one comes across different people with different attributes (Bauman, 2012). The academic skills workshops in our universities are supposed to assist Extended Programme students to approach their studies with a positive attitude and high self-esteem.

2.4.4 Poor schooling

Regardless of the fact that the South African system has gone through a drastic democratic change since 1994, the South African schools' performance has never changed and it continually affects higher education (Steyn, Harris, & Hartell, 2014). This is due to a lack of qualified teachers and textbooks among other reasons (Lubben et al., 2010). Chisholm (2011) argues that the reasons for the poor schooling are the misuse of resources, the number of teachers and their qualifications which do not fulfil the purpose of basic education, poor learning strategies as well as students' background. Mohamedbhai (2014) alludes that poor education background may mean that some of these students are from rural areas where some of the high schools are not of a good quality, meaning that these students are not well prepared when they enrol at university. Some of them want education but they are stressed by the fact that they cannot afford it since they come from a poor socio-economic background. Mahomedbhai (2004) also makes mention of the issue of language proficiency. English language proficiency is a serious problem as it is the medium of instruction on which all the assessments depend. Ntereke and Ramoroka (2017) highlight that the inadequacy of language proficiency impacts negatively on students' performance as the students fail to understand the text and make meaning out of it. It was also identified that less proficient readers employ inappropriate strategies which are not effective as a way of understanding. (CMaphosa, Sikhwari, Ndebele, & Masehela,

2014) posit that in comparison to higher education, schools do not demand that much academically from students, this implying that there is a huge amount of responsibility placed on students to excel academically on their own.

The transition from high school to higher education, according to (Naong, Zwane, Mogashoa, & Fleischmann, 2009) is a big challenge for first year students which comes with an overload of academic work. First year students are not used to a lot of tasks that are now compulsory for them to complete. Some are used to being assisted by their parents at home or siblings while they are still studying in high school.

Naong et al. (2009) further say that in higher education work is demanding and it is new to the first-year entering students. In addition to that, their classes are full and it makes it even more difficult for them to understand what is said during the lectures. According to the above-mentioned authors it is indicated that, generally, the problems students are faced with are as follows: experiencing difficulties in understanding the textbook due to language difficulties, and lacking direction when it comes to academic work. It takes time for students to realise that the workload that is in higher learning is different from that of high school so they approach their studies with the same attitude that they had in high school. The other challenge is that they have a problem expressing themselves in a way that others can understand, they struggle with interpersonal skills and, lastly, they lack communication skills in the sense that they find it difficult to take notes for themselves during the lectures. Based on these challenges, most researchers highlight the need for improvement of academic skills that can enable the first year students to meet the demands of university. It is also suggested that students' skills in dealing with content should be taken into consideration. As such, study skills like time management, self-discipline and independence are important.

The study skills are important in the sense that they motivate and influence academic performance of students (Quinco-Cadosales, 2013). The common thing about first time entering students is the fact that their achievements in matriculation from all schools determine their success at the institution of higher learning. This is due to the fact that their curriculum is the same (Fraser & Killen, 2003a). It is therefore strange

and impose a lot of questions when the Extended Programme policy is meant for only a few students and not benefiting the majority of students who still need this kind of support. Almost all first year entering students are affected. Students entering university do so from positions of extreme inequality, most obviously in schooling, but also in terms of finance and other resources. A lack of academic 'preparedness', in terms of both social class and the high school curriculum, is cited as one of the reasons students fail or take longer to master degree requirements (Scott, Yeld, & Hendry, 2007b).

2.5 Student support

Under student support, I discuss social support, academic support, first generation students and adjusting to university, academic emotions, learning approaches and factors impacting success in higher education.

2.5.1 Social support

Successful engagement with learning especially in first year students depends on whether they perceive themselves as part of the new environment they have just joined (Groves, Sellars, Smith, & Barber, 2015). A lot of factors are attached to this, such as the satisfaction with the university, how they manage to establish friendships and how well orientated they are in terms of where to get important resources (Abbasi, Malik, Chaudhry, & Imdadullah, 2011). It is said that belonging is an important concept which is closely aligned with the concept of academic and social engagement. Students must have a sense of belonging and being involved in their environment. There are different interventions that can be employed to improve retention although they may not be used together, and such belongingness being be achieved through peer relations where students establish relationships as well as interaction with staff members who assist them with skills so that they can make sense of their studies (Thomas, 2012). Research suggests that people who are socially supported feel good about their social support as it shows that they are cared for and loved as they have a very important network to communicate with. On the other hand, those with no support experience physical and psychological-related illnesses (Louw & Edwards, 2005).

2.5.2 Academic support

Most first year students go through a lot of stress emanating from factors such as academic demand, lack of support systems (either family or friends), and adjusting to university life which is unfamiliar as the environment is new (Fraser & Killen, 2003b). Much as this is the case, most universities cater for these challenges by conducting orientation programmes to familiarise and guide first year students. These programmes give the first year students an opportunity to create relationships with their potential classmates and also adjust socially and academically (Vlamis, Bell, & Gass, 2011).

The Centre for Learning and Teaching Development (CLTD) at the university under study provides different kinds of interventions specifically for the first year students. The support targets the high risk courses as they have been identified by the faculty under which students are registered. Orientation is the first support that is offered. I already mentioned the purpose of conducting this kind of support. The Centre also trains the second year students so that they can assist the first year students who may experience challenges with regard to the high risk courses. This programme is referred to as Supplemental Instruction (SI) in other universities; however, in this university it is called Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) and the second year students trained for that are called the Pal leaders. The idea behind the name is that peer learning plays an important role in the improvement of learning. Students interact well and understand one another even better because they are free to talk and even to share their views. Boud, Cohen & Sampson (2014) suggest that students involved in peer learning learn better by explaining and sharing ideas to others based on what they previously learnt during a lecture. The leader of peers organises and plans the activities to be done when they meet as peers. As that leader is the mediator between his or her peers and the lecturer, he is supposed to give them the feedback on the questions that they have as he does not know everything but depends on the lecturer in most of the things. What qualifies the employment of the student assistants is the fact that they have been carefully selected and they have passed and understood the courses well. The writing centre is there to assist students on how to write assignments academically and how to use communication. There are groups or classes for those

who are fortunate enough to be attending Academic Literacy as a compulsory course that is meant to improve their English. It is suggested that students are developed and trained not only to achieve great scores in higher education courses but also to be productive in the world of work where they will be employed after graduating. It is therefore important that they acquire foundational skills that will assist them through literacy which provides them to be able to acquire such skills.

Academic Advisors are there to assist first year students with study skills as I have mentioned earlier as there is a transition from high school to higher education and adjusting to university is one of their challenges which contributes to their performance. Academic advising is important as a support the students need as some feel free to talk and listen in order to be advised with good study habits. Also, the academic advisors are mature enough to offer support even where some students lack parental support. Students who do not perform well in high risks courses are referred by their lecturers so as to prevent them from failing again by influencing them to be aware of their potential. The academic advisor suggests different options during one-on-one advising and the student is expected to make a decision.

2.5.3 First generation students and adjusting to university

Previous research on first generation students portrays a lot of things. For example, they name it older students, single parents, financially independent, not very well prepared academically and in most cases employed while also studying (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011). The theory of involvement by Astin stresses the importance of extracurricular activities for students, socially and academically (Wilson, 2009). It has however been identified that the first generation students do not involve themselves in these kind of activities. This is a barrier to success in a way as some of these activities assist students generally on how to learn, such as study skills where students formulate study groups and are assisted by that involvement. The problem is that they end up lacking a sense of belonging since they do not involve themselves with other students and their faculty, which then leads to psychological problems such as depression (Stebleton & Soria, 2013). In their study concerning these FGS, Stebleton and Soria (2013) identified that, as compared to the non-FGS, the FGS experience

challenges such as weakness in English skills, weak maths skills, as well as feeling of being stressed or upset. More often than not these challenges are based on the negative things they came across previously in their lives. As it has been mentioned earlier in this study, the FGS need the university professionals to intervene so as to assist them to fulfil their personal and professional dreams. (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011) in the research they conducted found that there were no outstanding differences between the FGSs and the non-FGSs. The only difference was found in motivational dimensions and that was considered to better predict the academic achievement for both FGSs and non-FGSs. Heymann and Carolissen (2011) further argue that the FGSs showed weakness in maths, but in the study by Stephens et al. (2012) it is pointed out that the FGSs did not consider themselves as lower in mathematics even though some studies tend to perceive them as having a disadvantage in scientific reasoning. Even though that has been noticed, the FGSs were aware that they lack communication skills either way. The authors also pointed out that most of the time the FGSs enjoy staying outside the campus which may be affecting them negatively in their studies. These students' perception about education is that they should study, complete and get a job whereas the non-FGSs perception is about self-development and acquiring skills for personal enhancement.

The success of students in higher education implies that students are able to navigate from high school to university where students come across more options and have to decide what suits them best. Research suggests that there are many factors that influence students' negative behaviours or actions which include retention, socialising adjustment in the relationships that they are involved, study habits as well as dealing with the issue of being independent (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011). It is evident that if a student is able to adjust with the fact that there is transition from high school to university, adaptation emotionally and socially comes easily. Students who become active in campus activities are students who successfully transition from high school to higher education. Most of the time they are involved in campus activities and have involvement with their faculty or other academics. This involvement is about their contact with the members of staff as well as their attitude which is based on their

psychological readiness or dedication to the academic experience (Sparkman, Maulding, & Roberts, 2012).

2.5.4 Academic emotions

Villavicencio (2011) enlightens that academic emotions are students' emotional experiences relating to the academic processes of teaching and learning. These may be in the form of enjoyment, hopelessness, boredom, anxiety, anger and pride. The emotions may be triggered by positive or negative achievements in the activities the students perform in class. For example, the students may experience enjoyment when performing well or boredom when not understanding the instructions of what needs to be performed or even finding the task difficult. Anxiety is part of life; most students become anxious when faced with any kind of assessment. It depends on how one deals with it. Some people let it control them and that leads to poor performance in the action to be performed. This is not that they did not know or they did not prepare well but only because they let it control them. Louw and Edwards (2005, p. 320) allude that:

> "When one feels very anxious it interferes with cognitive functioning and the ability to learn, the affected students may find it difficult to perform in two ways. The first one is that anxiety distract them from concentrating on their studies. The other reason is that many students who are well prepared may perform poorly in tests and examinations. Anxiety interferes with their ability to recall what they have learnt. It is important therefore for students who experience a high level of anxiety to learn and practice how to manage stress".

Lei and Cui (2016) suggest that cognitive activity, learning motivation and strategies, as well as academic achievement are some of the variables associated with academic emotions. Academic emotions were identified to be assisting in the evaluation of the systems of education, including the teaching, the methods used and the progress of students in terms of success or failure. Emotions may be influential in students' cognitive processes and performance, and their psychological and physical health (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012).

2.5.5 Learning approaches

When it comes to student learning, students have an approach preference, but that may or may not be realised, depending on the learning context. Therefore, students may be illustrated as having adopted a surface approach to a specific learning task or project, but should not be described as a surface learner. In another learning environment or situation that same student may adopt a deep approach (H. Geyser, 2004).

The concept of deep approach and surface approach to learning in higher education implies that students need to be able and willing to notice the change that higher education is different from high school (Richardson, 2011). They must be able to conduct themselves, to learn on their own and be aware of what is expected of them for their studies to progress. What this implies is simply that student should be aware of the transition from their previous learning environment and the one they are at now. Awareness should then be followed by a positive attitude when approaching learning (Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002). Positive attitude will mean that they take into consideration the study skills including investing in time management.

2. 6 Institutional readiness

Under institutional readiness, I discuss the following factors: institutional environment and lecturers' qualifications and workload.

2.6.1 Institutional environment

The institutional environment is a powerful factor that predicts the future of the student in terms of performance (Olatunji, Aghimien, Oke, & Olushola, 2016). The institutional environment should provide a positive feeling for students. All the necessary equipment for learning should be in place for each classroom. Students and lecturers must have adequate space as part of the indicators that epistemological access is not just on paper but it is being practised. A lot of activities take place in the classroom, such as group discussions, presentations and other assessments. Moreover, the environment is supposed to meet the needs of the diverse majority of students (Bozalek, Garraway, & McKenna, 2011). Che Pee (2011) citing Kamla and

Ee (1995) posits that utilising appropriate teaching tools can be imperative in alleviating environmental boredom. Furthermore, research suggests that there are many teaching tools available to assist teachers in the classroom, such as paper-based material, images and graphics. Textbooks, which are referred to as main materials that provide information, are part of paper-based materials and they are also accompanied by notes which the teachers provide to simplify and explain some of the difficult topics from the very same textbooks. Other tools, such as desks, whiteboards, projectors, hearing aids and computers assist in engaging students in the learning process. It has been proved that there is a very strong positive significant relationship between instructional resources and academic performance. In addition to that, Akungu (2014) suggests that students' performance is affected by quality and quantity of teaching and learning materials. The above author further suggests that when the institution is well equipped with materials such as textbooks they have a better opportunity of portraying good performance as compared to those with poor equipment. That indicated that poor performance could be attributed to inadequate facilities and learning materials.

2.6.2 Lecturers' qualifications and workload

The lecturers are expected to do research as part of their daily activities. They are also required to manage teaching and administrative tasks as it is the main part of their job description. In the South African higher education context, the level of producing papers for publication is becoming higher. This is due to the fact that academic staff need to develop personally and professionally. As a result of that this has a negative impact on students as they end up being neglected due to strategies that are in favour of staff not students (Bates & Kaye, 2014).

Institutions of higher learning are also partly to blame for promoting an assessment driven tasks curriculum. This is due to the fact that most academics are overloaded with work and other commitments due to staff shortages (Maringe & Sing, 2014). These authors also suggest that, due to funding that is decreasing in the Department of Higher Education, it is a challenge to recruit qualified lecturers. This is not only a South African higher education problem but it is also a global challenge. In some

cases, the number of students in one class is too high and it affects them in the sense that they find it difficult to ask a question even if they did not understand the lecturer. The level of engagement decreases as compared to those who are in smaller classes. Sometimes the lecturer may not be that much committed or motivated to mark each assessment for each student and give personal feedback. Some students prefer talking to a lecturer in person concerning their work and it is frustrating when that does not happen. This leads to students adopting a surface approach to studying (Afzal, Ali, Aslam Khan, & Hamid, 2010). They do not get the gist of studying in order to learn and have knowledge. They study for the test. However, it is stated that approaches to studying in higher education are more than one and differ in the sense that the one is based on understanding the reading material, another one is based on memorising for the assessment while a further one is based on studying to achieve higher grades. Students do not follow one approach. Sometimes they change from one to the other (Richardson, 2005). All these learning approaches are a challenge to the first year students as they lack the ability to identify one that works best for them (Maphosa et al., 2014), citing Scott, 2009. The majority of students have challenges based on the fact that the disciplines they are admitted to are new to them. Engaging with learning therefore becomes difficult. These students are being failed by the institutions, which do not really provide the academic support strategies such as academic advising which motivates students and assists them to learn how to learn (Donnison & Penn-Edwards, 2012). The implication to this is that the first year students cannot be supported only by lecturing which is mostly the mode of learning delivery at university. The entire system from schools of higher education should take career advice or academic advising seriously as it guides students to make informed choices and, most importantly, to make the transition from school to university (Maree, 2015b). The greater the access the more support is needed, as it is indicated that it is not fair to have more access without support (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008).

