

## Transformative Pedagogy at the University of Sulaimani: Bridging Theory and Practice in Teacher Education

Choman Amin<sup>a</sup>, Khanda Aziz<sup>b</sup>, Zana Ali<sup>c</sup>, Stam Saeed<sup>d</sup>

[choman.amin@univsul.edu.iq](mailto:choman.amin@univsul.edu.iq)

<sup>a</sup>College of Physical Education & Sports Sciences, Department of Physical Education, University of Sulaimani, Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region-Iraq; <sup>b</sup>College of Administration and Law, Department of International Trade, University of Halabja, Halabja, Kurdistan Region-Iraq; <sup>c</sup>College of Physical Education & Sports Sciences, Department of Physical Education, University of Sulaimani, Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region-Iraq; <sup>d</sup>College of Political Sciences, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Sulaimani, Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region-Iraq.

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### Abstract

This study evaluated the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani by examining its effectiveness, strengths, and areas for improvement from the perspective of enrolled students. The research focused on several key areas, including teaching methods, curriculum relevance, assessment practices, technology integration, learning environment, and practical experience. A descriptive cross-sectional survey was used, with supplementary thematic analysis of open-ended responses, and census sampling targeted all 101 students enrolled in the programme. Data were gathered through a structured survey distributed via Google Forms, combining closed-ended and open-ended questions to capture both quantitative trends and qualitative insights. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, means) in SPSS version 26, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Validity was supported through pilot testing, reliability checks, and triangulated review of qualitative responses. Findings revealed strong student satisfaction with the learning environment, teaching quality, and technology use. However, concerns were raised about limited practical experience, curriculum alignment with career goals, and inconsistent assessment methods. The study concludes that while the programme has a solid foundation, it requires improvements. Recommendations include increasing hands-on practice, reducing class size, updating materials, extending course duration, and using Kurdish to enhance accessibility.

**Keywords:** Pedagogical Programme, University of Sulaimani, Teacher Education, Student Feedback, Curriculum Evaluation, Practical Experience

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## Introduction

The continuous improvement of educational programmes is vital to the success of higher education institutions, ensuring that they meet the evolving needs of students and the demands of the global job market (Ehlers, 2020). The pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani, located in the Kurdistan Region-Iraq (KRI), is a key component in the professional development of future educators. Given the critical role teachers play in shaping the minds of future generations, it is essential that their training programmes are rigorously assessed and continuously refined to uphold high standards of teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). In recent years, the field of education has undergone significant transformations due to advances in technology, changes in pedagogical theories, and the increasing importance of skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability (Schleicher, 2018). These developments have heightened the need for teacher education programmes to be dynamic and responsive. The University of Sulaimani's pedagogical programme must therefore ensure that its curriculum, teaching methods, and learning environments are effectively preparing students for the challenges of modern classrooms (Darling-Hammond, Burns, et al., 2017). The evaluation of student experiences and feedback is a crucial element in this continuous improvement process. Student feedback provides direct insights into the effectiveness of teaching methods, the relevance of course content, and the overall learning environment. It can reveal both the strengths of a programme and areas where improvements are needed. This study aims to systematically gather and analyse feedback from students enrolled in the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani. By doing so, it seeks to identify specific aspects of the programme that are performing well and those that require enhancement, ultimately contributing to the overall quality of teacher education at the university (Robinson et al., 2013). The importance of student feedback in educational assessment is well-documented. Research has shown that involving students in the evaluation process can lead to significant improvements in educational outcomes (Hattie & Timperley, 2011). For instance, Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasize the power of feedback in enhancing student learning and performance. Similarly, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) argue that formative feedback, which is based on student input, is essential for effective learning and development. By integrating student perspectives into the evaluation process, educational institutions can develop more effective and engaging teaching strategies, tailor their curricula to better meet student needs, and create more supportive learning environments (Carless, 2015). In the

[sjh@univsul.edu.iq](mailto:sjh@univsul.edu.iq)

context of the University of Sulaimani, this study will utilize a structured survey to collect comprehensive feedback from students. The survey will cover various aspects of the student experience, including demographic information, pre-programme preparation, learning environment, teaching methods, curriculum and course content, assessment and evaluation, overall satisfaction, technology integration, opportunities for practical experience, future goals, and open-ended questions for detailed qualitative feedback. This holistic approach ensures that all critical elements of the pedagogical programme are evaluated, providing a thorough understanding of its current state and areas for improvement. By systematically analysing the collected data, this study aims to provide actionable insights that can be used to enhance the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the programme not only meets but exceeds the expectations of its students, preparing them to become effective and innovative educators in a rapidly changing educational landscape. The findings of this study will be instrumental in informing future developments and ensuring that the pedagogical programme remains relevant, effective, and aligned with both student needs and contemporary educational standards (Brookhart, 2017; Gielen et al., 2010).

### **Research problem**

Despite the establishment of a comprehensive pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani, limited empirical evidence exists regarding its effectiveness from the students' perspective. While the programme is designed to promote student-centred learning, collaborative practices, and modern instructional methods, ongoing concerns remain about its alignment with participants' professional goals, the clarity of assessment mechanisms, and the adequacy of practical teaching opportunities. These gaps raise important questions about how well the programme prepares future educators for the realities of contemporary classrooms. Moreover, without a structured evaluation grounded in student feedback, it is difficult to determine which elements of the programme are most effective and which require improvement. As the landscape of teacher education continues to evolve globally, there is a pressing need to assess whether this local initiative is keeping pace with international standards. This study addresses that need by systematically examining students' experiences within the pedagogical programme, offering critical insights to inform future development and continuous improvement efforts.

### **Aims of the Study:**

The main aims of this research are as follows:

- a. To evaluate the effectiveness of the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani in terms of learning outcomes and overall satisfaction.
- b. To identify strengths and weaknesses in different aspects of the programme, including teaching methods, curriculum content, assessment techniques, and technology integration.
- c. To assess the impact of practical experiences and opportunities on students' understanding of pedagogy and teaching methods.
- d. To determine the alignment of the programme with students' career goals and its contribution to their future employability.
- e. To provide constructive feedback and suggestions for improving the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani.

### Research Hypotheses

Based on the research aims, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: The pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani significantly enhances student overall satisfaction and perceived learning outcomes.
- H2: There are identifiable strengths and weaknesses in teaching methods, curriculum content, assessment techniques and, technology integration within the programme.
- H3: Opportunities for practical experience within the programme have a significant positive impact on students' understanding of pedagogy and teaching methods.
- H4: The alignment of the programme with students' career goals significantly contributes to their perceived future employability.
- H5: Incorporating student feedback can lead to actionable recommendations for improving the pedagogical programme.

