

ENHANCING LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR FIRST YEAR GEOGRAPHY STUDENTS

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) have been significant in enhancing learning outcomes (Figs.1, 2) and minimizing attrition rates (7.5%) for University of Queensland (UQ) geography students.

- based on the Supplemental Instruction (SI) model in USA
- administered by a staff member with a geography discipline background and tasked with responsibility for PASS
- leaders work closely with course coordinators in preparation of materials and are considered part of the teaching team
- voluntary, one hour, student-centered and student-directed sessions
- provide immediate feedback within an interactive and friendly, collaborative learning environment
- small class size of 10-20 students facilitated by paid, high achieving, second and third year students
- tertiary entrance level, OP10+, students have most to gain (Fig. 2)
- leaders complete 4 hours of formal training, work in pairs and paid the demonstrator rate (A\$35/hr)
- PASS commenced in geography in 1995 for one course and has expanded to six, first year courses in the School GPEM
- Semester 1 enrolments in PASS are consistently higher than in Semester 2 by 10% (Fig. 3)
- students attending PASS provide useful feedback (Figs. 4.1, 4.2)
- national recognition achieved through a Carrick Award of A\$25,000 presented to the UQ PASS team, Canberra Nov 07 for *Programs that Enhance Learning: The First Year Experience*

Fig.1 Improved grades: GEOS1100 Sem II 08

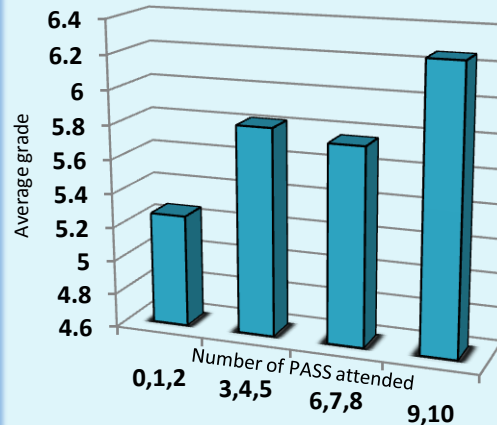


Fig. 2 All students GEOS1100: effect of tertiary entrance score (OP 1-26) 2007

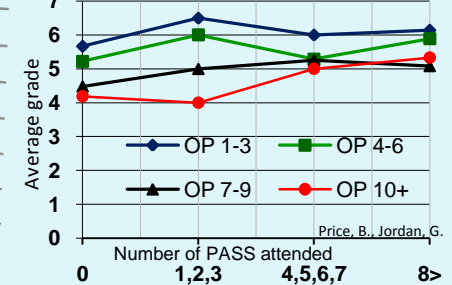
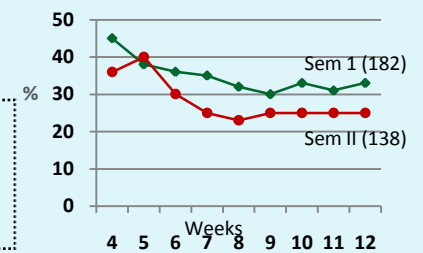


Fig.3 PASS attendance: % of class GEOS1100 2008



"The PASS leader explains concepts really well and goes through key topics so I understand concepts much better. Group participation and activities are good because hands-on stuff helps you to learn better." Student feedback, Sem I 08

Fig. 4.1 PASS: enjoyed most

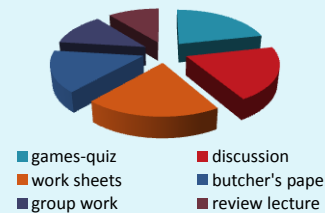
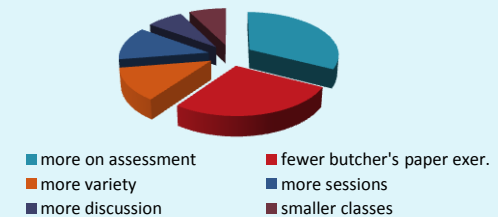


Fig. 4.2 PASS: student suggestions



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