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# Research Report



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## TITLE:

An exploratory study on the influence of student-centered teaching methods on student motivation towards education.

A Research Report by: Auldrin Julies

Date: 2020

## OVERALL INTRODUCTION

### Abstract/Executive Summary

Change is a constant within the educational process with the ever-evolving design of subject matter, change in the dynamics within classrooms, and changes within teaching strategies implemented by educators (Hansen & Laverty, 2010). This is all done in an attempt to reform educational practices to create learning environments that will stimulate student engagement towards subject matter and further encourage them to become capable graduates, that are able to adapt to the workforce and contribute towards the advancement of the industry (Cudney and Ezzel, 2017). The study aimed to establish the value student-centered approaches had on the students' motivation towards learning and find the most effective approach for educators to create learning environments that will allow for significant learning experience to take place.

According to Fink (2013), higher education needs to become more meaningful to the student through educational reform and challenging conventional practices. The dire need for the South African higher education system to produce competent graduates has become crucial towards the advancement and survival of the country's economy (Mdepa and Tshiwula, 2012). With the increasing popularity of student-centered teaching within classrooms, the focus has shifted from teacher to student (McKenna, 2013). This has challenged higher education institutions to create learning environments that will develop key skills and knowledge within the student, which can be applied to the real-world environment. This has seen a rise in student-centered teaching methods such as constructivism, that encourages student interaction and sharing of feelings, beliefs, and experience to construct new knowledge. One of the many benefits of student-centered teaching is that it encourages interaction. According to Trolan (2019) many students participate in non-academic activities on campuses to build self-confidence, as research showed a direct link between social interaction and how it leads to better academic results.

South African higher education faces many challenges that are unique to its socio-economic context. Mckenna (2013) argued that for student-centered teaching to

successfully be integrated into South African classrooms, there needs to be a clear understanding of the type of student and their needs. The study allowed for the exploration on how educators can utilize student-centered teaching approaches to more effectively motivate the learners to interact with peers and engage with subject matter. The research involved a logical process that firstly involved conducting a review of literature, that allowed for a holistic review of student-centered teaching approaches and its effectiveness within higher education classrooms. The literature provided some critical comparisons between traditional teacher-centered methods and student-centered teaching. It was followed by a critical research investigation, through exposing students at eta College to both teacher and student-centered teaching methods. Students were able to engage through both mediums of delivery to measure if the teaching method had a distinct contribution towards student motivation. The literature focused on both student and teacher-centered practices to identify its effectiveness within higher education.

The research looked at traditional teaching approaches and the advantages and disadvantages of employing its use within current higher education classrooms. It was important to identify the past, present and future teaching approaches, and its impact on student motivation. The review of literature was expanded towards student-centered teaching approaches within higher education and its value towards student engagement. The research looked at which of these approaches had the best potential of producing a self-autonomous learner and a graduate that will be able to fully function in the workforce while contributing to the advancement of the industry. The study aimed to address questions around students' taking an active role in the learning process to enhance motivation. The research study was conducted through identifying a sample group of Sport Management students currently studying at Pretoria eta College. The sample group only included second and third-year students, as these groups could further draw from past exposure to various teaching methods used throughout their years studying at eta College. The students were provided with qualitative questionnaires to gain a deeper understanding of factors influencing their learning experience. The study sample was firstly exposed to a traditional theory orientated class, where the educator was the central figure within the learning environment. Students were then exposed to a

practical student-centered teaching session where they were responsible for learning and the process relied immensely on their interaction with peers in constructing own understanding of key concepts. Preliminary results concluded that there was a direct link between active learning strategies and its impact on student's enjoyment of the educational process. There was however a greater preference amongst third year students for practical student-centered approaches to teaching, whereas second-year students still showed some interest in teacher-centric approaches. This was a key indicator that students at a higher level within the educational process starts showing a greater interest in how to apply their knowledge to solve real-world issues, as they are at the phase of entering into the workforce.

### Introduction: Purpose of Research

Motivation towards education has become one of the most prevalent researched areas within all levels of education, with many contributions from various professionals attempting to contribute new information (Middleton & Perks, 2014). Educators are often exposed to a diverse group of learners, each having their own learning needs. It becomes crucial to the development of the student to create a learning environment that will positively enhance the overall learning experience, while developing the key skills that the workforce requires. If the learning environment does not stimulate the students' motivation towards learning, a large bulk of learning process becomes daunting and unenjoyable. There were various aspects considered but ultimately the selection behind the topic was motivated by the value student-centered approaches to teaching has on the overall enhancement of the learning experience and student development. A secondary force behind the selection of this topic was driven by the potential student-centered approaches could have in producing better academic results, social cohesion, and an autonomous learner.

Through personal observation within the current Sport Management classroom, there is often a disconnect between educator, learner, and subject matter. Too often learners arrive late for class and when in class they do not engage with the educator

or subject matter. Students tend to be more engaged with unrelated educational activities such as downloading the latest videos or updating statuses on their social media platforms. As educators we often see the issue as simply the student being lazy and fail to recognize that the problem might lay with the way we teach. As argued by November (2010), a transformation of the educational system is required as outlined by the department of education. This has led to many educators moving from traditional teacher-centered approaches to more student-centered approaches. John Dewey, who as we know, was a leader and exponent of pragmatism, that encourage educators taking a much more practical approach to teaching rather than traditional approaches that mainly focused on the transfer of knowledge through theory (Nugent, 2010). In the sport management classroom, it was often an observation that overall student engagement and academic results seemed higher in a modules, such as Event and Project Management, that required more practical learning activities such as implementing social responsibility programmes within previously disadvantaged communities. Practical class activities seemly heralded higher engagement compared to modules with a high amount of theory, which created interest around the impact of teaching methods on student motivation. Through student-centered teaching methods, students are provided with a greater opportunity to engage with content, peers, and educators. This allows the student to build own knowledge foundation and possibly increase enquiry into subject matter.

This brought the question on whether it was simply the module, or the specific approach used to deliver content that led to a higher level of stimulation. Student-centered approaches are more practical in nature and provides a platform for the learner to better engage with content and become a much more active participant through approaches such as cooperative learning. It also focuses on elements such a social constructivism that allows the learner to actively use their skills gained within a classroom to solve issues that exist within society. In a study conducted by Keiler (2018) on the role of teachers within student-centered classrooms, the study explored challenges teachers faced in preparing learners for post-secondary education and further recognized the use of student-centered approaches to teaching as a possible way to address these issues. According to Keiler (2018) all participating teachers within the study concluded that student-centered approaches

provided multiple benefits that was not found in more traditional teacher-centered classrooms. The educators further described ways in which the model assisted them to become the teachers they had always envisioned to be (Keiler, 2018). The learning process needs to be ever evolving, to develop the critical skills within students, rather than a once-off event where students struggle to place value on the information that is being relayed (Hogue, 2016). The aim for higher education institutes and educators should be that of producing a learning environment that motivate students toward subject matter and creates significant learning experiences. Sadker and Zittleman (2013) argued that student-centered approaches are less authoritative and concerned with traditional ways of training the mind, as it focuses on the unique needs of the student.

A logical process was followed throughout the research process to ensure for the efficient collection of data. The report includes a clear outline of the problem being investigated and why the topic selected was of importance to the researcher. This information is presented within the report introduction and followed by a review on current literature. Through a thorough investigation around motivation towards education in higher education classrooms, the research aimed to uncover key gaps that existed within the literature and how the researcher could provide further knowledge through own research. The report provides a clear methodology explaining the methods and tools used to collect information and how this information was captured for further analysis. Key findings were summarized to gain a deeper understanding on the impact of both teacher and student-centered teaching approaches on student motivation.

## BODY

### Literature Review

Key words: Teacher-centered approaches; Student-centered approaches; Student motivation

Weimer (2012) as cited in Manqele (2017) proposed that student-centered teaching is characterized by its ability to engage students in difficult learning situations and



encouraged learners to reflect on what was learnt. Most importantly it motivated the learner by allowing them with the opportunity to have some form of control over their learning process. While the transformation of education is of utmost importance and a necessity given the value that student-centered teaching possesses, these changes have not fully materialised within South African classrooms (Manqele, 2017). South African higher education faces multiple challenges based on its current socio-economic context. Mckenna (2013) argued that for student-centered teaching to successfully be integrated into South African classrooms, there needs to be a clear understanding of the type of student and their needs. Curriculum developers and educators across all educational settings must therefore not get carried away with the new and fashionable concept of student-centered teaching (Manqele, 2017).

Educators play such a critical role in transforming teaching practices to cater to the needs of the student and creating learning environments that engage students with learning content. This includes carefully adapting teaching methods within higher education classrooms to motivate the student to actively engage with subject matter. Traditional teaching methods used within the conventional classrooms have been questioned in terms of its effectiveness in stimulating learning within students. Noreen and Rana (2019) argued that due to the constraint learning that takes place within traditional teacher-centered classrooms, it restricts the learning abilities and intellectual capability, which leads to the student losing interest in the subject matter and eventually the learning process. Robinson (2010), argued that people often go through life not enjoying what they do and simply getting on with life, finding no pleasure in what they do. This can be addressed by educators taking an innovative approach within classrooms to make sure that students do not simply go through the learning process but that they find pleasure in it. Traditional methods have its benefits, as it teaches students to appreciate their heritage and about the custodians of their culture and freedom (Sadker and Zittleman, 2013). Arguments raised indicated that traditional methods promoted banking education which largely served the interests of the oppressed and did not challenge students enough to construct their own knowledge and enhance critical thinking abilities (Haynes, Gale and Parker, 2015).

