

The role of academic and social integration in student success - A case study of the Durban University of Technology

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Student success as multi dimensional and requiring integration

- First-generation college students – experience cultural as well as social and academic transitions. **Longwell and Grice (2008)**
- The responsibility for student success cannot be placed solely on the shoulder of the student. **Case, Marshall, McKenna and Mogashana (2018)**
- Tinto's theory of integration. **Karp, Hughes and O'Gara (2008)**
- Holistic integration into the university community needed – academic, social and cultural.

Student success as multi dimensional and requiring integration

Methodology

- Mixed method explanatory sequential – Quantitative data expanded and explained by qualitative

Quantitative

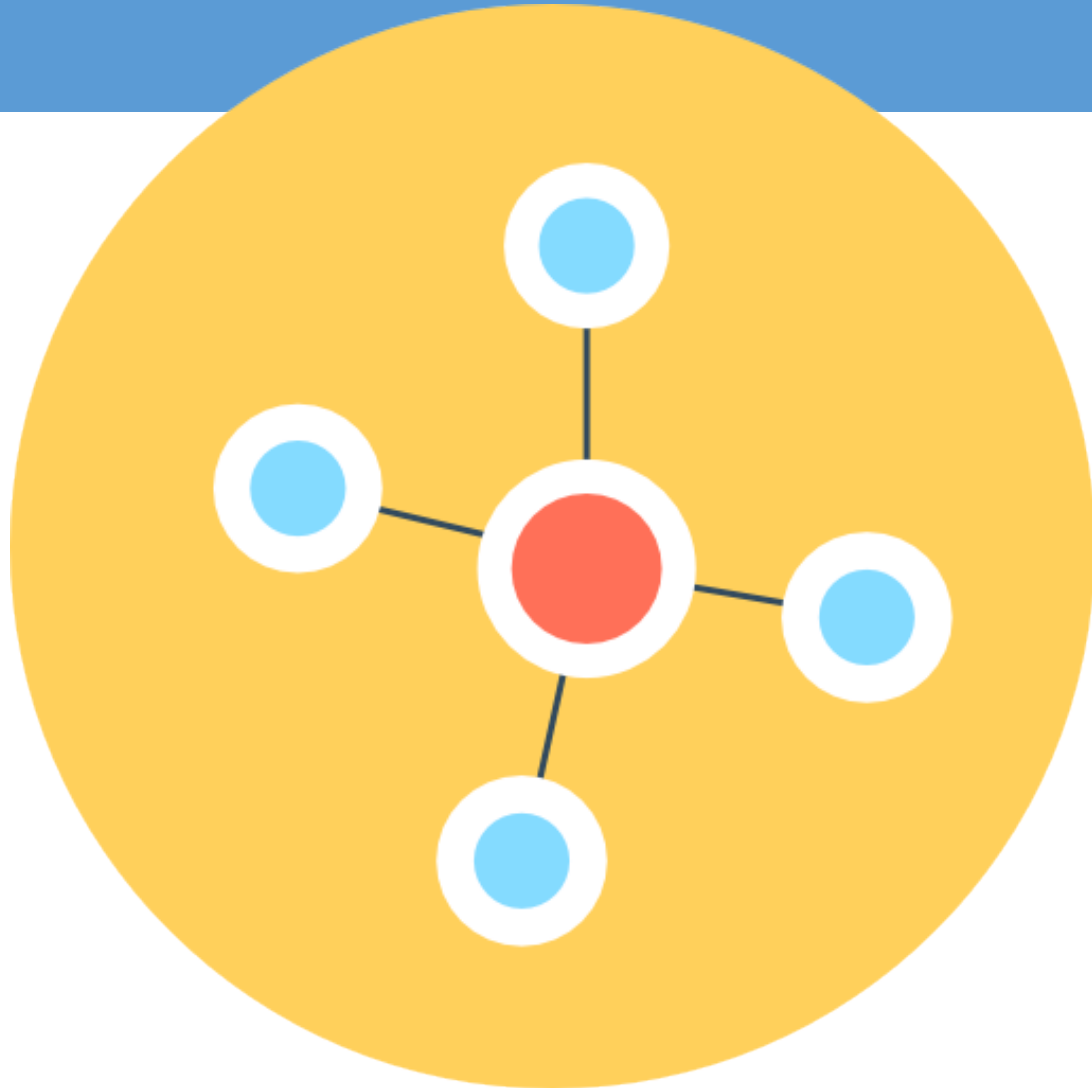
- SASSE (2016) provides a statistically significant sample (sample size 2700; 54% male; 25% First-year)

