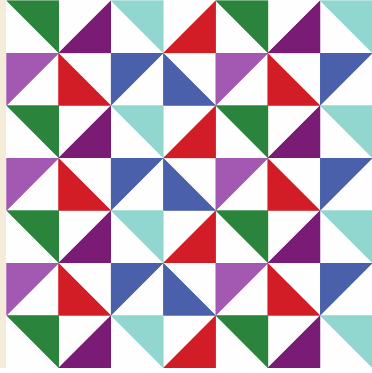


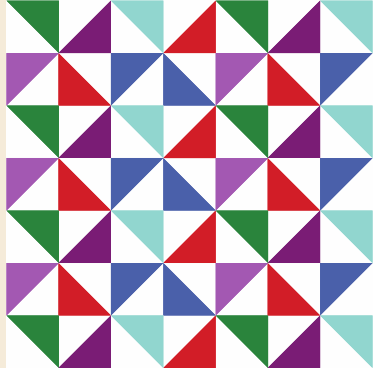
# **CHALLENGES OF TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, MIDLANDS CENTRE**

Senzo Ntuli &  
Fathima Haffajee



## INTRODUCTION

- The majority of South Africans are still to attain a decent standard of living. Most people are still poor; they are still served by low quality public services and institutions (Sennett, Finchilescu, Gibson & Strauss, 2013).
- In DUT, the majority of students that register are from the lower Living Standards Measure (LSM) categories and are drawn from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- National university dropout rates are (50%) high by international standards (HESA, 2013). When compared to African countries like Nigeria (20%), and Ethiopia (35%).
- DUT first year drop-out rate
  - 2013-19%
  - 2014-30%

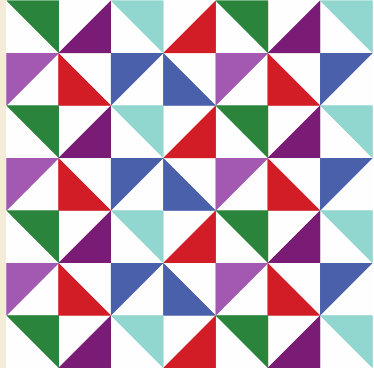


## Aim of research study

- This study aims to explore transition challenges experienced by first year students at DUT within first three months of university.

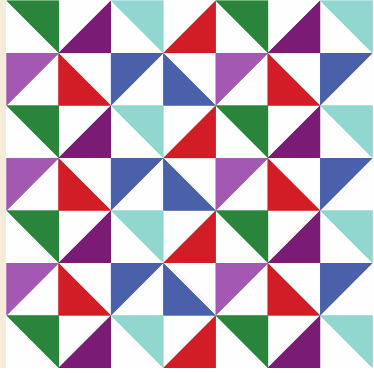
## Objectives

- To investigate language and social adaptation challenges that first year students face.
- To investigate technology usage challenges that first year students face.



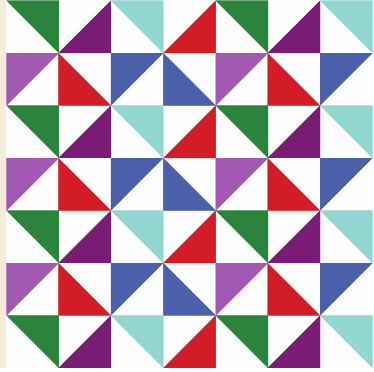
## LITERATURE REVIEW

- Low graduation rate in South African universities has long been a cause for concern (van Zyl, 2014).
- Transition from high school to university has been viewed as a major factor in understanding challenges that first year students confront (Benner, 2011 & Setlalentoa, 2013).
- Students are motivated to learn and have a positive attitude but lack skills e.g. study skills, adapting to lecturing pace, and academic writing at university.
- Most students lack confidence in their English abilities (Anderson et al, 2013)



## LITERATURE REVIEW CONT....

- Students from previously disadvantaged schools continue to have less access to resources, such as libraries and laboratories (Sennett, Finchilescu, Gibson & Strauss, 2013).
- Disadvantaged schools are largely characterized by overcrowded classes, lack of basic material such as books, paper, and equipment (Petersen., Louw., Dumont, and Malope, 2010).



# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## ➤ **Research Design**

Qualitative research design.

In-depth exploration of the perceptions and understandings of people (Cohen & Manin, 2013).

## ➤ **Sampling and sample**

30 first year students.

Convenience sampling method.

## ➤ **Data collection**

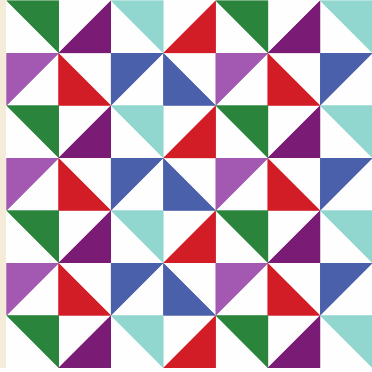
Two Focus groups

Interviews were conducted in IsiZulu language, transcribed, and translated into English languages

## ➤ **Data analysis**

Data that was collected, recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Content analysis was used to analyze data by systematically describing written, spoken or visual communication (Mayring, 2014).

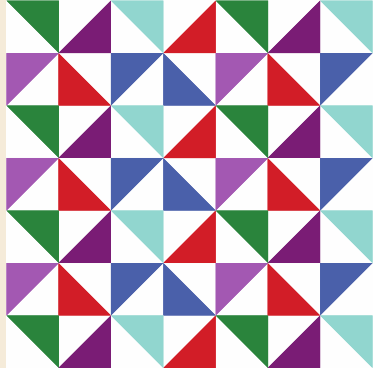


# KEY FINDINGS

## ENGLISH USE AND SOCIAL ADAPTATION

- Students from rural areas experience difficulties being taught in English.
- Grapple with the complexity of a material in another language as previously taught everything in IsiZulu then translated to English
  - **F1P7:** *at our high schools everything that was taught in English was translated in IsiZulu, even physics was taught in IsiZulu*
- They are embarrassed to ask clarification
  - F1P5:** *raising your hand is a mission because you are scared that your English is bad and people are going to laugh at you. So you end up not understanding.*
- Adaptation to the new university environment is experienced both positive and negative by first year students
  - -positive- because of independence, meeting different people, and opportunity for growth
  - negative- because of independence, not spoon fed anymore, and financial constraints.
  - F2P1:** *for me I think it's both, what can I say, it's more like a challenge for me. It's like everything is exposed to me, like no one telling me what to do. There's no one begging me to go classes and do*





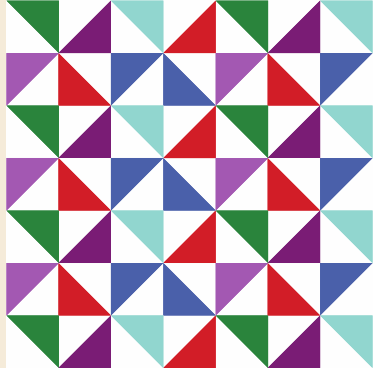
## KEY FINDINGS CONT....

### USE OF TECHNOLOGY

- Rural high schools do not have advanced technology, therefore technology used at university is not familiar to first year students.
- Challenge of self-teaching.

***F1P5:** I do not know how to use a computer. At school we did not have libraries at home OF WHICH I DONT KNOW HOW TO USE A COMPUTER*

- They cannot access information **online** that they need to study.
  - For example, emails, electronic notes, information through internet.
- F2P2:** *When you get here they say power a computer and you find that there is not enough time to teach people about a computer and how you even power it.*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Universities should cater more intentionally for first year students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds through academic development programs.
- Computer and academic literacy should be prioritized for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Academic writing centres should develop programs to foster academic writing for these students
- Mentorship program can be useful for first year students to be acknowledged about services provided for them when they come to university

THANK YOU

