Great Expectations: An Exploration of Student Academic Learning Expectations

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Abstract

Student-centred learning (SCL) within nursing higher education represents a deliberate move away from historically utilised, traditional, behaviourist teaching approaches. The use of SCL is considered beneficial within higher education, with more meaningful, whole-person, and lifelong learning being created. Specifically, within nursing, SCL is positively viewed due to its apparent congruence to patient-centred care. The term is, however, ambiguous, lacking in clarity and definition, thus resulting in confusion about principles and how it is to be accomplished. Yet, there is general agreement that SCL and teaching methods should promote student activity and involvement and take student interests and expectations into account. This study focuses on one aspect of SCL – student expectations of learning – in the context of the teaching of a higher education nursing program that espouses SCL.

The aim of this study is to investigate and explore the expectations of students toward their academic learning at the beginning of the first year of an undergraduate university nursing degree. More specifically, two research questions have been asked:

1. What are the expectations of first-year undergraduate nursing students toward their academic learning?
2. Do the expectations of first-year undergraduate nursing students include a preference for SCL?

In order to answer these questions, a sequential qualitative-dominant explanatory mixed-method design was utilised, in which the quantitative research phase was used to develop the qualitative phase. A convenience sample of 300 ($N = 300$) first-year undergraduate nursing students were invited to engage in the project, with 32.66% ($n = 98$) completing the questionnaire and 3.67% ($n = 11$) participating in individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

Questionnaire data were analysed through the latest edition of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), with qualitative questionnaire data analysed using Leximancer software. Findings from this analysis, combined with information from the literature review, were used to develop a semi-structured interview schedule. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed based on the six phases of analysis as developed by Braun and Clarke.
From the findings of the qualitative data, five key expectations were discovered in relation to students’ university study and academic learning: (1) less support would be provided at university, (2) there would be didactic teaching in tertiary education, (3) personal changes and learning freedom would be required, (4) learning preferences would be catered for by the university, and (5) an occupation-specific degree should include occupation-specific assessment. A sixth expectation was seemingly aligned with SCL (student involvement); however, it was not something explicitly expected or preferred. From these expectations, inferences are made concerning a preference by the students for some level of SCL; however, no explicit mention was made of any forms of pedagogical SCL by the participants within the study.

With the university made aware of students’ expectations, educational changes could be made that incorporate these expectations and thus better meet the needs of the incoming first-year cohort. With the embedding of student expectations into a university’s educational focus, SCL may be able to move from the current rhetoric and penetrate education practice. Tailoring of teaching and resources that integrate these expectations and preferences would likely be a clear and practical way in which the university could deliver a model of SCL as indicated within curriculum documentation.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Danny Sidwell
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANMAC</td>
<td>Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council</td>
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<td>AQF</td>
<td>Australian Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>BCSSE</td>
<td>Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement</td>
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<td>BN</td>
<td>Bachelor of Nursing</td>
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<td>DEEWR</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
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<td>DoH</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
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<td>DREEM</td>
<td>Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure</td>
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<td>NMBA</td>
<td>Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia</td>
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<td>SCL</td>
<td>Student-Centred Learning</td>
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<td>SCP</td>
<td>Student-Centred Pedagogy</td>
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<td>SEQ</td>
<td>Student Expectation Questionnaire</td>
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<td>SoNM</td>
<td>School of Nursing and Midwifery</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>USET</td>
<td>University Student Expectation Tool</td>
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<tr>
<td>VARK</td>
<td>Visual, Aural, Reading/writing, Kinaesthetic sensory modalities</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIL</td>
<td>Work-Integrated Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZPD</td>
<td>Zone of Proximal Development</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

This introductory chapter provides background to the research project in addition to providing context regarding the current educational environment in which the research was conducted. Discussion is also given to the overall aim of the project and the specific research questions being explored. The chapter concludes with a statement of the significance of the study.

1.1 Background

Historically within Australia, student nurses (for the most part) undertook their training within the public hospital setting for a period of three or more years (Department of Health [DoH], 2013). Formalised nurse education was well established by the 1960s, and followed an apprenticeship-style instructional model that held clinical experience and skill as the central focus (Russell, 1990). Due to this clinical competency focus, nurse training continued to develop within the hospital environment and remained far removed from the tertiary education sector (Russell, 1990). However, by 1978 basic nurse training courses were offered in six Australian tertiary institutions, with support provided from the Prime Minister announcing, in 1984, that all basic education of nurses would be transferred to the tertiary education sector by 1990 (Bessant, 1999). By 1993, all Australian student nurses seeking registration into the profession were doing so with a university qualification (DoH, 2013).

It is suggested by Mackintosh-Franklin (2016) that due to the non-traditional education background from which nurse education originated, students were traditionally trained (and continued to be so) through a behaviourist educational approach in order for a competency-based curriculum to be delivered. Ironside (2001) furthers this discussion and highlights that traditional behaviourist pedagogy has in the past served the nursing profession well; however, the use of such pedagogy does come with limitations. Passivity of learning is one such limitation described, with the establishment of a content-heavy, abstract, and decontextualized curriculum (School of Nursing and Midwifery [SoNM], 2015). Content-driven, teacher-centred learning is additionally observed by Ironside (2001), who discusses the poor fit of traditional pedagogy when the phenomenon being taught is unable to be broken appropriately into a rational and sequential order.
1.2 **Context**

As part of its program accreditation, the Griffith University School of Nursing and Midwifery (SoNM) developed a curriculum document that articulates the various aspects and activities that comprise the 2016 – 2021 Bachelor of Nursing (BN) Curriculum, from teaching and learning through to content and assessment (SoNM, 2015). As part of these discussions, the School’s learning and teaching framework is put forth, with attention given to the desire to move away from a behaviourist model of education. In replacement of this approach, discussion is given not only to “constructivist” pedagogy, but also to the synergy this has with student-centred learning (SCL). Student-centredness is further discussed as a central focus of the School’s framework, with specific mention made that “… the process of learning to be a nurse, whilst focused on meeting University and professional standards, is a personal intellectual journey for each student” (SoNM, 2015, p. 29). It is therefore necessary when providing this personal and individual journey that the School views the student as being at the centre of their own learning.

The above-mentioned SoNM framework is consistent with the wider University academic plan, which discusses student-centredness on several occasions (Griffith University, 2017a). The Griffith University academic plan stresses that students are to be placed at the core of all University activities and is done so to ensure the safeguarding of the University’s reputation through positive student experiences (Griffith University, 2017a). To further emphasise the importance of a student-centred approach, the third and final goal within the academic plan is that of being student centred. The use of a student-centred approach is described within the University plan as ensuring a responsiveness to both the students’ needs and their expectations. Despite such confident claims for the use of SCL (receptiveness to student expectations and subsequent increased satisfaction) it is unclear within the documents how this is to be achieved practically. For example, no surveys exist within the University that focus on the students’ expectations. The lack of appropriate detail regarding implementation of SCL is likely to result in a practice-theory gap, which is supported by Farrington (1991) who claims that there is more rhetoric regarding SCL than what is seen in reality. The notion of being student centred is described as “… a required criterion for academic credibility. Yet it does not seem to have penetrated beyond the periphery of practice” (Greener, 2015, p. 1). This is not to say that the SoNM and the wider University do not attach significant meaning to a student-centred approach; rather, simply adopting this terminology into documentation with limited specifics for achievement and execution is
unlikely by itself to lead to a great deal of practical change in the learning environment (Sweetman, 2017).

1.3 **Aim**

The aim of this project is twofold, with the first intention being to explore the expectations of first-year students toward their academic learning at the beginning of their undergraduate university nursing degree. In addition, the research project aims to understand if these expectations reflect a desire for a student-centred approach to learning.

1.4 **Research Questions**

In order to achieve the above aims, 2 research questions have been developed, each designed to provide detail and understanding necessary to explore the expectations and preference of SCL in the first-year undergraduate nursing cohort

1. What are the expectations of first-year undergraduate nursing students toward their academic learning?
2. Do the expectations of first-year undergraduate nursing students include a preference for SCL?

1.5 **Significance**

As per the previously discussed documents produced by the SoNM (2015) and the wider University (Griffith University, 2017a), SCL is a key focus and an underpinning learning strategy utilised to deliver a positive learning experience in an environment that is responsive to the needs of the student. To achieve SCL, it is in principle desirable to collect the expectations of the student cohort, so that an “outside in” approach to learning can be accomplished (Lea et al., 2003). Although School and University experience surveys are commonplace and are requested at the end of each course at Griffith University, data collected therein highlight what has already happened and not what is wanted or desired by students, thus making it difficult to forward plan courses, classes, and information for students in the light of student interests and expectations.

There is a dearth of information about the expectations of nursing students prior to their higher education studies: No literature has been found to date that specifically relates to the expectations of the first-year nursing student. This research project will therefore shed
light on the expectations that undergraduate nursing students may have of their future academic learning, thereby providing the SoNM and the University with a clearer understanding of the incoming first-year cohort. From this understanding, it may be possible to alter current practice to deliver a better service and experience that firmly places the student at the heart of learning and teaching – as indicated in SoNM curriculum documentation.
Chapter Two

Literature Review/Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides discussion concerning the overarching theoretical framework of SCL and how this has shaped and focused the current research project. As the antithesis of SCL, traditional learning will initially be reviewed to better understand the two ends of the learning continuum. Student-centred learning will then be considered, including its theoretical origins as well as the advantages and disadvantages of its use within university education. This information will then be contextualised to the nursing education setting, with specific mention given to the application of SCL to the undergraduate nursing curriculum. Finally, discussion will turn to the use of SCL within nursing pedagogy, the link this has to the democratic classroom, and the subsequent need to explore student expectations.

2.1 Traditional Learning in Nurse Education

In relation to the undergraduate nursing student, it is difficult to define explicitly their academic learning. Such difficulty arises in part by how learning has traditionally been viewed, and the interrelationship learning has with teaching and education (Churchill et al., 2015). Further confounding the definition of learning, there exists a multitude of theoretical perspectives asserting a particular orientation to learning. Such theoretical viewpoints include behaviourist, cognitive, humanistic, social, and constructivist (Churchill et al., 2015). Despite the ambiguity that surrounds the definition of learning, it is suggested that learning is, and should be, focused on what the learner does as opposed to what the teacher does (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Churchill et al., 2015); thus, learning is required to be “student centred”, with the focus of the teacher being to support and facilitate the learning process (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Simply put, to adopt SCL is to move away from a traditional teacher-centred learning environment towards a more learner-orientated one (Harju & Åkerblom, 2017). The term “traditional” has been used to describe the opposing approach due to the long-established acceptance and utilisation of a more didactic educational process, which is “… in some respects a stereotype of the method of provision of higher education for ages …” (Todorovski et al., 2015). This approach, however, does have a number of synonyms, including teacher centred (Moate & Cox, 2015), instructor-centred teaching (Blumberg, 2009), teacher-directed learning (Knowles, 1975), direct instruction (Hattie, 2012), supplantive instruction (P. Smith & Ragan, 2005), and back-to-basics education (Azizinezhad & Hashemi, 2011). Although
traditional learning (or its synonyms) as a phrase is highlighted within a variety of papers and texts, it would appear that a definition of this approach remains elusive. The reasoning for a lack of definition could be due to the term being developed only to differentiate from SCL, and thus only being used to describe the opposite end of the learning continuum. It would appear that whilst SCL has gained a variety of definitions and meanings, it was not considered prudent to define traditional learning precisely, with the expectation likely made that people would understand what was meant by this.

Although not a definition, Beck’s (1956) description of the process of traditional education is as the teacher assigning problems to be “worked on” and prescribing texts to be read and understood, with appropriate homework given, followed by testing of the previously assigned tasks. Beck (1956) goes on to highlight that the traditional method of education is not rooted within research or best practice standards but has been largely developed based on untested assumptions about learning. Traditional education has also been explained as the passive transfer of knowledge and information from the teacher to the student, with education being highly content driven and provided to large student groups (Günüsen et al., 2014). Knowles (1975) suggests that traditional learning assumes both that the learner is dependent on the teacher, as well as that the experience of the learner is deemed less than that of the teacher. A traditional approach to learning has been equated to the structure of industrial age organisations (Reigeluth, 1996) and factories (K. Brown, 2003), in which factors such as standardisation, conformity, and central control make up the traditional education paradigm (Reigeluth, 1996). It has described how this approach served its purpose within the industrial age, as standardised teaching and assessment of students resulted in the ability to provide valid comparison of student ability, thus assisting in the categorisation of future managers and factory workers (Reigeluth, 1996). Reigeluth further suggests that education based on a traditional approach is not created for the purpose of learning, but for the purpose of sorting (Reigeluth, 1996). Further elaboration and depth is provided by Rogers (1983, pp. 185-187) who describes the following eight characteristics of a conventional and traditional model of education:

1) The teacher is the possessor of knowledge
2) The lecture, the textbook … are the major methods of getting knowledge into the recipient
3) The teacher is the possessor of power
4) Rule by authority is the accepted policy in the classroom
5) Trust is at a minimum
6) The subjects (students) are best governed by being kept in an intermittent or constant state of fear

7) Democracy and its values are ignored and scorned in practice

8) There is no place for the whole person in the educational system, only for her [sic] intellect

Despite the seemingly negative connotations attached to traditional learning, this approach is not without positive attributes. P. Smith and Ragan (2005) liken a traditional teaching approach to a supplantive instructional method, in which the teacher supplants and scaffolds learning for the student by providing them with explicit learning goals, plans, structure, and content. It is suggested that, through a supplantive method, students can focus solely on the learning task rather than being required to develop learning strategies also. P. Smith and Ragan suggest that a supplantive approach may bring about several benefits, such as creating more predictable and focused learning, providing students with improved learning efficiency, and increasing the amount learned within a shorter time frame.

As indicated by P. Smith and Ragan (2005) within their traditional supplantive approach, scaffolding provides an important instructional function within the students’ learning. Based on Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD), scaffolding of learning is constructed by the teacher in order to support the student to reach higher levels of learning (Sanders & Welk, 2005). Higher learning is undertaken when the student is able to learn from and be guided by a “knowledgeable other” (Sanders & Welk, 2005; Waring & Evans, 2015), therefore allowing the student to learn more complex concepts than if left to their own cognitive abilities (Greenfield, 1984). The ZPD was described by Vygotsky (1978) as “… the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with a more capable peer” (p. 86). It would therefore appear that for scaffolding of learning to be successful and for increased student potential to be seen, a competent and informed adult (teacher) is required to provide direct guidance and instruction. The necessity for a knowledgeable other or content expert is reminiscent of Rogers’s first characteristic of traditional education: “The teacher is the possessor of knowledge” (1983, p. 185).

Important to note is that, along with the aforementioned adoption of SCL into the SoNM curriculum document, specific mention is also given to the utilisation of various tenets from Vygotsky’s theory of social learning (SoNM, 2015). Although the role of the teacher is described in this curriculum document as a facilitator as opposed to a provider of information,
such facilitation and guidance is highlighted to occur during structured experiences (SoNM, 2015). It would therefore seem that whilst SCL is core to a student’s educational experience within the School, this cannot occur without some inclusion of structure or scaffolding to guide learning.

2.2 Student-Centred Learning

Although a traditional approach has been discussed and, for the majority, depicts an erstwhile educational method, it is not to say that a focus on students, including what and how they learn, is purely a contemporary idea; rather, it has become a more accepted and practiced approach in modern times. Mention of the student as a more active member of their own learning can be seen as far back as 1762 within the book *Emile, or on Education* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in which Rousseau argues that learning should not be undertaken based on authority, reward, or vanity, but should be cultivated from personal relevance, desire, and need for self-preservation (Bloom, 1991). The example used to exemplify this point is that of Emile, hungry in the woods, using his understanding of astrology to find his way home for food. The knowledge of astrology, however, was not imposed on Emile by a teacher or made attractive with the promises of his being able to boast of his intelligence; rather, the knowledge was acquired through necessity (Bloom, 1991). In extension of this discussion, Rousseau states that a child must always be allowed to do what they would like to, which Bloom (1991) describes as the antecedent to progressive education. Additionally, Rousseau states his dislike for books in education, in contrast to Rogers’s (1983) characteristic of traditional education and the importance of a textbook in delivering knowledge. Such dislike is explained due to the book failing to assist in the creation of personal understanding and knowledge, instead simply conferring the opinion of the book’s author to the student (Bloom, 1991). Similar progressivist educational theory can also be seen in the works and theory of Friedrich Fröbel who, in 1840, coined the term “kindergarten”. For Fröbel, the educational institution should be like a garden in which children, through observation and activity, would be nurtured and allowed to grow (Noddings, 2007).

As an extension of the importance of student activity in education, Dewey (1966/1916) brings forth the significance of experience on thought arousal and effective thinking. It is suggested that as a first stage of learning new material, students should be allowed to engage with and carry out impulsive activity, so as to discover personal questions and problems. Without a period of experience and trial and error, any educational problems
faced by the student are not their own, but problems owned by the teacher. If students lack ownership of the learning problem they lose a relationship to the original education material; thus, education becomes less about personal development and more about satisfying the needs of the teacher (Dewey, 1966/1916).

