

Using evidence to improve and support student transitions



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FREISTATA



UFS·UV
EDUCATION
OPVOEDKUNDE

Overview

- Transition – what does the literature say?
- Transition from school to university in South Africa
- UFS101 – the first-year seminar at UFS
- PASS – the Transition Programme at UFS

TRANSITION – WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY?



Transition – what does the literature say?

A point at which students move from one phase of the education process to the next (Montgomery & Hirth, 2011)

“While change is typically driven by external events or circumstances, transition is an internal process; it is a personal reorientation that some making a change must go through...while the change of being in high school one year and university the next year happens quickly, the personal transition from being a school learner to being a university student might take much longer” (Wilson-Strydom, 2015: 28)

Transition programmes are of particular importance in supporting students who are minorities or disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and first-generation students, and provide services that include academic enrichment such as tutoring or supplemental instruction, as well as academic advising, information sharing, mentoring, career guidance, and social enrichment (United States Department of Education, 2007)

Although transition programmes are considered add-ons in some colleges or universities, they need to form part of the curriculum to function optimally, which would require buy-in not only from faculties, but from all student support related departments and divisions (Tobolowsky, 2008: 66)

TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA



University access and success

Humpback Bridge



NBT Results UFS

Entering student profile at UFS

First generation
66% of first years
69% of seniors



Academic literacy
65% are NOT proficient

Quantitative literacy
86% are NOT proficient



Math Scores
89% are NOT proficient



**Underprepared students who need help
navigating higher education**

SASSE Data

First-year students reported a slightly more supportive environment than senior students. This shows that a focus on the FYE has a positive impact. It also might suggest that more focus is needed on senior students to help them deal with their academic and non-academic responsibilities.

PASS Data

Students report that the PASS programme provides students with solutions and insight to overcome the transition.

UFS101: THE FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR



Overview of UFS101 in 2012 and 2013

Multi-disciplinary, core curriculum module for undergraduate students.

Disciplines: Anthropology, Law, Astrophysics, Astrobiology, History, Economics, Chemistry and Social Psychology

Outcomes

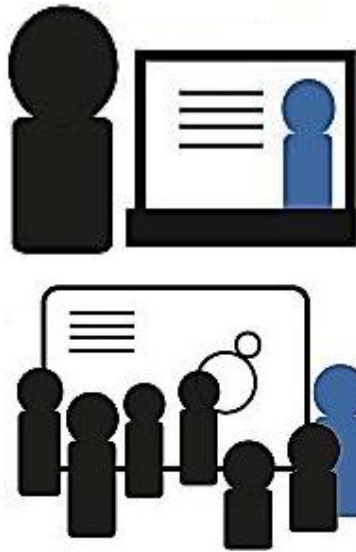
- Explain the value of different disciplinary perspectives;
- Apply different disciplinary perspectives as part of critical thinking;
- Demonstrate basic reflective academic skills – reading, writing and argumentation skills; and
- Reflect on how higher education empowers citizens to engage with the challenges facing the 21st century world (locally and globally).



UFS101 in 2014

Flipped Teaching Model

Flipped classroom approach



Discussion as a way of teaching
(Brookfield & Preskill, 2005)



Naked Teaching approach (Bowen, 2012)

