

# Meeting students' needs: learning and teaching design targeting student transition



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# The First Year Experience (FYE) initiative at UTS

## FYE strategy involves:

- Small grant scheme
- Forums (4 a year)
- FYE Coordinator
- FYE faculty  
Coordinators
- Online resources
- Tutor guides for  
successful transition



# Kift's Transition Pedagogy (TP)

## 'Broad Organising Principles for First Year Curriculum

Good first year curriculum design should abide by the six interconnected organising principles identified in the Fellowship research, to facilitate all students fully achieving desired learning outcomes:

- [Transition](#)
- [Diversity](#)
- [Design](#)
- [Engagement](#)
- [Assessment](#)
- [Evaluation and Monitoring](#)'

Kift: <http://transitionpedagogy.com/fy-curriculum-principles/>

# The ALL developer's role

In partnership with subject coordinators, we:

- identify areas of concern
- explain how the grants work
- introduce staff to the TPs
- help subject coordinators write the grant applications
- participate on the grants

# FYE small grant scheme

- Supports 'bottom-up' engagement in FYE (Kift, Nelson & Clarke, 2010)
- Provides resourcing for academics teaching low SES – and all – FY students (Devlin et al., 2012)
- Supports academic engagement in innovation (McKenzie et al., 2005)
  - Grants 'legitimise' academic time and commitment
  - Outcomes from grants can be published and shared
  - Academics often lack resources for small-scale innovation and evaluation

# Law and FYE

## Grant 1: Developing a professional identity

### Engagement and design

- Developing a **professional identity** through **reflective writing** tasks with an explicit focus on **self management** and professional management

### How

- **ALL** ran Tutor training in Reflective Writing and Professional Identity in a two hour workshop, and prepared tutorial material for teaching reflective writing

# Grant 2

## Development of resources

### Engagement

a significant number of students encounter a degree of difficulty **transitioning from** the basic level of theoretical engagement required at secondary school **to the more intense engagement** required to deal with the breath, depth and intensity of subject content and the conceptually challenging learning environment at tertiary level in law ‘

### Design instructional materials to:

- guide students through the set readings,
- assist them to develop competence at critically analysing the argument/s posited by the readings,
- extract meaning from and make judgements
- apply applicable principles and/or concepts to legal issues and problems and make informed decisions.

# Science

**Case study 1:** Series of FYE grants embedding discipline specific academic and professional communication skills development in core first year subjects

