

EARLY INTERVENTION IN STUDENT DISENGAGEMENT

UNNC Centre for English Language Education
response to student absences

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31/08/2016

Content

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2. CELE study + results
3. Attendance and early intervention
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Background

Previous studies determined:

1. ↗ rates of attendance are associated with ↗ grades
2. ↗ rates of absence are associated with ↘ grades

Background

This has been established in different...

- Countries (Pakistan, EU, N. America, India)
- Institution types (Community College, State Universities, Medical Colleges)
- Levels of education (non-degree, vocational, undergraduate, post-graduate)
- Disciplines (hard v soft science)
- Subjects (teacher training, pharmacological science, business studies)

Background

This is true in courses with

1. Non-compulsory attendance policy *and* with
2. compulsory attendance policy

Main comparable study is LeBlanc (2005):

Correlation between **absences** and **test scores** for all students: $r=-0.425$, $R^2=0.181$., $F(1,1587)=349.89$, $p<.001$

First stage: determine whether absences and test scores are correlated in CELE

(non-parametric statistical analysis from Seigel, 1959)

CELE Preliminary Year Study

1. Absence v pass/fail

S1	n	= 1721 students
	average absence	= 1.7 classes
	non-progression	= 151 students (8.8%)
S2	n	= 1708 students
	average absence	= 3.8 classes
	non-progression	= 266 students (15.6%)

Cohort = all students including retaking students

Note: issues with recording of attendance

S1 Absences v Fail / Pass (t-test)

H_0 There is no significant difference in the number of absences between students who fail and students who pass

	<i>Absences</i>	
	Failing Students	Passing Students
Mean	5.05	1.36
Variance	47.19	8.42
Observations	150	1569
Hyp Mean Difference	0.00	
df	154	
t Stat	6.52	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.000	
t Critical one-tail	1.65	

S2 Absences v Fail / Pass

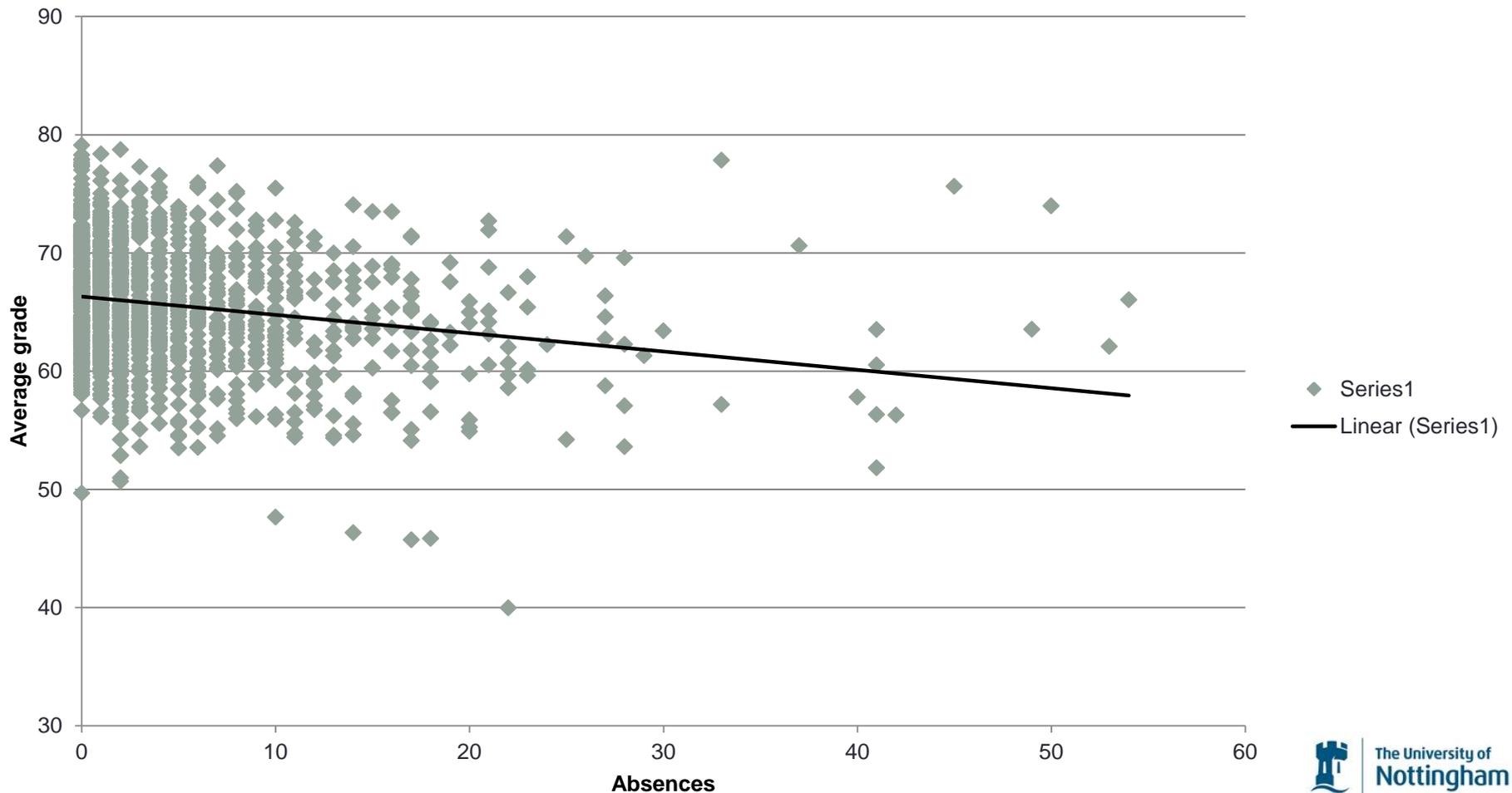
H_0 There is no significant difference in the number of absences between students who fail and students who pass

