



Extended Orientation 2008

First steps towards a First Year Experience Program at UJ...

Presented to the First South African FYE conference, Stellenbosch, September 2008.

By André van Zyl

Content of this presentation



- Background
- Extended orientation 2008
- Student and staff feedback
- Student tracking data
- Lessons learnt and the way forward
- Questions



Background

Background



- Retention issues in South African HE
- The New Funding Framework
- The Academic Development Unit at UJ (ADU)
- Retention and student success at UJ
- The importance of the first year
- Academic Integration and Social Integration (Tinto)

Background



- ADU involvement with the first year students at UJ
- The past...
- More coordinated efforts...
 - Project Mpumelelo 2007
 - Extended academic orientations 2008/9
 - First Year Experience 2010?



Extended orientations in 2008

Academic orientations 2008



- Academic orientations implemented in two faculties during 2008
- New cooperative partnerships
- Involvement commenced two weeks before official classes started
- Three to five hours per session
- Interventions during first semester

Basic Implementation Principles



- Support from the Deans
- ADU and faculty representative
- Plan orientation sessions
- Use actual academic material where possible
- Try to create a “real life” experience
- Integrated effort between ADU and Faculty
- Logistics surrounding session
- Student opinion
- Research on effectiveness

Sessions for 2008



- Total of 9 sessions
- 25 AD staff and 6 Faculty staff involved
- Three campuses
- Large venues and split up for AD intervention
- Sessions of between 150 and 500 students
- Less than 50% of expected attendance

Extended Orientation 2008



- Faculties of Economic and Financial sciences and Humanities
- **Differences** between implementations
 - Having an actual academic lecture presented
 - Use of actual textbook and lecture content vs. related articles
 - Reading course during quarter 1
 - Workshops in academic subjects (direct vs. indirect links to orientation)

Academic Orientation Sessions



- During orientation week
- Actual academic content
- Format
 - Student profile questionnaire
 - Academic Lecture (FEFS)
 - Reading for understanding (textbook chapter/article)
 - Making a summary and memorization
- Student feedback



Lecturer and Student Feedback

Lecturers Comment...



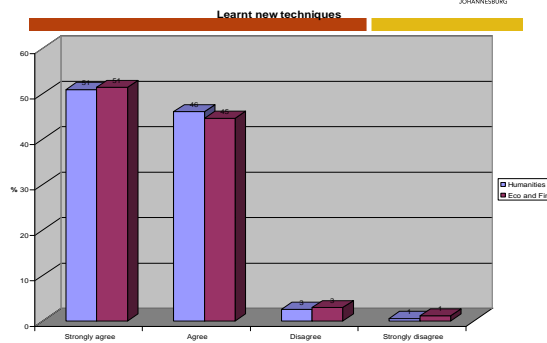
- The members of ADU have assisted me in my capacity as Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee (of my Faculty) in developing a programme for academic orientation for first year students in my during 2008 This was implemented before commencement of studies in February. As a result of the success of their assistance, we are already making plans for Orientation 2009!

Student Feedback

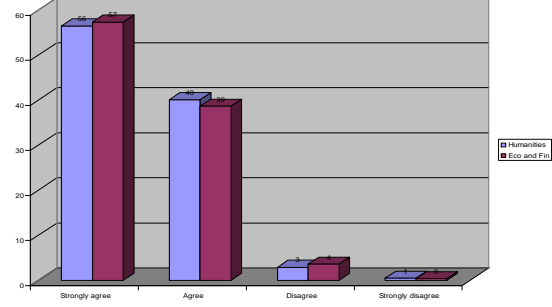


- Questionnaire with 8 closed and a open question
- Overwhelming positive response
- Responses
 - Eco and Fin 725 responses
 - Humanities 788 responses

