

**Its' not them its' us: Adapting the
institution to improve student
success.**

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Problem

University of Huddersfield Business Degree
Nearly 30% of students fail to progress to year 2

Solution

Adapt students

- Peer mentoring
- Academic skills support
- Counselling
- Pre-entry engagement
- Induction

Adapt the institution

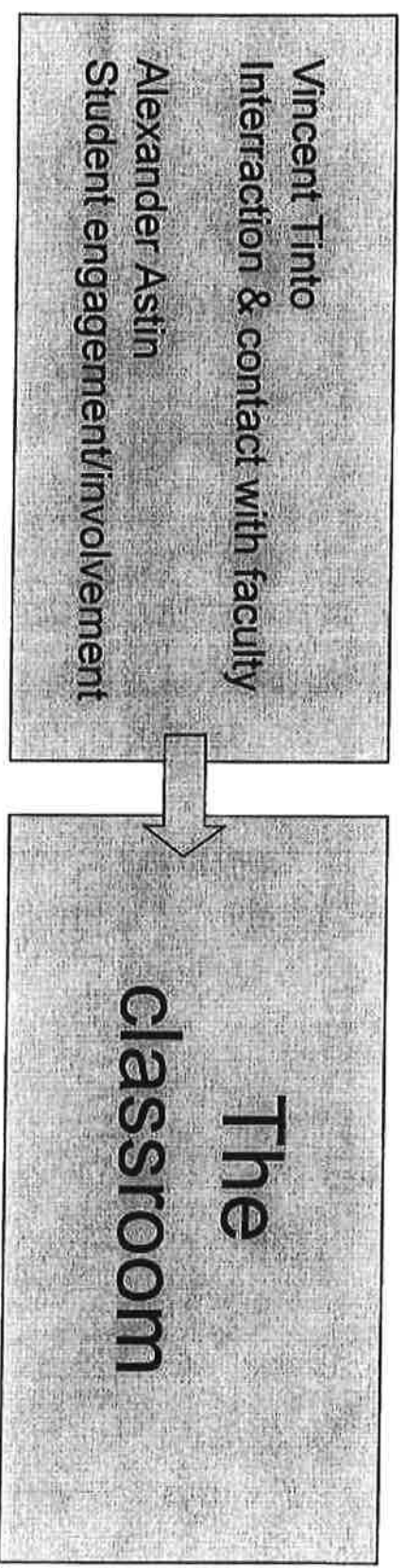
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Underlying theoretical support for institutional adaptation

"The suggestions by students for improving the conditions for the university freshmen in order of frequency are as follows: smaller classes; more personal relation with the teacher; more first hand vocational courses; more freedom of expression and discussion in classes" (Cooper 1928) USA

"But it is all too easy for universities, whose teachers have been, after all, some of the most successful students under the existing system, to assume that the student must be made to fit the institution (or drop out), rather than adapting the institution to fit the student". (Fulton 1977) UK

"Central to the emerging discourse is the idea that students should maintain their identity in their culture of origin, retain their social networks outside the institution, have their cultural capital valued by the institution and experience learning that fits with their preferences". (Zepke & Leach 2005)



Changing the classroom environment

2004 lecture/tutorial system replaced....

Old system: 1 x 50 minute lecture and 6/7 x tutorials

This system was in operation up to 2004. For each of the 5 core modules there was a weekly lecture and 6-7 smaller tutorials.

New system 4 x 2 hour seminars for each module

Each of the 5 modules was changed so that there were 4 x 2 hour seminars at various points in the week.

