

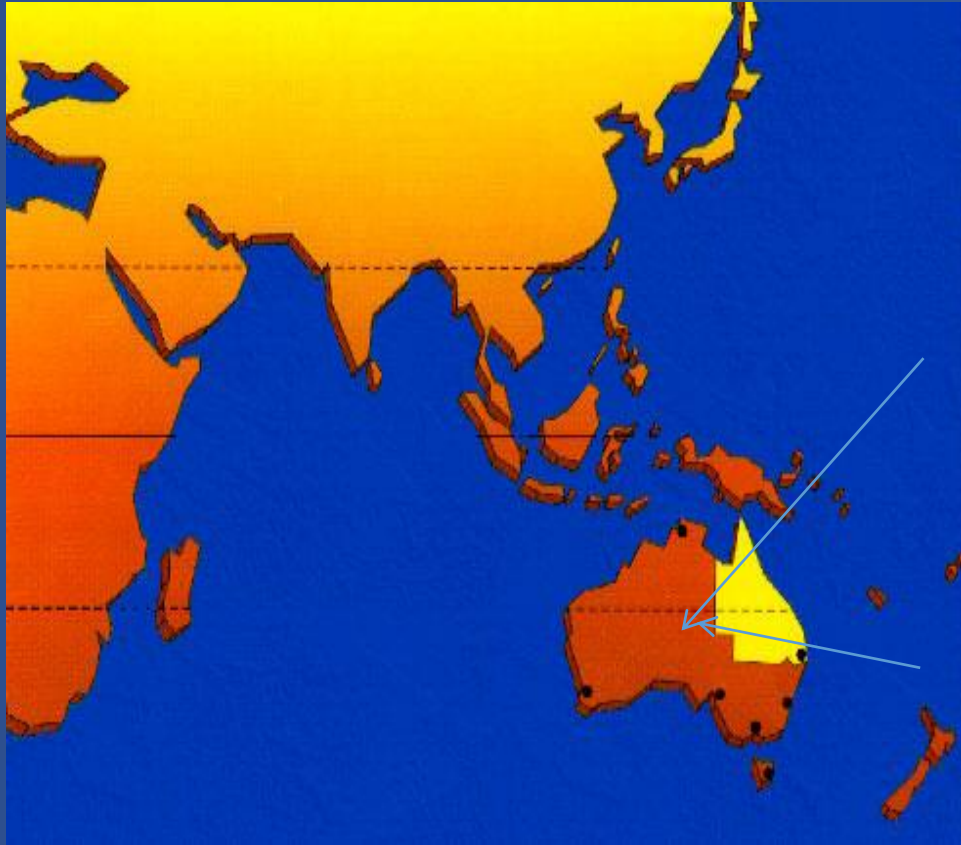
The *Cultural Connections for Learning* program

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QUT - one of Australia's largest universities:

- approx. 45,000 students
- located primarily on 2 inner city campuses
- 6 faculties including the Faculty of Health
- School of Nursing is the largest school in the Faculty of Health.



QUT



What were the key drivers?



- Increasing diversity of student cohorts
- Student needs not being effectively met
- Recognition that more than 'grass roots' activities were needed to make a difference

What are the goals?



- Assist students in building the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to be successful in their studies
- Promote student participation in the university and health care communities
- Assist staff to create learning environments that promote student success in their studies

Key themes from a needs analysis study



Students

- Not confident to ask questions
- Afraid to make mistakes
- Everyone's so busy - it's too hard to ask questions
- The hospital system is so different
- Knowing the right thing to say & the right thing to do



