Is what we are doing helping our students?

Dr Genevieve Hundermark

Siyaphumelela Conference

June 2016

"We" = Faculty of Humanities Teaching & Learning Unit at Wits

"*helping students succeed*" = throughput (specifically first years)

First
year
reg
2015

RISK

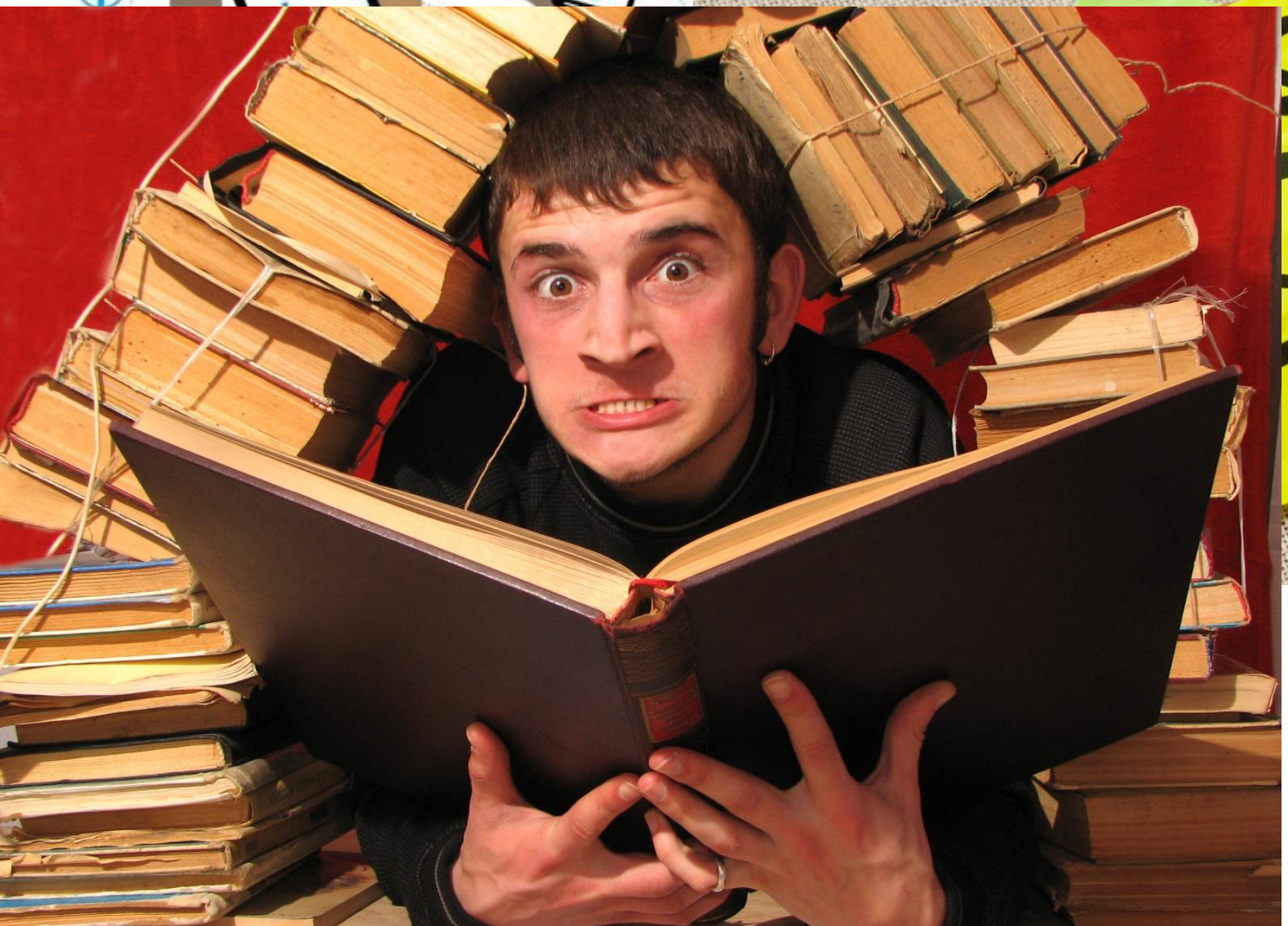
RESULTS

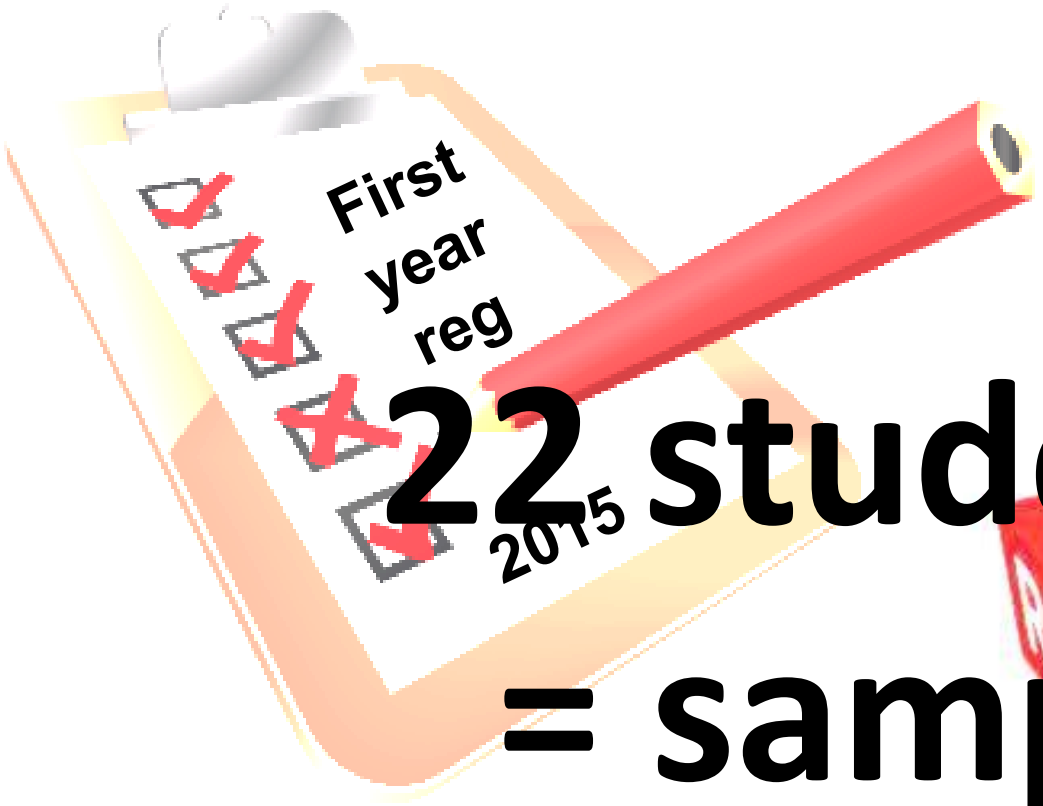
Interventions ??

The survey

SUPPORT

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
JOHANNESBURG





22 students 2015 = sample

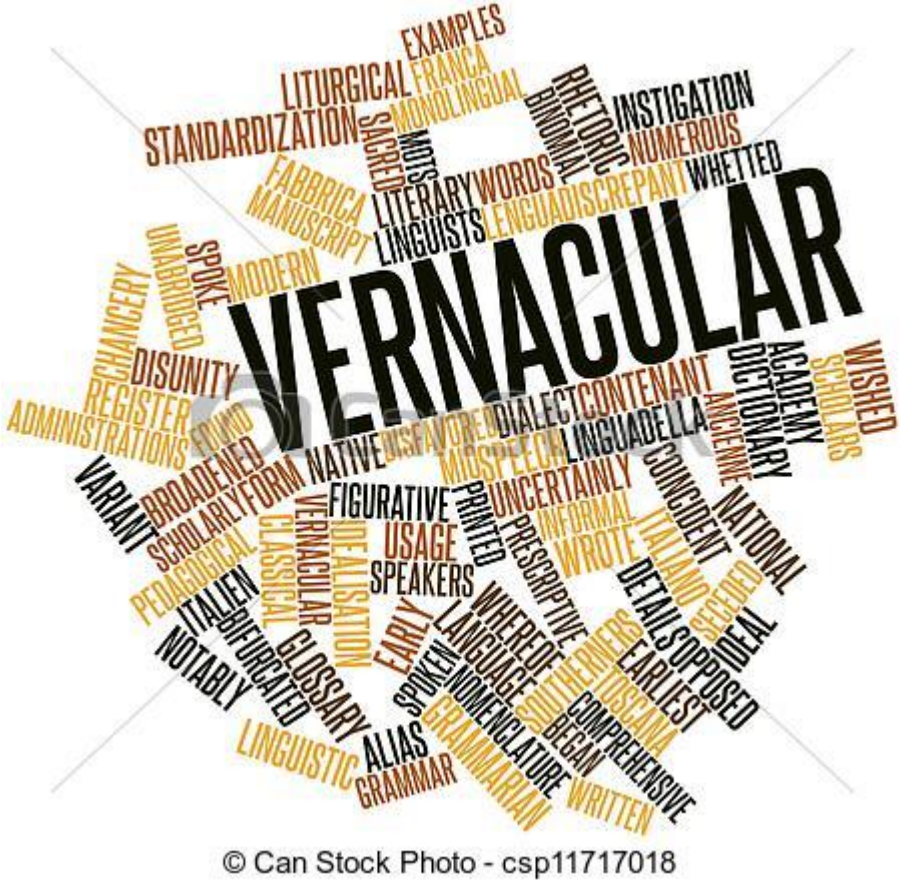
What did we discover?