**Transition pedagogies:** Design; Diversity

2014 - Academic Integrity and Paraphrasing

2015 - Scientific reading practices

2016 - Scientific report writing practices

2017 - Synthesis and critical evaluation

**Materials:**

- Online interactive modules
- Face-to-face workshops



# Case study 2: Supporting threshold learning in first year Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

Point Location and  
Acupuncture Anatomy



**Transition pedagogies:**  
Transition; Design

**Materials:**

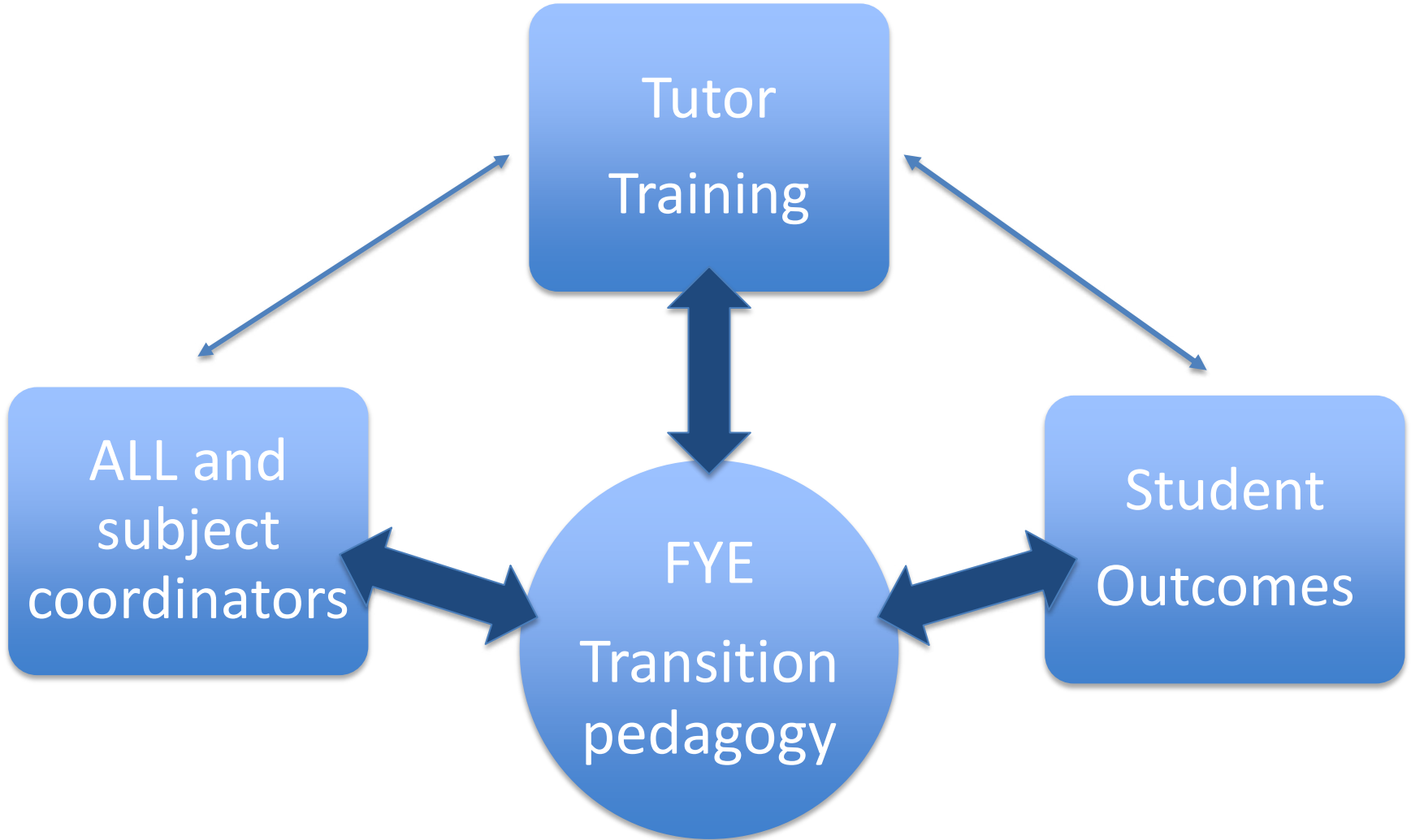
- Online interactive tutorials and quizzes
- Series of videos (YouTube)

# Activity (3 mins)

You've been awarded a small FYE grant (\$4000) to support T&L and student transition in your subject. What would you focus on?

<a href="#"><u>Transition</u></a>	supporting students to build on past educational experiences and become independent, lifelong learners, at university, and beyond.
<a href="#"><u>Diversity</u></a>	recognising that students come from varied backgrounds, groups, and experiences and have different needs and approaches to learning.
<a href="#"><u>Design</u></a>	formulating teaching approaches and resources to support these students for independent, active and successful study.
<a href="#"><u>Engagement</u></a>	connecting with students for collaborative and creative learning in and out of class.
<a href="#"><u>Assessment</u></a>	strategies for formative feedback and 'workshopping' criteria and exemplars with students.
<a href="#"><u>Evaluation &amp; Monitoring</u></a>	strategies to enable teachers to identify students at risk, intervene in a timely way and reflect on ways to improve classroom practice.

# Practice change



# Grant holder comments

“The outcomes of the project were achieved well beyond our expectations. The ALL developer’s leadership and skillful guidance on good pedagogical practice was also key to developing effective teaching and learning strategies to improve student engagement and learning outcomes.” (TCM practitioners, 2015)

# What the first year experience . . .

“. . . did for me was to really enlighten me to the fact that although I'd been teaching in the first year space for many years mostly what I'd been doing was focusing on the curriculum and the content . . . So for me that was a whole paradigm shift in how I thought about what these students are experiencing when they come in.” (Business academic, 2016)

# The student experience

**Self management plan** *“The transfer from high school to uni was difficult I felt very clueless about what was going on. But it helped me to keep on track with all work and assignments.”* (Law, 2014)

**Professional identity**

*“This subject has completely changed my view of the profession and understanding of the ethical considerations I’ll face in the future.”*  
(Law, 2014)

*“I liked how the subject prepared first year students with no background knowledge in science with the tools they needed for their following years in science, and how they taught you ... the basics of writing a scientific report.”* (PSP SFS Aut ‘16).



