

'Back to Study'

A one day transition programme for 25+ at AUT South

Dr Kathryn Owler
kowler@aut.ac.nz

Dr Pedro Silva
psilva@aut.ac.nz

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)



A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a dense, overlapping pattern of teal-colored triangles of various shades and orientations, creating a textured, mosaic-like effect that tapers towards the right.

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).

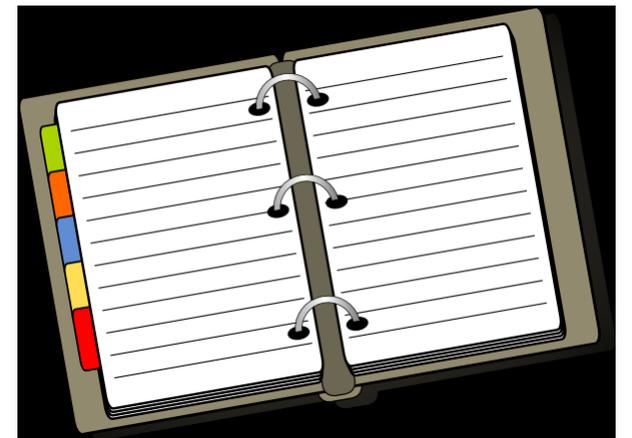
In other words:

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



A decorative background on the left side of the slide, consisting of a dense, overlapping pattern of teal-colored triangles in various shades, ranging from light to dark. The pattern tapers off towards the right, where the text is located.

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

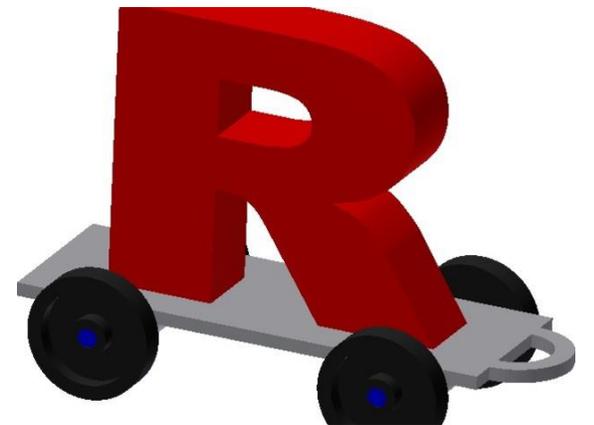


A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a dense field of teal-colored triangles of various shades and orientations, creating a textured, mosaic-like effect. The pattern is more solid on the left and becomes more sparse and fragmented as it moves towards the right.

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

- Auckland University of Technology. (2014). Auckland University of Technology Annual Report 2014. Auckland: AUT University. Retrieved from <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about-aut/university-publications>
- Fleming, S., & McKee, G. (2005). The mature student question. *Nurse Education Today*, 25, 230–237. doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2005.01.
- Glackin, M., & Glackin, M. (1998). Investigation into experiences of older students undertaking a Pre-registration Diploma in Nursing. *Nurse Education Today*, 18, 576–582.
- Mallman, M., & Lee, H. (2014). Stigmatised learners: mature-age students negotiating university culture. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. doi:10.1080/01425692.2014.973017
- O’Boyle, N. (2014). Front Row Friendships: Relational Dialectics and Identity Negotiations by Mature Students at University. *Communication Education*, 63(3), 169–191. doi:10.1080/03634523.2014.903333
- Owler, K. (2014). Internal report: Statistics on Go University programmes run over 2013 and 2014. Auckland: Auckland University of Technology.
- Roderick, G. W., & Bell, J. M. (1981). Unqualified mature students at the University of Sheffield. *Studies in Higher Education*, 6(2), 123-129. doi:10.1080/03075078112331379372
- Scevak, J., & Cantwell, R. (Eds.). (2007). *Stepping Stones: A guide for mature-aged students at university*. Victoria, Australia: Acer Press.
- Tones, M., Fraser, J., Elder, R., & WhiteSource, K. (2009). Supporting mature-aged students from a low socioeconomic background. *Higher Education*, 58(4), 505-529. doi:10.1007/s10734-009-9208-y

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a dense, overlapping pattern of teal-colored triangles of various shades and orientations, creating a textured, mosaic-like effect that tapers towards the right.

Thank-you

Questions?

Dr Kathryn Owler
kowler@aut.ac.nz

Dr Pedro Silva
psilva@aut.ac.nz