Further conceptualisation of SCL is provided by Carl Rogers, who in 1951 adapted and extended on his work as a psychologist and his previous hypothesis of a client-centred approach. Within his hypothesis, similarities are drawn between the individual in therapy who can constructively and intellectually guide themselves in new life situations, and the student who possesses the same capacity to deal with and guide their educational needs (Rogers, 1951). Rogers goes on to state that a traditional approach within universities has been authoritarian in nature, focused on producing students who can reproduce information, perform set operational skills, and duplicate the thoughts and opinions of academics without question. In contrast, Rogers (1951) describes student-centred teaching as a transition to democratic education, with the focus on the student becoming an individual learner. It should be noted that Rogers uses the phrase “student-centred teaching” as opposed to student-centred learning; however, he is quick to address the point that just because something is taught does not mean that it is learnt. Such a statement can be illustrated in the first of Rogers’s (1951) student-centred teaching hypotheses which states, “We cannot teach another person directly; we can only facilitate his [sic] learning” (p. 389).

With origins in the work of Dewey, Kolb (1984) extends the notion of the importance and necessity of experience in education, with the statement that experiential learning is a “… holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, cognition, and behaviour” (p. 21). With the act of learning considered holistic in nature, Kolb (1984) further attests to the lifelong and continuous learning that is promoted. In an attempt to provide some clarity concerning experiential learning, Kolb (1984) offers a working definition which highlights that “learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). With the understanding from this definition, it can be anticipated that the student is most definitely at the centre of their learning, as the learning and knowledge created are intrinsically linked to the student’s own personal experience and engagement with stimuli. Acknowledgement of the idea of SCL can be seen within the revision of his seminal text, when Kolb (2015) claims that “… experiential learning theory has been widely accepted as a useful framework for learning-centred educational innovation” (p. XXV).
Whilst traditional and student-centred learning have been discussed and presented separately, this has been done to provide understanding and clarity toward the different theoretical approaches that each style possesses. From a practical teaching viewpoint, these approaches need not be seen as dichotomous, or in isolation from one another, but rather as book ends to the same learning spectrum (Rogers, 1983); thus, they can been used in some combination as required and dependent on what is hoped to be achieved (Farrington, 1991; Moate & Cox, 2015).

2.3 Student-Centred Learning: Advantages and Disadvantages

The adoption of SCL by education institutions is attributed to the powerful learning it is supposed to promote and the lifelong learning it is anticipated will be developed through this approach. Students are encouraged to assume responsibility for their own learning (Frambach et al., 2014) with both student and teacher taking a shared ownership of the learning process (Aliusta & Özer, 2017). Tagney (2014) highlights this as “whole person learning” (p. 266), which she considers a more meaningful experience that moves the student focus toward the process of learning, and away from the end product. Harju and Åkerblom (2017) also attest to the increased understanding of the learning process that SCL can create, as students are provided with a more active and influential role in their own learning, with increased ability to debate topics of study and to problem solve learning needs. Adding to the benefits of lifelong learning, SCL is supposed to equip students with the capacity to reflect on their own abilities, to work and solve real-world problems, and to become critical thinkers (Aliusta & Özer, 2017). The use of SCL is also described as assisting students to develop a deep approach to their learning (Baeten et al., 2010), with students on the whole reportedly preferring an SCL approach (Lea et al., 2003).

Due to the positive effects credited to SCL, it can be understood why the approach has been described by the University and by SoNM as their preferred teaching and learning conceptual framework. As previously highlighted, however, it has not been made explicit within the School or University documents as to what is meant by the term SCL, nor how it can feasibly be achieved. Such lack of clarity and specificity, according to Farrington (1991), has resulted in much confusion and disagreement existing in relation to what is actually meant by the term. O’Neill and McMahon (2005) further attest to the ambiguity that surrounds SCL, as the phrase is overused and possesses a variety of meanings that can lead to uncertainty in regard to how it should be implemented. This debate is extended by Sweetman (2017), who
highlights numerous ways in which SCL can be applied. For some, SCL describes the change in power dynamic between teacher and student, whilst others use it to illustrate the educator’s notions of teaching and the move away from traditional learning. To emphasise the variability that exists in regard to the view of SCL, O’Neil and McMahon (2005) state that:

… some view student-centred learning as: the concept of the student’s choice in their education; others see it as the being about the student doing more than the lecturer (active versus passive learning); while others have a much broader definition which includes both of these concepts … (p. 29)

Ambiguity surrounding SCL is not limited to the SoNM, as demonstrated by Mackintosh-Franklin’s (2016) review of all publicly available nursing undergraduate curriculum documents within the United Kingdom (UK) (equating to 59% of all UK-based nursing programs). Whilst almost half of the documents reviewed made mention of a pedagogical practice, with some also highlighting SCL, none provided any clarity as to what was meant by these terms or how they should be achieved in a practical sense.

Concern has also been raised in relation to how the student cohort views the use of SCL in practice. Felder and Brent (1996) highlight the discontent that students may feel in regard to the use of SCL within their classroom, with possible frustration about the need to be responsible for their own learning when they have paid tuition fees to be taught. Such frustration may continue with protesting about group work, about peers not “pulling their weight”, or about needing information explained multiple times. Moreover, Felder and Brent (1996) discuss how students may not be appreciative of a move toward a student-centred learning approach if they have previously only experienced a traditional model of learning. An overemphasis and focus on the individual learner is also described, including how such individual development can be at the expense of social learning and can result in segregation from the wider societal education environment (Edwards, 2001).

Although not presenting as an issue with SCL per se, the approach is seen to have limitations that can make it difficult to implement fully. Compared to the preparation and delivery involved in traditional teaching, SCL is considered to demand a larger investment in time and effort (Felder & Brent, 1996) and to require a greater deal of resource allocation (Lea et al., 2003). Lea et al. (2003) further attest to the pressures on university academic staff to “publish or perish”, likely resulting in a reluctance to devote valuable time to the implementation of original and novel teaching methods. This argument is extended by Todorovski et al. (2015) who describe the reality of higher education and the allocation of rewards toward research activity over teaching excellence. Lack of innovative teaching is
ascribed to the lack of willingness of staff to advance their understanding and development in new educational skills and knowledge (Todorovski et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is suggested that within nursing, staff (clinicians and scientists) enter the field of academia to pass on their knowledge and content expertise, although how they will pass this information on is often not given as much thought and attention (Mackintosh-Franklin, 2016).

2.4 Student-Centred Learning in Nursing

Despite the purported disadvantages that could be seen with an SCL approach, it remains the learning method of choice of the SoNM, who state that “… the student is central to learning and teaching and the curriculum is student-focused” (2015, p. 26). It can therefore be speculated that the Nursing School deem that any shortcomings of SCL are negated by the raft of positive gains that this approach brings, as well as by the overall increase in benefits to the student compared to the benefits of a traditional educational method. Although the traditional approach attempts to offer a one-size-fits-all approach to education, K. Brown (2003) suggests that this does not necessarily work for a large portion of an ever-diversifying student cohort. She does, however, state that a learner-centred approach is viable for meeting the varied and diverse needs of the student cohort, due to the respect given to the individual student and their learning needs (K. Brown, 2003). Unlike the traditional learning approach that encourages passivity in knowledge transmission, SCL offers flexibility to the learner to construct their own understanding of the material and to become “sense makers” who can build and organise their own knowledge and information (K. Brown, 2003; Mayer, 2004).

It is suggested by Bevis and Murray (1990) that nursing schools teach more than nursing theory, with a hidden sub-context of control, power, attitude toward self, and authority also found within nurse education: all required to be understood by the nurses to deliver quality and just patient care. The use of SCL within a nursing context is associated with the humanistic approach, which echoes the client/patient relationship required by the nurse on a daily basis (Milligan, 1997). Although the use of a curriculum based on student engagement and dialogue is likely to cause the educator a level of uncertainty in their facilitation of learning, it is expected that the use of an approach such as SCL will increase the likelihood that the new graduate nurse will be able to provide appropriate person-centred care to their patients (Bevis & Murray, 1990).

As an extension of this premise, Young and Paterson (2007) provide discussion as to the relationship between SCL and patient-centred care, and how the adoption of SCL within
the university setting can imbue similar person-centred traits within the clinical environment. It is suggested that four similarities exist: Firstly, both approaches are conceptually aligned, with respect given to either the students or patients’ lived experience; secondly, professionalism is fostered and plays a key role in both SCL and patient-centred care, as both emphasise the need for life-long learning, problem solving, and reflection; thirdly, the focus of evaluation moves from the teacher or nurse toward the student and patient; and fourthly, opportunities are found within each approach to learn from and with others (Young & Paterson, 2007).

Besides the correlation between SCL and patient-centred care in nursing education, SCL is suggested also to assist the student in being better situated to enter the modern healthcare workforce. With increased demands placed on nurses to care for an increasingly diverse population and higher acuity of patient, combined with a complex and everchanging healthcare landscape, more active and student-centred pedagogy is required to match the demands of the nurses’ working environment (Chambers et al., 2013). Preparation of the nursing student using more interactive and student-focused teaching methods is said to develop clinical judgement, to assist in the understanding of clinical practice concepts, and ultimately, to promote safe, quality patient care; this in turn will in some way help reduce the theory-practice gap that is reported in the new graduate nurse (Huston et al., 2017).

2.5 Curriculum and Pedagogy

In attempt to provide clarity and definition to SCL, Knowles (1975) describes the increased choices that students need to make toward their own education. He depicts a holistic view of SCL where students take the initiative to learn and to analyse their own individual learning needs, with subsequent development and implementation of personally formalised learning goals. As can be observed within Knowles’s description of SCL, the student is very much the instigator and curator of learning and is in charge of making all decisions including the desire to learn, as well as what to learn and how to learn it. Dewey (1966/1916) highlights the notion of a dualism existing within education, describing both subject matter (curriculum) and method (pedagogy) as distinct focuses for educational endeavour. He puts forward that subject matter is the classification of facts and principles, with method being the focus of how the subject matter is presented and how it facilitates learning acquisition. He states, however, that method is not something external to subject matter; therefore, it does not sit in isolation. In this respect there is no one-size-fits-all approach to a method or pedagogical practice, as
the method exists only to deal with and present subject matter. Dewey goes on to impress that both subject matter and method are “… a separation in existence and not as a distinction in thought” (1966/1916, p. 167). Put simply, whilst curriculum and pedagogy exist separately as theory, they should be thought of as in a continual process and interaction within education practice. It is apparent that within learning, and specifically within SCL, both curriculum and pedagogy have an interwoven relationship that forms a singular educational experience. However, as highlighted by Dewey (1966/1916), both do exist individually; thus, it is judicious to better understand their distinct functions in order to better appreciate their roles within the learning process.

With respect to the understanding of curriculum, Coate (2009) describes the difficulty of defining this term within the higher education sector due to the large variations in discipline, subject area, and degree levels. Despite this difficulty, Coate (2009) extends on Dewey’s (1966/1916) previous mention of subject matter and offers a rather simple understanding of the term, taken from its Latin origin as “course of action”. It is suggested that this course of action provides description and detail as to what will be taught, when and how it is to be taught, and to whom it will be taught (Coate, 2009). More simply still, Bernstein (1971) states that curriculum “defines what counts as valid knowledge” (p. 47).

Likewise, there also exists confusion and uncertainty regarding a definition of pedagogy, probably as a result of the term meaning different things to different people (Waring & Evans, 2015). A traditional outlook is proposed by the former Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), which defined pedagogy as “the function or work of teaching; the art or science of teaching, education instructional methods” (2009, p. 42). Beetham and Sharpe (2013), however, describe it as “the original sense of guidance-to-learn: learning in the context of teaching, and teaching that has learning as its goal” (p. 43). The definition as proposed by Beetham and Sharpe (2013) is appealing due to its strong emphasis on learning, as opposed to the traditional-sounding approach put forth by DEEWR (2009). Beetham and Sharpe (2015) do, however, make note that whilst their focus is learning, this should not be completely divorced from the term “teaching”. They explain that although learning should sit at the heart of education, educational interactions and activities that support learning are also necessary for the learner; these can include exchanges with both the individual educator and the larger institution.

With an improved understanding of both curriculum and pedagogy, parallels can be made between Dewey’s (1966/1916) earlier subject matter and method discussion, and the
framework presented by Fay (1988). Within Fay’s framework, a typology initially developed by Basil Bernstein (1971) is utilised within his model of education knowledge. Fay (1988) employs Bernstein’s concepts of “classification” (curriculum, subject matter, and content) and “framing” (pedagogy and conditions of learning) which both need to be strongly controlled by the student for learning to be considered truly student centred. Should framing and classification (pedagogy and curriculum) be strongly controlled by the teacher, a more traditional and didactic teacher-centred approach would be observed. Accordingly, if applying the framework suggested by Fay to the aforementioned SCL definition put forth by Knowles, it is clear that the student would indeed be at the centre of their own learning and in strong control of both the curriculum and pedagogy. However due to the SoNM highlighting that focus is needed in regard to “… meeting University and professional standards …” (2015, p. 29), an educational tension is created. This tension is generated by the need to provide an SCL approach that implies transfer of control of both curriculum and pedagogy to students, whilst conversely needing to meet set professional standards and thus retaining partial or total control of curriculum. Such tension is expressed by Rogers (1983) who highlights the likely preference of educators for facilitating a whole-person and meaningful learning experience, but who are obliged to follow a traditional teaching approach using a set and approved curriculum.

2.6 Curriculum Application in Nursing

In relation to education within a higher education institution in Australia, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) (2013) must be observed, and as such the learning outcomes and application of AQF criteria must be maintained to a level that is considered appropriate for the qualification being studied. In regard to Australian nursing schools, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) standards must also be adhered to. Such adherence ensures that the nursing school remains an eligible and accredited education program which meets the required standards of education for students seeking to register as a nurse (ANMAC, 2019). It is therefore not possible to utilise Knowles’s (2015) description of SCL in the fullest sense, as school curricula, which include learning goals and outcomes, are unable to be determined by or fully tailored for the individual due to the influence of external bodies and organisations. This situation is not specific to the SoNM: many educators within professional education courses also feel the need to retain a traditional approach to teaching over a student-centred one when faced with
professional accreditation pressures (Blumberg, 2009). Within nursing, the student and their learning remains at the centre of the educator’s understanding; however, due to the required need to teach set standards and criteria, the individual needs of the student are often sacrificed for standardised teaching and curriculum (K. Brown, 2003).

Within an Australian BN degree, it could be argued that the professional standards as put forth and regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) are a further reason that the curriculum is tightly controlled by universities. The NMBA’s main function is registering both nurses and midwives within the auspices of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, as well as handling complaints and disciplinary matters (NMBA, 2018a). In order to achieve this aim, standards, codes, and guidelines have been developed for use by the nursing profession. The first of the NMBA documents is the code of conduct, which “… sets out the legal requirements, professional behaviour and conduct expectations for nurses in all practice settings in Australia” (NMBA, 2018b, p. 2). The code of conduct has seven overarching domains which include topics such as legal compliance and research in health. A further NMBA document is the Registered Nurse Standards for Practice (NMBA, 2016) which highlights the expected level of nursing practice as well as signifying a nurse’s scope of practice. Again, the Standards for Practice document consists of seven individual standards, ranging from “thinks critically and analyses nursing practice” to “evaluates outcomes to inform nursing practice”. The abovementioned standards and codes are expectations and requirements for all nurses in Australia, with practice registration being subject to their adherence. As the objective of the BN is to graduate students who are eligible to register as nurses in Australia, it is important to ensure that the student is equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil the requirements placed on them by the registering body. This therefore necessitates the inclusion of set skills and knowledge into nursing curricula, thus resulting in a need for explicit control of curriculum by the university. It is further required by ANMAC (2019) that nursing schools map their learning outcomes to the NMBA’s Registered Nurse Standards for Practice.

In addition to the underpinning competence needed of the students in relation to the NMBA and nursing registration, consideration must also be paid to the nursing and health industry and what is required of nurses within the workforce. It is suggested that within Australia there exist two main stakeholders with a vested interest in nursing education: the university and the clinical organisations (Mannix et al., 2009). It is further described by El Haddad et al., (2017) that the Australian healthcare system is forever changing and becoming
progressively complex, largely due to the health demands of an aging population, a looming nursing shortage, and increasing financial healthcare constraints. This in turn has increased the expectation by the clinical workforce that newly graduated nurses are practice ready, and therefore able to transition into the workforce with ease (El Haddad et al., 2017). The need for practice readiness has subsequently resulted in demands on nursing education to produce work-ready nurses upon graduation (Hofler & Thomas, 2016).

Despite the requirements by the health sector for graduates to be immediately effective in their new nursing role, it is suggested by clinical staff that Australian newly graduated nurses are often not work ready (R. Brown & Crookes, 2016). Harrison et al. (in press) further report a lack of independent practice in newly graduated nurses, which in turn creates difficulty and frustration for the clinical facilities when attempting to support their transition into the workforce. It has also been highlighted that Australian final-year nursing students may themselves feel unprepared for work as a registered nurse (Milton-Wildey et al., 2014); possibly due to experiences with unsupportive clinical environments during their undergraduate study (Milton-Wildey et al., 2014). The situation is not isolated to Australia: Monaghan (2015) echoes this statement, describing a theory-practice gap between UK universities and the clinical workforce and stating that this gap may lead to “… nurses who are incapable of acting safely and autonomously upon registration” (p. e5).