2.7. Enhancement of curriculum (Transformation)

Under enhancement of curriculum I discuss the following factors: transition in higher education, quality teaching and approaches, constructive feedback and motivation.

2.7.1 Transition in higher education

Maistry (2011) points that a lot of activities are considered for the transformation of the higher education sector in South Africa. Since Extended Programmes are part of the changes identified in many South African higher education institutions, all stakeholders involved in these programmes ought to engage in curriculum redesigning and restructuring.

The most important part of transformational enhancement is that the institutions of higher learning must have the knowledge of who their students are so as to be able to identify how they respond to academic practices or the teaching strategies based on their experiences of higher learning. There are academic development interventions which have different categories or phases, one of which is academic support (Maphosa et al., 2014) . The author suggests that Extended Programmes is one of the academic supports which is based on the university view that students are lacking certain knowledge and skills which hinder them from performing well. Kloot, Case, and Marshall (2008) concur by saying that Extended Programmes are the kind of student support which assist students to successfully progress to the second year of study. These authors further suggest that an additional year contributes to retention and progression into the second year of study for the students on Extended Programmes. Not that they are just underprepared in terms of academics but most of these students are challenged also financially and are faced by psycho-social problems that interfere with them studying at university (Lubben et al., 2010).

The Extended Programmes curriculum is inclusive of student support such as academic literacy so that students can gain skills on how to approach their studies as a way of addressing the issue of articulation gap. If this curriculum has responded to the articulation gap, which is its primary purpose, it will mean that there is a change in teaching and learning and transformation has been achieved. However, the impact may not be visibly noticed due to the small number of students who benefit from Extended Programmes.

2.7.2 Quality teaching and learning approaches

When it comes to quality in higher education the literature suggests that it is not clear as there are different perceptions (Dicker, Garcia, Kelly, & Mulrooney, 2019). It is perceived differently based on the fact that higher education is a broad sector which has different functions, thus quality differs from culture to culture (Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq, & Berhanu, 2011). The meaning of quality to other researchers embraces institutional evaluation, comparability, learning as well as transformation on teaching and learning (Wittek & Habib, 2013). Henard and Leprince-Ringuet (2008) suggest that quality teaching in the 21st century, including transforming higher education in terms of trends such as competence, social and geographical diversity of student body, the increased demands based on value for money and technology, is of great importance. Quality in higher education should be accompanied by good teachers who are empathetic with different and special expertise. It is important that the first year students get the opportunity to be guided on how to learn, that assists them to establish skills that will enable them to approach their studies with a positive attitude and find it valuable throughout their university life.

This means that quality in teaching and learning involves the entire system not only the teacher. The teacher is supposed to be transparent about the learning activities students are expected to do and how they have to do them. The environment should be conducive for learning activities. This simply means that curriculum and assessment methods should be aligned to optimise the students' achievements. This also implies that the students get the opportunity to construct meaning from their learning activities. Institutions of higher learning are concern about quality, especially when it comes to teaching. As a result of that, constructive alignment has been incorporated into the policies of teaching. However, the successful incorporation of this policy is dependent on the supported institution. It is the responsibility of the universities to keep reviewing their policies and improving their practices to eradicate hidden socio-economic and cultural obstacles which interfere with access to and success for the majority of students (Biggs, 2014).

Subotzky and Prinsloo (2011) contend that as part of quality education the universities are expected to take into consideration attributes, skills and knowledge as part of successful higher learning. There is a need for other skills outside the classroom. It is not only about what students are taught in class. The students are expected to access education, proceed successfully and graduate to have an impact in the economy of the country with their critical thinking. These are the outcomes that are influenced by the teaching and learning resources such as the availability of material resources such as a library with relevant books, human resources availability such as support staff and academics as well as the classrooms (Akungu, 2014).

In some institutions of higher learning, especially the so called "disadvantaged" universities where there are still more challenges like the underdeveloped infrastructure, it will be a big mistake not to consider different approaches to teaching and learning. Put into the context of the announcement a few years ago that higher education is free, the issue of different contemporary approaches to learning cannot be avoided. It is an advantage to use for students and for lecturers. One such approach is blended learning which is a necessity since it can defeat many challenges. According to Poon (2013) blended learning is a bringing together the tools that can assist students in learning. It is not a moving away from the teaching that has been there. It is just an improvement, an addition or a combination. The two methods of teaching complement each other towards the same goal of teaching and learning. Poon (2013) further suggests that the blended learning approach influences students' perception of the learning environment and their study approach and learning outcomes. Students are not technophobia; they enjoy technology and can learn faster using it, which is why the lecturing method can be supplemented by it in order to enhance learning (Missildine, Fountain, Summers, & Gosselin, 2013). In addition to that, technology is supposed to be part of the students' learning in the 21st century as it is also the indication that the South African higher education is drastically transforming.

Nyamupangedengu (2017) suggests that in order for the students to be supported academically, it is important that the academic staff or the lecturers involved be willing to understand and consider the diversity of their students. Identifying students'

diversity in class will give the academics the opportunity to use different approaches for the purpose of improved performance; in return the students will also be able to realise their potential. This means that the academics should be prepared academically for the underprepared students so as to utilize different pedagogies to reach all students (Mainstream and Extended Programmes). Brüssow (2007) says that teaching underprepared students in higher education must be a lesson that teaches academics involved to be creative and educationally strategic in meeting the students' challenges. They do not have to use only the traditional teaching method which is instructor-centred as it does not give students the opportunity to realize their potential.

2.7.3 Constructive feedback

Geyser (2004) argues that constructive feedback implies that learners should have access to their assessment scripts, and the assessor should be available to address queries, adjust marks where possible, and address appeals during this period. This includes avoiding improper disclosure of learners' assessment results. It is important that good feedback that contributes to learning should link the learner's goals and intentions rather than the assessor's.

One of the important parts of learning among others is feedback that allows students and their lecturers to interact. It also gives the same students a chance to interact with peers about the comments and how to improve their next performance based on those comments. That, on the other hand, influences interaction and active learning among students (Rudland et al., 2013). It becomes more effective when the students meet the lecturer as the knowledgeable one and get more clarity face-to-face. It is believed that the interaction between the teacher and a student may be productive provided it is considered to be a supervised project. It has to be a process with a purpose of assisting a student throughout, to assist them understand the assessment needed and what learning entails. They should be aware of why there are learning goals as Sadler (2010) also suggests that the purpose of feedback is to assist students to understand more about learning goals. Missildine et al. (2013) further say that the students have to use the feedback meeting effectively as it may result in improving their work.

According to Goldschmid (1976), two decades ago it was realised that traditional approaches, such as the lecture, were not in line with the principles of modern learning theory which stresses the role of active involvement and feedback, cognitive style, prior learning, and the rate of acquisition. The aim of feedback is to be constructive and supportive. It may impact on the positive performance of students if they accept it positively and make meaning out of it as well as improve where they may have gone wrong. Brown (2001) supports this by suggesting that the purposes of feedback are to motivate students, inform them how well they have done and how to improve. The improvements might be two different outcomes such as knowledge-base, understanding, problem-solving strategies and writing skills. These purposes should be set in the context of the learning outcomes. The students are expected to be made clear about the expectations in the assignment and the criteria that are being used. Brown (2001) further continues to indicate that feedback has been shown to be most effective when it is timely, perceived as relevant, meaningful, encouraging and offers suggestions for improvement that are within a student's grasp.

Learning preferences according to Wilson (2011) are effective and assist teachers to recognise the diverse needs of students in the classroom. It is therefore important that the teacher understands the way students learn. It becomes easy for that teacher to select carefully the strategies that will best suit each and every student.

2.7.4 Motivation

Leal, Miranda, and Carmo (2013, p. 1) state that, "motivation is psychological process in which personal traits interact with the environment. This implies that in terms of students learning, the factors that can affect their motivational changes are within themselves, and their learning environment, or in the institutional culture". Motivation can be seen in two different dimensions which are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is perceived as the force within an individual and it is based on the personality. People who are intrinsically motivated are characterised by the concern for producing quality in whatever they do since they want excellent performance, and their joy is boosted by working hard and achieving their goal. In

some students' intrinsic motivation may be identified by their level of confidence and positive attitude that have which impacts on their achievement. It is important for them to attend classes, do the activities expected of them and achieve high grades.

Extrinsically motivated students depend on the environment surrounding them. It plays an important role in their development. They are influenced by parents, friends and everyone who is considered to be a role model in the student learning regardless of their level of education. What matters is the way in which they perceive education and encourage that particular student. In an environment conducive for teaching, students' achievement may improve based on the learning activities that are created to simplify education for demotivated students. When they are awarded small things like certificate of achievement. that may motivate their behaviour to do even better.

Research points to motivation as a driver that pressurises people to achieve what they need. Motivation is one of the factors contributing to academic performance of students, depending on their motivational level, self-awareness, the level to which their lecturer is competent, the level in which the material is difficult, students' efficacy and their effort to attend lectures, their socio-psychological make-up and how persistent they are to attend classes (Goodman et al., 2011).

Afzal et al. (2010) highlight how important motivation of students is in higher education as it plays a vital role in their academic performance, hence it is the element that leads students' attitudes towards the learning process. Yuan and Powell (2013, p. 9) claim that students' motivation to learn is influenced also by several factors such as future economic benefit, development of personal identity, challenges, achievement and fun.

Farooq et al. (2011, p. 4) argue that students heavily depend on parent's involvement for better or improved academic performance. Takahashi (2018) suggests that motivation is regarded as an important concept of learning. It is viewed as having to know what, when, and how students learn. Motivated students tend to engage themselves in activities that according to their view are regarded as tools to assist them to learn. On the other hand, those who are not motivated feel discouraged to put effort into learning activities.

2.8 Conclusion

Discussed above is the reviewed literature which is organised into six headings and sub-headings. The information in the literature review is based on what has been reviewed by other authors concerning the Extended Programmes concept as well as the Mainstream one. The chapter has mainly elaborated on issues concerning all the first year students entering university for the first time and the kind of support which should be benefiting all of them. The general argument in this chapter is that, while Extended Programmes are viewed as useful to students' academic success, it's not very clear whether the expectations are translated in practice. The literature thus assists in bringing this gap to the fore.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology of the study

3.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter provided a detailed review of literature, in this chapter I provide a detailed account pertaining to the research methodology: the paradigm, theoretical framework, the location of the study, sampling techniques, data collection, data analysis as well as ethical dimensions to this study.

3.2 Paradigm of the study

According Feilzer (2010, p. 2) "paradigm is regarded as an organising structure, a deeper philosophical position relating to the nature of social phenomena and social structures". Feilzer (2010) further suggests that this use of paradigm relates directly to research as an epistemological stance. The logic starts from collection of data and analysing it, which is followed by its interpretation in order to understand, describe and predict. The importance of this process is that it allows the researcher to easily control or empower the individuals under investigation. The individuals' understanding and interpretation of research knowledge depends on the paradigm chosen. The paradigm guides the study based on the intention, motivation and what is expected of the research (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) further suggest that the methodology of the study depends on the paradigm and what the researcher believes about knowledge. The paradigm therefore guides the researcher's investigation.

The commonly agreed worldviews are post positivism, interpretivism and critical theory (Jonker & Pennink, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). I discuss the positivist and critical paradigms before discussing the interpretive paradigm that informs this study.

The ontological aspect of positivism is a measurable world. It assumes a single reality (Howard, 2010). It was, therefore, not applicable to my study because I was not looking for a single reality. I was looking for multiple realities from my respondents.

While the critical theory paradigm is powerful, it was not suitable for this research as the study did not aim at empowering the oppressed but rather at understanding the academic performance of students in Mainstream and Extended Programmes (Scotland, 2012).

The interpretive paradigm fits this study in a number of ways. Thanh and Thanh (2015) posit that when the researcher is approaching their study qualitatively the paradigm underpinning that study is the interpretivism paradigm. Interpretivists believe in truth that is subjective in nature. Their main concern is interpreting and understanding the reality. Thanh and Thanh (2015) further say that there is no way the investigator or the researcher can watch the investigated from a distance since the aim of the investigator is to explore, get the perceptions of the investigated, make meaning out of that and have understanding while outside of the river. The interpretivist becomes part of the individuals under study so as to get to know better how they behave. Ontologically interpretive researchers believe that reality is socially constructed, reality is not something that is out there but it is within premises where the researcher is. The social reality that emerges is used to make sense so as to get the meaning (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

Interpretivists believe that there are multiple realities depending on how one constructs that reality and epistemologically the inquiry is shaped by the connection between the investigator and the object of study to optimise the findings with the context of the situation. The process and the meaning are considered very important; they seek the understanding of phenomena from the individual's point of view (Sale, Lohfeld, & Brazil, 2002).

Following an interpretivist understanding, the study was conducted using qualitative research methods; however, numbers were involved since the scores are numeric. Qualitative research methodology is suggested to be a system of inquiry which seeks to build a holistic, largely narrative description to inform the researcher's understanding of a social and cultural phenomenon (Hale & Napier, 2013). Qualitative research as interpretive research exemplifies a common belief that a 'deeper' understanding of a social phenomenon can be obtained from data. Observation is

therefore central in qualitative research and an occurrence is interpreted according to the meanings attached by the people. In this method, the interpretive world-view depends on participants' understanding of phenomenon and relies on qualitative data collection methods and analysis.

In this study the interpretive paradigm was useful because I wanted to understand deeper the performance of Mainstream and Extended Programmes students. I aimed at exploring phenomena with thick description (Blanche, Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006).

This approach assisted in researching a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context where the researcher and participants were relaxed since the environment was familiar and the researcher was comfortable and had access to the tools and all instruments and facilities needed. This is useful for exploring and understanding the process and dynamics of change by means of describing, documenting and interpreting events as they unfold in a real-life setting. The important aim of this approach is to have a set of concepts to define so that the social phenomenon can be understood better (Silverman, 2013). This approach helped the research to determine the factors that are critical in the implementation of a programme including links and patterns that unfold (Simons, 2009).

3.3 Theoretical framework: Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Astin's Theory of Involvement

This study draws on a combined framework of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Astin's Theory of Involvement. First I briefly discuss the meaning of a theoretical framework before engaging with the Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Astin's Theory of Involvement.

 (Osanloo & Grant, 2016) posit that:

> "a theoretical framework is one of the most important aspects in the research process. It is important to use a theoretical framework in one's study as it is the foundation to which all knowledge is constructed for a research study. It serves as a structure that supports the rationale for the study, the problems

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statement, the purpose, the significance and the research questions the theoretical framework provides a grounding or an anchor for the literature review, and the methods and analysis which are very important".

Using the two frameworks, the study sought to understand the academic performance of students in Mainstream and Extended Programmes.

3.3.1 Abraham Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs

According to Koltko-Rivera (2006) Abraham Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs was developed between the 1940s and 1950s in America. The theory consists of five important needs that are still valid and can be tested for the understanding of human motivation. Students' academic performance is based on various factors, the Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs is composed of five basic needs. Maslow's Theory is connected to the factors affecting students' performance as it outlines how the human being is motivated in whatever work they do. The reality is that if a student suffers or lacks one of these needs, it may influence the others as they are connected and this will affect the student's performance as well as his or her motivation to excel.

Below are the needs as some of them are described in the theory according to (Huitt, 2007):

Physiological needs: These are shelter, food, sleep and clothing. These are also called 'survival needs'. Unless these needs are met a student cannot perform at his or her own best to achieve higher grades, or to grow and develop academically. Such needs may have a negative impact on students' performance.

