

An Exploration of First Year Bachelor of Education Degree Students' Learning Preferences in Academic Literacy in a Private Higher Education Institution: A Case for the Blended Learning Approach

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Abstract : The higher education landscape has undergone changes in the past decade, with concepts such as blended learning, online learning, and hybrid models appearing more frequently in research and practice. The year 2020 marked a mass migration from face-to-face learning and more traditional forms of education to online learning in higher education institutions across the globe due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, contact learning students and lecturing staff alike were thrust into the world of online learning at an unprecedented pace. Traditional modes of learning had to be amended, and pedagogical strategies required adjustments. This study was located within a compulsory first-year academic literacy module in a higher education institution. The study aimed to explore students' learning preferences between online, face-face, and blended learning within the context of academic literacy. Data was collected through online qualitative questionnaires administered to 150 first-year students, which were then analysed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that 48.5% of the participants preferred a blended learning approach to academic literacy. The main themes that emerged in support of their preference were best of both worlds, flexibility, productivity, and lecturer accessibility. As a result, this paper advocates for the blended learning approach for academic literacy skills-based modules.

Keywords : academic literacy, blended learning, online learning, student learning preferences

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