



# Where is the rest of the class? Exploring class absenteeism, engagement, and success

Sonja Loots and Hanlé Posthumus

[www.ufs.ac.za/ctl](http://www.ufs.ac.za/ctl)

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**UFS·UV**  
CENTRE FOR TEACHING  
AND LEARNING (CTL)  
ONDERRIG-EN-LEERSENTRUM  
(OLS)

# Outline

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1. Classroom attendance at UFS:
  - Why do students choose not to go to class?
  - Why do students choose to go to class?
2. How engaged are students who do/not attend class?
3. What are the implications for a changing T&L landscape?



## Class attendance survey

- Qualitative responses provided further understanding
- Linked with SASSE data
- Does attendance influence engagement?

**5044**

Responses in class attendance survey

**1264**

Also responded to SASSE 2018





## Skipping class or not

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941

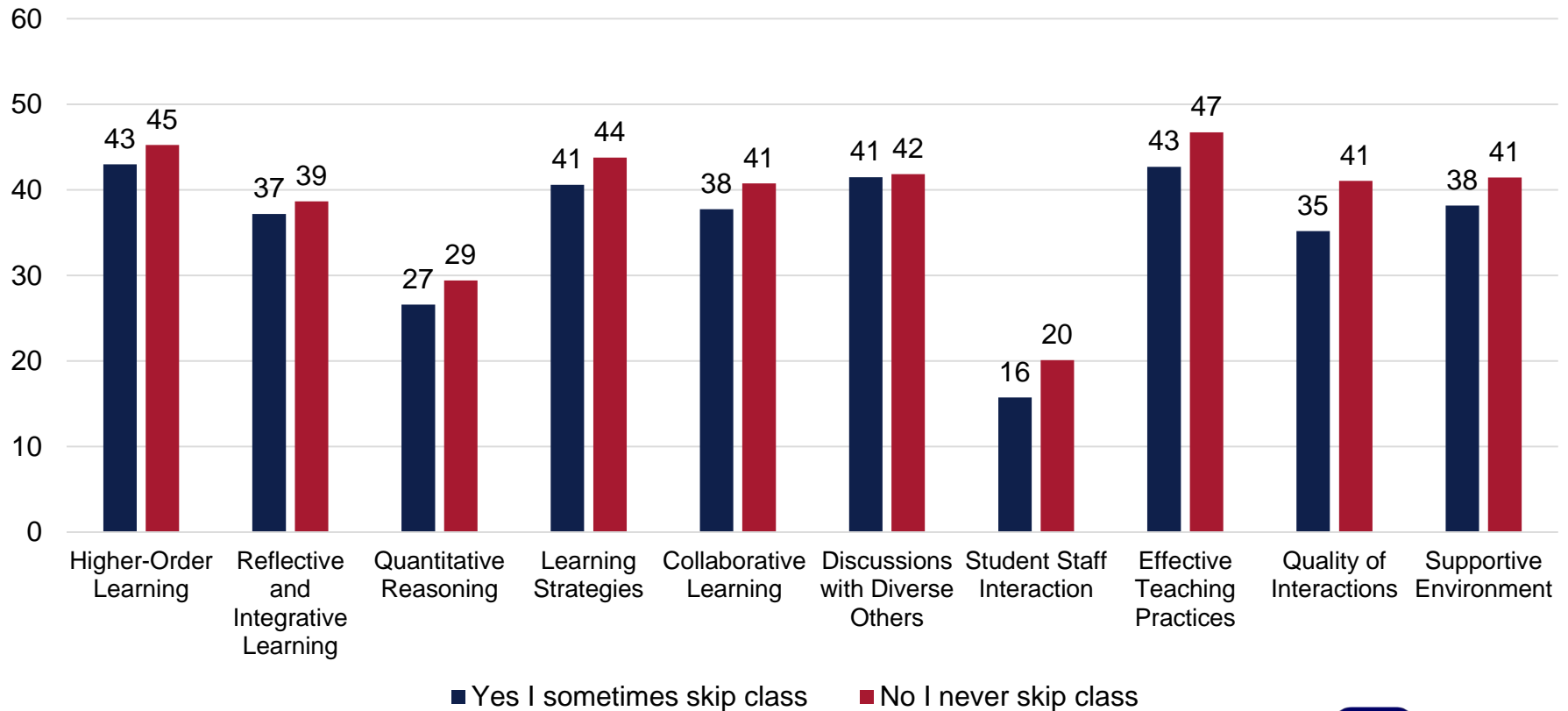
students sometimes skip class

323

students have never  
skipped class

# The relationship between class attendance and engagement

Do you sometimes skip class?

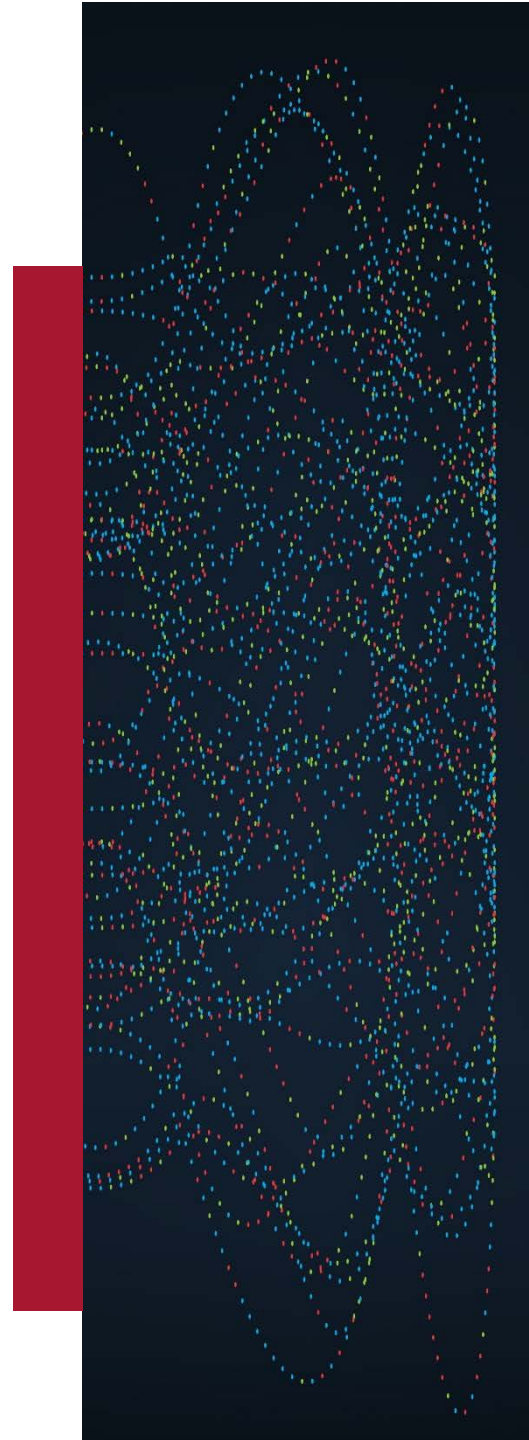




## Reasons students are not attending class

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- 1) Having to study for other subjects' tests or working on other subjects' assignments;
- 2) Falling behind with academic work and having to catch up;
- 3) Preferring self-study;
- 4) Times classes are scheduled; and
- 5) Lecturers' teaching skills





