



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

FACULTY OF COMMERCE, HUMAN SCIENCES, AND EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND LANGUAGES

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SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION QUESTION PAPER	
EXAMINER(S):	Dr B. Kamwi Dr S. Ithindi Mr C. Gwasira Ms Y. Lyamine
MODERATOR:	Prof N. Mlambo

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Answer all questions 2. Write clearly and neatly 3. Number the answers clearly

PERMISSIBLE MATERIALS

1. Examination paper
2. Examination script

THIS QUESTION PAPER CONSISTS OF 14 PAGES (Including this front page)

Read the following research article and answer the questions that follow. The original article has been adapted for assessment purposes.

Challenges of Teaching First-Year Students at Institutions of Higher Learning

By

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1. Abstract (omitted)

2. Introduction

A It is being said that, for many years in South African Higher Education, it was believed that only those who 'fit' higher education would eventually be successful. Those students who possess the talents and skill to 'survive' would succeed and the others would consider other educational possibilities (Eiselen and Geysler 2003; Killen, Marais, and Loedolff 2003; Bitzer 2005). Shertzer & Stone (1971) argue that people generally feel emotionally less secure in a new or strange environment. Bojuwole (2002) adds that this is particularly the case with students just coming to the university environment for the first time and becoming members of an institution. Such newly admitted students may feel confused, tense, threatened, anxious, and even helpless (Hamblin, 1989). The transition from a high school to a university environment has the potential to become a daunting task for first-year students. The demands on the lecturer for achieving success with this group of students, is equally as challenging. However, it is essential to note that studies conducted have established that students change substantially over the course of their undergraduate academic experience (Kennedy, Shackle & Kehrhan, 2000; Lourens & Smit, 2003) and the most dramatic changes occur during their first year of study (Muffo, Dickey & Bodo, 1999). The findings of Kariuki (2006) on many of the general problems confronting university students, revealed that: (i) understanding the English used in a textbook; (ii) understanding their academic work; (iii) expressing themselves clearly in English; (iv) making friends; (v) and taking notes in class were the five most important aspects identified by the students regarding their university education. Conversely, Downs (2005) reports that following feedback from first year lecturers, students have poor skills in the following areas: summarising, identifying key concepts, discussion, essay writing, and comprehension. He went further to suggest that the students have opted for surface-level learning, and consequently, the curriculum does not create meaning for them. It might follow that if students have a poor background as well as time pressures, they may

not have a choice. He concludes that other studies concerning assessment of student achievement revealed that many students fail to develop effective thinking and problem-solving skills.

3. Typical Academic Challenges for Students

3.1 First Year Students

B A first-year student needs support through the transitory process in a series of particular issues (Angelo & Cross, 1993):

i) First year students require new skills

A major concern is to assist first year students to become familiar with what it means to be a self-managed, independent learner. Time management is particularly difficult for students to learn. School leavers are usually more familiar with the day-to-day involvement of parents and staff who may also take on an inspectorial role. Those coming from the workforce will also have their own particular challenges when they lose the structure of work and daily deadlines and demands. Many students struggle to understand the need for detailed referencing and **unimpassioned** expression of ideas.

ii) First year students need to adopt a new style of learning

In professions-based awards there are often outside pressures from professional associations that tend to overload curriculum content at the expense of the time being spent on learning processes. As a result, there is a risk of teaching becoming content driven, rather than learning driven. The first year can be the hardest for students because there is a need for students to learn a vast range of basic concepts in a number of new fields or disciplines before they can engage with their application to their chosen profession. At first these concepts often do not appear to have any practical application. It is very difficult for students to engage intentionally in this kind of learning if they do not understand the importance as well as the relevance, for future learning and work. First year students often confuse fact and example and require constant explanation of what materials must be retained post-lecture and studied in detail.

ii) First year students have a diversity of needs, experiences, and backgrounds

Focusing on students' learning needs rather than curriculum content is further complicated by the diversity of needs that exist in the classroom (age, prior experience, cultural norms, ability, etc.) In the first year there are very few assumptions that lecturers can make about common experiences and understandings. All assumptions about knowledge, understanding, experiences, values, and capability need to be verified.

