



Student reflections on an online orientation programme for first-year students in an institution of higher education

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Abstract

The First-Year Experience Programme (FYEP) is significant as it forms the foundation of the entire university experience. This article aims to highlight first-time entry undergraduate (FTEN) students' reflections on the online orientation programme in the College of Humanities. As part of the FYEP, the College delivered a 23-day recurring online orientation programme in February 2024. Student evaluations of any programme, whether curricular or co-curricular, are important monitoring and evaluation methods to ensure the student experience is enhanced. An equally important reason for documenting student reflections on the orientation programme is to analyse the data generated by the student evaluation tool. Such data are important for understanding how first-year students experience institutional student support programmes and how their participation facilitates their transition into university life. In this paper, transition is conceptualised as a complex phenomenon during which FTENs are supported to adjust to the university environment, establish new relationships with peers and university staff, and integrate into the university community as successful students. A total of 343 out of 879 first-year students who participated in the online orientation programme completed the evaluation survey, which sought to determine the extent of student satisfaction with the programme and how it could be improved. The survey included both closed and open questions, yielding quantitative and qualitative data. The data were analysed using thematic content analysis and the SPSS data analysis programme. The majority of participants (75%) expressed overall satisfaction with the programme. Qualitative responses on ways to improve the programme included addressing technology infrastructure and students' digital literacy challenges, time management, the use of isiZulu, and a preference for contact rather than online orientation. It is recommended that the university and the Department of Higher Education and Training explore ways to expose school learners to university environments virtually during the pre-registration phase to bridge the school-university gap. In addition, innovative ways to improve pre-entry first-year students' digital literacy skills to minimise the risk of technology becoming a barrier to a successful transition should be explored. The adoption of a blended approach (online and physical) to orientation should be considered.

Keywords: Digital literacy; higher education; online orientation programme evaluation; school-university gap; student experiences

Introduction

Students transition from a secondary school context, where they are guided and their learning is controlled and closely monitored by teachers, to the university environment, where they are expected to take responsibility for their own learning in a new setting. This shift creates adjustment challenges. First-year orientation programmes are intended to introduce students to

the university, with the primary purpose of helping them become familiar with structures, systems, and support services at curricular, co-curricular, and social levels. Orientation programmes lay the foundation for students to begin understanding the academic requirements of being a university student and to develop meaningful social relationships with university staff and peers (Muloiwa-Klenam et al., 2023). Successful student transition and integration into the university

community lead to academic and social success (Soria, Clark & Koch, 2013).

The purpose of this article is to highlight first-time entry undergraduate (FTEN) students' reflections on the online orientation programme in the College of Humanities, which was implemented in February 2024. The study had two main objectives: firstly, to determine the extent to which students were satisfied with the online orientation programme, and secondly, to obtain feedback on how the programme can be improved.

The programme was designed to introduce FTENs to the university by providing them with the information required to register and access institutional academic and social support systems. It is also part of the college FTEN onboarding process to prepare students for a successful transition. Student reflections on their online orientation experiences are vital for the design, implementation, and evaluation of responsive student support programmes (Tanga & Rembe, 2015).

Context of the study

The study was conducted in the College of Humanities, part of a multi-campus institution comprising four colleges: Humanities, Health Sciences, Law and Management Studies, and Agriculture, Engineering and Science. College of six schools: Arts, Applied Human Sciences, Social Sciences, Education, Religion, Philosophy and Classics, and Built Environment and Development Studies. Participants in this study were drawn from the College of Humanities, which has the highest student enrolment among the four colleges. The majority of students in the college are enrolled from quintile 1–3 schools and are predominantly second-language speakers of English. Approximately 70 to 80% of first-year students in the college come from under-resourced communities and schools. This presents two main challenges for students: first, adjusting socially and meeting the academic demands of university study; and second, adapting to the teaching and learning style, understanding disciplinary content, and learning academic writing – all of which are mediated in English. These challenges have been categorised as emotional, epistemological and

practical (Bengasai, Paideya & Mkhonza, 2022; Krause et al., 2005).