### The Research Context

The pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani, initiated by the Centre for Pedagogical Training and Academic Development, is a pivotal initiative aimed at enhancing the quality of education in the region. This programme is designed to equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their teaching roles. The primary objective is to foster educational excellence by providing comprehensive training that combines both

theoretical and practical aspects of pedagogy. This initiative reflects the university's commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in teaching practices (University of Sulaimani, n.d.-a). A significant feature of the programme is its emphasis on a student-centred learning approach. This approach shifts the focus from traditional teacher-led instruction to a more interactive and collaborative learning environment. By promoting active participation and engagement, the programme aims to create a more dynamic and effective educational experience. The integration of modern teaching techniques and technologies supports this approach, making the learning process more engaging for students (University of Sulaimani, n.d.-b). This method not only enhances student learning outcomes but also prepares educators to implement these strategies in their own classrooms. According to recent studies, student-centred learning approaches have been shown to improve academic performance and critical thinking skills (Freeman et al., 2014). The programme also places a strong emphasis on practical experience, recognising the importance of bridging the gap between theory and practice. Participants are provided with numerous opportunities to apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world settings through teaching internships, classroom observations, and hands-on training sessions. These practical experiences are crucial for developing the skills and confidence needed to manage classrooms effectively and to implement innovative teaching methods. By combining theoretical knowledge with practical application, the programme ensures that educators are well-prepared to meet the challenges of modern education (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the programme addresses the need for continuous professional development among educators. It includes a variety of workshops, seminars, and training sessions that cover a broad range of topics, such as curriculum development, assessment strategies, and educational technologies. These sessions are designed to keep educators updated with the latest trends and best practices in education. The holistic approach of the programme ensures that educators are not only knowledgeable but also skilled in applying their knowledge effectively. This comprehensive training programme is essential for the overall improvement of the educational system in the region, contributing to the development of competent and innovative educators (University of Sulaimani, n.d.-b).

## Methods

This research employs a descriptive cross-sectional survey with supplementary qualitative analysis, utilizing a structured survey conducted through Google Forms between June 7 and

June 21, 2024, to gather data from students enrolled in the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani, KRI. The survey is designed to capture comprehensive insights into various dimensions of the student experience, including (i) demographic information, (ii) pre-programme preparation, (iii) learning environment, (iv) teaching methods, (v) curriculum and course content, (vi) assessment and evaluation, (vii) overall satisfaction, (viii) technology integration, (ix) opportunities for practical experience, (x) future goals, and (xi) open-ended questions for detailed qualitative feedback.

The study targeted all students enrolled in the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani, resulting in a total of 101 responses. To facilitate participant recruitment, the first author collaborated with the programme administration to distribute and promote the Google Form. The following sections detail the methodological approach used in this study. Table 1 illustrate the demographical information of the participants.

Table 1

*Demographical information of the participants*

Participants		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	58	57.4
	Female	43	42.6
Age	26-30	9	8.9
	31-35	32	31.7
	36-40	29	28.7
	41-45	16	15.8
	46-50	10	9.9
	51-55	5	5.0

***Data collection tools***

This study utilised a structured survey as the primary data collection instrument to comprehensively evaluate various aspects of the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani. The survey was meticulously designed to include both closed-ended and open-ended questions, thereby facilitating the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The survey was segmented into ten distinct sections, each focusing on a specific aspect of the student experience:

1. Demographic Information: This section aimed to gather essential demographic details such as gender, age, and area of profession. This data is pivotal for contextualising the respondents' backgrounds and analysing their feedback in relation to their demographic characteristics.
2. Pre-programme Preparation: This section assessed the level of information students had about the pedagogical programme prior to their enrolment. It explored the factors that influenced their decision to join the programme, thereby providing insights into their initial motivations and expectations.
3. Learning Environment: Here, the focus was on evaluating the overall learning environment, including the suitability of classrooms, learning spaces, and the general atmosphere. The aim was to understand how these elements contributed to or hindered the learning process.
4. Teaching Methods and Providers: This section examined the quality of teaching, the effectiveness of various teaching methods, and the knowledge and approachability of the programme providers. It sought to identify areas of strength and potential improvements in instructional delivery.
5. Curriculum and Course Content: This section evaluated the relevance and comprehensiveness of the curriculum, ensuring an appropriate balance between theoretical and practical components. It aimed to determine how well the curriculum met the educational needs of the students.
6. Assessment and Evaluation: In this section, the clarity and transparency of assessment criteria and grading policies were scrutinised. The objective was to ensure that students clearly understood how their performance was assessed.
7. Technology Integration: This section assessed the extent to which technology was integrated into the pedagogical programme and its impact on the learning experience. It explored how digital tools were used to enhance or detract from the educational process.
8. Opportunities for Practical Experience: The focus here was on evaluating the availability and impact of practical experiences, such as teaching internships and classroom observations, which are crucial for hands-on learning.
9. Future Goals and Employability: This section measured students' confidence in their preparedness for future careers and their employability prospects upon completing the programme. It aimed to assess how well the programme equipped students for their professional lives.

10. Open-Ended Questions: This section provided students with the opportunity to offer detailed qualitative feedback on their experiences. The open-ended format allowed for the collection of in-depth insights and suggestions for programme improvement.

By structuring the survey in this manner, the study aimed to capture a holistic view of the pedagogical programme's effectiveness and areas for enhancement, informed by both quantitative and qualitative data.

### **Validation and trustworthiness**

To ensure the rigour of the study, a structured and pilot-tested survey was used as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire was developed based on established literature and tailored to capture multiple dimensions of the student experience. Internal consistency of the quantitative items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, ensuring reliable measurement across the survey domains. Data were analysed using SPSS version 26, applying descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means to identify trends. Prior to analysis, the data underwent cleaning and verification to prevent input errors and ensure accuracy. The design of the survey avoided leading questions and maintained neutrality to enhance its validity. These methodological choices strengthened the reliability of the quantitative findings and the overall interpretive clarity.