	<i>Absences</i>	
	Failing Students	Passing Students
Mean	8.68	3.12
Variance	68.44	17.39
Observations	266	1442
Hyp Mean Difference	0	
df	290	
t Stat	10.72	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.000	
t Critical one-tail	1.65	

S1 + S2 Absences v Grades CELE (correlation analysis)

Average Grades and Absences

$$y = -0.1548x + 66.302 \quad R^2 = 0.0398$$



Conclusions

1. Confirmation of previous studies:

There is a direct negative association between absences and grades among CELE students. However, the relationship does not appear to be as strong as in the LeBlanc study

LeBlanc (2005) $r=-0.425$, $R^2=0.181$, $F(1,1586)=349.89$, $p<0.001$

CELE (2016) $r=-0.199$, $R^2=0.034$, $F(1,1508)=62.53$, $p<0.001$

Attendance and Engagement Policy

Policy

- All classes compulsory
- Students should submit absence note to 'authorize' absences (+documentary support)

Practice

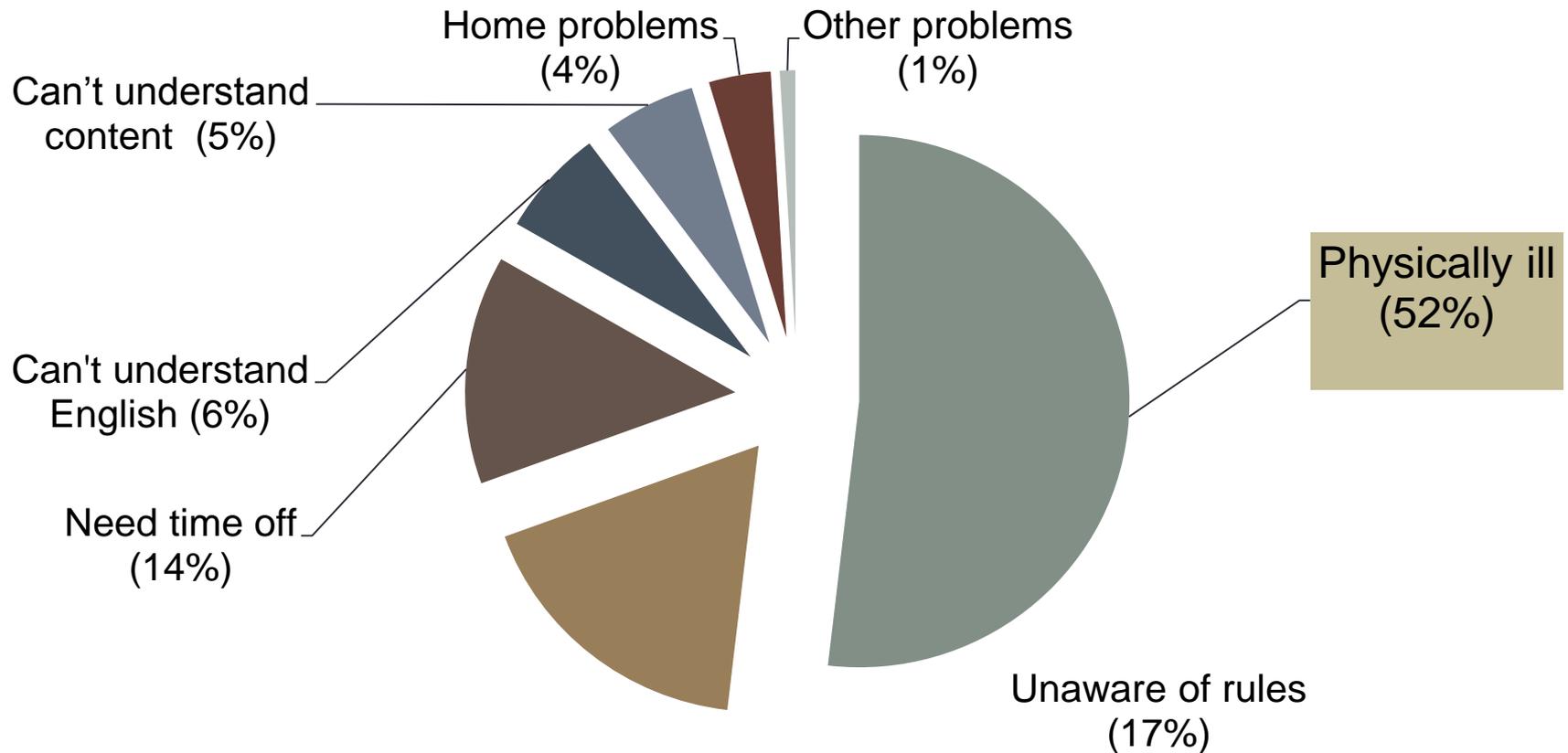
- Warning email from CPSO after 2 absences
- Students speak to ST 6-10 absences
- Students speak to Exams Officer 10+ absences
- Withdrawal from Examinations Register / Suspension / Voluntary Interruption of studies