The orientation programme, which was the data source for this study, was delivered online. First-year students were introduced to the qualifications offered and degree structures (academic), as well as curriculum and psychosocial support structures available (social aspects of being a student) (Van Rooij, Jansen, Van de Grift & Wim, 2018), and were given a preview of the online First-Year Experience (FYEP) programme.

Literature review

The orientation programme is implemented to support and assist students in preparing for university studies. It may be delivered either in person (physical) or online (Muloiwa-Klenam et al., 2023). In addition to helping students better prepare for the challenges of adjustment, integration, and personal development during the first-year experience (Daddona & Cooper, 2002; Wilson et al., 2016), online orientation offers the advantage of removing geographical barriers (Mashau & Nyawo, 2021; Muloiwa-Klenam et al., 2023). Evaluation should be an integral part of any programme to determine its success.

Delivering orientation online presents particular advantages. By transcending geographical barriers, students can participate whether they are on campus or elsewhere (Mashau & Nyawo, 2021). However, online orientation technology presents challenges to effective participation, including inadequate Information and Communications Technology skills, connectivity problems due to limited internet access, and some students lacking access to data.

Why are orientation and the FYE very important components of the student journey?

FYE programmes and initiatives, including orientation, are important building blocks and foundations of student success. The first year at university is recognised as the most critical phase of the student journey, as research indicates that the dropout rate in the first year is usually high in both South African and international institutions (Bengasai, Paideya,

Naidoo & Mkhonza, 2022). The first semester is the period of greatest risk for dropping out, with one-third of all first-year students considering withdrawal (Pitkethly & Prosser, 2001). Therefore, a well-designed and implemented orientation programme is crucial for successful integration into both the academic and social worlds of the university, reducing the risk of first-year student withdrawal (Tinto, 1999).

While orientation occurs only after students have been accepted into the tertiary institution, research suggests that universities that use students' pre-registration data could offer pre-registration training or use this data to inform the content of orientation programmes. To encourage academic engagement and ease the transition into university life, a university in the United Kingdom implemented a pre-induction online course (Head Start) to provide students with an understanding of academic literacies and information literacy to facilitate preparation for university study. The majority of first-year students who participated in the Head Start course reported feeling more confident about starting university after their participation (Fraser *et al.*, 2013).

To be adequately prepared for university studies, students need to be able to use a computer at a basic level. A substantial number of students, especially those from quintile 1 to 3 schools, have no prior experience of using computers for their school work (Maila & Ross, 2018). A 2021 Biographical Questionnaire at Wits University in South Africa revealed that only half of first-year students had used computers at secondary school (Wits, 2021). This finding has implications for the design of ICT support programmes, as weak digital literacy skills negatively impact students' academic and social adjustment and, ultimately, their successful transition and academic achievement.

Conceptual framework –Student transition

Transition is conceptualised as a complex phenomenon during which FTENs are supported to adjust to the university environment by establishing new relationships with peers and university staff, and consequently integrating into the university community as successful students (Pather & Chetty, 2016). Successful transition

depends on social integration and academic engagement, which are achieved through a whole-institution approach involving both co-curricular and curricular activities, and implemented through planned and coordinated institutional strategies (Kift, Nelson & Clarke, 2010). Student transition can be mapped onto Lizzio's (2006) five senses of student transition: a sense of connectedness, resourcefulness, capability, purpose, and culture. A sense of connectedness depends on the quality of relationships with peers and staff, and identification with the school or university. A sense of resourcefulness depends on students' ability to navigate the school or university systems, access help and information, and find balance in their academic, life, and work commitments. A sense of capability depends on how well students understand what is expected of them as university students. A sense of purpose depends on their vocation, engagement with their discipline of study, and capacity to set goals and work consistently towards achieving them. The fifth and final sense, culture, relates to the appreciation of the institution's values and principles, and how this informs their relationships with others in their role as students.