For effective teaching and learning to occur, as well as developing strategies that will nurture motivation for students within a variety of performance levels, there needs to be a clear understanding of what motivates them (Elsworth, 2009). In a study conducted by Warner (2015) on engagement, motivation and student-centered learning towards physical education, results found that students experienced physical education as more valuable when they were able to participate in activities that excited them. This is extremely valuable as similar context can be applied when considering a higher education environment and the motivation a student might show towards the subject matter. Fink (2013) argued that teaching and learning is a complex action in human beings and that it involved a multitude of tasks. If these tasks are performed effectively it can directly affect the overall quality of the students learning experience in a positive sense (Fink, 2013). According to Noreen and Rana (2019), traditional teaching methods has the potential to negatively affect the students' motivation towards learning as it restricts their learning ability as they become passive participants in the learning process. Teaching approaches implemented within classrooms has the potential to influence the stimulus of a student towards subject matter as many traditional methods fail to fully engage the learner. There is a great need to produce learning environments that will allow the student to become autonomous and take responsibility for their learning. As argued by Abbasi and Hadadi (2014) there is an expectation within any discipline that graduates are effective and independent individuals. But it cannot be achieved in isolation and educators cannot assume that all students within higher education are ready to take responsibility for their learning process. Vygotsky (1986) as cited in Abassi and Hadadi (2014) suggested that educators need to apply a scaffolding approach to teaching and learning to enable the student to function independently.

Discussions around the topic of motivation in education have increased with researchers relating it towards either an intrinsic or extrinsic activity that occurs within the student. Educators play such an important part in creating learning environments that encourages the student to actively engage with subject matter in order for them to recognize the value of the skills and knowledge that they obtain

throughout the course of their studies. The suggestion is for educators to be willing to hand over the responsibility of learning to the student to develop a self-motivated and independent learner (Abassi and Hadadi, 2014). Higher education institutes need to embrace the transformative power of education (Palmer, Zajonc & Scriber, 2010). Traditionally teacher-centered approaches placed great emphasis on the transfer of information, knowledge, and skill from a much more knowledgeable and older teacher to the younger and less experienced student (Sadker & Zittleman, 2013). In stark contrast student-centered approaches encourage student interaction and participation and stimulates interest within the student through reflective learning practices (Noreen and Rana, 2019). Great educational philosophers such as Paulo Freire had a strong believe that banking education promoted oppressive behaviour as the student portrait the role of receiving and storing the transferred information from the educator (November, 2010). Bartholomee (2017) argued that the introduction of classrooms set-ups that now possess the characteristics of an active, lively, and engaging environment for the student, has not only seen benefits to the student but also to the educator and higher education institutes. According to Dennick (2016), there is no singular framework that can account for the learning process, as it is understandable that there needs to be a build-up of knowledge and certain information within the educational process. An active learning approach highlights that the process of knowledge building should connect pre-existing knowledge to new knowledge to develop student interest (Dennick, 2016). Cothran (2016) highlighted that higher education institutions should be used as a vehicle to prepare learners to fit into the social, political and the economic reality of modern society. Student-centered learning will allow students the opportunity to generate and reconstruct knowledge in an active environment (Lee & Hannafin, 2016).

However, the educator still needs to be an active participant within the learning process and cannot solely rely on the learner to achieve the desired outcomes. Abbasi and Hadadi (2014) argued that solely relying on student-centered teaching could result in student frustration as their expectation is for the teacher to be more involved with teaching. The result could see motivation towards learning declining. There should be a careful consideration given to the type of approach used by educators that will allow students the opportunity to actively engage with subject

matter in order improve motivation. Universities are challenged with providing the student with quality education where they can obtain valuable knowledge and attributes that will allow them to become autonomous (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2013). There are concerns raised around student-centered teaching being undertaken with the assumption that education is independent from social and historical contexts (Mckenna, 2013). South Africa still struggles with access and equity and there are still large amounts of individuals entering higher education that do not possess basic skills. It will therefor take a greater amount of patience and effort to integrate student-centered teaching methods efficiently and effectively within the country's tertiary classrooms. South Africa is a country that has embraced democracy, and this highlights the importance of embracing forward-thinking educational practices. Having the ability to express opinions and form own knowledge basis, is considered influential towards developing student understanding of social issues and motivates them to a greater level of civic engagement (Manqele, 2017).

Although early conceptions viewed motivation as an individual drive, later beliefs shifted to recognize the importance the learning environment plays in motivating individuals, with the suggestion that personal motivation was triggered by environment stimuli (Middleton & Perks, 2014). Joshi (2018) noted that learning is at the centre of human nature and it is an inherent characteristic. Although multiple studies are focused on the benefits of student-centered learning, very little is available on the consequences of applying purely student-centered teaching and learning practices (Abbasi and Hadadi, 2014). As educators we have to be aware that learning does not happen in the same way for each and every individual and we have to find the most effective approach to teaching in order to get students to connect to the content. Despite student-centered teaching being widely accepted as the most effective approach to teaching there has been many challenges in integrating it into classrooms (Black, 2007). Students must buy into the idea of taking the lead in their academic journey and be motivated through innovative learning environments.

## Research Approach/Methodology

### Research paradigm

In selecting the most appropriate paradigm it was imperative that teaching and learning approaches from both angles were considered for the study to provide a more holistic view on the topic. To accurately conclude that the teaching approach applied within classrooms contributed to the level of motivation students show towards learning, the research considered the three dominant research traditions, namely: positivism, interpretivism and critical realism. The objective was to view the three identified research paradigms and the implications of each on the validity of the research. It was important to not only establish which paradigm would be utilized but also consider if and why alternative paradigms might not be appropriate for this study. The research considered historical-hermeneutic sciences as it is more practical and is therefore linked to interpretivism, as the emphasis is on gaining in-depth understanding of concepts. The aim of the research was to determine the impact of student-centered teaching has on student motivation and to understand what they view as meaning learning. In using an interpretivist approach, it was able to assist in determining what motivates individuals and gave a better understanding of human behaviour.

### Research approach

The research was conducted through identifying a sample group of Sport Management students currently studying at Pretoria eta College. The students were provided with qualitative questionnaires to gain a deeper understanding of factors influencing their learning experience and exposing learners to both student and teacher-centered teaching strategies. A cross-sectional comparison study was conducted where the study sample was firstly exposed to a traditional theory orientated class and then to a practical student-centric class. In doing so it assisted in determining if the exposure to a specific teaching strategy might correspond with a

specific outcome. In the traditional classroom the educator was the central figure within the learning environment and students a passive participant. Students were then exposed to a student-centered teaching session, that employed practical teaching strategies focused for active learning and student interaction. This learning approach relied immensely on their interaction with peers in constructing own understanding of key concepts. To gain an in-depth understanding of the learning experience of students and the factors that influence their motivation towards education, a qualitative approach was used in collecting opinionated data. It gave the study a deeper sense of factors that stimulate students towards subject matter and provided an opportunity for students to express their feelings towards the impact teaching methods had on their motivation towards education. According to Tuan, Chin and Shieh (2005), motivation plays a critical role in establishing the conceptual transformation processes. Using action-based teaching methods the educator can effectively establish the interest the student shows towards the teaching method and it promotes significant learning practices (Noreen and Rana, 2019). By exposing students to active learning practices, the student can integrate new experience with their existing knowledge which results in meaning and valuable learning experiences (Tuan, Chin, Shieh, 2005). Through a qualitative study, the research was able to explore the experience and perception of the participants and attach meaning to the effectiveness of teaching methods towards motivation and provide a clearer understanding.

## Research Tools

Students were provided with an open-ended questionnaire, divided into four key sections, to gain deeper understanding into the phenomena. Although certain questions had an element of quantitative data collection, participants were continuously encouraged to provide further comments. A questionnaire was selected for use within the research as it was a relatively inexpensive, efficient, and most effective method for obtaining information from the identified sample. As the researcher was present throughout the process and had access to the sample, questionnaires were handed out and collected immediately after to ensure that there

were no delays in the return of forms. Pen-and-Paper questionnaires worked best as online questionnaires would have had a greater risk of participants not completing.

### Research Timeline

Date	Activity
3 – 14 February 2020 (Induction week)	Session with all participants to explain process.
17 February 2020	Signed consent forms
24 February	Hold first teacher centered session with both 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year management student groups.
25 February	Conduct a student-centered session with both 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year groups.
26 February – 29 March	Data capture and analysis
30 March – 31 May	Finalize and compile draft research report
1 July 2020	Submission of draft research report
3 September 2020	Submission of final research project

### Population of the study

The intended research was aimed at the students within the sport management faculty at eta College. The population had a good sense of the eta teaching and learning ethos and had prior exposure to various methods of teaching which provided a thorough background on the impact of the approaches. A sample group was identified within the campus and the decision was to exclude students from the Exercise Science faculty based on the lack of prior interaction with these learners. The sample group identified for the study only involved a small group of second- and

third-year sport management students from the larger group of students currently registered and attending at eta College, Pretoria campus. The Pretoria campus currently has around 300 full-time students registered in three main streams. The Sport management faculty has a total of 68 full-time students, but the research only focused on a specific group within the Management stream. There is a current population of thirty-one second- and third-year Sport Management students, with the study aiming to involve all the participants in the study to get an extensive view on the proposed research topic. The study did not involve first year students as the research aimed to acquire opinion of participants that had some prior experience within higher education. The second- and third-year students used prior exposure to practical and theoretical teaching approaches to provide a more holistic opinion on the impact of these approaches on their stimulus towards subject matter, the learning environment, and the overall educational process. The reason for selecting a participant group from eta College is based on the ease of accessibility and that the sample population could best inform the researcher in reaching an understanding of the phenomena that was being studied. During the research, the participant number was reduced to nineteen between second- and third-year groups due to the non-attendance of certain students during either of the sessions.