Comparison of markers to results

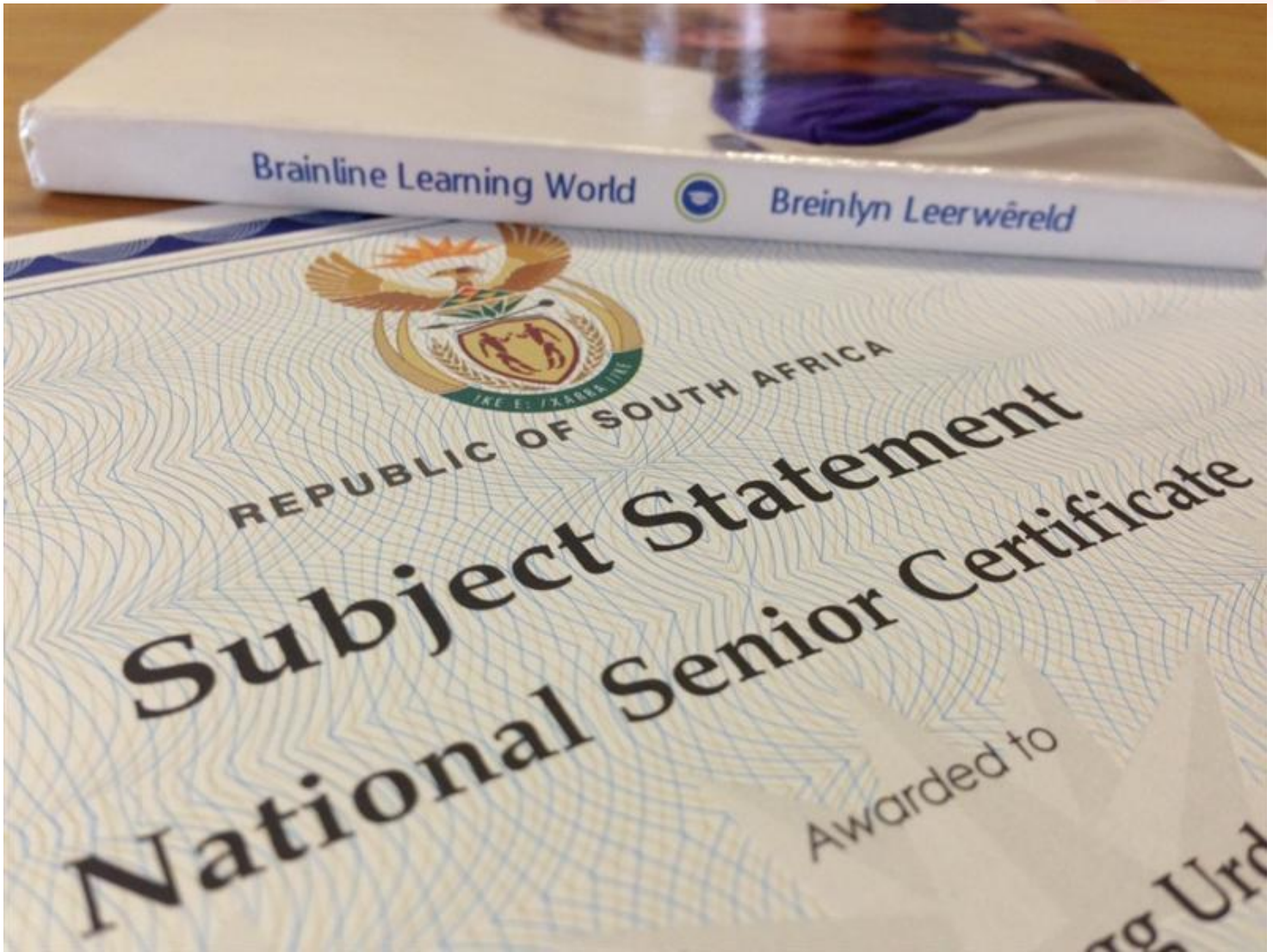
Of the 22 students:

- 20 : 2 at-risk courses (of possible 4) (Quarter 1) – less than 50%
- 2 : 3 at-risk courses
- 14 : 6 or more at-risk markers (22 possible markers)
- 9 : all from a professional degree

Common at-risk markers



Common at-risk markers

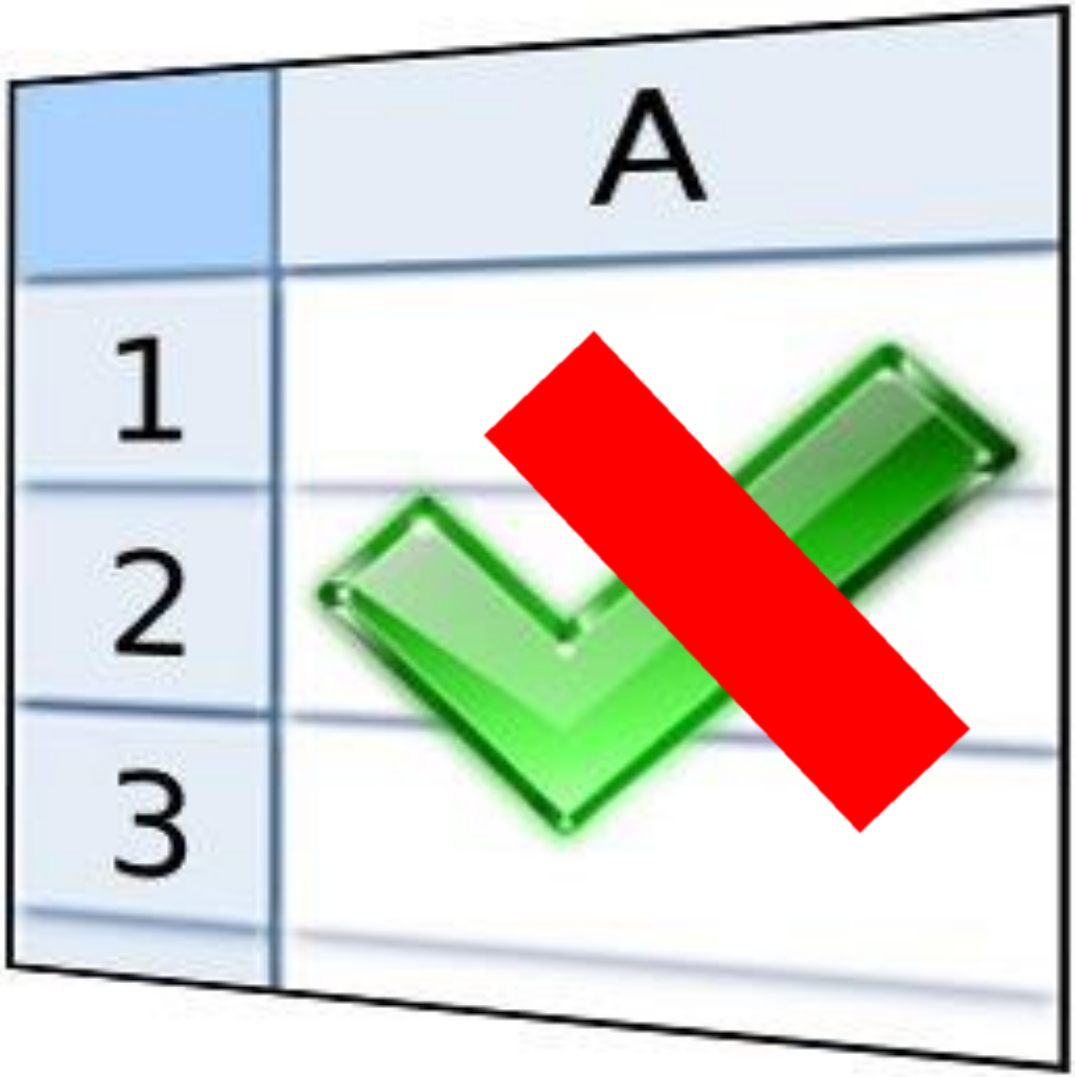


Common at-risk markers

Common at-risk markers

Common at-risk markers

Common at-risk markers



Common at-risk markers

Interventions

- Quarter 1
  - 30 students – FYE camp

+ APS

Interventions

- Quarter 2
  - Information session
  - Invitations to face-to-face consultations (optional)
  - Reflective survey
  - Invitation to mentoring program offered through CCDU