It was noted earlier that the majority of students in the college where this study was conducted are from quintile 1 to 3 schools, and such students may experience challenges at university, for example, language difficulties caused by the predominant use of English as the medium of instruction (Maila & Ross, 2018). In this context, universities have been criticised for reproducing certain forms of dominant social norms (Quinn, 2010). Universities are therefore urged to move away from describing students as "underprepared" and to modify their own practices to accommodate FTENs, instead of expecting them to assimilate into a pre-existing system (O'Donnell, Kean & Stevens, 2016; Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

The Academic Monitoring and Support, the First-Year Experience Orientation Programmes

The online orientation was a recurring programme that ran from 2 to 29 February 2024, from 09:00 to 13:00, Monday to Friday. The presenters were the college Academic

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Development Officers (ADOs), supported by staff from the Academic Monitoring and Support (AMS) unit and the Academic Leaders of Teaching and Learning from the six schools in the College of Humanities. The aim of the college AMS unit is to identify underperforming students early and offer academic, personal, and career counselling. Appropriate interventions and support systems are expected to reduce dropout rates and exclusions. The AMS policy commits the University to providing academic support for all students through a range of programmed activities arranged in three categories to improve throughput and completion rates.

The first category consists of compulsory student academic support activities, which typically include lectures, tutorials, computer training for higher education learning, assessments, course and staff evaluation, and other activities prescribed for each module.

The second category consists of additional academic support prescribed for students identified as being at risk due to declining performance or erratic participation caused by circumstances beyond their control in the primary activities.

The third category consists of student wellness support for students who have come forward or have been diagnosed as presenting wellness challenges that prevent them from achieving the desired level and pace of learning. This category includes clinical and counselling interventions in line with professional analysis provided on or off campus. The online orientation programme was organised and delivered by staff of the AMS unit.

The aims and objectives of the online orientation programme for first-year students were as follows:

- To welcome first-year students to the College of Humanities
- To provide a brief introduction to and overview of the university
- To provide important information to support the online registration process

(registration was strictly online and no walk-ins were allowed)

- To provide curriculum and academic advice to enable students to register for their modules in 2024
- To introduce students to the compulsory online First-Year Experience Programme (FYEP), which must be completed in the first year
- To empower students by identifying key institutional programmes and services needed as they navigate the first year and beyond

The FYEP is an online programme comprising four units, which must be completed by all first-year students in their first year of registration. All units are aimed at facilitating adjustment and integration into the university. Unit 1 is entitled Transition, Adjustment, and Integration to University; Unit 2, Academic Skills Development; Unit 3, Student Wellness and Global Citizenship and Sustainability Awareness; Unit 4, Financial Literacy.

The orientation programme included presentations on “Understanding your degree”, delivered by either the discipline ADO or the Academic Leader of Teaching and Learning of the relevant school. Important programmes and services introduced to students included student fees and funding, Student Support Services (Counsellors), Department of Student Residential Affairs, Information and Communications Services, Disability Unit, and the library. There was a question-and-answer session after each segment of the programme, and students were allowed to ask questions in either English or isiZulu, although all presentations were in English. After all topics were presented, students had the opportunity to meet the ADOs or the FYE coordinator in breakout rooms for one-on-one consultations, where needed. At the end of each day, students were asked to complete an evaluation form, which served as the data source for this study.

Methods

The survey was a quantitative study, using self-administered online questionnaires completed after participation in the online orientation. The survey included both closed and open-ended questions, providing quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was collected through questions on a 5-point Likert scale, while open-ended questions provided qualitative data. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive frequency counts, and qualitative data was analysed through thematic content analysis. Ethical clearance was obtained from the office of the College Dean of Teaching and Learning.

A total of 343 students (39%) out of 879 who participated in the online orientation programme completed the evaluation survey. By the end of the registration period in the first semester of 2024, 4,430 first-year students had registered in the College of Humanities.

