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STUDENT EXPECTATIONS – AN ASPECT EASILY OVERLOOKED

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Abstract

It is reasonable to believe that students have preconceptions about a course and an education programme, standing on the threshold of entering. It is also likely that these preconceptions will influence the perception of a range of aspects of the course due to content, pedagogy, lecturers, and the level of satisfaction. These expectations were investigated at the time of course introductions at a Swedish university for three different courses and subjects in three different years. A mix of methods, qualitative and quantitative, via two open-ended surveys were employed: one focused on the expectations before the course introduction, the other on the reflections on the expectations after the course introduction. Overall, it can be concluded that the student groups are diverse regarding expectations of a course. Academic skills such as academic writing was highlighted as an expectation and seemed to overshadow other course objectives. Active verbs that govern different steps of learning were neglected and not noticed at all. The course introduction could be viewed as an underestimated aspect of developing a course design. However, as a teacher, it is imperative to raise one's awareness of students' expectations and preferences concerning the initial part of a curriculum design, ensuring its potential.

Sammanfattning

Föreliggande studie tar sin utgångspunkt i att studenter inför kursstart har förutfattade meningar om en kurs och ett utbildningsprogram. Sådana förutfattade meningar kan komma att påverka uppfattningen om en rad aspekter på kursen såsom innehåll, pedagogik, föreläsare och graden av tillfredsställelse. Studien belyser studentens förväntningar i samband med kursintroduktionen vid tre olika kurser samt ämnen under tre olika årskurser på ett svenskt universitet. Två enkätundersökningar genomfördes innefattande såväl kvalitativt som kvantitativt innehåll, varav den ena fokuserade på förväntningar inför kursintroduktionen, den andra på reflektioner kring förväntningarna efter kursintroduktionen. En övergripande slutsats är att studenterna har skilda och olika förväntningar på en kurs. Synen på akademiska färdigheter såsom akademiskt skrivande lyftes särskilt fram som en förväntan vilket tycktes överskugga andra kursmål. Aktiva verb som styr olika steg i inläringen uppmärksammades inte alls. Kursintroduktionen kan ses som en underskattad del i att utveckla en kursdesign, som lärare är det dock centralt att öka medvetenheten om studenters förväntningar och preferenser särskilt när det gäller den inledande och introducerande kursdelen.

Nyckelord: Förväntningar, lärande, undervisning, kursintroduktion

Introduction

One of the critical challenges in today's higher education (HE) is to foster an environment where learning and teaching are balanced between meeting the needs of students and providing feedback to lecturers while supporting education. It is also important to recognise the arena for inclusive education and the co-creation of knowledge, originating from the values that everyone brings to the learning environment (Freire, 1973; Christensen et al., 2021; Christersson et al., 2022). As the number of students enrolling in HE has grown, the groups are more diversified than ever before and widening participation has increased – factors that challenge the role of HE (Wilkins & Burke, 2015; Anderson et al., 2018) and influence traditional teaching. In addition, university students' commitment decreases, and students seek knowledge beyond that specified in the curriculum (Kahn, 2014). Facing these new conditions leads us to HE today, where it is crucial to focus on how to find out and understand students' needs and expectations. Thereby, it will be possible for the lecturers to meet, fulfil or even eventually not prioritise these expectations (Voss et al., 2007).

One traditional way of finding out student opinion is via evaluations. However, these evaluations often focus on experiences and feedback after the course is completed (or as part of a course). This mapping is essential to promote active learning and student engagement with learning. However, feedback has no effect in a vacuum, and for it to be powerful there must be a learning context to address feedback as part of the teaching process (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Instead of this post-perspective, this study uses a pre-perspective, investigating student expectations about the initial phase of a course during the course introduction. Through exposure of such expectations, awareness of students' preferences concerning the initial part of a curriculum design could lead to better teaching, and thereby learning. The aim of this study is thus to investigate expectations, for introductions, for learning, and for the role of the lectures, among students. The point of view seems to have been overlooked for the benefit of the final evaluations and thereby this study both identify a research gap and contribute filling in this gap. Three courses at different academic levels and within different subject areas were investigated. These courses were offered at Malmö University at two faculties (two courses within Health and Society and one within Technology and Society). We start by elaborate upon the concept "expectations" and the significance of these in relation to student satisfaction. We go on describing what the students expected about the course they were about to start and what to learn, and their expectations of the lecturers. Finally, the article focusses on the diverse expectations that students have and the importance of recognizing these already in the course design and introduction.