# Reasons students are not attending class

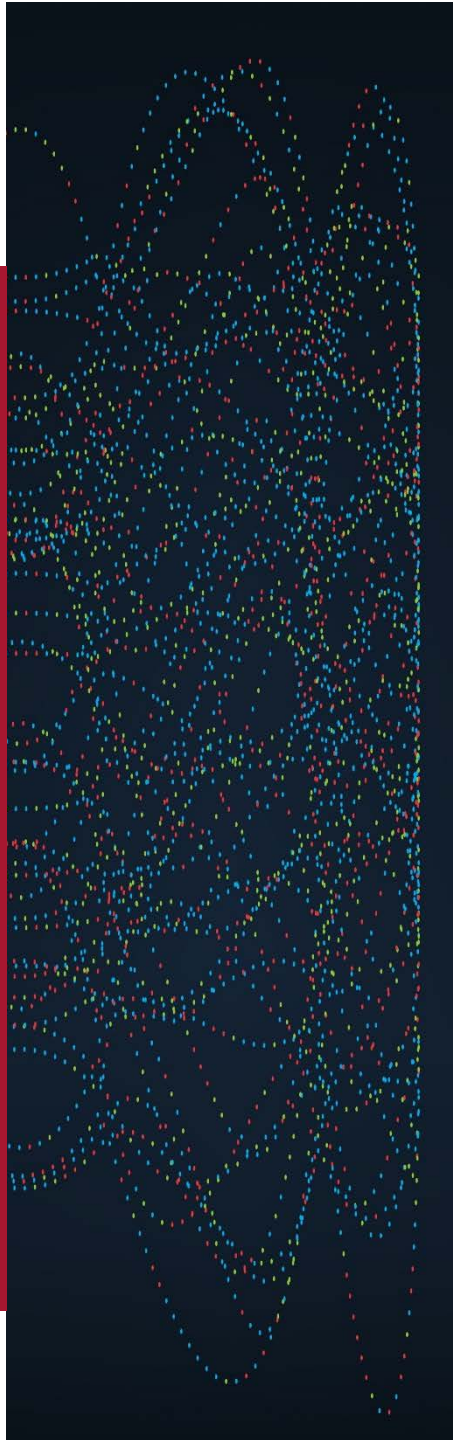
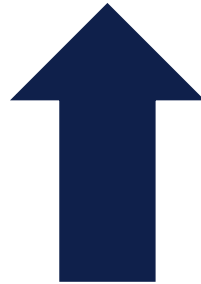
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Falling behind with academic work and having to catch up

**Reflective & Integrative Learning**

**Collaborative Learning**

**Student-Staff Interaction**



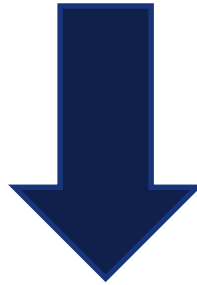


# Reasons students are not attending class

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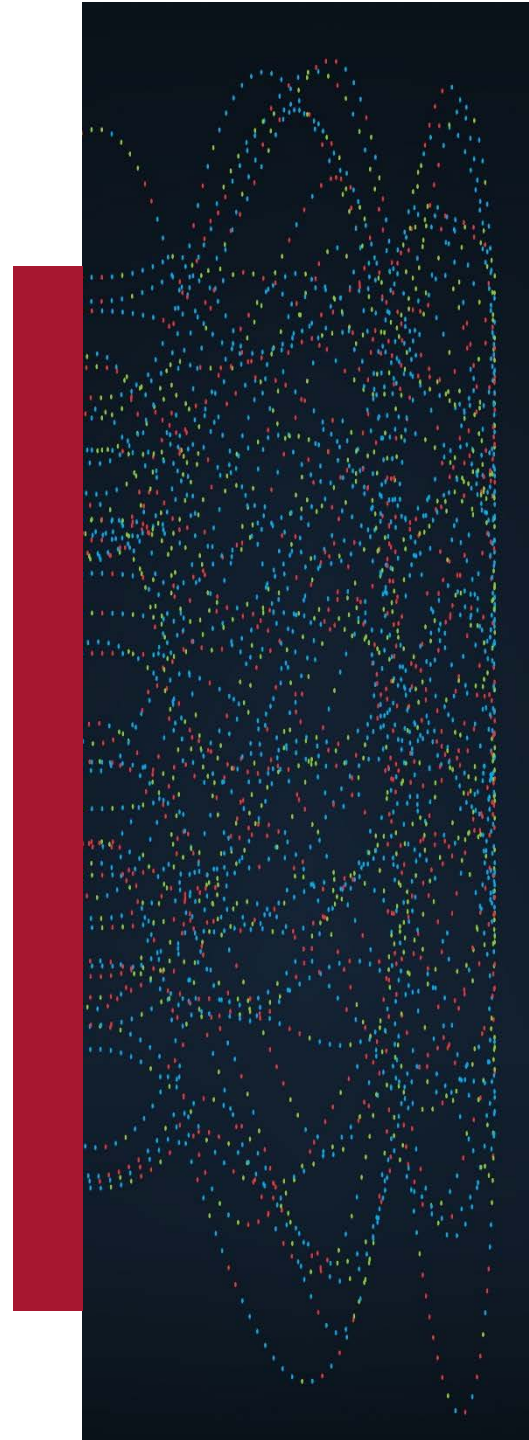
Preferring self-study