# FYE forums

“There are so many things that one can learn from other approaches, because other academics in other disciplines think differently. In that sense . . . that was probably the best aspect of the first year experience as a whole. (Physics academic, 2016)

# FYE forum topics, 2017

## Topics:

- *Tutors as partners in student transition*
- *Ways to belong: improving students' experiences of learning and belonging*
- *Orientating students towards work, professional practice and careers from year 1*
- *Students as partners in transition success*





# Successes and outcomes

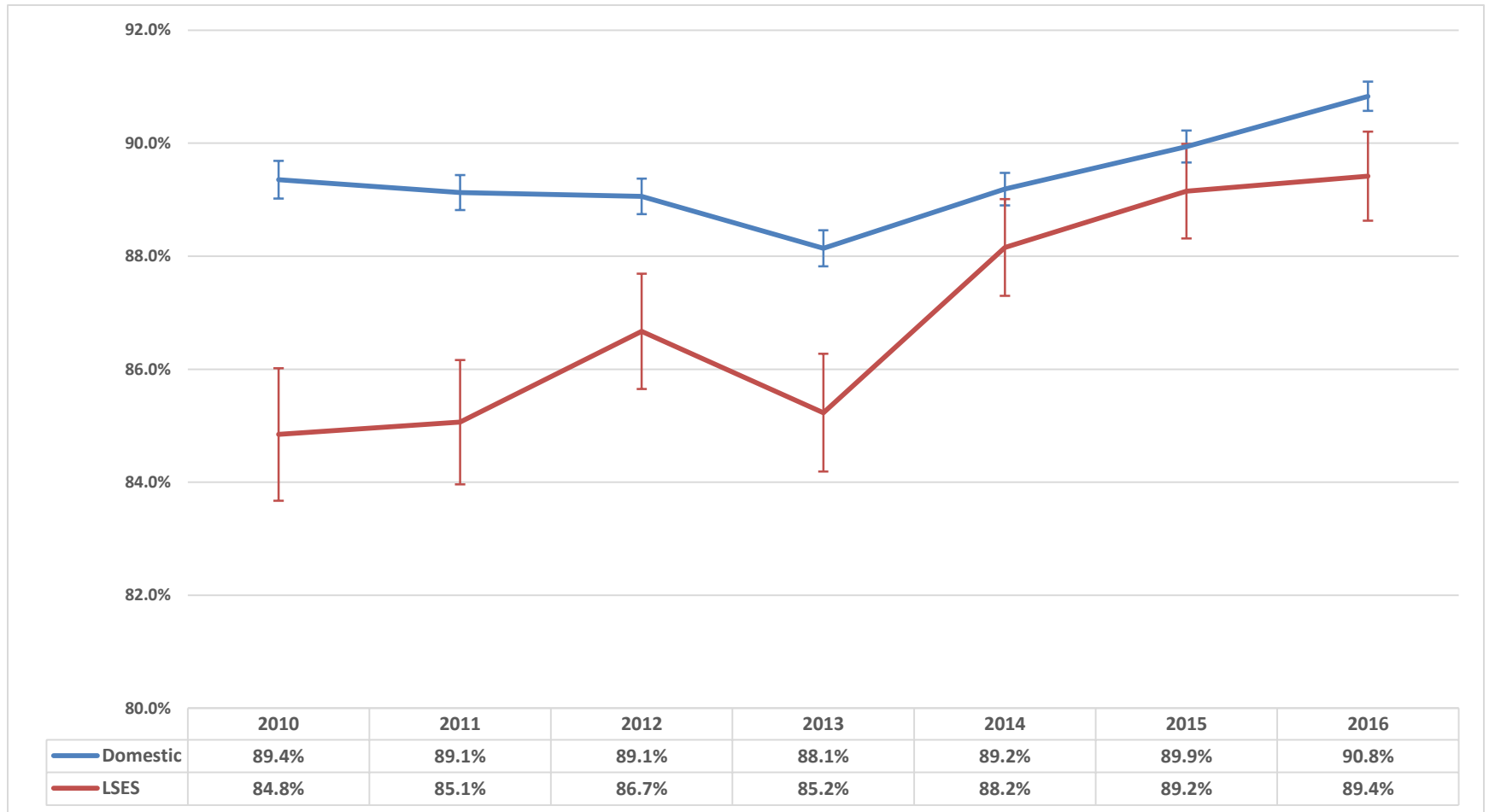
## Practice change:

- Given permission to take risks and pilot ideas
- Developing best pedagogical practices
- Improved understanding of student learning
- Building a language around transition
- Opportunities to work in new collaborative T&L partnerships