R. Brown and Crookes (2016) undertook a modified Delphi study in order to ascertain what level of competence nursing experts (senior clinicians and academics) expected of newly graduated registered nurses. From a list of 30 skill areas, newly graduated nurses were expected to be safe, knowledgeable, efficient, coordinated, and confident in 22 of the skills. It is therefore suggested by Virgolesi et al. (in press) that stakeholder engagement should be encouraged in university nurse education, so that closer alignment can be achieved between the competencies gained in the university degree and those expected in the clinical working environment. Such expectations of healthcare and industry further add to the need for students leaving a BN to have requisite knowledge upon graduation. With the main responsibility for developing competent and knowledgeable graduate nurses falling to the university, it is a requirement that the skills and knowledge necessary for the workforce be included within the nursing curriculum, further suggesting the implicit need for tight control of classification and curriculum by the university. Should classification or curriculum control be provided to the student cohort, it would be highly unlikely that all necessary knowledge would be included.
2.7 **Pedagogy Application in Nursing**

Due to the apparent inability to promote student control in regard to “classification” (curriculum) yet the desire by the SoNM to deliver SCL, it would seem that the “framing” or pedagogy of learning is the legitimate focus of student-centredness in this context. It is possible to conceive of a student-centred pedagogy (SCP) in which students are assisted and guided through their learning, all the while with teaching planned and delivered that has student learning at the centre of its purpose. It is the assumption on the part of the researcher that SCP is the focus of the SoNM during discussions of SCL; however, as a definition or explanatory statement has not been made within the School’s documentation, this cannot be confirmed. What is clear is that SCL probably cannot realistically be pursued in relation to curriculum given the professional and disciplinary imperatives described above.

With it being postulated that the effective focus of SCL within the SoNM is on pedagogy and the context of learning, and with the understanding that pedagogy relates to guidance-to-learn and teaching that has learning as its goal (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013), it is considered prudent to seek a working definition of SCL that emphasises the process of student learning. With this working definition, future SCL discussions can be better understood and contextualised, with subsequent dialogue possible as to how it could be achieved in reality. In light of this, Biggs and Tang (2011) propose a simple explanation of SCL when they describe, “It’s not what we do but what our students do that’s the important thing” (p. 20). Although this definition is concise and highlights the importance of the student within their learning, such an oversimplification of SCL results in ambiguity as to its meaning. It is therefore considered inappropriate to use this definition within future discussion, as it does little to provide clarity or specific focus on what SCL is and how it should be achieved. Cannon and Newble (cited in Lea et al., 2003) also focus on what the student does; however, they provide more context as to how SCL can be achieved by the student and teacher:

… thinking and learning that emphasize student responsibility and activity in learning rather than what the teachers are doing. Essentially SCL has student responsibility and activity at its heart, in contrast to a strong emphasis on teacher control and coverage of academic content in much conventional, didactic teaching. (p. 321)

Although the above definition does well to outline an overall meaning of SCL and helps to distance SCL from the control of curriculum required in professional education, it still remains unclear as to how this can be achieved practically within the classroom. Student responsibility and activity are clearly identified as key requirements, yet such terms could be open to interpretation. Unfortunately, there exists no simple or agreed-on recipe of SCL and
no formula as to what activities and responsibilities must be facilitated by the teacher or owned by the student. In this respect, whilst a general theoretical understanding is known, application specificity and detail are unclear. As described by Bernstein (2000), “… without these specific descriptions, there is no way in which we can understand the way in which knowledge systems become part of consciousness” (p. 29). If, however, SCL is to be appropriately integrated and utilised in the classroom, and moved from the rhetoric as described by Farrington (1991), it is important to explore and dissect SCL from a pedagogical or learning viewpoint. Through such scrutiny and examination, guidance may emerge of what is needed to deliver SCL to the student cohort.

It is at least clear that a guiding principle of all SCL discussion (curricular or pedagogical) places the student at the centre of their own learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Dewey, 1966/1916; Frambach et al., 2014; Harju & Åkerblom, 2017; Knowles, 1975; Kolb, 1984; Rogers, 1951 & 1983; Tagney, 2014). This notion of student-centredness is expanded by Rogers (1951), with commentary made on the democratic educational approach that it subsequently creates. An example of this creation is provided by Pryor (2004), with association made between a student-centred focus and progressive education. Within this educational approach, progressivist educators ensure that curriculum is developed in keeping with democratic ideals and with consideration of the interests of students (Pryor, 2004). This is consistent with prior statements set forth by Rogers (1951) in relation to educational democracy being advanced when the teacher asks the question of what the student wants and needs.

It is considered prudent at this juncture to overview the term “democracy” due to the apparent affiliation this has with SCL and to ensure clarity of understanding. The Museum of Australian Democracy (2018) highlights the derivation of the word from the Greek “demos” (populace of common people) and “kratos” (power); as such, the root of democracy can be interpreted to mean “the power of the people” (Ober, 2007 p. 2). Within an educational perspective, Knowles (1950) states that “in a democracy responsibility rests with each individual to decide the course of his [sic] own growth” (p. 11). In this regard and in specific relation to pedagogical SCL, democratic education would allow the individual student the power to determine their learning needs and requirements to best cater for their personal growth and development.

When applying and advancing a democratic approach in the classroom, it is suggested that three pedagogical rights be realised: the right to individual enhancement, the right to be
included, and the right to participate (Bernstein, 2000). Of these pedagogical rights, it is both the rights to be included and to participate that are reminiscent of Rogers’s (1951) desire to understand the student’s wants and needs. Moreover, such rights echo the need for individual responsibility and decision-making as suggested by Knowles. Student liberty is also a suggested theme to promote democratic education, helping to create the right for independence and thus allowing for the expression of opinion and activity within decision-making (Pryor, 2004). Through appropriate inclusion, decision-making, and independence, the student can be afforded the opportunity to participate not only in pedagogical discourse, but also in “the construction, maintenance, and transformation of order” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 20).

The rationale and justification for the use of democracy within an educational setting is well presented by Knowles (1950), who discusses how education programs are often developed and constructed on the premise of what ought to be included rather than on what learners actually require. He furthers this point with the clarification that “good program building is a matter of understanding what each individual really needs and wants, and being skilful in creating opportunities in which people will find the satisfaction they seek” (Knowles, 1950, p. 11). Although the use of the term “program” within this discussion likely highlights a curriculum focus by Knowles, it is suggested that good pedagogy and learning are also created through the understanding of the individual and creation of satisfaction. It is therefore considered imperative for democratic education and SCL to be possible within an Australian school of nursing, that the students’ expectant wants and needs be understood in relation to their pedagogical learning requirements. Through the collection and understanding of student learning expectations, appropriate student inclusion would be observed, resulting in the ability for the individual to be more actively involved in decisions, with ensuing independence in their own learning established, thus leading to the ability for students to be better placed to engage in pedagogical discourse and creation of classroom order (Bernstein, 2000).

2.8 Student Expectations

Before embarking on the exploration of expectations, it is first important to provide clarity regarding the word and the definition that guides its understanding. To date, no specific definition has been found in relation to student academic expectations, a lack which is exemplified by the North American Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement
Despite the BCSSE tool being described as useful in the collection of participants’ educational expectations, no attempt is made to identify what is meant by the wording. Due to this lack of specific definition, a more generic definition needs to be sought. The Cambridge dictionary defines the term expectation in three ways (Expectation, n.d.), with these slight variations of definition being determined by where the meaning derives from. Within American English, for example, expectation is “the feeling or belief that something will or should happen”. Similarly, the term within Business English describes “what you believe or hope will happen in the future”. The last definition offered by Cambridge dictionaries is from the English meaning, and highlights “the feeling of expecting something will happen”. It would appear that the words “feeling” and “belief” are a common thread among these definitions; so too is the focus on something happening or occurring. From this, a working definition can be developed, this being that expectation is a feeling and belief that something will occur.

For the most part, student academic learning is shaped and developed by the academic staff and institutions that are responsible for its delivery (Knowles, 1950). This development of practice has been described as an “inside out” approach, in which academic staff on the inside have assumed to know what the students on the outside need and how it should be provided (Sander et al., 2000). However, to ensure a true student-centred approach, it is essential that institutions move toward an “outside in” approach where student expectations are explored (Lea et al., 2003). Teachers should therefore facilitate and encourage students to be engaged in the teaching and learning process: not only because this is seen as good teaching practice, but also because this will assist in the move away from a teacher-centric approach (Lea et al., 2003) and assist students in becoming individually responsible for their own learning. The need for increased student engagement is also described as being of importance due to the diverse student population that is now being observed within the higher education sector (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Lea et al., 2003). With increased diversity comes a heterogenous student cohort with varied needs and expectations and, as such, universities must change the way in which they cater for their students; however, “in order to appreciate what the academic and non-academic needs of students are, one has to ask them” (Lea et al., 2003, p. 323).

Although, in part, teaching is revised based on student experience feedback, this feedback is related to the experience of what has already been provided and does not necessarily take into account what the students expected, or what they felt would have been
optimal for their needs. It is purported that should expectations be assured, and attention given to aspects such as preferred teaching methods, these will subsequently become a key part of the students’ learning process (Pichardo et al., 2007). Moreover, having a better understanding of what students expect from their learning can provide universities with valuable information necessary to increase the quality of their programs, to set student-focused educational priorities (Asefi et al., 2017), and to devise strategies to create institutional improvements (Hacifazlioğlu & Özdemir, 2010). The need to collect and document student expectations is also considered judicious before any improvements and developments are made by the university, as these expectations can be used as the yardstick by which to judge if advancements have been successful (Lea et al., 2003).

If, however, expectations are not sought from the student cohort, it is possible that the delivery of pedagogically sound and appropriate academic learning may still result in an “expectation gap” should students’ expectations not have been met (Asefi et al., 2017). This expectation gap may lead to disappointment, poor satisfaction, and a likely increase in course withdrawal (Asefi et al., 2017; Darlaston-Jones et al., 2003), as the fulfilment of expectations at university is strongly correlated with student satisfaction and retention (Knapp & Masterson, 2018). Darlaston-Jones et al. (2003) further suggest that students will potentially face this dissatisfaction regardless of whether the services provided by the university exceed global best practice standards or rank highly within university ranking scales. Further to unmet student expectations, it is likely that with little prior understanding of the viewpoint of new students, academic staff will attach their personal and professional discipline expectations onto the student in regard to their academic learning.

The expectations that are bestowed by teachers may be based on knowledge of the individual student but may also include the prejudices and stereotypical views that the teacher may have previously formed (Friedrich et al., 2015). Friedrich et al. (2015) attest that such expectations have the potential to impact (positively or negatively) on student achievement, which has been described as the Pygmalion effect or as self-fulfilling prophecy (Craighhead & Nemeroff, 2004). In contextual terms, if a teacher expects that a particular teaching method favoured by students will not work, this expectation may come to fruition in reality. Hagenauer and Volet (2014) acknowledge that the relationship between student and teacher is a vital one at university, as this relationship can affect the decision for students to continue in their study or to leave following their first year. As aforementioned in regard to an inside out approach to teaching and learning, expectations of appropriate pedagogy and information
delivery methods will likely be held, and subsequently used, by the teacher. Such use of pedagogy with no regard to student expectations has the potential for dissatisfaction and frustration in the learning process (Cox, 2009). If, for example, a didactic teaching approach is used with students who are expecting a more active learning environment, discontent will likely ensue.

Conflicting opinions and expectations may result in a poor working relationship between students and staff, which may then lead to disengagement in the learning process by the student. The learning climate is formed at an early stage through teacher and student interactions, setting out how both parties will feel toward the learning process (Biggs & Tang, 2011). There is a “call for educators to understand how their students perceive the college’s cultural environment so as to help students fit in at an institution and persist” (Kearns, 2013, p. 1). It is therefore important to ensure that such a culture is not negatively impacted by poor relations, such as a disconnect between expectations from the outset. The aim is to ensure that positive engagement in the learning process is established, creating a firm basis on which to build learning and teaching for future years of study.

As has been discussed, the illumination of student expectations has various benefits, not just to the individual student but to the educational institution as a whole. Furthermore, the failure to identify student expectations has the potential for negative consequences such as expectation gap, dissatisfaction, and enrolment attrition. Nonetheless, it should be highlighted that some student expectations may be unrealistic and not necessarily aligned with their future experience (Crisp et al., 2009; Darlaston-Jones et al., 2003; Sander et al., 2000). Despite these expectations being inappropriate, it is still necessary to manage them and to assist students in refocusing and shaping their expectations in a more realistic and reasonable direction (Hill, 1995; Sander et al., 2000; Shank et al., 1995). J. Smith and Wertlieb (2005) put forward the notion that students with highly unrealistic expectations are likely to achieve a lower grade point average compared to students with average or below-average expectations. Management of expectations is therefore considered an important task to complete, in order to clarify any possible misconceptions that students may possess prior to attending university (Bates & Kaye, 2014). Management of expectations can be achieved either through enabling students to adjust their expectations closer to the reality of what will be experienced, or by universities and teaching staff modifying their approach to better align with the needs of the student cohort (Crisp et al., 2009; Shank et al., 1995).
2.9 Conclusion

As has been discussed, a spectrum of learning exists, with traditional learning and SCL sitting at opposite ends of this continuum. This is not to say that one learning approach is better than the other, as both methods bring with them advantages and disadvantages. For example, traditional learning is associated with scaffolding of information and direct student guidance, and with this, the ability for students to learn increasingly complex concepts. It is suggested, however, that traditional learning encourages teacher dependence and the passive transfer of knowledge. Student-centred learning, on the other hand, is said to foster more meaningful learning as well as assisting students to become critical thinkers; however, the term lacks appropriate definition, leading to confusion regarding practical application. Nevertheless, preference in nursing higher education is for SCL, likely due to the relationship this approach has with patient-centred care.

In relation to SCL, both curriculum and pedagogy play a role in shaping the learning environment and the student experience. Within nursing education, the curriculum or “valid knowledge” cannot be student centred, as external constraints such as industry demands, accreditation standards, and nursing registration requirements need to be satisfied. To ensure achievement of these external constraints, control of curriculum must remain with the university; therefore, the focus of SCL in nursing education must be in relation to pedagogy. To encourage pedagogical SCL, the inclusion of, and active participation of the student within their own learning is necessary, subsequently promoting democratic education. This in turn affords students the opportunity to articulate their needs and wants, resulting in the ability for education providers to create an outside in approach to learning, to provide learning opportunities that will increase student satisfaction, and to assist in the management of appropriate and realistic student expectations. In order to encourage democracy and SCL, the needs and wants of the student must be understood, and therefore solicited by the education provider.

Considering the gap in information regarding nursing students’ expectations toward their academic learning, combined with the beneficial outcomes that can be gained through this understanding, further research is required to address this deficit in knowledge. This research will assist in the increased understanding of the nursing students’ wants, needs, and expectations of academic learning.
Chapter Three

Research Design

This chapter overviews the research method and design used to address the previously identified knowledge gap and the current study’s aim, as identified in Section 1.3. More specifically, this chapter outlines the methods used within this project, as well as providing information regarding participants and sample size. The geographical setting of the research is then highlighted, with discussion given to the timeframe in which the research was conducted. Detail regarding the collection of quantitative and qualitative data is provided, with justification provided for the selected questionnaire and the use of semi-structured interviews. Finally, the analysis of data is reviewed and ethical considerations are discussed.

3.1 Constructivist Paradigm

To better frame the current research and to provide a considered approach to its inquiry, a constructivist paradigm was utilised. With SCL and expectation being focused on, both subjective to the individual, a research paradigm that echoed the focus of the individual was considered beneficial. Constructivist ontology highlights that reality is personally and socially constructed (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012; Creswell, 2014); consequently, there is not one universal truth of reality but as many realities as there are individuals constructing them (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). Specifically within this paradigm, a phenomenological approach was utilised and applied to the current research project. As put forth by Gray (2018), phenomenological research seeks to understand social reality through enquiry of the individual and of how they may experience it. Within this research approach it is necessary to explore the subjective viewpoints of the individual, thus revealing current understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Gray, 2018). When exploring student expectation through the lens of this paradigm and approach, the ontological and epistemological belief of the researcher is that “truth lies within the human experience” (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012, p. 56). It is this experience and the meaning attached by the individual towards the phenomenon (expectation) that are the antecedents to this research.

3.2 Methodology

A sequential qualitative-dominant (quan→QUAL) explanatory mixed-method design was utilised in the proposed research. Within this approach, the quantitative and qualitative
methods are used in a linear fashion (Richardson-Tench et al., 2014), with the results from the initial quantitative phase being used in the development of the qualitative phase (Teddie & Tashakkoro, cited in Richardson-Tench et al., 2014).

