

**DIVERSE TECHNOLOGIES FOR DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS:
SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHERE THEY'RE AT AND WHERE THEY ARE**

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ABSTRACT

Research into retention, completion and progression in tertiary education shows that of the students who started in 1998, 40 percent had qualified by 2002, 9 percent were still studying, while a disturbing 51 percent had dropped out.

As the sector grapples with this, rising costs are under the spotlight as the Government strives to balance affordability and accessibility with supporting quality teaching and learning required to improve outcomes. Recent policy changes link funding to measurable performance to ensure returns on investment.

Other factors related to student overall well-being, although not as readily measurable, are equally significant. Extensive research has shown that early, appropriate and regular learning support has a positive and lasting effect on retention and academic and social outcomes.

Against this background the Learning Centre uses a range of 'high tech' and 'low tech' strategies to support diverse learner needs; two are highlighted:

- Facilitated, online study skills workshops for first-years
- Culturally relevant, telephone peer support for Maori students

Both strategies are demonstrated, with 'real-life' examples illustrating our learner-centred approach of meeting students where they're at and where they are.

Anecdotal evidence and analysis of preliminary results show an increase in retention and success rates of students participating in these programmes.