Safety/security: These are order, stability and money saved. Students may be aware of the legacy the future may hold for them and that they may bring change to their society if they work hard and have stable jobs and money.

Belongingness and love: This need involves being with a group, being cared for, and being understood. Students need support both intrinsic and extrinsic. For example, study groups and family members extrinsically motivate students' performance as they feel that they are not alone, they have support from other people. It is also important

that a person be driven by something within themselves to study (Quinco-Cadosales, 2013).

Esteem: Setting goals and achieving them, mastering something difficult. Students' behaviour may indicate that they are on a mission to achieve their goals. Everything revolves around working and achieving the desired goal regardless of how hard or difficult the situation may look. In the end it produces good results. This implies that through the act of working hard and achieving their goal students' self-esteem is boosted, and they realise that they are good at something (McLeod, 2007).

Self-actualization: Realising your full potential, becoming everything one is capable of becoming. Students are aware of their potential in the sense that they are confident, analytical and able to critique. They view the world differently and can see the opportunities ahead of them as they also grow psychologically. This is the level when they are about to graduate. This implies that should the study be repeated after two years, the researcher will be able to notice the difference in terms of academic performance and other skills (McLeod, 2007).

The theory suggests that should all the needs from physiological to esteem be fulfilled, which is supposed to happen logically, the last need of self-actualisation will develop gradually. This does not actually mean a job or wealth; it simply implies that the individuals will reach their full potential which will not only benefit them but will also benefit the society in general. When the individual reaches the stage of maturity, he or she interacts with other people well and assists where need be. The environment is important and must be accommodating for the individual to be self-actualised (Maslow, 1943).

3.3.2 Astin's Theory of Involvement

This theory is based on three elements; namely:

> "Inputs, environment, and outcomes, along with five basic postulates about involvement. The theory explains how desirable outcomes for institutions of higher learning are viewed in relation to how students change and develop in result of being co-curricular. The core concepts of the theory are composed of

three elements. The first, a student's inputs such as their demographics, their background, and any previous experiences. The second is the student's environment, which accounts for all of the experiences a student would have during college. The last one says that there are outcomes which cover a student's characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values that exist after a student has graduated college" (Stebleton & Soria, 2013).

Astin (1984) assumes that involvement requires an investment of psychosocial and physical energy. Secondly, involvement is continuous, and the amount of energy invested varies from student to student. Thirdly, aspects of involvement may be qualitative and quantitative. What a student gains from being involved (or their development) is directly proportional the extent to which they were involved (in both aspects of quality and quantity).

Lastly, academic performance is correlated with the student involvement. Research indicates that student involvement in co-curricular activities such as organizations, leadership positions, and activities in campus residence halls has a positive correlation with retention and academics. As a result of that universities have been encouraging students to become involved (Astin, 1984).

3.4 Location of the study

The study was conducted at the smallest campus at one of the South African universities. The distance from the town where the campus is located is about 35 km. This campus consists of two faculties, Education and Economics, and Finance and Information Systems. There are approximately more than 2000 students from different departments: Management Studies, Economics and Finance, Information Technology Systems, Curriculum Studies, Natural Sciences and Humanities. Most of the students on this campus are from the nearest rural areas and towns. Most of them lack language proficiency in English, a communication barrier which they inherited in their high schools due to apartheid policies.

Given the challenges outlined, being a student at this university presents challenges to both the students and academics in many ways such as exposure to opportunities

relevant to learning. As such, students at this institution need more academic support and resources. There are about 42 academic staff members, 15 support staff and 50 admin staff (Institutional/HR records, 2019).

3.5 Data production

3.5.1 Sampling

I used purposive sampling to select a sample. (V. N. Anney, 2014) suggest that purposive sampling is the technique mainly used in naturalistic inquiry studies, and is defined as selecting units based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's question. I chose to use purposive sampling because it would be the best to yield insights into the phenomenon under study. The participants of this study were selected because of the fact that they are particularly relevant to the study, i.e. they have knowledge. They were relevant in the sense that they were identified as the providers of the required information in this study (Maree, 2007). In this study the purposive sampling was used so as to gather data that is rich enough to develop sub-themes with regard to the Extended and Mainstream Programmes. The sample was NHC Accountancy first year students 2018.

The study was qualitative in nature; however, I used number to interplay the scores of students so as to be able to select twenty to participate in focus groups. I was interested in selecting five best performing Mainstream and five less performing Mainstream students from a total of forty-nine students and in the Extended Programmes I was interested in selecting five best performing and five less performing students from a total of twenty-seven students. I took the average mark for every student and compared the average marks to get the performance and selected the best and the less performing. Those were targeted for focus group discussions.

First of all, I considered test scores for twenty-seven students who were in the Extended Programmes and forty-nine students who were in Mainstream. I used the test scores because their total number is seventy-six and I was interested in their test scores as well as knowing the students' individual performance. From the Extended Programmes I wanted to select only five who would attend my focus group discussion

and I therefore used purposive sampling to get the best five with highest scores and to get the lowest five. In Mainstream I also wanted to get the best five who were the highest in performing and the other five who were less performing. I also used purposive sampling. The first five who highly performed were selected and the last five who were the lowest in performance were selected from both Mainstream and Extended Programmes. The reason for selecting only five is that this was qualitative research and in qualitative research the researcher is interested more in an in-depth understanding than in numbers.

3.5.2 Data collection methods

Data collection methods are different and they include observation, interviews, questionnaires, standardised tests, physical instruments, stimulation and review of documents (Maree, 2007). This study used focus groups interviews in order to get the opportunity to study the ways in which the participants sense of the topic and how they construct meaning around when they are collectively. Focus groups are also important as the participants get to discuss, comment or raise their point of views based on the knowledge they have. That continues to allow the researcher the opportunity to probe in certain issues for better understanding (Doody, Slevin, & Taggart, 2013).

Collating test scores

I collected the test scores for both Mainstream and Extended Programmes from the department and looked at the Mainstream and their average and Extended Programmes and their average. I did that by entering the test scores in Excel since I was eager to find out how they performed at their starting point of learning together in the same classroom. For the first semester, the comparison was for: Financial Accounting (FAC10Q1(55%)/EFAC2Q2(53%), Business Calculations (BUC10Q1(43%)/EBUC 1Q1(20%), Economics (ECO10Q1(54%)/EECO1Q1(53%), as well as communication (COM10Q1(69%)/ECOM 1Q1(73%). For the second semester the following modules were compared: Financial Accounting (FAC10Q2(42%)/EFAC1Q2(46%), Economics (ECO10Q2(42%)/ECO1Q2(48%), Cost

Accounting (CAC10Q2(45%)/ECAC1Q2(58%) and Business Information Systems (BIS10Q2/EBIS1Q1).

Focus group discussions

The total sample size was fifteen consisting of five best performing Extended Programmes, five less performing Extended Programmes, three best performing Mainstream and two less performing Mainstream. The nature of focus group discussions is that they involve a number of people who are brought together to discuss the topic. This gave me the opportunity to interact with the participants and gathered the in-depth data as the participants had a better knowledge about the phenomenon under study (Doody et al., 2013).

After identifying the students who met the criteria, I called them to my office to schedule an appointment for discussions. During the focus group interviews I introduced myself and my study to the participants and informed them that participating in the interviews was voluntary and confidential and that if they agreed to participate they should sign the informed consent form. They each introduced themselves. With the participants' permission, data was audio recorded for 20 minutes and the questions asked were based on Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs as well as on Astins' Theory of Involvement. The questions were asked from the combined theories of the study and used such that some of the questions would reveal whether indeed the above theorists could be challenged or not. For example, could the unfulfilled basic needs affect students' performance negatively or not as Maslow's Theory suggests. The other questions were formulated such that they authentically challenged the Theory of Involvement by Astin which suggests that the environment for learning determines students' performance (Usher & Kober, 2012). For example, if the environment allows students to be involved in university activities and can access all the resources needed for learning, their performance will improve. The reason for this was to find out if their performance may have anything to do with their background like the location or area of the schools they attended.

3.6 Data analysis

Creswell (2003) suggests that the process of data analysis involves making sense out of the text and image data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data. Bless, Higson-Smith, and Kagee (2006) outline that the process of data analysis takes many forms depending upon the nature of the research question and design as well as the nature of the data itself.

The test scores were analyse and presented on graphs, so as to demonstrate and compare the two streams easily. Qualitative data collected during focus group discussions was recorded, transcribed and thematically analysed. The combined theoretical frameworks underpinning my study, together with the literature reviewed, assisted me with the interpretation of the findings of this study.

Table 3.6.1 Summary of my methodology

Objectives and main questions	Paradigm	Theoretical frameworks	Data sources	Data collection tools	Data analysis
To compare performance of Mainstream students and Extended Programmes students.	Qualitative Interpretive in nature	The Abraham Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs. Astin's Theory	Students	Test scores. Focus group.	Physiological needs. Security needs. Belongingness. Love. Esteem. Input.

					Environment.
					Outcomes.

The above table is the summary of the methodology of the study. It shows the objectives of the study and main research questions and how they linked to the interpretive paradigm which informed the choice of qualitative research methodology. The study was underpinned by the theories of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Astin's Theory of Involvement. To answer the research questions data was collected from two data sources, the test scores and the focus group interviews. The data was presented and analysed according to emerging themes from the aforementioned theories such as physiological needs, security needs, belonginess needs, love and esteem needs, inputs, environment and outcomes.

3.7 Ethical issues

Ethical clearance for permission for the study was obtained from the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of UKZN and the gatekeeper permission was granted by the Division of Academic Affairs and Research Directorate of Research Development at the institution where the study was taking place. I adhered to ethical standards by not naming the institution to which the study was conducted. The participants were informed of the nature and the purpose of the study and that they had the right to participate or withdraw and that participation was voluntary. I read the informed consent letter to them so that they could make up their minds whether they would participate in my study or not and that I was permitted to conduct the study about them. I ensured that they understood the process in which they were involving themselves and that they signed to show that I did not force them. I gave them a chance to withdraw from participating if they wanted to do so. They were also

given assurance that confidentiality would be maintained, and no names would be revealed (Creswell, 2003).

3.8 Trustworthiness of the study

According to Sinkovics, Penz, and Ghauri (2008) trustworthiness is about the quality of the study in terms of the procedures the researcher employed, the methods used, instruments and the results obtained. Based on that, below I discuss how I achieved trustworthiness results, adhering to the following concepts: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. I explain how these assisted.

To ensure credibility of results, data from test scores for both Mainstream and Extended Programmes was analysed using Microsoft Excel. This ensured that the results were accurate and true. The narratives of respondents were transcribed as given by the respondent before analysis.

To achieve transferability, I used populations of first year undergraduate students in which the Mainstream and Extended Programmes were equally represented. The questions used to collect data from focus groups discussions can be used in similar groups in other campuses with similar contexts.

I captured only the views of the respondents without expressing my feelings, fears and intentions on the study. The decisions and conclusions met in this study were derived from the participants' responses and test scores from the participants in Mainstream and Extended Programmes.

Before data was collected, I sent the instrument for data collection to my supervisor and other friends in the research community to analyse the instrument to ensure that it would produce findings that were relevant to the topic of study. This would ensure that if the study was replicated on a similar group, they would produce similar results, thus ensuring dependability.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the research paradigm chosen for the study. Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs and Astin's Theory of Involvement as the underpinning theories of the study were discussed. The population from which the sample was drawn, and the data collection tools I used (the test scores and focus groups) were discussed. The issues addressed by the study to gain trustworthiness of the study were described: Transferability, confirmability, dependability and credibility. The next chapter will discuss the presentation of data from the test scores and responses from focus groups in both the Extended Programmes and the Mainstream Programmes.

CHAPTER FOUR

Study results and presentation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study which are informed by the physiological needs, security issues, belongingness and love, esteem needs, inputs and environment issues affecting or impacting on students' achievements.

4.2 Biographical factors

The table below shows fictitious names of participants in the study as it was meant for the names to remain anonymous. This table shows the areas where the students did their studies. This was meant to assess whether the place where a student Matriculated had an effect on whether a student was placed in the Mainstream or Extended programmes.

Table 4.2.1 Summary of students' demographics

Fictitious names of Participants	Age	Gender	Matric year	Programme	Area
Vuyo	24	M	2016	Extended	Rural

Smangele	22	F	2016	Extended	Urban
Sipho	22	M	2016	Extended	Urban
Siyabulela	22	M	2014	Extended	Rural
Nkosinathi	23	M	2016	Extended	Rural
Boy	27	M	2016	Extended	Rural
Ndimphiwe	23	F	2014	Extended	Rural
Zaza	23	F	2016	Extended	Urban
Thando	24	F	2016	Extended	Rural
Kholisa	22	F	2016	Extended	Rural
Amkelani	22	M	2017	Mainstream	Rural
Philisa	20	F	2017	Mainstream	Urban
Samkelo	22	M	2017	Mainstream	Urban
Xolani	24	M	2017	Mainstream	Rural
Thobeka		F	2017	Mainstream	Urban
Phindile	21	F	2017	Mainstream	Urban
Baba	23	F	2017	Mainstream	Rural
Lizeka	23	F	2017	Mainstream	Rural
Thembeka	22	M	2017	Mainstream	Urban
Thami	20	M	2017	Mainstream	Urban

The Extended Programmes participants were Boy, Sipho, Zaza, Smangele, Ndimphiwe Kholisa, Nkosinathi, Thando, Vuyo and Siyabulela. These were five females and five males. From Mainstream the participants were Lizeka, Baba, samkelo, Phindile, Thembeka and Thami. There were three females and two males. These students were involved in focus group interviews.

4.3. Analysis of marks on average

Figure 4.3.1 Mainstream and Extended Programmes class average for first semester
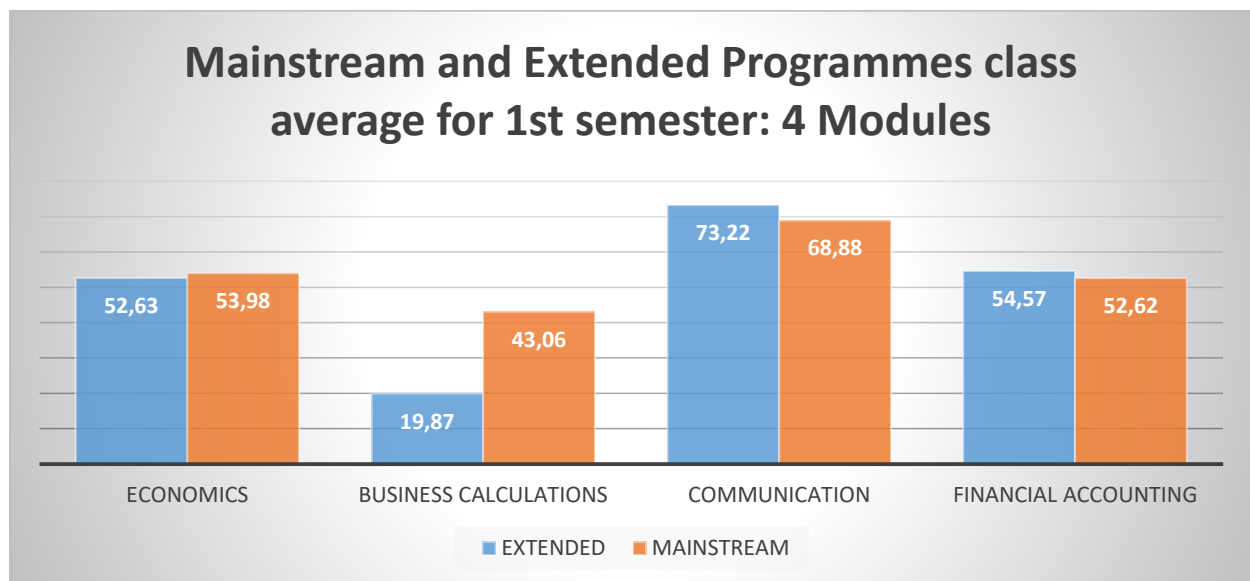
The results for Mainstream and Extended Programmes were presented for analysis. The data is presented first as average student performance in the first and second semester. The results of four modules offered in the first semester were first analysed according to whether the students were in the Mainstream or Extended Programme as indicated in figure 4.3.1 above. This is followed by an analysis of the results for two randomly selected students from the two streams in the first and second semesters.