For the qualitative component, thematic analysis was conducted on open-ended responses to explore participant perspectives in greater depth. Themes were derived inductively and reviewed by multiple researchers to reduce personal bias and ensure inter-coder agreement. To support credibility, selected participants were contacted through member checking to validate whether the identified themes accurately represented their input. The use of thick descriptions in presenting participant quotes enhanced the transferability of results to other similar pedagogical contexts. An audit trail was maintained throughout the analytic process to support dependability, while researcher reflexivity and triangulation practices further ensured confirmability. By combining quantitative rigour with qualitative depth, the study maintained a balanced and trustworthy approach to evaluating the pedagogical programme's effectiveness.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data were analysed descriptively. Quantitative data from closed-ended questions is analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means. This analysis provides an overview of the responses and identifies trends and patterns in the data. Statistical software, such as SPSS version 26, is used to facilitate the analysis and ensure accuracy (Field, 2024).

Qualitative data from open-ended questions is analysed thematically. Thematic analysis involves identifying recurring themes and patterns within the qualitative responses, providing deeper insights into the student experience (Burns & Gottschalk, 2020). This method allows for a comprehensive understanding of the qualitative feedback, complementing the quantitative analysis.

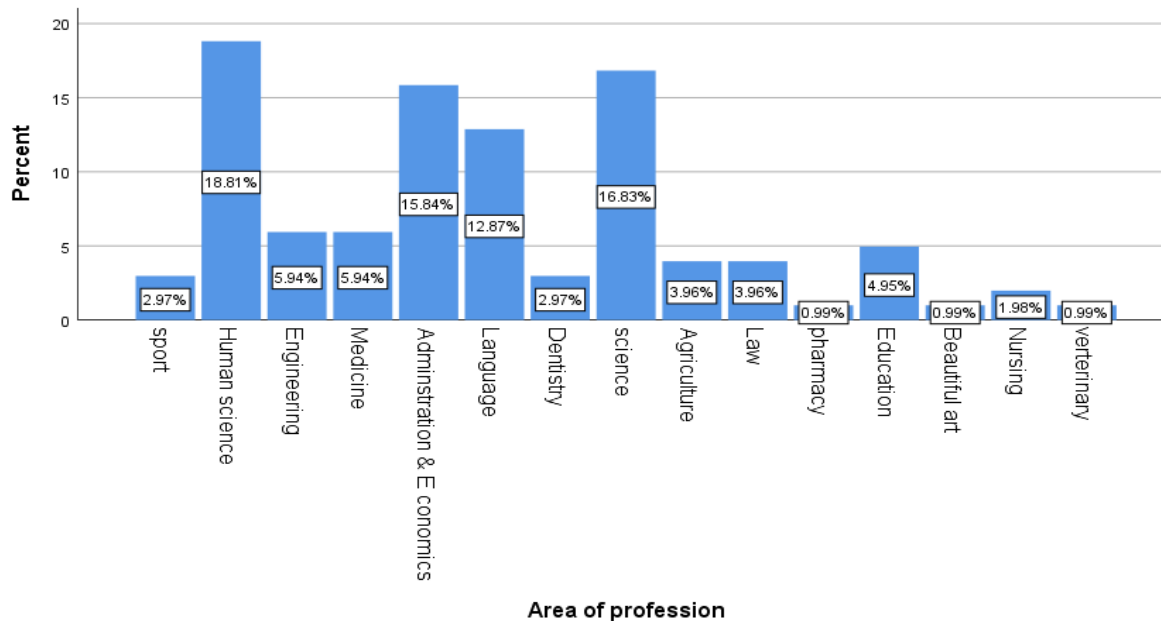
### **Results**

This study gathered responses from 101 participants across all colleges. The results are presented in eight thematic areas, supported by descriptive statistics and thematic summaries.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of participants by college, with the highest representation from Human Science (18.81%), Science (16.83%), and Administration and Economics (15.84%), and the lowest from Veterinary, Beautiful Arts, and Pharmacy (0.99%).

### **Figure 1**

*Descriptive Statistics of Participants and Teachers at the College Level*



### Theme 1: Pre-programme preparation

As shown in Figure 2, 40.59% of participants reported being “not well informed” about the programme prior to enrolment, while 37.62% were “moderately informed” and only 2.97% were “extremely well informed.”

### Figure 2

#### Participants' Pre-programme preparation

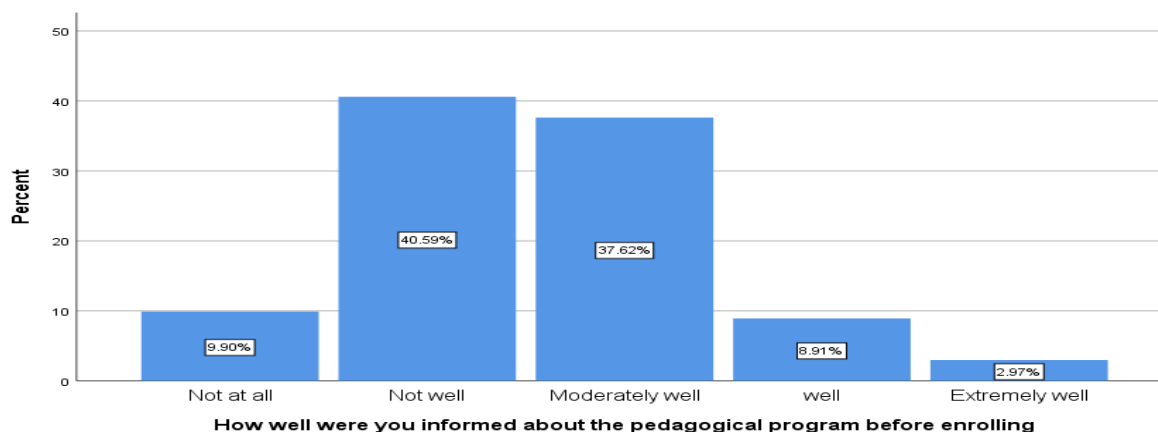


Figure 3 indicates that the most frequently cited reason for enrolment was the compulsory nature of the programme for job promotion (46.53%), followed by the programme's reputation (15.84%). Proximity to the place of residence was the least influential factor (6.94%).