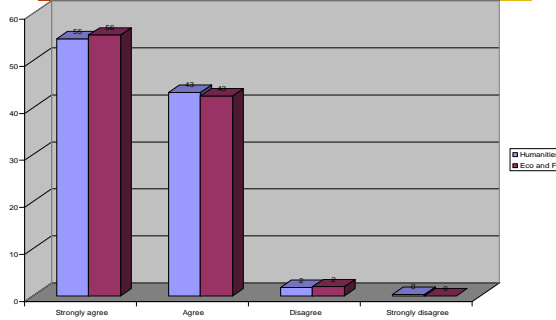
Student Feedback



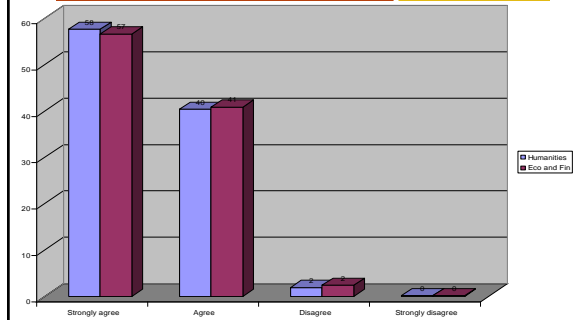
Recommend to others



Apply to your studies



Positive contribution



The session started on time. Thank you.
I learned how to memorise and recall it.
-
I already heard this before.
Very good and useful.
Well prepared and provided me with lots of information.
It was great because they were lively.
The session is really a good thing for students.
It was interesting.
-
It was well presented and the energetic facilitators made it fun.
The session is good for first year students.
I learned that learning is all about achieving.
-
-
The session was very helpful.
The session was practical and applicable.
I recommend these workshops to other students.
It was great and I enjoyed it.
I recommend these types of sessions to all first years..
-
The session was very enjoyable but too long.
Very enjoyable.
Good job.
Write times and dates of workshops in the provided brochures.
This will really help with my studies.
-
The sessions must be done through out the year.
A long but worth it session on how to pass my degree.
Your time management was the best. Thank you!!
The session contributed a lot to me knowledge I already have.
This kind of sessions is very helpful to students.



Student tracking

Student tracking



- 2342 students tracked
- 583(25%) attended orientation
- 1759 (75%) did not attend orientation
- Three main subjects for the first semester
 - Economics
 - Accounting
 - Business Management

Results

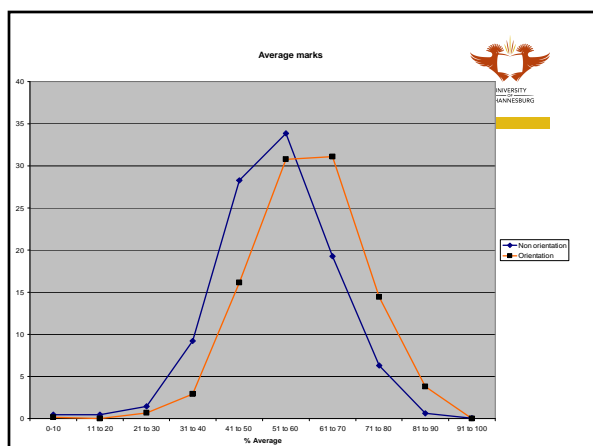


Attendees

- 583 students
- Average of 60% for three subjects
- 20% had an average mark lower than 50%
- 26% failed Economics in the first semester

Non-attendees

- 1759 students
- Average of 53% for all three subjects
- 40% had an average mark lower than 50%
- 44% failed Economics in the first semester



Lessons learnt and the way forward

Lessons learnt and the way forward



- The value of using actual academic material
- The value of direct cooperation between AD and Faculty members
- Include real life experiences before class starts
- Reading development can be developed further (compulsory?)
- Ensuring that students know a few people in the class they will actually be attending

Lessons learnt and the way forward



- The weaker students are not attending interventions designed to assist them
- Students who do not attend orientation are missing out...
- The value of not just using orientation to "dump" information
- Way forward
 - Doing an assessment during orientation...
 - Expanded orientation involvement
 - Social and academic integration
 - Fully fledged and intentional FYE program...

Contact Information



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