Figure 4.3.1 reveals that in Business Calculations, results indicated that the Mainstream students performed significantly higher (with an average of 43%) than the students in the Extended Programme (with an average of 19%).

Figure 4.3.2 Mainstream and Extended Programmes class average for 2ⁿᵈ semester.

Mainstream and Extended Programmes class average for 2nd semester: 4 Modules.
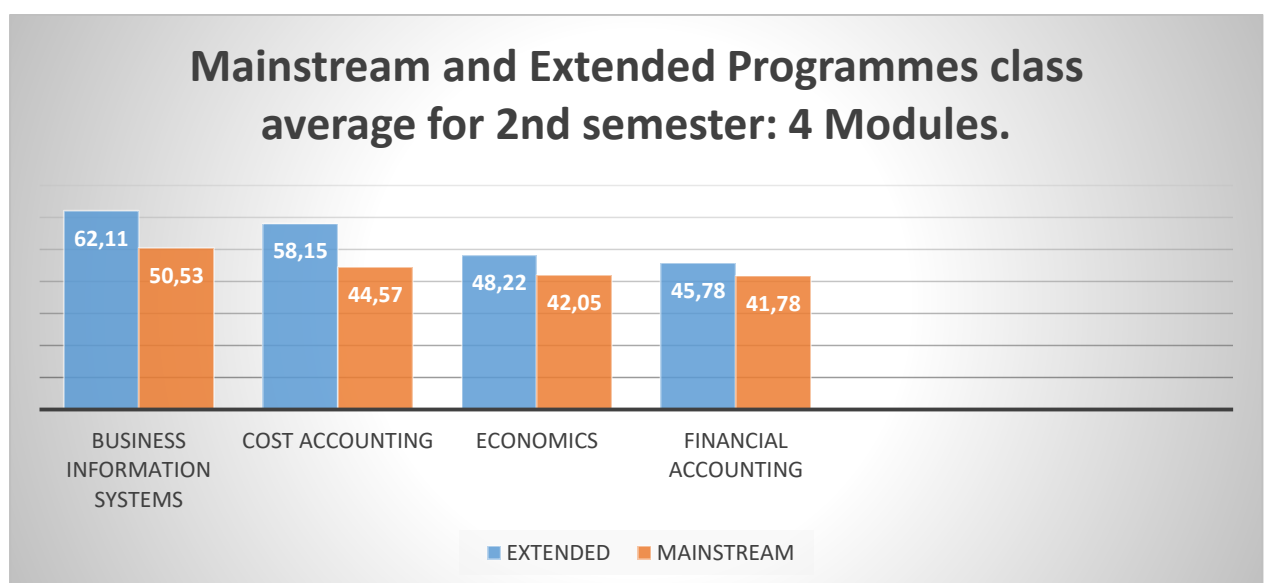
Figure 4.3.2 above shows that in the second semester the Extended Programme students performed better than the Mainstream students. These revelations could be attributed to the interventions on the Extended Programme students by CLTD. Academic advising, peer assisted learning, reading and writing sessions are helpful to these students. The other reason could be the design of the Extended curriculum in which the students do their first year in two years. This gives the Extended Programme students more time to do their modules than the Mainstream students.

The data shows that in the second semester the Extended Programme students had a higher average percentage than the Mainstream students in all the four modules written.

Figure 4.3.3 A comparison of average performance of top performing 10 and 10 low performing students in each programme.

A comparison of average perfomance of top perfoming 10 and 10 low performing students in each programme
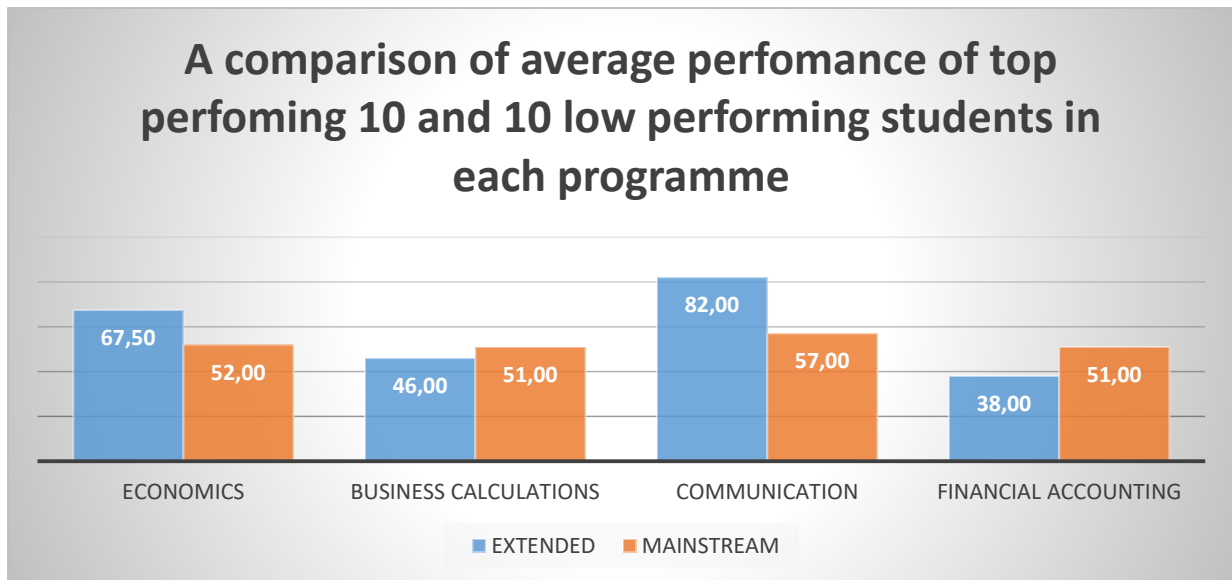
Figure 4.3.3 above shows that in the Economics and Communication modules the Mainstream students performed better whilst the opposite was true for Business Calculations and Financial Accounting. This could be as a result of the better numeracy skills possessed by the Mainstream students.

Figure 4.3.4 A comparison of average of top performing and low performing students in both programmes.

A comparison of average perfomance of top perfoming 10 and 10 low performing top perfoming 10 and 10 low performing students in each programme semester 2

|	Business information systems	cost accounting	Economics	Financial Accounting
EXTENDED	62,00	57,50	40,50	46,00
MAINSTREAM	59,50	62,00	65,00	57,50

■ EXTENDED   ■ MAINSTREAM
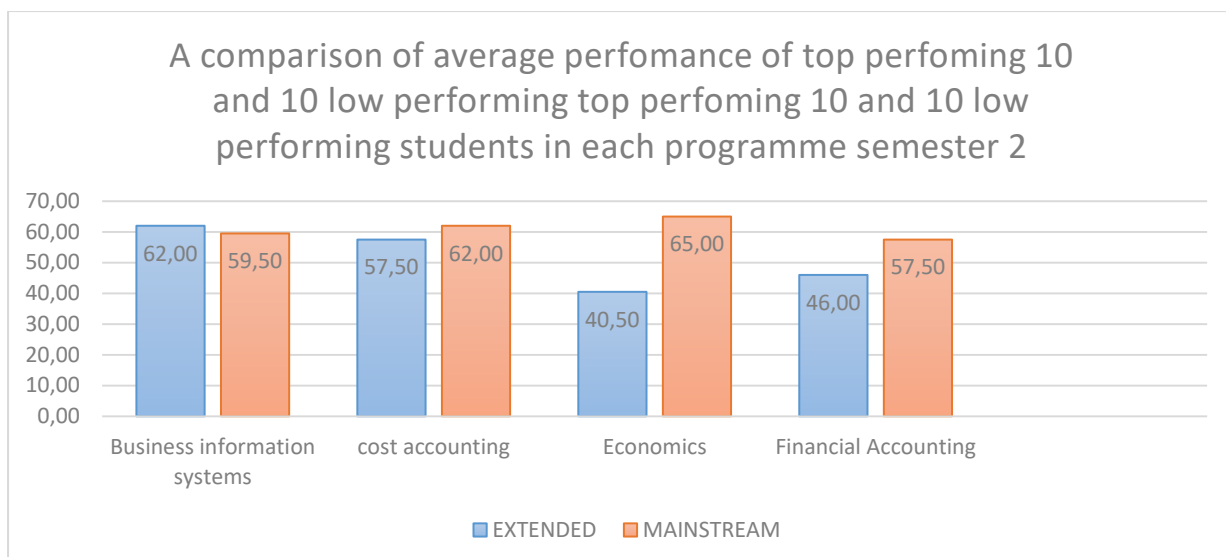
Figure 4.3.4 above shows that the Mainstream student surpassed the Extended Programme students in the second semester modules. There was a marked difference in Economics and Financial Accounting. The above could be revealing that the Mainstream modules may be of a higher order in terms of competence requirements than the first semester modules.

4.4 Analysis of qualitative data

This part of the study presents verbatim accounts from focus group discussions. The discussions are presented according to the following emerging themes: Factors affecting students' academic performance, opportunities in high school, undergraduate student support at university, experience about resources on campus and in residences, learning strategies employed, assessment feedback, attitude of lecturers, financial challenges, relationship with classmates, coping with academic or personal stressors, esteem needs, beliefs about failing, anxiety, student inputs and campus environment.

4.4.1 Factors affecting or impacting on students' achievement

Data is presented according to the following themes: family background, experience about resources in campus and residences, learning strategies employed, attitude of lectures to students, students' financial challenges, relationship with classmates, coping with academic or personal stressors, esteem needs, previous achievements in

high school, student beliefs about failing, anxiety, motivation, expectations and strategies to support learning.

Family background and school attended

Less performing Extended Programme

Boy, a less performing Extended Programme student, mentioned the following:

> I am from the deep rural areas of … called Nqekani. I attended school there at the high school called Thembani SSS. I am the first born from both my mom and dad. I have my three siblings, two girls and a boy.

Another student, Ndimphiwe, expressed similar sentiments. She averred:

> I was born in Butterworth but I did my high school at Thabathe high school. I have both parents and my two siblings who are younger than me.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Baba, a less performing Mainstream student, said:

> I am from Burgersdorp. I was born and raised there. I passed Grade 12 in 2017 at Thembani SSS. I still have both parents, we are three at home and my sister is doing second year at Ikhala. My two brothers are still young and my father is the only one working.

 Lizeka, the other less performing student, said:

> I was born and raised at Bizana. I live with my mom who is single. I did my matric at Mbalo SSS. I do not want to talk about my father because I do not have a relationship with him. My mom designs traditional bits for us to survive.

Best performing Extended Programme

Kholisa, one of the best performing Extended Programme students, said:

I am from Alice, where I did my matric. I am from a very poor family and we are thirteen at home. Five from my mom who works in the kitchen.

Nkosinathi, another best performing student from Extended Programmes, said:

I am Nkosinathi from Ntabankulu, I passed matric at Combined Public School. We are five at home from my mom. My uncle whom I stay with provides for me and his kids. My mom is not working and she is my only parent.

Thando, one of the best performing Extended Programme students, said:

I was born in Ngcobo and attended school at Phatheka SSS. I have two twin sisters with whom we are staying with our mom and our aunt and her child. We are not a rich family but we manage to get something out of the little we get; my mom only gets piece jobs sometimes.

Siyabulela, one of best achieving Extended Programme students, said:

I am from around Queenstown and attended school there. I stay with my grandmother since both my parents are no longer alive. Life is not very easy because I am not the only one taken care of by my grandmother.

Vuyo, one of the best performing Extended Programmes students, said:

I attended school at Tabankulu. We are sixteen at home and I have my own mom and my step mother; the other siblings are from my step mom.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Samkelo, the best performing Mainstream Programme student, said:

I am from Lusikisiki and that is where I did my high school. We are two at home. I no longer have parents, my sister is the one taking care of us; she does not work but she gets grant.

Phindile, one of the best performing Mainstream Programme students, commented:

I am from Ezbeleni in Queenstown. I come from a family of five. I'm a bit shy but I am very generous and kind and work hard towards my studies although sometimes I understand in class but lack the ability to explain to others in a group. I am living with my mom; she is the bread winner.

Thami, one of the best achieving Mainstream Programme students, said:

I am from Port Elizabeth. I started my primary school there and I have done my Matric there in 2016. I had a gap year and worked at Parmalat. In 2018 I registered as a first year at this university.

The data presented above reveals that the majority of students did their Matriculation in rural secondary schools. This shows why a large number of these students are in the Extended Programmes rather than the Mainstream. These students indeed are from formerly and still disadvantaged secondary education systems.

Opportunities in high school

Less performing Extended Programmes

Thando, a less achieving students in Extended Programmes, said:

I was doing drama in high school. It assisted me with self-confidence since I was a shy person but I am no longer shy. I thought that it was an opportunity because I pictured myself as being somewhere in acting.

Siyabulela, one of the less performing Extended Programmes students, said:

I was singing in high school and I thought that it would take me places so I joint a choir even here but my family discouraged me and said that I should concentrate on my studies rather than music.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Lizeka, one of the less performing students in Mainstream, responded as follows:

There was a programme which was meant to offer learners bursaries for university but I could not succeed because I failed the mathematics test that was written in order to qualify.

Baba, another less performing Mainstream student, commented:

At high school there was a programme in which we were trained on how to advise others about careers. I got a chance to learn how to differentiate people's characters.

Best performing Extended Programme

Nkosinathi, the best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

There were not so much resources since it is a school in rural areas, however I learnt a skill of communicating while I was selected to teach other students, which gave me the opportunity to interact with other people. Computers which were there we never used them because there was no internet.

Kholisa, one of the best performing Extended Programmes students, said:

I got a certificate of top achiever in Mathematics while I joined other learners only for one term. I did not achieve just any award but Economics and Accounting.

Another best performer, Thando, said words with similar sentiments:

At grade 8 I got top achiever certificate of English, Economics, isiXhosa, Art and Culture. I was also the only one who got a bigger certificate for the school.

Vuyo, one of the best performing Extended Programme students, said:

I did a wonderful prepared speech among all the 26 schools in our district. The schools were competing so they selected best learners who could deliver speech while they were being judged. I did the best speech and everyone was congratulating me.

Best performing Mainstream Programme students

Thami, one of the best performing Mainstream Programme students, said:

In my high school we used to go to South African Institute of Chartered Accountants SAICA camp in Mthata for Bcom programmes that was when I realised that I wanted to do Accounting at university, the reason I am saying this is because I was already doing Accounting in High school and I felt that I did not do the wrong choice.