Academic staff

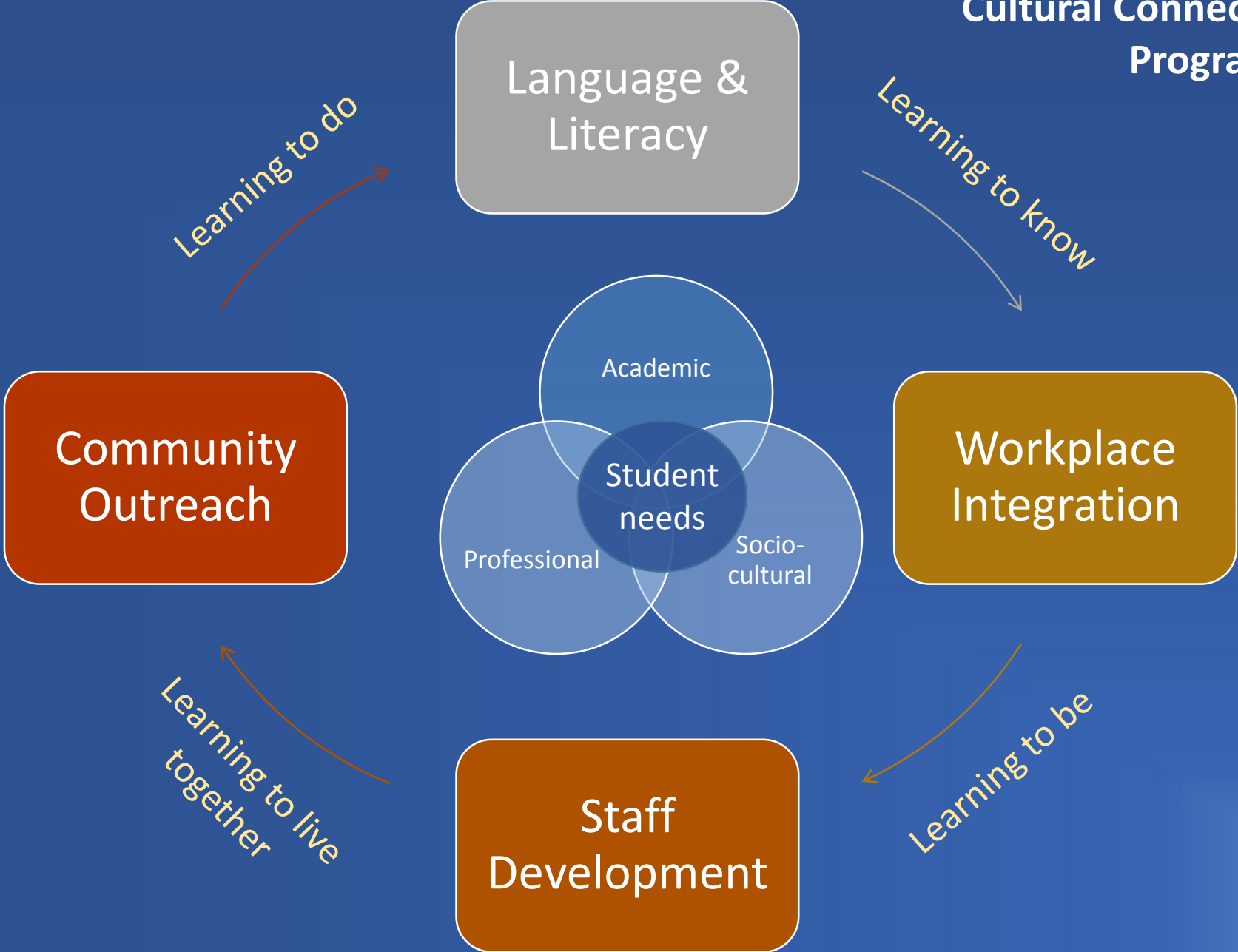
- Their English is a problem
- They don't speak up in class
- Critical thinking and writing are problems
- It's difficult to know the right thing to say