### Data collection

Firstly, a case study approach was used in identifying a specific site and participants for the study. It is one of the primary methodological considerations when selecting a group that contained a diverse range of students (Saeed and Zyngier, 2012).

Through the use of a qualitative research method, it was important to consider that the data that would be collected through structured questionnaires in order to produce results that provided the researcher with a full description of student experiences (Sanjari, M., Bahramnezhad, F., Fomani, F., Shoghi, M. and Cheraghi, M, 2014). The data was collected using paper-pencil questionnaires, to ensure raw data is available and was safeguarded by the researcher in a secured storage facility. All completed documents, including questionnaires and consent forms, were



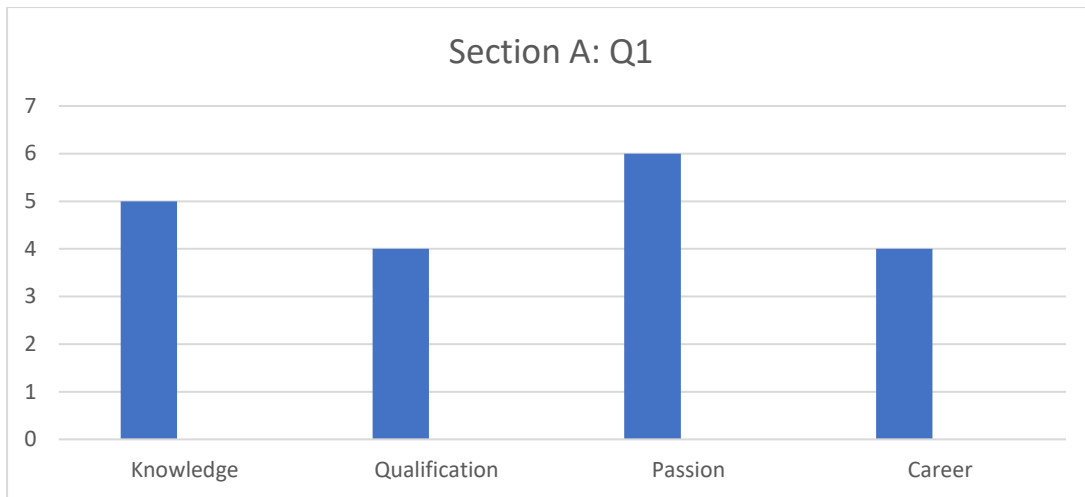
scanned, and saved on a cloud storage site for record purposes. In addition, all data was cross-populated and captured on excel sheet for a smoother interpretation of data. When developing the questionnaires, the process required content, construct validity as well as criteria related validity (Tuan, Chin, Shieh, 2005). In constructing the questionnaires various other existing resources were consulted to formulate a logically constructed questionnaire that would enable participants to provide extensive comments on each question. After completion of all questionnaires by participants, themes were developed based on participant responses, to ensure that key ideas and concepts were identified to showcase its relationship towards student motivation. Once all responses on questionnaires were captured on excel, the results were analysis and interpreted within the research report. A thematic approach was used when capturing the opinionated feedback, as participants were required to provide comments as far as possible, to make data capturing and interpretation much more efficient.

## Data Analysis

### Section A

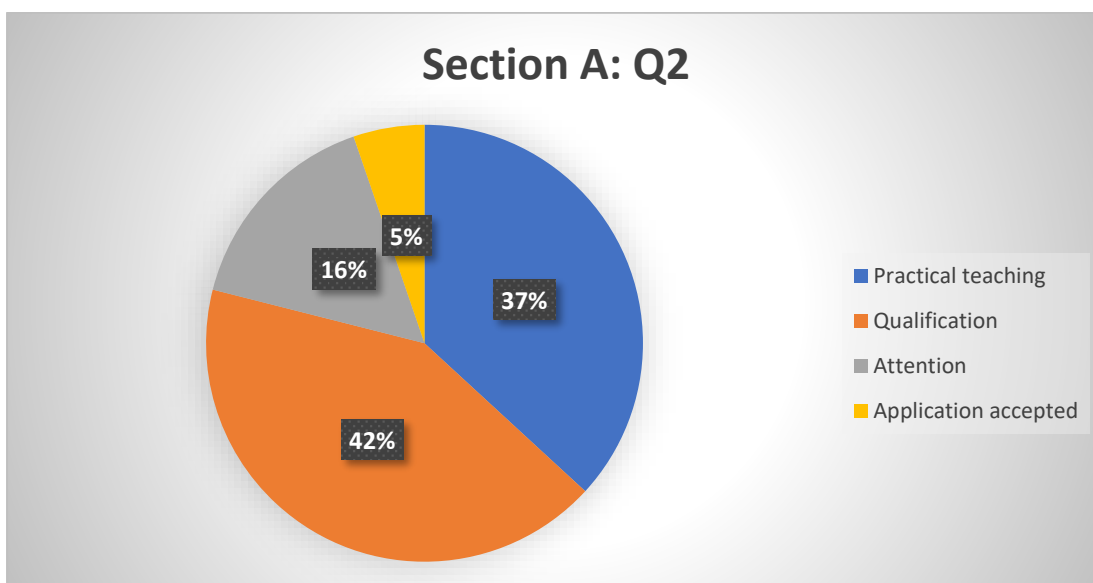
#### **Q1: Indicate your reason behind studying towards a Diploma in Sport and Recreation Management.**

Question 1 required students to indicate their reason behind studying towards a Diploma in Sport and Recreation Management to get a better understanding on the motivation behind selecting the specific course. As noted, themes were created based on various responses and the data compared to view the most popular outcomes. There was no singular motivated factor behind the choice of course but a common factor shared amongst the sample group was the intrinsic passion they shared for the industry. Importantly the sample group indicated their desire to gain more knowledge within the industry which is key towards the student stimuli to become a self-sufficient learner.



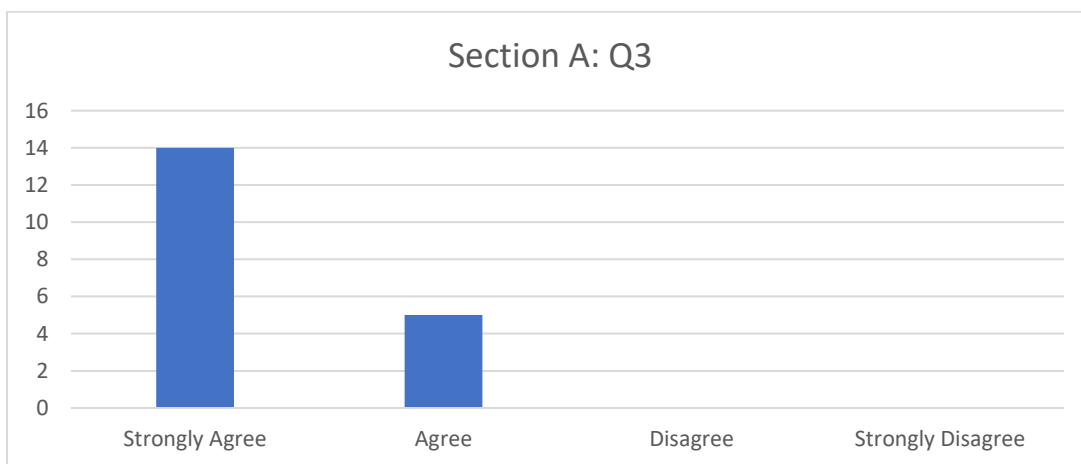
**Q2: Elaborate on why you selected eta College as your preferred institution.**

In question 2 the researcher wanted to get a better idea on why students selected eta College as their preferred higher education institute. The main outcome indicated that participants mainly selected the institution due to their applications being accepted. This could pose as an initial resistance from the student towards the institute as their minds and hearts might have been set on another preferred destination. Most importantly, students indicated their interest in practical teaching to gain real-world experience which is critical in applying student-centered teaching practices such as social constructivism.