The 39% response rate may be attributed to two socio-economic challenges faced by pre-registration students: digital literacy difficulties and unequal access to internet infrastructure, particularly among first-year students from quintile 1 to 3 schools. Language and digital literacy challenges (Maila & Ross, 2018; Mashau & Nyawo, 2021; Muloiwa-Klenam *et al.*, 2023) may also have prevented some students from

completing the online evaluation form. These initial observations require confirmation through further research.

Results

The quantitative data showed that a majority of the respondents (over 75%) expressed overall satisfaction with the online orientation programme. However, a small minority was dissatisfied.

Respondents were asked about their levels of satisfaction with specific aspects of the programme:

- Feeling welcome at the university
- Understanding the academic expectations of the university
- Providing information about degree structures
- Providing information about student support structures

The response options were the following; very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt welcome at the university. Figure 1 indicates how they felt.

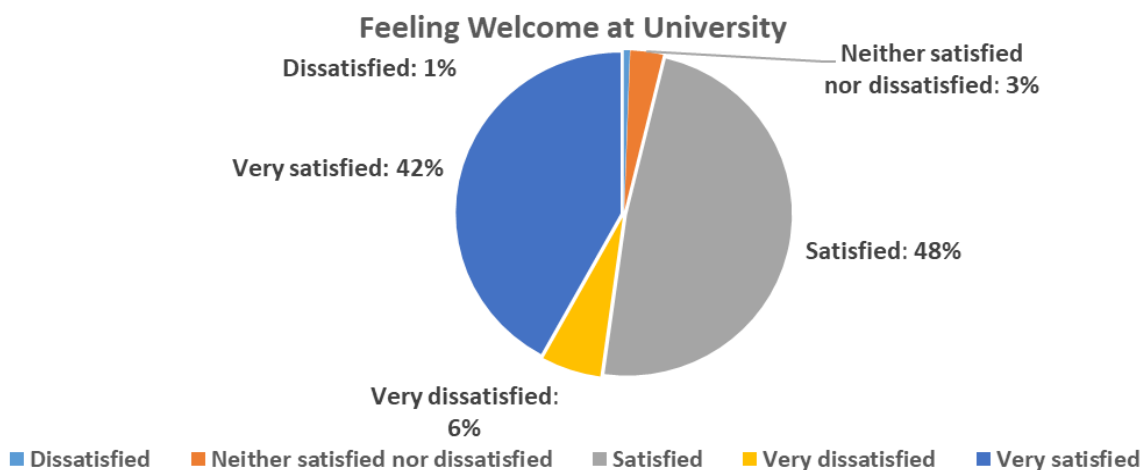


Figure 1: Students' Feelings of Welcome at the University

First-Year Reflections on Online Orientation

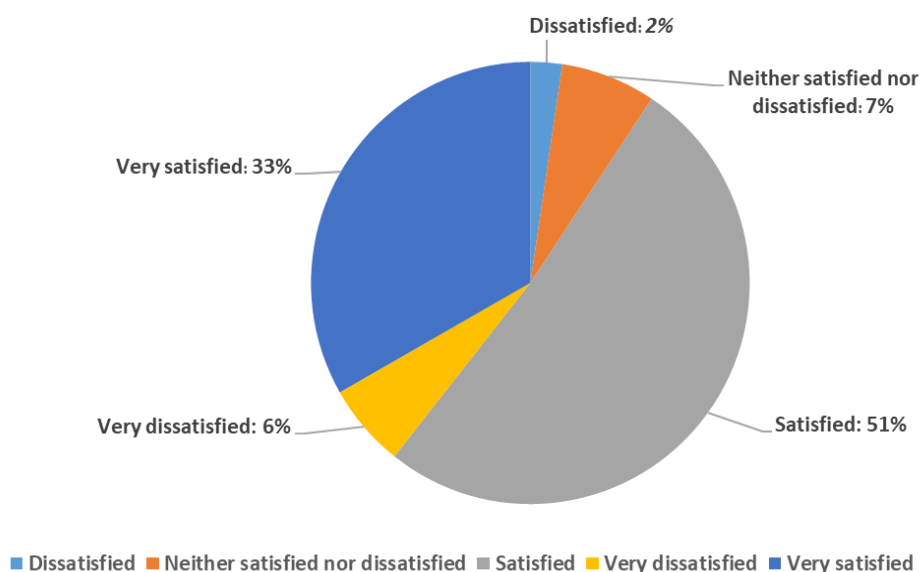


Figure 2: Students' Reflections on the Online Orientation Programme

Ninety per cent of respondents felt welcome (42% very satisfied, 48% satisfied). This indicates that the objective of introducing students to the key institutional programmes and services of the university was achieved. Feeling welcome at the university promotes a sense of belonging, which is an important aspect of the transition process. A sense of belonging facilitates social adjustment and integration into the university community (O'Donnell, Kean & Stevens, 2016). Feeling welcome at the university can be linked to a sense of connectedness, which relates to feeling connected to the university. According to Lizzio (2006), university staff can help students develop a sense of connectedness by providing opportunities for first-year students to form good relationships with peers and university staff (both academic and support), and by encouraging students to get involved with the institution.

Respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the information which had been provided on understanding university academic expectations. Results are shown in Figure 2.

Seventy-four per cent of the respondents were satisfied (33% very satisfied; 51% satisfied). This finding can be mapped onto Lizzio's (2006) sense of purpose. A student with a clear sense of purpose will show commitment and engagement with their discipline. University staff can assist students to be as clear as possible in their choice of

a particular degree, see the relevance of the chosen degree and support them in developing their talents and strengths as part of the transition process.

Respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the information provided on degree structures. See figure 3.

Seventy-four per cent of respondents were satisfied (38% very satisfied; 43% satisfied). Understanding degree structures is a very important aspect of student transition. Where students have not received career counselling at school level, understanding university degree structures can initially be challenging (Maila & Ross, 2018). Therefore, although students have expressed high levels of satisfaction, continuous support will be provided by the ADOs, especially in the first few weeks of the first semester when first-year students struggle to adjust to the university environment (Everett, 2017). Understanding degree structures can be described as a prerequisite for developing a sense of academic culture. Lizzio (2006) states that successful students know "...what is important or valued in the new culture" (Lizzio, 2006, p. 2). A sense of academic culture will foster an appreciation of the core values and ethical principles of the university, which in turn will assist academic and social adjustment and integration.

Respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the information provided on student support services. See Figure 4.

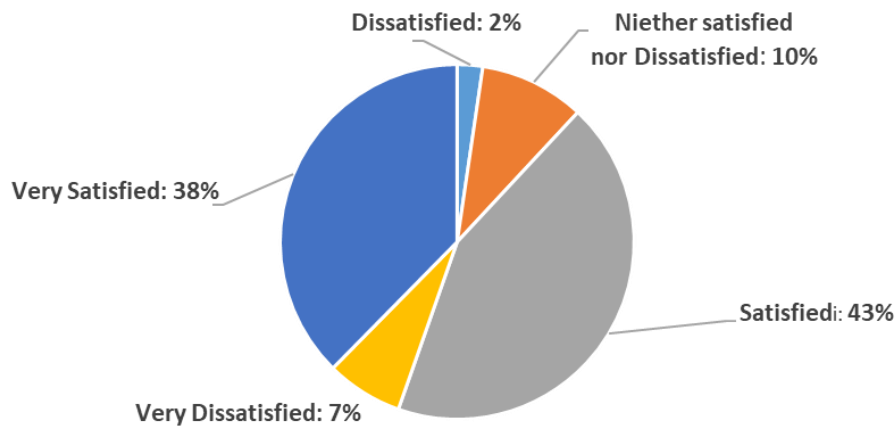


Figure 3: Students’ Satisfaction with the Information Provided on Degree Structures