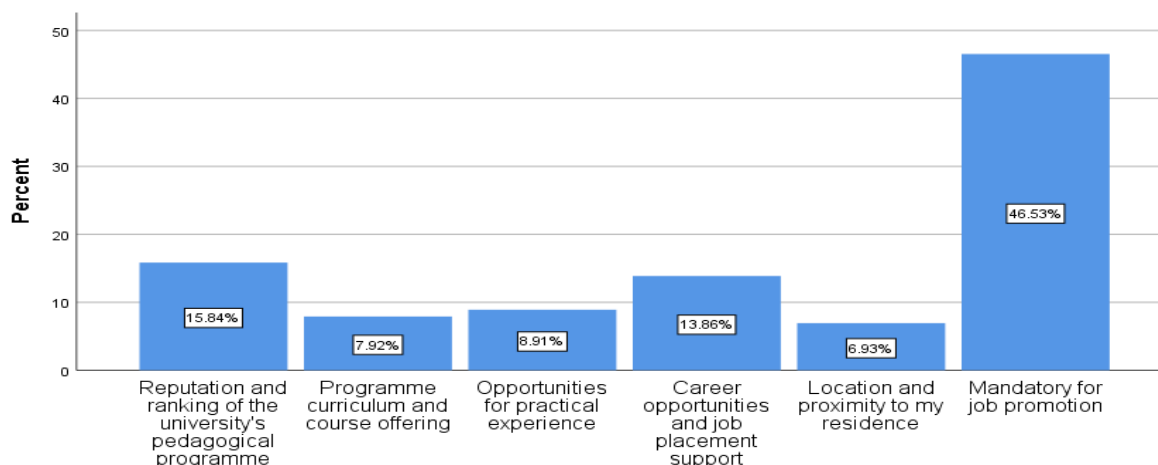
**Figure 3***Participants' influenced factors to enrol in the programme***Theme 2: Learning Environment and Teaching Methods**

Table 2 shows high overall satisfaction with the learning environment ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ), classroom facilities ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ), and quality of teaching ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ). Programme providers were rated highly for both subject knowledge ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ) and approachability ( $M = 4.51$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ).

**Table 2***Combined ratings for various aspects of the pedagogical programme*

Aspect (%)	Mean (SD)	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
Overall learning environment	3.90 (.90)	27.7	42.6	21.8	7.9	0.0
Classrooms conducive to learning	4.11 (.81)	35.6	42.6	18.8	3.0	0.0

Quality of teaching	3.90 (.88)	24.8	49.5	16.8	8.9	0.0
Providers' understanding	4.18 (.61)	28.7	60.4	10.9	0.0	0.0
Providers' approachability	4.51 (.77)	63.4	28.7	5.0	2.0	1.0

As indicated in Table 3, group discussions were the most valued teaching method (44.6%), followed by practical demonstrations (29.7%). Transmission methods were rated effective by 21.8%, while case studies and online methods were least preferred (2% each).

**Table 3**

*Teaching methods effectiveness*

Method	Effectiveness (%)
Group discussion	44.6
Practical demonstrations	29.7
Transmission	21.8
Case studies	2.0
Online	2.0

**Theme 3: Curriculum, Course Content and, assessment**

The relevance of the curriculum to career goals received a moderate rating ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ), with 52.5% considering it “somewhat relevant.” Adequate coverage of theoretical and practical components was reported by 56.4% ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ).

Table 4 further shows that assessment methods ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ) and clarity of assessment criteria ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) were rated positively overall, although one-third of respondents (33.7%) felt criteria were unclear.

**Table 4***Participants' ratings of curriculum, course content and assessment*

Aspects (%)	Mean (SD)	Excellent / Fully	Good / Mostly	Satisfactory / Somewhat	Needs Improvement / Not Clear	Unsatisfactory
Relevant and aligned with career goals?	3.86 (.80)	19.8	52.5	21.8	5.9	0.0
Covers theoretical concepts and practical skills?	3.92 (.70)	18.8	56.4	22.8	2.0	0.0
Used assessment methods?	3.97 (.83)	23.8	57.4	11.9	5.9	1.0
Assessment criteria clear and transparent?	4.07 (.91)	33.7	48.5	10.9	5.0	2.0

**Theme 4: Impact and integration of technology**

As presented in Table 5, most participants (58.4%) perceived technology as “mostly integrated” into teaching and learning ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ). The perceived impact of technology on learning was also favourable ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ), with 39.6% rating it as “highly beneficial.”

**Table 5***Evaluation of technology integration and its impact*

Aspects (%)	Mean (SD)	Fully	Mostly	Somewhat	Minimally	Not at all
Integration of technology in teaching methods	3.97 (.81)	22.8	58.4	12.9	5.0	1.0
Impact of technology on learning experience	4.19 (.82)	39.6	44.6	10.9	5.0	0.0

**Theme 5: Student feedback and learning satisfaction**

Constructive feedback on performance was generally reported as frequent ( $M = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ), and 41.6% rated it as “very helpful” for improving learning ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ).

Table 6 indicates that overall satisfaction with the learning experience was high ( $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ), with 85.2% of respondents either satisfied or very satisfied.

**Table 6***Ratings constructive feedback and overall satisfaction*

Aspects (%)	Mean (SD)	Always / very	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Constructive feedback on performance	3.87 (.86)	19.8	56.4	16.8	5.0	2.0
Helpfulness of feedback for improving performance	4.13 (.91)	41.6	35.6	17.8	4.0	1.0
Overall satisfaction with the learning experience	4.23 (.79)	40.6	44.6	12.9	1.0	1.0

**Theme 6: Practical experience and future goals**

Table 7 shows that opportunities for practical teaching were frequent ( $M = 4.38$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ), and these experiences significantly contributed to understanding pedagogy and teaching methods ( $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ).

**Table 7***Opportunities for practical experience*

Aspects (%)	Mean (SD)	Frequently / Significantly	Occasionally / Moderately	Neutral	Rarely / Slightly	Never / not at all
Practical experience opportunities	4.38 (.80)	54.5	24.8	20.8	0.0	0.0

Contribution to understanding pedagogy	4.48 (.72)	58.4	32.7	6.9	2.0	0.0
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Preparedness for a teaching career was rated highly ( $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ), as shown in Table 8, with 86.1% feeling “fully” or “mostly” prepared. Confidence in applying programme content to future careers was also strong ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ).

**Table 8**

*Preparedness and confidence for future careers*

Aspects (%)	Mean (SD)	Fully / Very confident	Mostly / Moderately	Neutral	Slightly	Not at all / Not confident
Preparedness for a career as an educator	4.32 (.80)	48.5	37.6	11.9	1.0	1.0
Confidence in applicability	4.34 (.73)	47.5	39.6	11.9	1.0	0.0

### **Theme 7: Transformative learning experiences**

Open-ended responses revealed several programme elements that participants considered transformative. **Collaborative group work** was widely valued for developing teamwork, communication, and peer learning skills. Students explained that working in groups encouraged the exchange of ideas, improved problem-solving, and fostered a sense of community within the programme. The **student-centred approach** adopted by many instructors was also noted as increasing motivation and confidence, with lecturers acting as facilitators who encouraged active participation rather than passive reception.