Expectations – A Diverse Impact

It is reasonable to believe that students have preconceptions about a course and an education programme, standing on the threshold of entering. It is also likely that these preconceptions will influence the perception of a range of aspects of the course, such as the content, pedagogy, lecturers and level of satisfaction with the course (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006). A recent study by James (2022) showed that attention to student expectations, concerns and intentions can also contribute to increasing student retention rates, not only in a specific course (subject) but also for the duration of a programme.

Yooyen et al. (2011) confirm that students have expectations and come with experiences and motivation before they enter their studies, which in turn impacts the outcome of evaluations. The same is valid for university staff who will have perceptions of the students' expectations and how these will be fulfilled. The findings indicate that perceptual gaps impact the evaluation outcomes (i.e., satisfaction or dissatisfaction). Based on these findings, the authors conclude that the university should move beyond the traditional satisfaction/dissatisfaction paradigm to fully understand the mismatch between expectations and experiences.

Changing focus from higher education institutions (HEI) to a general labour market, previous studies have suggested that unmet expectations are negatively associated with job satisfaction, commitment, performance and retention (Wanous et al., 1992). In addition, unmet expectations have been found to mediate the relationship between workers' beliefs about job conditions and performance outcomes, such as intent to remain in the organisation (Turnley & Feldman, 2000). In other words, if a worker has higher expectations about the reward associated with their job, they are more likely to be disappointed with the job and less likely to remain in the organisation (Hansung, 2011).

Regardless of the logic behind student or workforce expectations taken from the classroom environment in HEI or different fields of practice, the outcome of unmet expectations is the same. Expectations are a part of evaluation processes to stimulate students' engagement and involvement through participatory learning processes. Therefore, an overall learning environment design includes social and pedagogical aspects where students and lecturers should feel integrated. As a part of this, expectations could be seen as an essential element, not least in how we design and structure the initial phase of the meeting with students for positive learning outcomes.

Student Engagement and Expectations

Student engagement is recognised as crucial for HEI quality content and pedagogical framing (e.g., Kahu 2013). As stated by the European Union (EU) Education Policy (European Commission, 2021), HE must play its part in tackling Europe's social and democratic challenges. This also refers to the Agenda 2030 (UN, 2015). The focus on engagement includes ensuring that HE is inclusive, where student should be seen as participative and active. Therefore, students should be considered key actors in HEI's contribution to social transformation for a better future. Encouraging students to connect what they already know to what they are expected to learn makes an important contribution to the learning process. Inclusive collaboration across borders is a prerequisite for a co-creative knowledge process that is solution-oriented, socially robust and transferable to scientific and societal global practices (Gibbons, 1999). This is needed in a complex and fast-changing society (Rosa 2013). Cook-Sather et al. (2014) express the same view and see partnership as a collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualisation, decision-making, implementation, investigation or analyses. The importance of student engagement is thereby well formulated and ought to permeate the core of HEI.

One way to involve students is to make room for and encourage them to express their expectations. Sharing these may also be evident if they are unrealistic and thereby conflicting views of a course (Buckley et al., 2004). Student expectations depend on a range of factors and, according to Borghi et al. (2016), research about it is relatively rare. Tham and Lynch (2014, p. 709) addressed a reflection on education with a "wish for clarity and certainty concerning course contents, expectations and assessment" and that they "disliked 'unclear' or 'vague' descriptions of course contents".

