'Bridging the Gap' through the Academic Development Programme in the Faculty of Health Sciences at The Durban University of Technology

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'ARTICULATION GAP'

- Teaching practices in secondary education does not equip students for university life.
- Demographic, institutional, economic, financial and technological backgrounds.
- Major contributor to academic success/failure.
- "All learners can learn and need support".
- Barriers to learning should be minimised.

(Fisher and Scot 2011; Education White Paper 6 (2001))

"A gap can be closed from either side."

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HISTORY OF AD

- 1980's → "Quota Act" – Control number "Black" students admitted to university.

- Assumption – These students will not meet demands of tertiary education -"deficit model."

- Hence initial AD aimed at equity and equality rather than support.

- Soon the "needs model" implemented as it became a need for all students.

(Cruickshank 2018:25; Boughey 2010; Volbrecht 2003)

BRIDGING THE GAP

Aims:

- To provide professional needs based academic support which encompasses interlinked areas around student development.
- To enable the students to take on the values, responsibility and belonging to the academic world.

Objective:

- This is done by developing programmes that promote academic interaction, eliminate academic alienation, as well as discourage social isolation.

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'INTERVENTION STRATEGIES'

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

SURVIVING AND THRIVING

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS

"UNDERPERFORMING STUDENTS"

LANGUAGE LABORATORY

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'SURVIVING AND THRIVING'

Adjusting to University Life	Basic Writing Conventions	Work Ethic
Time + Stress Management	Plagiarism +Paraphrasing	Presentation Skills
Computer Literacy	Referencing	Critical Thinking Skills
Note-taking techniques	Academic + Research writing	Test/Exam Writing Strategies
Study Techniques/Learning Styles / Question Analysis	Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills	

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INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS "UNDERPERFORMING STUDENTS"

- Unsatisfactory academic progress.

- 'Borderline' students (50%/51%)/lecturer discretion.

- Erratic attendance at lectures/ behaviour changes.

- Teaching & Learning Committee, Exams Board.

- Pregnant and post-partum students - monitoring.

- English language support.
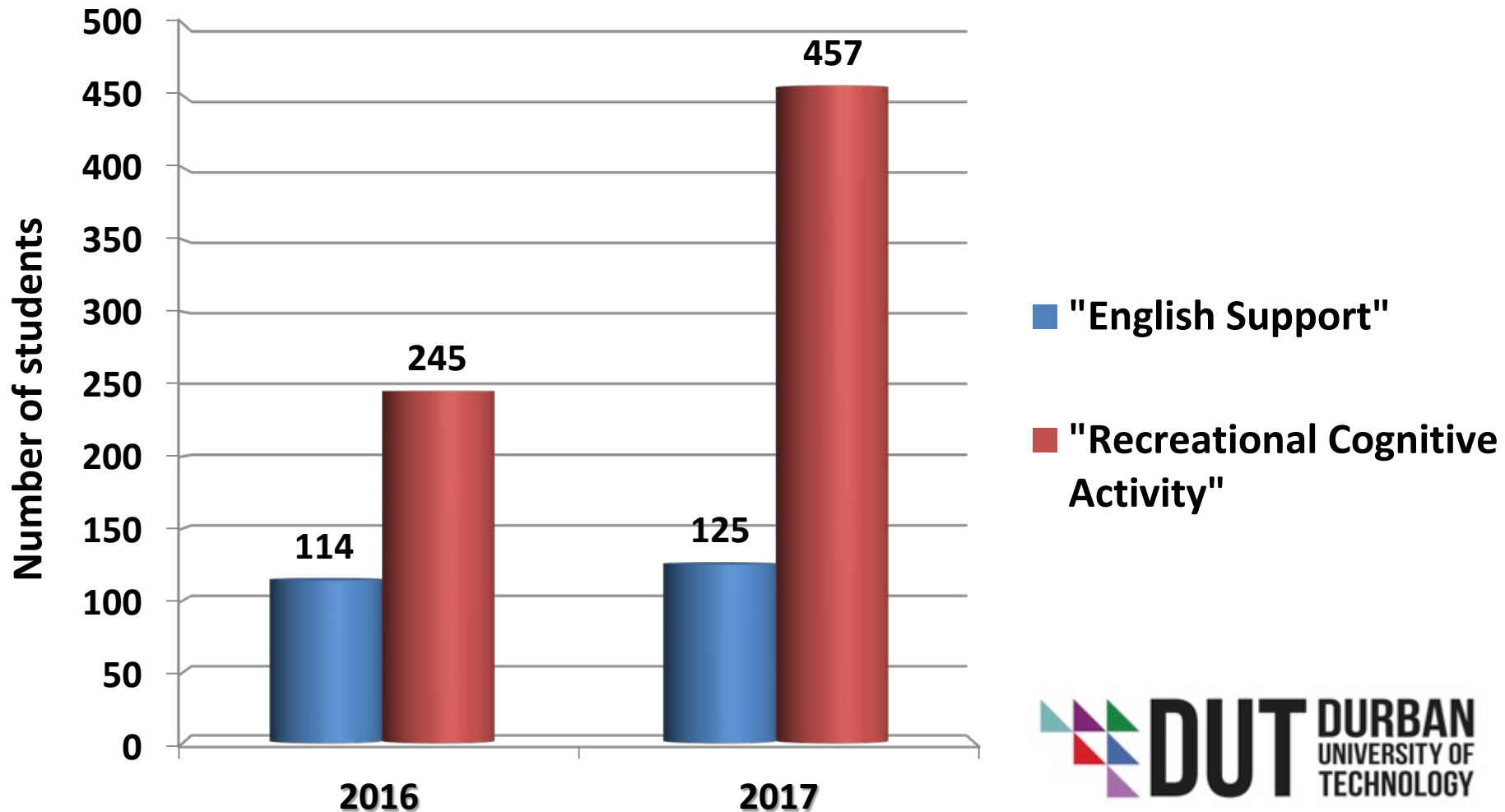
- Self referral.

