

# **Student Reflections on Learning and Studying during the Transition to University: Implications for Tertiary Learning Advisors**

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## **Abstract**

Tertiary learning advisors (TLA) are key support staff for university students in Aotearoa New Zealand and serve a major role by promoting effective strategies for students' studying and learning. For TLAs to effectively assist students, particularly first-year university students, institutions must have a greater understanding of the academic transition experience as reported by students. The current study used a mixed-method approach to consider students' reflections on their learning and study after their first semester of university. Results show that 2 out of 3 students reported feeling underprepared for their university courses, and most students reported attempts to modify their learning and study approaches in their adaptations to university. Further, students' perceptions of the learning environment as clear and organised, interesting and personally relevant, and supportive of building a peer-based learning network were linked to positive changes in their learning and study practices. Such findings highlight the importance of the psychosocial climate on learning and learners during the student transition to university. While the majority of participants reported that their modified learning strategies were effective, a small minority felt incapable of overcoming this challenge. The implications of these results are discussed about stress and coping theory. Recommendations for TLAs to support transitioning students are included.

## **Introduction**

Change can be daunting. Schooling transitions, such as becoming a university student, can be especially challenging as they involve an acculturative process within a new social and educational environment (Sotardi, 2016; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Traditional first-year university students face personal adjustments, including a changing sense of self, homesickness, and social pressures (Palmer & Puri, 2006). For non-traditional first-year

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students such as mature and international students, this transition may also involve challenges such as culture shock and language barriers (Ramsay, Jones, & Barker, 2007; Sümer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008). Research has shown that university life can be unexpectedly harsh (Compas, Wagner, Slavin, & Vannatta, 1986), and students' experiences during this transition impact their academic achievement and personal well-being in powerful ways (Pluut, Curşeu, & Ilies, 2015).

In addition to personal and social challenges, transitioning students are likely to experience discrepancy between their subjective expectations of and objective realities at the university. Part of this difference may be rooted in students' formative experiences in primary and secondary school and the ways in which students might navigate this different environment. Students must not only perform academic tasks—many which may seem alien to them—but also cope with a broader series of differences in how and where learning takes place (Briggs, Clark, & Hall, 2012). Recent research conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand (e.g., Sotardi & Brogt, 2016) has provided evidence that first-year students confront a variety of academic concerns. These include: (a) what lecturers expect of students for course tasks and activities; (b) how to learn and make sense of course materials; and, (c) ways to locate and seek help when necessary. Within the bicultural framework of Aotearoa New Zealand, it is also important to acknowledge that many institutions are structured from a European view; therefore, Western approaches to teaching, learning and assessment may negatively impact students from different cultural backgrounds such as Māori and Pacific populations (e.g., Chu, Samala Abella, & Paurini, 2013; Curtis et al., 2012; Sotardi & Brogt, 2016). Thus, Aotearoa New Zealand students who struggle with learning-related challenges during the transition to tertiary studies might question their cultural preparedness for university, further casting doubt on their personal motives, career goals, and competence (e.g., Krause, Hartley, James, & McInnis, 2005; Perry & Allard, 2009).

Students' learning and study practices are essential to a successful experience with university. With regards to academic achievement, Richardson, Abraham, and Bond (2012) performed a meta-analysis to identify factors which contribute to students' grade point average (GPA). In their results, approaches to learning and studying, self-regulation, and contextual influences were significant predictors of student GPA. Although GPA is not the *only* indicator of a “successful” transition, higher education researchers (e.g., Diseth & Martinsen, 2003) agree that the effectiveness of learning and study practices is important for

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a variety of outcomes at university. Therefore, how incoming students attempt to learn and study could shape their transition to university; in this regard, Entwistle, McCune, and Hounsell (2002) assert that deep, elaborative approaches to learning as well as more systematic, effortful approaches to study contribute to high-quality comprehension. It is also evident that student perceptions of the learning environment matter. Specifically, how students evaluate and respond to their learning environment are linked to their individual approaches to learning and studying (e.g., Entwistle, 1991). Favourable perceptions of the learning environment are negatively related to a surface or rote approach and positively related to a deep approach to learning (Lawless & Richardson, 2002).