    - 7 of 22 students participated
    - 6 were from professional degree (of 9 students)

Interventions

- Semester 2
  - Email invitations for face-to-face consultations
  - Learning skills workshops:
    - Academic reading skills
    - Academic writing skills (with Writing Centre)
    - Note-taking skills
    - Study skills
    - Test/Exam-preparation skills
  - Journal
  - Mentoring program

RESULTS

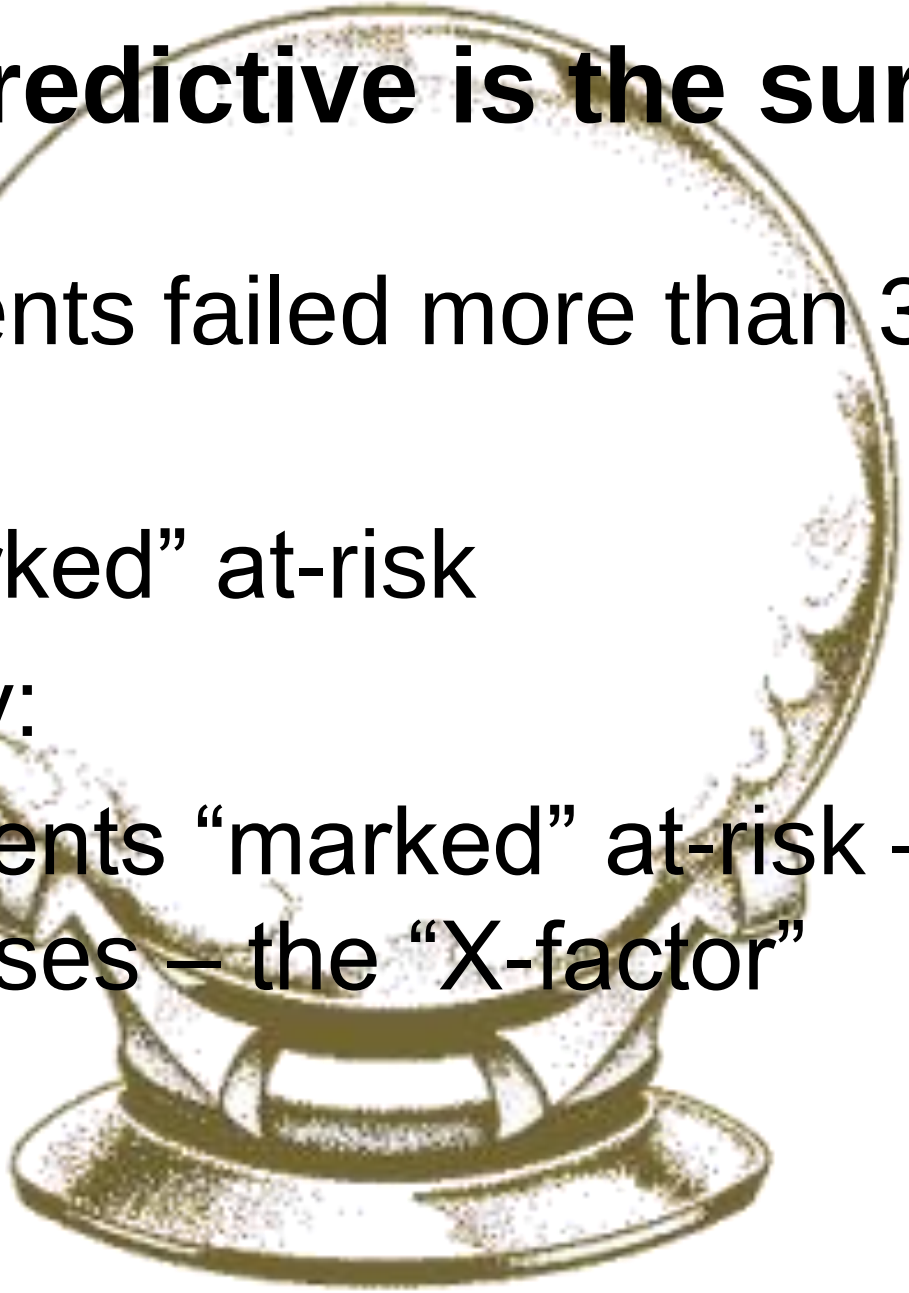
	Block 1
No of students with 0 at-risk courses	-
No of students with 1 at-risk course	-
No of students with 2 at-risk courses	20
No of students with 3 at-risk courses	2
No of students with 4 or more at-risk courses	-
Discontinued	
N	22