'LANGUAGE LABORATORY'

- AD or self referral.
- English language support for improvements in understanding of the language (1st, 2nd or 3rd).
- Skills application: Writing assignments, reports, projects and presentations.
- Provision for Chess, Scrabble, poetry club, social reading, self-help reading, debates – Cognition.
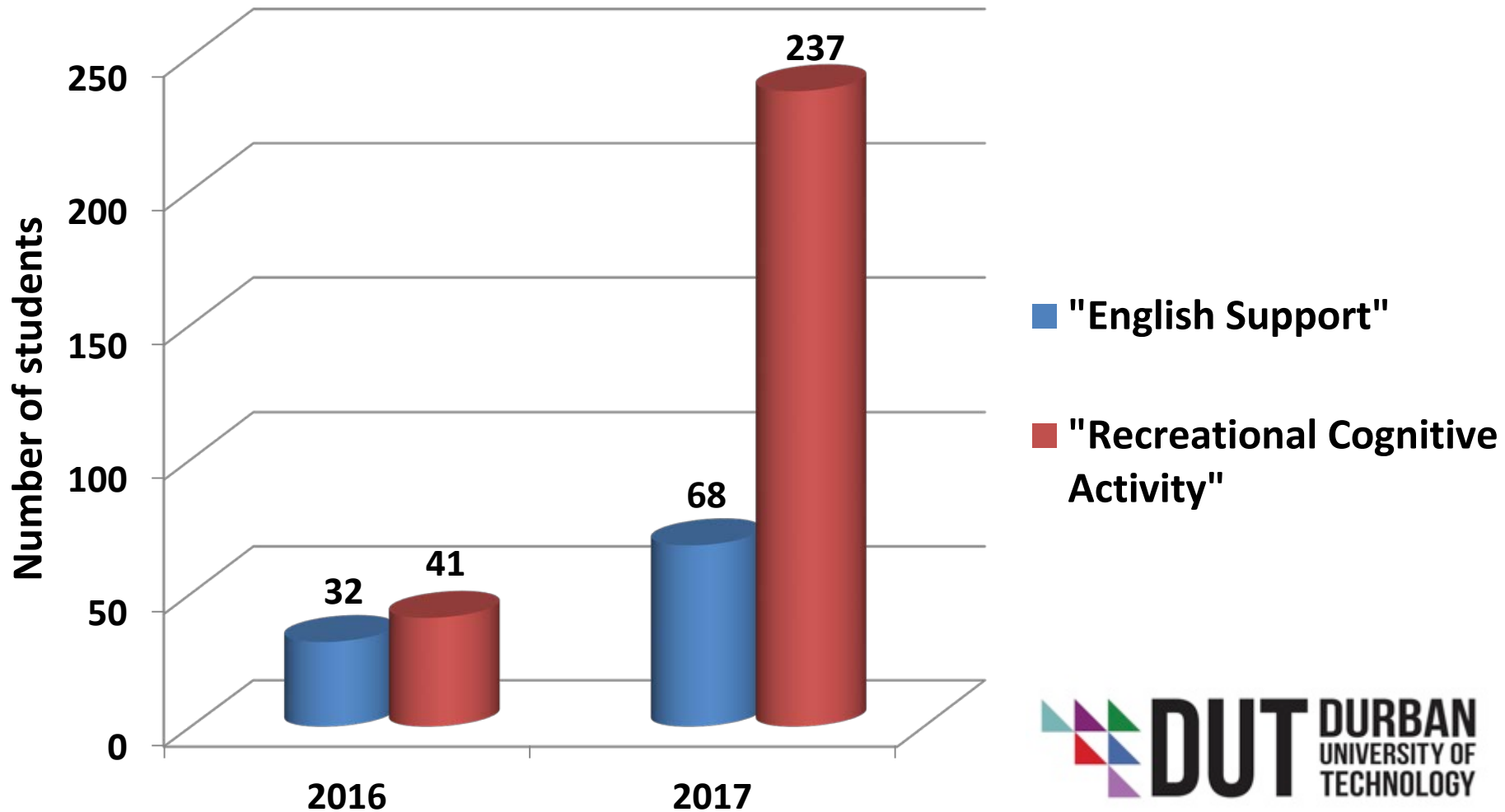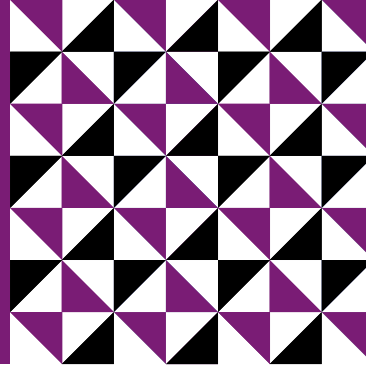- Chess, Scrabble and poetry competitions for all faculties.