**Q3: The intuition has met my preconceived expectations of what higher education should be.**

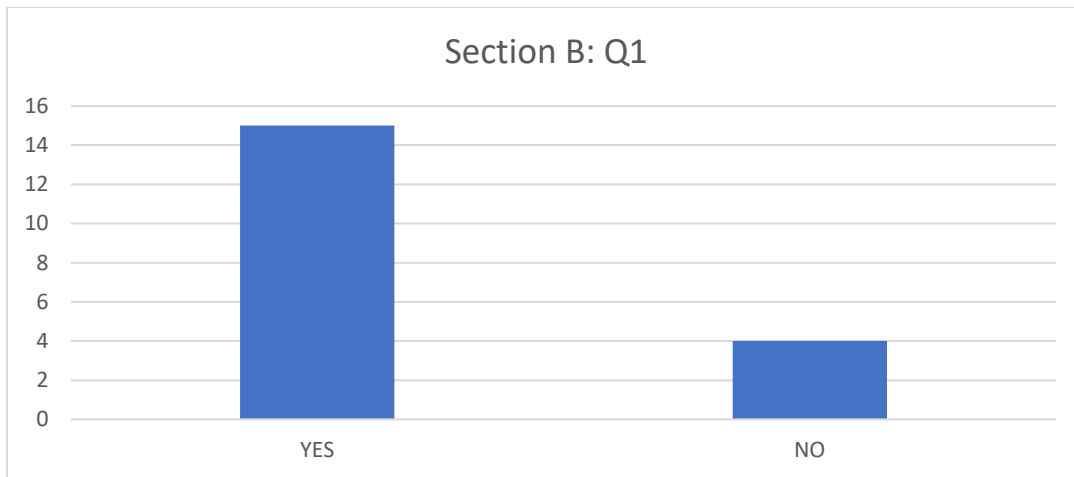
Question 3 required students to indicate whether eta College had met their preconceived expectation of what higher education would be. This was extremely important to understand the initial expectation and what the possible factors were that influenced the student experience. The participants indicated that initial expectations were to receive personal attention and practical teaching which highlights that the teaching approaches used by the educations satisfied the need and expectation of the learner.



**Section B**

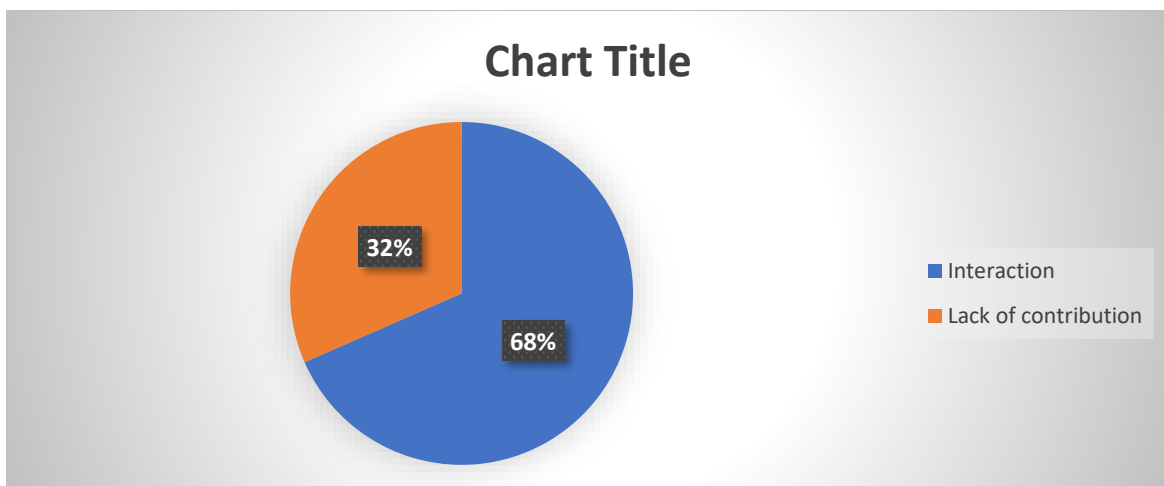
**Q1: Do you enjoy working on your own?**

The next section within the questionnaire focused on self-efficacy as an objective of the research was to determine the most efficient and effective methods to produce self-autonomous learners and industry-ready graduates. The first question under this section aimed to determine the students' current interest in working independently. Evidence indicated that there was a great acceptance that the learning process would require the learner to take responsibility for their own learning. There were indications from some of the participants that their preference was working in groups as they were able to learn from their peers.



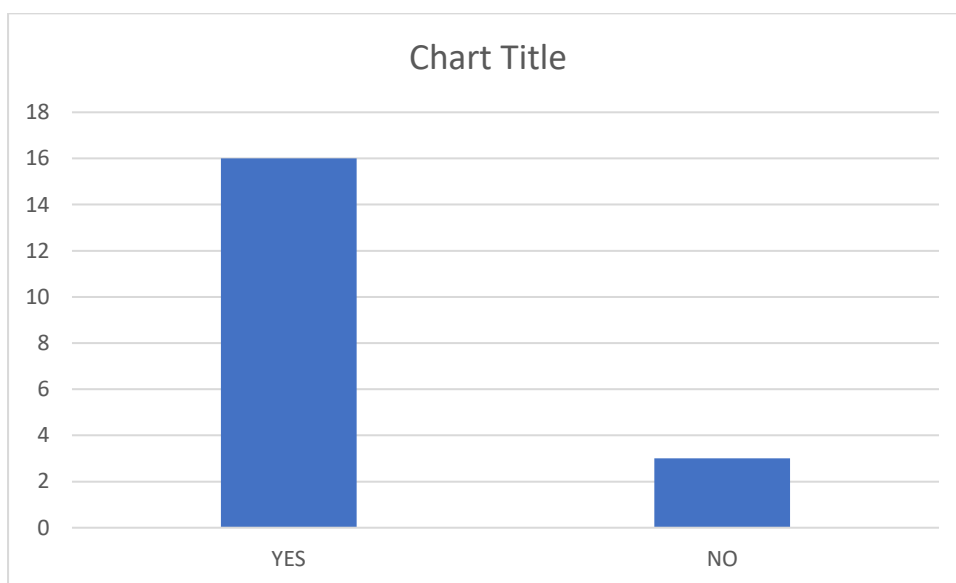
**Q2: How do you feel about working in groups?**

Question 2 under self-efficacy sought to uncover the student’s feelings towards group work and determine the preference of the sample between individual and group work. In understanding the acceptance of group work, the teaching strategies can be adjusted in a way that provides the student with the most effective teaching and learning strategies. Majority of the group highlighted their enjoyment of group work as they can interact with others. Through that interaction they can share ideas and work with different personalities. The biggest concern raised for working in groups was the lack of contribution from certain members and the feeling of carrying others through the educational journey.



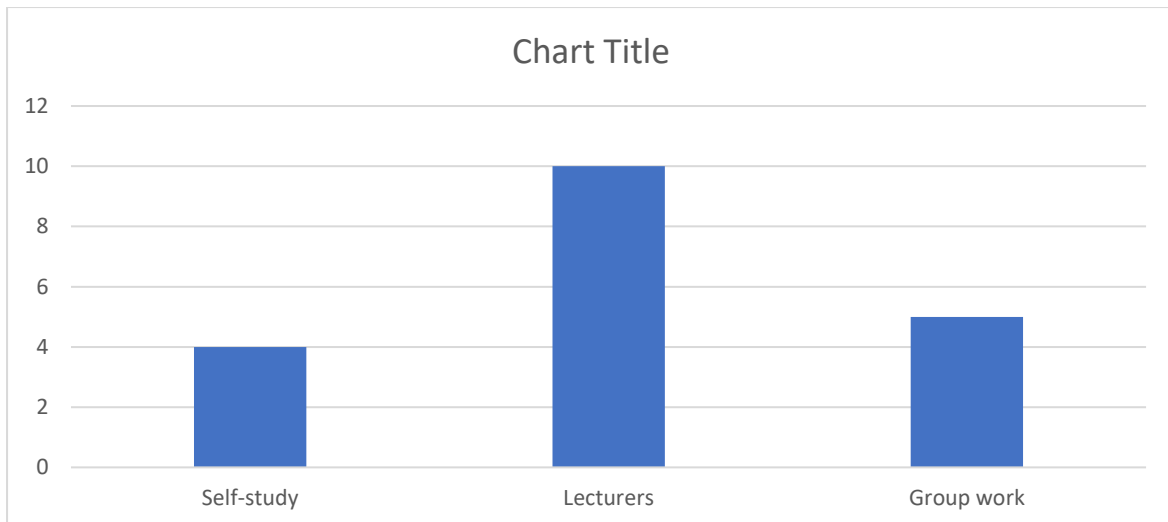
**Q3: Do you prefer lectures where the educator delivers the content via a presentation?**

The following chart indicates the student's preference towards more traditional teaching methods such as conventional presentations used to deliver theory. The results clearly highlighted that students preferred active participation within classrooms rather than being passive recipients of information. One out of every three learners still showed their preference for traditional teaching approaches. As argued by Zittleman and Sadker (2014) there is no singular framework for teaching within higher education classrooms and providing the student with the best possible learning experience will require an integration between traditional and modern teaching strategies.



