

# **International students' perceptions of intensive learning in business course delivery: A case study of Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus**

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# Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus



- The Auckland International Campus (AIC) is the newest campus of OP, was opened in 2012 in partnership with Future Skills Academy.

- AIC puts emphasis on small class teaching with a high level of learning support for every student.
- Number of students ??



# Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus



- AIC has five teaching blocks each year instead of two traditional semesters per year.
- Each teaching block is comprised of eight weeks of teaching, followed by a two week break in between teaching blocks. Students study two courses per block.



# International Students in New Zealand



## Overall international student trends January to August 2014



The number of international students

+12%



Tuition fee income

+13%



Students studying for a Masters degree\*

+21%



Students studying Business and Management

+18%

Number of international students from 2010 to 2014



Source: <http://thepienews.com/news/nz-international-students-12-sector-worth-2-85bn/>

# International Students in New Zealand

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- International students in New Zealand continues to grow and was up by 22 percent during the period of January - March 2014 (“International Education Numbers Set To Grow”, 2014).
  - International education is New Zealand’s 5th largest export earner, generating \$2.85 billion in 2014 from almost 100,000 international students (Scoop Education, 2015).
  - International students may face many difficulties in the new education environment. For example, “problems may occur in adjusting to a new culture, experiencing academic difference” (Sherry, Thomas & Hong Chui, 2010, p. 34).
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# Introduction

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- The context of international higher education is changing due to a) “the global context of education”, b) “the financial constraints” faced by education providers, c) the emerging profile of “non-traditional students” who “try to combine work and study” and “want to complete their studies as quickly as possible” (Tatum, 2010, p. 35)
  - The rapid integration of the intensive mode in course delivery at various universities across the world
  - The traditional model of course design and teaching methods has been challenged due to the steadily increasing number of international students
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# Intensive Learning

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- Intensive delivery modes are defined as “accelerated learning” (Swenson, 2003; Wlodkowski, 2003; Serdyukov, 2008); “accelerated education” (Tatum, 2010); “compressed courses”, “abbreviated courses” (Anastasi, 2007); “multi-sensory, brain-compatible teaching and learning methodology” (McKeon, 1995, p. 64); intensive, concentrated, or short-term learning (Serdyukov, 2008)
- According to Scott, intensive course delivery is “semester- or quarter-equivalent classes offered in compressed, accelerated, or condensed formats” (2003, p. 29)
- Intensive learning is characterised by “the active learning method of teaching”, “flexible schedules”, respect to “adult experience” and use of new technology (Wlodkowski & Kasworm, 2003, p. 94)



# Intensive Learning

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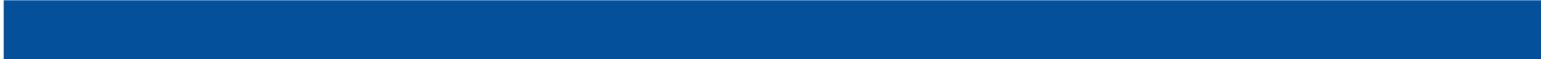


- Issues related to the intensive mode of course delivery: a) a lecturer's ability to cover a course content in a shortened period of time and a lack of time to analyse what is being learned (Wlodkowski, 2003); b) students' ability to comprehend the course content; c) students enrolled in compressed courses have lower test results than students from traditional length semesters (Petrowskys as cited in Daniel, 2000)
  - Student's academic performance in a compressed format is equivalent to traditional semester courses due to a) a limited number of courses available for fast tracking, therefore there is no interference from other courses; b) the type of learners taking the intensive programs; c) more conducive classroom environment and greater students' participation (Anastasi, 2007)
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# Problem Areas

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- Course design that addresses the unique needs of international students
  - Little coherence exists in education research if the intensive study design complies with traditional programs' standards.
  - A negative view of intensive learning. The judgments refer to the fact that intensive learning is about convenience rather than “substance and rigor” (Wlodkowski, 2003, p. 7).
  - A lack of empirical support and concerns with the quality of intensive mode courses in the context of international business education
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# Research Question

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- *What are the international students' perceptions of the intensive mode of delivery of business courses at Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus?*

The aim of this study is twofold: 1) to analyse international students' perceptions of the intensive mode of delivery of business courses at Auckland International Campus of Otago Polytechnic (OP). 2) to evaluate the effects of the intensive format on international students' academic performance.



