

# Residential 4 Retention



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# Introduction



- background
- investigation
- integration & socialisation
- a potential solution
- concerns
- feedback

# The issue



- foundation year
- varied
  - student cohort
  - experience of education
  - aspirations
- Annual Monitoring Review - retention concerns
- how to improve it?

# Investigation – what do we know?



- Many Bradford students live at home with their parents
- For many of our students students the University of Bradford College are their only options
- Peer group often not Bradford students
- Many students enter the foundation programme with a negative (almost hostile) view of learning
- Could this have an impact on retention?

# What does the research say?



- withdrawal from HE is complicated –usually due to a combination of factors
- most withdrawal is for particular issues outside the control of the institution
- withdrawal can be a positive response
- activity is unlikely to have an impact on majority of withdrawers
- research suggests that social and academic integration is important to retention [Yorke & Longden (2007)]

# Integration



*“...Students need help in adapting to university life and becoming autonomous learners and that feeling positive and having a friendship group greatly aids social and emotional adjustment to higher education...students adjust quicker if they learn the institutional ‘discourse’ and feel they fit in. Integration, through supportive interaction with teachers, greatly enhances adjustment”*

*Harvey et al (2006) pIII*

# Socialisation - an answer?



- ‘social scripts’ or ‘codes of behaviour’ [Hogan (2007)]
- these vary (cultural groups, generations)
- can we help the process?
- help students to identify what the appropriate codes of behaviour are
- help them to understand the institutional ‘discourse’
- help to move identity from pupil to student

# The proposed solution



- based on existing ‘Clapham weekend’
- student led not tutor led
- provide a residential experience for all students to;
  - Develop positive feelings
  - Develop bonds with fellow students
  - Understand the learning process
- develop an ethos that supports study, inquiry and academic achievement
- develop a climate of mutual support and respect
- develop group work skills

# Concerns?



- volunteers *V* conscripts
- course reps *V* foundation students
- group work / facilitation experience *V* limited
- how would they fare?
- would they engage?
- would they stay?

# Planned activities



- groups set
- Fri - group activities - groups win points
- all groups are debriefed after each activity
- Sat – ‘Claptrap’
- groups identify strengths and weaknesses
- groups are allocated another group
- groups prepare learning activity
- Sun – groups do activity set by partner group

# How we felt it went



- not all students came (27 out of an expected 45)
- all students stayed!
- all students engaged (eventually)
- no casualties
- students transferred their new found confidence into the classroom
- a number of students have since trained to be facilitators

# How the students felt it went



- students were asked to fill in a questionnaire
- of the 23 students who responded (out of 27)...
  - Only one said that they had gained little from the experience
  - Only 3 thought it shouldn't be a compulsory part of the course
  - 15 said they would like to be trained as facilitators

*'This helped me gain confidence as I spoke to people I didn't usually speak to'*

*'It taught me some important things about myself which I will carry into everyday life'*

*'Its made me a stronger person'*

*'No way can I leave higher education and go back to what I was doing before. I need more'*

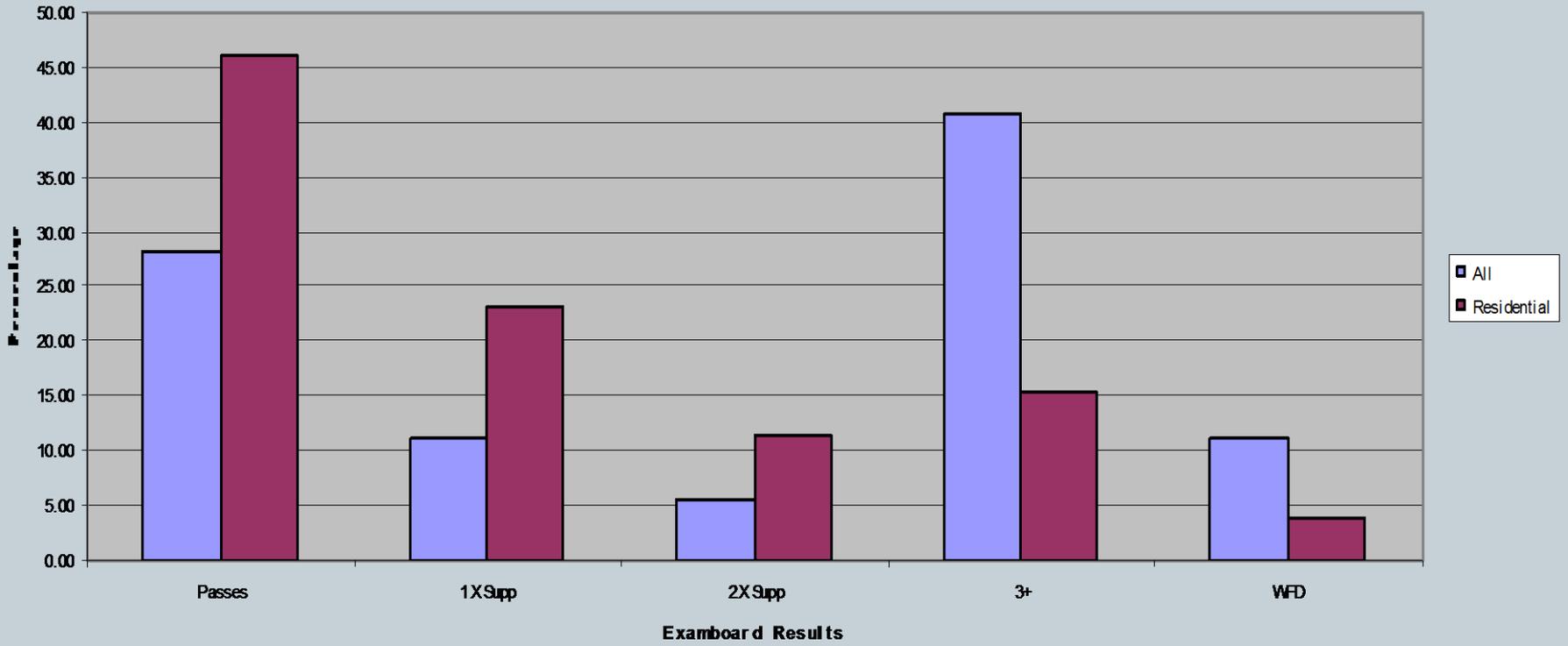
# How can we judge success?