Early Intervention Policy

- Warning email from CPSO after 2 absences
- 4-6 absences:
 - Email from CPSO to PT & student 'need to meet'
 - Engagement-related meeting with personal tutor (193 meetings)
 - **Reasons for absences recorded**
 - Supportive intervention to encourage SS back into class
- **Students speak to ST 6-10 absences**
- Students speak to Exams Officer 10+ absences
- **Withdrawal from Examinations Register / Suspension / Voluntary Interruption of studies**

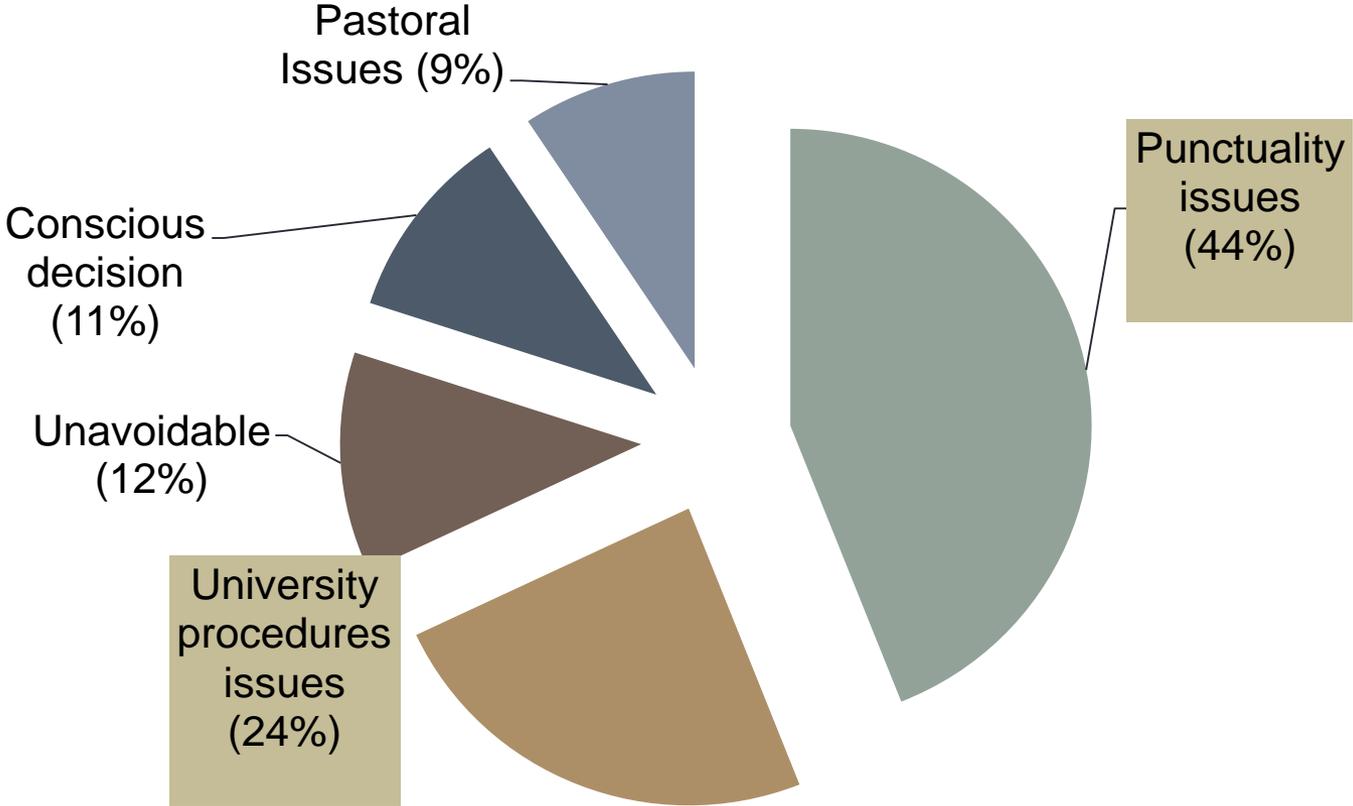
Reasons for Absences

(predicted categories n=56)