Given the impact of the university learning environment on students and the clear need for individuals to develop effective learning and study approaches as they transition to university, there is a golden opportunity for Aotearoa New Zealand tertiary learning advisors (TLAs). TLAs have diverse, important roles within their respective centres and institutions to support lifelong learning in students (Manalo & Trafford, 2006). In their interactions with students, TLAs often scaffold professional and transferrable skills to promote self-regulated learning and to provide psychological and pastoral support for individuals who may find the transition into academic culture challenging (Carter & Bartlett-Trafford, 2008). From a bicultural perspective within Aotearoa New Zealand, a TLA may serve university students as a *kaiāwhina* (advocate or support person) who cultivates *tautoko* (support) and *mātauranga* (education and skills). This process can occur through *akoranga* (learning and teaching) and an interpersonal relationship through *whakawhanaungatanga* (the process of getting to know each other). Indeed, research suggests that comprehensive, bicultural, and well-designed support services in Aotearoa New Zealand institutions are likely to enhance student learning and contribute to higher completion rates (Prebble, Hargreaves, Leach, Naidoo, Suddaby, & Zepke, 2004). TLAs and their interactions with university students could, therefore, benefit from more focused research aimed to understand the transition experience, specifically with learning and study approaches.

The present study used a mixed-method design to explore how students approach their learning and studying at the end of their first semester at university. Specifically, educational researchers examined the research on students' reflections on academic readiness and any strategic changes to their learning and studying since their start at university. Using a social cognitive framework, relations between students' perceived classroom learning environments

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and their learning and study approaches were investigated. This integrative approach is designed to provide Aotearoa New Zealand TLAs and other institutional staff with deeper insight into the academic experience for transitioning students. To achieve this insight, two guiding research questions were posed:

1. What are students' reflections on learning and studying as a result of the first semester of university?
2. To what extent do transitioning students' perceptions of the learning environment predict changes in their approach to learning and studying?

## **Method**

### **Sample & Procedure**

Participants were 30 students (90% female) enrolled in a public university in Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand. The sample comprised full-time students and the mean student age was 25.67 years ( $SD = 9.83$ ). The majority were campus-based (60%) whereas the remaining students were pursuing a baccalaureate degree via distance learning (40%). Individuals were recruited from three introductory-level courses within education (73.3%), management (16.7%), and physical geography (10.0%). The courses were selected to represent breadth in the student experience during the transition to university across various disciplines.

Participants were volunteers, recruited via advertisements on their respective course Moodle websites.

A mixed-method design was used, integrating self-reported quantitative and qualitative measures (Creswell, 2013). At the end of their first semester of university, study participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire (1) to reflect on their course-specific academic readiness; (2) to describe and elaborate on any adjustments made to their learning and study approaches across the semester for their respective course; and, (3) to rate their perceptions of the course-specific learning environment. It is worth emphasising that this study includes a small sample of participants, With a relatively high percentage of female, and slightly more mature, students, and may depict a transition experience which differs from traditional school-leavers. Thus, generalisability of findings should be taken with the appropriate caution. Further, the presented analyses are correlational, and therefore causality cannot be determined. Moreover, several lecturers taught the same course (a

common practice at this institution) and therefore student perceptions of the classroom environment may have varied more widely than in courses with a single lecturer.

### **Instruments**

#### ***Students' approaches to learning and studying.***

Open-ended items invited students to reflect on their learning and studying, which provided insight into their academic readiness and adaptation. The first set of questions asked the following: *Thinking back to when you first started this course, do you think you started this course with the necessary learning skills to adequately achieve the results you desired? If not, what do you think you were lacking or what did you need to change?* The second set of questions asked the following: *Since February [the start of the course], what changes have you made to your learning strategies? Do you feel these changes have improved your learning?*

Participant responses were organised using content analysis (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). Firstly, after reviewing all of the responses to the open-ended questions, the first author extracted key phrases relevant to the points addressed in each participant's text (e.g., time management), which were supplemented by interpretive comments. Secondly, these codes were sorted into key headings (e.g., time management and reading strategies codes became "organised study"). Thirdly, topics within each key heading were listed as frequencies. Using an iterative process, the list was evaluated to ensure there was no clear category overlaps. Lastly, interrater reliability testing of the coding scheme was performed, including both positive and negative case analysis. For the first set of questions, Cohen's kappa ( $\kappa$ ) ranged from .93 to .94; for the second set of questions,  $\kappa$  ranged from .70 to .82. Overall, this indicates moderate to very strong congruence between the raters (see McHugh, 2012).