Qualitative

- Interviews - 91 interviews across all 7 campuses and 4 levels of UG study



Supporting Students' Success



SASSE (2016) shows students' perceptions of support

Qualitative interviews show how students experience support individually.



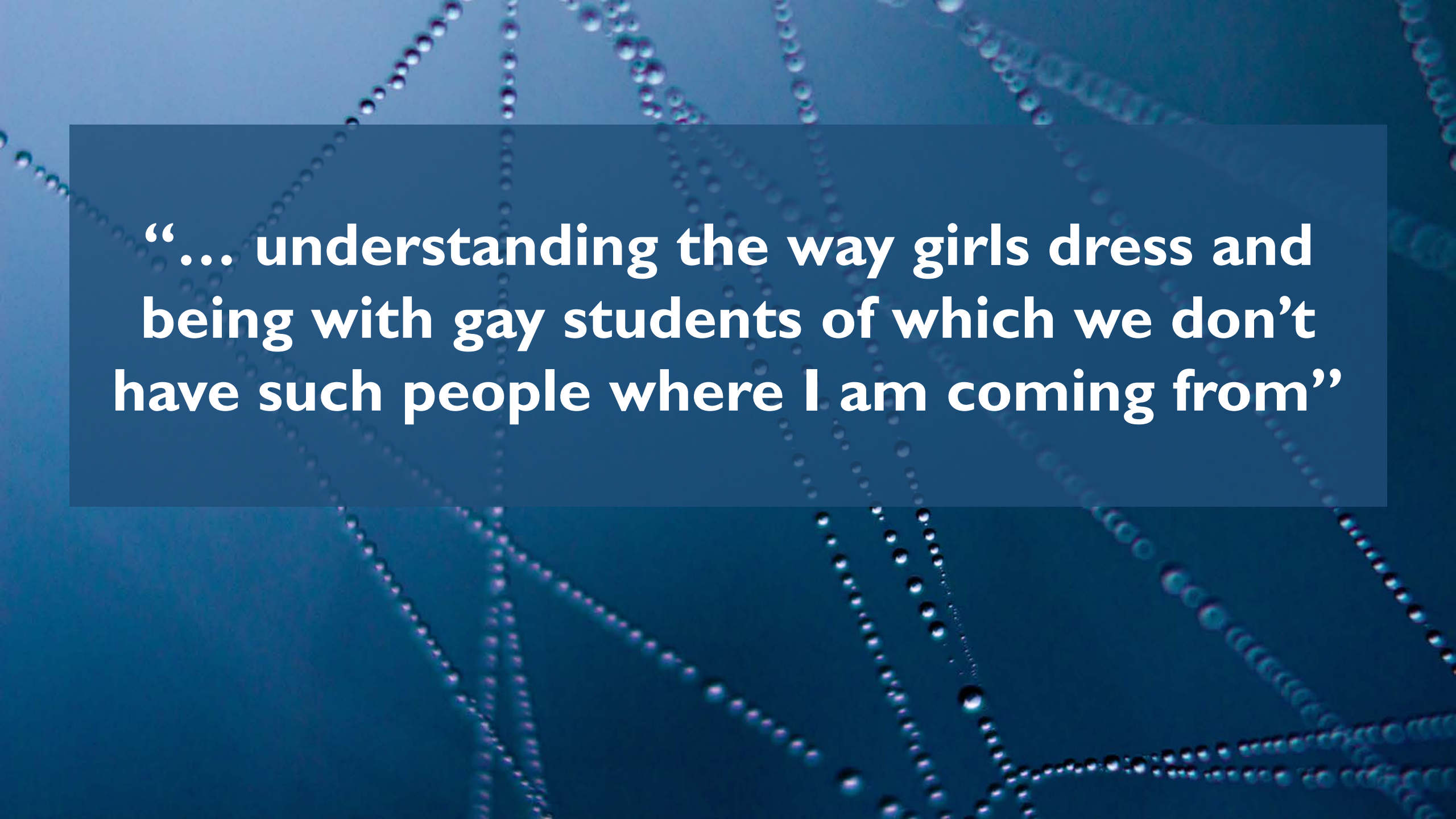
Diversity and Rurality



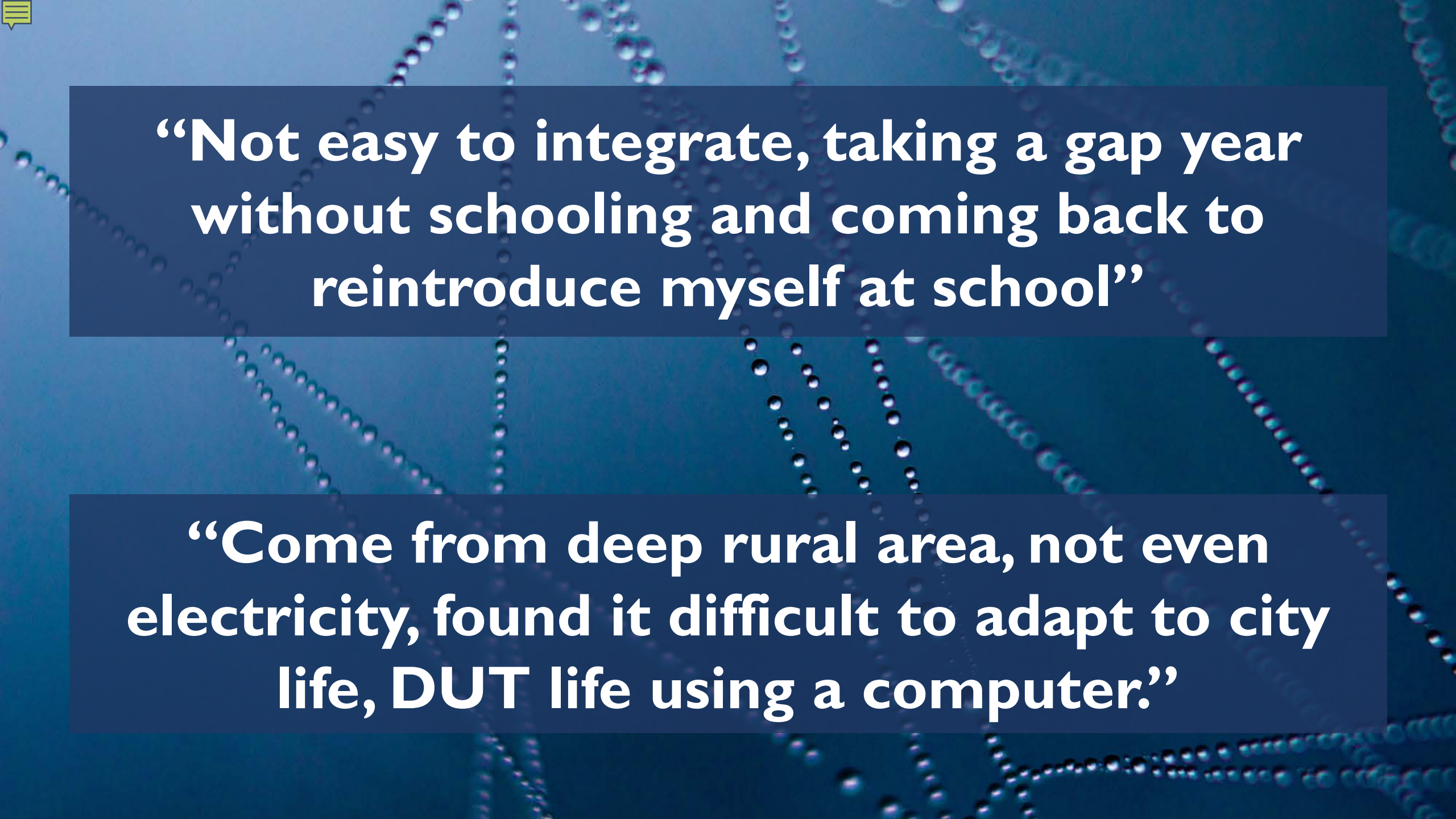
Deep rural areas

A lack of digital literacy

Complete culture shock



“... understanding the way girls dress and being with gay students of which we don’t have such people where I am coming from”



“Not easy to integrate, taking a gap year without schooling and coming back to reintroduce myself at school”

“Come from deep rural area, not even electricity, found it difficult to adapt to city life, DUT life using a computer.”



Female students were more aware of and use learning support services (SASSE 2016)



About half students said DUT focuses on providing IT/Tech support **but almost a third reported there is very little focus on teaching students how to use tech.**

(SASSE 2016)



18% of students said that very little social opportunities are provided with **more being done for on-campus residence students.**

(SASSE 2016)



Students interviewed
overwhelmingly wanted
English as the medium of
instruction

“Some English terms cannot be translated into Zulu. For instance, accounting terms, that is why English is the best.”

“I already have Zulu. Have to master English because at work I will meet people who speak different languages, then we will be linked by English.”



Physical learning spaces



Basic physical spaces
insufficient

Learning happens outside
classrooms as much as in.



“Wouldn’t recommend DUT because it ... looks like a primary school or jail. They do not have all resources that are needed by students.”

Faculty specific student support



Class sizes influence how students perceive support. This affects their relationships with staff.



Social learning

Two thirds had asked another student for help understanding module work

74% of students prepared for exams by working with other students

84% of students were using/planned to use peer learning support

Students learn from each other. Peers and friends are substituting where academic staff falls short.



Lecturer-student relationships

Generally, students reported good relationships with academic staff, but less positive with support and administrative staff.