Samkelo the other best performing Mainstream student said:

I had one opportunity in high school. There was a programme called Environmental. It dealt with teaching people how to take care of the environment. I am saying it was an opportunity because I learnt about nature and how to protect it.

Phindi, also the best performing Mainstream student, said:

In my high school they used to take us to aviation campus where we learnt about aircrafts and what is expected when one wants to be a pilot. They used to do some kind of career guidance. Yes, it was an opportunity because they also helped us to improve our Math.

The data reveals that students were exposed to a number of school based activities that assisted them to develop competences that assisted them in higher education. Some of the schools exposed their students to South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA) activities. This exposure contributes significantly to their future performance in post-school education.

Undergraduate student support at the university

Less performing Extended Programme students

Zaza the less performing Extended Programmes student said:

> My parents support me. I tell them about my studies and they encourage me, they do not judge me. Even financially they try the best.

Boy also from Extended Programmes and less achieving similarly said:

> I get support from my family especially my mother but I don't know how she is doing it because she is not educated but she is doing it. She is also supporting me; she is doing the best to get me where I want to be (Whispering and coming a bit closer).

Simangele, the other less performing student in Extended Programmes, said:

> My roommate who is also my friend supports me. We share problems and ideas and we advise each other. I also have a group of people I study with.

Sipho, also a student from Extended Programmes, said words with similar sentiments. He commented:

> Most of the people who support me are in my class. We arrived here at the same year and we did not want to be in the extended class. It is because some students were not saying good things about our class.

Ndimphiwe the other less performing Extended Programmes student said:

> I will take it as support, the fact that my father recently asked me why am I just beautiful yet I fail and still have outstanding modules. My parents also try to support me financially.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Baba who does not perform well from Mainstream said:

> My aunt promised my mom that she will support me since my mom does not work, so she is the one taking care of me and also her husband does support me by asking me how I am doing at university.

Lizeka the other less performing student in Mainstream said:

> I have friends who support me, we started a group and work together. I also talk more often to my PAL (Peer Assisted Leader).

Best performing Extended Programmes

Siyabulela, the best achieving student in Extended Programmes. said:

> I get a lot of support from different people like my friends and my relatives. Even though my mom did not study up to university at least she encourages me sometimes she asks me how I am doing at university. My uncle is also supportive even with finance since my mother does not work.

Nkosinathi, the other best performing student from Extended Programmes, said:

> I will say my mother and my brothers since I am the first to go to university. At home they wish to see me successful with my studies and I am also trying not to disappoint them.

Thando, best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

I feel like my mother is supportive because even though she works for a small amount of money when she gets a job, she is able to share with me.my sister and my aunt with her kid. She makes sure that I have cosmetics and other small staff that are necessary and she sometimes calls me to find out how I am doing.

Best achieving Mainstream Programme

Samkelo, the best performing Mainstream student, said:

I have friends who are very supportive here at the university even at home. I also have relatives who support me. I am also financially supported by NSFAS I would not be here, though my sister is trying but she would not manage to do everything for me alone. My lectures are also supportive.

Phindi, the other best performing student from Mainstream, similarly said:

We are being supported by National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and we also have book allowance. In terms of academic support our lecturer supports us by preparing notes for us and advising us.

This section of data shows that almost all the students got financial assistance from NSFAS because they are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Financial assistance improves learner retention.

Experience about resources in campus and residences

Less performing Extended Programmes

Ndimphiwe, one of the less performing students from Extended Programmes, said:

At campus there is Wi-Fi but is not effective because we are many so it is weak and it is very slow. When I am at home there are no resources as a result of that I use notes that I get from class. I am

assisted by the tablet that I got from here by taking a picture on notes.

Boy, a less performing Extended Programmes student, said:

I don't know if I can say we have a library because it opens late and even the photocopying machines are there but it's as if it's not there. The lecturers refer us there for short loan books in which we are to make copies but the machines are always not working. If they are working it is only for few days. At the village I do not have any resources for studying.

Less performing Mainstream students

Lizeka, a less performing Mainstream student, said:

We have a challenge with the photocopying machines here at campus. Most of the time it does not work, we have to go to town where we need to pay R2.00 for many pages.

Best performing Extended Programmes student

Thando, best performing Mainstream student, said:

We have Wi-Fi meant for our studies like searching for information that will assist in our studies but as students most of the time we do not use it for the purpose of studying we use it for our own personal reasons like watching stories. We only do just a little when it comes to researching information for our studies.

Vuyo, one of the best achieving Extended Programmes students, said:

It is difficult at home because we do not have data to research. When we have assignment we have to go to town for internet

Kholisa, another best Extended Programmes student, said:

> We have a lot of resources in campus and we also have Wi-Fi, unlike at home are few where there are no resources at all. If they are there they, even the libraries are far and one needs a taxi fare to get there so it becomes difficult. You don't even get to do assignment because no internet.

Best performing Mainstream Programme students

Phindi, best performing student from Mainstream, said:

> The thing is you have to find cash to go to town (internet café) which is not easy. It's a serious struggle, there are no books.

Resulting from the above factors a number of themes emerged and those are poverty, finance, social and academic support, Wi-Fi and library. The students indicated that their performance was affected by lack of resources such as library facilities and Wi-Fi in the areas where they stay as the university does not have its own hall of students' residences. They revealed that they cannot get to the university library after classes as transport to their respective residences leaves the campus too early. This condition affects all the students regardless of the programme in which they are.

Learning strategies employed?

Less performing Extended Programmes

Ndimphiwe, less performing student from Extended Programmes, said:

> So like most of us we set a time-table to study but we are not working based on that time-table we set. We keep postponing time for study but still we do not make it. We decided to change and meet for study after the last lecture when we are still at the same place, rather than being specific with time.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Baba, less performing student from Mainstream, said:

I study alone because I am aware that when I study with others there are those who do not want to share what they know and the next thing they pass when some of us failed. I am used at studying at night but my challenge is that at the residences they make a lot of noise, it's not like at home. So it becomes difficult to concentrate.

Lizeka, less performing Mainstream student, said:

It depends on the module. If it's Accounting I know I need more help from other but I do not study with one group only. I keep changing because sometimes others do not come on time. So if the module is not difficult for me I just read alone at residence.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Thando (all agreed):

We study together as Extended Programme students. We are like a family. When the other one did not do well we assist them so that they can understand what the question wanted and how they should have answered it. Accounting and BIS (Business Information Systems) are the most challenging. Studying in a group is assisting us a lot because some of us are doing Accounting for the first time.

Vuyo, one of the best performing Extended Programme students, said:

We come together as a group so that we can be able to assist each other where one does not understand. Otherwise there is nothing that we do beyond that, it just about studying together. We share a module, like if we are doing five chapters on that certain module each person is given three days to study that chapter. When we come together after three days we are just asking questions to each other and we are also using previous question papers which we get from others who have already passed that module and also from the library.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Samkelo, best performing Mainstream student, said:

> I like studying with headphones in my ears so I try not to study with others because they do not understand the way I study. I will also be expected to explain something or listen to someone explaining so I avoid that.

Thami, one of the best performing Mainstream students, commented:

> I am studying with… I am good with Accounting and he is good with something that needs to be read. He is also good at writing short notes. So I am going to study a particular course which has a lot of notes. I stay with him and we write note, he explains and asks questions. Even on WhatsApp he asks me about the question we did and we and we do the voice note trying to explain what I understand about that question. When it's my turn we do calculations.

Both Mainstream and Extended Programme students revealed that they gained from group discussions with peers on campus as well as after class. The students expressed, however, that noise in their halls of residence was a challenge.

Assessment feedback

Less performing Extended Programmes students

Boy, less performing Extended Programmes student, said:

> When it comes back negative I feel like I have failed my parents. I failed to focus on what I am here for. Sometimes I blame myself, sometimes I shift the blame to NSFAS because it sometimes delays. It delays to give us our allowance.

Ndimphiwe, the other less performing Extended Programmes student, commented:

> When the feedback is positive I just get excited but when it is negative I get said. However, I compare my script with others scripts so that I can see where I have gone wrong and correct it. I then study further for the next test.

Zaza, the less performing Extended Programmes student, expressed similar sentiments:

> To be honest it's painful to fail especially when you know that back at home life is not that simple, one has to complete and find a job.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Lizeka, less performing Mainstream student, said:

> It feels painful because sometimes we don't even sleep. We study for hours and hours but you do not pass. I wish the lecturers could think for us and stop giving us too much work. I find it difficult concentrating for two tests.

Baba the less performing Mainstream student said:

> If I have passed I feel motivated but if I have failed I get angry and sometimes lose hope. My friend once said failing is not the end of the world, I must get up and work even harder.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Siyabulela the best performing student in Extended Programmes uttered these words:

> I make sure that I identify where I went wrong. Feedback makes me do even better. It is about what you do as an individual, for me I am pushed by support, my friends and classmates comfort me if the feedback I negative.

Kholisa, one of the best performing Extended Programmes students, said:

I talk to my friends who motivate me to say I am not the only one who fail, talking it strengthens me because when I tell them, they are able to show me how I should have tackled the question.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Phindi, the best performing Mainstream student, said:

It depends on how you performed and for instance I failed BCal and I was crying I but then I realised that I did not push hard to pass that test that is why I failed. The advantage in feedback is that we are given the second chance by other lecturers.

Thami, also the best performing Mainstream student, said:

I failed the first test while I arrived here, I was hopeless as if I would never pass. I was relieved when given a second chance because I prepared well since I was anxious not to fail again.

Samkelo, another best performing Mainstream student, commented:

I feel very disappointed when I get a test feedback and I have failed. However, I tell myself that it is not the end of the world if I am given the second chance I will pass do my best to pass.

This part of the study reveals that both the Extended Programmes students and the Mainstream Programme students value feedback. They see feedback as a motivator.

Attitude of lectures to students

Less performing Extended Programmes

Ndimphiwe, less performing Extended Programmes student, said:

These lecturers are so stressing. They think that we know everything. They can be our downfall; they are not working with us because sometimes they expel us from class for small things. I mean…. But

we are not in high school. Sometimes they give us too much work within a short time.

Simangele, less performing Extended Programmes student, commented:

> The problem is the person who expels us from class because we didn't do homework. We do not do it because sometimes you find that we will be having a test from the same lecturer, so you just tell yourself that the homework is not going to be recorded. So what's the use?

Boy, one of the less performing Extended Programmes students, said:

> I'm not sure if this is attitude but I don't know if I will make it in Accounting this year because of the way he speaks English. Even if I am sitting in front I struggle to understand him.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Lizeka, a less performing Mainstream student, uttered these words:

> The lecturers have their times, sometimes they shout us sometimes they pray for us. It depends on their mood. We are being shouted for the homework if we did not do it.

Baba, another less performing Mainstream student, said:

> If they can only arrive early in class because we wake up early for the bus only to find that they are not in class but when we are late we are being shouted.

Best performing Extended Programmes

All the five best performing Extended Programmes students agreed that, more especially Kholisa:

> They like the way we do things so we think they like us and they see the potential even if our grades are declining. They talk to us and they

also advise us when we do not attend lecturers. It shows that they are aware of us as their students. They are like parents to us.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Thami, the best performing Mainstream student, said:

> In Accounting you find that we are writing three tests at a day. When we are complaining the lecturer does not respond to us just ignoring us and saying it is not her matter that we can't cope. How can we read three things at the same time?

Samkelo, also a best performing Mainstream student, uttered these words:

> When you compare us with students doing five modules, as a year course, we are different. We are doing semester courses and to us it's difficult. First of all, when you are studying you have certain time and sometimes it's too hard to do so, you push and another lecturer gives us their work.

It has been revealed that students receive a positive attitude from their lecturers and that contributes to their positive performance.

Students' financial challenges

Less performing Extended Programmes

Boy, one of the less performing Mainstream students, commented:

> To be honest I was not funded in my first year (2017). I think that is why I failed some of my modules. I started to be funded this year (2018), so I managed to buy books and make copies and everything that I needed. But this year NSFAS failed us because we are struggling. We have to borrow money from others and it's not a nice thing. They delayed to pay.

Another less performing student, Ndimphiwe, expressed similar sentiments when she said:

> I was also not funded last year but this year I applied for NSFAS although I have not yet received money. They are telling us a lot of things when we ask.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Lizeka, less performing Mainstream student, said:

> I get money from NSFAS but this year others have received their funding; others have not received it. We have not received it too.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Vuyo, one of the best performing Extended Programmes students, said:

> In 2017 I was not funded, maybe it's because I applied late so I don't think National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) received my application since there were lack of resources in my high school so I was unable to have information on how to apply and when.

Best achieving Mainstream Programme

Phindi, best performing student from Mainstream, said:

> We have NSFAS; however, we are struggling because of the delay in terms of payment. We sometimes have to borrow money for food and other needs from those who have already received their money. Almost all in our department has been affected by the delay and it is not easy for our some of us as families are different.

Resulting from the above variables the emerged sub-themes are improvement, anger, supportive, and Financial Aid (NSFAS).

Relationship with classmates

Less achieving Extended Programmes

Ndimphiwe, less achieving Extended Programmes student, raised her opinion and said:

> It's not like high school here, I feel like you are on your own. I feel like it is too risky to talk to students about my things because some cannot be trusted. It would be better if I had a sister here. In class we are extended programme with Mainstream but we can't associate with them, we are fine as Extended Programme.

Zaza, another less performing Extended Programmes student, commented:

> Automatically we find ourselves doing everything together as Extended Programmes students, not that we choose to do that.

Less achieving Mainstream Programme

Baba, one of the less performing students from Mainstream, said:

> Our relationship with extended family is good and bad. Extended Programmes compete with us. Extended Programmes think that they have more power.

Best achieving Extended Programmes

Vuyo, the best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

> It is good because we help each other as Extended Programmes students. The fact that we started doing extended has a very positive impact on our studies as most of us really work hard and pass.

Siyabulela, one of the best performing Extended Programmes, students said:

We are always divided from Mainstream students; the problem is that they think that we are academically disadvantaged. They do not know that we have various reasons for doing extended programme.

Best achieving Mainstream Programme

Samkelo, best performing Mainstream student, said:

I can say our relationship with our classmate is normal. We are in one class with Extended Programme students, but they like to work as Extended Programmes alone and as Mainstream we do the same but we are in one class.

Thami, the other best performing Mainstream student, uttered these words:

Maybe good or fine but my other classmates don't like me but I don't know why because everyone has a vision so when I ask for information they think I am too much forward.

The students expressed that there is competition between the Mainstream students and Extended Programme students as they learn in the same classes. The study has also revealed that the Mainstream students have a negative attitude towards the Extended Programme students.

Coping with academic or personal stressors

Less achieving Extended Programmes

Zaza, less performing student in the Extended Programmes, said:

There are a lot of things that stress us especially as extended like the time table which always clashes. People who do it do not think for us because ours is supposed to be different from Mainstream but now it was done to suit them. We sometimes do not attend other classes because of that problem. Yes, we miss information but we ask others who were in class to give us notes.

Simangele, the other less performing student from Extended Programmes, said:

> With me it depends on the nature of the problem. If it's not something big I am able to talk to other students but who are my friend. It's not easy because we are same age but I feel better after.

Less achieving Mainstream

Lizeka, one of the less performing students from Mainstream said:

> I get stressed more when I am here because I usually share my problems with my mother. I do not really trust other students for my problems so here but I have friends.

Baba, less performing Mainstream student, said:

> When I am stressed most of the time I choose to be alone. That helps me to think about my problems better and I also avoid shouting other people. For me it is better to meet people when I feel better.