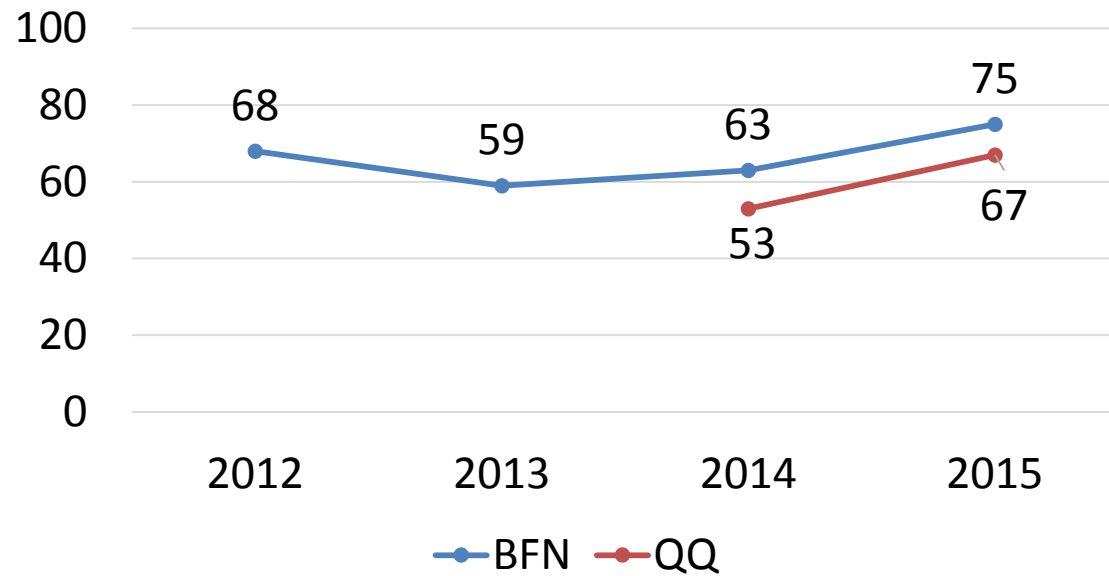


UFS101 in 2015: re-curriculated to a FYS

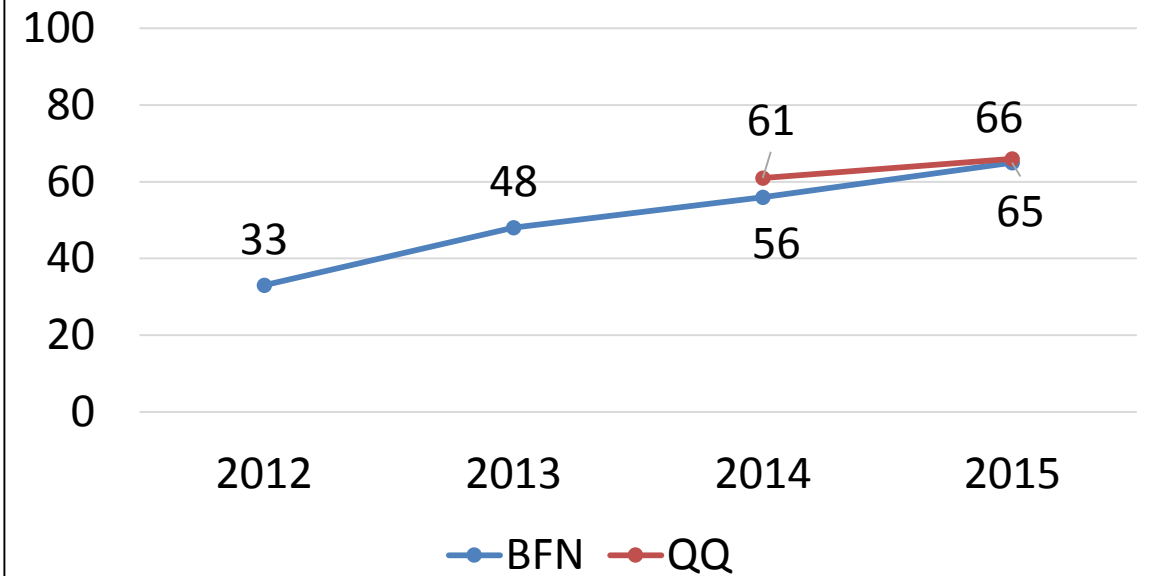
UFS101 2015	
Semester 1: Get success at UFS Focus: Help students make a successful transition to the university by helping them to develop and apply the skills required to succeed academically.	Semester 2: Shared intellectual experience Focus: Apply critical thinking skills by engaging with complex problems from multi-disciplinary perspectives.