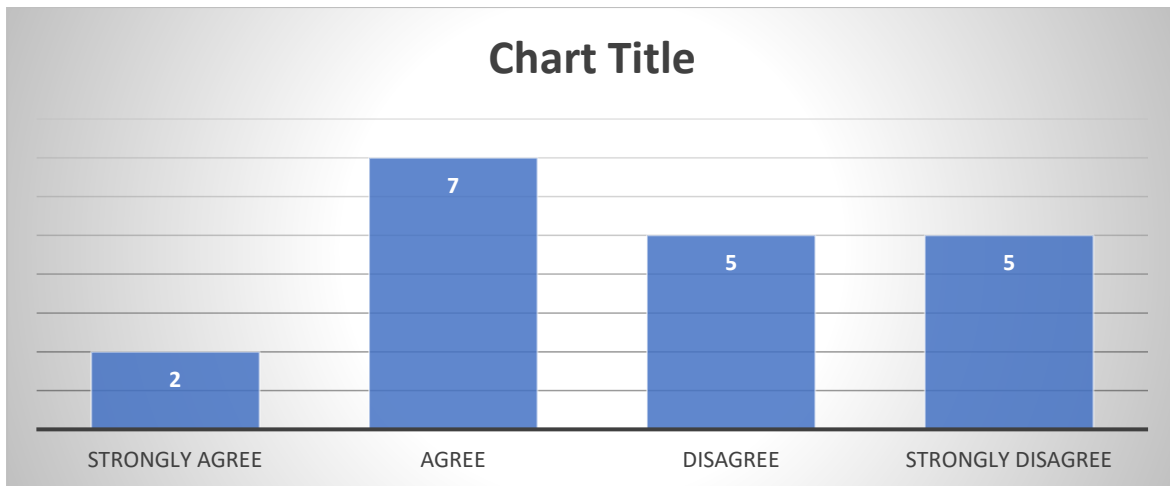
**Q4: I enjoy the following aspect of my learning journey the most.**

Question 4 under section B aimed to establish the most enjoyable aspect of the students learning experience. Students were provided with three key options, 1) Self-study, 2. The lecturer and 3) Group work. The results surprisingly showed that the main reason students enjoy their educational journey is due to their lecturers. This highlights the importance the educator plays towards the student motivation towards education. One of the main reasons was the personal attention they received from the lectures.



**Q5: When I find the subject matter difficult, I try and engage with the content myself.**

Question 5 under Self-efficacy section looked at how motivated students are towards engaging with subject matter independently and to determine their readiness to take responsibility for their learning journey. As student-centered teaching advocates for educators to hand over more responsibility to the learner it was important to get an understanding from the student on how they perceived this notion. The results showed that over 50% of the study population showed a lack of responsibility and mainly relied on the educator being in control of knowledge transfer. The main concern was that participants had indicated in previous questions their interest in working independently which contradicts the information in some form. Student-centered teaching would require learners to become less dependent on the educator in constructing knowledge and taking responsibility for their own journey.

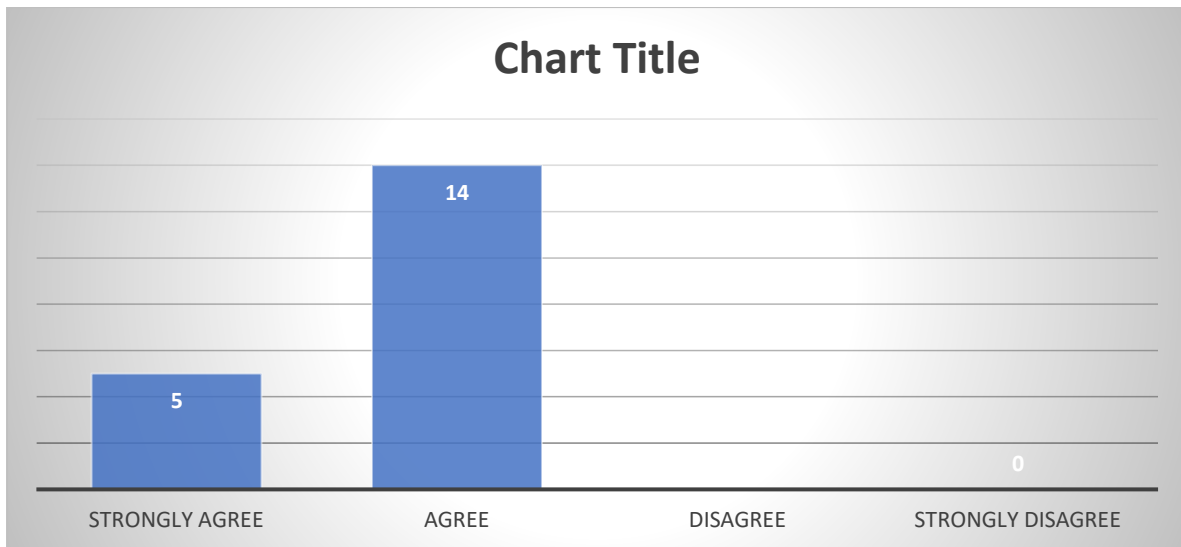


### Section C

This section looked at the effectiveness of active learning strategies within higher education classrooms and consisted out of 5 guiding questions.

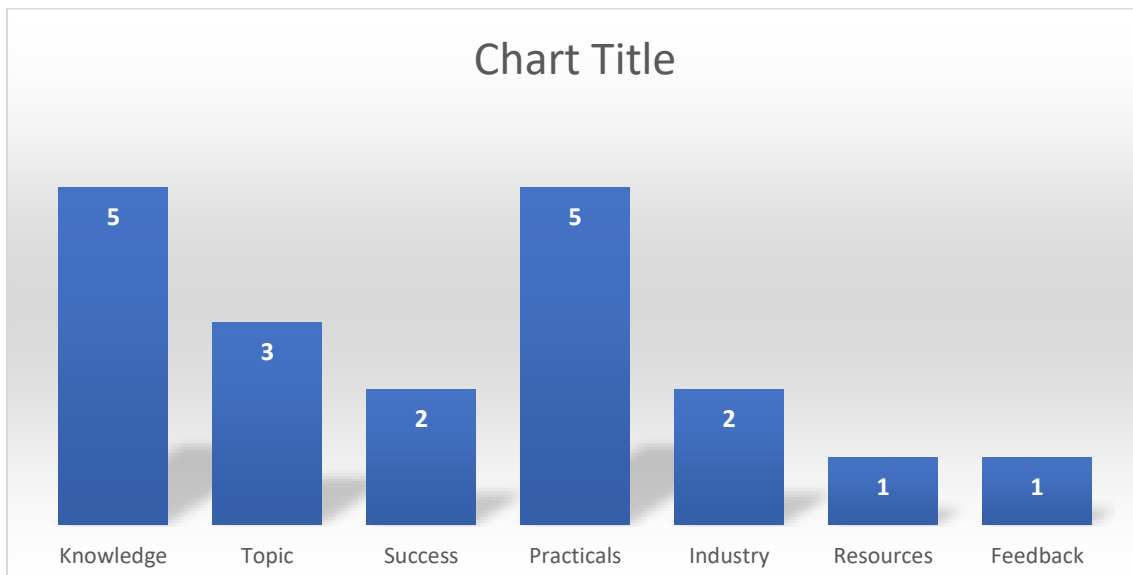
**Q1: Throughout the process of learning I always try and make connections between concepts.**

Results showed that students attempted to connect key concepts and gain a deeper understanding of subject matter. This can be used as an indicator on the acceptance from learners of student-centered approaches. All 3<sup>rd</sup> year students only “agreed” with the statement which might relate to their dependence on the educator developing over the years. At eta College students receive significant student support and this might be part of the issue. It could be a key indicator for the educator to promote independent learning from the onset to better condition the learners. Student should be more intrinsically motivated as they move through the years rather than more dependent on an external influence from the educator.



**Q2: Elaborate on what motivates you the most to engage with learning content.**

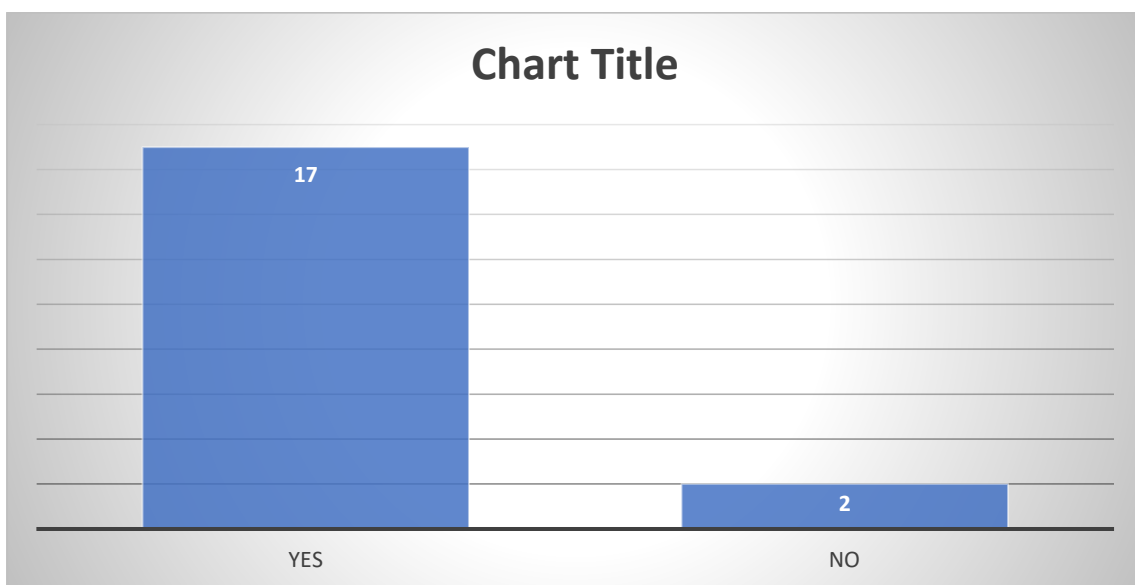
The participants had a mixture of factors that contributed to their motivation. The most prevalent answers related to their desire to expand on existing knowledge base and the practical curriculum of Sport Management. Feedback seemed to also play a minimal role towards student motivation which highlights its importance within the learning process.





