‘Back to Study’

A one day transition programme for 25+ at AUT South

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Discussion today

• Background to the programme
• Research on mature students
• Programme design
• Evaluation and outcomes
• Where to from here?
Background to the programme
Focus on student success

The Student Learning Centre or Puna Aronui assists all students who are adjusting to the university academic culture and to new approaches to teaching and learning.

We also help students who require guidance on how to write academic assignments (eg, essays) and students who want to excel and achieve better grades.

Earlier Go University programmes we had run for school leavers transitioning into University had been shown to impact on retention.
The new face of the university

• These days the university population is diverse:
  • In 2014, 44% of domestic students studying at AUT were 25+ (23% were 25-39 and 11% were 40+) (Auckland University of Technology, 2014).
  • In Semester 1, 2015, 40% of domestic students studying at AUT South were 25+ (29% were 25-39 and 11% were 40+)

• Many different social groups & experiences
• Wide cultural & linguistic background
What the literature tells us about mature students

Challenges and needs
Challenges

• Adjustment to university (including overcoming personal fears and negotiating a new identity)
• Finances
• Responsibility conflicts
• Lack of availability of services (after hours)
• Lack of time/awareness to use support services

(Sources: Fleming & McKee, 2005; Mallman & Lee, 2014; O’Boyle, 2014; Roderick & Bell, 1981; Tones, Fraser, Elder & White)
Needs

• Academic support e.g. study skills (including IT) & time-management
• Childcare provision
• Financial assistance, including support to address child-care commitments

(Sources: Fleming & McKee, 2005; Glacklin & Glacklin, 1998)
The *Back to Study* programme

Four sessions
Session 1: Challenges and strengths
Session 2: Academic Survival Skills

• Becoming a “self-regulated learner...who takes active control of his or her learning” (Scevak, 2007).

In other words:
Successful learners are not born brilliant, they choose tactics to help them learn

• Four intentional strategies: Effective lecture preparation, Effective reading, Effective note-taking, Organising lecture notes
Session 3: Using personal capital to succeed

- Identifying personal capital (skills, attributes & experience) to help succeed at university

- Explore strategies for academic resilience including time-management
Session 4: Beginners guide to technology

Digital tools to help thrive at AUT
Programme evaluation and outcomes
Student feed-back

• 100% felt better prepared for university study
• 89% rated the programme quality excellent, 11% very good
• 100% would recommend the programme to others
• They liked:
  • Sharing with others (knowing you were not the only one to have concerns)
  • All sessions helped to prepare students and calm nerves and anxieties
  • Getting to know other students
  • Learning that there is a lot of support available to study at AUT
  • Friendly presenters
• Wanted more of:
  • Coffee and tea!
  • Culturally appropriate greeting protocols
Data

• Attendance 86% highlighting need for programme
• Withdrawal rates for ‘Back to Study’ vs. other 25+ students may suggest positive impact
  • Back to Study attendees = 0% withdrawal
  • Other students at AUT South 25+ = 1.2% for EFTS

Other outcomes

• Friendship and study groups formed from outset
• Programme increased students’ awareness of available services, which could lead students to access these services in the future
Where to from here?
Semester 2 2015

• Incorporated into university wide orientation of mature students
• Rolling programme out on all three campus: North, City, South
• Will cater to the unique flavour of each campus
• Will complement other orientation activities
• Retention rates for those attending will be monitored
References


Thank-you

Questions?

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