Effect on timetabling

Typical student timetable pre-change

	9:15	10:15	11:15	12:15	13:15	14:15	15:15	16:15	17:15	18:15
Monday					BR (C)					
Tuesday										
Wednesday										
Thursday		OR (C)				MG (C)				
Friday			AG (C)							

Poor learning environment, fractured learning episodes (different tutors)
 Inconvenient (mismatch with student circumstances)
 Difficult to monitor lecture attendance

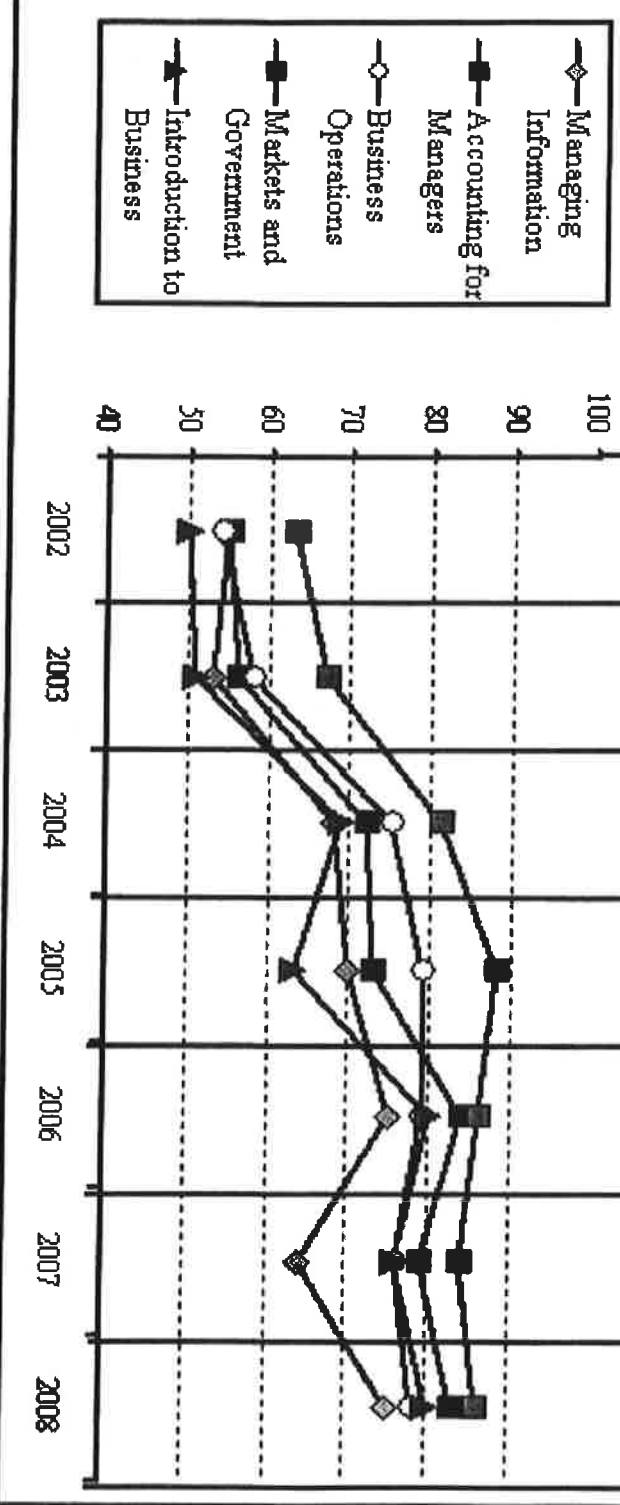
Typical student timetable post-change

	9:15	10:15	11:15	12:15	13:15	14:15	15:15	16:15	17:15	18:15
Monday				AG	BR					
Tuesday										
Wednesday										
Thursday				AG		MI				
Friday						GP				

Focused, integrated learning episode, interactive.
 Flexible timetable personalised for student
 Facilitates effective attendance monitoring.

