
THROWN IN THE DEEPER END: FIRST YEAR STUDENTS LEARNING ONLINE

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BACKGROUND

First year students experience difficulties adapting to independent learning and managing their time (Richardson et al., 2012; van der Meer et al., 2010). These issues were compounded at the University of Queensland when students transitioned to online learning three weeks into semester 1 2020. This study describes students' insights about themselves as learners during this time.

METHODS

Participants (n=144) were enrolled in a first year anatomy and physiology course. At the end of semester, students were asked to reflect on their learning. Responses were coded using inductive thematic analysis.

RESULTS

When asked what they had discovered about themselves as a learner, students mentioned the importance of motivation (n=53), environment (n=44) and social connections (n=42) for learning. When asked what advice they would give themselves if learning was online again next semester, students wanted to maintain a routine (n=48), improve their time management (n=41), make study plans (n=34), and be more proactive (n=27).

DISCUSSION

Universities are microcosms for learning, and during the pandemic first-year students struggled to replicate this context at home. These results suggest that staff should support their students by helping them plan their learning and encouraging connections with peers and staff.

REFERENCES

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