

Opening the floodgates?

Using peer learning to facilitate an open access academic literacy “shopfront”



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

CENTRE FOR

**TEACHING &
LEARNING**

www.newcastle.edu.au

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What is the Writing Drop In program?

- Daily “drop in” style sessions for front-line academic literacy support
- Learning Advisers (LAs) and Mentors provide individualised feedback on student writing



The physical space

- Dedicated shopfront / physical space called the Learning Centre
- Located centrally and where the students are
- A central location is essential to program



Type of support offered

Ourimbah LD - Writing Drop In Attendance Records – 2017

Mentor: _____

Week: _____



Date	Start and Finish Time	Student Number	Course Code	<p>Please tick the areas of writing you would like support with during your visit.</p> <p><i>Mentors can only spend 20 minutes with a student and focus on 1 assessment item per visit.</i></p>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Structure of the text type (i.e. essay, report, annotated bibliographies) <input type="checkbox"/> Using evidence and referencing advice <input type="checkbox"/> Structure of the writing (i.e. flow between paragraphs, introductions, conclusions) <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphs <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary and language advice <input type="checkbox"/> Micro-features of writing (spelling, punctuation) <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to learning adviser or library <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to lecturer for content support
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Why was the model established?

- Target FYHE by providing ALL support / not over-servicing with lengthy consultations
- Double transition into tertiary study on a multisectoral campus; creates a need for a continuum of support.
- Shifting to an open access and student driven mode increases access to ALL support (given general workshops were poorly attended, costs, small staffing profile, etc.)
- Improves the process for academic and support staff referrals
- Provides an avenue to absorb the follow up requests generated from embedded ALL support
- A managed learning community normalises support and builds a sense of belonging
- Gaps between good practice ALL models and our context needs

Roles of LAs and Mentors

Learning Advisers (LAs)	Mentors
Partnerships with faculty and support staff – embedded work that feeds into drop in	Provide face-to-face first level support to students at any stage of assessment or study
Promotion – advertisements, lecture visits, communication with staff, open days and orientation stalls	Promotion – open day and orientation stalls
Recruitment, training and rostering of mentors	Assist in developing resources and training other mentors; experts on their discipline styles
Preparing assessment item schedule and resources linked to embedded ALL work	Refer students to LAs for further assistance or to redirect to other services
Work alongside mentors, maintain ALL and pedagogical perspectives	Contribute insights to refinement of the program operations