UFS101 grades 2012-2015

Mainstream Mean 2012-2015 (%)





Extended Mean 2012-2015 (%)



UFS101 growth in student numbers

 = 200 students Bloemfontein campus

 = 200 students Qwa-Qwa campus

 = 180 students Kimberly campus

2011



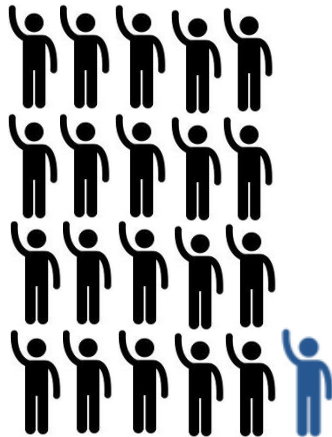
BFN: Pilot with 200 students

2012



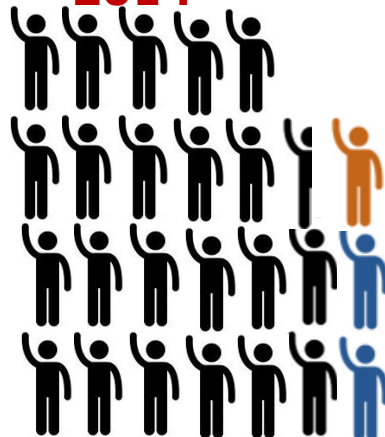
BFN: Full roll out with 2000 students

2013



BFN: Full roll out with 4000 students
QQ: Pilot of 150 students

2014



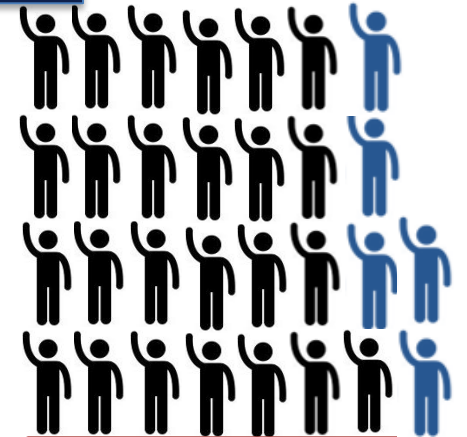
BFN: Full roll out with 4500 students
QQ: Full roll out with 400 students
KBY: Full roll out with 180 students

2015



BFN: 5000 students
QQ: 800 students

2016



BFN: 5400 students
QQ: 1000 students

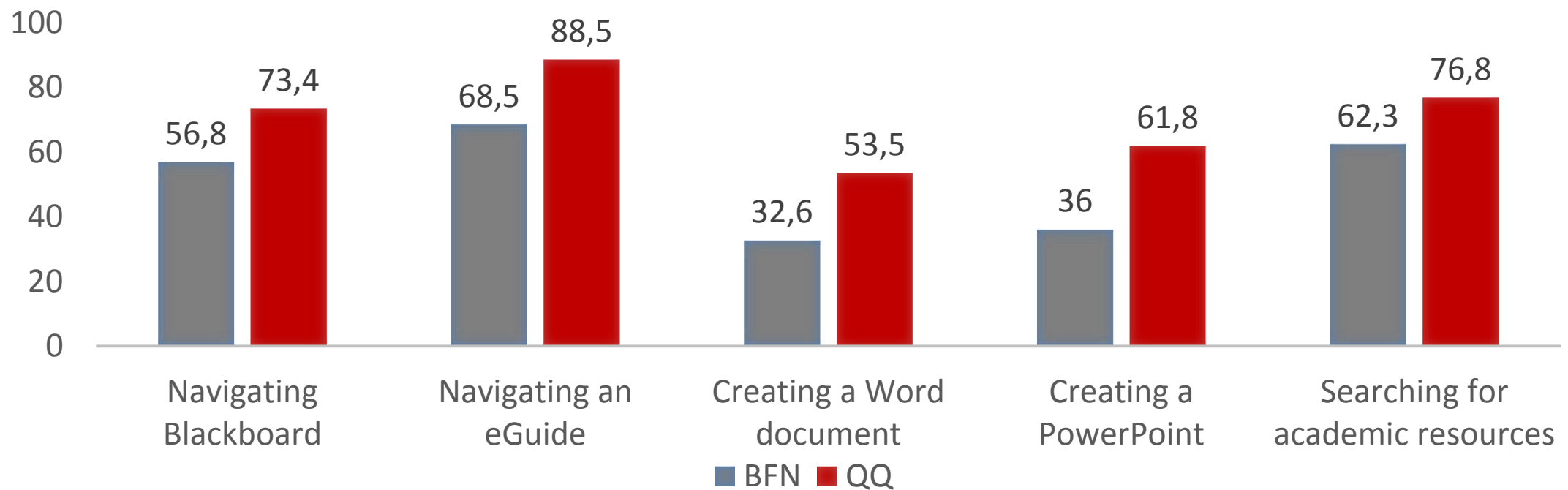
BENEFIT OF NEW UFS101, ACCORDING TO STUDENTS