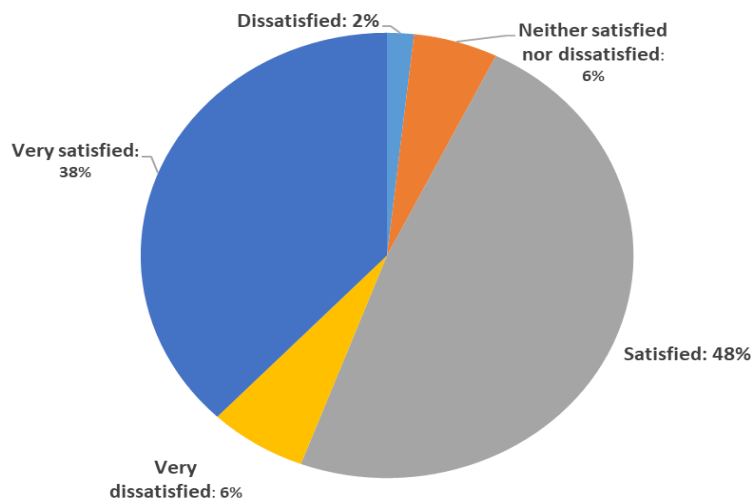


Figure 4: Students’ Satisfaction with the Information Provided on Student Support Services

Eighty-six per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the information provided on student support services. This finding can be mapped onto Lizzio’s (2006) sense of resourcefulness. “Successful students not only know how to study but also how to proactively manage the challenges of their whole university experience” (Lizzio, 2006, p.1)

Knowledge of student support services enables students to develop timely help-seeking behaviour to address challenges which they may face during the first year at the university. A sense of resourcefulness also promotes persistence. This

drives the ability to seek help to address challenges, instead of delaying seeking help with the risk of a problem aggravating to become a crisis.

Qualitative Responses

Respondents were asked for comments on how the overall orientation programme could be improved. The key findings are grouped under the following categories:

- Satisfied and no need for improvements - 28 respondents (12%)

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- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) – 10 respondents (3%)
- Language and comprehension comments – 15 respondents (4%)
- Online versus contact orientation – 14 respondents (4%)
- Miscellaneous (other) comments – 96 (27%)
- Respondents who wrote “No comment” – 180 (52%)

Satisfied and no need for improvements:

The following comments were made by three respondents who were satisfied with the online orientation programme.

It was presented well. No need to improve it

Everything went well and it was easy for us to understand

No, I have no comments. I am satisfied

This finding shows that some students understood most of the information provided during the orientation. It must be noted that the orientation was held at the beginning of the onboarding process. So, the important information that was provided continues to be reinforced through interactions with ADOs, mentors, peers and other support staff throughout the first and second semesters of the first year.

Information and Communication Technology:

Respondents mentioned aspects of ICT that prevented full participation and made suggestions for improvement.

The programme can be improved through the provision of Internet data to all first-year students attending orientation as a means to cater [for] those who come from underprivileged societies

...sometimes we struggle access to a stable network so it is very hard

Not all students have access to stable Wi-Fi. Not all students participating in the orientation

session had data. Similar findings were made in a study of the challenges faced by students during online orientation (Muloiwa-Klenam et al., 2023). A solution to students not having access to Wi-Fi is combining online orientation with in-person orientation to ensure that no student is left behind. A respondent noted that not having data prevented participation in the online orientation. Similar findings have been made by De Klerk et al. (2021) and Muloiwa-Klenam et al. (2023) in spite of the fact that institutions endeavour to provide all students with data on registration, not all students receive the data provided by universities. Universities may have to review the process through which students are allocated data to ensure that all students receive the data at the beginning of the academic year.

The intention of the online orientation was to introduce students to key academic and support services and structures. The online orientation was complemented by subsequent student support programmes, which made up for any vital information that students missed due to technological challenges. However, on a long-term basis, Universities need to look for lasting solutions to technological challenges faced by first-year students to ensure that no students are left behind.