iv) First year students show high drop-out and failure rates

In any analysis of first year failure rates, it is important to recognise that there are multiple causes of failure. In some cases, students enrol for reasons other than interest and

personal choice. Early evidence of the risk of failure is when students fail to submit work. In other instances, some students work for a mere pass rather than to learn. These factors are not readily apparent in grade distributions.

v) First year students display poor class participation

Some students do not participate by talking in lectures and tutorials due to a fear of being perceived as ignorant. Other students dominate conversations. There is also a concern that where there is a heavy reliance on lectures in the first year, there is a general decline in the attendance of lectures as the course progresses.

vi) First year students are typically under prepared

Students fail to understand the depth of preparation that is required for participation in university courses and attend tutorials without having worked through pre-readings. Because of this, tutorials frequently revert to mini lectures rather than active sessions. Students who have done the preparation can then become discouraged from doing so.

3.2 General Academic Challenges for Students

C Human beings possess an acquired need to express their innate, biologically ordained competence, called “competence motive” (Hall 1993, 1994). The attainment of human competence is a natural part of the life process and is what ensures the survival of the species. Therefore, rather than assume students are not intellectually capable of meeting the demands of the university environment, one should consider that such individuals are making use of the incorrect cognitive processes (Craig, 1998). Understanding student learning difficulties within the higher education context, students must be seen as abstract thinkers who have the ability to engage in, benefit from and master formal education but, at the same time, make use of the incorrect cognitive process when grappling with the typically ill-structured problems encountered in the various academic disciplines at higher education level. Scott (1994) adds that if the complex student learning difficulties in higher education are to be addressed effectively, it is clear that academic development work is required. Such academic development needs to be aimed at preparing all students to mobilise the cognitive process required for success within each of the various academic disciplines. All students have the capabilities to fulfill the demands of university tasks, but, in some cases, the learning-teaching situation does not elicit these competencies and/or the desired performance level (Craig, 1989). Academic development needs to be more than growth, it is about growth and change. Academic development is essentially concerned with the processes of change in teaching and learning in higher education. Academic development “no longer becomes a problem that lies within a particular group or groups of students but is a process in which a range of actors in different situations share responsibility for growing into academic life” (Bulman, 1997:09; Van der Riet, Gilbert, Kelly & Fischer, 1996). There is consequently a need to develop academic literacy, not as an adjunct “skill”, but by and through engagement with learning in the mainstream

academic disciplines themselves (Langer, 1987; Boughey, 1994) aimed at preparing all students to deal with the set of competencies required at the tertiary education level.

4. Problem Statement and Aim of the Study

D Student performance at institutions of higher learning is generally **attributable** to a range of diverse reasons, which are both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. More often than not, teaching first-year students pose more challenges than when teaching senior students. Time-management, self-discipline and independence are some of the traits most of them battle to master. Straus & Volkwein (2002) and Lourens & Smit (2003) insists that while the Higher Education literature provides an exhaustive range of theories about the reasons for students leaving, as well as proposals for positive intervention, it remains critical for administrators to understand the unique combination of factors contributing to student performance and attrition at their institutions, and how to best assist lecturers to deal with them. At the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Central University of Technology, schools/departments are expected to perform and uphold a certain performance standard. This standard is checked regularly after every examination. Indications from most schools seem to suggest that the cause for most deviations from the agreed standard is attributable to mainly first-year performance. It is against this background that this article came about.

5. Research Design and Sampling

E The method used was quantitative and followed a descriptive and exploratory research design, using a survey to collect the data. The survey instrument was developed by the researcher and was in the form of a questionnaire comprising 15 closed-ended items, and one open-ended question. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A: demographic information; Section B: factual items as well as attitudinal and perception items, divided between (i) lecturers and (ii) students' opinions on the topic. A four-point Likert rating scale was used to measure the responses to the items on the questionnaire in Section B, and the responses varied from "a very great extent = (4)" to "no extent = (1)" The issues investigated were **obstacles** encountered or perceived to be faced by these students during university education, and the following variables were **identified** as predictors of their performance: language of instruction; diverse academic competency levels in a class; listening skills; active participation in class; class attendance; ability to work independently; self-discipline; responsibility; commitment; preparation for class; health and HIV/Aids; support from home; peer pressure; financial issues; and class sizes.