3.3 **Participants**

A convenience sample of enrolled first-year BN students \( (N = 300) \) from the SoNM at Griffith University Gold Coast campus was invited to engage with the quantitative phase of the project. From the invited participants, 32.66\% \( (n = 98) \) completed the questionnaire. On commencement of their study at the University, the same total sample population \( (N = 300) \) was invited to participate in the qualitative phase. From the total sample invited, 3.67\% \( (n = 11) \) participated in an individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interview.

3.4 **Setting**

The Griffith University SoNM operates the Bachelor of Nursing degree from three campuses in Australia (Gold Coast, Nathan, and Logan); however, only students from the Gold Coast campus were invited into the project. The reasoning for a single-site research project was twofold, with the first being the length of time available for the project to be completed (the research needed to fit within the constraints of the Master of Education and Professional Studies Research). The second reason was the limited timeframe in which quantitative data needed to be initially analysed to develop an interview guide for the semi-structured interviews. To ensure that students involved in the semi-structured interviews provided an accurate account of their expectations of academic learning, it was planned for interviews to occur relatively soon within their commencing trimester of study, preferably before teaching commenced or the week thereof. Interviews performed later in the trimester were considered likely to contain perceptions of students’ current learning experiences; therefore, they would not provide an accurate description necessary for addressing the aim of the project, that being the expectations of academic learning. A time frame of 2 weeks was selected in which to complete all student interviews, due to this being the time at which the University sends out the first experience survey to the commencing student cohort. In the absence of literature able to identify a timeframe in which experience replaces previous expectation, the delivery of the expectation survey marks a point by which the University deem students to have experienced an appropriate degree of university life.
Should data have been collected from all three campuses, giving a sample of approximately 700 students, it is likely that analysis would have created a delay in the development and undertaking of the aforementioned semi-structured interviews. This constraint does not, however, negate the possibility of engaging the full cohort as part of a larger project in the future.

3.5 Data Collection

Phase 1 of this mixed-methods research project included the use of an amended first-year student expectation questionnaire (SEQ) (Crisp et al., 2009; see Appendix A) to collect quantitative and basic qualitative response data from the commencing undergraduate nursing cohort. The questionnaire (using LimeSurvey software) was sent via an electronic link to all participants along with their BN “on-boarding” information, which is sent via email once a student has confirmed acceptance of their university placement offer. Consent to participate in the research project was implied on completion of the questionnaire. Early surveying of students was undertaken in the hope of limiting the possibility of “experience” bias as well as to increase survey response rates, the link being sent during a period when students are wanting to commence their formal engagement with the university.

Phase 2 of the project included the use of semi-structured interviews conducted with students soon after their commencement of study with the SoNM. Interviews were conducted within the aforementioned 2-week timeframe so as to limit the potential for experience bias during discussions on expectations. Semi-structured interviews were audio recorded following participant consent, with ongoing “real time” member checking undertaken throughout the interviews. That is, paraphrasing of information was undertaken throughout the interviews to ensure participants’ meaning was appropriately understood (Polit & Beck, 2017). Recorded interview data were then transcribed verbatim, with transcription data de-identified.

As highlighted by Charmaz (cited in Creswell, 2014), the goal of qualitative data collection is to continue until data saturation has occurred. Although this situation was preferred, it was not possible to confirm within the 2-week student interview timeframe. If interviews were to be conducted, transcribed, and analysed, and then a decision made as to whether further participants were needed, this would have likely resulted in very few interviews being conducted before the end of the second week of university. It was therefore decided to conduct as many interviews as possible within the designated time frame, with the expectation that the more interview data collected, the more chance there would be to achieve
data saturation. As a rough guide prior to recruiting participants, three to 10 interviews were planned as a minimum, based on Creswell’s (2014) proposed guide for sample size during phenomenological research. During analysis and coding of the interviews, it was noted that data saturation occurred following the fifth interview, with no new codes being generated thereafter.

3.6 Questionnaire Selection

Through reviewing the literature, four questionnaires were identified and considered for use within the current research project, these being (a) the Dundee Ready Educational Environment Measure (DREEM; Roff et al., 1997); (b) the University Student Expectation Tool (USET; Sander et al., 2000); (c) the Service Quality tool (SERVQUAL; Parasuraman et al., 1988); and (d) the first-year student expectation questionnaire (SEQ; Crisp et al., 2009). Of all the questionnaire tools reviewed, the DREEM (Roff et al., 1997) is the most widely published and is validated within a variety of settings and countries (Bakhshiliabad et al., 2015; Barcelo, 2016; Hamid et al., 2013; Imanipour et al., 2015; Ousey et al., 2014; Rochmawati et al., 2014; Victor et al., 2016). The tool was conceived specifically for use in the area of health and medical education, with the aim of assessing and diagnosing the education environment and climate within these speciality settings. The DREEM consists of 50 questions, all focused on students’ perceptions of teaching, of the teacher, of academic self, of atmosphere, and of social self (Roff et al., 1997). On further review of the tool, however, it was ascertained that the survey has been tailored to collect information regarding students’ perceptions of their experience rather than their expectations; therefore, it was not appropriate for the intended project.

The USET questionnaire was designed to allow students to answer three questions, namely, what their ideal expectation was in regard to teaching and learning, what they predicted was likely to happen, and what they did not want to occur (Sander et al., 2000). The questionnaire’s authors state that it was developed to collect data quickly and efficiently, and within a format agreeable to statistical analysis (Sander et al., 2000). Although the tool does include questions pertinent to the current research, this is not its main focus, with questions regarding expectations accounting for only two of the 10 questions available. Furthermore, on request of the tool from the primary researcher, it was stated that a major revision to the tool would likely be needed due to the length of time since it was developed (P. Sander, personal communication, November 15, 2017).
The SERVQUAL tool explores consumer perception of quality in relation to a particular service, with the intention that it be used within the realm of business and retail. High financial outlay and investment from students to their educational institutions has resulted in a move away from the traditional scholarly relationship between student and university, toward a more consumer-driven relationship (Bates & Kaye, 2014), a perspective which initially led to the inclusion and review of a questionnaire regarding service provision. Shank et al. (1995) put forward the notion that students’ initial expectations are used as a benchmark that later defines perceptions of quality of service provided by the university. As predicted, questions within the SERVQUAL tool are specific to service alone, with major revision and amendments needed to make it appropriate for gaining insight into students’ academic learning also. It is noted that studies exist that use SERVQUAL within health education (Asefi et al., 2017; Darlaston-Jones et al., 2003), with amendments to the tool having been made. Although the amended tool is better suited to health education, its focus remains on what the student can expect to be provided as a service within their academic learning. Additionally, it is suggested that the tool is best used several times, with data tracked between each delivery (Shank et al., 1995); however, as the current project’s questionnaire would be a stand-alone collection of data, a tool that requires multiple delivery was considered unsuitable.

After consideration of the tools available, the first-year student expectation questionnaire (SEQ) developed by Crisp et al. (2009) was selected for utilisation within the current research project (see Appendix B). Questions within the SEQ were designed after review and appraisal of both the BCSSE tool (Indiana University School of Education, 2019) and the Australian first-year experience survey (Baik et al., 2015). The BCSSE was established by the School of Education at Indiana University, with data being collected from hundreds of educational institutions utilising the questionnaire since its inception in 2007 (Indiana University School of Education, 2019). Within the tool’s inaugural year, 126 colleges and universities within North America conducted the survey, collecting data from over 100,000 first-year students (Crisp et al., 2009). Although data from the BCSSE are not publicly available, institution-specific reports and data are provided to each participating organisation for use in improving the quality of services delivered to the student cohort (Indiana University School of Education, 2019). The Australian first-year experience survey is a multisite, longitudinal study that has used surveys to collect data over a 20-year period (1994 – 2014) from first-year commencing university students (Baik et al., 2015). Following
review of the aforesaid questionnaires, the SEQ was developed as a hybrid tool that combined salient items from each.

The SEQ was initially conducted in 2006 by Crisp et al. (2009) during Orientation Week, and again in 2007 with minor alterations made to some of the questions (although not to the structure of the questions). Further use of the SEQ is observed within research from Brinkworth et al., (2009). Whilst the student cohort was dissimilar in the Brinkworth et al (2009) study, the objective remained the same, with student expectation being the focus of data collection. Given prior use of the SEQ and its focus on student expectations, comparison can be made with the current study’s aim (Section 1.3), thus demonstrating the reason for its selection.

3.7 Semi-Structured Interviews
Following the use of the SEQ tool, analysis of the data was undertaken (as highlighted in Section 3.8.1) to develop a guide for qualitative data collection and thus to provide a focus for the semi-structured interviews. Though the questionnaire data provided focus and identification of topics to be covered in the interviews, it was not clear as to what answers would be provided, therefore leading to the need for and use of a semi-structured approach. This approach allows participants the opportunity to enter a free-flowing conversation in which they are encouraged to talk openly and to provide their own narrative, all the while being kept on track through the use of the aforementioned guiding questions informed by the questionnaire results that provide some structure and direction to the interview (Polit & Beck, 2017; Richardson-Tench et al., 2014; Schneider et al., 2013).

From a pragmatic viewpoint it could be argued that qualitative data could have been collected more readily from a focus group of students rather than from individual interviews, and as such would have provided a more economical use of the researcher’s time (Schneider et al., 2013). It could also be argued that students new to the university setting may find comfort in a group setting when providing feedback, as the focus group may be seen as less intimidating than an individual interview (Schneider et al., 2013). It is, however, this group setting that has the potential for overrepresentation of specific personality types such as the dominant and confident student, with more introverted students being unable to fully assert their understanding and views (Schneider et al., 2013). Subsequently, the individual semi-structured interview approach was utilised, so that the opinions and views of all participants could be collected in full detail.
3.8 Analysis

3.8.1 Questionnaire

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analysed through the latest edition of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data were subjected to analysis using descriptive and simple bivariate correlations, in line with those of Crisp and colleagues (2009).

Qualitative responses within the questionnaire were subjected to qualitative content analysis. To perform this analysis, text mining was employed through computer-based coding software (Leximancer). The use of Leximancer as an analysis tool was primarily due to its ability to quantify the content of textual documents and thus produce concepts and themes, as well as displaying these themes within an interactive concept map (Leximancer, 2018). The use of this approach was further influenced by the low level of interpretive analysis needed, which Vaismoradi et al., (2013) describe as an appropriate use of content analysis. Kim and Kim (2017) highlight the benefit of reliability and reproducibility as well as the removal of researcher bias with the use of Leximancer text mining. Moreover, A. Smith and Humphreys (2006) state that increased automation of the process of analysis not only decreases cost but also allows for quicker analysis, which was considered important in light of the limited time frame for conducting the second phase semi-structured interviews. Although Morgan (1993) describes how an overemphasis on numerical analysis of qualitative data can result in a loss of meaning to the results, this was not considered to be of detriment to the findings, as the analysis was designed to inform a semi-structured interview schedule, which itself would provide meaning to the initial questionnaire results. The semi-structured interview schedule is presented as Appendix C.

3.8.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Data from the semi-structured interviews were thematically analysed based on the six phases of analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. Familiarise yourself with your data;
2. Generate initial codes;
3. Search for a theme;
4. Review themes;
5. Define and name themes; and
6. Produce the report.
This method of analysis was selected due to the flexibility it provides and the ability to report patterns in the data in rich detail, all the while not being wed to a specific theoretical approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). With the goal of thematic analysis being to interpret and make sense of qualitative data, themes and patterns are identified and thus demonstrate much more than the simple summation of data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

3.9 Ethics

Human Research Ethics Committee approval was granted by Griffith University (GU ref no: 2019/028). In addition, approval was also sought from the University’s survey team in order for surveys to be conducted with the commencing student cohort (Griffith University, 2017b).

In regard to student semi-structured interviews, it was noted that the principal researcher is employed within the same School and at the same campus from which students were recruited. It was therefore possible that, due to a perceived power imbalance, students may have been reluctant to provide open and honest discussion. This was, however, considered a theoretical possibility only, due to the researcher not being an active member of the first trimester teaching staff for the first-year nursing cohort, and thus being largely unknown to the student cohort during the interview stage.

It was further understood that during semi-structured interviews, students may have revealed a variety of expectations that are not possible for the University to meet currently, or expectations that are wildly unrealistic. Although this did occur, it happened in only two of the 11 interviews conducted. In both instances, the students’ expectations were discussed after the interview and they were referred to the appropriate department within the University, as well as being shown the most appropriate information on the University’s website. Failure to address these expectations by the researcher may have resulted in students believing their expectations to be appropriate, as they would not have been advised otherwise by the researcher (an academic staff member within the School).
Chapter Four

Results/Findings

This chapter presents the results and findings from the sequential qualitative-dominant (quan → QUAL) explanatory mixed-methods research study. To reflect the linear approach of the research design, the questionnaire (quantitative phase) findings are initially reported following descriptive and simple bivariate correlation analysis through SPSS (quantitative questionnaire responses) and qualitative content analysis through Leximancer (qualitative questionnaire responses). This is then followed by how the results informed the semi-structured interview (qualitative phase), with qualitative results lastly presented following thematic analysis. As the research is qualitative dominant, the results and findings from the semi-structured interviews are provided greater weighting within the section.

4.1 Questionnaire Findings

4.1.1 Quantitative Survey Questions

The online questionnaire was made available to all 300 newly enrolled first-year undergraduate nursing students at Griffith University, Gold Coast campus. Of the total participant pool, 98 (32.66%) completed the questionnaire. Table 1 provides a summary of the frequency percentages of the participants’ background demographic and enrolment status.

Table 1. Background Demographic and Enrolment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Under 20 years</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 – 24 years</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 years and over</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First year studying at university</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment status</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In relation to Table 1, it is not possible to determine the representativeness of the survey’s participants compared to the entire first-year nursing cohort, as year-level data are not
available. Data relating to the student cohort are, however, available by subject code, so for comparison to be made, a key first-year, first-trimester course (1803NRS – Foundations of Professional Nursing Practice) was selected. Within this course 270 students were enrolled, with 86% \( (n = 225) \) female and 14% \( (n = 37) \) male, providing a degree of similarity when compared to the survey participant group. Further likeness is seen when comparing the age ranges of the 1803NRS student cohort with the survey participants. Ages of 1803NRS enrolled students at the start of the academic year ranged from 17 years to 49 years, with the vast majority (65.2%) falling within the 17-19-year age range. The number of students in other age ranges fell drastically after 19 years, with 15.2% of students aged 20-24 years and 15.2% of students aged 25 years or older. Full-time enrolments within 1803NRS accounted for 211 (78.1%) students, with the additional 21.9% enrolled in a variation of part-time study, thus accounting for the main discrepancy between enrolled student and survey participant numbers.

Following demographic data collection, eight statements were presented relating to expectations toward academic learning within the university setting. Responses to the statements were made on a 5-point Likert scale including Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Not Sure (NS), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Overall percentage frequencies to these eight statements can be seen in Table 2, along with probability significance in relation to participant gender and age. Despite the questionnaire being scored with a 5-point Likert scale, results are displayed as a 3-point Likert scale to mirror the results of the original SEQ authors (Crisp et al., 2009) and to provide for an easier review of findings. Results from SA and A have been combined, as have results from SD and D.
Table 2.  
*Quantitative Statement Response Percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% of responses</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to be able to combine study with paid work</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having ‘ready’ access to my lecturers and tutors outside of face-</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to-face teaching will be important to my success</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on my submitted work will be important to my learning</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on my DRAFTS of work will be important to my learning</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will be important for me to attend most lectures</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have activities outside of the University that may affect my</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with other students in class time will be important to my</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I anticipate that studying at University will be different to</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>studying at High School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; NS = Not Sure; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree. ** p value < 0.050 displays significance.

For the vast majority, statements were responded to in agreement, with only one statement displaying an even spread of responses. From this it would appear that participant consensus was least achieved in regard to the expectation that outside activities may impinge on academic study. Despite the expectation that outside activities may impact on participants’ ability to study, it was recorded that almost 80% of respondents expected to combine study and paid work. It is therefore presumed that “outside activities” include much more than paid work; however, such definition or understanding was not requested at the time. The only other statement not to have been responded in agreement by at least 90% of participants was in relation to working with other students. Although this statement mostly attracted agreement, almost a third (30.3%) of the participant group were not sure if such work would be important to their learning.

The highest agreement was achieved in relation to feedback on assignments, and how this will likely be important for learning. This statement recorded all responses as being in agreement. The importance of draft feedback was also agreed on by most participants (97.9%), with no disagreement to this question, the only difference being that 2% of participants were not sure of the importance of draft assignment feedback toward their academic learning. The majority of survey participants (91.9%) also agreed that university
would be different from high school, with similar agreement displayed in regard to the importance of attending most lectures (94.9%). Finally, agreement (90.9%) was also noted in relation to the importance of “ready access” to teaching staff outside of classroom time. Although no disagreement was seen for this question, it may be possible that the term “ready access” held different connotations among the survey participants.