Language and comprehension comments:

Some students expressed a concern that the entire orientation was conducted in English and isiZulu, their mother tongue was not used. This reduced their ability to understand fully, the information that was shared.

Must have another language, e.g. isiZulu, not only English

The facilitator of the advising session should try to explain in Zulu and in a simple way for us to understand everything...because in Modules it is very difficult for some us

By mixing language constantly”[code-switching]

The challenges faced at university by students who are not proficient in English have been documented in the literature (DuPlessis & Gerber, 2012; Muloiwa-Klenam et al., 2023; Maila

& Ross, 2018). Not fully understanding the information disseminated during orientation due to language comprehension problems may prevent students from fully achieving all aspects of student transition and success, with the sense of connectedness being most negatively affected. This also reduces students' ability to create and maintain meaningful relationships with university staff and peers. A lack of confidence in communication can result in a reduced sense of belonging, which decreases the likelihood of a smooth transition and ultimate academic and social success. Universities may implement programmes to assist first-year students with language difficulties. However, the root of the language problem lies in the school system, where the link between reading and academic achievement is not prioritised, especially in under-resourced schools (Maila & Ross, 2018).

A respondent suggested code-switching between English and isiZulu. Code-switching is described as a phenomenon in which bilingual or multilingual speakers switch from one language to another. A study of code-switching in an undergraduate tutorial class showed that it promotes inclusivity and bridges linguistic and cultural gaps (Melane, 2024). While an institution-wide project to conduct bilingual or multilingual first-year orientation would have substantial financial implications, it could significantly address this persistent problem, which can potentially hinder a smooth transition and student success.

Online versus contact (preferred) orientation:

A number of respondents expressed a preference for physical and not an online orientation programme. They also gave reasons for this preference.

As a first-year student not knowing...how to navigate the university grounds, it would have been more enjoyable if we had an on-campus orientation

Physical orientation week would be more effective

Making the orientation programme a physical programme where students can attend the

orientation on campus in order to familiarize themselves with the campus atmosphere.

The main argument advanced by the respondents is that physical orientation is more effective than online orientation. A similar finding was made by Muloiwa-Klenam *et al.*, (2023). There is little interaction with peers during the online orientation. This works against the student achieving a sense of connectedness and impacts negatively on an important aspect of student transition which is social and academic adjustment and integration. Tinto (2012) argues that if a first-year student does not successfully adjust and integrate at the social level, academic success will be very difficult to achieve. Ideally, institutions which conduct online orientation should adopt a blended mode of delivery to promote inclusivity.

Miscellaneous (other) comments on various student support units

There were miscellaneous comments when respondents were asked to give comments on how the overall programme could be improved. Most of the comments related to other university support units.

By providing links so that everyone can access easily

I think at least one person from the fees office and housing should be included in the programme to answer relevant questions

Must add some Notes for stages on how to register things like res [university residence] so we can be able to make a screenshot of the steps

These comments refer to important information which the students had missed. The reference to "links" most probably refers to Zoom links to access the meeting. The links to attend the online orientation meeting were placed on the university orientation web site and also social media channels. The challenge faced by the university is communication with students at the pre-registration stage. Student contact details are based on information supplied by students at the time of application. If a change of address is not communicated to the university by the student, then the communication loop which connects the student to the university is broken. In this case,

important information may be sent out by the university but it may not reach the student. Communication barriers between universities and first-year students is an area for further research.

Two comments show a wish that students received more information from the student fees unit and student housing office. Reference was made to all key university support units during the presentation by the facilitators. The following details were provided on each key unit; web address, telephone numbers and email address. However, there were no representatives from these key units with presentations. Given the findings on the technological challenges faced by students in this study, the lesson learned from these reflections is, in addition to a PowerPoint presentation, there should be other ways of communicating important information to students. Secondly, students should be repeatedly told where all the presentations will be made accessible because the thread which connects all the miscellaneous comments is student access to vital information.

