Decreasing Student Attrition Rate by Tutor/Counselor Interventions

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The Open University of Israel

- Established in 1974
- Started teaching in October 1976
- Teaches Currently around 46,200 students (the largest university in Israel)
- Exercises an open admission policy
- Operates in 50+ study centers across Israel
Distributed Teaching Responsibility

- Academic faculty
- Course coordinators
- Tutor
  - Students
- Tutor
  - Students
- Tutor
  - Students
Evaluation Department

- Conducts student surveys in all of the 700+ courses every semester
- Conducts tutors surveys every semester
- Monitors learning analytics projects
- Monitors pilot studies
Support Division

- Ongoing academic counseling
- Special support to disabled students
- Workshops for course coordinators and tutors
- Workshops for a variety of student clienteles
- Supporting individual students through a variety of intervention techniques
Tutor/Counselor Interventions

- An additional tutorial hour for students from the Arab sector
- Study skills and writing workshops for novice students in introductory courses
- Addressing potential early dropouts
Third Hour to Students from the Arab Sector

- 15% of OUI’s students are from the Arab sector
- High dropout rate in first courses (35% to 55%)
- Hebrew literacy deficiency
- Academic study skills deficiency
Special Support Mechanisms for Students from the Arab Sector

- A handful of courses were translated into Arabic (students allowed to study a third of their degree in Arabic)
- Many courses enable to submit assignments in Arabic
- Hebrew workshops for novice students
- Third hour project – devoted to practicing study skills
Third Hour Project

- A third hour was added to the weekly two-hour tutorials to practice mainly study skills, text comprehension and assignment preparation

- 826 students from the Arab sector participated in this project in 2014/15
## Third Hour Project

### Students’ Feedback

- **I feel more confident in managing academic studies**
  - Very much: 79.1%
  - More: 14.5%
  - Not at all: 6.4%

- **The study skills assist me in preparing the tutor assignments**
  - Very much: 77.7%
  - More: 15.9%
  - Not at all: 6.4%

- **I feel that my general study skills improved**
  - Very much: 74.1%
  - More: 19.1%
  - Not at all: 6.8%
Study Skills and Writing Workshops to Novice Students

- In 2014/5 a special pilot was conducted on novice students in introductory courses in the Department of Sociology and Communication
- 274 students participated in the workshops (11% from the total student cohort in these courses)
- Around 70% female students
- Around 30% did not have a high school diploma
# Success Rates

- **Students who did not participate in the workshops**
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full completion</th>
<th>Partial completion</th>
<th>Dropout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
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</table>

- **Students who participated in the workshops**
  
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
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</table>
Major Results of the Study Skills and Writing Workshops

Students who participated in the workshops:

- Enrolled in more courses in subsequent semesters
- Completed successfully more courses after 4 semesters
- Study more courses in any given semester
Addressing Potential Early Dropouts

- In 2015/16 a pilot was conducted on 530 novice students from the Department of Sociology and Communication who had not submitted their first assignment.
- A counselor from the Support Unit approached them by phone discussing with them their difficulties and trying to encourage them to submit the assignment.
Addressing Potential Early Dropouts

- **Students who were approached**
  - 68.4% Successful completion
  - 31.6% Dropout

- **Students who were not approached**
  - 63.6% Successful completion
  - 36.4% Dropout
General Conclusions

- All of the successful pilot interventions are going to be implemented on a large scale.
- Further interventions initiated by learning analytics are conducted on an ongoing basis in relation to: technology enhancement, attrition patterns, dropout of students at an advanced stage of study, etc.
Thank you for your attention!