



Why do they come?

A review of student learning appointments

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Context

- Growth agenda at UTAS
 - Student numbers doubled since 2001
- Tasmanian context
 - Historically low participation rate in HE
 - NoHEFT
 - Rural and regional issues



Consequences of Growth

- More open entrance requirements
 - Diversity of student intake
- 3 campuses
- 2 campuses in Sydney (Nursing)
 - Issues of service delivery



Academic literacy

“ a set of skills that students must master in order to perform successfully as a student”

(Henderson & Hirst, 2007, p1)



UTAS Suite of Learning Support

- UniStart
- *Orientation*
- Embedded workshops
- Central and unit specific workshops
- Student Learning appointments
- PASS

Student Learning Team based in the Centre for the Advancement of Learning & Teaching.



Student Learning Appointments - Evaluation

- Database for recording student information
- Description of appointment written by student learning staff
- Student evaluation through 'Survey Monkey'

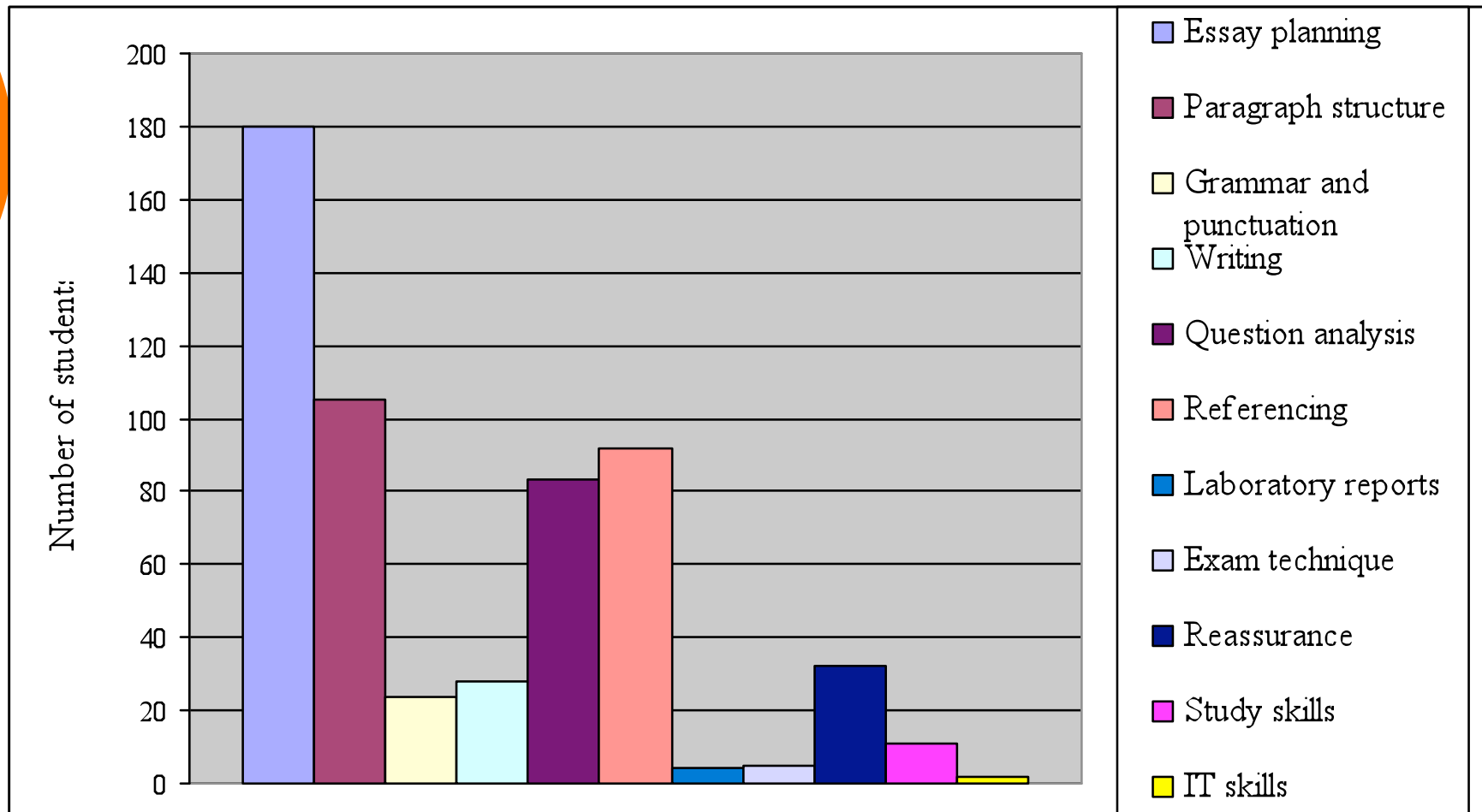


Results

- 467 individual appointments
 - 265 different students
 - Predominantly first year
 - All faculties except Law

- 68% only one appointment
- 18% more than two
- 10% by phone or video from Sydney

Why did they come? Categories of assistance required





Student evaluation

- 57 students responded (21%)
- All campuses represented

- 44% < 3 year break between study
- 40% > 11 year break from study
- 23% from NESB



Why did you seek assistance

- Generally in agreement with the issues noted by academic staff –
 - Grammar/punctuation/paragraph
 - Essay structure/argument
 - Essay planning/Analysing a question

"My essay writing needed improvement, also my interpretation of essay questions"

- Other genres of writing
- Referencing

"Couldn't figure out referencing"



Other general comments:

- *Because I was new to university and I was unsure if I was doing the right thing on my assignment. So I was seeking advise [sic], encouragement and support*
- I chose to make use of support sessions before any big issues arose which helped reduce stress levels. I appreciate the help, thank you.
- *To improve my grades; from credit and pass to distinction.*
- The staff were very approachable, there was no feeling 'silly' for having to seek assistance.
- *Because I have no support and struggling for living in general.*



Quantification ...

- Overall I found the appointment to be helpful 4.3
- The appointment gave me some ideas or strategies for further studies 4.3
- I would recommend this method of support for others 4.5



How did they find out about the appointments?

- Lecturer or tutor 37%
- Student Advisors 16%
- Friends 19%
- General advertising 11%
- Counsellors 9%



Why are they effective?

- Just in time
- Contextualised
- Delivered by Student Learning team

"I felt very comfortable discussing my learning difficulties with [lecturer], and requesting help"

"[Lecturer] is a very warm, professional, and effective teacher, I believe she has a great humanist approach with an emphasis on meta-cognition"

For those who attended ...



What are the limitations?

- Self identification
- Adaptive vs non-adaptive behaviours (Alexitch, 2002)
- Contributing to overload?
- Are we building capacity/flexibility?
- Dependence?
- Overload on staff as the service becomes more well known



Ongoing strategies

- Continue to build relationships with student advisors
- Building relationships and awareness with academic staff (and sessional staff)
- Systematic promotion
- Student learning space & drop in
- Student learning mentors
- Diagnostic testing and support



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