Within all eight statements, no significance (p value < 0.050) was seen in relation to participants ages, with p values ranging from 0.135 (when discussing ready access to lecturers) to 0.722 (when discussing working with other students). In contrast, four of the eight statements displayed significance in relation to participants’ gender; more specifically, that the split in opinion related to gender indicated significance. The four statements of significance included “easy” access to lectures (p 0.010), feedback on submitted work (p 0.011), attendance at most lectures (p 0.044), and anticipation that university study will be different from high school (p 0.006).

Further questions related to academic learning were asked within the questionnaire, although unlike with earlier statements, these were not presented in terms of level of agreement or with the use of a Likert scale. The amount of study hours expected outside of the classroom per week was asked, as was the length of time that was considered appropriate to have submitted assessments marked and returned to students. Lastly, participants were asked who they felt should have the most responsibility in relation to student learning. Table 3 provides a summary of the frequencies to these three questions.

Table 3. Expectations of Study, Marking Feedback, and Learning Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expected study outside of class time per week</td>
<td>0-5 hours</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10 hours</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11-15 hours</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-20 hours</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 20 hours</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the acceptable time for having your submitted work marked and returned to you?</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-3 weeks</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-6 weeks</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 6 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who should have the most responsibility in relationship to your learning?</td>
<td>You (student)</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lecturer/Teaching staff</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the possible responses regarding expected study time required outside of the classroom, a mix of responses was seen. The highest percentage of participants (37.4%) expected that they would need to study between 11 and 15 hours per week outside of class time. Responses were however also recorded at various other ranges, such as between 0 and 5 hours (3%), and more than 20 hours (18.2%).

When questioned about the acceptable time frame for assignments to be marked and returned, almost half (46.5%) of participants stated between two and three weeks. From a university viewpoint such a response is encouraging, as whilst such a time limit is not stated in University policy, the SoNM informally regards 3 weeks as the timing for returning marked assignments. Despite fortuitous comparison between survey responses and SoNM practice, this leaves almost a third (32.3%) of participants expecting that assessments be marked and returned with a 1-week period.

4.1.2 Qualitative Questionnaire Questions

In relation to the qualitative questions within the questionnaire, data from all questions were merged into a single document and entered into Leximancer software (version 4.5). Within this software concepts were extracted, with these concepts then clustered together into overarching themes. Table 4 provides a list of the 37 generated concepts, ordered by the number of counts within the data and their relevance, with relevance being “the percentage frequency of text segments which are coded with that concept” (Leximancer, 2019, para. 1). From these 37 concepts, 11 themes were created, these being (in order of importance): learning, study, expect, activities, work, assignments, learn, classes, lectures, experience, and support. Figure 1 displays a visual “map” representation of these themes and how they relate to each other. “The themes are heat-mapped to indicate importance. This means that the ‘hottest’ or most important theme appears in red, and the next hottest in orange, and so on according to the colour wheel” (Leximancer, 2018, p. 12).
Table 4.

*Leximancer (Version 4.5) Concept Counts and Relevance of Qualitative Survey Answers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Classes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Expect</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Need</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Take</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Able</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Learn</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Studies</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Use of Questionnaire for Semi-Structured Interview Schedule Development

As can be seen from the Likert questionnaire results, the vast majority of participants were in agreement with most of the statements presented. Although this does not provide a focus for further questioning per se, the consensus of opinion does call for further exploration to better understand why such agreement was given. If, for example, the statement relating to having “easy” access to lecturers is reviewed, 90.9% of participants were in agreement that this would be important for their success. It is, however, not understood why this is considered beneficial, or what this access would need to consist of for the participants. As such, further questioning is needed for clarification and elaboration of opinion to be given. Such clarification is also needed for the statement related to outside activity and study, as without further detail it is not understood why such variation of response is seen. Leximancer themes are also considered appropriate topics for further exploration within interviews, as
such themes have been generated by the participants themselves and therefore signify areas of participant interest. The most important theme requiring consideration is “learning”, with some of the concepts contained within this theme being: learning, students, responsibility, student, effort, responsible, course, teachers, and understand.

Table 5 displays the relationship between the quantitative survey questions, the Leximancer themes generated from the survey, and the semi-structured interview questions/prompts that were used within the later interviews. As an example, in Row 4, interview questions related to the teacher were developed based on five of the Likert survey statements (Q7, Q8, Q9, Q14, & Q15) as well as seven of the Leximancer themes generated from the qualitative survey questions (Learning, Learn, Study, Work, Expect, Assignments, and Support). It should be noted, however, that despite the questionnaire results forming the basis of the interview questions, prompts have also taken their cue from the literature. An example of this can be seen in Row 1 when discussing expectations and desire, as the reason for this line of questioning stems from previous discussion regarding an increasingly heterogenous student cohort with varied needs and expectations (see Section 2.8).
### Table 5.
**Relationship Between Questionnaire Findings and Semi-Structured Interview Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview question/Prompt</th>
<th>Questionnaire statement</th>
<th>Leximancer theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expectation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you come to expect something at University, does that mean that you desire or want that to occur?</td>
<td>Q13. I anticipate that studying at University will be different to studying at high School</td>
<td>Expect Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider studying at University to be different to studying in other environments such as high School or TAFE?</td>
<td>Q5. Expected study outside of class time per week</td>
<td>Study Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you enrolled as a part-time or full-time student?</td>
<td>Q5. Expected study outside of class time per week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you feel is an appropriate number of hours to study at home for 40-credit point (full-time) study? (How did you come up with this?)</td>
<td>Q11. I have activities outside of the University that may affect my ability to study</td>
<td>Study Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you come up with this?</td>
<td>Q5. Expected study outside of class time per week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independence, Responsibility, Self-directed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your feelings toward self-directed learning and having a paid job?</td>
<td>Q6. I expect to be able to combine study with paid work</td>
<td>Learning Learn Study Study Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If Positive) So what is it that has prepared you for being able to combine work and becoming more responsible in your learning? Or is this simply a belief of what should happen?</td>
<td>Q11. I have activities outside of the University that may affect my ability to study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your expectations of the student teacher relationship at University?</td>
<td>Q7. Having ‘ready’ access to my lecturers and tutors outside of face-to-face teaching will be important to my success</td>
<td>Learning Learn Study Study Work Expect Assignments Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you feel is the role of the University teaching staff within students’ learning?</td>
<td>Q8. Feedback on my submitted work will be important to my learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your expectations towards teaching staff providing assessment feedback?</td>
<td>Q9. Feedback on my DRAFTS of work will be important to my learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that easy access to your teaching staff will be important in your studies?</td>
<td>Q14. What is the acceptable time for having your submitted work marked and returned to you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does ‘easy’ access mean to you?</td>
<td>Q15. Who should have the most responsibility in relationship to your learning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In addition to teaching and accessibility, is being supportive an important trait for the teacher to have?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think teaching staff need to do to show such support?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involvement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider yourself to be a student who is involved in their own learning activities and assessments?</td>
<td>Q10. It will be important for me to attend most lectures</td>
<td>Learning Learn Activities Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you consider is involvement?</td>
<td>Q12. Working with other students in class time will be important to my learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is an appropriate level of involvement?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel this involvement should extend to being involved in designing learning activities and assessments along with teaching staff?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning activities and assessments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you expect lectures and exams to be part of your experience of University?</td>
<td>Q10. It will be important for me to attend most lectures</td>
<td>Expect Work Activities Lectures Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you prefer different types of learning and assessment?</td>
<td>Q13. I anticipate that studying at University will be different to studying at high School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do lectures and exams have a place in a complete experience of University?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Qualitative Findings

Within the qualitative phase of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to explore the phenomenon of students’ academic expectations. The qualitative interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, with these data then subjected to thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Six major themes were illuminated through this analysis, with most comprised of several sub-themes (see Table 6).
Table 6.
Results of Thematic Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Differences between University study and previous educational experiences | **University is different** - Expectation that the university setting is different from other educational institutions  
**Workload/Study is different** - Expectation that there will be workload/study differences between university and other educational institutions  
**Something was unexpected** - The students either did not expect something to occur or they did not expect the level at which it occurred |
| Personal changes and learning freedom | **Independent** - Expectation that students are required to be more independent, autonomous, and/or self-reliant at university  
**Study/Learning behaviour** - Changes to behaviours applied by students within university to their learning and study  
**Study balance** - The ability to balance university study with work and life |
| Teaching that includes direct instruction at times | **Traditional learning** - Learning and teaching activities that are didactic and teacher centred  
**Knowledgeable teacher** - Thoughts towards lecturers’ knowledge and ability to facilitate information  
**Contextual teaching** - Information presented so that students can construct their own meaning |
| Assessment feedback and learning that will match educational preference | **Preferred learning** - Student preferences in relation to learning activity, environment, and assessment  
**Multiple sources of information** - Expectation for information to be supplied in multiple formats  
**Student involvement** - Expectations toward the involvement of students in their learning and assessment  
**Feedback/Feedforward** - Feedback wanted in order to use it for assessment success in the future  
**Assessments** - Understanding towards assessments within the undergraduate degree |
| An occupation-specific degree will have more occupation-specific assessments | **Nursing profession** - Expectation that the nursing profession should dictate teaching and assessment at university |
| Lecturer availability, accessibility, and approachability | **Thoughts of lecturer** - Thoughts towards lecturer, their behaviour and role within student learning  
**Lecturer contact** - The importance of access, availability, and approachability of lecturer/teaching staff  
**Teacher relationship** - The relationship between the student and lecturer/teaching staff |
4.3.1 Differences Between University Study and Previous Educational Experiences

All participants had some previous educational experience to compare with their current studies. Prior experience included, but was not limited to, other university experiences, high school, and vocational education and training (VET) such as in Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions. This comparison often resulted in the formation of expectation that the university setting would be different from other educational institutions, as Participant 10 (P10) explains:

P10. I thought that seeing the way that the education system has changed for my children, that that would flow through to tertiary level as well. I did expect there to be differences.

High school was described as being different from the university setting, with participants expecting less support being offered within university. During this discussion, one participant described how they were “babied” during their high school study. In addition to an expected reduction in support at university, participants expected an increase in difficulty when studying within the university system. However, when discussing the expectation of university being “harder” and “different”, participants suggested they did not know how much harder their study would be:

P2. I definitely thought it would be a lot harder. I knew that it would be a lot more complex than it would be at TAFE or any other levels, I guess. I kind of didn't expect it to be as hard as it is ...

Participants discussed the differences between high school and university, with the expectation that learning at university would be more focused due to a specific area of study (nursing), rather than the generic and broad educational focus of high school. Despite this focused learning, it was expected that nursing would be content heavy and would therefore have an exacting learning progression. It was further expected that due to nursing being content heavy, topics would be taught and not revisited, unlike high school that offered in-class revision time:

P9. ... that's why I feel the need that I have to go to every single lecture and I have to go to everything because if not, what if I miss the one thing was spoken about, that then is not spoken about again until the exam kind of thing.

Conversely, whilst differences at university were often reported in the negative compared to other educational experiences, positive differences were also described. The ability to move away from the formal constraints of high school was seen to be a positive
change, as too was being treated as an independent and individual learner who was not simply grouped with all other students:

P3. ... high school’s more formal but it is sort of like you’re all put into the same nest almost. In uni it’s like everyone’s got their own situation so they’re giving you the option to use certain resources but if you fail, that’s not on the lecture r... it’s sort of like self-directed learning almost. You’re wanting to get the degree. The lecturer’s got their degree.

4.3.2 Personal Changes Needed for Academic Learning

In addition to the expectations toward the university setting, participants had expectations of themselves and how their personal qualities may play a part in their academic learning. These personal expectations often placed the participant as the driver of academic success:

P5. You put yourself into it, you give it your all. You kind of - it's kind of your life, you've got to take control of it.

Personal and behavioural changes in the individual were discussed, with “self-motivation”, “self-determination”, and “time-management” expected to assist with learning within the undergraduate degree. “Discipline” was also highlighted as a further trait that was expected to assist with learning success:

P4. I think I’ll have a lot more discipline and I expect that of myself being at this uni. I think there's almost like an expectation, but not in a bad way, but be like put in the hard work and you'll do really well ...

Participants also expected that independence toward learning was required by the individual. The necessity for being independent was often reported in relation to a perceived increased academic workload, as well as an expectation based on advice given throughout high school. A common topic among participants was the need for independence following the loss of authority figures (parents or high school teachers) upon whom participants may have previously been dependant to reinforce discipline:

P6. At school they used to talk to us about uni and saying how obviously your teachers and stuff don't keep asking you about your assignments and staying on top of your work, that's just a given. You have to be organised and focussed. There's going to be no one there sitting next to you saying come on, you need to do this ...

Participants referred to an educational and future career “focus” as being an incentive to make such changes and strive for academic success. Career “passion” was also highlighted,
with one participant describing their passion as providing the motivation for completion of the nursing undergraduate degree:

P10. ... it's taken me a long time to arrive at this career choice. So I feel quite passionate, quite motivated. I think even if I was left as an autonomous learner, I would be probably relatively self-motivated. But ... Yes. I think that I'm definitely more self-motivated, more invested and interested this time ...

In addition to the personal changes that were expected in connection with academic learning, it was expected that factors external to the participant may also change. These factors included paid work and how changes may be required to mitigate the impact this might have on university study. It was expected that a balance between paid work and study would be ideal, and that changes would mostly be needed during times of high university demand such as exams and nursing clinical placement:

P9. And I think during like the exam periods and all that kind of thing, it will be a lot harder to work, and easier to pick study over working because it's more important in that point in time.

It was, however, highlighted that despite the understanding of this need for balance, it would not always be possible to achieve:

P2. You've got to do what you've got to do at the end of the day, when you've got bills to pay and stuff. You've just got to get over it and work.

4.3.3 Teaching that Includes Direct Instruction at Times

When discussing the type of teaching that was expected within the university setting, participants acknowledged a need for a didactic and traditional approach to education at times. Such an approach was often discussed in terms of lectures, with it often expected that they would be part of the university experience. In addition, lectures were described as providing a focus to learning due to the removal of external distractions such as other students, as well as being described positively by some participants due to the comfort of and desire for direct instruction from teaching staff:

P4. So, I like having someone that is knowledgeable get up in front of me and go, this is how it works. I still like that.

Smaller educational environments such as tutorials and workshops were also discussed by the participants; however, much like lectures, this was at times due to the desire for allowing “direct”, face-to-face, and one-on-one interactions with academic staff:

P5. So in sort of the high school classroom there was obviously less people. So it was a bit more - what's the word? Like sort of fac- to-face I guess. It was like, more direct.
Whereas you know you've got the lectures and the tutorials and stuff and there can be up to like 60 people in there, maybe even a few more. So yeah I feel like maybe that might be the big thing for me as well. Because I feel like I learn sort of more directly. But obviously that's something to challenge I guess.

In order to give quality instruction, it was expected that teaching staff be “very knowledgeable”, “know their stuff”, and have a high level of education. When discussing their expectation of the lecturer, one participant stated that not only should the need for a knowledgeable lecturer be obvious, but that it should be the only requirement. The need for a knowledgeable lecturer was connected with the expectation of content expertise that would facilitate passing high-quality information to the student cohort:

\[P3. I\text{ suppose, kind of like the gatekeeper. The information’s on one side, they know what it is and they open the gates and they let it out to you as the student. They can clarify things if you’ve struggled with the concept…. But yeah, I suppose they facilitate - they’re that middle ground I suppose between you and what you need to know.}\]

Participants articulated that to facilitate this transfer of knowledge, the lecturer should be able to deliver course content appropriately and provide direction in a way that was clear and easy to understand by students:

\[P1. For me, I guess it would be making it easy to learn. So … Easy is having lectures and the learning outcomes very straightforward … I like clear and concise direction … I would prefer to have everything very to the point.\]

Direct instruction was described by some participants as bringing about learning contextualisation, as teaching staff could reinforce theoretical information with personal stories and experience. This use of personal narrative and contextual learning by lecturers as a teaching tool was subsequently expected to increase understanding:

\[P5. … the PowerPoint does have information, but it’s just purely information. It's not anything that you can really put an image in your head of. Like for instance if a lecturer tells a story of what they’ve experienced or sort of given you an idea of - like an example of what something could be applied to you kind of create your own picture in your head and it's easier to wrap your head around the concept or the idea … having someone who's actually experienced, like relating it to themselves and then reflecting that on you, it's really important.\]

4.3.4 Assessment Feedback and Learning that will Match Educational Preference

In relation to this theme, much time was spent by participants discussing their educational preferences, including preferred learning activities, learning environments, and assessment tasks. The vast majority of participants expressing a desire for smaller learning environments as opposed to larger classes such as lectures. Discussion often revolved around
the large size of the student cohort, and the beneficial learning experience that small classes and student groups could bring:

P11. I go into a lecture I get lost a lot easy. I am better in a smaller environment where I can go hey, what does that mean? You can’t just yell out in a lecture because there’s so many people…. Whereas in your tutes and tutorials … I think that’s a little bit better because you are more engaged. You can ask questions more.