	Block 1	Sem 1
No of students with 0 at-risk courses	-	2
No of students with 1 at-risk course	-	6
No of students with 2 at-risk courses	20	8
No of students with 3 at-risk courses	2	3
No of students with 4 or more at-risk courses	-	3
Discontinued		
N	22	22

	Block 1	Sem 1	Sem 2
No of students with 0 at-risk courses	-	2	3
No of students with 1 at-risk course	-	6	5
No of students with 2 at-risk courses	20	8	3
No of students with 3 at-risk courses	2	3	4
No of students with 4 or more at-risk courses	-	3	6
Discontinued			1
N	22	22	22

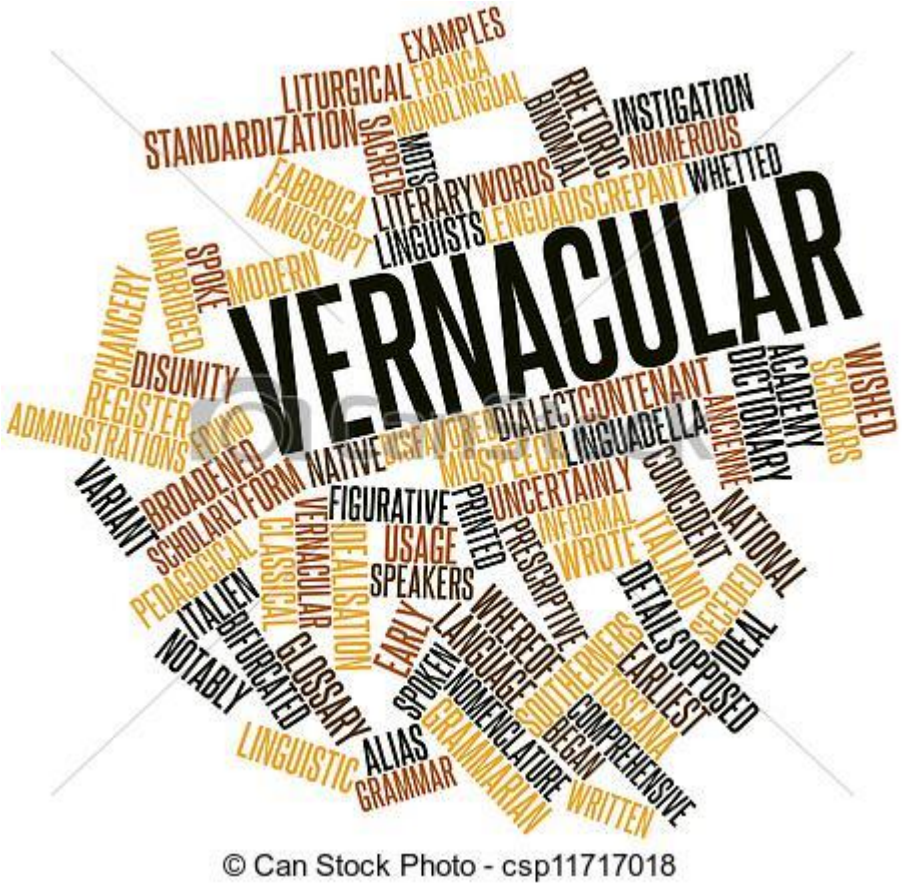
- Of 22 students:
  - 9 passed (PCD)
  - 8 return (RET)
  - 2 return with conditions (RER)
  - 2 readmitted with conditions
  - 1 may not return
- Only 5 students attended interventions (1 PCD, 3 RET, 1 RER)

How predictive is the survey?