The **practical application of theoretical knowledge** was another frequently cited strength. Activities such as micro-teaching, classroom observations, and role-play exercises helped participants connect pedagogical theory to real-world practice, making learning more relevant and memorable. Students also appreciated the **integration of technology**, including

[sjh@univsul.edu.iq](mailto:sjh@univsul.edu.iq)

multimedia presentations and digital resources, which made sessions more interactive and aligned with modern teaching environments. Finally, the **supportive relationships** between teachers and students were recognised as contributing to a positive learning atmosphere that encouraged engagement and professional growth.

### **Theme 8: Challenges and suggestions**

Despite positive evaluations, participants highlighted several areas requiring improvement. The most common suggestion was to **increase opportunities for practical teaching** to allow for more hands-on skill development. Many recommended expanding micro-teaching sessions, extending the practicum period, and providing more structured feedback on performance. **Large class sizes** were seen as a barrier to active participation and individualised feedback, prompting calls for smaller groups.

Several respondents suggested extending the **course duration to three months**, arguing that the current schedule limits the depth of learning and the time available for practice. Others recommended greater use of **Kurdish** when explaining complex pedagogical concepts to ensure full comprehension and focus on teaching skills rather than language barriers. There were also requests for **updated teaching materials** to replace outdated slides and examples, and for **better coordination among instructors** to avoid unnecessary repetition and maintain a coherent flow of topics.

### **Discussion**

The comprehensive evaluation of the pedagogical programme across multiple dimensions, including learning environment, teaching methods, curriculum content, assessment, technology integration, feedback, practical experience, and future goals, provides significant insights into the programme's effectiveness and areas for improvement.

### **Learning Environment, Teaching Methods, and Curriculum**

The study revealed that the learning environment and teaching methods are highly rated by participants, with mean scores of 3.90 (SD = 0.90) and 3.90 (SD = 0.88), respectively. The findings underscore the importance of a supportive and engaging educational environment in fostering student satisfaction and engagement. Research indicates that a positive learning environment contributes significantly to students' academic success and overall well-being (Cornelius-White, 2007; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Participants found the classrooms and learning spaces highly conducive to learning, evidenced by a mean rating of 4.11 (SD = 0.81). This suggests that the physical environment plays a crucial role in supporting effective teaching and learning practices. The strong understanding of the subject by programme providers, rated with a mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.61), further underscores the quality of instruction. Effective teaching is linked to educators' deep understanding of the subject matter and their ability to convey it in an accessible and engaging manner (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Additionally, the approachability and supportiveness of programme providers were highly rated, with a mean score of 4.51 (SD = 0.77). The high level of approachability and supportiveness indicates strong faculty engagement, which is essential for creating a positive learning environment. Supportive teacher-student relationships are associated with higher levels of student motivation and academic achievement (Cornelius-White, 2007).

However, the curriculum's relevance and alignment with career goals received mixed responses, with a mean rating of 3.86 (SD = 0.80). While 52.5% of participants found the courses somewhat relevant, 19.8% deemed them not relevant. This suggests a need for ongoing curriculum evaluation to ensure alignment with industry standards and evolving professional requirements. Continuous curriculum development is vital for maintaining the relevance and applicability of educational programmes (Baumgartner et al., 2020). Additionally, the assessment methods and clarity of assessment criteria received mixed reviews, with mean scores of 3.97 (SD = 0.83) and 4.07 (SD = 0.91), respectively. These findings highlight the necessity for clearer communication of assessment practices to promote transparency and fairness in student evaluations (Boud & Molloy, 2013).

### **Technology Integration and Feedback**

The integration of technology within the pedagogical programme was generally well-received, with a mean rating of 3.97 (SD = 0.81). A majority of participants (58.4%) believed that technology was mostly integrated into the teaching methods and learning resources. The impact of technology on the learning experience was also positively perceived, with a mean rating of 4.19 (SD = 0.82). These findings reflect the transformative potential of technology in education, which has been widely documented in contemporary research (Bond et al., 2018). The integration of digital tools in teaching can enhance learning outcomes by providing interactive and engaging learning experiences.

Feedback on student performance was rated positively, with a mean score of 3.87 (SD = 0.86). The role of feedback in improving performance (mean score of 4.13, SD = 0.91) and overall satisfaction with the learning experience (mean score of 4.23, SD = 0.79) underscores the importance of timely and constructive feedback in enhancing student learning and satisfaction (Carless & Boud, 2018). Feedback is a critical component of the learning process, as it helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement, thereby fostering continuous learning and development.

However, the variability in the perceived helpfulness of feedback indicates a need for further standardization of feedback practices across the programme. Standardizing feedback practices can ensure that all students receive consistent and actionable feedback, which is essential for their academic growth (Boud & Molloy, 2013). Implementing structured feedback mechanisms and training educators in effective feedback delivery can address this variability.

### **Practical Experience and Future Goals**

Opportunities for practical experience were highly rated, with a mean score of 4.34 (SD = 0.80). A majority of participants (54.5%) believed that the programme often provided practical experience opportunities, and 58.4% acknowledged significant contributions to their understanding of pedagogy and teaching methods. These findings highlight the critical role of practical experiences in teacher education, providing students with hands-on opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings (Darling-Hammond, 2020). Practical experiences enable students to bridge the gap between theory and practice, enhancing their teaching competencies and confidence. Additionally, participants felt well-prepared for their future careers (mean score of 4.32, SD = 0.80) and confident in the applicability of the programme's content (mean score of 4.34, SD = 0.73). This indicates that the programme effectively equips students with the necessary skills and knowledge for their professional careers. Preparing students for their future careers is a fundamental goal of higher education, and the programme's success in this area is commendable (Boud & Molloy, 2013).

Overall, the findings from this study underscore the importance of continuous improvement in educational programmes to meet the evolving needs of students and the demands of the professional world. Addressing the identified areas for improvement, such as curriculum relevance, assessment transparency, and feedback standardization, can enhance the

overall effectiveness of the pedagogical programme. By focusing on these areas, the programme can better support student learning, satisfaction, and professional preparation.