Writing Check List Resource

Writing Drop In Checklist

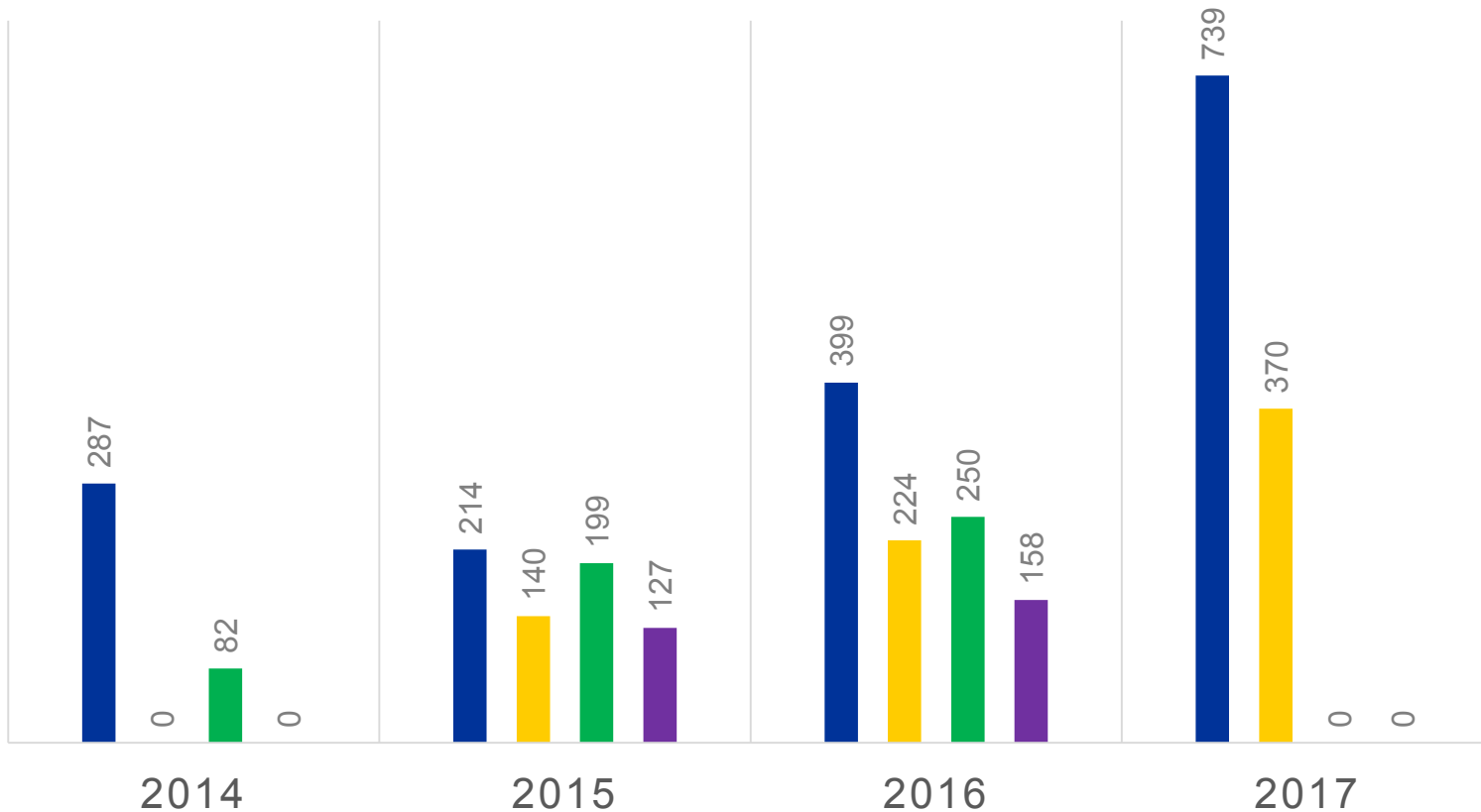
Focus Area	Comments/Actions
<p>Is the writing on task?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does the work CLEARLY align to the content, question and assessment rubric? Without going into detail of content area – is this alignment visible to an educated reader? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the writing address the content and question area consistently? Is the focus sustained throughout the writing? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the writing align with academic standards? <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate – is the writing clear? Is the language appropriate for academic English and the discipline? Does it incorporate evidence appropriately? 	
<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are all facts, information, statistics, tables, appendices and claims accompanied by an in-text citation (Author, Year, Page number)? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a clear distinction between my thoughts and those of the authors or sources I have read and cited? <input type="checkbox"/> Are pieces of evidence properly introduced, responded to, and addressed in my writing surrounding them? Are the choices for reporting verbs appropriate (i.e. suggests, claims, argues, etc.)? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the evidence appropriate, on-topic, relevant, and recent? <input type="checkbox"/> Are in-text citations written, punctuated, and formatted consistently? <input type="checkbox"/> Are reference list items written, punctuated, and formatted consistently? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the reference list arranged in alphabetical order? <input type="checkbox"/> Have all works cited in the writing been included in the reference list? <p><i>Note: Students should use an APA or Style guide to check the consistency of in-text citations and reference list items.</i></p>	
<p>Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does the work adhere to the text type structure? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the work have a clear introduction, body and conclusion? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the major points expressed clearly and connected within the paragraph? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the writing and information advance in a logical and clear way? <input type="checkbox"/> All information is written into paragraphs and sentences, no lists or dot points are used? 	

<p>Paragraphs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does each paragraph have a topic sentence? <input type="checkbox"/> Does each paragraph have a concluding sentence? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there smooth transitions or clear links between the paragraphs? <input type="checkbox"/> Does each paragraph focus on developing one idea? Is that idea clear and obvious to the reader? Does information need to be relocated? <input type="checkbox"/> Have headings been used? Are these appropriate for the length and content of the writing? 	
<p>Sentences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does each sentence express a complete idea? <input type="checkbox"/> Are sentences punctuated correctly? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the writing use a mix of simple, compound and complex sentences? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there any repetition in sentence structure or phrasing? 	
<p>Words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is the work written in a formal tone? (i.e. no slang, no contractions, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Has the work been written in third or first person consistently? Is the use of third or first person voice appropriate for this task? <input type="checkbox"/> Have appropriate words been used to introduce and frame evidence? <input type="checkbox"/> Has language been used consistently (tense, when listing items, etc.)? <input type="checkbox"/> Have any unnecessary words been removed to keep writing concise? Has any information been repeated unnecessarily? <input type="checkbox"/> Have any ambiguous or unclear words, and any weak pronouns or verbs been replaced to make the writing more precise? <input type="checkbox"/> Have joining words or phrases to show relationships been used clearly and appropriately? <input type="checkbox"/> Has terminology and jargon been used correctly? 	
<p>Micro features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Check spelling, especially the use of technical terms <input type="checkbox"/> Have apostrophes and commas been used correctly? <input type="checkbox"/> Where applicable, have colons and semicolons been used correctly? <input type="checkbox"/> Have in-text citations been punctuated correctly? Including appropriate use of 'inverted commas' where a direct quote has been used? <input type="checkbox"/> Have full stops been used at the end of sentences? 	
<p>Refer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Escalate writing support to a Learning Adviser for an individual appointment – student to bring writing check sheet to appointment <input type="checkbox"/> Recommend Learning Development workshops to student <input type="checkbox"/> Refer any content and course requirements back to the lecturer/tutor <input type="checkbox"/> Refer student to additional writing or study skills resources (i.e. analysing an assessment task, referencing guide, writing about evidence) <input type="checkbox"/> Refer student to a writing example to demonstrate the quality of work and the feature of academic writing to student. 	