- did it have an impact on retention?
- did these students perform better, stay the course better, than students who did not attend?
- did the students attend classes better after the residential?
- all results not in yet

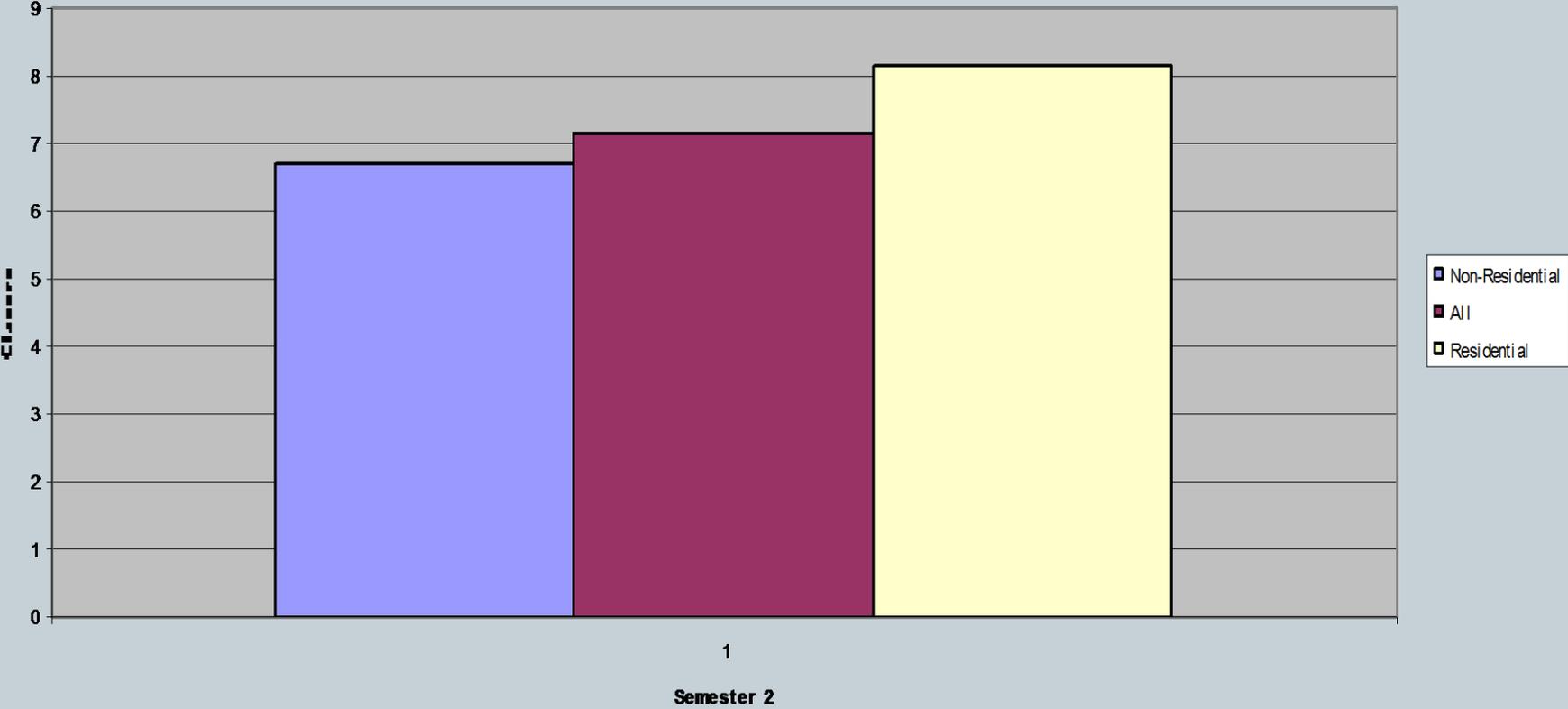


### Student Performance





**Average number of classes attended**



# What next?



- full evaluation after supplementary exam boards
- planning next years residential
- students trained as facilitators
- developed a module to give new facilitators course credit

# References



- Harvey, Drew & Smith (2006) The first-year experience: a review of literature for the Higher Education Academy, York :HE Academy
- Hogan (2007) Facilitating multicultural groups: a practical guide, London: Kogan Page
- Yorke & Longden (2007) The first-year experience in higher education in the UK, York: HE Academy