### **Enhancing pedagogical practices: experiences and recommendations**

The transformative nature of the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani is evident from the qualitative data collected from participants. A significant aspect of the programme that was highlighted is the value of collaborative group work. Collaborative learning has been shown to enhance critical thinking, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills, which are essential for future educators (Johnson et al., 2024). Participants reported that working in groups not only enriched their learning experiences but also fostered a sense of community and teamwork. This aligns with recent studies that emphasize the benefits of collaborative learning in higher education, which include improved academic performance and enhanced social skills (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012).

The shift towards a student-centred learning approach was another crucial element of the programme. This approach empowers students by making them active participants in their learning process, thereby enhancing their engagement and motivation (Bovill et al., 2016). Participants appreciated the inclusive environment that acknowledged and valued diverse opinions and intelligences. Such environments are known to promote higher levels of student satisfaction and learning outcomes (Freeman et al., 2014). The emphasis on student-centred learning reflects a broader trend in educational practices aimed at fostering more interactive and participatory learning environments.

Practical applications of theoretical knowledge were frequently cited as valuable components of the programme. Participants noted that real-world projects and hands-on experiences were particularly beneficial in bridging the gap between theory and practice. This finding is consistent with experiential learning theories, which suggest that practical experiences are crucial for deep learning and the development of professional skills (Kolb, 2014). The integration of practical activities into the curriculum helps students to better understand and retain complex concepts by applying them in real-world contexts.

The use of innovative teaching methods, including the integration of technology, was another significant aspect of the programme. Modern teaching strategies and digital tools were appreciated for making the learning process more engaging and effective. The positive impact of technology on student learning is well-documented, with studies showing that technology

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[sjh@univsul.edu.iq](mailto:sjh@univsul.edu.iq)

can enhance learning outcomes by providing interactive and flexible learning environments (Bond et al., 2018). Participants highlighted the contemporary behaviour of lecturers and the use of digital resources as key factors that contributed to their positive learning experiences.

Despite these strengths, participants identified several areas for improvement. One major concern was the need for increased practical application of teaching skills. Many felt that there was insufficient time dedicated to practical teaching, which hindered their ability to effectively apply theoretical knowledge. This is in line with the findings of Darling-Hammond, Hyler, et al. (2017), who emphasize the importance of practical training in teacher education programmes. Smaller class sizes were also suggested to allow for more personalized attention and better engagement. Research indicates that smaller class sizes can lead to more effective teaching and improved student outcomes (Blatchford et al., 2011).

Additionally, participants suggested extending the course duration to three months to allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the material. Longer course durations can provide students with adequate time to absorb and apply what they have learned, leading to deeper learning (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, et al., 2017). There were also calls for the use of Kurdish instead of English in the programme to make the content more accessible and to focus on pedagogical skills rather than language proficiency. This suggestion aligns with the principle of linguistic inclusivity in education, which advocates for the use of students' native languages to enhance learning (Cummins, 2000).

Furthermore, the need for modern and prepared teaching materials was emphasized. Participants noted that updated materials are essential for maintaining student interest and ensuring that the content is relevant. Better coordination and consistency among instructors were also highlighted as necessary to avoid repetition and ensure comprehensive coverage of topics. These improvements would enhance the overall effectiveness of the programme and ensure it continues to provide high-quality education.

In summary, the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani has successfully implemented several transformative practices that have positively impacted participants. However, addressing the identified areas for improvement would further enhance the programme's effectiveness and better prepare future educators for the dynamic demands of modern classrooms.

## Conclusion

The pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani has made commendable strides in creating an enriching and supportive learning environment for future educators. The programme's emphasis on collaborative group work and a student-centred approach has fostered a strong sense of community and teamwork among participants. The integration of innovative teaching methods, including the use of technology, has enhanced the learning experience, making it more engaging and effective. These elements have not only enriched the personal and professional growth of the students but also equipped them with essential skills for their future careers. The practical application of theoretical knowledge has been particularly beneficial, bridging the gap between theory and practice and deepening students' understanding and retention of the material. Effective communication and relationship-building between teachers and students have further contributed to a positive learning environment, supporting student confidence and active participation.

Despite these strengths, the programme also faces significant areas for improvement. There is a clear need to increase practical opportunities, as students have expressed the desire for more hands-on experience to better apply their theoretical knowledge. Reducing class sizes could provide a more personalised and supportive learning environment, facilitating better engagement and interaction. Extending the course duration would allow for a more comprehensive integration of knowledge, giving students adequate time to absorb and apply what they have learned. Updating teaching materials to ensure they are current and relevant is also crucial. Additionally, improving the coordination and consistency among instructors can prevent repetition and ensure a more cohesive and comprehensive coverage of topics. Language preferences should be considered to make the content more accessible and focus on pedagogical skills rather than language proficiency. Addressing these issues through continuous improvement efforts, informed by student feedback and current educational research, is essential for maintaining the programme's relevance and effectiveness in a rapidly evolving educational landscape. By focusing on these areas, the programme can better support student learning, satisfaction, and professional preparation, ultimately contributing to the development of competent and innovative educators.

### Recommendations for future research

While this study provides valuable insights into the strengths and challenges of the pedagogical programme at the University of Sulaimani, several areas warrant further investigation. Future research should consider the following directions:

1. **Longitudinal Impact Studies:** Conduct follow-up studies with graduates to examine the long-term impact of the pedagogical programme on their teaching practices, professional development, and student learning outcomes in real classroom settings.
2. **Comparative Institutional Analysis:** Expand the scope by comparing pedagogical programmes across multiple universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq or the broader Middle East. Such comparative research can reveal common challenges and context-specific innovations.
3. **Instructor Perspectives and Institutional Leadership Views:** Future studies should include the views of programme facilitators, academic supervisors, and policy-makers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of institutional dynamics and challenges in implementation.
4. **Action Research on Teaching Methods:** Investigate the effectiveness of specific teaching methods used in the programme (e.g., group discussion, case-based learning, or digital tools) through classroom-based action research to identify best practices.
5. **Language of Instruction and Accessibility:** Explore how the choice of instructional language (Kurdish vs English) affects comprehension, engagement, and learning outcomes for teacher trainees.
6. **Quantitative Experimental Studies:** Employ experimental or quasi-experimental designs to test specific interventions—such as revised assessment practices or enhanced practicum models—on student achievement and satisfaction.
7. **Technology Integration Models:** Further research could evaluate different models of technology integration in pedagogical training, particularly in low-resource or multilingual settings, to determine scalable and sustainable strategies.

Addressing these areas through future research will not only strengthen the evidence base surrounding teacher education in the Kurdistan Region but also contribute to global conversations on effective pedagogical training and professional readiness.