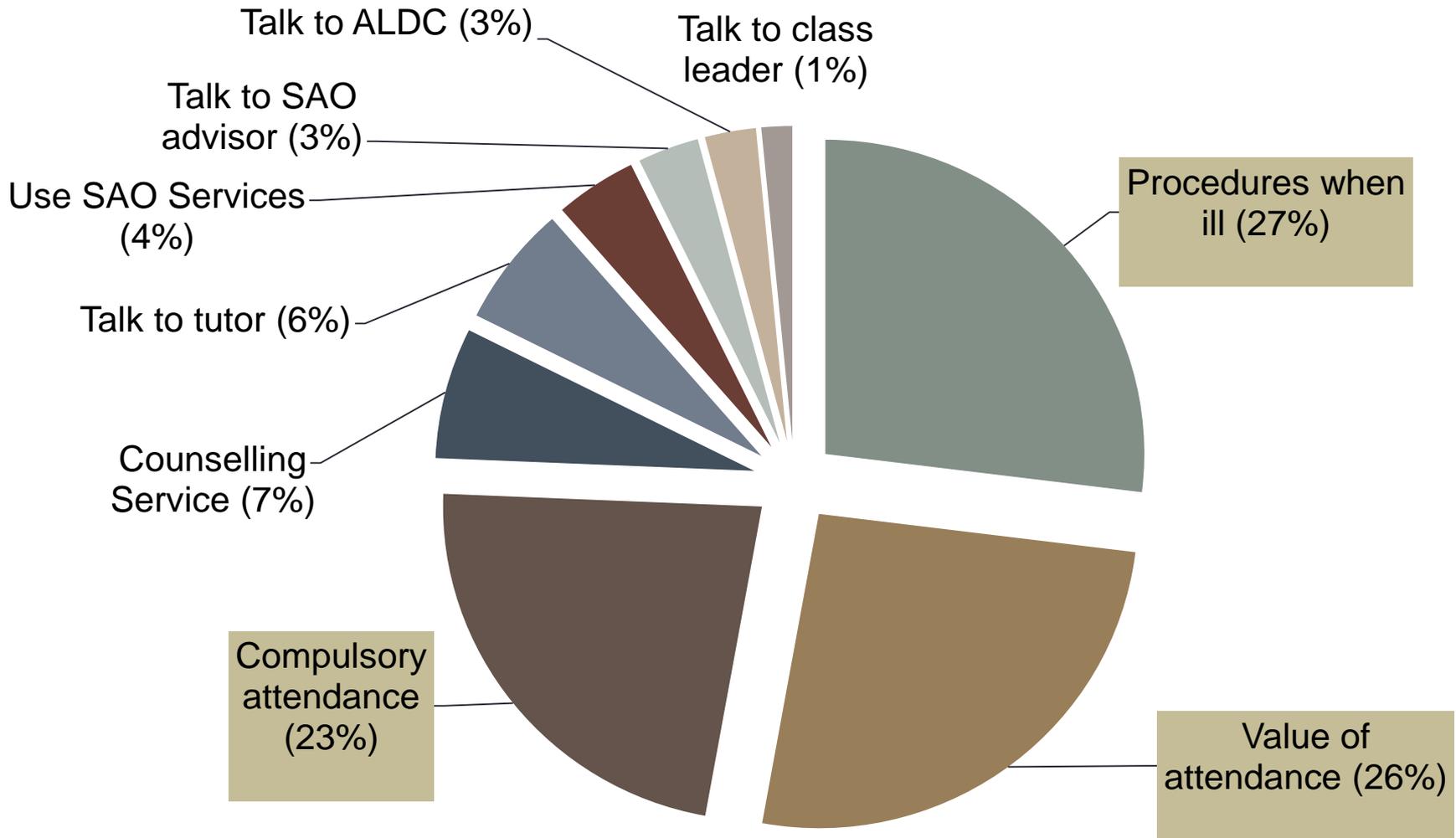


Additional reasons for Absences

(student categories n=81)

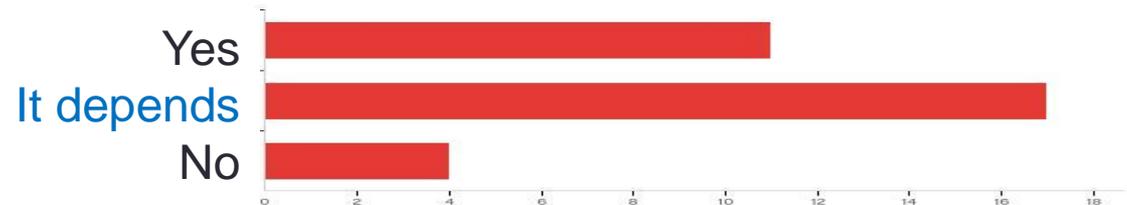


Advice Given

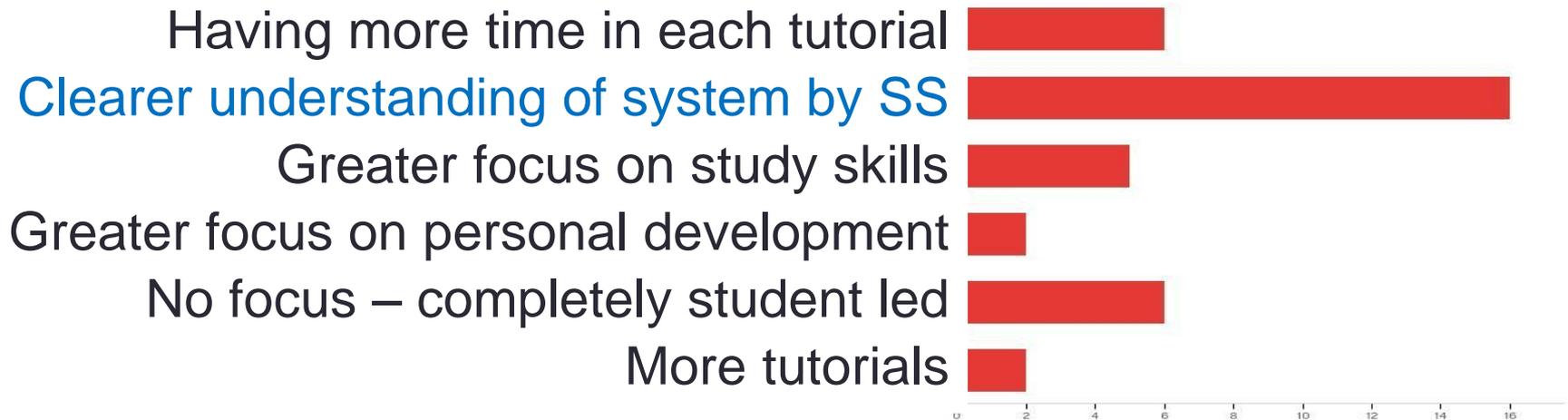


Tutor response to tutorial system

- Q1 - Do you feel the personal tutorial programme is valuable to the students? (n=32)



- Q2 - What would make it more valuable? (n=20)



Tutor response to tutorial system

Q4 – What are your main issues with the personal tutorial system? (n=22)