5.1 Selection of respondents

F Firstly, due to time constraints, a purposeful or non-probability sampling strategy was used whereby all full-time students at a research university of technology currently in their

first year of training to become teachers, were selected for this study. Students were enrolled for the module GSD10AS (General Subject Didactics). The selection was based primarily on the fact that this module, GSD10AS, is a compulsory module for all first-year students who enrolled for any of the 4-year undergraduate B. Ed (FET): Specialisation programmes, and would therefore, at least be a fair and adequate reflection of the Teacher Training student population at the university. The student response rate was 100% (n=154), and this can be ascribed to the fact that the questionnaires were administered just after one of their written assessments in this module. Secondly, a similar approach was followed to select a total number of 75% (n=21) of lecturers from the four schools namely: Education; Tourism; Public Management; and School for **Entrepreneurship** and Business Development, all located within the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Central University of Technology. All those selected were lecturing the first-year students within their respective Schools. Because the study was conducted on such a relatively small scale (n=154, students) and (n=21, lecturers) over a limited time and in a limited context, this study does not attempt to claim any generalisation of its findings but provides only indications on trends and tendencies as perceived and reported by both lecturers and students.

5.2 Data collection and analysis

G The data derived from Sections A & B, demographic, factual and attitudinal information of the questionnaire: Student and lecturer surveys on perceptions and attitudes regarding challenges of teaching first-year, was coded and recorded on the SAS® (SAS Institute Inc., 2004) database. This is also where all statistical calculations were carried out. A frequency analysis was done using the data obtained from Section A to obtain a demographic profile of both the student and lecturer sample.

5.3 Demographic profile

H The demographic profile of the respondents included their age, gender, race, and the academic programmes for which they had **registered**. The student sample (n=154) and lecturers (n=21) are shown as frequencies and percentages in Table 1. The findings reveal that three percent of lecturers involved were in possession of doctoral degrees, 58% had master's degrees and 39% had B.Tech/Hons degrees. All lecturers had the required qualifications to teach at an institution of higher learning. Their lecturing experience at this institution varies from minimum 3,6 to maximum 18 years.

6. Discussion of the findings (omitted)

7. Summary and Conclusion

I Undoubtedly, the first year at university is a time of social and academic transition for most students and their early experiences are critical to their academic success and perseverance in student life. Teaching first year students can also be more demanding on the staff member involved due to the large class sizes, coordination difficulties, extra

planning, and feedback requirements, amongst other issues (Newton, 2000:08). Evidently, from this study, most of the first-year students view language of instruction; volume of work; ability to manage time; level of independence and support especially from home, as the most crucial areas that impact on their performance. On the other hand, lecturers identified lack of responsibility, commitment, and poor preparation for class as the most key areas to the success of their academic adventure. It stands to reason, therefore, that the success of a lecturer is dependent largely upon the willingness and ability of a student to succeed. It is of paramount importance to understand that lecturers need not only master the subject matter, but also **comprehend** that the way students learn is a vital ingredient. How to help them develop not only their cognitive skills, such as applying; analysing; synthesizing and evaluating information (Bloom's 1956) higher order cognitive skills), but also empathy, caring and support equally requires a special skill from a lecturer. A holistic approach, inclusive of student support service or academic development, has to form an integral part of this venture for first-year student to succeed. Quite a **daunting** task for academics if proper mechanisms are not put in place timeously and proactively.

Source: Naong, M. N., Zwane, M. G., Mogashoa, L. G, and Elma Fleischmann. (2009). Challenges of Teaching First-Year Students at Institutions of Higher Learning, International Education Studies, 2(2), 170-179.