Lizeka, one of the less performing students in Mainstream, stated:

> Eish! Another problem is NSFAS, we need books, we need to make copies and we also need to eat but we have not yet received our money. It's a challenge because some of us are renting and we need to pay. Our parents are struggling so that we can eat.

Best achieving Extended Programmes

Vuyo, best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

> I believe in talking to someone I just feel that it is ok because if it does not happen to me, who would it happen to?

Nkosinathi, one of the best performing Extended Programmes students, said:

> That kind of a situation does not make me cry I think and talk to someone. Sometimes I do not share my problem because it's not all

the time that one should share their problems, some people cannot be trusted. Such kind of problem sometimes goes with trust.

Thando, also one of the best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

> I take time to solve my challenges because I do not want to come with an unhealthy solution which will not assist me but rather make the situation even worse. I do not even share my problems to social media like others do. I hate exposing myself to everybody.

Best achieving Mainstream Programme

Thami, best performing Mainstream student, said:

> I like meditating for 10 to 20 minutes, I also read anything that motivates me or listen to motivational speakers. It helps me with focus it also makes me aware of the differences in myself. I am able to approach people and to make friends with people who will not waste my time. The other benefit is that I am able to reduce negative people and negative energy and gain positive energy because I do not have time to waste.

Phindi, the other best performing Mainstream student, said:

> I always motivate myself by saying it's part of life and it will pass. If I do not get a solution, I always motivate call my mom so that she can assist me.

The findings indicate that students have identified ways of managing stress, which is a positive thing that will assist them to be productive in their studies.

Esteem needs

Drawing on Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, esteem needs were important. The results presented here show how Mainstream and Extended Programme students narrated esteem needs in relation to their performance.

Previous achievement in high school

Less performing Extended Programmes

Sipho, best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

> I like music and I was in a school choir. Even here I joined the university choir. I thought that music would be career but my family discouraged me by saying being a musician is not a career. I was hopeful but then again I thought that I would not be successful because I am situated at the deep rural area, even my family encouraged me to focus on my studies.

Zaza, the less performing student in Extended Programmes, said:

> I do not remember achieving anything at high school. I only played basketball while in primary school from there is nothing.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Lizzy, less performing Mainstream student, said:

> I was attending school from rural areas where it was not easy to achieve a lot of things, even the roads are bad, so most of us were only praying to be at university so that we can at least work in future, so Ma'am I did not have any achievement.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Kholisa, best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

> I learnt to interact with people while I was selected to teach other students. I am also a very shy person so that assisted me, and it gave me an opportunity to deal with my shyness.

Vuyo, the other best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

I was the only one in my district who achieved the highest mark out of 150. That was in the whole district and it made me proud of myself. I also did a wonderful prepared speech among all the 26 schools in our district. This was my best ever, even everyone was congratulating me.

Best performing Mainstream Programmes

Thami, the one best performing Mainstream student, said:

Since I was part of the project which was protecting the environment, I used to go to the schools as well as the community at large and teach them how to protect the environment. Sometimes I would assist learners on how to prepare for exams.

Phindi, the other best performing Mainstream student, said:

I joined the group called interactive club. We used to help the community around like planting trees, cooking for old people. It was good to be part of that group because I learnt how to plant trees and I felt good about doing something for someone. Another thing is that in high school I was one of the top achievers in G12.

Students' beliefs about failing

Less performing Extended Programmes

Boy, less performing Extended Programme student, had this view:

We fail sometimes because we end up sacrificing other classes due to the fact that we have clashes that is what is confusing, we therefore feel that we are not supported. Sometimes we study and we do not sleep but still fail.

Sipho, another less performing Extended Programmes student, commented:

NSFAS is the problem we are struggling (with). However, sometimes we fail because of peer pressure, we cannot say no to some things.

Simangele, less performing Extended Programmes student, said:

I am sponsored by NSFAS but this year almost all students doing Accounting have not received their money. I am one of them I survive by asking some things from my friends or borrowing money.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Lizeka, less performing Mainstream student, said:

The sad part of failing is when you know that you did such kind of a subject at high school like computer and you used to pass it, but now we are failing. I think it's because of the way they ask questions it's not clear, even if you read.

Baba, also a less performing Mainstream student, had this view:

When I have failed and others have passed its terrible. You feel like you will never pass again and I panic thinking of how I will do on other subjects. It becomes better when we are given the second chance because maybe you can improve.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Siyabulela, best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

I have never failed in my primary school and high school; I think it is painful. It could be hard for me to accept failure since I have never failed until I go to university. At university they make it easy when they say you need 40 percent and 60 percent.

Thando, one of the best performing Extended Programmes students, alluded that:

When you get less than 50%, you lose hope as if you will never pass and you panic because maybe your friends passed. You also think of repeating that subject with the new students. It's not a good feeling. Even the people you want them to assist you they become busy and have no time for you sometimes.

Vuyo, best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

I have also been assisted at home with my parent's money for everything. The challenge that we sometimes experience is that we can't get everything we need since tuition fees is expensive and we are also expected to eat. NSFAS is frustrating.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Samkelo, a best performing Mainstream student, alluded that:

When you fail you feel like you can exclude yourself from other people, which is not good because it is the time when you need support from other people. The problem is that sometimes we do not study everything we did in class so that's why we fail.

Phindi, another best performing Mainstream student, said:

Although sometimes we fail and it is not nice, some of us do not really work hard. I am saying this because some study hard only when they are going to write a test. Most of the time we are not doing anything, we spend time with those who are good yet we are different.

Thami, best performing Mainstream student, said:

NSFAS helps me very much because my mom is the only one working, so it covers a lot of things. We are being supported by NSFAS and we also have book allowance but we have a challenge this year because we have not yet got it.

The study has revealed that feedback is a thread to most students. This can be a motivating factor to them.

Anxiety

Less performing Extended Programmes

Ndimphiwe, less performing Extended Programmes student, had this view:

> When I am going to present I become anxious, not that I do not know but the problem is my English which is not good. I fear the presentation because I think I compare myself with people who are fluent. Even when the lecturer asks a question, sometimes I know the answer but I cannot answer because of my English.

Simangele, also one of the less performing Extended Programmes students, said:

> You see this is like when you went to clinic today for a test, yet you tested the previous day you will still be anxious just like when you would be writing. I mean you can keep studying but still be anxious during exam.

Less performing Mainstream Programmes

Baba, one of the less performing Extended Programmes students, said:

> In the presentation we do not have much difficulty. We are not afraid even to answer the question, even if my English is poor as long as you can hear what I want to say. I like presentation at the same time. I like to deliver a message.

Lizeka, also a less performing Extended Programmes student, said:

> I do not become anxious when going for a test if I read. What makes me anxious is when others discuss what they studied before the test or how they answered the questions.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Thando, a best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

> When it's time for the lecture we are afraid to ask even if the classroom is not full. Sometimes we answer questions among ourselves. The brave ones ask in class, as extended we get a chance when we are together.

Kholisa, another best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

> I was surprised with what I can do because while in high school I lost marks. There was a time I didn't do presentation and I lost marks but then when I came here to university ah! I'm doing it so good and I realized that I can talk to people. The other lecturer even compared us with the other class that is ahead of us saying as compared to them we are good.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Samkelo, less performing student from Mainstream, said:

> Presentation for me, at first I had a challenge of standing in-front but then at the same time I got to think of this are my marks, so whatever that I am doing in-front of them it will reflect academically, like if it is beneficiary I had to change. When presenting I look at one of the students until I finish.

Phindi, best performing Mainstream student, said:

> When it comes to BCal I always feel like I am anxious as if I have already failed. I panic and drink a lot of water before I get to the test room. It's worse when you have entered the exam room with anxiety and the paper's duration is two hours and someone finishes within 30 minutes.

Thami, one of the best performing students from Mainstream, commented

> My main fear is when I have to stand in front of everybody in class
> and present. It's very challenging because you are not even perfect
> in English and some will just come and flow because they have
> background in English. So we cannot run away from the fact that we
> are situated in rural areas, over there was not even pre-school while
> I grew up. It is very difficult to stand in front of others.

This part of the study has revealed that both students expressed that they lack confidence in using English during class especially when doing group presentations. Lack of reading and presentation skills leads to lack of self-esteem and self-confidence resulting in self-exclusion from peers. These attributes may affect student performance.

4.6 Students' inputs, environment and outcomes

Drawing on Astin's Theory of Involvement, student input was important. The results presented here show how Mainstream and Extended Programmes students narrated the importance of inputs in relation to their performance.

Motivation

Less performing Extended Programmes

Simangele, one of the less achieving Extended Programmes students, said:

> I want to be a bread winner; I want to be employed because I am
> the first one at home to go to university.

> My step mother used to encourage me by saying I will get what I
> want if I push hard and not discouraged, and that I should not
> compare myself with those who inherited after their parents but I will
> have mine if I study.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Lizeka, one of the less performing students from Mainstream, commented:

> Something what makes me to study is that in my family I was the first to go to university so I have to be an example to my siblings. If I fail or drop out or do not graduate they will compare themselves with me when they are not doing well, so that is a problem. I have to make sure that I finish. I also look up to someone who was my role model, who is from a poor family, but not now. She drives big cars; her family has progressed. No one is poor. I am also being motivated by the fact that I will be able to assist my family after graduating and getting a job.

Baba, one of the less performing Mainstream students, said:

> My mom is not working. I like to be independent. I don't like asking for money sometimes I look myself in the mirror and say mhm…….one day!

Lizeka, another less performing Mainstream student, said:

> I want to be one of the graduates, work and have my things especially money. It's bad to be desperate, without money yet you want some things. People at the village also motivate me that I should work hard.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Siyabulela, one of the best performing Extended Programmes students, commented:

> When I look at the situation at home, I realise that I'm just push hard and get what I came here for. I also do not like to be dependent. Once I'm done here I am going to assist at home.

Vuyo, another best performing Extended Programmes student, commented:

> Since lifelong I am the only one who got this opportunity to come to university. I am always an example to those who are coming. My

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uncle used to make an example about me that even other people around my environment are looking up to me so I should not disappoint them and myself.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Samkelo, a best performing Mainstream student, commented:

Growing up as a kid I didn't have much so I always motivate myself and say, if you give up what are you going to do? This is the only chance I have.

Thami, also a best performing Mainstream student said:

My mom is the one that motivate me and my background. Like I always ask myself that, if I do not achieve my goals what will happen to me? Living in a small house at the location, what will my future be like, my mom and everything.

The study revealed that students' background and their future have an impact in their performance since they grew up with different experiences and are looking forward to changing that. They possess intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Experiences

Less performing Extended Programmes

Boy, one of the less performing Extended Programmes students, commented:

Alcohol I used to like it too much and it happened that someone was stabbed and I was drunk and at the end that person died. I was then hospitalised and I realised that it was a bad thing that I was involved in that incident. From that day I started being committed, even my parents were asking why I was involved in that, why was there I something like that about me. I was enjoying that freedom because when I am at home I do not do these things that I do.

Less achieving Mainstream Programme

Ndimphiwe, a less performing Mainstream Programmes student, commented:

> At home no one is working. I grew up struggling. Sometimes I used to be given uniform and that made me study and pass Grade 12. As from that time I try too hard to get Diploma. I also motivate my brother to think about university.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Thando, one of the best achieving Extended Programmes students, commented:

> I think my past is the reason that I am where I am now. Everyone knows that it's not a nice thing to live without parents. It's indeed not a nice thing and that is the reason why I passed Grade 12 in 2014 although I went to tertiary in 2017. The money was there, it's just that there are things that are happening. It is the reason why I learnt to be mature enough at my age. Whatever happened never made me disappointed to the extent that I considered life the other way round and be demotivated and join prostitution. Instead I had to toughen up and observe life differently. That is why I want to be independent just because it made me to be someone and I considered life the other way round like the fact that I know how to save money. There's no such thing as being supported all the time to be a better person.

Nkosinathi, best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

> In my high school almost all my classmates were smoking dagga, cigarette. I wanted to avoid them and so I decided to associate with girls. I was trying to achieve my aim of not smoking. It worked for me because here I am studying what I wanted to study at university.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Thami, one of the best performing Mainstream students, said:

At that time some of my friends dropped out that year and I was going to drop out because I did not want to see the very important things of education. People in my area they have a qualification. They have trained well. They don't have money. They are not working. But now I feel for my friends because they ask for money even from me and in isiXhosa it's not easy to ask from another man. So they encourage me to say I must study and prove them wrong.

Samkelo, another best performing Mainstream student, said:

My challenges were just verbal challenges. Someone who came to me and said: You are not going anywhere, just drop what you are doing. It's really challenging even if you are not doing well you just reflect yourself to that. That is something that's encouraging me. I want to show that person that I am going somewhere.

It has emerged in this section that there are many factors that affect student performance such as a background of poverty and being raised by single parents. A good number of students were first generation students in their families. This shows that these students came to university without the cultural capital required for post schooling. These factors affected all first year students regardless of their programme.

Expectations

Less performing Extended Programmes

Sipho, a less performing Extended Programmes student, said:

I expect to get knowledge so that I can be able to be on my own, to get a job and assist my mother at home. I believe that it is good thing to depend on yourself as a person.

Boy, a less performing Extended Programmes student, commented:

I want to be independent because my cousin brother scared me by saying if you are a drop out at school (laughing) you are going to

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support yourself. I am going to support myself if I drop out at school. I do not want to be poor and then eish….I was scared but it's one man's jive now. Nobody in my home is supporting each other, it's only my sister who supports me. Do you know how you feel when you ask something from someone? Yhooo! (tearful). For me I don't want to be poor.

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Baba, a less performing Mainstream student, said:

We want to acquire knowledge. When you are studying you need to understand but now we are just doing. We do not have time; everyone is rushing since there was a strike. The lecturer must explain to us; we need to know even for future.

Lizeka, the other less performing Mainstream student, said:

When you have education people respect you. I need a job, I need money and I also want to learn so that I can have a bright future. My parents also trust me they want me to be educated.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Siyabulela, a best performing Extended Programmes student, said:

I expect to be fully equipped so that I can be able to interact with all kinds of people and most importantly I am looking forward to graduating my diploma or B-tech after few years. I also want to change things that are not right. When I talk there should be a difference between me and someone who does not have knowledge.

Vuyo, best performing student from Extended Programmes, uttered these words:

I expect to get good grades so that I can be able to be employed when I leave the University for Work, employability is the best thing.

I don't want to find myself having to pay a debt. I need to acquire something from learning.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Samkelo, a best performing student in Mainstream, said:

Looking at our background, the main motivation for us to study is to improve the way in which we grew up, so we want to improve our children's future and their children so that they should not grow in the environment that is different from the one we grew up in.

Phindi, another best achieving student in Mainstream, said:

I expect to get the qualification because if you do not have a qualification on these days you are like nothing because most of the jobs they need a qualification, so that's why we are learning because we want to get the qualification and get a salary to do anything that like our vision because now we need money so that's why we are doing this course.

The study reveals that all the students have high expectations to obtain a qualification. They see this as a passport to a better life and to earning a good salary.

Campus Environment

Less performing Extended Programmes

Zaza, a less performing Extended Programmes student, said:

You know sometimes when you are late and you get in class, there are no chairs, and you find yourself having to go around other classrooms looking for a desk. Sometimes you have to look for both the desk and the chair. What kind of university is that?