Lim et al. (2022) explored students' expectations of the lecturer's behaviour as a key to understanding student engagement. Here, the behaviour included issues like "making the subject interesting", "giving helpful guidance" and "availability". The findings revealed expectation–performance gaps in lecturer behaviour, and it was demonstrated how evaluating students' expectations and performance evaluations of lecturer behaviour can inform intervention strategies for closing the expectation–performance gap to improve student engagement in HE. This study raised the importance of listening to students in HE to enhance the quality of interactions. It also showed the important role of lecturers in improving student engagement in HE. Voss et al. (2007) also focused on lecturers and found that desirable attributes were being knowledgeable, enthusiastic, approachable and friendly, and that these attributes were directly associated with being prepared for a profession and passing the tests. This raises the importance of HE having a broader role in society than educating students and contributing to democratic values. Employability was also a result of a study by Gorgodze et al. (2020). The students in their study also expected knowledge transfer and the acquisition of practical skills. The skills were defined as a connection between the university and the workplace. Hassel and Ridout (2018) point out that interactive dialogic relationships with students can change lecturers' power and authority and offer room for understanding student expectations concerning lecturer behaviour and what lecturers can do to address them to garner greater student engagement. A conclusion reached is that differences in the expectations between student and lecturer perceptions have a negative impact and lead to difficulties in assessing learning and teaching. The meaning-making of knowledge of what expectations mean for course introductions is a critical aspect both for learning and for instructors. Money et al. (2017) state that in conclusion to the importance and awareness of the role of expectations, HEI must map and address them,

though they might influence the students' retention, failing rate, engagement level and perceived quality experience.

Methodological Approach

The methodological approach is rooted in Brown's (1992) design experiments viewed through the lens of action research (Zheng, 2015). Our approach was to investigate students' expectations before a course was introduced and directly after the lecturers presented the course.

Research design

The study took place between September 2019 and December 2020 at Malmö University, Sweden. We selected three courses in each of the years of bachelor education in Sweden. This selection of courses was based on convenience, i.e., that the four authors were actively engaged in those courses. The characteristics and homogeneity of the student groups were not explored, rather the scope of expectations was related to completed years at the university. The first-year students were from a disability studies course, the second-year students were from a course in their computer science specialisation and the third-year students were from an elective course in international social work. For years one and two, the course is mandatory and part of their respective programmes, while in year three, students have explicitly chosen this course. Some students in year three were also exchange students who travelled to the university for the semester.

The courses represented three different subject areas. The disability course was about the welfare system and legislation in the field of disability and participation and had ten learning outcomes. The computer science course aimed to deepen the students' knowledge about digital information management and communication and had seven learning outcomes. Lastly, the elective course focussed on the relation between social policy, social problems and living conditions from a multicultural perspective out of social work in a local and global context and had twelve learning outcomes. The disability course contains, besides the subject-specific learning outcomes, one about personal and professional development and one about academic reading and writing. The course in social work had two learning outcomes pertaining to writing an academic text and opposing another. The rest of the learning outcomes in the syllabuses were subject specific and connected to an active verb such as discuss, define, reflect, problematise and so on (Bloom, 1956), showing what kind of knowledge the student should obtain during the course.

Instrument

In this study we applied a mix of methods, qualitative and quantitative research. At the start of the course, we developed two open-ended surveys. The first focuses on expectations and the second on reflections on the expectations. The individual surveys were developed by the team of researchers, reflecting their experience as educators, and focuses on expectations about central aspects when it comes to entering an HE course. They were developed iteratively through conversations about our experiences as educators and researchers and from earlier research.

The first survey took place at the beginning of the course, when the first lesson was scheduled but before the course was presented. This three-question open-ended survey investigated the following:

1. Students' expectations of what the course is about
2. Students' expectations of what to learn
3. Students' expectations of the lecturers

The second survey was administered after the lecturers introduced the course, i.e., a couple of hours later. The issues raised were formulated as

“Does the presentation of the course match your expectations, and do you know what you should do and achieve in the course?”

The survey left room for both short as well as long answers to each question.

Students

A total of 77 students attended the course introduction and completed the survey: 31 students from the first-year course, 38 from the second year and eight from the third year.

Data Analysis Approach

A collaborative inductive content analysis (Mayring, 2015) was conducted to see what themes and categories emerged from the data. In practice, the researchers went through the datasets, creating initial categories and distributing these to the other team members who then suggested new categories based on their datasets. The final set of categories was based on a collaborative and iterative analysis process conducted on the datasets. In cases where ambiguous student answers were encountered, we discussed the matter with the whole group and interpreted it together. Two senior researchers coded the collected data. Disagreements were discussed between the two researchers, and the results were averaged to .912 Kappa for the inter-reliability between the two coders.

An example from the question “Students' expectations of what the course is about” was answered as “How to learn how to write in an academic way”, which led to the category “Partial”. This is because the current course had a range of learning outcomes where academic writing was one of these, implying that only part of the course was observed. The rest of the empirical data was categorised in a corresponding manner. In a few cases an answer could be analysed as belonging to two categories.

