

FACULTY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

The learning experience at the Stellenbosch university engineering faculty provides a solid foundation of the fundamentals of engineering and problem solving. The faculty implements measures to ensure ideal relay of information to its students; with that, the system is not without its flaws.

On account of the shift from face-to-face lectures to fully online to ARTLA: the learning experience has changed drastically.

Although face to face learning allowed students to interact and cooperate, it suffered from a lack of out of class learning material as students did not have recorded lecture videos to refer to when studying afterwards.

Fully online lectures were difficult to adjust to; upon running a survey with my colleagues I found out that most students did not participate on the online forums, which crushed any form of collaboration possible. This forced students to work more independently while on their own schedules, thus pushing them to manage their time better.

Augmented Remote Teaching, Learning and Research structure has struck a balance where students have access to recorded lecture videos, which implies a non-synchronous learning experience allowing students to work on their own schedules. The face-to-face tutorial and practical sessions together with the face-to-face Q&A sessions are more effective learning schemes in comparison to the online alternative. In 2021 students suffered from inaccurate pre-recorded lecture videos made in 2020. Some lecture videos were either inaccurate or non-correspondent to the lecture slides which caused a lot of confusion. Revision and rectification of flawed lecture videos is required to ensure the accuracy of information given to the students.

One of the main flaws that has affected mostly Electrical and Electronic Engineering students is the lack of coordination among the various departments. Different modules tend to have consecutive deadlines which are often difficult to make; what makes the deadlines unbearable is the fact that they are clustered over a short period of time whereas any other time there will be few to no assignments due. This misstep stems to the structure of the tutorials and tests: in the 2nd semester of 2021 (3rd year E&E), the tutorials were clustered at the start of the week. This put the students under a lot of unnecessary pressure when the tutorials could have been placed more strategically.

Due to the personalised nature of the students' schedules, it would be more beneficial to release the following week's work a week in advance to give the students ample time to plan their workflow for the following week and study ahead if need be. Weekly face-to-face or online Q&A's have proven to be very useful to most students and having them for every module seems necessary. Students have also requested that all lectures be reviewed internally on account of a lack of effort from some lectures.

Another blemish that slows down the students is the lack of standardisation of various portals on Sunlearn. On Sunlearn each module has a different layout; this introduces uncertainty especially during submission times when students are under pressure.