Boy, a less performing Extended Programmes student, said:

I hate the fact that this university isn't around town because the challenge is that now even if we get residences we have to use buses all the way from Queenstown to come here. Sometimes we have a class at 08:00 and the buses become late sometimes they are full and it's possible that you arrive here at 09:00. So I think we see ourselves forced to stay the nearest location. Some classes are ok, some are not, even now when it's cold…….eish.

Less performing Mainstream Programmes

Baba, a less performing Mainstream student, commented:

I am satisfied with the environment but it does not have everything we need like the library is too small and sometimes the copying machines are not in good condition or are not at all working. Sometimes we have to go to town to print assignments. Books are also not enough.

Lizeka, another less performing Mainstream student, said:

The library is too small because when it's time for exams it becomes full so we force ourselves to go late even though it is not safe.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Kholisa, a best performing student from Extended Programmes, said

Classes are overcrowded and we are unable to hear what the lecturers is saying. The standard is low but I feel like it's simple to accommodate us and after all you get what you want.

Thando, another of the best performing Extended Programmes students, said:

I think a major negative part is residences, the way in which we are allocated, you find NHC being allocated far from her classmates and

if you need a group to start, it's a challenge. It is risky to go from one residence to another.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Thami, best performing Mainstream student, commented:

> If we are talking about this university, we are lacking English because we don't get to present in English, we will suffer when it comes to the world of work because they will not take us if we do not speak English.

Phindi, another best performing student from Mainstream, said:

> This campus is very beautiful and among other campuses, this campus is doing its best, also the campus is not very complicated, even a first year student can find their way out.

Samkelo, one of the best performing Mainstream students, commented:

> There are many students in this campus now so the main challenge is shortage of books in the library. You may find that the whole class has been referred to the short loan for only one book. Books are costly so it's not easy to buy them, most of us prefer making copies, the challenge to that is that most of the time the photo copy machine in the library is out of order.

Students revealed the need for the expansion of the library as they expressed that it was too small especially during times of examinations. They also expressed that the reading resources in the library are few and outdated. This affects the students academically as they cannot access all the resources they need.

Strategies to support learning

Less performing Extended Programmes

Simangele, a less performing Extended Programmes student, commented:

We have PALLs and we have Wi-Fi and WiSeUp for more learning.

Zaza, one of the less performing Extended Programmes students, commented:

PALLs are there but for us to attend their sessions it's a problem because our timetable is wrong. It is wrong in the sense that we attend with Mainstream in all modules but the timetable only suits them better, they do not have clashes that we have. It is a confusion and we miss other classes especial if you are repeating one module it's not fair (Sad emotion).

Less performing Mainstream Programme

Baba, one of the less achieving Mainstream students said with similar sentiments:

CLTD has PALLs for us, especially who are struggling in Accounting. Sometimes they give us short tests they want to make sure we understand.

Best performing Extended Programmes

Vuyo, one of the best performing Extended Programmes students, said:

I think the university is already having strategies to support our learning because there are Peer Assisted Leaders (PALs) in place for students who do not understand Accounting. We also have the Writing Centre where we are assisted with writing assignments and we are also encouraged to speak English since some of us are challenged with English speaking.

Best performing Mainstream Programme

Lizeka, a less performing student in Mainstream, said:

Our Peer Assisted Learning Leaders (PALs) assist us. Sometimes we understand them more than the lecturers.

Students expressed their appreciation of the support they get from the CLTD programs such as the reading and writing centre, the PAL program and the Student Advisory support services.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the results of the study from the test scores and presented them in the form of graphs. I also presented qualitative data collected during the focus groups discussions in themes. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study and the discussion.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion of the findings and recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the results analysed in the previous chapter. All the themes are discussed under the factors of the two theories; Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs and Aston's Theory of Involvement. The conclusion of all the discussion will adhere to these factors.

5.2 Biological data and test scores

The data revealed the following findings:

- There is no marked difference in the students' performance in the two streams, Extended Programmes and Mainstream.

- The interventions and lengthening of the first year over a two-year period is paying dividends for the Extended Programme students.

- The Mainstream students might also need the same extended period of their first year so as to increase their performance.

5.3 Themes

Themes 1: Family background and student support

Under this theme, data reveals that students were exposed to a number of school based activities that assisted them to develop competences that assisted them in higher education. Some of the schools exposed them to SAICA activities. This exposure contributed significantly to their performance as Samkelo one of the best performing from Mainstream said:

> I am from Lusikisiki and that is where I did my high school. We are two at home, I no longer have parent, my sister is the one taking care of us, she does not work but gets grant.

Literature argues that poverty affects student academic performance (Maree, 2015b). Students who are not on NSFAS are benefiting financially from Funza Lutshaka and Mathew Goniwe Bursaries. Nnamani, Dikko, and Kinta (2014) reported that, in the study conducted in 2008 about whether financial aid status affects students' performance, retention, persistence and academic success, all students regardless of their financial aid status are performing differently and the differences can be attributed to other variables such as demographics and college specifics. This is proving the findings which indicate that both Extended Programmes best performing and less performing students experience challenges with regards to financial aid and yet the Mainstream group is doing well. On the one hand, both the best and less performing Mainstream students have been sponsored. Financial challenges do not affect students' performance alone, however, they are important.

These support systems cater for students irrespective of their programme or stream. As a result of these interventions the students develop a sense of belonging in the institution. The motivation to learn thus increases as the students' basic needs are being met. Tinto (2014) stresses the value of supporting students, especially with the fact that most of these students are coming from poverty stricken families.

Students establish a sense of belonging through peer relations where they relate and interaction with others for the same goal of success. That may assist them to communicate to staff members as a group so as to be assisted with certain skills so that they can make sense of their studies Thomas (2012). The responses indicate that support - especially peer support in this case - plays an important role in the performance of students in this university. For best performing students, the support they get maybe motivating them to do even better so as not to disappoint those who are supporting them. Students need holistic support from significant others or parents to be able to survive (Swecker et al., 2013). Even students whose parents did not study at university get support from their parents. This is against the literature that seems to be arguing that first generation students do not have support and that is the reason they drop-out (Stephens et al., 2014). Boy, one of the less performing students from Extended Programmes said:

> I get support from my family especially my mother but I don't know how she is doing it because she is not educated but she is doing it. She is also supporting me; she is doing the best to get me where I want to be.

Responses such as this one show no difference in the way the Extended Programmes students and the Mainstream students responded.

Themes 2: Belongingness, self-confidence and love

The study has revealed that the campus environment was welcoming and provided them with a sense of belonging as the lecturers showed a positive attitude towards the students. This sense of belonging creates high self-esteem among students. This confirms the findings by (Bauman, 2012) that self-esteem was found to have a strong impact on learning as it contributes to the improvement of academic performance, whereas low self-esteem affects academic achievement. Students who have high self-esteem or self-confidence believe in themselves, are motivated and perform better (Zepke & Leach, 2010). This confirms the findings of this study since the students themselves reported that and a number of students seem to be performing to the best of their ability and dealt with the issue of being shy.

The literature suggests that the difference between higher education and schools is that higher education is demanding that students be responsible and able to do the work on their own as compared to the schools where they are always monitored (Maphosa et al., 2014). Researchers identified that academic stress among students is triggered by too many assignments, competing with other students, failures, lack of pocket money, poor relationships with other students and lecturers as well as family problems or problems at home (Bataineh, 2013). The students themselves responded that it is hard to cope with a lot of work although they work to the best of their ability to achieve well.

Theme 3: Resources on campus

There is a concern from the Mainstream and Extended Programmes students about the library being small and the need for its expansion as it is a challenge, especially

during exams. In addition, books that are limited and outdated. This affects students' performance since there are those who prefer the library as it is most of the time quiet and in order. Books are the main sources of information for students and it provides other important resources. Hanssen and Solvoll (2015) posit that libraries provide students with information that is important to be used in their studies even when they are writing research.

Theme 4: Teaching and learning

The responses concerning assessment feedback revealed that students value feedback although it is associated with anxiety and see it as a motivator. This is supported by Brown (2001) who suggests that the purposes of feedback are to motivate students, inform them how well they have done and how to improve. The lecturers also have positive attitudes and that contributes to their positive performance. It has also been found that since they learn in the same classroom in all their modules there is competition between Mainstream and Extended Programmes students. Research emphasises that the way in which students see themselves and the other group to which they belong can influence feelings of competence and relatedness and goal setting (Usher & Kober, 2012). This has a positive impact on students in the Mainstream and Extended Programmes.

It has also been found that there is a negative attitude from Mainstream students to Extended Programmes students which raises a lot of questions about them being stigmatised. This indicates that the response may be a fact based on what Coleman (2018) states: Extended Programmes students are being stigmatised and, based on this, Extended Programme student performance may be boosted to prove a point against stigma.

The findings about anxiety in the classroom also indicate that both students lack confidence in using English during class especially when doing group presentations. These attributes may affect study performance as Bauman (2012) concurs that low self-esteem can affect student achievement negatively.

Theme 5: Motivation

The study in this section revealed that students' background has an impact on their performance since they grew up different experiences and are looking forward to changing that. They possess intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. (Leal et al., 2013). posit that people who are extrinsically motivated perform because the environment surrounding them plays a big role in their development, whereas the intrinsically motivated are working hard and achieving due to the fact that they look forward to producing quality in what they do since it will result in excellent performance and boost their joy as they achieve their goals.

It has emerged in this section that there are many factors that affect students' performance such as background of poverty and being raised by single parents. Maree (2015a) suggests that poverty continually imposes a negative impact on the access and success of students in higher education. A good number of students were first generation students in their families. This shows that these students came without the cultural capital required for post-schooling. These factors affect students' performance regardless of their programme. Research suggests that some of the things portrayed by first generation students are financial dependency and not being very well prepared academically (Hymann & Carolissen, 2011).

Theme 5: Campus environment

Students revealed the need for expansion of the library as they expressed that it was too small, especially during times of examinations. They also expressed that reading resources in the library are few and outdated. This affects students academically as they cannot access all the resources they need. The institutional environment is a powerful factor that predicts the future of the student in terms of performance (Olatunji et al., 2016). In this section it has also been found that students expressed appreciation of the support of CLTD programmes such as the PAL (Boud et al., 2014) programme, the Reading and Writing Centre and Academic Advising Services. confirm that these kinds of support are useful by saying that students involved in peer learning learn better by explaining and sharing ideas with others based on what they previously learnt during a lecture. The leader of peers organises and plans the activities to be done when they meet as peers.

5.3.1 Question 1

How do Mainstream and Extended Programme students perform in their first year of university studies at a higher education institution?

In answering this question, the study revealed that there is not a marked difference between Extended Programme and Mainstream students; however, I conclude that Extended Programme students perform better than Mainstream ones. Any form of support is very important to students as they experience a lot of challenges that lead to under-preparedness, some of which are: academic, social and financial (Fraser & Killen, 2003b). The different kinds of support mentioned in section 2.5, which include orientating the first year students, play a very big role in assisting the first year students (Vlamis et al., 2011).

5.3.2 Questions 2

What are the reasons for Mainstream and Extended Programmes students to perform the way they do in their first year of university studies at a higher education institution?

In answering this question, the study revealed that both Extended Programme and Mainstream students are affected by a lot of factors that interfere negatively with their performance.

These results have implications that in the near future Extended Programmes will apply to all students so that they benefit equally from these programmes and thus the retention and throughput rate will be improved. The institutions of higher learning have a responsibility to prepare the environment for learning and teaching.

5.4 Recommendations

The study come up with the following suggestions as recommendations:
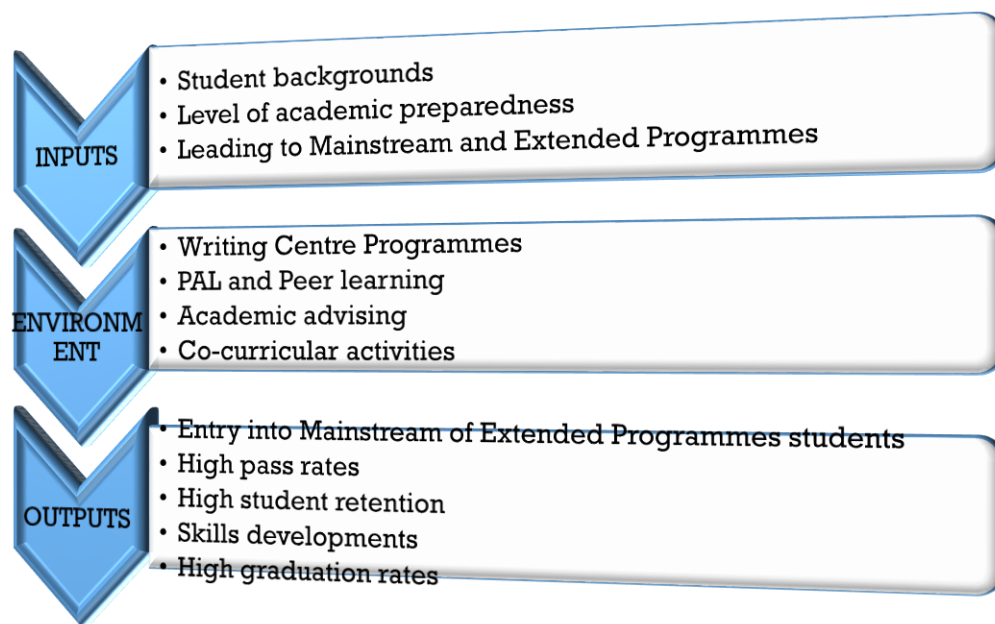
1. The study suggests that the interventions given to the Extended Programmes students should also be extended to the Mainstream students since the test

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scores show that the average scores do not show that the Mainstream students perform far better than the Extended Programmes students.

2. The study suggests the use of adoption and utilisation of the Student Involvement Models designed during the study as discussed below.

Figure 5.3.1 shows how the theory has been utilised.

Figure 5.3.1: Summary of how the theory has been utilised

INPUTS
- Student backgrounds
- Level of academic preparedness
- Leading to Mainstream and Extended Programmes

ENVIRONMENT
- Writing Centre Programmes
- PAL and Peer learning
- Academic advising
- Co-curricular activities

OUTPUTS
- Entry into Mainstream of Extended Programmes students
- High pass rates
- High student retention
- Skills developments
- High graduation rates

Source: Adapted from Astin (1984)

The model above shows the impact of the involvement of the model on learning (adapted with the assistance of computer functions and developed for the study. The model indicates the situation in which first year students find themselves when they are enrolled, the kind of support they get and how they are developed later.

Inputs

After enrolment, the university should consider the student background characteristics such as family background. Literature reveals that student family and educational background play a significant role towards student success (Guarino et al., 2015). Some students are affected by being first generation students with low cultural capital

when entering university for the first time (Stephens et al., 2014). Student level of academic preparation for undergraduate studies largely determines how students will perform at university. Research has also indicated that most students, especially those from disadvantaged communities, come to university with a low level of academic preparedness for university (Case et al., 2013). These considerations will assist in the formulation of policies and programmes that promote student success (Coleman, 2018).

Environment

The academic environment in which the students in Mainstream and Extended Programmes are studying consists of the intervention strategies facilitated by CLTD to enhance student success such as Academic Advising, Writing Centre, Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) and Peer Learning, as well as Co-curricular activities.