Student response to Semester 1: Technology at a university

BFN Sample: 3612 students (71% response rate)

QQ Sample: 673 students (85% response rate)

SKILLS ACQUIRED IN UFS101 - UNIT 1 (%)

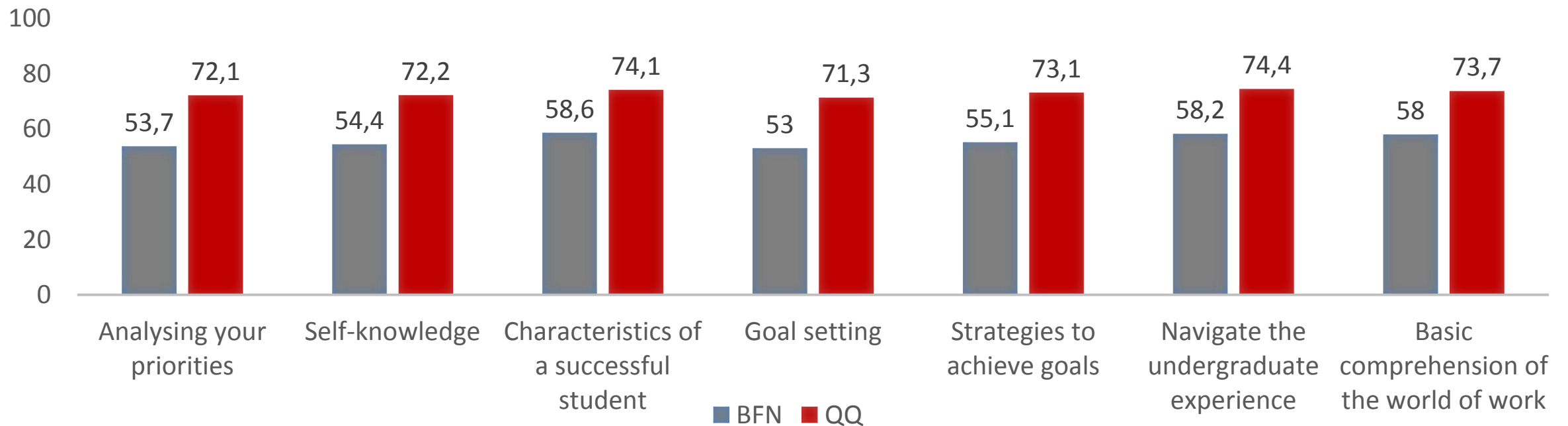


Student response to Semester 1: Will I get a job after graduating?