Among these discussions the participant’s preferred “learning style” was often identified and considered. A variety of phrases were used regarding how participants felt they learnt best, including “hearing someone speak and talk through ideas”, “written text on lecture slides”, and the “need to draw things and write things out”. It was further expected that teaching strategies would cater for all these learning styles, and therefore provision of information would occur in a multitude of different ways and formats. Moreover, many participants stated a preference for a “hands-on” approach to learning. It was, however, seen that discussion regarding hands-on learning was not necessarily specific to clinical or manual skill learning, but was also used to suggest an active learning approach more broadly:

P1. ... it's something that's hands-on and it can put theory and pages into context for me. To me, that is involvement.

As an extension of active learning, student involvement was also discussed, with participants asked if they expected to be actively involved in their own learning. The majority of participants responded with the expectation that involvement in learning needed to come from themselves:

P11. I’m definitely involved like in my tutes [tutorials], I’m always asking questions … what does that mean, what about this? ... Yeah, and engaging with the teacher and picking their brains and going but why? But why?

Participants were also asked whether student involvement in learning should be something that was extended by their lecturer or university, and therefore if they expected involvement within the development of their own learning activities and assessment items. Some positive responses were provided to this idea, although they were often qualified:

P5. I think that would be cool if that could happen [involvement in learning activities]. But I understand that possibility is probably not realistic…. Because it's hard - obviously you can't ask every single student like what they think about things, what they'd like to see, all this stuff …

Although some initial positivity was indicated by individuals, it was mostly expected that involvement in the creation of learning and assessment activities should not fall to participants. It was suggested that this would likely cause added stress and pressure due to the
feeling of students being in control of others’ learning. Reluctance about being involved in developing assessment tasks was explained in terms of the expectation that assessments and tasks are evaluated to a “set standard” and possibly against “governmental guidelines”.

Further hesitation was justified by some participants due to feelings that they lacked the skill and knowledge to perform such tasks:

P4. I wouldn't like that [involvement in learning activities] because I don't know what I'm talking about yet. So, you - that's your job, you... You need to organise it.

During assessment discussions, and specifically that of written assignments, expectations about feedback and its importance was debated by participants. “Constructive” and “critical” as well as “positive” and “negative” were all words used to describe the feedback expected for assessment items. The need for and importance of feedback was unanimously described as improving future work on assignments, as well as highlighting the areas that would require development and areas where students performed well:

P10. I would like it to be constructive criticism. I would want them to be totally honest with things that I had done that were subpar and I would want them to tell me what I could do to improve for the next time.

The frequency of feedback was also mentioned, with all participants expecting feedback on their final assignment submissions, and most expecting feedback on their drafts. Some participants suggested that draft submissions would require lecturers to mark assignments twice, making it therefore impracticable and unrealistic. For the majority of participants, however, the expectation was that draft submissions would have some form of feedback to assist students in better understanding their assessment progression:

P5. I did expect there to be some sort of like non-compulsory submission that you could submit to somewhere ... that they could like just do a quick check-over. Like yeah you're on the right track. Yeah just fix up there and then hand it back ...

Regarding the form of assessment, participants mainly expected assignments and exams. However, consensus was not seen during discussion on assessment preference, with differing views of each assessment type:

P9. Because an assignment, you can look up anything and just regurgitate someone else's words, but in an exam is you actually understanding it, and I feel like in the course that I'm doing, you need to be able to understand what you're talking about and what you're doing ...

P3. In an assessment [assignment], it's at least my own words and my own interpretation. So I can actually convey this is what I know and this is how I know it. Exams are just like answer the question.
4.3.5 An Occupation-Specific Degree will have More Occupation-Specific Assessments

The nursing profession was also discussed by the participants, along with their expectation that the requirements of the profession should be reflected in the teaching and learning activities of the undergraduate degree. One participant indicated that not only should activities be dictated by the nursing profession, but so should the type of information and content provided within the curriculum. It was further discussed that “heart knowledge” as well as “head knowledge” was needed to ensure patients were physically cared for, whilst also being treated with kindness and as a person rather than simply as another patient. It was suggested that such nursing requirements be taught at university to assist students in becoming work-ready and competent graduate nurses on registration:

P9. I think if you’re doing a course that's specific to a job title, you should have a lot more job-specific assessments.... Because you never know, you might one day need to know something that you didn't learn in university, because you didn't get that hands-on assessment for it and you have to learn it yourself. And it's a bit hard to learn something when you've got a patient in front of you and you have to figure out how to do something. And they've got all their trust in you to do it correctly.

In addition to nursing-profession-oriented teaching and learning activities, the applied and practical nature of nursing was highlighted as a reason for expecting more hands-on learning and assessment:

P8. I feel nursing's quite a hands-on profession. Obviously you have to learn theory, because you need to know, but rather than having an assignment for example where you're writing, I would have loved to have something more practical.

When discussing assessments within the nursing undergraduate degree it was suggested that although assessments such as exams and assignments were expected to be part of the educational experience, it was at times not understood how the assessments related to the profession of nursing. For example, one participant questioned how writing an essay would translate into being able to care for a patient in their time of need. Due to these expectations and questions about assessment relevance, the assessments most related to the clinical act of nursing were held in higher regard:

P2. As long as I did well in my pracs [clinical practicums] and everything, then - and my placement. Because I feel that nursing is a lot about - more about practical skill than anything else.
4.3.6 Lecturer Availability, Accessibility, and Approachability

When discussing the role of the lecturer in student learning, participants provided a variety of opinions regarding important traits of an academic staff member. For the most part, the behaviour of the lecturer was most important. Expectations ranged from the relatively modest trait of a “sense of humour” to the more intricate comportment of being invested in students and their welfare. Investment in students not only included being empathetic and understanding but also included taking the time to sit with students, as well as showing that “they actually want to be there”:

P10. I think they just have to show that they're invested. That they want to be there. That they care ...

Agreement was seen among participants when discussing the expectation that lecturers be available and accessible to them and to the larger student cohort. Lecturer contact was often described as necessary and beneficial to students’ progression when clarification was needed on course content and tasks:

P8. Even though I know we're not in school anymore and you have to figure things out yourself, absolutely, but that two minutes of conversation would be quite valuable, especially starting off ...

Access to lecturers was commonly described in terms of face-to-face meetings, although online communication was also mentioned with the expectation that lecturers make themselves available via email. Participants linked lecturer access and availability with increased confidence. While direct contact may not be required on a continual basis, the knowledge of lecturer availability brought with it comfort and reassurance:

P1. It's more of like a comfortability feeling. I feel like if I'm struggling, I have help. To me, that's important as being able to have the resources to do well and them wanting me to do well ...

In addition to the availability and ease of access to lecturers and teaching staff, approachability was also highlighted as important to participants. Approachability was however described in two different ways, with the first of these expectations relating to the physical approachability of the lecturer:

P3. Approachability, if you see - like if you've just got a quick question, just seeing the lecturer and tutor out and about and you just stop them ...

The second expectation related to approachability was that lecturers should be friendly and easy to deal with:
P5. ... they'd probably have to be really approachable because obviously it's a bit hard to find the courage to go up to the teacher and be like hey I'm struggling with this. Or can you help me find how to access this or do something like that. That's probably a main thing that a lot of people that I've talked to as well, are like a bit nervous about. You know coming in and suddenly there's all these adults and it's a bit daunting because I'm a bit younger. But yeah I guess approachable is probably a really big one.

Based on the participant’s prior experience, a relationship with teaching staff was often cited as important due to the benefits this had for the student, their learning, and the learning environment. The expectation was frequently expressed that a positive teacher-student relationship would be valuable, and that a negative teacher-student relationship may be of detriment to the student’s university experience:

P8. I'm sure if I wasn't treated right or if I didn't have that relationship and it was very stale ... that would definitely affect my experience with how my uni life would be. I might even potentially think about changing and going to another university if that was the case.

Despite such an expectation and desire for a positive teacher-student relationship, participants acknowledged it may not be possible and that within the university setting a personable relationship or bond with the lecturer could be problematic. This doubt was oftentimes expressed due to the increase in student cohort numbers at university compared to high school or other educational institutions:

P9. It's going to be obviously a lot harder to make that connection between lecturer and student because they've got so many people they are teaching and they've got so much stuff they've going on more, so than having a teacher that teachers six classes to a lecturer that teaches 400 people and has to remember all their names. So I think it's a lot harder to connect with them ...
This chapter will be presented in four distinct sections. The first two sections will provide a discussion of the qualitative research findings identified in Chapter 4, with the intention of addressing the aim of the current study and to answer the two research questions previously stated in Section 1.4. To achieve this, each of the first sections will address a separate research question. To recapitulate, the first question being asked was: What are the expectations of first-year undergraduate nursing students toward their academic learning? The second question was: Do the expectations of first-year undergraduate nursing students include a preference for SCL?

The discussion within these first two sections will focus on six main qualitative research findings extracted from the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews, with these being: (1) less support would be provided at university, (2) there would be didactic teaching in tertiary education, (3) personal changes and learning freedom would be required, (4) student involvement in education is not specifically expected, (5) learning preferences would be catered for by the university, and (6) an occupation specific degree should include occupation specific assessment. The last two sections within this chapter will discuss the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

5.1 What are the Expectations of First-Year Undergraduate Nursing Students Toward Their Academic Learning?

Within the current study, participants identified a range of differences they anticipated would be seen at university compared to previous educational settings experienced, particularly high school. Differences included the need to make personal changes and to “be in charge” of their own learning (discussed later in this chapter), the more demanding workload at university, and the anticipation of a fast learning pace due to an exacting learning progression. These results are similar to those reported in earlier research by Hassel and Ridout (2018), who found that students expected to struggle with university workload, with the further expectation that the pace of learning would be too fast. Likewise, Lowe and Cook (2003) reported the expectation of incoming students that they would struggle with the academic level and workload at university, whilst also finding it difficult to be more responsible and independent with their own learning.
Participants contrasted their schooling experiences with what they expected at university, resulting in the expectation that less “support” would be provided to them in the university learning environment. Participants described being “babied” during high school, which was not expected in the university environment, and this could subsequently be considered a facet of a perceived lack of support (Cook & Leckey, 1999). Similar to participants’ observations in the current study, students within a UK nursing degree commented on being “spoon fed” when they were previously at high school, which was in contrast to the increased personal study responsibility expected and required of them in the university environment (Pryjmachuk et al., 2019). However, despite the knowledge that increased independence to learning is needed at university, it has been suggested by Kandiko and Mawer (2013) that students often expect and require guidance on how to become self-directed learners, so as to avoid the “feeling of being left alone to cope with complex academic work” (p. 50).

Participants further expected at least some traditional teaching activities in their undergraduate degree. Such an expectation is not surprising, even when taking into consideration the benefits of SCL as previously argued within the literature review (Chapter 2). This is mainly because a more didactic educational approach is also noted as offering several benefits for student learning. P. Smith and Ragan (2005) likened the traditional teaching approach to a “supplantive” instructional method (as described in Section 2.1) which can create more predictable and focused learning, provide students with improved learning efficiency, and increase the amount learned within a shorter time frame.

Not only did the current research participants discuss a traditional approach as providing the opportunity for more focused learning, but they also welcomed the idea of being taught by someone knowledgeable in the field. Similar findings are reported by Saunders and Gale (2012), who describe a student preference for the use of face-to-face teaching as an effective tool for learning. This preference may relate more specifically to students who have recently left high school, as they often predict a minimal change to the style of teaching previously experienced, therefore expecting a more didactic teaching approach at university (Hassel & Ridout, 2018). With a driver for traditional education being the need to accommodate large student groups (Günüsen et al., 2014), participants may have also expected traditional teaching and the use of lectures to cater for the large student enrolments that in the SoNM courses often include 300 undergraduate students.
In addition to traditional lecture delivery, smaller class sizes were expected in the form of tutorials and workshops. Such findings are comparable to those of Kandiko and Mawer (2013) who reported that tutorials and small seminars are preferred learning environments for direct staff interaction. As has been mentioned earlier, the expectation for didactic teaching could be due to expectations of teaching similar to high school, or due to the benefits that students expect from a more instructional approach to their learning. It has also been postulated that the students’ desire for increased academic staff contact time is for reassurance and guarantee of the quality and value of the degree course (Bekhradnia, 2013; Kandiko & Mawer, 2013; Neves & Hillman, 2019).

Further to the expectations related to the university (differences from previous educational settings, reduced support, and didactic learning), participants described a range of personal qualities and personal changes they felt would assist them within their transition to university learning. “Self-motivation”, “discipline”, and “independence” were all words used to describe the expected changes necessary for academic success. Similarly, within an earlier Australian student expectation study, results suggested that students expect increased autonomy and individual learning responsibility as necessary for transitioning successfully to the university environment (Brinkworth et al., 2009). Whilst these findings are taken from quantitative survey research, comparable results can be found within Kandiko and Mawer’s (2013) qualitative study, that found students discussed the personal changes necessary when commencing university study: Independence and self-direction were discussed, along with difficulties faced in shifting to these new learning approaches (Kandiko & Mawer, 2013). Independence has been further reported as necessary during the transition into the university environment, with specific mention of independence being a transition from passive learning to a more active approach (Maunder et al., 2013). In contrast, however, Money et al. (2017) reported that students did not always realise they were expected to engage in their own independent study in addition to the face-to-face teaching provided.

In relation to independence, Baer (2008) reported that students often expect the provision of reassurance and guidance alongside the desire to be independent. Similar findings indicate that students often expect to be more autonomous, self-directed, and responsible for their learning, whilst also expecting practical assistance in terms of direct guidance and a level of “spoon-feeding” of information, similar to that in high school (Darlaston-Jones et al., 2003; Winstone & Bretton, 2013). Participants within the current study did not explicitly state that direct guidance was expected of the university in relation to
the various personal changes discussed, yet it could be anticipated that previous expectation of a didactic educational approach would indicate an expected level of practical and direct assistance.

It is clear then that current research participants had expectations of themselves, but it could be argued that the university also expects a change in incoming student cohorts. As has been mentioned, Hassel and Ridout (2018) found that a more didactic teaching approach at university is often expected by students who have recently left high school; yet, both the SoNM and the wider University’s stance is toward an SCL approach. Despite this possible conflict of learning approaches, it was expected that the notion of student involvement in teaching and learning would be widely supported by the current research participants due to the raft of previously discussed benefits said to result from SCL. As suggested earlier by Lea et al. (2003), students for the most part prefer an SCL approach, with similar findings also expected from the current research study. With reference to the literature review (Chapter 2), active involvement was discussed as being of importance so that students can engage in pedagogical discourse and the creation of classroom order (Bernstein, 2000). Bernstein (2000) argues that the right to be included is one of the three pedagogical rights of a democratic classroom, with classroom democracy being comparable to progressivist education and SCL (Pryor, 2004; Rogers, 1951). It is further expected (Robinson, 2012) that the involvement and engagement of students within educational activities will assist in creating learning communities, subsequently enhancing the students’ experience at university. In addition, student involvement can assist in empowering students in their study (Bovill et al., 2011a) which in turn can increase enthusiasm, motivation, and engagement (Bovill et al., 2011b). The benefits of student involvement are equally applicable to academic staff as to students, as positive relationship building will occur, allowing a deeper understanding of learning to take place, consequently improving the overall design of the curriculum (Bovill et al., 2011a; Bovill et al., 2011b).

With these benefits of student-centred learning in mind, it was a surprising discovery that involvement in teaching and learning at university was not an expectation for the majority of incoming students in the study, nor something with which they felt comfortable. On a surface level, participants were happy for involvement, although they expressed reluctance and a feeling of not being able to be involved due to their novice learner status within the university setting and thus their lack of content knowledge. It was also stated that reluctance to be involved was due to the feeling of being responsible for others’ learning and not
knowing how others learnt. Although such opinion was unanticipated, it resonates with work by Kandiko and Mawer (2013) who also reported that undergraduate students often feel unqualified to engage in curricular design or co-authorship of educational activities. With a change in university teaching approaches compared to high school, first-year students may be confused and unfamiliar with the pedagogical processes at university and apprehensive about being involved in the creation of curricula, which by itself may also be an unfamiliar task (Bovill, 2014). An example of student hesitancy in engaging with curriculum development can be seen in Bengtson et al.’s (2017) study, which initially attracted limited interest in a student curriculum design project; however, following face-to-face discussion, explanations, and clarification of purpose and expectations, increased student interest and engagement was seen.

The findings of the current study are, however, in contrast with those of Matthews et al., (2017), who found that students within an Australian science degree valued the importance of participation and desired more involvement in academic activities. It is, however, important to note that this research was based on the experience (rather than expectation) of students, and was conducted via a quantitative survey. With the current research focused on first-year students who may previously not have had any experience with direct involvement in these sorts of education activities, it is unclear if reluctance for academic involvement would have been seen also in second- or third-year nursing students, or even in first-year students with some exposure to an SCL approach.