Data Trend 1: continued user growth

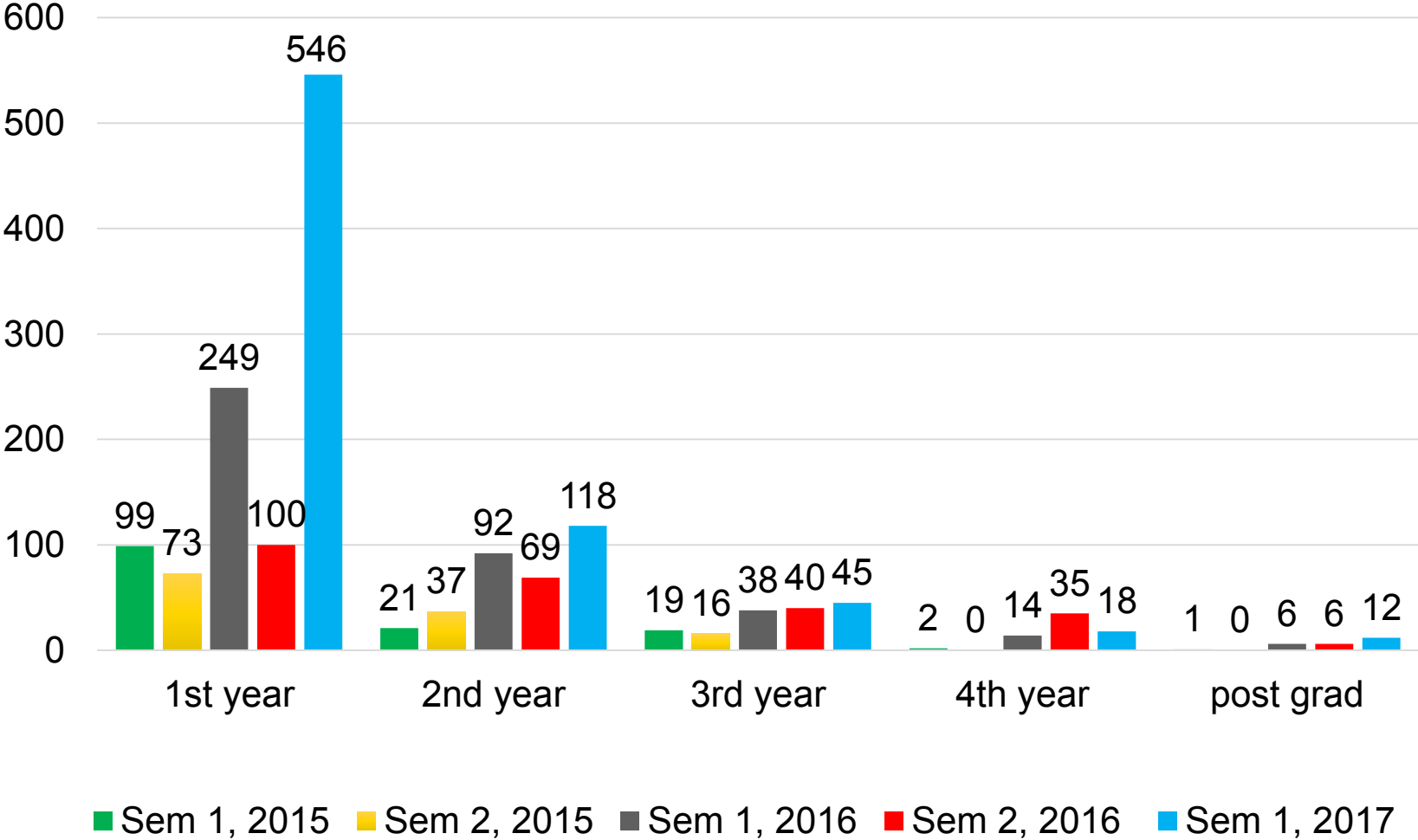
INDIVIDUAL USERS VS INDIVIDUAL VISITS 2014-2017