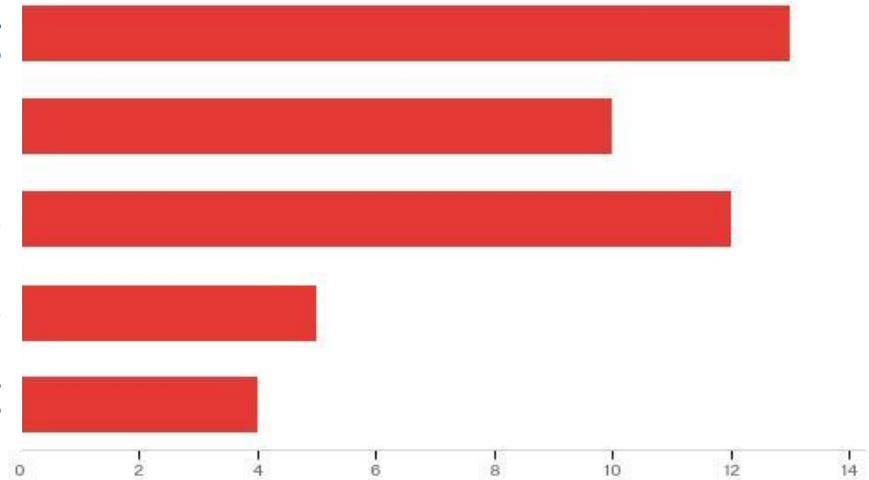
It's too time-consuming

It's too difficult to organize

It's too difficult to chase up students

There are too many tutorials

I don't see the point in it



Tutor comments (1)

Time

Too time-consuming (*5)

Have fewer students per each personal tutor (*3)

No time to build a relationship (*2)

Tutors should not have to chase students

Time is not well spent

It's a waste of time for everyone

Nature

Should be with students you teach (*4)

Should be academic and not pastoral

Needs to be more flexible

Needs study skills focus: eg. time management

Better with a pre-tutorial task

Tutor comments (2)

Value

Students do not value it

Needs evidence of its value

I only had one student who ever really opened up

Students that skip tutorials are the ones that need it most.

Students shouldn't have to do this in a foreign language

Organization

Better communication necessary between all agents

Should be scheduled

Should be done by a professional advising service

We need a list of FAQ for personal tutorial

Changes the form to cover set items and individual issues

Was early intervention successful?

H_0 : There is no difference between the predicted number of absences in the second year and the actual number of absences.

A Chi-square 'Goodness of Fit' calculation can be used to compare the expected number of absences (based on the 2015-16 figures) with the actual 2016-17 absences.

	<i>Absences</i>	
	2016-17 Sem 1	2016-17 Sem 2
Expected	1527	6698
Observed	2097	5316
O-E	570	-1382
(O-E) ²	324613.4	1911242
(O-E) ² /E	212.5	285.3
Sum (=calculated χ)	497.9	
Df	1	
X		10.83
P calculated $\chi > X$		0.001

As the calculated figure is significantly greater than the figure from the Chi-Square tables, it is possible to reject the null hypothesis and accept that the number of absences in the second year is significantly different.

Conclusions (1)

1. There has been a statistically significant difference in the number of absences after the early intervention programme.
 - ☛ However, it should be emphasized that this does not prove that the difference in absences was **because** of the early intervention programme.
2. Assuming students are being truthful, the main reasons for absences are:
 1. **Illness and**
 2. Lack of understanding of policy / procedures
3. **Enforcing compliance with university policies and procedures is not the most effective use of personal tutors**
 - ☛ The additional burden on tutors is unwelcome and unnecessary
 1. **It is too time consuming**
 2. It could be better done in a different way

Conclusions (2)

Although the evidence for success may be limited, the process was valuable in so far as there was:

- Data collection leading to
- System innovation +
- Further data collection +
- Analysis, Reflection and further change

...allowing for:

- Informed decision-making, system revision and system improvement

Changes:

1. New compulsory induction programme for better understanding of attendance policies and practices
 1. Attendance is compulsory (and why)
 2. What to do when sick:
 1. How to get a sick note from clinic
 2. Where and when to hand this in
2. Tutorial system to be better explained to staff & students
3. Tutorial system to be better organized (reduce staff burden)
4. Early intervention to become 'later' intervention

Questions



Ethical Consent

Ethical consent was obtained for

1. the original study comparing student absences and pass / fail rates and grades (2015-16)
2. The use of information provided by students on reasons for absences
3. The use of information about the advice given by tutors

All information has been made anonymous, no names have been used, no student or member of staff can be identified.

References

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- Siegel, S. (1956). *Nonparametric statistics for the behavioral sciences*. New York, McGraw-Hill.
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