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Attitudes and expectations of first year students towards physics labs

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**Abstract content
 (Max 300 words)
Formatting &
Special chars**

While most first physics courses have a laboratory component the reasons for including this can vary. In some cases the laboratory course is set up so as to demonstrate aspects of the theory being covered while in other cases the course is meant to develop experimental skills independently of the content being covered in the class. However, in either case it is not clear that the expectations of the students are aligned with those of the lecturers. As part of a broader study on student attitudes and expectation with regard to first year laboratory work we report on a pilot study in which we probe students' perceptions of the first year lab course at the end of the first term with regard to: expectations, enjoyment, learning, relation to course content, and assessment. The instrument that we developed comprises 5 questions. Each question is framed as a debate positing different points of view. The respondents are asked to choose the view with which they most closely agree (answer choice) and more importantly, are requested to explain their choice in detail (free response writing). We report on some of the findings from the preliminary analysis of both the answer choice and the free response writing.

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**Level for award
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M.Sc

**Main supervisor (name and email)
and his / her institution**

Saalih Allie
 saalih.allie@gmail.com
 University of Cape Town

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Primary author: Ms TLOWANA, Munene (University of Cape Town)

Co-author: Prof. ALLIE, Saalih (UCT)

Presenter: Ms TLOWANA, Munene (University of Cape Town)

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