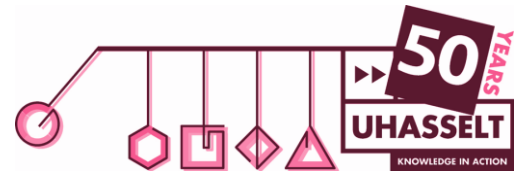


# Unleashing Potential Exploring Pathways to Inclusive Higher Education

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# Paper 2 b Enhancing equity and inclusion through block teaching: lessons from diverse student experiences



# Introduction

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- Block teaching x student-centred education
- Descriptive statistics and self-report surveys
- Real contexts
- Need for qualitative research
- Hasselt University as a case - long history with block teaching experience

# Research question(s)

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- How UHasselt students **experience** its **educational system**?
- What is the **meaning** of **block teaching** within it?

# Methods

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- **IPA** - Interpretative phenomenological analysis (Nizza et al., 2021)
- In-depth **interviews** (40min to 2h30)
- **17** participants
- **All** faculties represented
- **Diverse** participants (socio economic background, migration background, learning disorder, illness)
- Questions: **student-centred learning, feedback, self-study, technology, class size, instruction quality**

# Results

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- **Time** - privilege
- **Interactions** - power relationships
- **Workload** - different school backgrounds and professional development
- 11 students - with significant **struggles**
- Block teaching receives particular meanings within this context:
  - **Time redistribution**
  - **Transition to university**
  - **Institutionalisation of feedback and academic skills**
  - **Open space for differentiation**

# Content and time compensation

- Alternative **school trajectories** - knowledge not provided by previous education
- **Higher workload** - recover knowledge, time spent working, in therapy, dealing with discrimination.
- Higher workload **does not exist for privileged students**



Block teaching gives **time to recover** and **less mental workload** during exams.

Specific disciplines with **poor design** + **no rest time** between blocks = more **stress**

The block system is, in my personal opinion, an opportunity for every student to succeed. Even if you don't have the right educational background. (47)

**Ana**

# Institutionalisation of feedback and academic skills

- Hesitation to **seek help**
- Lack of **professional development on diversity**
- **Discrimination**
- **Power relationships**

Block teaching helps **compensate**.

**Fast feedback = empower students** to take decisions about study method and adapt to what is expected. **Scheduled study hours** = academic skills development.

Stronger with extra feedback mechanisms and small groups.

But, once they're in the same class, they form two groups. If you come from a lower-class to a higher-class group, you have nothing to talk about. (65)

**Rony**

It wasn't until the second block that I really started understanding how it all worked.(28)

**Camila**





# Transition pedagogy

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- Better in the **first year**
- **Time needed** for complex disciplines
- Better for students who did not acquire **autonomy** yet
- **Not significant** for privileged students, but **preference for semester** after first year

In a semester you have more free time, you can choose on what to work.(17)

**Hans**

Now I'm used to semesters as well. I don't mind semesters, but I wouldn't mind the block system either.(31)

**Stef**

# Differentiation

- Mostly **traditional education**
- Lack of professional development in **didactics**

**Fewer contact hours = time for self-regulated learning.** Enhanced if **technology** is used (e.g. recording lectures)



Students still have to figure things out themselves at home anyways. (28)

**Stef**

In every lesson you wonder: 'has the university ever observed this person's class?'. (105)

**Carlos**

# Discussion/conclusion

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- **Alignment with previous research** by Winchester, Klein and Sinnayah (2021) and Loton et al. (2020)
- Block teaching as a **choice** to assist disadvantaged students in the **first year**
- More investment in:
  - **technology for self-study**
  - professionalisation on **diversity competencies** and **didactics**
  - **curriculum design**
  - **transition pedagogies**
- Research on **resilience** and **drop-out** in the first block

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