Part 1: Comprehension questions

[20 marks]

1. How many scholars undertook this study? (1)
2. Provide any three problems that university students are likely to struggle with.
(Par. A) (3)
3. Why is the first year the most challenging for students? (Par. B) (1)
4. What does 'diversity of needs exist in the classroom' imply? (Par. B) (1)
5. There are multiple causes of academic failure. What is the early evidence of failure? (1)
6. Why are first year students generally under-prepared for university? (2)
7. As per Paragraph C, what academic development is required to effectively deal with university students' learning difficulties? Provide two arguments. (4)
8. How is teaching first year students problematic for staff? (2)
9. Identify two key aspects (under each) that are regarded to have an impact on student performance, as perceived by: (4)
 - a) Students
 - b) Lecturers
10. In which section do authors propose a holistic solution to the problem of first

year students? (1)

Part 2: Language usage [10 marks]

1. Identify an example of the following in Paragraph A. (2)
 - a) Hyphenated compound word
 - b) Solid compound word
2. State whether the underlined affix in each word below is derivational or inflectional. (2)
 - a) attributable (Par. D)
 - b) registered (Par. H)
3. Analyse (break down) the following words according to their morpheme structure. (2)
 - a) unimpassioned (Par. B)
 - b) Entrepreneurship (Par. F)
4. What part of speech are the words below as used in paragraph I? (2)
 - a) Comprehend
 - b) Daunting
5. What is the function of the underlined inflections to each of the words from paragraph E? (2)
 - a) obstacles
 - b) identified

Part 3: Research analysis questions [10 marks]

1. Describe the method adopted by the study. (2)
2. What technique was used by the researchers to select the participants? (2)
3. The target population comprised students enrolled for the module GSD10AS (General Subject Didactics). Why? (2)
4. What was the sample for a) students, and b) lecturers? (2)
5. Briefly describe how the data was analysed. (2)

SECTION B: ACADEMIC WRITING [60]

PART 1: Report writing questions [15 marks]

Read the following adapted report written by one of you (Ruben Amateta, 2024, Semester 1) for assessment purposes. Answer the questions that follow.

1. Introduction

i) According to Doe (2014), people around the world are very concerned about climate change, especially in countries like Namibia that have been classified as extremely vulnerable. Climate change is defined as persistent changes in temperature, precipitation patterns, and the frequency of extreme weather events (IPCC, 2021). These climate changes in Namibia pose new risks to the country's overall well-being and development trajectory, while also making already-existing problems worse. ii) *The extensive effects of climate change on Namibia are examined in this paper, with particular attention paid to three main areas: Economic growth, biodiversity loss, and health hazards.* The report seeks to shed light on Namibia's climate change effects by thoroughly examining these variables.

2. Impact of Climate Change on Namibia

2.1 Economic growth

Climate-sensitive sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and natural resource extraction, integral to Namibia's economic development, face disruption. Agricultural activities are increasingly disrupted, leading to crop failures, livestock losses, and diminished rural incomes. Extreme weather events further compound these challenges, damaging infrastructure and elevating disaster relief costs, hindering economic progress (IPCC, 2014).

2.2 Biodiversity loss

Namibia, renowned for its rich biodiversity and diverse ecosystems, faces significant ecological and socioeconomic repercussions due to climate change. Habitat loss, changes in species distribution, and more frequent extreme weather events endanger the country's biodiversity. This poses threats to ecosystem services crucial for human welfare, impacting tourism, a major source of income (Hofmann, 2016; Mendelsohn, 2014).

2.3 Health hazards

Climate change poses serious threats to public health in Namibia. Rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events exacerbate existing health conditions and introduce new ones. Heatwaves and waterborne illnesses become more prevalent, while changes in vector habitats affect the spread of diseases like dengue fever and malaria (Gupta & Jankovic, 2018).

