



# Assisting Transition Through an Honours College Program: an Australian Perspective

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## **WHAT** is the Griffith Honours College?

First of its kind in Australia for undergraduate students

Provides an enriched educational experience for high achieving undergraduate students

- ☐ Enhanced opportunities to ease transition to University
- ☐ Recognition of high academic achievement
- ☐ Meeting like minded students
- ☐ Special preparation to be a future leader in your chosen field
- ☐ Exclusive academic and social experiences
- ☐ Additional support of Griffith Honours College staff

## **WHAT** is the Griffith Honours College?

From Keitha's Talk

Orientation linked to academic success

Low self confidence and purpose important

Friends

Future more important than past

Ongoing not a single event esp for low SES. FIF

## Transition

- Many students face difficulties in transition to HE
- High risk of discontinuing studies
- Early intervention. Students go where there is a connection
- Student-centred learning
- Aim is to provide supportive environment
- Study reports the first Australian Honours College
- 130 high achieving students – OP 1, 2 and 3

# Where are they now?





# South Korea









# Adelaide





# Florida







# Dubai







# Gold Coast



# Gold Coast





**WHY** apply to join the Griffith Honours College

**Students' Perspective**

**Receive Personal Attention** – students will take part in regular one-on-one sessions with a mentor throughout their University years



**Experience the World** – students will be encouraged to gain a global perspective by studying or working overseas for a few weeks, a few months or a year



**Be Recognised** - as high achieving amongst the University community

- **WHY apply to join the Griffith Honours College**
- **Parents' Perspective**
- **Additional Pastoral Care** – students will have access to the Griffith Honours College staff
- **Leadership Development Series** – extra curricula activity specially designed for Honours College students to assist in the transition to University
- **Orientation** – exclusive orientation event for students and parents



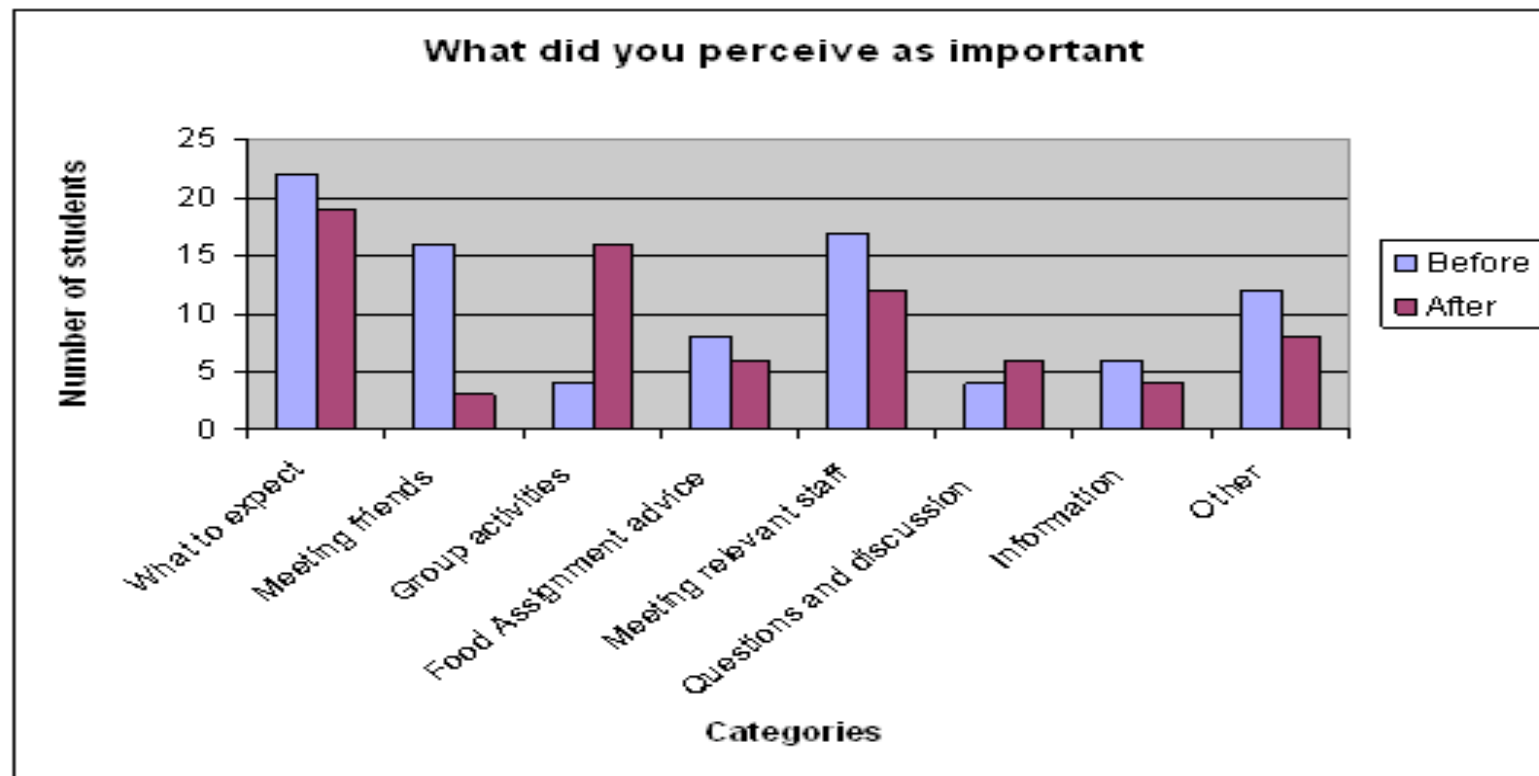
## The Study

- A Pragmatic Approach using mixed methods (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998)
  - Quantitative: formative assessment measuring perceptions of important issues before and after orientation
  - Qualitative: unstructured interviews with students at end of semester to review effectiveness and make changes based on the perceptions of students themselves
  - Quantitative: comparison of Honours College students results with mean scores for programs