- 10 students failed more than 3 courses
  - 8 “marked” at-risk
- Anomaly:
  - 3 students “marked” at-risk – failed 0 courses – the “X-factor”

3+ courses failed



© Can Stock Photo - csp11717018

8

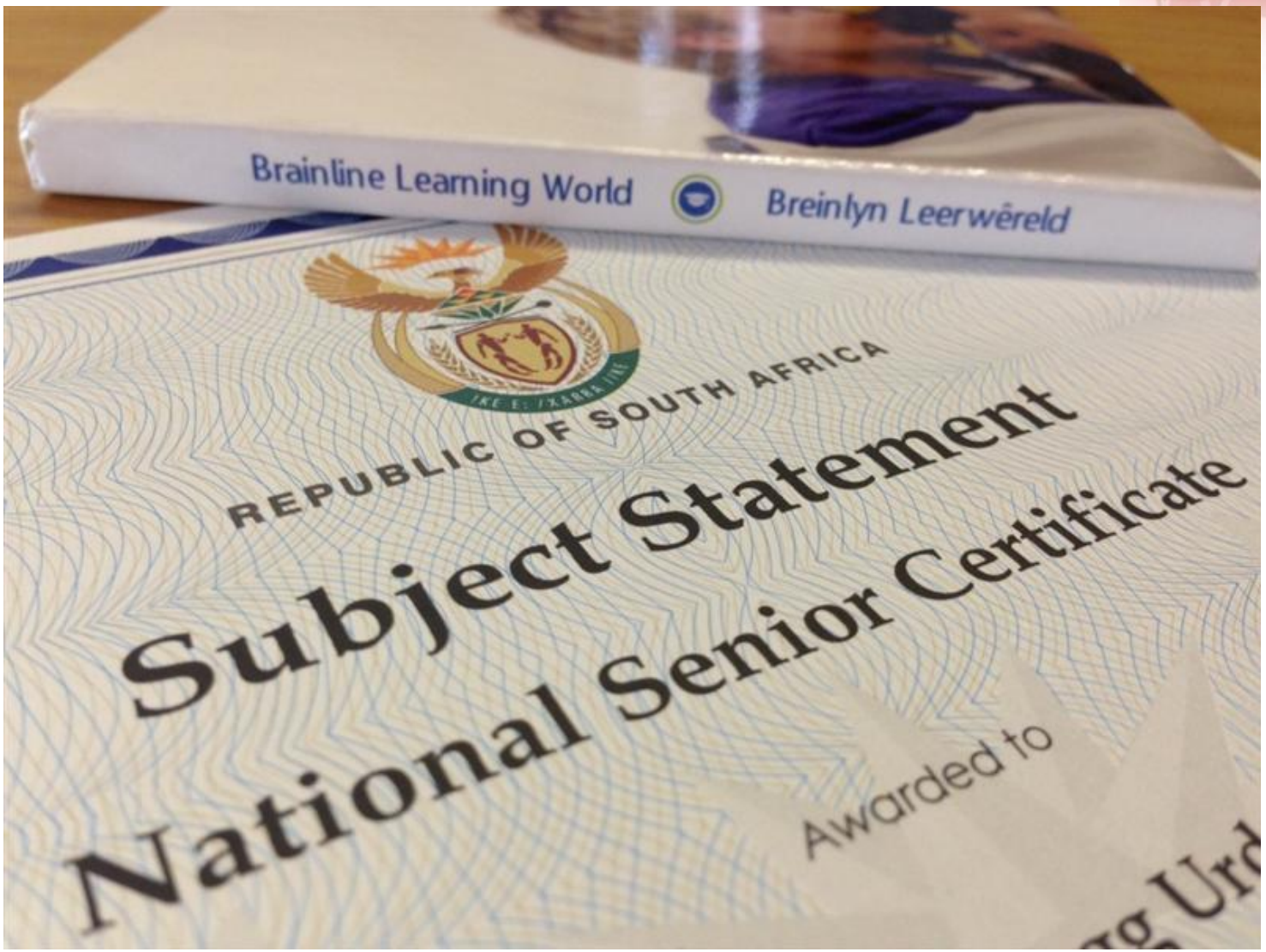
3+ courses failed

6

3+ courses failed

5

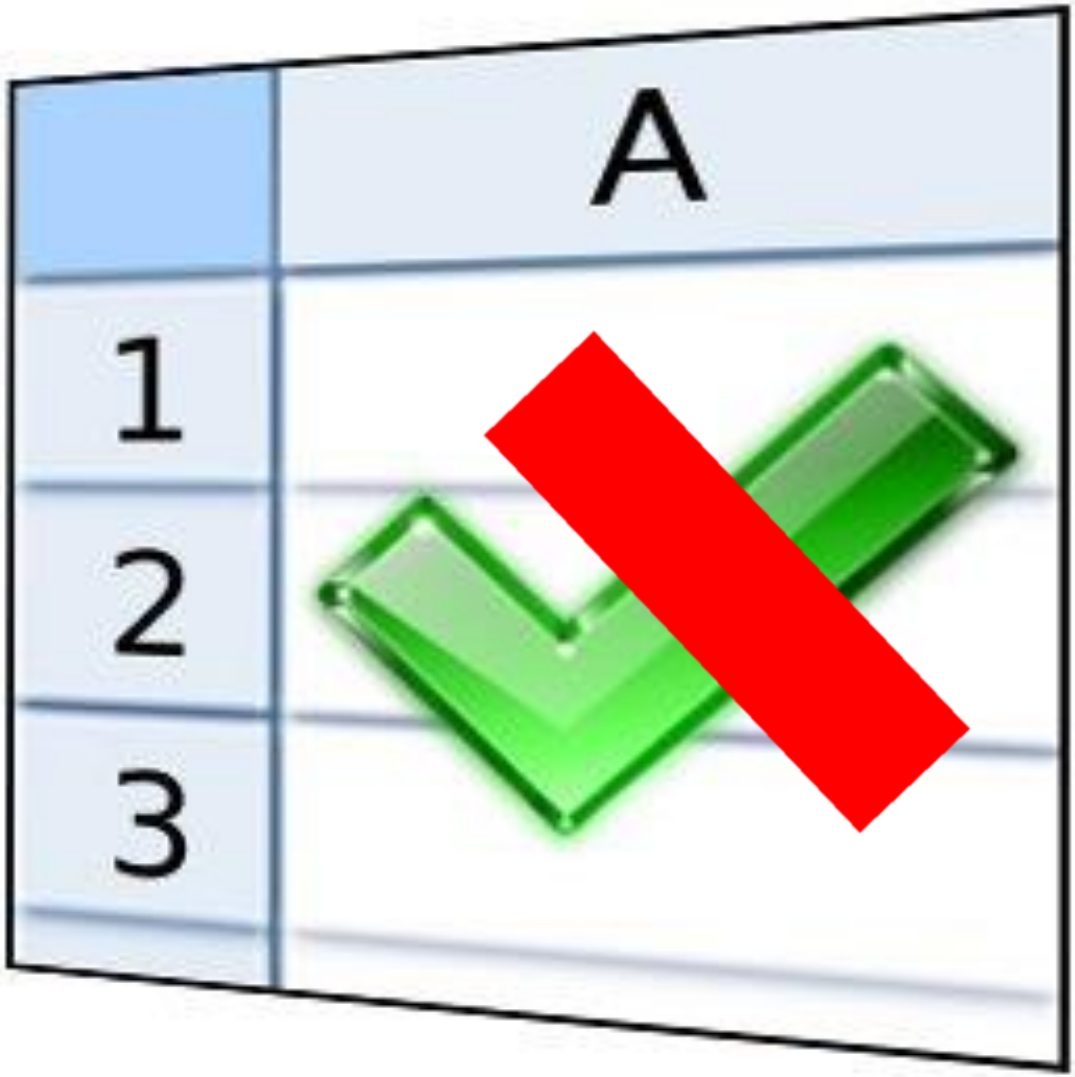
3+ courses failed



3+ courses failed

5

Common at-risk markers



3+ courses failed

Which interventions helped?

- Sample too small
- University data – preliminary analysis of interventions university wide
- May be possible to predict risk or lack thereof
- Students move in and out of risk
- Important to be responsive
- Mentoring – 5 of 7 students in sample passed or returned

Recommendations

- Language intervention
- Mentoring
- Time management
- ICT skills
- Reading
- At-risk courses/combinations
- The “X-factor”
- Close the loop

Thank you!

Dr Genevieve Hundermark
Faculty of Humanities
Teaching and Learning Unit
genevieve.hundermark@wits.ac.za