3. _____

The report highlights the profound effects of climate change on Namibia's economic growth, biodiversity, and public health. Disruptions in key sectors hinder economic development, while biodiversity loss jeopardises the tourism industry, and health risks

escalate due to changing climate patterns. iii) **Urgent action is imperative to implement comprehensive strategies for mitigation and adaptation, ensuring Namibia's resilience and sustainable development in the face of ongoing environmental changes.**

4. Recommendations

In the view of main findings, the following are recommended:

- 4.1 _____
- 4.2 _____
- 4.3 _____

1. Read the content of the report and complete the missing part of the title. (1)
2. What element of the **introduction** is exemplified by the following: (4)
 - a) The bolded statement numbered (i)
 - b) The italicised statement numbered (ii)
3. Write down the missing heading in 3. (2)
4. Identify the element exemplified by the statement numbered (iii) in 3. (2)
5. Provide three relevant recommendations under 4. (3)
6. Sign and date the report. (2)
7. Which part of the report are you likely to put the list of sources cited? (1)

Part 2: Academic writing

[20 marks]

Observe the following paragraph and answer the questions.

¹ Rapid technological change, digitisation, and globalisation appear to be changing the structure of today's workplace. ² Technologies that did not exist barely a decade ago are increasingly changing the nature of jobs, work practices, and skills requirements today (PwC 2018; WEF 2016; Pennington and Stanford 2019; World Bank 2019). ³ Technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing, big data, the Internet of things, machine learning, drone technologies, nanotechnology, renewable energy technologies, and biotechnology are increasingly becoming mainstream in the workplace. ⁴ In the process, these technologies are destroying old jobs as well as creating new ones (OECD 2018; World Bank 2019). ⁵ New technologies have also changed the skill composition required to perform the remaining jobs, often moving them towards more skill-intensity (T. A. Campbell 2018; De Vos et al. 2021). ⁶ Consequently, the "lifecycle of competencies needed for successful performance in the job is shortening rapidly" (De Vos et al. 2021, p. 11). ⁷ Rapid technological change and equally rapid knowledge obsolescence has meant that workers must continuously reskill and upskill to

retain their employability (Deloitte 2020).⁸ In addition, the global trends towards massification of higher education have meant that more and more graduates are competing for fewer jobs, reducing the currency of a first degree, as well as increasing the competition in graduate labour markets (Pinto and He 2019; Tomlinson 2008; Moore and Morton 2017).⁹ Increasingly, new graduates are entering graduate labour markets that are very competitive, congested, dynamic, precarious, turbulent, and unpredictable (Lock and Kelly 2020; Watzlawik and Kullasepp 2016; Tomlinson 2017b).¹⁰ In addition, more and more new graduates are entering non-graduate and recently graduated jobs (i.e., clerical and administrative jobs in banks (tellers), customer services, marketing, etc.), which are linked to wide-spread underemployment and problematic long-term career development trajectories (Osseiran 2020; Erdsiek 2017).

1. Identify any sentence that complies with the following academic writing conventions. Write only the correct sentence number. (2)
 - (a) Tentativeness
 - (b) Acknowledgment
2. Name the methods used to incorporate information from other scholars in the following sentences. (6)
 - (a) Sentence 6
 - (b) Sentence 7
 - (c) Sentence 9
3. The paragraph has three spelling errors. Identify and correct them. Write the misspelled word and its correct format only. (6)
4. (a) The paragraph has two sentences with subject-verb agreement errors. Identify them by writing their numbers only. (2)
 - (b) Correct the sentences with errors you identified in (a) above. Underline the corrected parts. (2)
 - (c) Specify the stage of the writing process you used to correct the errors in (b) above. (2)

Part 3: Text structure

[10 marks]

Read the following paragraph and answer the questions that follow.

Video game addiction is a serious problem in many parts of the world today. Most players can limit their usage in ways that do not interfere with their daily lives, but many others have developed an addiction to playing video games, which causes detrimental effects. Firstly, many people become addicted to video gaming to escape an unpleasant or threatening reality.

They are looking for refuge in a virtual world where they feel secure. Secondly, sometimes individuals with a certain disorientation or lack of purpose in life will seek a sense of accomplishment in the virtual world. Furthermore, other players become addicted to the feeling of adrenaline and excitement provided by the game. These addictions involve unhealthy behaviours that ultimately disrupt the ability of a person to keep up with regular daily responsibilities. One common effect of video game addiction is isolation and withdrawal from social experiences. Video game players often hide in their homes or Internet cafés for days at a time. Another unfortunate consequence that might accompany video game addiction is the disruption of the user's career, resulting in challenges at their workplace or studies. Moreover, video game addiction may result in a decline in overall health and hygiene. Players who interact with video games for such significant amounts of time can go an entire day without eating and even longer without basic hygiene tasks. The causes of video game addiction are complex and can vary greatly, but just like everything else, the amount of time one spends playing video games needs to be balanced with personal and social responsibilities.