#### ***Perceptions of the learning environment.***

To measure students' perceptions of their respective learning environments, we used items from the Experiences of Teaching and Learning Questionnaire (ETLQ; Entwistle et al., 2002). For this study, a Likert-style scale was used ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Instrumentation included 37 items that were appropriate for all participating courses and represented the following subscales: (a) Organisation, structure, and content ( for

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example, *The topics seemed to follow each other in a way that made sense to me*); (b) Alignment (*What we were taught seemed to match what we were supposed to learn*); (c) Integration of teaching and learning materials (*The different types of teaching (lectures, tutorials, labs, etc.) supported each other well*); (d) Choice (*We were given a good deal of choice over how we went about learning*); (e) Encouraging high quality learning (*I was prompted to think about how well I was learning and how I might improve*); (f) Clarity and feedback about assessment (*It was clear to me what was expected in the assessed work*); (g) Assessment for understanding (*To do well in this course, you had to think critically about the topics*); (h) Staff enthusiasm and support (*Staff tried to share their enthusiasm about the subject with us*); (i) Support from other students (*Talking with other students helped me to develop my understanding*); and, (j) Interest, enjoyment, and relevance (*I found most of what I learned in this course unit really interesting*). Internal consistency alpha coefficients for these subscales were all acceptable to strong ( $\alpha = .70$  to  $.85$ ).

## Results

### Student Reflections on Learning and Studying

Students were invited (1) to reflect on their first academic readiness and approaches to learning and study, (2) to comment on any changes they made to those approaches across the duration of their first semester of university, and (3) to rate their perceptions of the classroom learning environment.

Only one-third of the respondents (33.3%) felt they possessed the necessary skills for their respective courses at the start of the semester. The majority considered they lacked core competencies with regards to time management ( $n = 11$ ; 36.7%), note-taking ( $n = 5$ ; 16.7%), writing skills ( $n = 4$ ; 13.3%), and technical/content knowledge ( $n = 3$ ; 10.0%). As an example of time management, one student commented, *“Thinking back to the start of this course, I knew that we would be expected to do readings each week. However, I didn’t expect how full on the readings [would be]!”* With regards to note-taking, another student noted:

I quickly realised that I needed to learn how to take notes better [...] and to take cues from the lecturers. This was my first time studying in 20 years, so I was a bit rusty, but I adapted quickly to the demand of academic studies.

As an example of writing skills, one student explained, *“I have needed to improve my writing skills, grammar and to be concise. I have used [a learning advisor] for essay writing.”* A few

students also noted that they lacked the necessary technical and content skills for success. One individual commented, *“Coming out of a high school that did not teach us geography skills (mapping, reading weather maps, etc.), I struggled in a lot of the lab work, where it was expected that we would already know how to deal with these elements.”*

Students were also asked about changes made to their learning and study approaches across their 12 weeks of university study, with 83.3% reported adapting their learning and study practices for particular courses. Specifically, students described making adjustments to their organised study and effort management, especially with regards to time management ( $n = 16$ ; 53.3%). One student commented, *I learned to put more time aside in order to make sure I read it before the week’s lectures, so I could build on it with [information] from the lectures.* Another student stated, *[I’ve learned] to set aside time to study. I am an extremely busy person, and I used to get by on little study at high school but still pull top grades. However, this is not the case at university. I really needed to sit down and just hit the books.* In addition to time management issues, students reported change in utilising lecture notes ( $n = 7$ ; 23.3%). One student explained, *I made small changes like typing notes as opposed to writing [...] the small changes have probably not made a substantial difference to my grades but have helped my stress levels.*

Several students reported that they had adopted a more “active” approach to studying practices ( $n = 7$ ; 23.3%). These practices typically involved doing something with the course content (i.e., restructuring the ideas or theories using elaborative methods rather than passively engaging with the materials). Such strategies are representative of a deep approach to learning (Entwistle et al., 2002). For example, one student explained, *[I’ve learned] active strategies of study (such as making mind maps or flash cards) instead of just reading through notes.* Another commented,