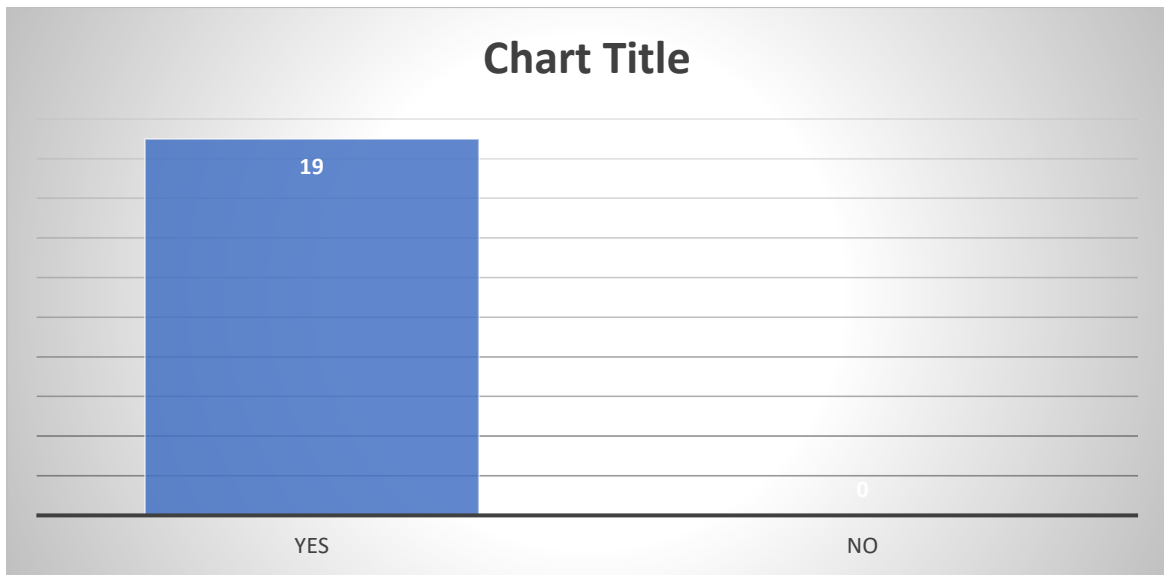
**Q3: Do you feel the current learning activities encourages you to participate within the learning process?**

The Spot Management curriculum is extremely based on practical application rather than being overly theory intensive. This allows the student to gain real-life experience and develop critical thinking ability that is one of the key attributes' employers look for within graduates. The student's indication of their enjoyment of the practical activities highlights the importance of student-centered teaching. Those [participants who did not enjoy the activities enjoyed theory more.



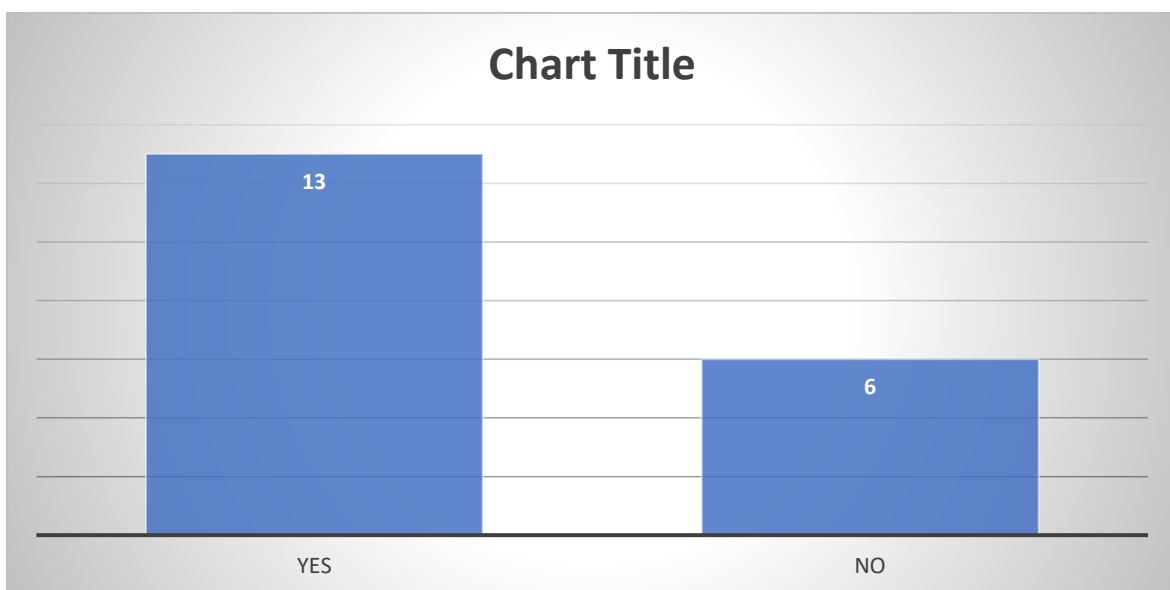
**Q4: Do you enjoy practical learning activities?**

The results were clear in favour of practical teaching strategies. Students shared the sentiments in that practical teaching better prepares them for the workplace and that it improved understanding as they were able to apply theory into practice.



**Q5: Would you like to see more field projects being introduced as part of the curriculum?**

The curriculum currently provides a lot of opportunities to work within the industry as volunteers or as part of their experiential learning. Although most of the participants of the study indicated their desire for more field projects, 30% felt that the current opportunities were sufficient. However, of those that indicated that the current projects were sufficient only felt so due to the financial constraint of paying additional travelling costs. The students would be more motivated to be part of a broader experiential training programme if their finances permitted.

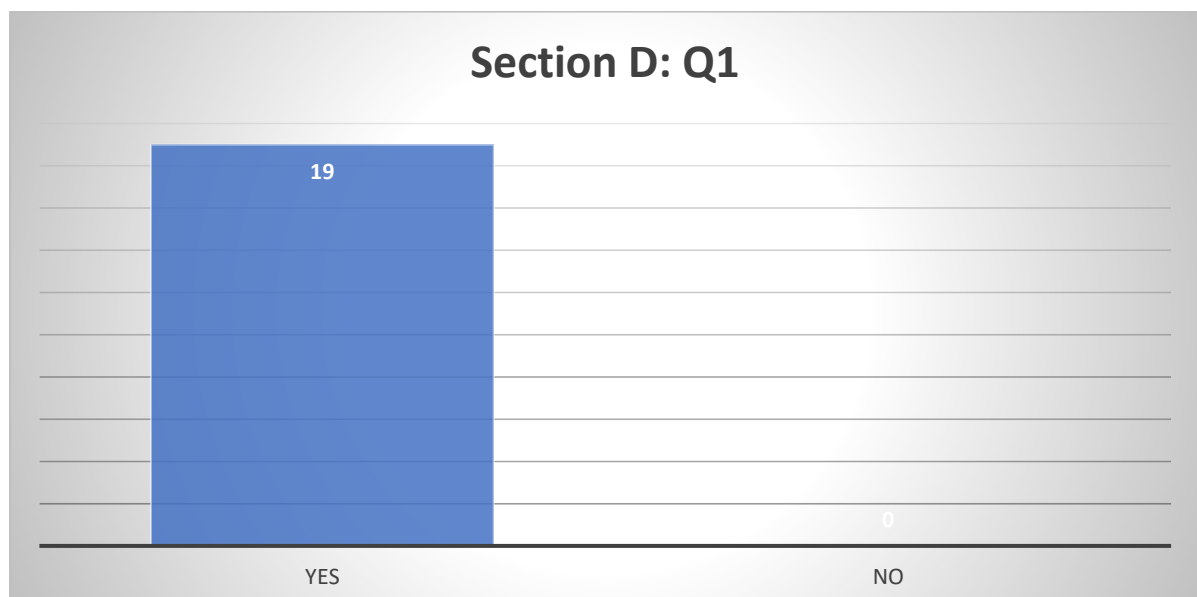


## Section D

This section looked at factors around stimulation within the learning environment. The research attempted to directly obtain information on what the student would like to experience within the learning environment to motivate them to engage more with teaching and learning.

