



An 'early-intervention' metacognitive skills workshop for academically 'at-risk' students



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Background

Withdrawal from undergraduate study can cause emotional and financial distress and the drop-out rate is high among those who fail summative assessment in first year. Therefore it's important to identify those who are 'at-risk' of failing summative assessment and attempt to address any transitional issues that may have an impact on their studies. Using the Transit tool we can successfully identify students who are 'at-risk' of academic failure *before* they sit summative assessments. However, it is not clear how to help these students. This workshop is an attempt to address and overcome transitional issues in first-year.



<https://stock.adobe.com>

Methods

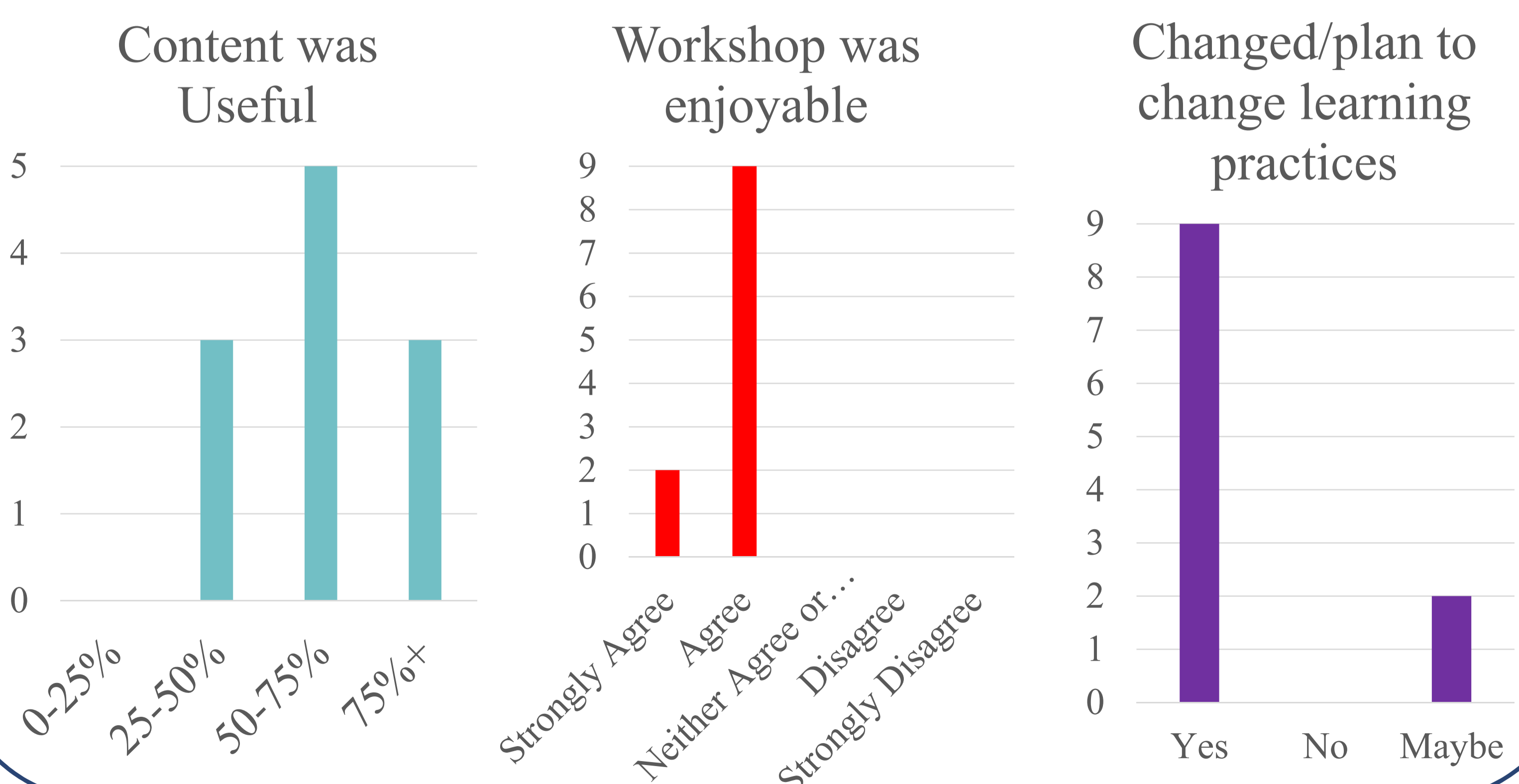
We identified the 20 most 'at-risk' students from Maths, Medicine and Veterinary Sciences and invited them to a two-hour near-peer led workshop 4 to 12 weeks before exams, depending on the school. For the workshop we:

- Developed content with near-peer tutors focussing on developing metacognitive skills to improve learning.
- Conducted a systematic review of literature pertaining to remediation students 'at-risk' of academic failure.

Following the workshop, participants were asked to complete an evaluation and were invited to a follow-up interview.

Results

- All students found the workshop enjoyable and many changed their study habits as a result of attending
- Attendees felt the project had been helpful and were not distressed by being identified as 'at-risk'
- No significant differences were observed in immediate summative performance of attendees vs. non-attendees
- Subsequent analysis of later exam performance suggests no long-term improvement, however several of the students who failed the first diet of exams have withdrawn from their courses.



Early Warning System - Wed 12th Nov Session Plan

ICE BREAKER (eg. name and hobby)
 Explain why they have been invited and what we're planning to cover
 Attendees list 5 things that they do well and 5 things that could do with some improvement

Attendees were uncomfortable at the start but ~~became~~ engaged more during Ex 2

open up the following to a discussion:

WHAT WAS UNEXPECTEDLY DIFFERENT (COMPARED TO SCHOOL)
 WHAT WE'D WISHED WE HAD KNOWN
 WHAT HELPED US LEARN
 WHERE TO GO FOR ADVICE

Structure
 students no idea of exam structure
 had little idea of PAs and MathsBase
 most seemed aware of why were invited

didn't mention Disabilities/Caricalling
 was a v. positive workshop didn't want to mention

video useful
 -> students seemed to really engage + relate

Groups of 4: Whole Group discussion
 Groups of 4: Maths group

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Early Warning Workshop Agenda

14:00 Introduction and outline from near-peers.
 Why the students have been invited
 What will be covered
 Questions
 14:15 Near peers will give a short presentation/summary of their experiences on first year.
 What helped the near-peers learn
 What they wish they had known when starting
 What was unexpectedly different from school-level studying
 Where to go for advice
 14:30 Exam Skills
 Discussion - what exam techniques worked for them in the past? What might be different about open book exams?
 14:45 Past Paper Review
 Analyse questions. Plan answers but do not solve completely. Locate relevant theorems/definitions in textbook.
 15:15 Group review
 Decide on goals/resolutions relating to exam technique and how to approach problems both in the exam and in study generally
 15:30 Graduate Advice for First Year Video
 Play video (5 minutes)
 15:35 Group review of video
 Which advice did they agree/disagree with? Decide on goals as a result of watching the video.
 15:45 Tea/Coffee

Conclusions & Take-home Messages

- Identifying students who are 'at-risk' can be done sensitively
- Addressing metacognitive skill development alone does not seem to have significantly improved performance
- There is still work to be done to identify 'at-risk' students' needs and how to address them.
- The workshop and training materials/guidance notes will be available on a free-to-use basis at <http://sefce.net/en-gb/page/transit>

References

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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