In addition to discussing expectations relating to involvement in learning and teaching at university, the majority of participants described their individual learning preferences and were able to discuss how they would likely best process and understand new information. Examples were often given from previous educational experiences. Phrases such as the “need to draw”, “hear someone speak”, “the need for written text”, and the need for being “hands-on” were used to illustrate how participants expected they would best learn new content in the university environment. Specific to these learner preferences was the expectation that information would be provided in a way that catered for their various preferences, and as such would be somewhat tailored to the individual. It was preferred and expected by the majority that, because this was a nursing degree, they would learn by being “hands-on” in their academic learning. Similar findings have been noted in other first-year Australian nursing school cohorts (James et al., 2011; Meehan-Andrews, 2009), as well as in Australian postgraduate nursing master degree students (McKenna et al., 2018), suggesting that hands-
on, tactile, or kinaesthetic learning may be a common expectation within nursing education in Australia. It may be postulated that the expectation and preference for hands-on learning was also found in undergraduate nursing research conducted in Saudi Arabia (Stirling & Al Quraini, 2017), Jordan (Alkhasawneh, 2013), China (Zhu et al., 2018), India (Gayathiri et al., 2019), and the US (Husmann & Dean O’Loughlin, 2018). It is worth noting, however, that in all the aforementioned studies, a preference for hands-on learning in nursing was quantitatively reported after surveying students, rather than from analysis of student expectations. “Learning by doing”, however, has been reported as a learning preference in a qualitative study of Iranian student nurses, although the focus of the study was on clinical learning rather than academic learning and results may therefore not be transferable (Baraz et al., 2014).

The current study did not explore how participants knew of their learning preferences; however, it is interesting to note that the learning preferences mentioned within the current research project are reminiscent of the so-called VARK (visual, aural, reading/writing, kinaesthetic) sensory modalities that are claimed to assist with comprehending new information (Fleming & Mills, 1992; James et al., 2011). Having said this, it is important to be clear that participant discussion was of learning preference rather than of learner style. As such, findings should be interpreted accordingly due to a learning preference simply indicating a partiality to or fondness for a type of learning. It may be that individuals hold uninformed beliefs about how they learn, possibly due to the ease or familiarity that a certain preference may bring yet unrelated to the overall comprehension of the information being presented (Pashler et al., 2009). It may for example be “easy” and preferable to be “hands-on” when learning a skill, yet this does not necessarily guarantee that the theoretical underpinnings of the skill will have been learnt (Pashler et al., 2009). It is further reported that students may be limited in their ability to self-predict learning preference, with only 15.5% of the participants within a study conducted by Breckler et al., (2009) being able to self-predict their learning preference result as indicated post survey, suggesting that self-reported preference may not be accurate.

Nonetheless, participants in the current study also expected that individual learner preference would be catered for by the university and teaching staff. Other research has found that academics should indeed modify teaching to provide a more tailored education approach as well as a learning environment that is better suited to student preference, subsequently enhancing the efficiency of student learning (Alkhasawneh, 2013; D’Amore et al., 2012;
James et al., 2011; McKenna et al., 2018; Meehan-Andrews, 2009; Stirling & Alquraini, 2017; Zhu et al., 2018). In addition to the changes proposed of individual academics, it is also suggested that nursing schools should modify course learning objectives to best match student learning style preference (Alkhasawneh, 2013). If these modifications were to be made by the school, it is suggested that a student-centred curriculum would be enabled, ultimately allowing students to utilise their learning preference more effectively (Baraz et al., 2014; Meehan-Andrews, 2009). Conversely, it has been suggested that no improvement is seen in learning outcomes when teaching resources are used that match the preference of the learner (Kollöffel, 2012). A cognitive (learner) preference simply shows what individuals like and does not necessarily have a correlation with an individual’s ability and what they are good at (Kollöffel, 2012); “Therefore, choosing a format on the basis of one’s own preference can lead the student to selecting a format that is less effective for learning” (p. 703).

As well as the majority preference for a more hands-on approach to learning, the current study also identified the expectation of some participants for the nursing profession as such to dictate the teaching and learning activities within the undergraduate degree. Considering that the participants were all newly enrolled into a nursing undergraduate degree (likely following a period of research toward their future degree and profession), this result should have been expected; however, despite the researcher also being a registered nurse, this finding was not something previously considered. What was clear was that the participants themselves interwove discussion regarding nursing into answers related to educational activities (with no interviewer prompting). This therefore indicated that participants expected requirements of the nursing profession to shape their academic activities within university. Considering that nursing is a hands-on profession and that nurses often consider hands-on as being at the heart of the profession (Engebretson, 2002), this could go some way to explaining previous expectations of hands-on learning in a nursing degree. It is also reported that whilst course content was often not a central focus of students’ discussions regarding the expectations of higher education, it was an expectation that information delivered would be relevant to the students’ perception of the course, as well as displaying coherence with the needs and view of industry (Kandiko & Mawer, 2013).

With the expectation of current participants that the nursing profession would influence undergraduate teaching and learning practices, it is the belief of the researcher that what is being expected is a more real-world approach to education; Such an approach would subsequently result in real-world authentic assessment and learning overall (Frey et al., 2012;
Palm, 2008). This authentic approach in nursing has demonstrated increased learning outcome direction, building of student confidence, and enrichment of the learning experience (Wu et al., 2015). In addition to the learning that this approach can bring, authentic learning that is specifically linked to a profession is as much about fostering a professional identity as it is about reflecting a professional knowledge base (Webster-Wright, 2010). Therefore, authenticity in professional learning includes both professional epistemology (theory of professional knowledge) and professional ontology (the reality of being a professional) (Vu & Dall’Alba, 2011). It is further argued by Dall’Alba and Barnacle (2007) that “epistemology must be in the service of ontology in higher education programmes” (p. 686). Such a view could explain the expectations of the current research participants who wish to become professional nurses and therefore expect that the knowledge and content taught will service this outcome.

This is not to say that an increased emphasis on authentic nursing activities would cater for all individual students’ expectations. With 300 students commencing their BN studies with the SoNM Gold Coast campus in 2019, it would be highly likely that a proportion of these students brought with them some first-hand knowledge of the nursing profession through previous interactions and experiences as a patient in the healthcare setting. Others may have second-hand knowledge through family or friends who may themselves be nurses. The rest, however (whilst interested in nursing), would most likely be entering their undergraduate degree with limited or no previous experience of the profession. Considering that the current research was conducted within the first 2 weeks of commencing a BN degree and well before any work-integrated learning (WIL) had been experienced, it is unclear how individual students perceived the nursing profession, what this was based on, and what aspects of nursing were considered important to integrate into teaching and learning activities. It could therefore be reasonably argued that when participants indicated they expected that the nursing profession dictates academic activity, what was actually being expected was that the individual participants’ perceptions of the nursing profession dictate academic activity.

As described by Song (2016), nursing students were found to have a vague and emotional view of the profession in their first year prior to WIL, with “caring” being a foundation of this perceived professional identity. Millennial nursing students, in particular, are said to have a stereotypical and traditional view of nursing from the outset, which sees nurses as “virtuous, caring, compassionate, noble and altruistic” (Price, 2011, p. 143). Price (2011) considers that this traditional view often backgrounds the academic or intellectual
abilities needed by the modern professional nurse. Should teaching and learning be tailored to the perception of students, this may not actually deliver authentic education that is true to the real world and to the students’ eventual experience.

With reference to the current study’s first question and the expectations of first-year undergraduate nursing students toward their academic learning, it can be seen that a number of key expectations exist. It was first expected by the participants that differences would exist between the university setting and high school; specifically, that less support would be available in the university setting. A traditional and didactic learning approach was also expected, which included direct teacher contact through both lectures and smaller classroom settings. Participants expected that individual personal changes would be required when transitioning into university, with self-motivation, discipline, and independence described as the type of capabilities that were expected and necessary for academic success. Moreover, a hands-on approach to learning was an expectation of the current participants, with further expectation that the learning preference of individuals would be catered for by the university and teaching staff. It was lastly expected that the nursing profession would dictate the type of educational activity within the nursing degree, thus creating an authentic approach to learning. Despite the assumption to this effect on behalf of the researcher, it was not a specific expectation that students would be actively involved in educational activities within their nursing degree.

5.2 Do the Expectations of First-Year Undergraduate Nursing Students Include a Preference for SCL?

As has been discussed above, the current research participants highlighted a number of key expectations related to their university study and academic learning. Of these expectations, five were expected to occur: (a) less support would be provided at university, (b) there would be didactic teaching in tertiary education, (c) personal changes and learning freedom would be required, (d) learning preferences would be catered for by the university, and (e) an occupation specific degree should include occupation specific assessment. However, the area seemingly most aligned with SCL (student involvement) was something that was not explicitly expected or preferred.

The initial expectation discussed by the current research participants was an expected lack of support within the university environment. However, how this expected lack of support relates to the participants’ preference for SCL is difficult to address. It should be
noted that whilst a preference for SCL was not explicitly stated by participants in relation to a perceived lack of support, a lack of direct support and instruction could be considered in keeping with a student-centred approach. As stated previously by Biggs and Tang (2011; see Section 2.7), “It’s not what we do but what our students do that’s the important thing” (p. 20). This rather simple description offers insight into the change toward an SCL approach within the university setting, and possibly helps to illuminate the perceived university differences and lack of support expected by the current research participants. It can therefore be postulated that whilst an expectation of reduced support does not necessarily signify a preference for SCL, it does at least show that this type of learning was expected.

Didactic teaching was a further expectation in the current research, which indicates an expectation that both framing and classification (pedagogy and curriculum) would be strongly controlled by the teacher (Fay, 1998). A didactic type of approach would therefore sit at the teacher-centred end of the learning continuum rather than at the student-centred end, suggesting participants were not expecting comprehensive SCL in their university experience. This expectation also seems to fly in the face of the suggestion that students prefer an SCL approach, as proposed by Lea et al. (2003); however, it has been reported that students might also expect learning to be unproductive if lacking in direction from academic staff or if excessively student led (Kandiko & Mawer, 2013). In relation to first-year students, a more didactic approach has been shown to contain various benefits (Chapter 2) including focused and efficient learning created through a “supplantive” instructional method (P. Smith & Ragan, 2005) and the higher levels of learning possible with the aid of scaffolding and direct teacher guidance (Sanders & Welk, 2005). With this in mind, it is not surprising that a preference for a more teacher-centred approach to learning was indicated.

Results from the current study indicate participants’ expectation of greater self-motivation and independence in their academic study, along with the need to be self-disciplined. Although participants did not suggest any link between these personal changes and SCL, it is suggested that within an SCL approach the student must become an independent learner, one who can constructively and intellectually guide their own educational needs (Rogers, 1951). Likewise, a reported beneficial trait of SCL is that students are encouraged to assume responsibility for their own learning (Frambach et al., 2014), thus allowing students to better understand the process of learning (Tagney, 2014). Therefore, whilst the current research participants did not explicitly state a preference for SCL during
discussion related to personal changes, it would at least appear that the type of personal changes discussed are consistent with SCL.

As was discussed in the previous subsection, current research participants did not expect to be involved in educational activities within their nursing degree. On the surface this would most clearly indicate a lack of preference for SCL; however, it was not the concept or thought of being involved, but rather the feeling of being a novice learner in the university setting and subsequent lack of content knowledge that reduced the appeal for this type of activity. Discussion from the current study and that made by Kandiko and Mawer (2013) indicate that feeling unqualified and lacking in content knowledge are often reasons for students to not engage in curricular design or co-authorship of educational activities, which likely results in feelings of apprehension (Bovill, 2014). Regardless of the possible reasons, the current research findings do not suggest a desire for student involvement and therefore do not signify a preference for this kind of SCL.

Learner preferences were also discussed, with a variety of ways that current participants expected to best learn new content being articulated. The expectation and desire for learning to be hands-on was stated by the majority as their preferred learning approach. Considering a hands-on approach requires the student to be actively involved in learning, direct comparison can be made to the SCL approach which attempts to make education a more active process and encourages students to adopt a more active learning role (Harju & Åkerblom, 2017; Newmaster et al., 2006). Aside from the individual learning preferences discussed, it was also expected and desired that education (teaching) should be delivered in a variety of ways, with resources provided in multiple formats to cater for the various student preferences. The expected tailoring of education and teaching would certainly elaborate the apparent preference for SCL on behalf of the current research participants. From these results, parallels are able to be drawn between the current study and the earlier argument made by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Bloom, 1991; see Section 2.2), who indicates the need for learning to be based on personal relevance and desire. It is also asserted that democratic education (and subsequently SCL) can only be achieved when the wants and needs of the students are ascertained by the teacher (Rogers, 1951). Moreover, in a qualitative study of final-year teaching students, Bayram-Jacobs and Hayrsever (2016) reported that designing teaching practice based on individual student needs and differences is considered a cornerstone of SCL. It would therefore appear that the expectations of the participants are consistent with a preference for SCL.
In relation to authentic education and the nursing profession dictating the educational activities within the nursing degree, it would initially appear that this is not related to a preference for SCL; yet, authentic assessment pedagogy has been described as a student-centred approach (Chong et al., 2016). Authenticity in relation to assessments has also been reported to result in increased engagement from students, as well as increasing their commitment and ownership towards specific assessment activity (Frey et al., 2012). It is further suggested that authentic learning (that is, related to the real world) moves students from externally directed learning inquiry, to learning that is more internally motivated, thus resulting in a learning context that is more actively engaging and centred on the individual’s ownership of learning (Newmaster et al., 2006). It could therefore be reasonably argued that a preference for authentic and nursing dictated education activities displays a correlation with a preference for SCL. However, as has been previously discussed in this chapter, professionally focused authentic learning is said to include both professional epistemology and professional ontology (Vu & Dall’Alba, 2011), thus helping to foster a professional identity (Webster-Wright, 2010). It therefore remains unclear if an expectation for authentic assessment and learning within the current study is due to an underlying SCL preference, or due to the desire to become a professional nurse and to cultivate a professional identity. Further research in the area of authentic learning within the nursing degree would be needed to provide clarity on this topic.

As can be seen, whilst students were clear about what they expected when transferring into the university environment, preferences for SCL were not as obvious. In fact, there was no explicit mention given to any forms of pedagogical SCL by the current research participants. This could be due to the prediction for minimal change to teaching styles previously experienced (especially if students are enrolling directly from high school; Hassel & Ridout, 2018), or because SCL is poorly understood by the participants due to the ambiguity and confusion that surrounds its meaning (Farrington, 1991). Thus, when interpreting any prior mention of SCL preferences, it should be noted that such inferences are made without direct statement from the research participants. This is not to say that the current research participants do not have a preference for SCL; rather, firm conclusions cannot be made at this time.
5.3 Limitations

No research study is without its limitations, and as such it is important to highlight the possible shortcomings of the current study so that the research findings and discussion can be appropriately examined. In relation to the SEQ questionnaire, it was noted that some ambiguous terminology existed which may have resulted in confusion during data collection. One such example of this was the inclusion of a statement regarding “ready access” to the university teacher. The equivocal nature of the term would need to be clearly defined and clarified for future questionnaire use, which is supported by similar comment by Brinkworth et al. (2009) following use of the SEQ questionnaire. In addition, questions were asked in relation to the expected amount of study per week; however, the focus of that study was undefined. It may therefore be seen that some participants answered in relation to the amount of study in total per week, whilst other may have answered in relation to study per course per week.

As has been described previously, crucial to the research was the timing in which it was performed; more specifically, the need for interviews to occur soon after student commencement. The importance of not conducting interviews late was to avoid any bias that university experience may have on discussions regarding expectations. Although a time frame for interview completion was set and achieved, it would appear that data collected often included thoughts of (recent) experience. Despite a time frame of only 2 weeks, this still provided many of the research participants with a number of university experiences such as lectures and tutorials. For the majority, such thoughts and discussions did not detract from the purpose of the research, although it did prove difficult for some participants to separate the two phenomena. It could therefore be suggested that, in future, interviews about expectations are conducted prior to university commencement, possibly at High Schools; however, this may narrow the results and generalisability to nursing schools, as high School students are not necessarily wedded to a BN degree. Phone or Skype interviews may also be useful in conducting interviews with students prior to their university start date.

Further related to the participants, it should be understood that they were recruited from a single University campus. As the SoNM operates on three domestic campuses in slightly different geographical areas in south east Queensland, a different student “make up” in relation to their sociodemographic backgrounds is seen at each campus. It may therefore be that the findings of the research are not generalisable to the entire SoNM. It would be of benefit for future research to include students from all campuses to ensure a wider
generalisability of results, possibly with the inclusion of representative sampling to reflect the demographic distribution of the School’s student population.

As has been previously discussed, the researcher was an academic staff member within the SoNM in which the students were enrolled. As the researcher is not within the first-year teaching team and therefore is largely unknown by the students, the expectation was that the researcher’s academic role would have little effect on the students and the semi-structured interviews. It is not possible, however, to guarantee that this was the case, and as such it could be that discussion within the semi-structured interviews was influenced by this. To ensure that this is not a possible limitation in the future it is suggested that external researchers are utilised to conduct qualitative data collection with the student cohort.