- **Effective Teaching Practices**



Times classes are scheduled

- **Higher-Order Learning**







## Lecturers' teaching skills and engagement

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Learning  
Strategies

Effective  
Teaching  
Practices

Quality of  
Interactions

Supportive  
Environment



During the current academic year, to what extent have your lecturers done the following?

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**Clearly explained module outcomes and requirements**

“Work discussed in formal classes differ to that of tutorials which creates confusion regarding tests.”

**Presented modules in an organized way**

“In one of our modules we do not follow the semester plan, and do work that overlaps with work done in other modules. It is obvious to me that the lecturers are not prepared well.”





During the current academic year, to what extent have your lecturers done the following?

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**Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points**

“The lecturer just reads slides or from the study guide, which defeats the purpose of attending.”

**Provided detailed feedback shortly after you completed tests or assignments**

“In some modules we never receive feedback on the class activities or tests that we do, so that kind of demotivates me to go to class because I don't really know how my academic record looks like.”



## Interactions of student experiences within and beyond the classroom

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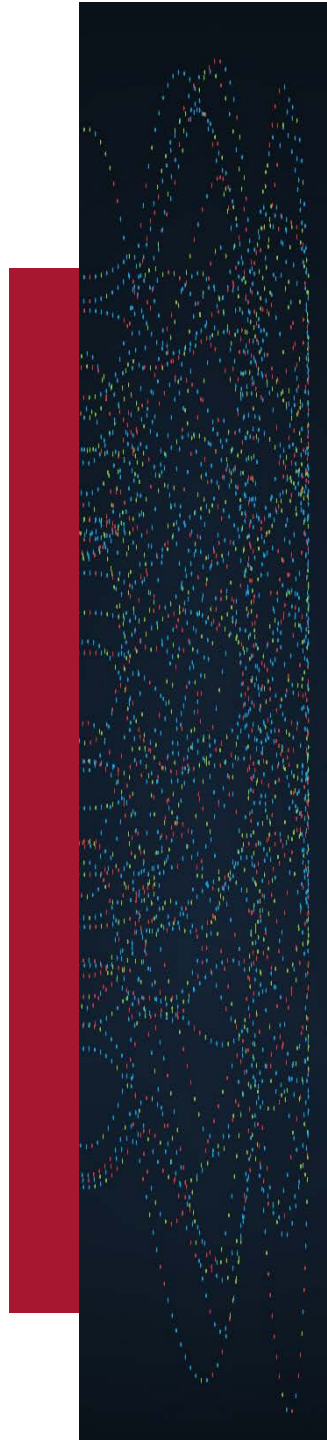
### A variety of mental health issues:

“Depression and anxiety are crippling.”

“I fall sick quite often, it can be physically or mentally due to stress and burnout. My body can't cope.”

### Socio-economic issues:

“I have a very low self esteem wearing the same thing every week.”