- Sem 1 Total Attendances
- Sem 1 Number of student users
- Sem 2 Total Attendances
- Sem 2 Number of student users



Data Trend 2: continued use beyond first year

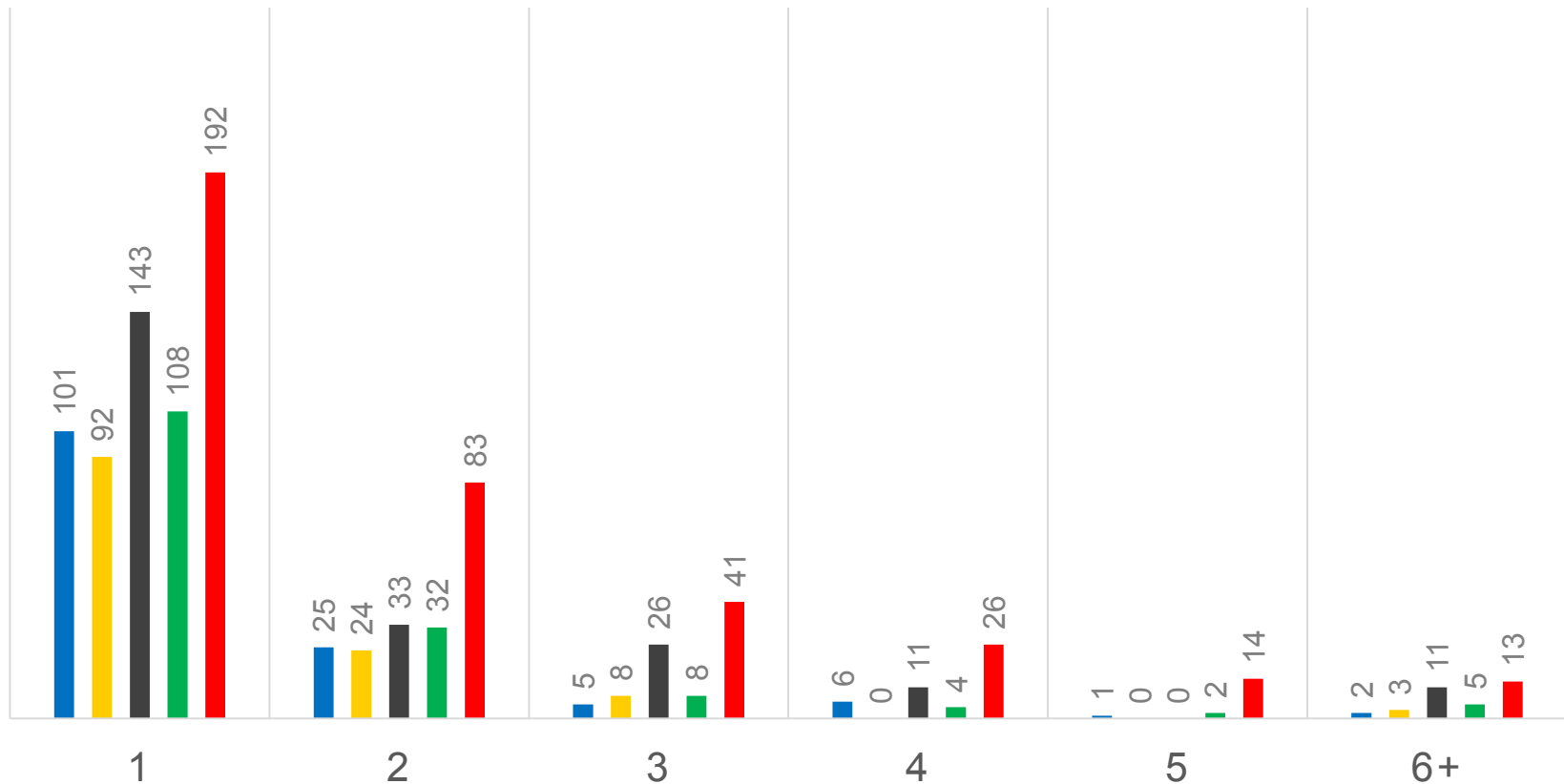
CURRENT YEAR OF STUDY FOR DROP IN USERS



Data Trend 3: repeat users

NUMBER OF VISITS PER INDIVIDUAL USER

■ Sem1, 2015 ■ Sem2, 2015 ■ Sem1, 2016 ■ Sem2, 2016 ■ Sem 1, 2017

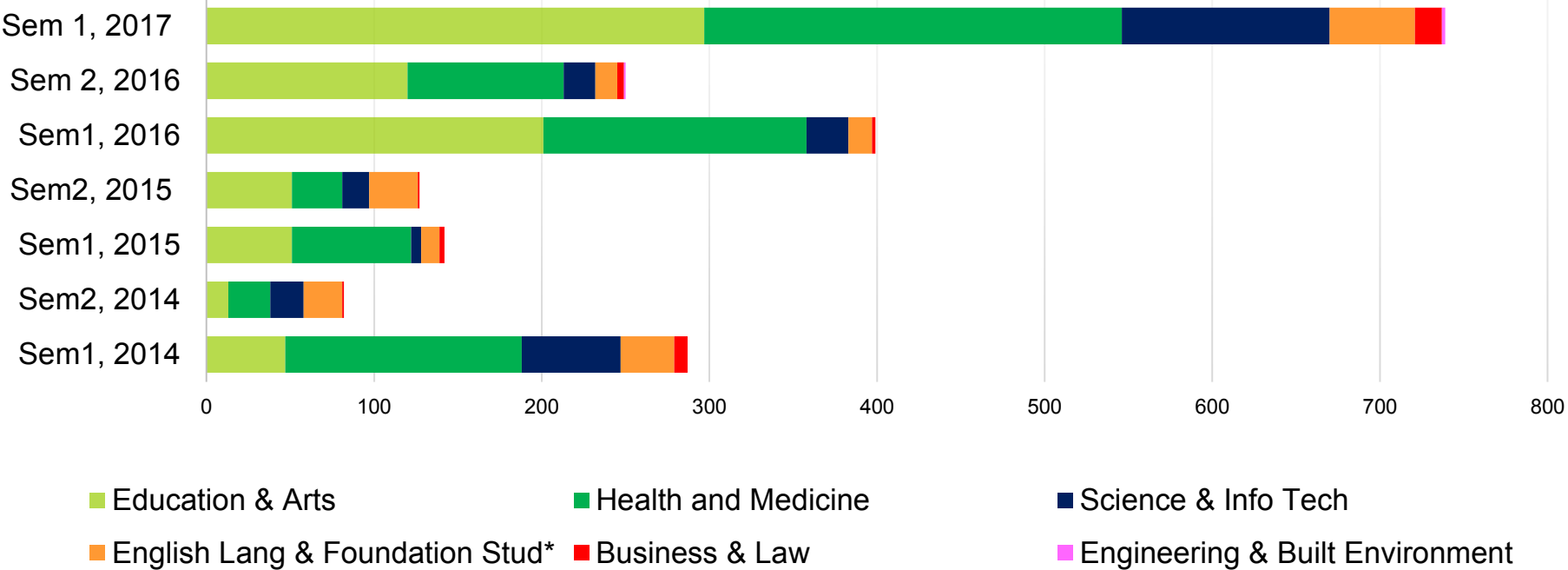


Interesting user data to emerge...

...and the stories!

Campus	Sem1, 2016	Sem2, 2016	Sem1, 2017
Central Coast (Ourimbah)	364	205	645
Distance Education	0	0	1
GradSchool.com	2	0	1
Newcastle (Callaghan)	33	44	90
Port Macquarie	0	0	2
Sydney CBD	0	1	0

DROP IN USERS BY FACULTY



Why it works well? Our process of opening the flood gates and making it sustainable...

- timely access for time-poor students; reduces barriers to accessing support
- dedicated shopfront, and the culture and physical layout of the campus
- peer-supported models could provide a means for not only normalising academic behaviours and literacy on a pragmatic level, but also move towards establishing an academic culture and community at a deeper level
- benefits of employing HDR students as mentors to provide triage service for literacy and study support
- the collaborative and reciprocal relationship with LAs working alongside HDR student mentors – with distinct scopes of practice
- Consistent “expectation management,” with referral strategies in place

THANK YOU



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References

Reference list available through the following link & QR code:

<http://bit.ly/2gUIVLM>