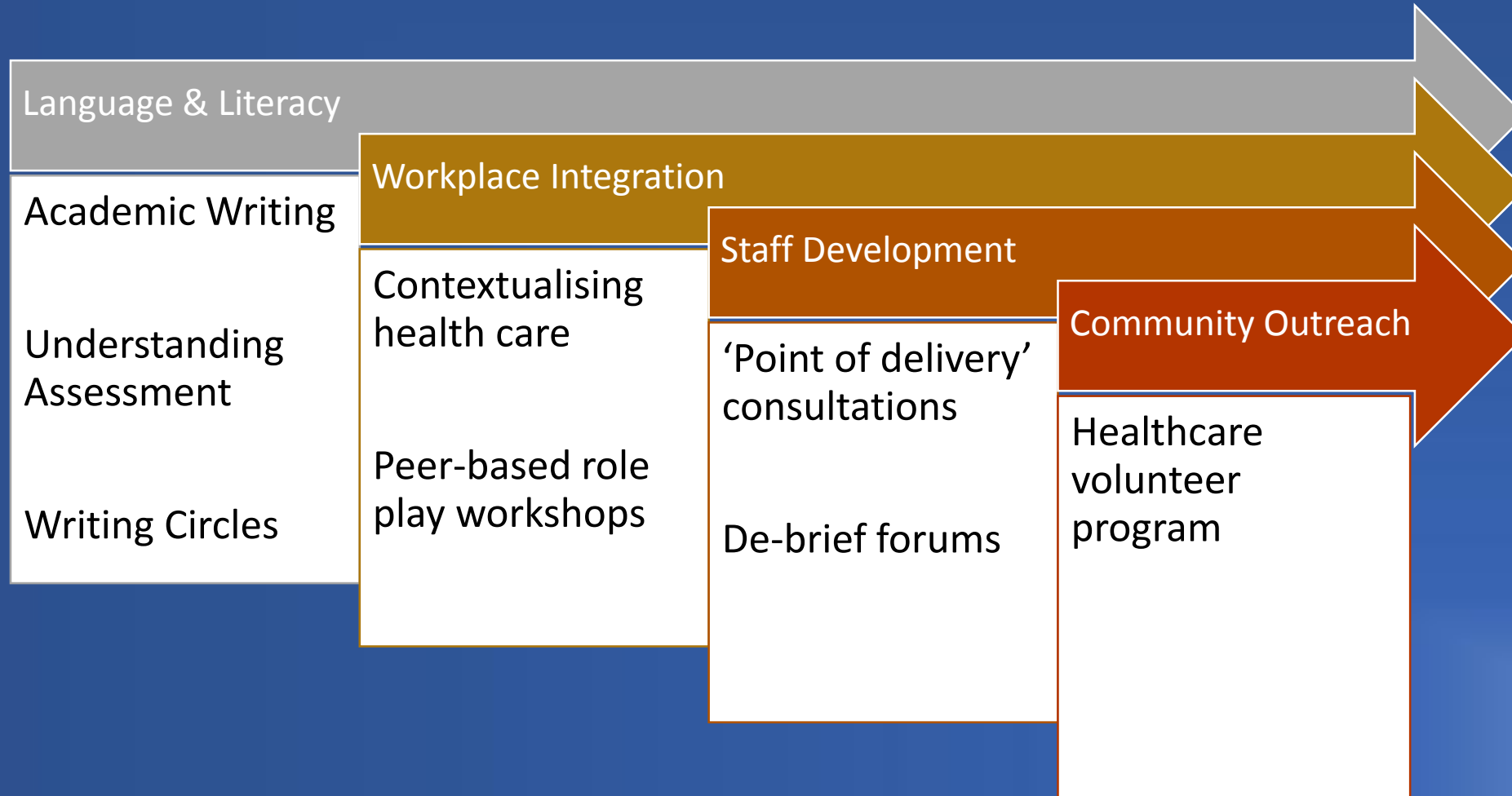
Clinical staff

- They don't understand the language, eg. handover
- If only they'd ask!
- They're afraid to make a mistake
- They have different cultural beliefs, eg. pain, hygiene care
- It takes time to reach an understanding and we don't always have the time

Cultural Connections for Learning: Program model



Cultural Connections for Learning: Program model



Academic writing workshops



- active, authentic task-based workshops for undergraduate and postgraduate students to practise skills such as reading for understanding, paraphrasing, citing and referencing



'in my country there is no requirement for referencing. We do not know how to do it. The workshops is very helpful. We learn how to paraphrase and summarise. The lecturers and tutors expect more than we know' (Undergraduate student, 2011)

Assessment Strategy workshops



- complement the Academic Writing workshops and specifically target assessment within *undergraduate* course units that have been identified as challenging for students.
- Students work with their *peers and a facilitator* in an informal environment to better understand assignment topics and assessment criteria, concept map their ideas and receive feedback on draft work



The environment in the workshop is very supportive. Normally I do not question, but this is the class where I do not hesitate as I know there is nothing like silly question or the answer. They have helped me improve my grades each semester. (Undergraduate student, 2012).