# Case Study

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- As of December 2013, there were 182 international students pursuing their tertiary qualification in Applied Management at AIC.
  - 14 business subjects were offered in the October 2013 teaching block for Applied Management students as shown in Table 1.
  - Classes for each subject comprised of a 240-minute session (which includes lectures and tutorials) twice a week of an eight-week teaching block.
  - All students involved in this research would have completed at least one teaching block (two intensive subjects) of their studies.
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# Case Study

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- Students involved in this research were enrolled in either
    - Bachelor of Applied Management (BAppMgt) or
    - Graduate Diploma in Applied Management (GradDipAppMgt) programs
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# Table 1: Business subjects offered in 2013 October teaching block



| Level            | Subjects  |
|------------------|---|
| Level 5 / Year 1 | BX550001 Business Heritage, Culture and Sustainability<br>BX551001 Commercial Law<br>BX554101 Introduction to Marketing<br>BX555001 Business Computing<br>BX556001 Professional Communication |
| Level 6 / Year 2 | BX660001 Research Methodology<br>BX660007 Event Planning and Management<br>BX660009 Facilities Management<br>BX660301 Introduction to Finance<br>BX663601 Applied Management                  |
| Level 7 / Year 3 | BX770011 Industry Project<br>BX770015 Managing for Growth<br>BX770020 Strategic Management<br>BX770022 Business Transformation and Change   |

# Data Collection and Methodology

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- Data was collected using a brief paper-based questionnaire administered during the final week (between 9th – 13th of December) of the 2013 October teaching block.
  - International students were asked to complete a questionnaire survey that required about five minutes to complete, which was administered at the end of the final lecture.
  - Responses were based on a five point Likert scale; from agree strongly to disagree strongly.
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# Data Collection and Methodology

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- Most of the questions were concentrated on how students' perceptions of the intensive face-to-face course have contributed to their learning, as well as the perceived benefits associated with enrolling in this intensive course.
  - Students were also asked to indicate their perception of whether attending the intensive course is more enjoyable and/or difficult as compared with other business courses in which they enrolled previously in their undergraduate studies.
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## Table 2. Participants' Profile

- 122 completed questionnaires were returned.
- The majority of the participants in this research came from China and India:

| Country       | Number of Students |
|---------------|--------------------|
| China         | 54                 |
| India         | 59                 |
| Indonesia     | 2                  |
| Kenya         | 2                  |
| Malaysia      | 1                  |
| Nepal         | 1                  |
| Other         | 3                  |
| <b>Total:</b> | <b>122</b>         |

# Table 3: Age and Gender of Participants



| Age     | Number of Students | Percentage |  | Gender | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|--|--------|--------------------|------------|
| 18 – 24 | 82                 | 67%        |  | Male   | 83                 | 68%        |
| ≥ 25    | 40                 | 33%        |  | Female | 39                 | 32%        |
| Total   | 122                | 100%       |  | Total  | 122                | 100%       |

# Table 4: International Students' Perception of Intensive Learning



| No. | Questions  | DS | D  | N  | A  | AS | Mn   | SD    |
|-----|--|----|----|----|----|----|------|-------|
| 1   | I prefer to enroll in an intensive subject rather than one offered on the traditional semester basis.                                    | 1  | 5  | 14 | 74 | 28 | 4.01 | .769  |
| 2   | I find myself more efficient and effective in my learning because this is an intensive subject.  | 1  | 3  | 18 | 75 | 24 | 3.98 | .727  |
| 3   | By studying via intensive mode, I am using my time to the best of my knowledge.  | 1  | 1  | 25 | 70 | 24 | 3.95 | .720  |
| 4   | Being in an intensive subject is a disadvantage for me due to the shorter learning time as compared with a traditional semester subject. | 11 | 32 | 39 | 29 | 10 | 2.96 | 1.103 |
| 5   | I can easily get feedback and/or help from the lecturer(s) via email, telephone or in-person contact throughout the intensive classes.   | 2  | 2  | 19 | 59 | 39 | 4.08 | .836  |
| 6   | The discussions/feedback from the lecturer(s) over email, telephone or in-person contact enhanced my understanding of the subject.       | 2  | 2  | 23 | 66 | 29 | 3.97 | .806  |
| 7   | Intensive learning is more time consuming as compared with traditional semester learning.  | 9  | 29 | 31 | 46 | 7  | 3.10 | 1.068 |
| 8   | Overall I find the subject(s) is/are more satisfactory than other subjects that I have studied in the traditional semester.              | 1  | 2  | 30 | 65 | 24 | 3.89 | .762  |

