

Making a Successful Transition during the First Year of University Study: Do Psychological and Academic Ability Matter?

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ABSTRACT This article presents an explanatory study and focuses on the problem of academic ability and the psychological challenges that affect first-year students as they progress from Grade 12 to first-year university studies; a process that is significant for most universities. A cause of transition can be found in the under-preparedness of the university support system at first-year level. The study was conducted on 102 first-year students registered for the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) undergraduate degree at Central University of Technology (CUT). The results from this study showed that there is a significant difference in student life, student expectation and psychological status between university first-year students and high school learners. Some of the findings of the study are that induction had an insignificant influence on student academic ability and social integration. However, it is important to recognise that this factor might not have a significant influence on first-year students, but the withdrawal of students in the second and third years is, to a certain extent, due to their academic results. It can be proved that workload has a significant influence on the academic ability of first-year students.