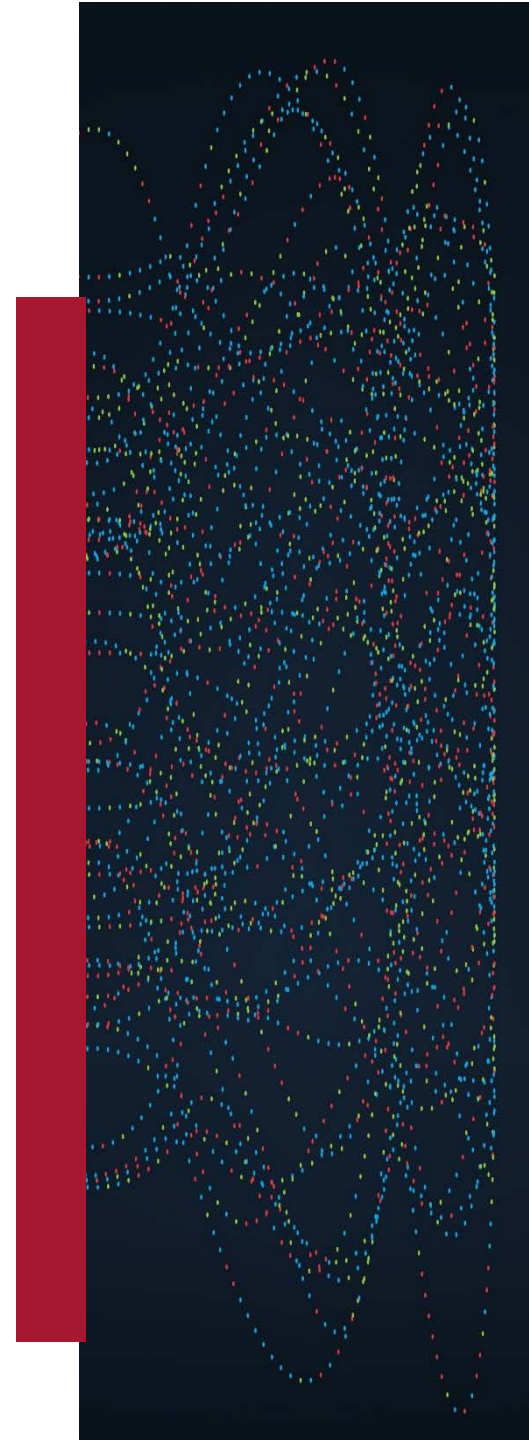




## Reasons students are attending class

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- 1) Wanting to gain a deeper understanding of module content;
- 2) Being made aware of the most important concepts;
- 3) Keeping up to date with the work;
- 4) Learning how to answer test or exam questions; and
- 5) Receiving additional explanations