Postgraduate Writing Circles



- specifically designed to assist with research and the synthesis of evidence for advanced writing tasks such as literature reviews. Students are also encouraged to reflect critically on their learning and act as peer writing mentors for each other.

The (PG) Writing Circle was the most wonderful experience ... I learned so much especially about thinking and organising ideas, not ashamed to share my ideas, listening to others, getting feedback and supporting others. (Postgraduate student, 2011)



Workplace Integration workshops



- sessions targeting communication and culture within the health care context, learning in the workplace, giving and receiving feedback constructively, and reflection on learning.
- **peer/peer role-play** activities that participants undertake with student volunteers who, in the main, are domestic students who have been 'out on prac' and are willing to share their experiences with their peers.



We role played the real situation ... I gained more practical knowledge that I couldn't get in lectures or tutorials. It build up my confidence and make me feel more comfortable about going on prac (Undergraduate student, 2011).

Health volunteer program

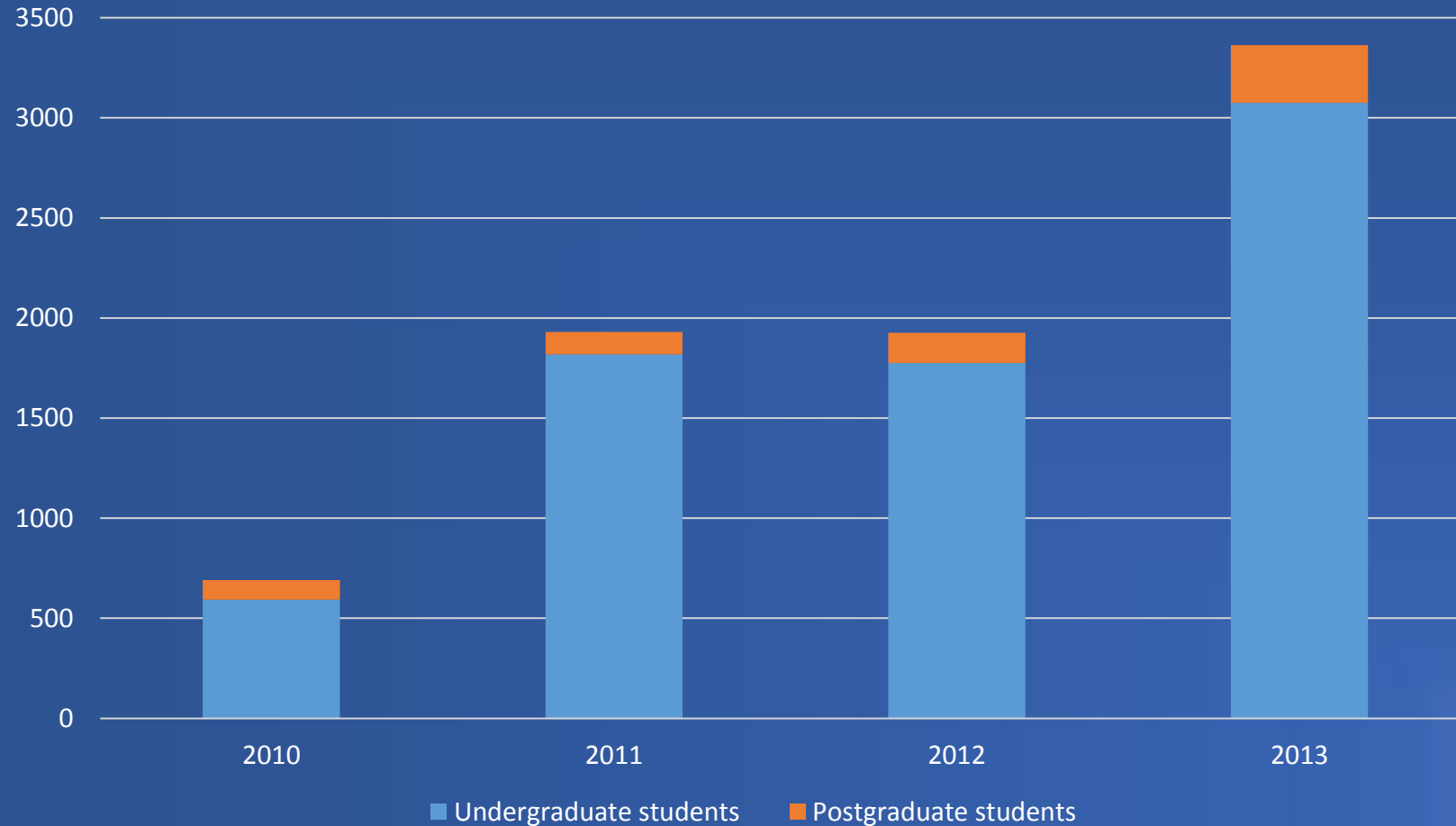


- promotes student engagement in the community and enhances their confidence for working in health care environments
- our industry partners now include eight major healthcare facilities and services in Brisbane and, since 2011, more than 120 students have participated in this initiative.