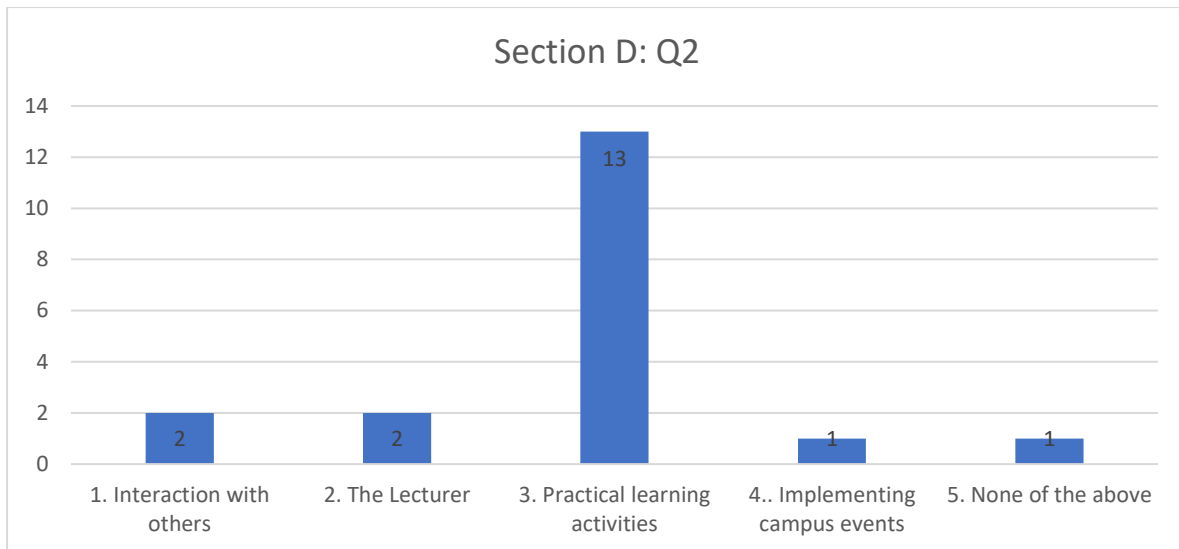
### **Q1: Does the teaching method used by the educator motivate you to engage with the subject matter?**

Results clearly indicated the impact the teaching approach had on learner motivation with all participants in agreement that it has a direct influence.

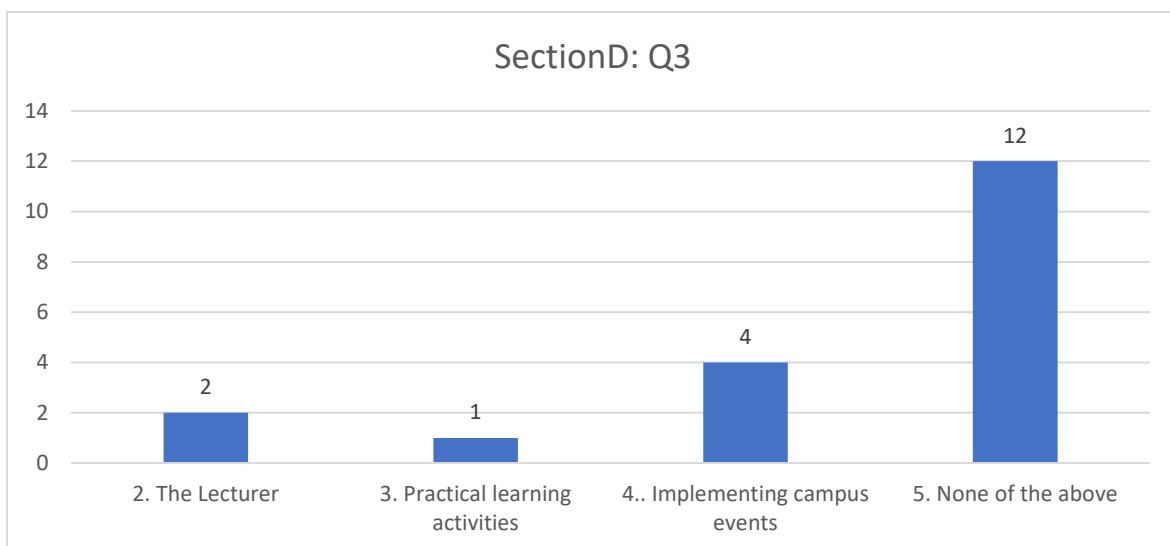


### **Q2: Which of the following factors motivates you the most to attend school?**

The question had a variety of options but neglected to include traditional teaching methods. Results indicated that students enjoyed practical activities the most as it prepared them for the working environment. They also enjoyed the practical sessions more as it allowed them an opportunity to problem solve and feed of their peers to construct meaning and improve understanding.



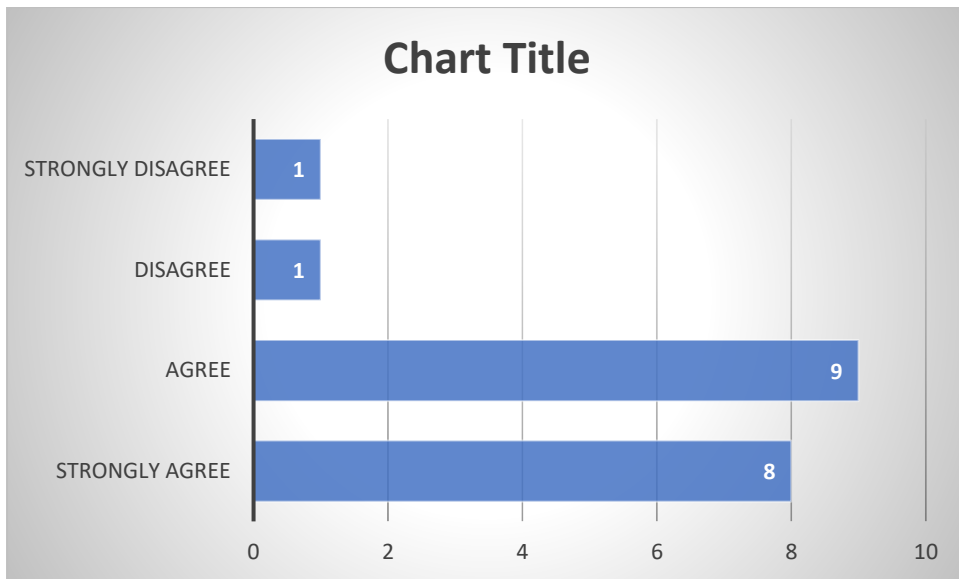
**Q3: Which of the following factors least motivates you to attend school?**



Question 4, 5 and 6 had a rating scale from.

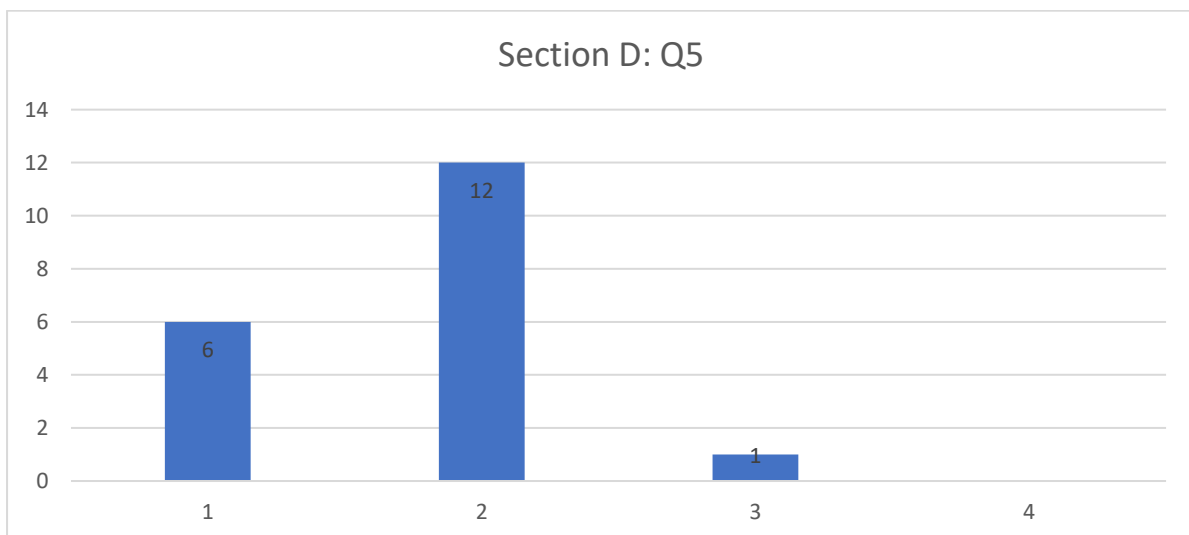
**Q4: I enjoy my studies as I can participate in class discussions.**

Most participants enjoyed class discussions as it allowed them to interact with peers. Those that did not show much interest indicated their preference to work alone. The consensus was that class discussion allowed student to gain a deeper understanding of the topic.



**Q5: The sport management course is exciting due to the subject matter and learning resources.**

One aspect of that the research did not thoroughly investigate was the decolonisation of curriculum and how subject matter appealed to the learner. From the results it showed that the current curriculum appealed to the student and was fully enjoyable as it stimulates excitement about the topic.



**Q6: I engage with the subject matter as the lecturer is always using a variety of teaching methods.**

It was important to determine at the start of the research if the student enjoyed variety teaching to not just provide a subjective view on student-centered teaching on student motivation but also how important it is to cater for the di

### Ethical considerations

To have ensured that all ethical considerations were taken into account for this study, the research instituted measures to ensure that participant confidentiality, anonymity and privacy was protected at all times. Firstly, all necessary structures within eta College were notified of the intention to conduct research and ethical clearance was received. Once all relevant clearances were provided, a sample size was selected and taken through the research process. A thorough explanation of the study was provided to all participants during a face-to-face session. The research did not pose any physical harm towards the participant, but everyone was provided with the option to withdraw from the research at any time should they wish to do so. All participants were provided with a consent form that explained the research process and its purpose. The consent form highlighted the process involved in protecting the confidentiality of all participants and that no information would be shared within any person outside of the researcher and supervisor. In order to enhance anonymity, participants were not required to include their names within their research questionnaires, as this also allowed for more truthful and honest responses. To ensure that privacy was protected during the course of the research, participation within the research was completely voluntary and no participant was forced to be part of the process or answer any questions that they did not feel comfortable with. Once questionnaires were completed all information was summarized and interpreted within a research report.