## The Study

- Orientation
- Understanding University
- Understanding Self
- Leadership
- Meeting others – speed dating, human bingo
- Parents breakfast (Kenny Rogers)
- Sets the scene and gives a language

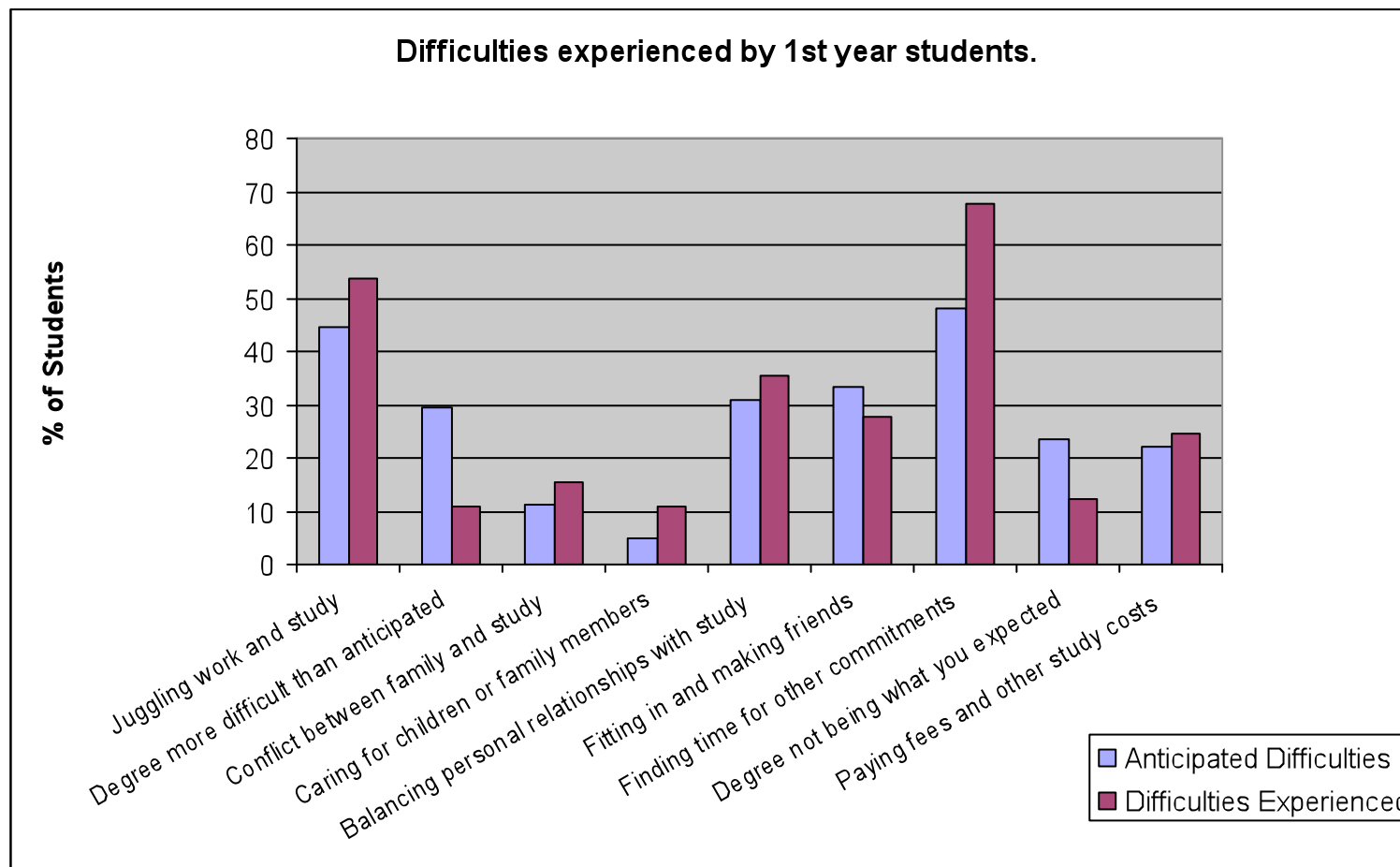
## What Students Perceived as Important



## Data Analysis

- N=99
- Students evaluate their expectations prior to orientation and again after it had been completed
- Paired sample T-test ( $t(77) = 8.935$ ,  $p < .001$ ) indicated that students perceived a significant difference in their preparedness before and after orientation

# Difficulties Experienced by 1<sup>st</sup> Year Students





## Discussion

- All 130 students completed first year
- Initiatives used in the program have assisted transition
  - Mentoring
  - Global experiences
  - Team building
  - Feeling Connected
  - Social events run by students
- Formative evaluation enables the Program Manager to make real-time changes
- Griffith Honours College is a successful model

## Challenges

- Overcoming perception high achieving students do not need additional support
- Lack of Australian literature
- Marketing and unknown Australian concept
- Transference to other universities
- Maintaining sponsorship with changes in Senior Management
- Like a number of HE Projects is this one too dependent on present staffing skills and passion