# Major Findings

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- From international students' perspective, the intensive learning was the same as the traditional semester learning or more preferable, however, it required them to be more efficient with their time (q3).
  - Students pointed to more opportunities for feedback (q5) and interaction (q6) with the lecturer within the intensive mode of course delivery.
  - Students found themselves more efficient and effective by studying via the intensive mode (q2).
  - Students reported that the subject delivered via the intensive course design is more satisfactory than any other subjects in their previous studies via the traditional mode (q1 & q8). 40% of international students agreed or agreed strongly that intensive learning is their first preference
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# Qualitative Question

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- The final survey question asked international students to tell the researchers what is their preferred mode of study (traditional or intensive mode) and also provide details for their answer.

# Qualitative Feedbacks

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*“Intensive! Because I can use my time to the best! It’s good to have traditional semester for some papers which are required to be understand deeply”.*

*“Intensive is the fastest way to graduate and I like it! Save time, save money!”*

*“Intensive mode. Because I have more time to study by myself.”*

*“Intensive. Save time and make me hard working.”*

*“Intensive mode. I can finish my course earlier and work with my knowledge.”*

*“This intensive study proves to be beneficial as it engages student with practical knowledge as well.”*

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# Table 5. Intensive Mode & Students' Academic Performances



|                        | <b>Business Heritage, Culture and Sustainability</b> | <b>Commercial Law</b> | <b>Introduction to Marketing</b> | <b>Business Computing</b> | <b>Professional Communication</b> |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Enrolment</b>       | 25   | 38                    | 14                               | 14                        | 15                                |
| <b>Pass</b>            | 20   | 19                    | 11                               | 13                        | 15                                |
| <b>Fail</b>            | 5  | 19                    | 3                                | 1                         | 0                                 |
| <b>Withdraw</b>        | 0  | 0                     | 0                                | 0                         | 0                                 |
| <b>Incomplete</b>      | 0  | 0                     | 0                                | 0                         | 0                                 |
| <b>Net Enrolment</b>   | 25   | 38                    | 14                               | 14                        | 15                                |
| <b>Completion Rate</b> | 80%  | 50%                   | 79%                              | 93%                       | 100%                              |
| <b>Retention Rate</b>  | 100%   | 100%                  | 100%                             | 100%                      | 100%                              |
|                        |  |                       |                                  |                           |                                   |





# Table 5. Intensive Mode & Students' Academic Performances

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- The overall completion rate is 92%
- Completion rate:  $\text{Number of Pass} / \text{Net enrolment}$
- Retention rate:  $\text{Net enrolment} / \text{Enrolment}$

The overall completion rate supports the assumption that intensive subjects were of benefit to students. However, not all the business subjects are suitable for intensive delivery. For example, the passing rate for Commercial Law is only 50 percent.

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# Conclusions, Implications and Limitations

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- Despite the overall positive results, this study is limited by the fact that it involved a small number of international students within Otago Polytechnic.
  - There may also be a number of other factors that need to be considered in evaluating the effectiveness of one mode of delivery in comparison with others such as:
    - Types of assessment uses
    - Undergraduate vs Graduate students
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# Contribution & Future Research

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- The study contributed to the institutional knowledge on the intensive forms of business course delivery, particularly in the international education context.
  - The future research may investigate linkages between different attributes of the intensive learning such as course schedule, subjects, type of students, teaching style and students' academic performance
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# Q & A

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Please email Inna Piven or Henry Ho for any questions and/or feedback.

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Thank you!

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