### Limitations of the study

At the start of the process there were possible pitfalls anticipated during the research study. The initial concern was not receiving ethical clearance from eta College, as this would pose a major problem in successfully conducting the research. To eliminate this potential issue, the researcher ensured that the research study was discussed with the CEO at the early stages of the process, to ensure that the top

structures of the institute remained aware of the process. The study was then discussed with national academic head, regional campus manager and regional academic manager to obtain ethical clearance. Student participation in the study could limit the number of anticipated responses. The initial study only included the sport management students that would complete their third year in 2020 and a decision was taken to include the students who will complete their second year in 2020. This increased the sample size and attended to any potential issue of no-show students in the 2020 calendar. Should there had been an issue with the sample size, the option would be to include the 2020 first year sport management students. Unfortunately, the research did not predict the current COVID-19 epidemic that resulted in limited time with the students during the first semester. Fortunately, the study was conducted during term 1 and most participants were able to participate within the study, complete and return questionnaires.

The questionnaires were handed out and not made available online but had online forms been used, the campus has full access to internet connection and any student that did not have a working device would have been able to use the college computers. As the college is situated within a national cricket stadium, the initial thought was the possible interruption by the cricket schedule but in the end, this did not have any impact on the study.

#### [Anticipated contributions of the study](#)

There has been long-standing interest in the value student-centered approaches add to the various levels of education (Lea, Stevenson & Troy, 2003). With many education institutes advocating the need for educational reform, the study aimed to add substantial value to the current literature on ways education could improve individual motivation. The study found a lot of similarities in current research but did highlight the lack of current South African examples of using student-centered teaching practices within higher education. The research also provided key information on the different educational needs from students at different levels within their educational journey. It provided good evidence on the important role of social interaction during the learning process and how student-centered teaching stimulates student engagement. With the data available from the study it will

hopefully incentivise educators to fully embrace the transformative power of education. Although there is no singular way for enhancing student experience, studies such as this provides a good platform for ways to adapt teaching to encourage student engagement and motivation.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research results clearly indicate that education cannot be a one size fits all process and to truly stimulate student engagement, curriculum design must promote a holistic learning environment. Although the results indicated that the students preferred student-centered approaches through practical teaching, it did not rule out their enjoyment of traditional teaching methods. It was clear that majority of the students enjoyed learning through the interaction with peers although some questioned the effectiveness of group tasks due to the lack of participation from certain members. This led to a feeling of discouragement but can be successfully managed if assessment is adjusted to allow for individual scoring criteria in group tasks. Through the review of literature there are still some gaps that exist in the current literature regarding the impact teacher-centered approaches have on student motivation. Existing evidence clearly indicate the importance of student-centered teaching within higher education and the impact it has on student motivation. Further studies can expand to explore the influence of external factors such as finances on the motivation, students have towards education. Many opinions and concerns highlighted that students found it difficult to remain stimulated when factors such as funding still had an immense impact on their lives. Practical learning activities had a higher impact on engagement as it allowed the students to interact with others, share ideas and problem solve. Student-centered approaches allow for greater engagement and promotes independent learning. The study provided important information about the critical part the educator plays in creating active learning environments that will enhance the overall experience for the learner. Through the study key results pointed to the importance of more student-centered teaching at an advanced level within the educational process as was highlighted with the third-year students' preference for practical teaching above traditional methods. Learner-centric teaching provided them with a greater opportunity to construct and apply their



knowledge to actively solve real-world issues they would face within the workplace. There seemed to be a dire need from the students to have continuous engagement with educators and clear indication that the educational process is bound to be more effective and efficient through cohesive effort.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX C: EXPLANATORY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

To whom it may concern,

My name is Auldryn Julies and I am a student at The Independent Institute of Education. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Clodagh Mannion-Nash about factors influencing student motivation towards education. The aim of the study is to investigate the impact the teaching approach has on the motivation of a student towards learning and engaging with subject matter. The participants in the study will be exposed to both teacher and student-centered teaching approaches to test the effect it has on the students' stimulus towards subject matter. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of how the teaching method utilised within classrooms have an impact on student engagement towards subject matter.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

#### What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because the study will find ways of actively engaging students in learning and find effective ways of motivating them towards subject matter and enhancing the learning experience. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to complete a questionnaire and participate within a teaching session that will include teacher and student-centered teaching methods. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

#### Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your feelings about personal factors influencing your motivation towards learning. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

#### Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary.
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so.



- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision

### Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at The Independent Institute of Education, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

### What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Post-Graduate Diploma in Higher Education. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

### What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:  
Auldrin Julies

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:  
Clodagh Mannion-Nash

## Consent form for participants

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research conducted by Auldrin Julies about motivation in education in order to research the value teaching approaches have on the stimulus of a student towards subject matter. The research further aims to find effective ways for educators to create significant learning experience for the learner to produce graduates that can think much more critically about subject matter. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

1. I agree to be interviewed for this research.
2. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
3. My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
4. I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
5. I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX D: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

### Topic: Student motivation to education

The following questionnaire contains various questions related to factors that possibly contribute towards student interest to learning. You will be asked various open-ended questions, where you are required to provide your honest opinion. Some of the questions will provide you with various choices or that you answer “yes” or “no”, but you are requested to further expand on your selection within the comments section. Note that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers and all that is required is for you to provide your opinion. Before answering a question, kindly think carefully about your answer. The questionnaire has been divided into the following sections:

1. Educational selection – to establish the motivation behind the selection of the specific course and institution; 2. Self-efficacy – establish the believe of the learner to complete tasks independently; 3. Active learning strategies – the value of active learning strategies towards the students’ ability to construct new knowledge; 4. Stimulating learning environment – gain and understanding of how educators, interaction with fellow students, learning environment and teaching methods influence student motivation.

If you have already answered a question and want to reconsider your answer, simply cross out the original answer.

Wherever you are provided with a choice of answers or to indicate “yes” or “no”, please mark the box with an “x”.

Gender : \_\_\_\_\_

Course : \_\_\_\_\_

Course year : 2nd \_\_\_\_\_ or 3rd \_\_\_\_\_

## A. Educational selection

1. Indicate your reason behind studying towards a Diploma in Sport and Recreation Management.

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2. Elaborate on why you selected eta College as your preferred institution of study.

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3. Please answer the following statement based on the rating scale from 1 – 4, with 4 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. Elaborate on your answer within the comments section.

*The institution has met my preconceived expectations of what higher education should be.*

1 Strongly disagree

2 Disagree

3 Agree

4 Strongly agree

Comment on reason for answer:

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## B. Self-Efficacy

1. Do you enjoy working on your own?  Yes  No Comment on reason for your answer:

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2. How do you feel about working in groups to complete tasks?

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3. Do you prefer lecturers where the educator delivers the content via a presentation?  Yes  No  
Comments:

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4. I enjoy the following aspect of my learning journey the most. Please select an answer and provide reason.

- Self-study
- Group work
- Lecturers
- None of the above

Comment on the reason for your answer:

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5. Please answer the following statement based on the rating scale from 1 – 4, with 4 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. Elaborate on your answer within the comments section.

*When I find the subject matter difficult, I try an engage with the learning content myself.*

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Agree
- 4 Strongly agree

Comment on reason for answer:

---

---

### **C. Active learning strategies**

1. Please answer the following statement based on the rating scale from 1 – 4, with 4 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. Elaborate on your answer within the comments section.

*Throughout the process of learning I always try and make connections between concepts that I am learning about.*

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Agree
- 4 Strongly agree

Comment on reason for answer:

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2. Elaborate on what you find motivates you the most to engage with learning content

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3. Do you feel that current learning activities encourages you to participate within the learning process? Please elaborate on your answer.

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4. Do you enjoy practical learning activities? Elaborate on your answer

---

---

5. Would you like to see more field projects being introduced as part of the Sport Management curriculum? Please provide a brief explanation.

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#### **D. Stimulating learning environment**

1. Does the teaching method used by the educator motivate you to engage with the subject matter? Elaborate on your answer.

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2. Which of the following factors motivate you the most to attend school?

- 1 Interaction with other students
- 2 The lecturer
- 3 Practical learning activities
- 4 Implementing campus events
- None of the above

Comment on reason for answer:

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3. Which of the following factors least motivate you to attend school?

- 2 The lecturer
- 3 Practical learning activities
- 4 Implementing campus events
- None of the above

4. Please answer the following statement based on the rating scale from 1 – 4, with 4 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. Elaborate on your answer within the comments section.

*I enjoy my studies as I am able to participate in class discussions.*

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Agree
- 4 Strongly agree

Comment on reason for answer:

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5. Please answer the following statement based on the rating scale from 1 – 4, with 4 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. Elaborate on your answer within the comments section.

*The sport management course is exciting due to the subject matter and learning content.*

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Agree
- 4 Strongly agree

Comment on reason for answer:

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6. Please answer the following statement based on the rating scale from 1 – 4, with 4 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. Elaborate on your answer within the comments section.

*I engage with the subject matter as the lecturer is always using a variety of teaching methods*

1 Strongly disagree

2 Disagree

3 Agree

4 Strongly agree

Comment on reason for answer:

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Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

Participant signature: \_\_\_N/A\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

End of questionnaire