Ethics

This study complied with ethical principles as well as applicable international, EU and national law, in particular the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016/679, upon its enforcement, as well as EU Directive 2006/24/EC. Additionally, we followed the national legislation that governs what personal data partners may collect, how they may use the data and to whom they can disclose the data according to The Ethical Review Act (SFS 2003:460). Since no sensitive personal data was collected the study did

not go through a vetting process. The collected data cannot be traced to any individual and each participating student completed a written informed consent form.

Results

The results will be structured in the same procedural order as described in the method section.

Before the Introduction

1. Students' Expectations of What the Course is About

Three categories were created from this measurement occasion: basic, partial and in-depth understanding. The categories should be interpreted as a process where basic represents the simplest understanding and in-depth is applicable when a student shows awareness of the course objectives, assessment and working methods, i.e., the course syllabus. Most of the students in the three classes (see Table 1) expressed a basic understanding of the course (43 codes), compared to a partial or deeper understanding of the course. This basic understanding of the course was an interpretation of the student's ability to describe a general overview of the course, quite simple and mainly based on the title. For example, one student from year 2 wrote

“deeper learning than in the first course; more advanced pieces than in the first course”.

In contrast, the deeper understanding would be specific knowledge about what was going to happen in the course and the main learning objectives. Another student in the same course expressed their expectations as an in-depth understanding:

“deeper learning of the different IA [Information Architecture (author note)] theories and how you can use them to succeed in structuring the “project”/“idea”/“development” in the best possible way. I also think that the course will be about us being given the chance to conduct a real, small survey/analysis that is based on our own theory/idea”.

Table 1. What do you think the course is about?

	Basic understanding	Partial understanding	In-depth understanding
Year 1	17	13	6
Year 2	24	3	12
Year 3	2	0	6
Total	43	16	24

When we look at the three courses, we see a more nuanced breakdown between the years. For the first-year course the majority of students have a basic understanding of the course (17 codes), while about one-third (13 codes) displayed a partial understanding of the course. Students expressed this partial understanding in terms of one learning goal in the syllabus. This goal was exclusively about “academic writing”, and it seems that this goal stood out, unlike other more subject-orientated goals.

In the second-year course, the majority of students also had a basic knowledge of the course topics (24 codes). The remaining students expressed more in-depth details about the topics covered in the courses. For the third-year students, three-quarters illustrated a deep understanding of the course (six codes). However, the results show that in year two, two-thirds of the students had a basic understanding. In year three, the students show either basic or in-depth understanding. It can be concluded that the course understanding needs to follow our pre-assumption about how student understanding moves from basic to in-depth as the years proceed. The wide perceptions from one dimension to a more holistic view of what the course is about and what to expect show that diverse student groups have different expectations. This seems to be valid over time.

2. Students' Expectations of What to Learn

Three themes emerged from the expressed outcomes: study techniques and skills (focus on the academic formality), theoretical knowledge (theory) and applied practice (methods and theories in practice). Based on the three themes, theoretical knowledge received the highest score, followed by applied practice (see Table 2). One student from year one expressed theoretical knowledge as

“...rights when it comes to everyday life, jobs, work at home. What obligations and rights the authorities have”.

For year 2, the students were quite explicit that it was theories that they were expected to learn. Two representative responses are as follows:

“The theory of presenting information” and “more about the broad subject of IA, better understanding of the theories”.

The applied practice was for year two students expressed in terms of usage and application, all about methods and theory. For year three students, the focus was on the comparison and difference between applied social work in Sweden and social work in other countries and the students' home country.

The results were surprising because of year one's concern with study techniques and skills (16 codes). All quotes are about writing and academic writing, together with how to deal with references in the text. Here it must be highlighted that the course in social work, year 3, also had learning outcomes involving writing an academic text. However, this is not something those students mentioned, as opposed to students from year one.

Interestingly, all the students were expected to mention something about how to perform the active verbs in the learning outcomes. Even though the variety of those verbs was great, no comments about them were made.

Table 2. What do you expect to learn in the course?