Academic Advising



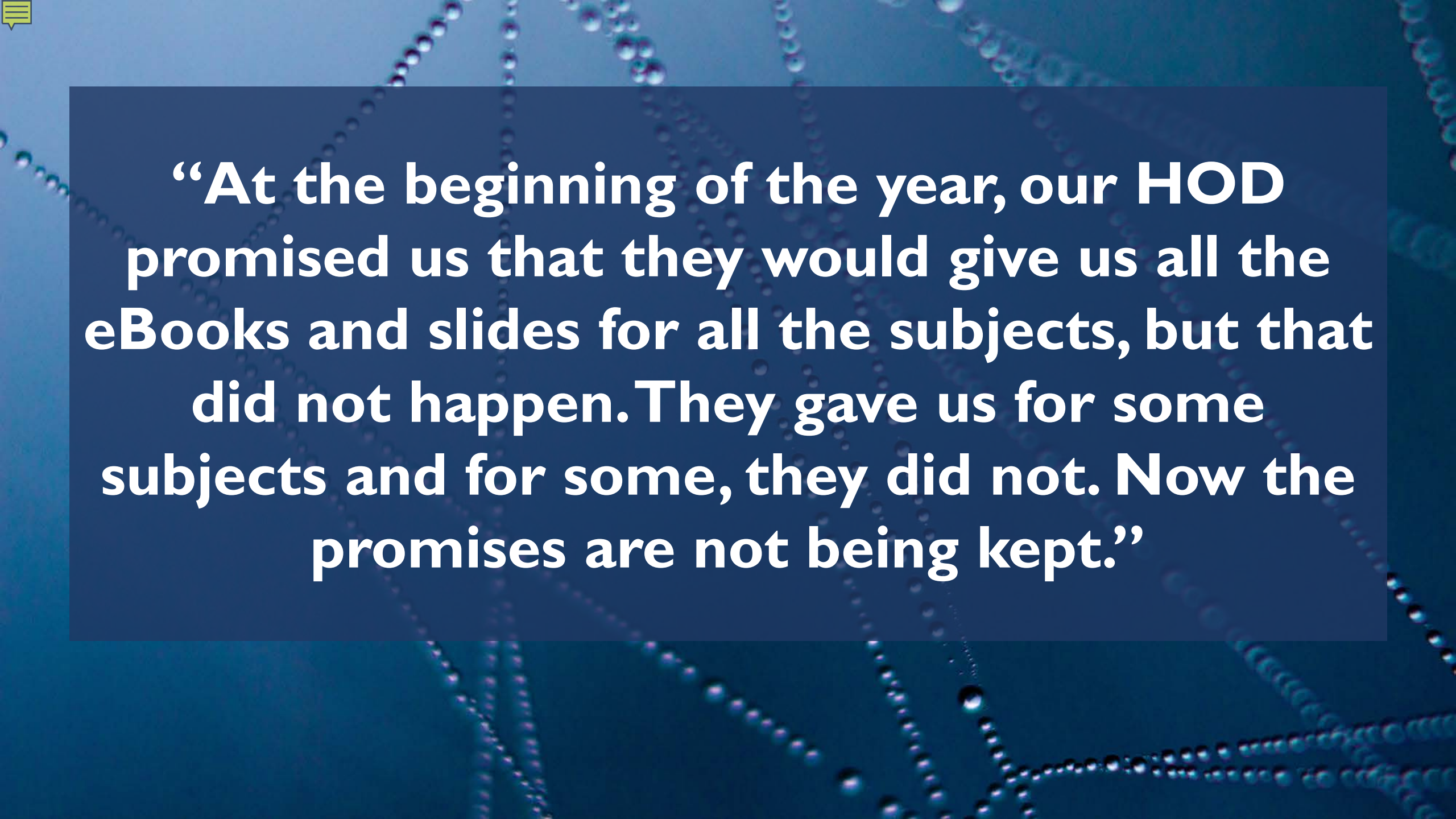
Little discussion of
academic performance
with lecturers.



Lecturer qualities



Students spoke about the personal and professional qualities of lecturers



“At the beginning of the year, our HOD promised us that they would give us all the eBooks and slides for all the subjects, but that did not happen. They gave us for some subjects and for some, they did not. Now the promises are not being kept.”



**“... check up on us because we’re first years,
first years still need that, you know?
Somebody to watch over you.”**

Recommendations: I

Academic Advisors:

- Career counselling (more integrated into faculties from the advising point of view)
- Goes beyond narrow academic advice; need 'academic parents'

Lecturers:

- Experienced lecturers should teach 1st years
- Consultation times (Speaking about academic performance outside of class time)

Assessments:

- Timely feedback
- Venues and booking systems of venues for tests

Recommendations: 2

Learning spaces:

- Social spaces (spaces to 'hang out' absent on many campuses)
- Learning spaces (labs are not provided or insufficient)

Social learning: (students learn best when they teach each other)

- Students are asking each other for help
- Formalising small group teaching, mentorships, residence and campus tutorials, foster study groups

Large faculties

- Foster 'artificial' small groups within large classes

Pedagogical interventions (lecturers not always taught how to teach)

Recommendations: 3

Digital literacy:

- Necessary especially for rural students

How to learn in the disciplines (academic literacies)

Support structures

- Finance
- Residence issues
- Quality of accommodation
- NSFAS

Differences between support for on campus residence students and everyone else (on campus seemed to enjoy more support)

FYSE is in place, but not enough feedback to lecturers

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of water droplets on a yellow surface. The droplets are of various sizes and are arranged in a somewhat chaotic pattern, with some larger droplets and many smaller ones. The lighting creates highlights and shadows on the droplets, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The overall color palette is warm, dominated by the yellow of the surface and the clear, slightly blue-tinted water of the droplets.

CONCLUSION

“...learners' outcomes improve when they are supported to integrate socially and academically into their programme and institutional cultures; and where these cultures accept and value the cultural capital brought by diverse learners” (Zepke and Leach 2006: 508)

References

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