## Institutional level:

- Sustained uptake of FYE grants, attendance at forums etc.
- Maintained or improved subject pass rates over the last five years despite a 33% growth in commencing students
- Community of practice

# Pass Rate of Domestic and LSES for commencing undergraduate (UG) cohorts from 2010 to 2016.



Egea & McKenzie, 2017

# Acknowledgements and References

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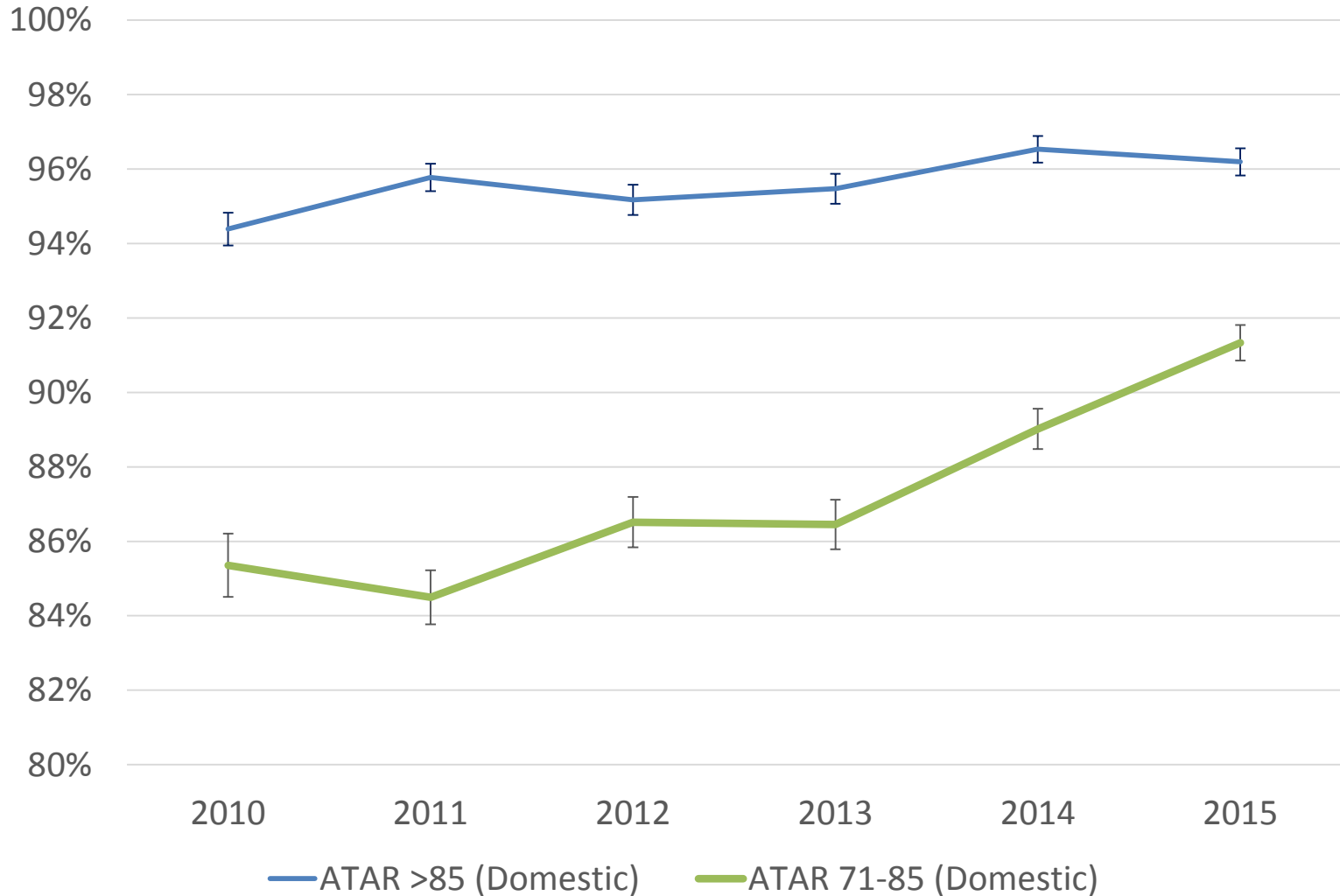
# Thank you



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# All domestic student pass rates, in ATAR bands



# Number of FYE grants per faculty over the period 2011 to 2017