	Study techniques and skills	Theoretical knowledge	Applied practice
Year 1	16	18	4
Year 2	0	19	25
Year 3	0	6	5
Total	16	43	34

3. Students' Expectations of the Lecturers

The students expect the lecturer to provide learning materials and structure. The terms clarity and being precise were frequently used in this category: “Clear lecturers and instructions” (year one student), “To teach and explain clearly” (year two student), and “Clarity when it comes to presentations and assignments” (year two student). They also expected support from the lecturers. This was expressed as a desire for the lecturers to be helpful, providing good feedback and guidance, and also to be fair and show respect. The third category, engagement and active, emerged from the richness of comments that display the great variety regarding the expectations of the teachers. One student (year one) expressed expectations that the lecturers should “...teach in an inspiring way”. Another student (year one) expects of the lecturer to “...teach in a pedagogical and informative way”. A third student (year 2) responded that the lecturer should “arouse our interest and show commitment for the subject” while a fourth student (year 3) wrote that they expect “That they are passionate about what they are teaching” (Table 3).

Table 3. Expectations on the lecturers

	Learning materials, structure	Support from lecturers	Engagement and active
Year 1	25	8	8
Year 2	32	5	13

	Learning materials, structure	Support from lecturers	Engagement and active
Year 3	5	4	7
Total	62	17	28

After the Introduction

After the lecturer presented the course, a second open-ended survey followed-up the pre-survey with whether the course presentation matched the students' expectations and how to proceed with the course. There were categories defined for each question. A clear matching could be seen regarding if the introduction matched the expectations.

“Yes, the course intro matched my expectations, although it was very basic” (year two student).

“Yes, this course intro matched my expectations and went beyond them. We covered a large range of topics and focused on topics where I did not have much learning previously” (year three student).

However, expressions categorised as unclear, including the need for clarification, were also identified.

“It was not what I had expected to learn about and work with now” (year one student).

“Pretty much yes, however hard to tell at the moment since we have not started the course or read any literature” (year two student).

Suggestions for improvements were visible and could be categorised.

“I would like to have a little bit more of organised lectures and would have delved deeper into theories” (year two student).

If the student knew what to do and achieve in the course, a category was defined saying that it was clear what needs to be done for the course.

“Yes, I think I got a pretty clear picture of what is required of me and what to expect” (year two student).

On the other hand, it was also categorised that certain clarification to understand, and more information was needed:

“I do not understand exactly what we are supposed to learn, or the outcome, but the structure of the course was explained well” (year two student).

Discussion

This study investigates expectations among students in three different years in three different courses and three different subjects in terms of what it means for introductions, for learning, and for the role of the lecturers. As stated by Fisher and Miller (2008), exploring student expectations could, if taken care of, lead to excellence in teaching and learning. Borghi et al. (2016) confirm the importance and highlight that students' expectations need to be researched and explored to a greater extent. This study embraces a unique objective and thereby contributes to this field of understanding.

Our first question was about what the students expected from the course. We assumed that most year one students would have a basic understanding, whereas year three students would have an in-depth understanding. This assumption builds on the fact that students are schooled in academia. As the duration of the student's education increases, their acquaintance with procedures, documents and systems likewise increases. However, the results show that this assumption was not correct, as year two students did not show this understanding. For year three, the result showed that most students had an in-depth understanding, with only one-fourth having a basic understanding. Overall, it can be concluded that the student groups are diverse regarding expectations of a new course. Also, that students' expectations or preferences, as confirmed in a study by Sander et al. (2000), must be responded to by making the necessary adjustments in order to meet these expectations, and in some cases where the preferences are unrealistic it would be more appropriate to manage expectations or preferences and bring them to more appropriate levels. For the lecturers who miss out on this essential knowledge, a course introduction seems to need to be held, regardless of which semester the students are in, as all students are new students – new students in the sense that they are differently prepared and capture different aspects of a course.

Questioning what the students expected to learn illustrates two of the most interesting aspects. It was obvious that when academic writing as a skill was clearly defined as a goal of the course (which was outspoken among year one students) in the syllabus, students adopted this ability as part of their own expectations. This factor should not be underestimated, as there are also central abilities that are not visible in the syllabus and may therefore not be prioritised by students as learning abilities. It should be emphasised here that as a substantial part of higher education skills, academic writing is a general skill. Expressing this in the curriculum has a great impact on how such a skill is understood and interpreted, as well as having priority among students regarding their expectations about their learning outside of the course description. However, it must also be noticed that year three students did not mention this learning outcome at all, even though it was a course goal. It may be interpreted as those students being more familiar with the theme and therefore not having any expectations regarding it. The other very interesting result is the absence of comments about the active verbs in the syllabus. Active verbs that govern different steps of learning seemed to be neglected and not noticed at all. It could be questioned whether this absence is a result of the students being comfortable with their knowledge about how to perform verbs like discuss, reflect and problematise and also the difference between them. As lecturers we know that much effort is employed in valuing and deciding which verb should be chosen to reflect what kind of knowledge should be obtained. Here one might ask whether the subject obstructs the view of those verbs.

