TEACHING IN A RURAL – BASED AFRICAN UNIVERSITY: WHAT STUDENTS WANT

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Introduction and background

• The African rural based universities are faced with a significant number of students who find it difficult, if not impossible to cope with university work.

• In an attempt to meet the needs of students, a number of South African universities established intervention teaching programmes as early as 1980 in South Africa as described by Adams (2009); du Plessis (2006); Agar (2007).
Introduction and background

• Despite the support programs in place, support of university students particularly in rural areas remains a challenge (CHE, 2010:60., Agar, 2007:68; Adams, 2009:135).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

• UNIVENs’ teaching and learning objective is to increase the throughput, graduation and retention rates, which is a National priority.

• Given the kind of existing student support facilities, the success and graduation rates of registered nursing students are not in line with this objective.

• As yet, there is no scientific data available about the expected nursing students’ support programmes as perceived by students at UNIVEN.
THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

• To determine the students’ perception of the necessary academic student support programmes at UNIVEN.
• explore the kind of academic student support programmes that students’ want at UNIVEN
• To make recommendations

RESEARCH QUESTION

• What kind of support do students want from rural universities for them to succeed academically?
• What are the students’ perceptions of the academic student support programmes?
• Which recommendations can be made regarding academic student support programmes?
RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGNS

- A qualitative study design was followed.
- Focus group interviews were conducted to collect data from respondents.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

- The population consisted of 221 nursing students who registered for a four year Baccalaureus Curationis (BCur) degree.
- A purposive sampling procedure was used to select participants.
- 48 students were sampled and participated in the study.
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

• Permission to conduct the study was granted by the ethics committee of the university
• Participants’ anonymity, confidentiality and consent were respected

DATA COLLECTION / ANALYSIS

• I collected data through focus group interviews.
• Focus groups consisted of 10-12 participants
• Data was analyzed using Techs’ method of open coding (in Creswell, 1996:142).
DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

- Several themes, categories and sub-categories emerged from the analysis of raw data.

### Profile of the sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course level</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year One</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Three</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Four</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

Presentation of data is according to themes and categories that emerged from the analysed data, relevant quotations and literature control.

Table 2 indicates the summary of themes, categories and sub–categories.

Themes

• Four themes emerged from data analysed. Results show that students want the following:
  – Learning support
  – Emotional support
  – Financial support
  – Social support
Learning support

- How to prepare for exams
- Lecturers class attendance schedule
- Lecturers academic support
- Time management
- Time management during clinical practicals
- Accommodation

Emotional support

- Giving informed about opportunities ahead
- The university being there for them
- Someone to guide students in academic activities
- Show students how they can cope in life
- Help to concentrate in class
Emotional support

- Guidance by the university structures
- Role modeling by lecturers
- University playing its role in helping students solve their problems
- Regular assessment by the university psychologist
- Senior students

Financial support

- How to get Loan or bursary
- To be paid for practical session activities
- Settlement of account (those who are owing)
- Financial support
Social support

• Students to select whom to share the room with
• A person to listen to them and to talk to
• Allowing them to express our feelings
• University staff to be there for them in times of distress

CONCLUSION

• Students want comprehensive programmes
• Programmes that are not comprehensive and do not include what students want contribute towards the students’ poor academic performance.
RECOMMENDATIONS

• A mental health support programme should be developed based on the results with the aim of supporting students towards their academic success.

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THANK YOU