*Flashcards have become a new strategy for me. Normally I would read my book and test myself on the questions, but the flashcards seemed to be an effective way for me, with the bonus I could take them somewhere with me, so I was able to ‘study’ when I got a moment while out and about.*

Students also expressed they incorporated peers as learning and study resources ( $n = 5$ ; 16.7%). One student explained, *I have created a lot of posters using colour and discussed my ideas with other students. These changes have improved my learning skills, and I believe that they were successful.* Another commented *I’ve started studying more with a group. In a*

*subject like Geography, having more than your own thoughts, views, and notes can be really useful.*

However, not all students found that the changes in their learning approaches were effective (6.6%). One student explained *I've tried mind maps, flash cards, re-listening to the lectures, going over the content again, study groups, [and] extra readings. I cannot find a study technique that works for me.* This struggling student also signalled the importance of adapting to academic practices and social cohesion during the first semester of university:

*I am not liking university. I cannot study and therefore get bad results. I find it really stressful and have made no friends. I have joined several clubs, but I still don't feel [a] friendly atmosphere. I don't think I will come back next year. I may just have a gap year and decide what to do with my life.*

These qualitative results indicated that 66.6% of participants felt academically unprepared for their university coursework. Furthermore, this lack of readiness appeared to promote a variety of adjustments to students' learning and study approaches. Although it is uncertain as to whether individuals had sought support from their institution's TLAs, these conditions do underscore the importance of available learning support during the transition to university.

### **Perceptions of the Learning Environment**

Students reported the learning environment in a positive light (see mean and standard deviations presented in Table 1). Independent-samples t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) indicated no statistically significant group differences in students' perceptions of the learning environment by demographics (e.g., gender, age) or course enrolment. As presented in Table 1, bivariate correlations revealed that first-year students' perceptions of the learning environment were closely associated except for student support, which was less consistently linked to the other variables. It is important to note that the strength of these reported correlations may be overestimated due to this small sample size.



**Table 1.**

*Bivariate correlations between classroom perceptions at the end of the semester (n = 30)*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Organisation, structure, & content	5.27	.48	-								
2. Alignment	5.26	.65	<b>.79**</b>	-							
3. Integration of materials	5.21	.60	<b>.60**</b>	<b>.88**</b>	-						
4. Choice	3.90	.72	.33	<b>.41*</b>	<b>.46*</b>	-					
5. Encouraging high quality learning	4.99	.55	<b>.66**</b>	<b>.75**</b>	<b>.71**</b>	<b>.59**</b>	-				
6. Clarity/feedback about assessment	4.86	.69	<b>.50**</b>	<b>.56**</b>	<b>.48**</b>	<b>.53**</b>	<b>.59**</b>	-			
7. Assessment for understanding	5.20	.42	<b>.42*</b>	<b>.55**</b>	<b>.54**</b>	.21	<b>.53**</b>	<b>.55**</b>	-		
8. Staff enthusiasm and support	5.20	.55	<b>.66**</b>	<b>.54**</b>	<b>.47**</b>	<b>.53**</b>	<b>.70**</b>	<b>.54**</b>	<b>.53**</b>	-	
9. Support from other students	4.87	.80	.05	.18	.11	.02	.15	<b>.45*</b>	<b>.56**</b>	.21	-
10. Interest, enjoyment, and relevance	5.29	.64	<b>.63**</b>	<b>.65**</b>	<b>.56**</b>	<b>.42*</b>	<b>.78**</b>	.34	.34	<b>.52**</b>	-.02

Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Students' (qualitative) reported changes in learning and studying practices (e.g., time management, active engagement with course materials, etc.) were integrated with self-report quantitative data. To achieve this integration, a series of logistic regressions using forward stepwise techniques were performed. Variables were dichotomised based on positive and negative coding analysis. This process created an opportunity to identify variables, which best predicted the likelihood that students reported a change in their learning and study approaches. Since time management was the most frequently reported change in student reports, analyses started there.