Outputs

With the cognisance of the kind of students we enrol in the institutions of higher learning and their readiness in terms of preparing for them, the model suggests that the outcomes will be productive. The pass rate will improve, student retention will be high, students will develop skills and knowledge and the graduation rate will improve. This is relevant as all of the above mentioned are expected from students who are studying at a higher education institution. Subotzky and Prinsloo (2011) suggest that, as part of organisational quality, universities are expected to take into consideration attributes, skills and knowledge as part of successful higher learning. This implies that students will be productive in their societies where they are working by showcasing their skills in the community.

5.5 Conclusion

The main purpose of my study was to critically compare the academic performance of the two streams, Mainstream and Extended Programmes. I conclude by saying that the level at which students enrol at higher education is the same. They have all been affected by a lot of issues that interfere with their preparedness for higher education. Higher education has taken a positive step by introducing Extended Programmes as

support although it leaves the majority of students not benefitting. The fact that the Extended Programmes perform almost at the same level as the Mainstream students suggests that the support given to Extended Programmes students is effective. The study can safely say that the Extended Programmes is a good intervention for improving student academic performance. I think future research about Extended Programmes should concentrate upon the areas that need to be addressed like the issue of quality of the lecturers and the calibre of students' higher education enrols.

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Appendices

Appendix1: Ethical clearance

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

04 May 2018

Ms Ramaketse Goodness Lekhehle (215081617)
School of Education
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Lekhehle,

Protocol Reference Number : HSS/0172/018M
Project title: Comparing academic performance of students in mainstream and Extended Programmes at a higher institution in South Africa

Provisional Approval – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 12 December 2017 in connection with the above, has been provisionally approved, subject to the following:

* **Gatekeeper permission letter**

This approval is granted provisionally and the final clearance for this project will be given once the above mentioned condition has been met. Note that data collection may not proceed until final ethics approval letter has been issued after the remaining conditions have been met and approved by the research ethics committee.

Kindly submit your response to Professor Shenuka Singh: Research Office as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Lester Brian Shawa
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrators: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Appendix 2: Gate keeper's permission

Identity hidden for anonymity.

Appendix 3: Informed consent

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Dear Students

My name is Remaketse Lekhehle from the Centre for Learning and Teaching Development (CLTD) at Walter Sisulu University (WSU), Queenstown Campus. I Am the Student Academic Advisor for Walter Sisulu University, currently studying for a Master of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I may be contacted on the following numbers: office 040 8426867 and cell: 0732507725. My email address is rlekhehle@wsu.ac.za.

I am supervised by Dr Lester Brian Shawa at the School of Education, University of KwaZulu Natal. His phone number is 0312602291 and email shawa@ukzn.ac.za.

I write to invite you to participating in my study entitled: *Comparing academic performance of students in mainstream and Extended programmes at a higher education institution in South Africa*. The study will involve four focus groups with a total number of 20 students: 5 top achieving mainstream students, 5 less achieving mainstream students, 5 top achieving Extended Programmes students and 5 less achieving Extended Programmes. To arrive at the 20 students, I will analyse the test scores for all the 113 students currently registered for the programmes. The duration of the focus group will be between 30 to 45 minutes.

While the study will not benefit you directly, it has pertinent benefits to the academic community as it will assist in assessing the programmes in relation to access to higher

education. This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact me or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Kindly note that your participation is entirely voluntary. This means that you have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research and that you will not be penalized for taking such an action. Also note that you will not incur any costs by participating in this study.

In this study, your views will be presented anonymously. Neither your names nor identity will be disclosed in any form.

CONSENT

I_____have been informed about the study entitled *Comparing academic performance of students in mainstream and extended programmes at a higher education institution in South Africa by* Remaketse Lekhehle

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at the following contacts:

     Office phone: 040 8426867

     Cell phone: 0732507725

     Email address is rlekhehle@wsu.ac.za.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby provide consent to (delete which is not applicable for the study):

Audio-record focus group discussion YES / NO

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   **Date**

Appendix 4: Research Questions

TITLE OF STUDY: Comparing academic performance of students in Mainstream and Extended Programmes at a higher education institution in South Africa.

NATURE OF QUESTIONS: They are open and allow for probing.

TARGET GROUP: Top 5 less archiving Mainstream students.

EXPECTED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 5

EXPECTED TIME FOR INTERVIEW:

Part 1: Introduction (time =)

Introduction of the researcher and participants

Introduction of the topic

Part 2: Questions based on Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs

1: Physiological needs and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

Please tell me about yourself, e.g. your family, school attended.

Tell me about the opportunities you had at high school.

What kind of support do you get from your family?

In terms of resources that a student needs, can you tell me about your experience at home and at school.

2: Safety/security issues and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

2.1 What measures are you taking to progress well until you graduate?

2.2 How do you feel about the assessment feedback (outcome) whether positive or negative? What do you do about it?

2.3 Tell me about the lecturers' attitudes to you as students. How does it make you feel?

2.4 In terms of finances (tuition fee, your needs) what are your challenges?

2.5 Tell me about the academic support you receive.

3. Belongingness and love and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

3.1 Do you have parents and how is your relationship in terms of the support you get from them?

3.2 How is your relationship with other students, especially your classmates?

3.3 Tell me more about the learning communities you belong to. How do you think they impact on your performance?

3.4 How do you cope with daily academic/personal stressors, e.g. solving a difficult problem?

3.5 Can you please tell me about the academic society or the religious group you belong to? How does it help you?

4. Esteem and needs and effects/impact on student learning students' achievement/learning

4.1 Tell me about your previous achievements at school and in the community.

4.2 Can you tell me about your beliefs about failing?

4.2 Some students become anxious about any assessment (presentation, test). Can you tell me about your hopes and fears?

4.3 To some extent other students find it difficult to participate in class activities even if they do not understand them. How do you deal with that?

Part 3: Questions based on the Theory of Involvement

1. Students' input (demographics, background, previous experience) and effects on students' achievement/learning

1.1 Based on your background, what are the motivating factors that give you persistence for your studies?

1.2 Previous experiences have positive/negative impacts in people's lives. How are you aiming to use that to your advantage?

1.3 Tell me about the expectations you have about your learning?

1.4 Why do you think this is the right course for you?

2. Students' environment and effects/impact on achievement/learning

2.1 Tell me about the university environment generally.

2.1 What strategies do you think should be employed to support students learning on campus?

2.2 Tell me about the important resources that you need to assist you in learning.

2.3 You did not do very well. What kind of learning media do you think can help you? Something that will make it easy for you to concentrate and remember what you studied.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

TITLE OF STUDY: Comparing academic performance of students in Mainstream and Extended Programmes at a higher education institution in South Africa.

NATURE OF QUESTIONS: They are open and allow for probing.

TARGET GROUP: Top 5 achieving Mainstream students.

EXPECTED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 5

EXPECTED TIME FOR INTERVIEW: 20 Mins

Part 1: Introduction (time =)

Introduction of the researcher and participants

Introduction of the topic

Part 2: Questions based on Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs

1: Physiological needs and effects/impact on students' achievement/learning

1.1 Please tell me about yourself, e.g. your family, school attended.

1.2 Tell me about the opportunities you had at high school.

1.3 What kind of support do you get from your family?

1.4 In terms of resources that a student needs, can you tell me about your experience at home and at school.

2: Safety/security issues and effects/impact on students' achievement/learning

2.1 In terms of learning resources/materials, how secure do you think you are?

2.2 How do you feel about the assessment feedback (outcome) whether positive or negative? What do you do about it?

2.3 Tell me about the lecturer's attitude to you as students.

2.4 In terms of finances (tuition fees, your needs) what are your challenges?

2.5 Tell me about the academic support you receive.

3. Belongingness and love and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

3.1 Do you have parents and how is your relationship in terms of the support you get from them?

3.2 How is your relationship with other students, especially your classmates?

3.3 Tell me more about the learning communities you belong to. How do you think they impact on your performance?

3.4 How do you cope with daily academic/personal stressors, e.g. solving a difficult problem?

3.5 Can you please tell me about the academic society or the religious group you belong to. How does it help you?

4. Esteem and needs and effects/impact on student learning students' achievement/learning

4.1 Tell me about your previous achievements that boosted your confidence at school or in the community.

4.2 Can you tell me your beliefs about failing?

4.2 Some students become anxious about any assessment (presentation, test). Can you tell me about your hopes and fears?

4.3 To some extent other students find it difficult to participate in class activities. How do you participate in class?

Part 3: Questions based on the Theory of Involvement

1. Students' input (demographics, background, previous experience) and effects on students' achievement/learning

1.1 Based on your background, what are the motivating factors that give you persistence for your studies?

1.2 Previous experiences have positive/negative impact in people's lives. How are you aiming to use that to your advantage?

1.3 Tell me about the expectations you have about your learning?

1.4 Why do you think this is the right course for you?

2. Students environment and effects/impact on achievement/learning

2.1 Tell me about the university environment generally.

2.2 What strategies do you think should be employed to support students learning in campus?

2.3 Tell me about the important resources that you need to assist you in learning.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

TITLE OF STUDY: Comparing academic performance of students in Mainstream and Extended Programmes at a higher education institution in South Africa.

NATURE OF QUESTIONS: They are open and allow for probing.

TARGET GROUP: Top 5 achieving Extended Programme students.

EXPECTED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 5

EXPECTED TIME FOR INTERVIEW: 20 MINS

Part 1: Introduction (time =5 mins)

Introduction of the researcher and participants

Introduction of the topic:

Part 2: Questions based on Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs

1: Physiological needs and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

Please tell me about yourself, e.g. your family, school attended.

Tell me about the opportunities you had at high school.

What kind of support do you get from your family?

In terms of resources that a student needs, can you tell me about your experience at home and at school.

2: Safety/security issues and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

2.1 In terms of learning resources/material, how secure do you think you are?

2.2 How do you feel about the assessment feedback (outcome) whether positive or negative? What do you do about it?

2.3 Tell me about the lecturer's attitude to you as students. How does it make you feel?

2.4 In terms of finances (tuition fee, your needs) what are your challenges?

2.5 Tell me about the academic support you receive.

3. Belongingness and love and effects/impact on students' achievement/learning

3.1 Do you have parents and how is your relationship in terms of the support you get from them?

3.2 How is your relationship with other students, especially your classmates?

3.3 Tell me more about the learning communities you belong to. How do you think they impact on your performance?

3.4 How do you cope with daily academic/personal stressors, e.g. solving a difficult problem?

3.5 Can you please tell me about the academic society or the religious group you belong to? How does it help you?

4. Esteem and needs and effects/impact on students' achievement/learning

4.1 Tell me about your previous achievements at school and in the community.

4.2 Can you tell me about your beliefs about failing?

4.2 Some students become anxious about any assessment (presentation, test). Can you tell me about your hopes and fears?

4.3 To some extent other students find it difficult to participate in class activities even if they do not understand them. How do you participate in class?

Part 3: Questions based on the theory of involvement

1. Students' input (demographics, background, previous experience) and effects on students' achievement/learning

1.1 Based on your background, what are the motivating factors that give you persistence for your studies?

1.2 Previous experiences have positive/negative impact in people's lives. How are you aiming to use that to your advantage?

1.3 Tell me about the expectations you have about your learning?

1.4 Why do you think this is the right course for you?

2. Students' environment and effects/impact on achievement/learning

2.1 What strategies do you think should be employed to support students' learning on campus?

2.2 Tell me about the important resources that you need to assist you in learning.

2.3 How much time do you have for studying and engaging with the study materials?

2.4 What other access do you have/not have to assist you with learning activities at the residence and on campus?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

TITLE OF STUDY: Comparing academic performance of students in Mainstream and Extended Programmes at a higher education institution in South Africa.

NATURE OF QUESTIONS: They are open and allow for probing.

TARGET GROUP: Top 5 less archiving Extended Programme students.

EXPECTED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 5

EXPECTED TIME FOR INTERVIEW:

Part 1: Introduction (time =)

Introduction of the researcher and participants

Introduction of the topic

Part 2: Questions based on Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs

1: Physiological needs and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

Please tell me about yourself, e.g. your family, school attended.

Tell me about the opportunities you had at high school.

What kind of support do you get from your family?

In terms of resources that a student needs, can you tell me about your experience at home and at school.

2: Safety/security issues and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

2.1 What measures are you taking now to progress well and until you graduate?

2.2 How do you feel about the assessment feedback (outcome) whether positive or negative? What do you do about it?

2.3 Tell me about the lecturers' attitudes to you as students. How does it make you feel?

2.4 In terms of finances (tuition fee, your needs) what are your challenges?

2.5 Tell me about the academic support you receive.

3. Belongingness and love and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

3.1 Do you have parents and how is your relationship in terms of the support you get from them?

3.2 How is your relationship with other students, especially your classmates?

3.3 Tell me more about the learning communities you belong to. How do you think they impact on your performance?

3.4 How do you cope with daily academic/personal stressors, e.g. solving a difficult problem?

3.5 Can you please tell me about the academic society or the religious group you belong to? How does it help you?

4. Esteem and needs and effects/impact on student learning students' achievement/learning

4.1 Tell me about your previous achievements at school and in the community.

4.2 Can you tell me about your beliefs about failing?

4.2 Some students become anxious about any assessment (presentation, test). Can you tell me about your hopes and fears?

4.3 To some extent other students find it difficult to participate in class activities even if they do not understand them. How do you deal with that?

Part 3: Questions based on the Theory of Involvement

1. Students' input (demographics, background, previous experience) and effects on students' achievement/learning

1.1 Based on your background, what are the motivating factors that give you persistence for your studies?

1.2 Previous experiences have positive/negative impacts in people's life. How are you aiming to use that to your advantage?

1.3 Tell me about the expectations you have about your learning?

1.4 Why do you think this is the right course for you?

2. Students' environment and effects/impact on achievement/learning

2.1 Tell me about the campus environment generally.

2.1 What strategies do you think should be employed to support students learning on campus?

2.2 Tell me about the important resources that you need to assist you in learning.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

TITLE OF STUDY: Comparing academic performance of students in Mainstream and Extended Programmes at a higher education institution in South Africa.

NATURE OF QUESTIONS: They are open and allow for probing.

TARGET GROUP: Top 5 less archiving Mainstream students.

EXPECTED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 5

EXPECTED TIME FOR INTERVIEW:

Part 1: Introduction (time =)

Introduction of the researcher and participants

Introduction of the topic

Part 2: Questions based on Maslow theory of hierarchy of needs

1: Physiological needs and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

Please tell me about yourself, e.g. your family, school attended.

Tell me about the opportunities you had at high school.

What kind of support do you get from your family?

In terms of resources that a student needs, can you tell me about your experience at home and at school.

2: Safety/security issues and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

2.1 What measures are you taking to progress well until you graduate?

2.2 How do you feel about the assessment feedback (outcome) whether positive or negative? What do you do about it?

2.3 Tell me about the lecturers' attitudes to you as students. How does it make you feel?

2.4 In terms of finances (tuition fee, your needs) what are your challenges?

2.5 Tell me about the academic support you receive.

3. Belongingness and love and effects/impact on students' achievement/ learning

3.1 Do you have parents and how is your relationship in terms of the support you get from them?

3.2 How is your relationship with other students, especially your classmates?

3.3 Tell me more about the learning communities you belong to. How do you think they impact on your performance?

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1.4 Why do you think this is the right course for you?

2. Students' environment and effects/impact on achievement/learning

2.1 Tell me about the university environment generally.

2.1 What strategies do you think should be employed to support students' learning on campus?

2.2 Tell me about the important resources that you need to assist you in learning.

2.3 You did not do very well. What kind of learning media do you think can help you? Something that will make it easy for you to concentrate and remember what you studied.