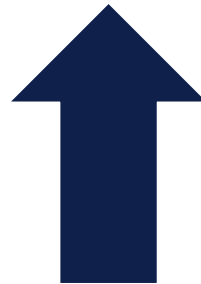


## Reasons students are attending class

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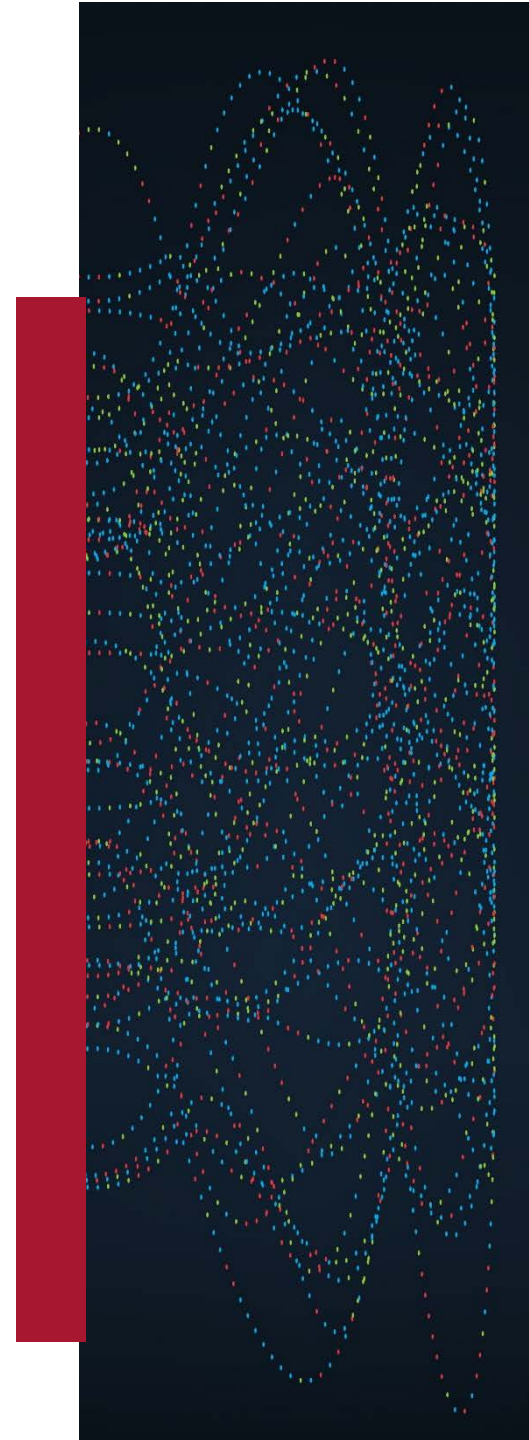
Being made aware of the most important concepts

- **Higher-Order Learning**
- **Learning Strategies**
- **Effective Teaching Practices**



Receiving additional explanations

- **Effective Teaching Practices**



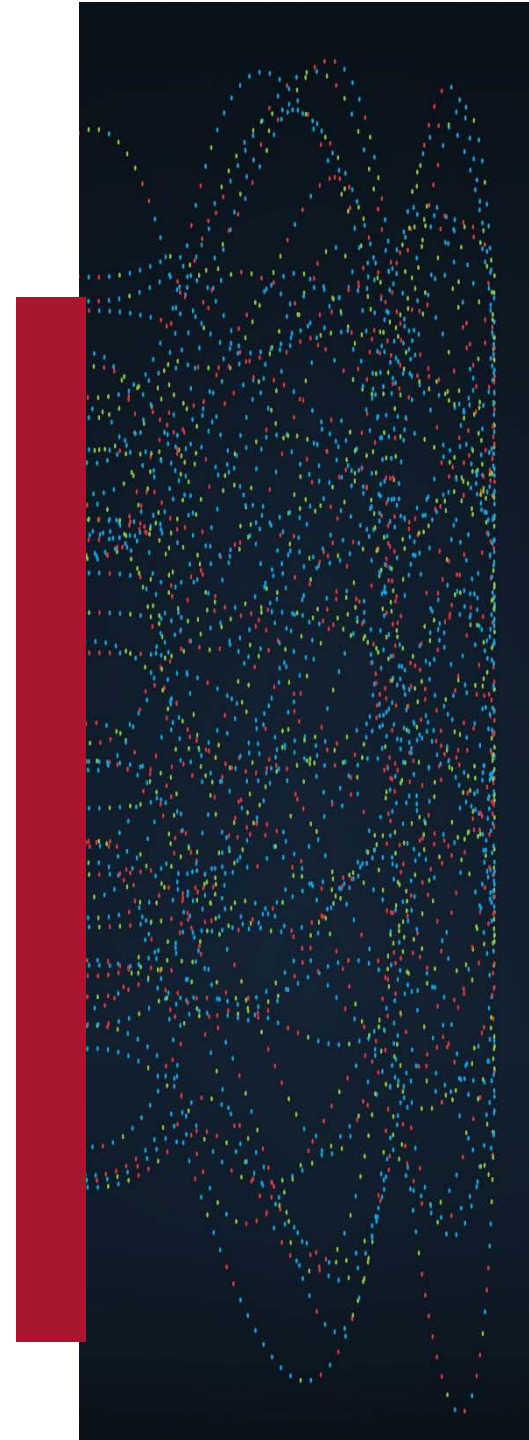


## Reasons students are attending class

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Keeping up to date with the work