BFN Sample: 3612 students (71% response rate)

QQ Sample: 673 students (85% response rate)

SKILLS ACQUIRED IN UFS101 - UNIT 2 (%)

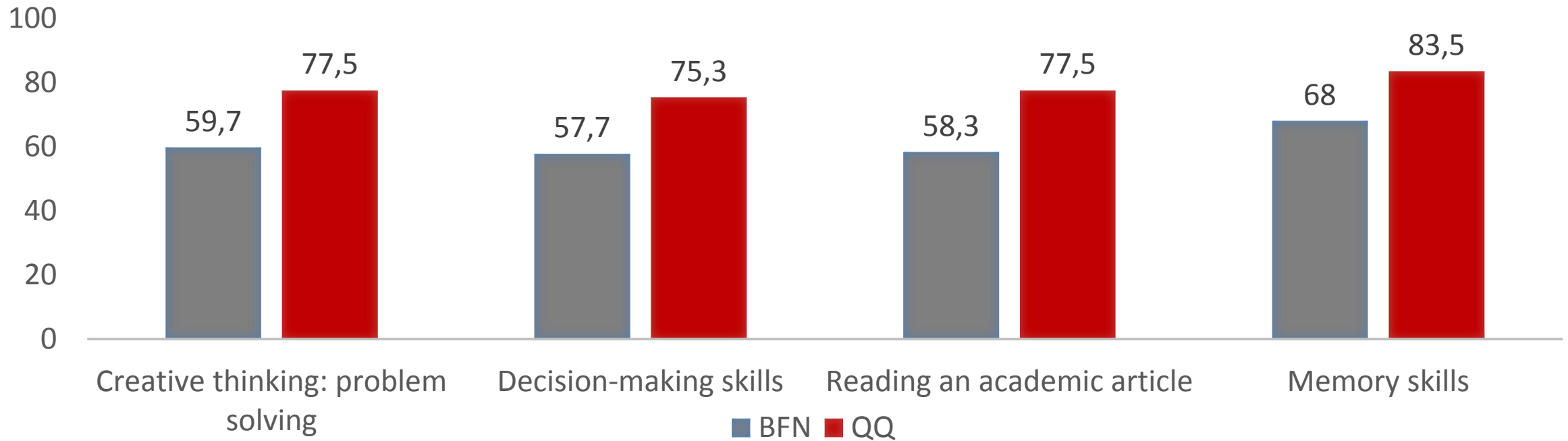


Student response to Semester 1: Critical thinking: Putting the ME in Metacognition

BFN Sample: 3612 students (71% response rate)

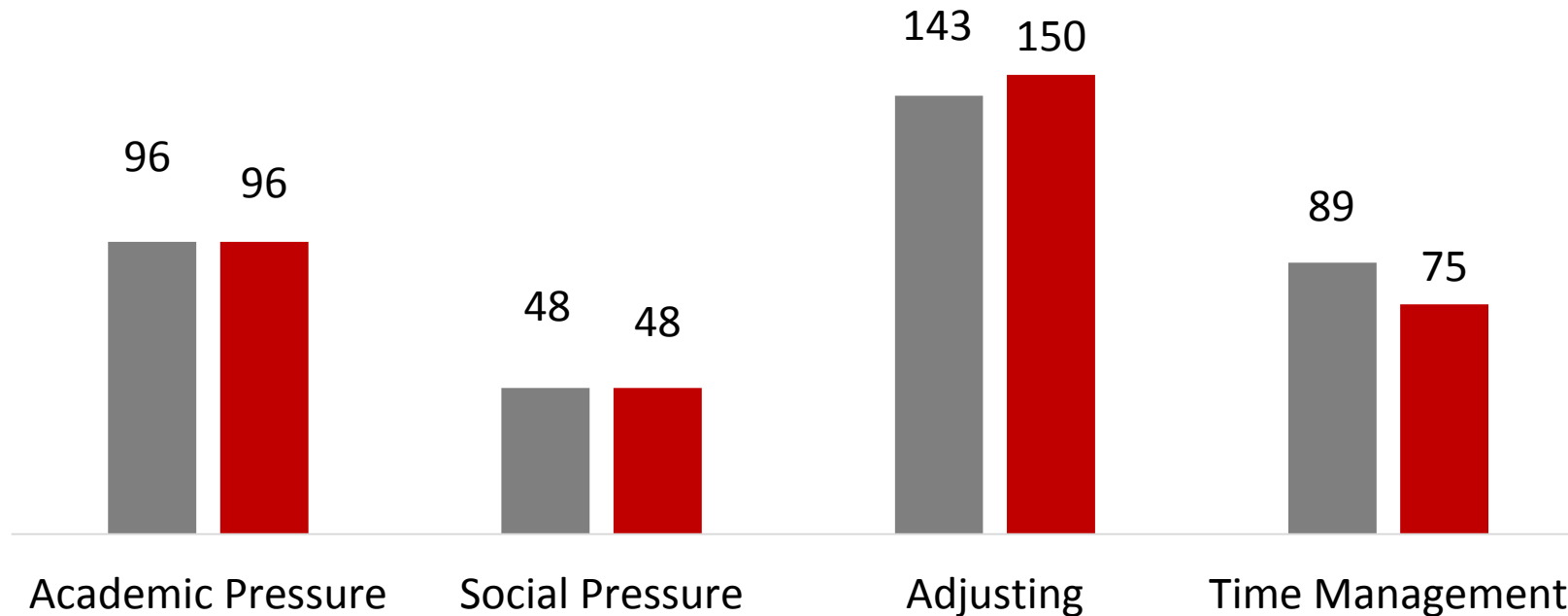
QQ Sample: 673 students (85% response rate)