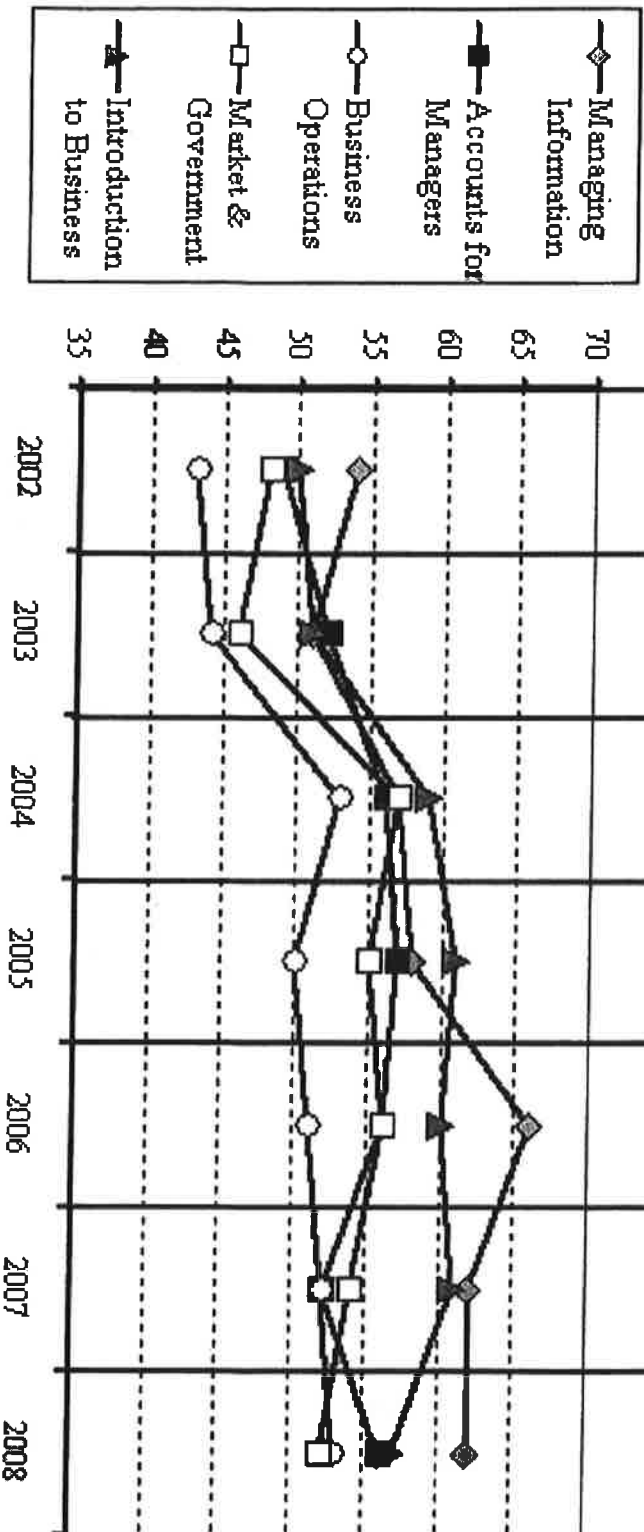
Attendance

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Managing Information	55	53	68	70	75	64	75
Accounting for Managers	55	36	72	73	84	79	83
Business Operations	54	58	75	79	79	76	78
Markets and Government	63	67	81	88	86	84	86
Introduction to Business	50	51	69	63	80	76	80



Student performance

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Managing Information	54	51	57	58	66	62	62
Accounts for Managers	49	52	56	57	56	52	56
Business Operations	43	44	53	50	51	52	53
Market & Government	48	46	57	55	56	54	52
Introduction to Business	50	51	59	61	60	61	57



Retention and progression

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Students Enrolled	98	110	95	114	109	106	121	753
Students Progressing to year 2	74	74	73	93	88	87	89	578
	75.5%	67.3%	76.8%	81.6%	80.7%	82.1%	73.6%	76.8%

Academic success (a)	91.4%	91.4%	98.6%	98.9%	96.7%	97.8%	96.7%	95.9%
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(a) This figure represents students passing sufficient credits to progress to year 2 as a proportion of those who complete all required assessments.