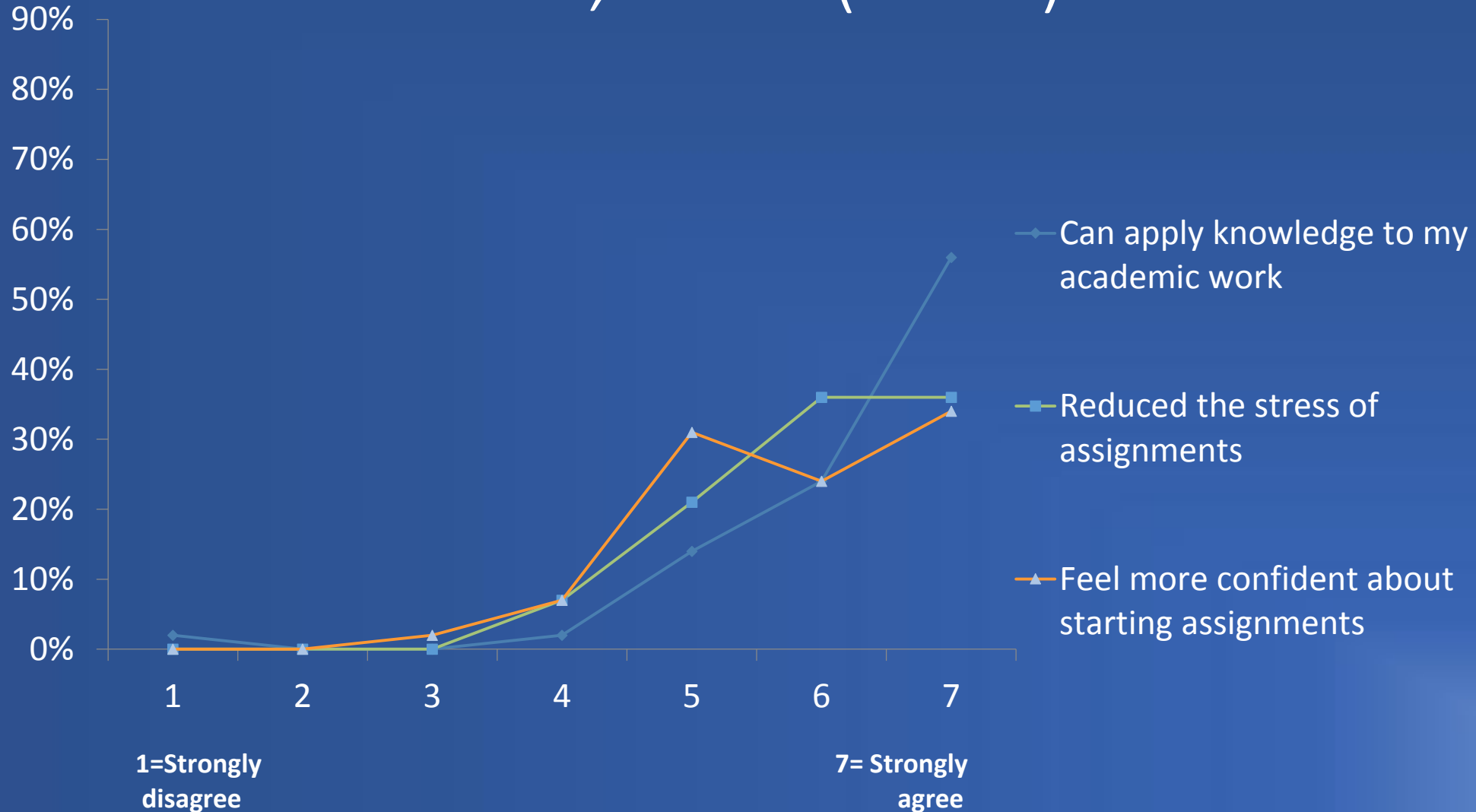


Majalia's story: 'It was my first time in a hospital and taught me so much. The first few weeks I had no idea what the staff were saying to the patients but a few months later I know how to talk to patients. From volunteering