- **Quantitative Reasoning**
- **Learning Strategies**
- **Student-Staff Interaction**
- **Effective Teaching Practices**
- **Quality of Interactions**
- **Supportive Environment**



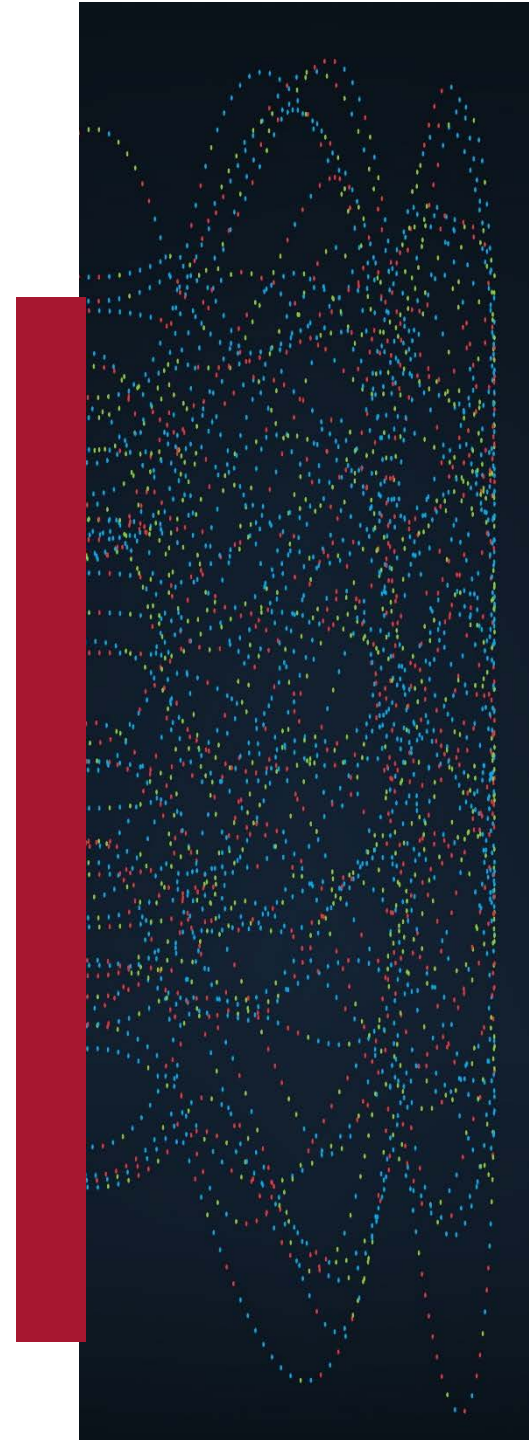
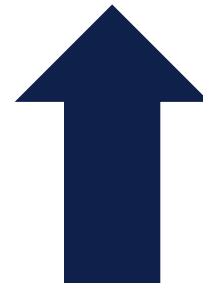


## Reasons students are attending class

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Learning how to answer test or exam questions

- **Higher-Order Learning**
- **Reflective & Integrative Learning**
- **Quantitative Reasoning**
- **Learning Strategies**
- **Student-Staff Interaction**
- **Effective Teaching Practices**
- **Quality of Interactions**
- **Supportive Environment**