### **Local and international research implications**

This research holds significant implications both locally and internationally. Locally, it addresses the educational needs of the KRI by focusing on student-centred learning and collaborative group work, which are crucial for fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These skills are essential for students' academic and professional success. The programme's incorporation of modern teaching methods and technology aligns with global educational trends, preparing students to compete in a globalised job market.

The emphasis on practical experiences, such as teaching internships and classroom observations, is particularly beneficial in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, a common issue in the local context. By providing students with real-world teaching opportunities, the programme ensures that graduates are well-prepared to enter the workforce and contribute effectively to the local education system. Furthermore, the programme's adaptability in addressing language preferences, such as potentially shifting to Kurdish, enhances accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that all students can fully engage with the course content.

Internationally, the programme at the University of Sulaimani serves as a model for other institutions in regions undergoing educational reform. The integration of innovative teaching methods and technology reflects best practices in modern education, offering insights into how similar programmes can be designed and implemented worldwide. The programme's comprehensive approach, which includes continuous professional development for educators, underscores the importance of lifelong learning and adaptability in teaching.

Moreover, the focus on detailed feedback and student involvement in the evaluation process can inform international educational policies aimed at enhancing teaching quality and student satisfaction. By demonstrating the effectiveness of a student-centred approach and the integration of practical experiences, the University of Sulaimani's programme contributes to the global discourse on teacher education, providing valuable data and strategies that can be adapted to diverse educational contexts. This dual focus on local and international implications highlights the programme's potential to impact education reform broadly, ensuring the development of competent and innovative educators capable of meeting the demands of modern classrooms.

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## Appendix: Survey Instrument

### Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Area of profession: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 2: Pre-Programme Preparation

1. How well were you informed before enrolling?  Extremely well  Well  Moderately  Not well  Not at all

2. Factors influencing enrolment (select all):  Reputation/ranking  Curriculum/models  Practical experience  Career opportunities  Proximity  Mandatory for job promotion

### Section 3: Learning Environment & Teaching Methods

1. Overall learning environment:  Excellent  Good  Satisfactory  Needs improvement  Unsatisfactory
2. Classrooms/learning spaces:  Highly conducive  Conducive to some extent  Neutral  Not conducive  Not at all conducive
3. Quality of teaching:  Excellent  Good  Satisfactory  Needs improvement  Unsatisfactory
4. Most effective teaching method:  Transmission  Group discussions  Practical demonstrations  Case studies  Online
5. Provider's subject understanding:  Always  Most of the time  Sometimes  Rarely  Never
6. Provider's approachability/support:  Very approachable  Moderately approachable  Neutral  Slightly approachable  Not approachable

### Section 4: Curriculum, Models Content, & Assessment

1. Curriculum relevance to career goals:  Completely  Mostly  Somewhat  Not very  Not at all
2. Coverage of theory/practical skills:  Fully  Mostly  Partially  Minimally  Does not cover
3. Assessment methods:  Excellent  Good  Satisfactory  Needs improvement  Unsatisfactory
4. Assessment criteria clarity:  Very clear  Mostly clear  Neutral  Slightly clear  Not clear

### Section 5: Technology Integration

1. Integration level:  Fully  Mostly  Partially  Minimally  Not at all
2. Impact on learning:  Highly beneficial  Somewhat beneficial  Neutral  Somewhat detrimental  Highly detrimental

### Section 6: Feedback & Overall Satisfaction

1. Constructive feedback frequency:  Always  Most  Sometimes  Rarely  Never
2. Feedback helpfulness:  Very helpful  Moderately helpful  Neutral  Slightly helpful  Not helpful
3. Overall satisfaction:  Very satisfied  Satisfied  Neutral  Dissatisfied  Very dissatisfied

### Section 7: Opportunities for Practical Experience

1. Frequency of opportunities:  Frequently  Occasionally  Neutral  Rarely  Never
2. Contribution to understanding pedagogy:  Significantly  Moderately  Neutral  Slightly  Not at all

### Section 8: Future Goals & Applicability

1. Preparedness for teaching career:  Fully prepared  Mostly  Neutral  Slightly  Not prepared
2. Confidence in applicability:  Very confident  Moderately  Neutral  Slightly confident  Not confident

### Section 9: Open-Ended Questions

1. Most positive/memorable learning experience and its contribution to your growth:  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Challenges/areas needing improvement (with suggestions): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Additional suggestions for programme improvement: \_\_\_\_\_

البیداغوجیا التحویلیة فی جامعة السلیمانیة: ربط النظریة بالممارسة فی إعداد المعلمین

چۆمان کامل أمین<sup>1</sup>، خنده غریب عزیز<sup>2</sup>، زانا إبراهیم علی<sup>3</sup>، ستهم کامل سعید<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>كلية التربية البدنية وعلوم الرياضة، قسم التربية البدنية، جامعة السليمانية، السليمانية، إقليم كردستان - العراق

<sup>2</sup>كلية القانون و الإدارة، قسم التجارة الدولية، جامعة حلبجة، حلبجة، إقليم كردستان - العراق

<sup>3</sup>كلية التربية البدنية وعلوم الرياضة، قسم التربية البدنية، جامعة السليمانية، السليمانية، إقليم كردستان - العراق

<sup>4</sup>كلية العلوم السياسية، قسم السياسة والعلاقات الدولية، جامعة السليمانية، السليمانية، إقليم كردستان - العراق

للتواصل: د. چۆمان کامل أمین - choman.amin@univsul.edu.iq - 009647701424736

كلية التربية البدنية وعلوم الرياضة، قسم التربية البدنية، جامعة السليمانية، طريق كركوك، السليمانية، إقليم كردستان -

العراق

مستخلص البحث

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم البرنامج البيداغوجي في جامعة السليمانية من خلال فحص فعاليته ونقاط قوته ومجالات تحسينه من منظور الطلبة المسجلين فيه. ركز البحث على عدة محاور أساسية، من بينها: أساليب التدريس، مدى ملاءمة المنهج الدراسي، ممارسات التقييم، دمج التكنولوجيا، بيئة التعلم، والخبرة العملية.

اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي المقطعي، مع إجراء تحليل موضوعي للإجابات المفتوحة، وتم استخدام أسلوب الحصر الشامل لجميع الطلبة البالغ عددهم (101) طالباً مسجلاً في البرنامج. جُمعت البيانات باستخدام استبانة منظمة عبر (Google Forms) تضمنت أسئلة مغلقة ومفتوحة لالتقاط كل من الاتجاهات الكمية والرؤى النوعية.

