

## **Undergraduate Geography Students' Views of Assessments and Academic Results: An Exploratory Study**

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**ABSTRACT** Research on students' views is a relatively new trend in assessment literature, more so locally (in South Africa) than internationally. This article examines university students' views of their summative assessments and academic results, and what they perceive to be influencing their academic results. The study used a qualitative approach and was undertaken in a second-year Geography Education module at a higher education institution in South Africa in 2011. The methodological instrument used was student narratives and there were 24 participants. The findings suggested that students' views of the intellectual demands of their assessments were not related to their views of their academic results. They indicated a preference for assessment methods that offer a host of support mechanisms to improve their performance, particularly when new geographical content was introduced. Students revealed that both their personal and learning environment characteristics influenced their academic performance. Students who perceived themselves as producing poor academic results displayed poor time-summary management in assessments and a fragmented approach to studying. In contrast, students who made significant progress in the assessments as the modules advanced reported on the positive impact of their added effort, consultations with the lecturer, and oral and written feedback. The article concludes by signalling the importance of researching students' views as a catalyst for developing students' assessment awareness. Furthermore, it indicates the need to, firstly, nurture students in achieving time-summary management in assessments, and secondly, explore students' reliance on the need for a scope (detailed outline) for each assessment.