I know how important it is to talk to and listen to patients, and the patients appreciate you spending time with them so much. The experience has really increased my confidence.'

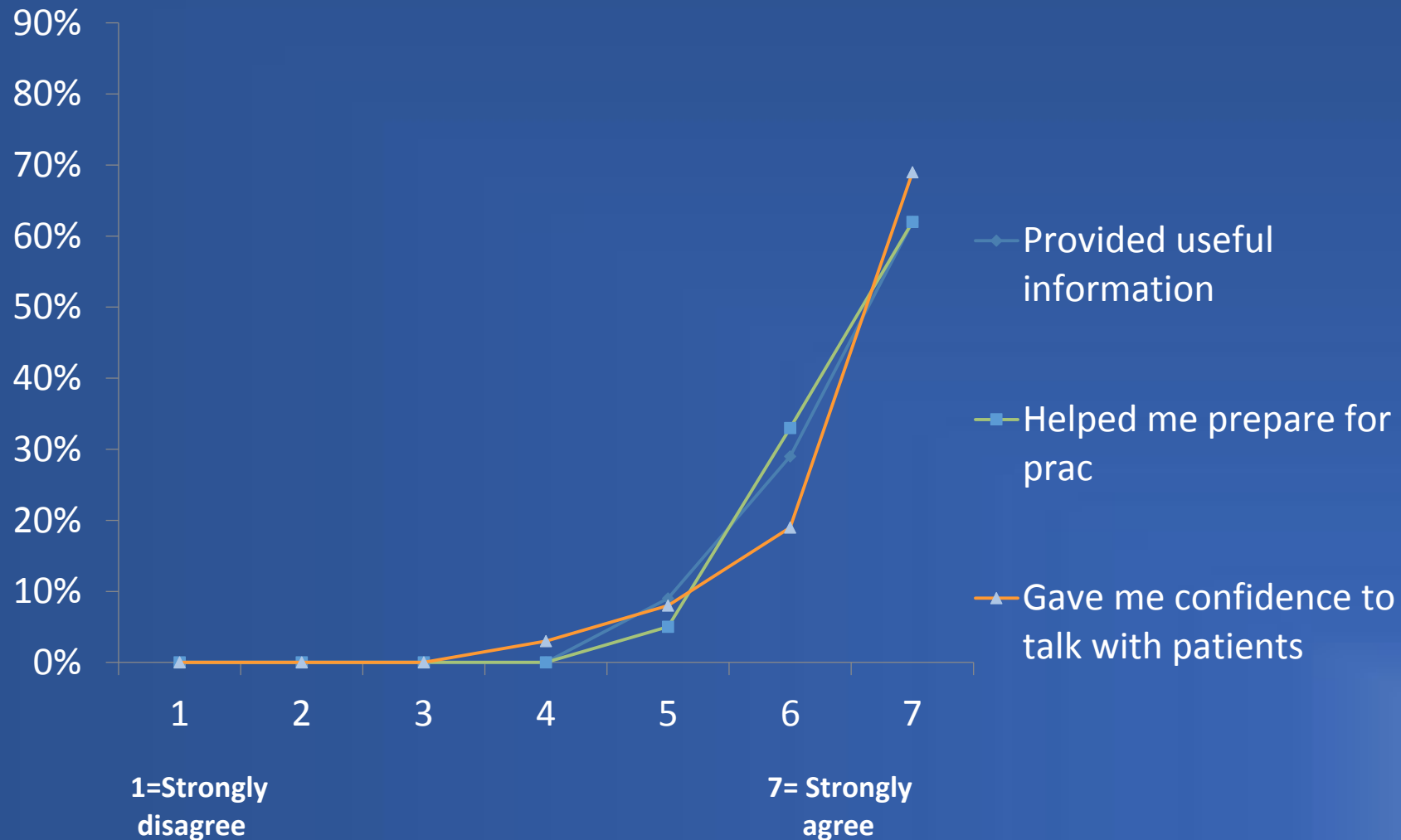
Student participation in 'Connections' program