Wanting to gain a deeper understanding of module content and engagement

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Learning  
Strategies

Effective  
Teaching  
Practices



## Characteristics of face-to-face classes that students would like to attend

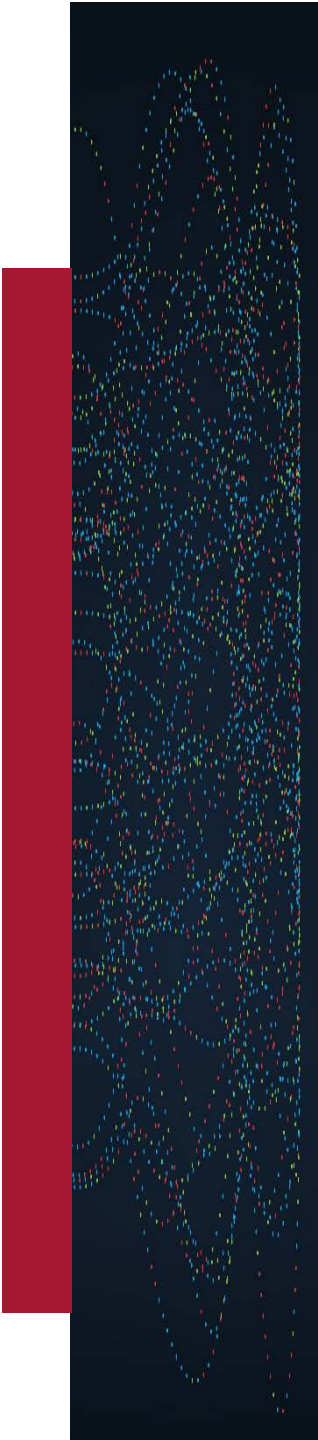
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Spaces where opportunities for deeper engagement and learning are created

“Some classes I enjoy attending due to how much I enjoy discussing the content with the lecturer and engaging in an active analyses of the material with other students.”

Having lecturers that provide support and help them to persevere, progress and succeed;

“The lecturers encourage us to engage with the material. Some make contemporary comparisons, thus we understand the work better.”



## Characteristics of face-to-face classes that students would like to attend

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Environments that empower them with graduate attributes and move beyond just imparting content;

- Confidence
- Interpersonal skills
- Communication/vocabulary
- Presentation skills; etc.

Providing them with important feedback that promotes their development.

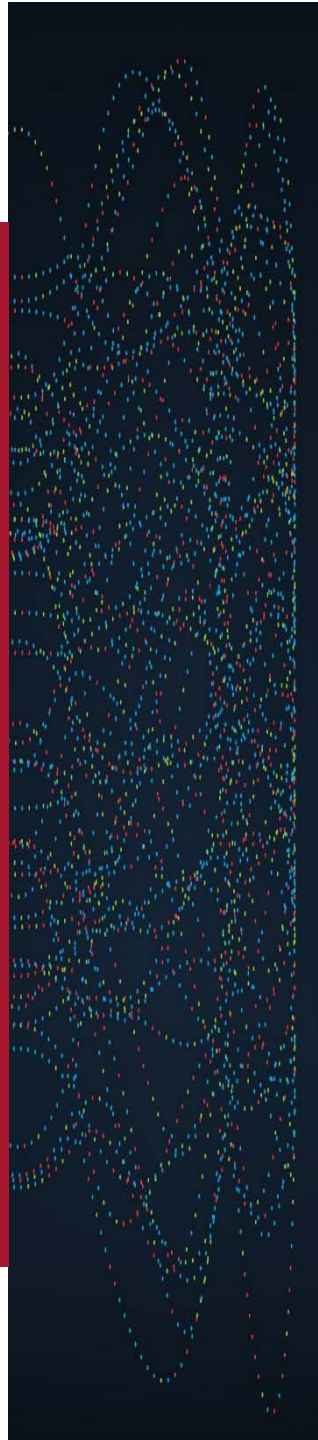
“I get the chance to ask the lecturer questions and fix the mistakes that I made during self study or a written test.”



## Key points and questions

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- 1) Relationship between students' attendance and experiences of a variety of engaging behaviours
- 2) The benefits of attendance are for all students – whether they attend all the time or not
- 3) There is a relationship between students' experiences within and beyond the classroom
- 4) How can we replicate the key benefits students gain from class in ever-increasing online teaching and learning spaces?
- 5) How can we help lecturers develop techniques that enhance deep learning, participation, peer learning, etc.?



# QUESTIONS?



T: +27 51 401 3776 | E: [lootss@ufs.ac.za](mailto:lootss@ufs.ac.za) | [www.ufs.ac.za/ctl](http://www.ufs.ac.za/ctl)

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