جرت معالجة البيانات الكمية باستخدام الإحصاءات الوصفية (التكرارات، المتوسطات) عبر برنامج (SPSS) النسخة 26، بينما خضعت البيانات النوعية لتحليل موضوعي. وقد جرى تدعيم الصدق من خلال الاختبار القبلي، وفحص الثبات، والمراجعة المتلثة للاستجابات النوعية.

أظهرت النتائج وجود رضا عالٍ لدى الطلبة عن بيئة التعلم، وجودة التدريس، واستخدام التكنولوجيا. ومع ذلك، أثرت بعض المخاوف بشأن محدودية الخبرات العملية، وضعف موازنة المنهج مع الأهداف المهنية، وتفاوت أساليب التقييم.

خلصت الدراسة إلى أن البرنامج يتمتع بأساس متين، لكنه يتطلب تحسينات. وتشمل التوصيات: زيادة الممارسات التطبيقية، تقليل حجم الصفوف، تحديث المواد، تمديد مدة المقررات، واستخدام اللغة الكردية لتعزيز سهولة الوصول.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** البرنامج البيداغوجي، جامعة السليمانية، إعداد المعلمين، ملاحظات الطلبة، تقييم المنهج، الخبرة العملية.

پیداگوژی گۆرانکار له زانکۆی سلیمانی: بهسته وهی تیۆری به پراکتیک له پهروه دهی مامۆستا یاندا

چۆمان کامل أمین<sup>1</sup>، خنده غریب عزیز<sup>2</sup>، زانا إبراهیم علی<sup>3</sup>، ستهم کامل سعید<sup>4</sup>

[sjh@univsul.edu.iq](mailto:sjh@univsul.edu.iq)

1 کۆلیجی پەروەردەى جەستەیی و زانسته وەرز شیهکان، بەشی پەروەردەى وەرز ش، زانکۆى سلیمانی، هەریمی کوردستان  
- عراق

2 کۆلیجی یاسا و کارگیری، بەشی بازگانی نیودەولەتی، زانکۆى هەلبەجە، هەلبەجە، هەریمی کوردستان - عراق  
3 کۆلیجی پەروەردەى جەستەیی و زانسته وەرز شیهکان، بەشی پەروەردەى وەرز ش، زانکۆى سلیمانی، هەریمی کوردستان  
- عراق

4 کۆلیجی زانسته رامیاریهکان، بەشی یاسا و پەيوەندیه نیودەولەتیهکان، زانکۆى سلیمانی، هەریمی کوردستان - عراق

پەيوەندى: د. چۆمان کامیل امین-009647701424736 – choman.amin@univsul.edu.iq

کۆلیژی پەروەردەى جەستەیی و زانسته وەرز شیهکان، بەشی پەروەردەى وەرز ش، زانکۆى سلیمانی، شەقامی  
کەرکوک، سلیمانی، هەریمی کوردستان - عێراق

#### پوختەى توێژینهوهکه

ئەم توێژینهوهیه هەلسەنگاندنیکی گشتگیری بۆ پرۆگرامی پێداگۆزی له زانکۆى سلیمانی ئەنجامداوه، به نامانجی دەستنیشانکردنی کاریگەری، خالە بههیز مکان و بوارەکانی گەشەپێدان له دیدگای خوێندکارانی بەشداربوووه. لێکۆلینهوهکه سەرئێخستە سەر بوارە سەرەکییهکان وەک شتێزەکانی فێرکردن، گونجاندنی پرۆگرام، رێکارەکانی هەلسەنگاندن، یەكخستنی تەکنەلۆژیا، ژینگەى فێربوون، و ئەزموونی پراکتیکی.

بۆ ئەم مەبەستە، راپرسییهکی وەسفی تێپەر بەکارهێنرا، لهگەڵ شیکاری بابەتی تەواوکەری وەلامە کراوهکان. کۆی گشتی ۱۰۱ خوێندکاری تۆمارکراو له پرۆگرامهکهدا وەک نمونەى توێژینهوهکه هەلبژێردران. کۆکردنهوهى داتاكان له رینگهى راپرسییهکی پیکهاتیهوه بوو که لهسەر فۆرمەکانی گووگڵ دابەشکرابوو، به تیکهڵکردنی پرساری داخراو و کراوه بۆ وەرگرتنی زانیاری چەندایەتی و تێگەیشتنی چۆنایەتی.

داتای چەندایەتی به بەکارهێنانی ئاماری وەسفکەر (فریکوینسی و تیکرا) له بەرنامەى (SPSS-26) شیکرانوه، له کاتیکدا داتای چۆنایەتی به شتێزای شیکاری بابەتی خراوەتە روو. باوەرپێکراوی و گونجای توێژینهوهکه له رینگهى تاقیکردنهوهى تاقیکاری، پشکنینی متمانهپێکراوی، و پێداچوونوهی سێگۆشەیی وەلامە چۆنایەتییهکانهوه پشتر استکرايهوه. ئەنجامهکان رەزامەندییهکی بەرچاوی خوێندکارانیان لهسەر ژینگەى فێربوون، کوالیتی وانهوتنهوه، و سوودوهرگرتن له تەکنەلۆژیا پێشاندان. بەلام، نیکهرا نییهکان سەبارەت به کەمی ئەزموونی پراکتیکی، گونجان و پەيوەندى پرۆگرام لهگەڵ ئامانجهکانی پێشەدا، و ناکۆکی له شتێزەکانی هەلسەنگاندندا خراوه روو.

توێژینهوهکه بهو ئەنجامه دهگات که هەرچەندە پرۆگرامهکه بنه‌مايهکی پتهوى ههيه، بهلام پيوستى به باشترکردن ههيه. پێشنيارەکان بریتی بوون له زیادکردنی دەرفەتی پراکتیکی، کەمکردنهوهى ژمارهى خوێندکاران له پۆلهکاندا، نوێکردنهوهى کەرەستە و بابەتەکانی خوێندن، درێژکردنهوهى ماوهى خولهکه، و بەکارهێنانی زمانى کوردی بۆ بەرزکردنهوهى دەستەرگەيشتن و کاریگەری.

وشه کلێههکان: پرۆگرامی پێداگۆزی، زانکۆى سلیمانی، پەروەردەى مامۆستا، فیدبাকেکانی خوێندکاران، هەلسەنگاندنی  
پرۆگرام، ئەزموونی پراکتیکی.