SKILLS ACQUIRED IN UFS101 - UNIT 3 (%)



Student response to Semester 1: Further benefit of UFS101

CHALLENGES THAT STUDENTS EXPERIENCE IN THE FIRST YEAR



■ n of students reported a challenge

■ n of students reported that UFS101 addressed the challenge

Student response to UFS101: Qualitative data

LOOK AT BIGGER PICTURE
Adjust to University Organise Goals Believe in Oneself
UFS101 Helped Encouraged Hard Work
How to be a well-rounded student Helped adjusting Made new Friends
Helped to Ease the Transition to University Life
The only first year course that practically assisted me

- 65 % of first years indicate that the first semester content of UFS101 helped them to succeed in their first year
- 85 % of first years indicate that the second semester content broadened their thinking about solving problems from multi-disciplinary perspectives

PASS: THE TRANSITION PROGRAMME



Transition Programme at UFS: PASS



Academic
success skills



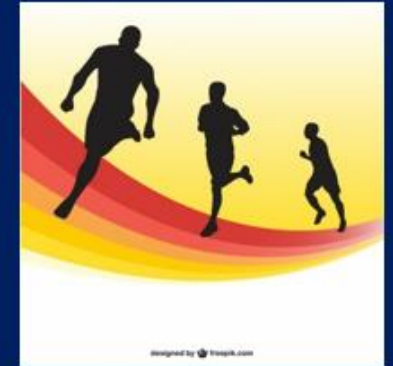
Academic
Advising and
Career Advising



Leadership and
motivation



Financial
management



Health and
wellness



Transition Programme at UFS: PASS

- Data driven decision making
- Workshop structure
- Attuned to academic rhythm of the students
- Only 14 hours per year
- Free for students
- Transfer of skills

Comparison of grades between different groups of students

Mean Academic Performance							
		Did not attend PASS			Did attend PASS		
		Academic Performance			Academic Performance		
		2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Mainstream	White	65	64	67			
	Black	57	58	61			
Extended	White	52	55	52		68	67
	Black	55	56	55	59	60	59

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CONCLUSION



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UFS101 – large scale first year front loading works – use data to adapt teaching methodology in order to improve student engagement and learning.



PASS – It is possible to do more with less – use data to develop interventions that promote skills transfer that impact student success



Rigorous evaluation and monitoring, as well as careful reflection on logistics is used to make sure the impact of a transition programme is optimal.