The question about the expectations of the lecturer received by far the most answers. The students hoped for clarity, much as did those in the study by Tham and Lynch (2014). However, what does it mean to be clear? Clarity for one person could be vagueness for another, making it basically impossible to fulfil.

The students also expected the lecturers to possess a range of characteristics. It must be highlighted that those mentioned were not primarily about knowledge and theoretical skills but rather about making the students interested. Nobody mentioned the importance of face-to-face contact with lecturers, which was an outcome of the study by Money et al. (2017).

Conclusions

The results show that the lectures should take more account of student's expectations in their teaching. However, these expectations seem to be too diverse to be able to give a clear picture of what the students expect from a course. Given that students have different expectations (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006) when entering classes, lecturers will need to raise their awareness about "before, under and after aspects" in developing why and how we design introductions. Course introductions form a critical stage in a course that constitutes what we can call the "moment of truth", i.e., the student's first meeting point where a mixture of curiosity, interest (or disinterest) and expectations (or lack of expectations) meet. In several respects, one can see this part of a course as the lecturers' single most optimal opportunity to design content so that course objectives can be met – objectives that articulate the knowledge and skills you want students to acquire by the end of the course. Examples from our study of this mismatch of knowledge objectives were that the students highlighted academic skills as an expectation which seemed to overshadow other course objectives. Further that the active verbs used in the learning outcomes were not noticed by the students. Therefore, course introductions should be understood as a critical element, or as Wheeler (2004, p. 167) expresses it, "critical moments in which mood is set, issues are framed, and relationships established"; a vital component that, as we have seen in our study, should not be neglected in its importance as it can potentially be of great importance for students' commitment and learning. As stated by Klimczak and Wedman (1997), in every project a well-prepared course instruction design is a potential success factor. This could be seen as a part of what Drake and Read (2018) define as an integrated curriculum supporting a course design where an important aspect is to give students as much voice and choice as possible.

Course instruction could be viewed as an underestimated part of developing a course design. Further, it could then improve a critical start-up moment in learning and teaching which makes a substantial contribution to the quality assessment in higher education. Above all, this study clearly shows the importance of not viewing students as representing homogenous groups (in the sense of having the exact same needs and expectations) and letting that govern how we design courses.

Awareness of diversity in expectations should be understood as a potential hidden capacity and tool for the implementation of a whole course. When student expectations are not met in full, engagement, success, satisfaction and retention may suffer (Byrne et al., 2012; Jones, 2010; Lobo & Gurney, 2014). Critical reflection among lecturers on engagement with the students, spending time communicating requirements and being clear about both the course structure and learning outcomes is a pivotal point for HE. Putting effort into this and connecting it with the students' expectations through following-up yields a "course-investment". As Appleton-Knapp and Krenter (2006, p. 261) write, "A good way to ensure that students have appropriate expectations is simply to ask them on the first day of the term to list everything they expect from the course". Therefore, the lecturer should put effort into this initial phase. However, a holistic approach to integrated curriculum design will most likely support and strengthen both students' and teachers' learning capacity. The teacher can already lay the foundation in this phase, as it is also an opportunity to reduce multifaceted barriers for the students. It both broadens

and deepens the role of framing, regardless of the course or module content. As a teacher, you must raise your awareness of students' expectations and preferences concerning the initial part of a curriculum design, ensuring its potential.

Limitations

Our research study is exploratory, where we were limited to the participants involved, all of whom volunteered for this study. Secondly, this study comprised qualitative and quantitative research interpreted with our own experiences and views. Further, verifying the empirical result in a second round with the student group was impossible, as was the desirable implementation of pilot research before the main study. Our study is anchored in a collaborative and interdisciplinary understanding of how courses or modules are designed. This approach is not specifically elaborated in this study.

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The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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