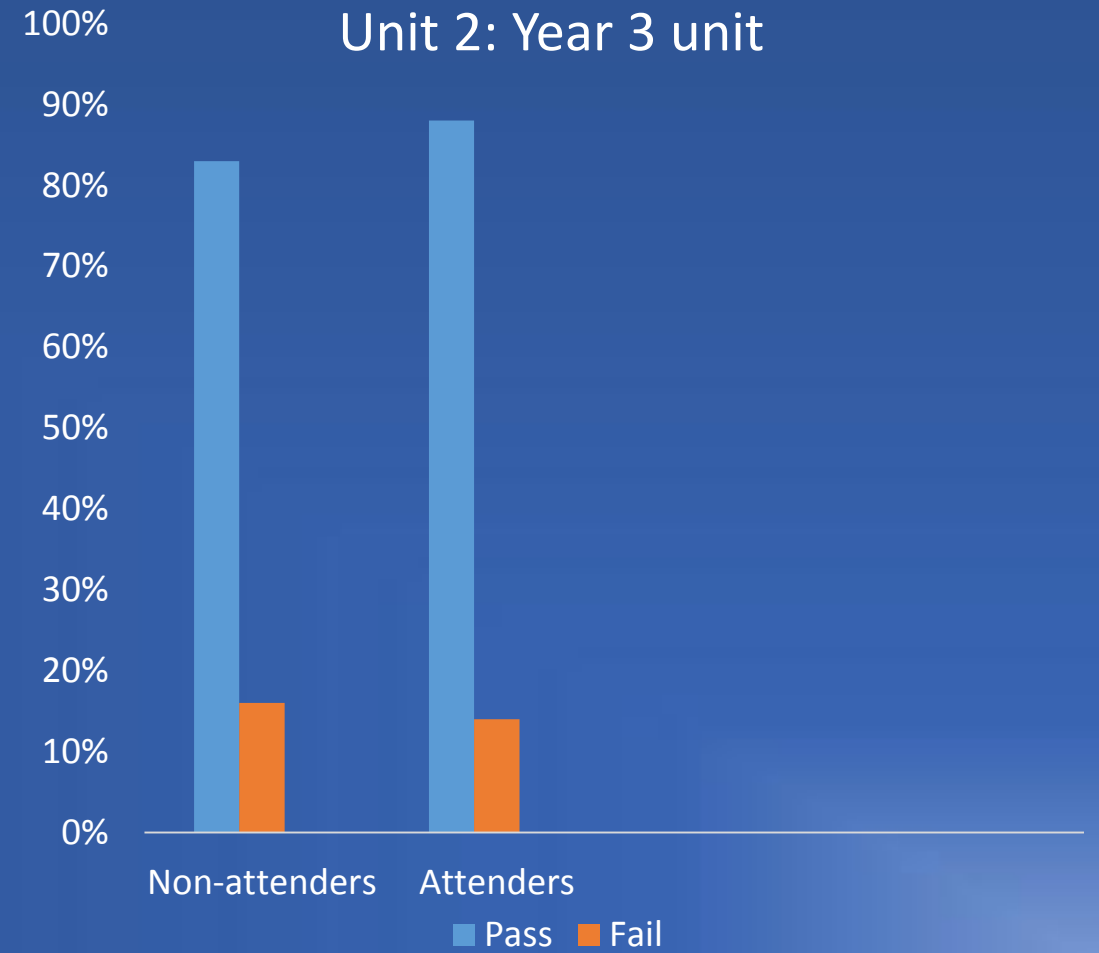
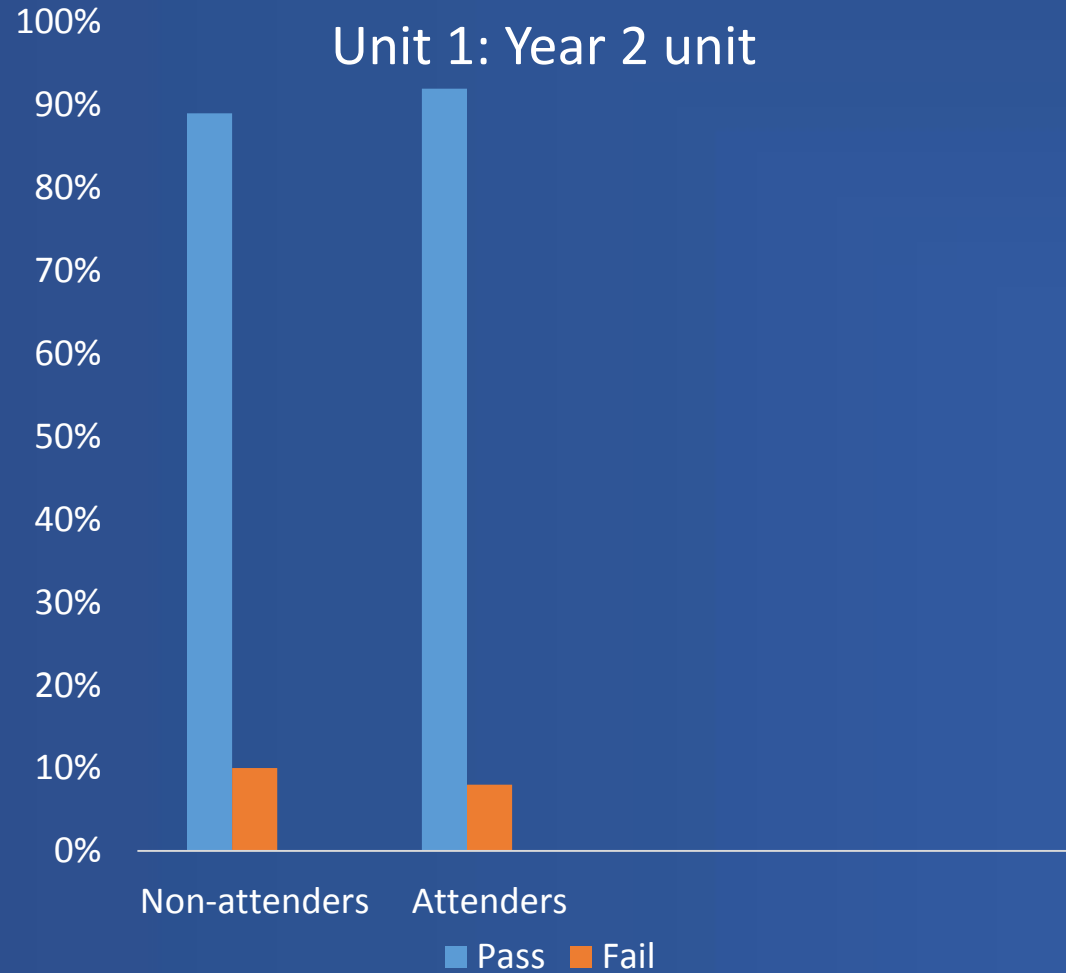
Academic Writing Workshop survey: Semester 2, 2012 (n=42)



Workplace Integration Workshop survey: Semester 2, 2012 (n=34)



Program impact: Unit pass/fail outcomes Semester 2, 2013



What are we finding?



- **Contextualising support works well**
 - Support strategies that focus on specific learning needs are more effective than generic approaches
- **Multi-faceted staffing enriches the program**
 - Academic & professional staff involvement leads to more perspectives on how to address students' academic, professional and socio-cultural needs
- **One size doesn't fit all: multi-dimensional strategies**
 - Students' needs = diverse & changing.
 - One-approach program cannot meet broad range
 - Flexible approach to strategies always required

Targeted support can have a positive and sustained impact on learning outcomes, lifelong learning and future professional development



QUESTIONS?

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