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Lastly, students' perception of the course as Interesting, Enjoyable, and Relevant was a significant predictor of *effective* changes to their learning approaches;  $\chi^2(1, n = 30) = 4.05$ ,  $p < .05$ . The model explained between 12.6% (Cox and Snell R Square) and 21.3% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variance for changes to learning, and correctly classified 80% of cases. Students who reported their course as Interesting, Enjoyable, and Relevant were five times more likely to report useful changes to their learning approaches (odds ratio = 5.26; 95% CI = 0.93 to 29.80).

Results showed students' perceptions of the learning environment were related to change in time management practices. Specifically, perceived Course Organisation, Structure, and Content was a significant predictor of students' change in time management skills;  $\chi^2(1, n = 30) = 6.86$ ,  $p < .01$ . The model explained between 20.4% (Cox and Snell R Square) and 27.3% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variance for change in time management, and correctly classified 63.3% of cases. Students who reported greater Organisation, Structure, and Content in their course were nearly 12 times more likely to report time management changes than those who did not perceive their course as organised (odds ratio = 11.68; 95% CI = 1.32 to 103.70).

Results also showed that perceived Student Support was a significant predictor of whether students learned through small-group study sessions;  $\chi^2(1, n = 30) = 6.14$ ,  $p < .05$ . The model explained between 18.5% (Cox and Snell R Square) and 31.1% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variance for change toward small-group study sessions, and correctly classified 83.3% of cases. Students who reported support from their peers were more than 12 times more likely to learn and study through small-group discussions (odds ratio = 12.21 (95% CI = 0.81 to 183.56)

Lastly, students' perception of the course as Interesting, Enjoyable, and Relevant was a significant predictor of *effective* changes to their learning approaches;  $\chi^2(1, n = 30) = 4.05$ ,  $p < .05$ . The model explained between 12.6% (Cox and Snell R Square) and 21.3% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variance for changes to learning, and correctly classified 80% of cases. Students who reported their course as Interesting, Enjoyable, and Relevant were five times more likely to report useful changes to their learning approaches (odds ratio = 5.26; 95% CI = 0.93 to 29.80).

To summarise, results reveal that transitioning students who saw their learning environment as clear with regards to expectations, running smoothly, and progressing in a logical order were 12 times more likely to modify their time management practices than students who saw their learning environment as disorganised and unclear. Students who felt a sense of community amongst peers were 12 times more likely to learn and study through small-group discussions than those students who lacked support from other students. Lastly, students who found their courses to be interesting, enjoyable, and relevant to their lives were five times more likely to identify effective learning and study approaches than students who were less interested or saw their learning environment as lacking meaningfulness. It may be that interest, and other positive states may encourage students to experiment with different approaches and persist in self-regulated learning and studying.

## **Discussion**

The present study sought greater insight into transitioning students' reflections on their learning and study strategies as well as the potential contributors of the learning environment on changes to these strategies. Three key findings are presented. Firstly, nearly 2 out of 3 students in this sample reported feeling underprepared for their university courses. These concerns were primarily related to skills in organising self-study, making use of lecture notes, and writing at an acceptable standard. It is important to note that these findings represent the experiences of a small sample of full-time, primarily female students who varied widely in age (mean of 25.67 years) and educational experience during the university transition (e.g., distance vs. campus study). Although results revealed no statistical differences by student demographics across sampled courses or perceived learning environment, students' reflections on learning and study strategies during the transition to university could vary as a function of certain group characteristics. For example, mature students who pursue a qualification after a long departure from study could struggle more than traditional school-leavers during the transition to university because of the unfamiliarity of academic life as well as the addition of family, whānau, and work commitments. To estimate the extent to which students' learning and study approaches differ and change over time as a result of their unique circumstances and learner backgrounds, a larger sample including a greater variety of academic disciplines to explore these group differences would be beneficial.

Secondly, participants in this study reported modifications to their methods of learning and study across the first semester. From a stress and coping perspective (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), it may be that transitioning students who pay attention to their current skills and critically evaluate university, and course-specific demands may be more likely to modify their approaches to learning and studying during their first few weeks at university. This search for effective strategies may be instrumental not only for the processes of knowledge acquisition but also for outcomes such as university achievement and retention. Moreover, if transitioning students are likely to search for effective strategies, then support and guidance from academic and support staff may be of vital importance. In this study, transitioning students reported changes that provided them with greater time management, more efficient note-taking strategies, the development of small-group study sessions, and a deeper, more elaborative approach to mastering course content through flashcards and concept maps. As depicted in the results, not all students (6.6%) were able to identify practical approaches to learning and studying. The potential impact of a university's learning centre on supporting transitioning students may, therefore, be far-reaching and understated.