Facilitators could try to answer our questions it is sad to join the session and leave with unanswered questions

The facilitators at the orientation sessions endeavoured to answer all student questions either orally or in the chat. Students were also allowed to ask questions in isiZulu. ADOs provided their contact details for further engagement with students. A way to avoid this situation where a student attended the orientation but was left with some unanswered questions is to reiterate to students during the orientation the various channels available to receive answers to their questions. This comment also relates to possible communication barriers between the university and students and exploring possible ways to address them.

Pace of programme

These two comments focused on the pace of the programme

They should explain everything properly and at a lower pace so that everyone can hear and understand what they are saying and try by all means to make sure students understand the university life told

When showing links and codes please do not remove the slide quickly wait at least a minute or two

The lesson learnt from these two comments on the pace of the presentations is an important statement that all good teachers make in the middle of a lesson: “Am I talking too fast? If yes, please tell me”. This is an important question that will be asked in all subsequent orientation sessions, both online and in person. This comment also suggests that providing the orientation presenters with short training in the pedagogy of teaching or presenting to students online with a particular focus on course design and delivery (Ren, 2023) could improve the overall effectiveness of the orientation session.

Duration of programme

The four comments below all relate to the duration of the programme. They all found the orientation programme, which started at 9h00 and ended at 13h00, to be too long.

There should be a little more time break since we are doing orientation online it can be tiring to stare at the screen for long which causes a loss of focus

They can make the session a bit shorter because today the meeting almost took 4 hours

They should stick to time management because they said it would end at 13h30 but yet 13h30 has passed

Maybe less time because not a lot of people can afford to be in a Zoom meeting for 4 hours

There is a delicate balance to strike between selecting the content of an orientation programme and the time it takes to deliver the content. The students are the most important role players in the online orientation planning and delivery. Given the low response rate in the survey, these comments on the duration of the orientation cannot be taken as a majority view. However, the value of these comments on the duration is that the question will be asked in subsequent surveys on first-year orientation, whether online or physical. The comments on the duration of the online orientation session and indeed all the other student

reflections that have been reported in this paper constitute student voice, a rich source of feedback that can be used to enhance first-year student experience (Shah & Nair, 2009, Shah & Pabel, (2020).

What is the significance of the findings of this survey? The findings form part of the bigger picture of finding answers to the following questions – who are our students? What is their background? What have been their pre-registration experiences? What have been their experiences since they became students of this institution? Finding answers to these questions enables the university to gain a deeper understanding of who our students are (Knowing our students: understanding & designing for success, 2021) and to design targeted and responsive support programmes and support programmes which will address the needs of students first as a group and secondly as individuals. Finding answers to the questions posed above is guided by the institutions strategic goal number 2 which is excellent student experience.

Recommendations

Based on the data and findings, the College of Humanities should adopt a blended approach to first-year orientation (online and physical) in order to address the concerns mentioned by students in this survey and to ensure that students receive and understand key information that is delivered. The College should consider a bilingual (Zulu/English) or multilingual orientation programme to promote inclusivity and acknowledge diversity. The process of intentional and coordinated collection of student pre-registration data to feed into orientation and FYE programmes, which have already started, should be continued and expanded. Increased ICT support should be provided to FTENs, especially at the early transition phase or the first month of the first semester. This should be preceded by a digital skills assessment to identify first-year students who need training in computer skills. The College of Humanities should explore innovative collaborative partnerships with Dept of Basic Education to expose university environments to high school learners (virtually & physically) to ease transition challenges.

Suggested focal areas of the proposed collaborative partnership: career guidance, coupled with university qualifications offered, training and exposure to the use of computers and online platforms like zoom, virtual tours of universities, a concerted effort to promote and encourage reading for leisure to address students' language challenges. While some collaborative initiatives between the Department of Basic Education can commence at high school level, a long-term approach must be adopted to the reading promotion programme (Olifant et al., 2020). It must start at the primary school level and be sustained to the high school level, in particular, in quintiles 1 to 3 schools.

Disclosure

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

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