5.4 Future Research Opportunities

Among the different expectations identified in the current study, the majority of participants expected that less support would be offered within the university setting. A definition of what was meant by the word “support” was however not provided; moreover, clarity was missing on how support was expected to be delivered. This ambiguity unfortunately makes it difficult to compare the current research with other published works, as the word “support” has a diversity of meanings organisationally and across the population. As an example of the numerous meanings that could be attached to the word, Griffith University’s “student support” internet page consists of nine types of support that are offered at the University (academic, personal, employability, financial, social, administrative, technical, cultural, and transitioning to university; Griffith University, n.d.). Benefit would therefore be seen with further research specific to student perceptions of university support, including what support is expected when transitioning into university, why and how these expectations are formed, how this support is expected to be delivered, and the differences in support expected between university and high school. Such information would assist in better understanding the students’ viewpoint and the support expected on entry to the university setting, as well as why they feel support will be reduced in the university environment, thus assisting academic staff to better cater for the needs of the incoming student cohort.

Detailed inquiry and questioning regarding traditional and didactic learning were not a central aim of the current study, resulting in a number of questions remaining unanswered. Further research would help to clarify whether a traditional approach is expected and wanted
due to participants being novice learners within the university environment, or if traditional learning is expected to fulfil all learning needs in the 3-year undergraduate degree. Benefit would be seen with further longitudinal research that examines the expectations of learning approaches at the outset of the degree, compared to students’ experience throughout. Not only would such research provide a better understanding of the learning approaches expected and wanted by students, but it would subsequently assist academic staff and universities to better plan and develop teaching practices to cater for students at different points of their academic progression.

Although personal changes were discussed and expected when transitioning into university, it is not clear how these expectations were formed or why. More importantly, it is not understood if participants expected that changes were solely to be made on an individual basis, or if the expectation was also held that the university would offer guidance and direction. Further research into personal changes related to university transition would assist in better understanding the mindset of incoming undergraduate students. In turn, this research may help universities and academic staff to develop and deliver strategies to better assist students in their personal development and academic transition.

With the raft of benefits associated with SCL, combined with the University’s stance toward this approach, reluctance from students to be actively involved in educational activities was unexpected. Further research in this area would provide academic staff with a more detailed understanding of the barriers and hesitancy that may be faced if a more inclusive curriculum is expected by the education provider. Moreover, research would also help to demonstrate whether reluctance to increased involvement is due to the practice not being previously offered and experienced, or due to an underlying passivity on behalf of students. The use of a longitudinal study that captures students’ perceptions of involvement over their undergraduate studies, rather than simply providing a snapshot of a point in time, would also help to clarify any change in preference as students progress through their studies. It would equally be beneficial for future research to be conducted that focuses solely on student preferences for SCL. This research would help to illuminate students’ inclination towards SCL, subsequently assisting in better understanding how an SCL approach could be practically implemented to meet student needs. Specific to student involvement, focused research would allow a possible increase in educational activity involvement and would actively engage students who may otherwise be unwilling to do so.
Although learner preference was highlighted by the majority of current research participants, what was not discussed is how these preferences were formed or why. Concrete examples of how these learner preferences are used or how they are of benefit to the individual participants was not sought within the current study, which could be a valuable focus of future research in order to better understand the views and opinions of the incoming student cohort. In addition, benefit would be seen with future research that compares the learning preference of students with the styles of learning actually used. Not only would such information allow universities and academic staff to better assist students with their individual learning needs, but it would also allow for a more targeted approach should it be deemed appropriate to alter teaching and learning resources to cater for the needs of the students.

Further study in relation to students’ perception of a nursing professional identity would be advantageous; specifically, how these perceptions determine expectations for authentic undergraduate teaching and learning. Such research would likely assist academics to deliver a more authentic nursing course, as well as allowing any perceptions incongruent to the profession to be addressed.
Chapter Six

Conclusion

The antecedent to this research was to better understand the incoming first-year cohort and to appreciate the expectations that they may have when commencing their BN studies. As has been argued by Lea et al. (2003), “… in order to appreciate what the academic and non-academic needs of students are, one has to ask them” (p. 323). The current research study’s SCL focus is in keeping with the SoNM (2015) and the wider University (Griffith University, 2017a), which both discuss the importance of delivering learning that is student centred. Due to this connection between SCL, the current research, and the importance of this approach espoused by the SoNM and the University, understanding of the first-year preference for SCL was also a focus of the study. The aim of the current research was therefore twofold, with the first intention being to explore the expectations of first-year students toward their academic learning at the beginning of their undergraduate university nursing degree, and the second being to understand if these expectations reflected a desire for a student-centred approach to learning.

In regard to the expectations of the first-year undergraduate nursing students toward their academic learning, research participants highlighted a number of key expectations related to their university study and academic learning. Overall, six expectations were discussed, with five of these expectations positively discussed. These five expectations were: (1) less support would be provided at university, (2) there would be didactic teaching in tertiary education, (3) personal changes and learning freedom would be required, (4) learning preferences would be catered for by the university, and (5) an occupation specific degree should include occupation specific assessment. The sixth expectation was student involvement; however, it was not, for the majority of participants, something expected to occur at the outset of the BN degree.

How these expectations relate to a student preference for SCL is a little less clear. Of the six expectations, four seemingly indicate a preference for (or at least an understanding of) an SCL approach. The expectation for individual learners to make personal changes (such as to become independent) is reminiscent of the principles of SCL. A likely preference for SCL is also noted in the expectation that learner preference should be catered for by the university, as well as in the fact that authentic learning is expected in the nursing degree. Moreover, whilst expecting less support in university does not indicate a preference for SCL per se, it
does reflect this approach when transitioning into the university environment. Conversely, the expectation of didactic teaching and the aversion to student involvement in education activities implies a preference for a more teacher-centred learning approach. It is however important to note that any preference concerning SCL (for or against) was not explicitly discussed by the current research participants, but has been inferred based on the prior expectations made and the relationship these expectations have with published SCL literature. As such, firm conclusions in relation to SCL preferences from the current study should be avoided; however, such findings do provide focus for future research that may be beneficial on this topic. Although care should be applied when interpreting the preference of the research participants toward SCL, the expectations they discussed were much clearer.

With these expectations known by the University, an education plan could be developed that incorporates these expectations and thus meets the needs of the incoming first-year cohort. With the embedding of student expectations into the School’s educational focus, SCL would be able to penetrate into the education practices of the School, alignment which Greener (2015) has stated is currently lacking in regard to student-centred education practice. This, in turn, would allow the SoNM to move into a true reality of SCL and away from the empty rhetoric of student-centredness as described by Farrington (1991). If, for example, learning preferences of the participants were examined, and this led to the expectation that these preferences would be catered for by the University. It would therefore appear that the tailoring of teaching and resources that integrate these preferences would be a clear and practical way that the SoNM could address student expectation and deliver its model of SCL as indicated within its curriculum document (SoNM, 2015).

However, it is important to note that whilst implementation of some of the expectations discussed in this study would assist in creating a move to an SCL approach, this does not ring true for all expectations. If, for example, student involvement is reviewed, whilst this may theoretically be aligned to SCL it was not an expectation that was desired by most students. It would therefore seem that whilst the SoNM and the University wish for an SCL approach, student-centred strategies should not be universally applied without student input. If SCL strategies are applied in a blanket fashion to all learning situations, it may be that learning approaches may not match the expectation and preference of the student cohort, possibly undermining the intention of student-centredness. It is therefore important to be mindful of earlier discussion (see Section 2.2) that highlights that SCL is simply one end of the learning spectrum (Rogers, 1983), and should be used in combination with a more
traditional teacher-centred approach as required and dependent on what is hoped to be achieved (Farrington, 1991; Moate & Cox, 2015).

Without prior understanding of the students’ expectations, it is easy to see how SCL may be universally applied by a university attempting to make use of the various reported benefits of student-centredness. It is however possible that this widespread use of SCL could be counterintuitive if the approach is not what is expected or desired by the students themselves. Therefore, to ensure that a commitment is seen toward SCL and its appropriate use in the University environment, further resources should be devoted to better understanding the expectations of the student cohort. This could include further research specifically in relation to SCL and the incoming first-year nursing students, along with longitudinal research that examines how opinions toward SCL may change throughout the nursing degree. With this improved knowledge, a more tailored approach could be provided in relation to the application of SCL and its use within the nursing course.

Specifically, in relation to nursing schools, the implementation of an SCL approach can help foster a humanistic approach that reflects the client/patient relationship required by the registered nurse on a daily basis (Milligan, 1997). In extension to this premise and acknowledging the relationship that exists between SCL and patient-centred care, it is reported that the adoption of SCL within the university can imbue similar person-centred traits within the student (Young & Paterson, 2007), thus leading to newly graduated nurses being able to provide appropriate person-centred care to their patients (Bevis & Murray, 1990). It would therefore seem that the use of SCL shows a correlation with the real world and thus authenticity to the profession, which has been described earlier as an expectation of the current participants. With the use of an authentic learning approach, students are encouraged to be more internally motivated and to take individual ownership of their own learning (Newmaster et al., 2006). This in turn will likely result in students being more actively engaged and committed towards specific assessment activity (Frey et al., 2012; Newmaster et al., 2006). From this line of thinking, it is possible to understand why the SoNM is keen to adopt an SCL approach with the student nursing cohort, and why student-centredness has been included as a focus of their curriculum document.

Similar to earlier discussion, however, the use of SCL should be applied judiciously and not as a universal one-size-fits-all learning approach. Although the use of SCL would appear to offer a great deal of benefit to the student, both personally and professionally, the need to adhere to external bodies and organisations must also be considered. With ANMAC
detailing the standards that must be observed for nurse education, and the NMBA stipulating the professional nursing standards and requisite knowledge needed of the newly graduated nurse, explicit control of the curriculum is required by the SoNM. Moreover, with the clinical workforce also having a vested interest in nursing education (Mannix et al., 2009), consideration must also be paid to the nursing and health industry and what is required of nurses within the workforce. With a changing healthcare landscape, there is an expectation by the clinical workforce that newly graduated nurses are practice ready and able to smoothly transition into the workforce (El Haddad et al., 2017), subsequently resulting in demands on nursing education to produce work-ready nurses upon graduation (Hofler & Thomas, 2016). With closer alignment needed between the nursing competencies gained at the University and those expected in the clinical working environment, external stakeholder engagement with the University should be encouraged (Virgolesi et al., in press). This furthers the need for an appropriate level of curriculum control on behalf of the Nursing School, and a more teacher-centred learning approach at times.

Although SCL has been discussed as providing both personal and professional benefits to the student cohort, this approach should not be viewed as a one-size-fits-all learning approach. Student expectations should initially be taken into consideration, thus ensuring that learning that is delivered according to SCL principles is also aligned with the students themselves. Within a nursing school it should also be understood that due to external professional constraints, not all educational activities can be developed and delivered with an SCL approach. Thus, to ensure that the desire of the SoNM to utilise an SCL approach is not simply empty rhetoric and hyperbole, it would be of benefit to map the activities within the degree to discover what could effectively be delivered with a student-centred approach. This in turn would allow for a clear and transparent understanding of the school’s approach to SCL, as well as providing a practical course of action for its implementation.
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7.1 Appendix A: Amended SEQ Questionnaire

Q1. What is your gender?
□ Male □ Female □ Non-Binary

Q2. Which age group are you in?
□ Under 20 years □ 20 – 24 years □ 25 years and over

Q3. Is this your first year studying at a University?
□ Yes □ No

Q4. What is your enrolment status?
□ Full time □ Part time

Q5. How much time per week do you expect to spend in study outside of scheduled class time?
□ 0 - 5 hours □ 6 - 10 hours □ 11 – 15 hours □ 16 – 20 hours □ More than 20 hours

Q6. I expect to be able to combine study with paid work
□ Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Not Sure □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

Q7. Having ‘ready’ access to my lecturers and tutors outside of face-to-face teaching will be important to my success
□ Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Not Sure □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

Q8. Feedback on my submitted work will be important to my learning
□ Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Not Sure □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

Q9. Feedback on my DRAFTS of work will be important to my learning
□ Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Not Sure □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

Q10. It will be important for me to attend most lectures
□ Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Not Sure □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

Q11. I have activities outside of the University that may affect my ability to study
□ Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Not Sure □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

Q12. Working with other students in class time will be important to my learning
□ Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Not Sure □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree
Q13. I anticipate that studying at University will be different to studying at high School

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Please Comment:

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Q14. What is the acceptable time for having your submitted work marked and returned to you?

☐ 1 week
☐ 2 - 3 weeks
☐ 4 – 6 weeks
☐ More than 6 weeks

Q15. Who should have the most responsibility in relationship to your learning?

☐ You
☐ Lecturer/Teaching staff
☐ Equal

Please Comment:

__________________________________________________________________________________

Q16. What do you expect of your lecturer/teaching staff within your first year of the Nursing degree?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Q17. What learning activities do you expect within your first year of the Nursing degree?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Q18. How do you expect to be assessed within your first year of the Nursing degree?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Q19. How much involvement do you expect to have within your learning activities and assessments?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Q20. What do you think will be important for making your University experience successful?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
7.2 Appendix B: 2007 SEQ Questionnaire (Crisp et al., 2009)

Q1. What is your gender?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Non-Binary

Q2. In the last 5 years I have lived mainly:
☐ South Australia ☐ In another Australian State ☐ Overseas

Q3. Which age group are you in?
☐ Under 20 years ☐ 20 – 24 years ☐ 25 years and over

Q4. Is this your first year studying at a University?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Q5. What is your enrolment status?
☐ Full time ☐ Part time

Q6. Which program area are you enrolled in? (Mark as many as apply)
☐ Arts ☐ Agricultural Science ☐ Computer Science ☐ Economic/Commerce ☐ Education/Architecture ☐ Engineering ☐ Health Science ☐ Law ☐ Mathematics ☐ Medical/Dental ☐ Music ☐ Science

Q7. What are your reasons for choosing the program? (Mark as many as apply)
☐ To study a field that really interests me
☐ To improve job prospects
☐ To develop my talents and creative abilities
☐ To get training for a specific job
☐ To meet expectations of my parents or family
Please specify if other

Q8. How much time per week do you expect to spend in study outside of scheduled class time?
☐ 0 - 5 hours
☐ 6 - 10 hours
☐ 11 – 15 hours
☐ 16 – 20 hours
☐ More than 20 hours
Q9. I expect to be able to combine study with paid work
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Q10. Having ‘ready’ access to my lecturers and tutors outside of face-to-face teaching will be important to my success
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Q11. Feedback on my submitted work will be important to my learning
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Q12. Feedback on my DRAFTS of work will be important to my learning
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Q13. It will be important for me to attend most lectures
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Q14. I have activities outside of the University that may affect my ability to study
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Q15. Working with other students in class time will be important to my learning
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Q16. I anticipate that studying at University will be different to studying at high School
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Please Comment: __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Q17. What is the acceptable time for having your submitted work marked and returned to you?
☐ 1 week
☐ 2 - 3 weeks
☐ 4 – 6 weeks
☐ More than 6 weeks

Q18. Why do you think a University of Adelaide degree is important to your life?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Q19. What do you think will be important for making your University experience successful?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
7.3 Appendix C: Semi-structured interview schedule

EXPECTATION
- What does the term expectation mean to you?

(PROMPT) Provide researchers understanding if needed (the belief that something will happen in the future)

- If you come to expect something at University, does that mean that you desire or want that to occur?

STUDY
- Do you consider studying at University to be different to studying in other environments such as high School or TAFE?

- Are you enrolled as a part time or full-time student?

- What do you feel is an appropriate number of hours to study at home for 40-credit point (full-time) study?

- How did you come up with this?

INDEPENDENCE, RESPONSIBILITY, SELF-DIRECTED
- What are your feelings toward self-directed learning and having a paid job?

(IF POSITIVE) So what is it that has prepared you for being able to combine work and becoming more responsible in your learning? Or is this simply a belief of what should happen?

TEACHER
- What are your expectations to the student teacher relationship at University?

- What do you feel is the role of the University teaching staff within students learning?

- What are your expectations towards teaching staff providing assessment feedback?

- Do you feel that easy access to your teaching staff will be important in your studies?

- What does ‘easy’ access mean to you?

- In addition to teaching and accessibility, is being supportive an important trait for the teacher to have?
• What do you think teaching staff need to do to show such support?

(FOLLOW UP) Considering some teaching staff may have 400 students in their cohort, does easy access to all enrolled students seem practical?

(FOLLOW UP) What then could the independent student do if easy access was not possible?

INVolvEMENT

• Do you consider yourself to be a student who is involved in their own learning activities and assessments?

• What do you consider is involvement?

• What is an appropriate level of involvement?

• Do you feel this involvement should extend to being involved in designing learning activities and assessments along with teaching staff?

10. Lectures are often expected learning activities, and exams expected assessment.

• Do you expect lectures and exams to be part of your experience of University?

• Would you prefer different types of learning and assessment?

• Do lectures and exams have a place in a complete experience of University?

Many thanks for your time, that is all of my questions. Do you have any for me?

Before you go, I wanted to quickly highlight two points that I mentioned in the interview.

• We discussed the number of hours students expected per course, with students having a range of expectations. Based on research the School of nursing and midwifery advise students that for every 10-credit point course, 10 hours of study are often necessary.

• The other point is in regard to feedback on drafts. It is actually a University policy that academic staff do not read drafts for students. That’s not to say that you cannot seek feedback on specific aspects such as writing style or referencing; however, this feedback would need to be during a meeting with outside support services such as the library or from learning advisors.