Seminar vs Lecture/tutorial

	A Lecture % performance	Sample size	B Seminar % performance	Sample size	Difference (B-A)
Gender	Male	111	53.8	247	7.0
	Female	68	58.9	161	9.1
Ethnicity	White	129	57.8	278	8.3
	Asian	34	51.6	85	8.6
	Black	3*	52.9	23	19.2
Age	Chinese	12	50.3	13	0.2
	Mature	25	53.2	65	8.4
	Young	154	56.4	341	8.0
UCAS Points	0-200pts	51	50.4	92	7.3
	201-300pts	39	56.4	117	4.4
	301+ points	18	64.8	91	1.2

The student perspective

LECTURE/TUTORIAL		SEMINAR	
Total responses	107	Total responses	255
Responses per student	0.89	Responses per student	1.88
Can't find the material		Can't find the material	15%
Good if lecture works with tutorial	20%	Good tutor-student interaction, more personal	35%
Good if material is presented well	13%	Efficient use of time, good pace	32%
Can hide, use phone, not attend, sign in friends	6%	More time to learn, breaks, easy to make notes	19%
Good if lecturer is good		More time to learn, breaks, easy to make notes	19%
Relaxed can concentrate, no interruptions	4%	Interaction with peers, group work.	16%
Can be anonymous, don't have to join in if don't want	3%	Can concentrate, few distractions	10%
Good for independence, self study	2%		
Total responses	207	Total responses	92
Responses per student	1.73	Responses per student	0.77
Poor teaching, limited methods, "Death by Powerpoint", Boring	34%	Too long if break too short or no break	13%
Disruptive and noisy, too many distractions	18%	Concentration problems towards the end	9%
Lecture/tutorial system doesn't work/not organised	13%	Not enough theory, too much discussion	7%
Inconvenient timetables, no breaks, too long	10%	Too much material	1%
Lack of resources, no handouts	2%		
Pointless attending if stuff on Blackboard	1%		

STUDENT OPEN COMMENTS.

Survey comparing the lecture/tutorial system with the 2 hour seminar system.

I think the seminar system enables people to learn better. This is because there are less distractions and you can ask the tutor to clarify things and re-explain things again. Also it allows you to build up a relationship with the tutor so if you need to speak with them about the module it is much easier.

The seminar system was by far the better system. I felt I was learning and interacting with others I also felt that could approach the teacher whenever I needed to. The lecture system is old fashioned and too theory based. We come in and copy notes at the speed of light and we never feel like we are learning but just copying. This method of learning takes more time to learn and digest.

I think that in seminars the students have a better chance to get to know each other especially if every student would be mostly staying in the same seminar groups (high school style of teaching).

Seminars I think are the best way of getting the work across. Small groups make it easy for students to work with each other plus the teacher can help students until they understand what they are stuck on rather than worry about having a lecture room full of students waiting.

The seminar system was better as it gave direct teaching. The information was covered better and in more clarity. If I am confused or want to know more I can ask, I can make decent notes and do more first hand rather than just listen.

I do enjoy lectures generally especially when handouts are given to help note taking as sometimes I find it hard to take detailed notes and keep up with the lecture. Lectures can be very interesting if the lecturers try and engage the students and putting the slides on Blackboard before the lecture. This is a must I wish all lecturers did it. However I still prefer seminars overall I find it much easier to build a relationship with the teachers and ask questions. It can all depend on the person taking the seminar though as some lecturers can be quite abrasive and assume the students know everything already which of course is quite ridiculous.

*I believe both systems can work side by side if the lecturers are good enough at them. One downside is that due to the quality of most of the lecturers I have had I have doubts about whether either system would work completely. Tutors like ***** and ***** are excellent at lectures and seminars however sadly they are in a minority at this.*

The lecture or seminar are both useful but depend upon the structure and quality of teaching. Although personally I prefer lectures I believe seminars are better for everyone.

Better to vary as some tutors are better than others at interacting with students in seminars so lecturers are better for lectures as you can get bored easily if the tutor doesn't engage you. It is easy to switch off in lectures.

My feelings are that everything is covered again in tutorials that were covered in lectures therefore I believe lectures are not as important as seminars. Lecturers go into more detail in seminars

As a part time student I have found the lecture mixed with the full time students to be quite frustrating the lectures are quite noisy and some students quite clearly don't want to be there. As I am paying for the course and doing this in my own time as well as doing a full time job I don't really want to be in a lecture with people who don't want to learn, are just there to chat. As our tutorials can be every other week it can mean that the subject was finished so the subject is not fresh in your mind.

It means I don't have to come to university so often, like when it's a lecture on one day then a tutorial on a different day I have to come in twice. With a seminar it's all on one day and its over with.