Thirdly, students' perceptions of the learning environment were linked to changes in their learning and study practices; therefore, students' subjective course experiences emerged as a complex but significant contributor to the student transition to university. Many first-year students felt as though they lacked the necessary skills for academic success. Consistent with existing literature (e.g., Parpala, Lindblom-Ylänne, Komulainen, Litmanen, & Hirsto, 2010), results from this study suggest that transitioning students' perceptions of the university learning environment may shape their academic practices. Results further indicate that students who identify deficits to their current learning and study strategies may be more likely to change their strategy; this process may be shaped, in part, by the learning environment itself such as its organisational and interpersonal climates.

Despite sample size constraints, this study sheds new light onto transitioning students' perceived readiness and university experience in Aotearoa New Zealand. If only 1 out of 3 first-semester students report feeling prepared for academic study at university, then a systemic approach must be negotiated within educational institutions and communities. These changes may help to ensure that transitioning students gain the appropriate skills training in high school and have access to skills resources as they segue to university. Within such an approach, students' academic readiness (or lack thereof) has clear implications for learning

support teams. For instance, TLAs are likely to play a crucial role in both actively promoting effective strategies but also dispelling flawed thinking about learning and studying during the first semester of university.

For tertiary institutions to promote a culture of knowledge and care, a suite of academic resources (such as workshops and interactive online resources) must be widely available to transitioning students. Comprehensive support further emphasises the importance of TLAs across the school year, before students enrol in university, during orientation and other preparatory programmes, embedded within courses, and alongside coursework throughout each semester. TLAs and other support staff could partner with local high schools to help secondary students and their respective families and whānau to highlight key differences in learning, studying, and academic expectations between high school and university. TLAs may be involved in targeting their efforts to specific cohorts, such as mature or distance students, who may have a qualitatively different transition experience. As students begin university, it is especially important for TLAs to help individuals evaluate their study practices so they can advance toward self-regulated learning. Students may hold a belief that university is “different” from their previous educational experiences, but they may not realise that this transition involves both a change in the learning environment but also within themselves ([authors blinded for review, 2016b]). Therefore, TLAs who offer personalised consultations or group workshops that aim to scaffold transferrable skills, in particular with the reported issues involving time management, taking lecture notes, and academic writing, may support students during their transition to university.

TLAs (and their larger teams) may also strive to inform university academic staff the broader trends they observe working with transitioning students in their respective colleges or departments. If the classroom learning environment is indeed an influential part of students’ learning and study approaches, then strengthening interactions between TLAs and academic staff would be worthwhile. TLAs can recommend strategies to lecturers and students for improved learning and study practices. For example, TLAs can collaborate with academic staff by providing them with constructive feedback on the clarity and organisation of their assessment details and how transitioning students are likely to interpret those instructions. TLAs can recommend to academics and students a variety of pedagogical practices which may enhance learning, such as a “study buddy” or small group study system. Encouragement and facilitation of group practices may be especially beneficial to individual students who

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may otherwise have difficulty transitioning to university on a personal and social level. Thus, fostering effective techniques for learning and studying in students may create a learning community regarding tautoko (support) and mātauranga (education and skills).

## **Conclusion**

Results from this small-scale study showed that 2 out of 3 university students felt underprepared for their first-semester coursework. Many students modified their approaches to learning and study approaches over time, and these modifications were linked in part to the learning environment. Based on these findings, three recommendations may be particularly useful when TLAs and other learning support staff consult with transitioning students. First, TLAs can strive to understand each student, his/her background, and co-construct specific goals for university. Second, TLAs can seek information about the learner's current approaches to learning and study as well as his/her perceived failures and successes with different methods. Third, TLAs can share their wealth of knowledge about learning and study strategies by making recommendations which are closely aligned to each student's goals. In addition to individual consultations, TLAs—alongside institutional academic and support staff—can assist incoming students through a proactive, systemic approach in which learners can be better informed, better prepared, and have a more positive experience as they transition to university.

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