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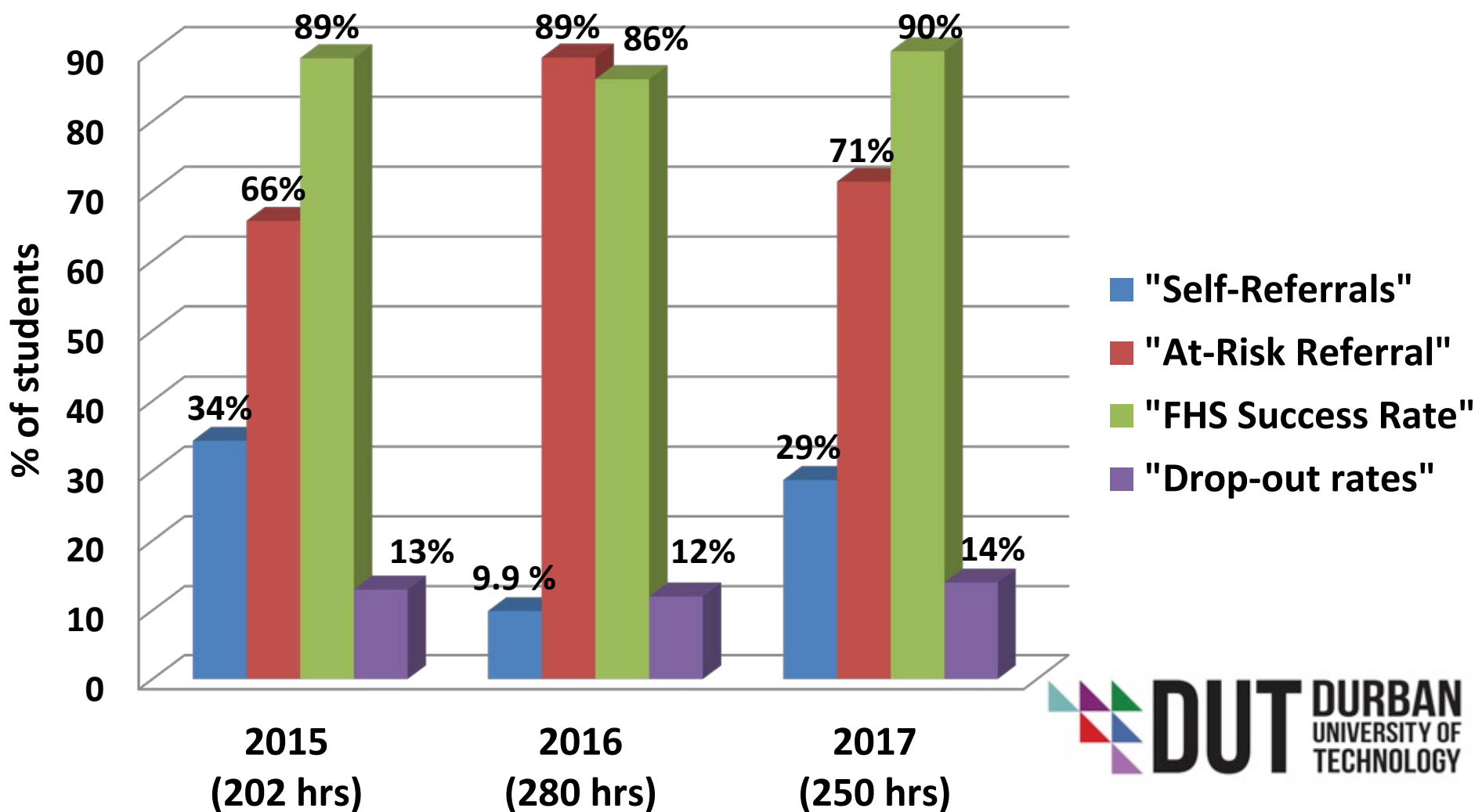
Health Sciences

LANGUAGE LABORATORY DATA

- AD appointment data shows an increasing trend in % referrals every year - Growing demand in HE warrants AD.
- Drop-out rates consistent each year - below DHET.
- PhD thesis confirms retention (not dropping out) – sig. diff.
- FHS success rates are well above the DUT/DHET (80%) norm and correlate to referral stats. (Cruickshank 2018:25)

- The number of students that sought English support display an upward trend each year.
- Enhancing their cognitive, critical and strategic thinking via Chess and Scrabble have been well received in all faculties.

'CLOSING THE GAP'

- Improve marketing of AD.

- Improve communication strategies with students.

- Implement effective student tracking method for underperforming students at an early stage.

- In-turn we can track "at-risk" modules.

- Ensures sustained interventions at crucial time points in their academic career.

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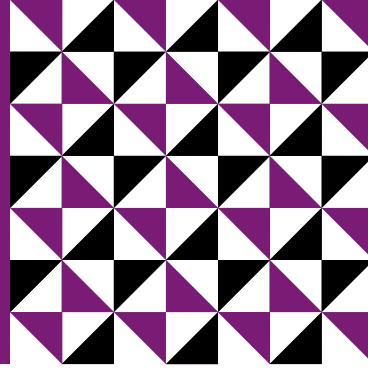
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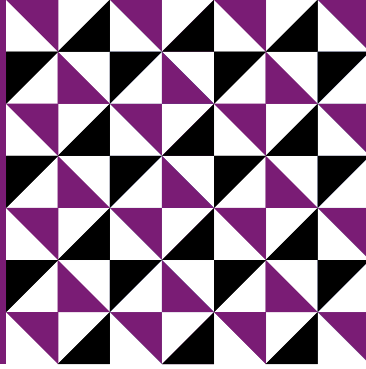
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THANK YOU

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