1. Identify the text structure used in the paragraph above. (2)
2. Write down the following from the paragraph:
 - (a) The topic sentence (2)
 - (b) The transitional sentence (2)
 - (c) The concluding sentence (2)
3. What type of model is this paragraph? (2)

Part 4: Citation and reference (APA 7TH edition)

[15 marks]

4.1 Using the source details provided in each case, select a correctly formatted in-text citation from the options provided below to complete the sentences. Use page 49 if you need to use a page number.

4.1.1 Language is broadly influenced through cognitive and behaviouristic learning, and now Language learning is more technology-driven today _____ . (2)

Source details:

Ahmadi, M. R. (2018). The use of technology in English language learning: A literature review. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 3(2), 115-125.

- a) Ahmadi, 2018
- b) Ahmadi (2018)
- c) (Ahmadi, 2018)

4.1.2 According to _____, a language learner should eventually understand the technicalities of the language and should make necessary attempts to use the language effectively. (2)

Source details:

Ahmed, S. (2015). Attitudes towards English language learning among EFL learners at UMSKAL. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(18), 6-16.

Alsaawi, A. (2016). Written discourse analysis and its application in English language teaching. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 7(2), 244-254.

- a) Ahmed, 2015 & Alsaawi, 2016
- b) Ahmed (2015) and Alsaawi (2016)
- c) (Ahmed, 2015 & Alsaawi, 2016)

4.1.3 English being a global language and common lingua franca for professional, technical, and social communication, varies according to the use of varied disciplines and communicative contexts _____. (2)

Source details:

Seidlhofer, B. (2011). *Understanding English as a lingua franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Taavitsainen, I., & Päivi, P. (2008). From global language use to local meanings: English in Finnish public discourse. *English Today*, 24(3), 25–38.

- a) (Seidlhofer, 2011) and (Taavitsainen & Päivi, 2008).
- b) Seidlhofer (2011); Taavitsainen & Päivi (2008).
- c) (Seidlhofer, 2011; Taavitsainen, & Päivi, 2008).

4.1.4 Learners need to compulsorily learn and increase their vocabulary skills found in social networking sites like Facebook, WhatsApp App and IMO chatting _____. (2)

Source details:

Thurairaj. S., Hoon, E. P., Roy, S. S., & Fong, P. K. (2015). Reflections of Students' language usage in social networking sites: Making or marring academic English. *The Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 13(4), 302-316.

- a) (Thurairaj, Hoon, Roy, & Fong, 2015)
- b) Thurairaj et al. (2015, p. 49)
- c) (Thurairaj et al., 2015).

4.2 Study the reference list and the source types below and answer the question that follows. The reference entries are numbered for your convenience. (6)

References	Source types
1) Auer, P. (2002). Code-Switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction and Identity. Routledge.	a) Newspaper article
2) Barber, S. (2013). The influence of culture and identity on second language acquisition: a perspective from Egypt. Retrieved from http://dar.aucegypt.edu/bitstream/handle/10526/3342/Shirley.thesis%20proposal%20FINAL%20.pdf?sequence=3	b) Online article/webpage
3) Farina, F. & Liddy, F. (2011). The language of text messaging: "Linguistic ruin" or resources? The Irish Psychologist, 37(6), 144-149	c) Dissertation/thesis
	d) Printed book
	e) Journal article
	f) Book chapter

Match each reference entry to its source type. Write the number of the entry and the letter of the source only.

4.3 Which of the following rules of compiling a reference list is not true? Write the letter of the correct answer only. (1)

- a) The reference list should begin on a clean page.
- b) Reference entries should be arranged in alphabetical order.
- c) Reference entries should be bulleted instead of numbered.
- d) All reference entries should be double-spaced.
- e) The second line of each entry should be indented.

-END OF EXAM-