

Context



University competency-based dental hygiene is recent and underexplored, yet we know from the literature that first-year students need support in transitioning into higher education or a professional program. There are two tracks for students to obtain a degree in dental hygiene at the UBC Faculty of Dentistry

Track 1: Entry to Practice (ETP)	Track 2: Degree Completion (DC)
For those with no prior credentials or experience	For those who have a dental hygiene certificate or diploma
Didactic & clinical components	All didactic. No clinical .
Four-year undergraduate, cohort-based, Bachelor of Dental Sciences (BDS)	Category 1: One year FTE Category 2: Two years FTE
Years 1&2: On campus Years 3&4: Combination of online and face-to-face classes	All online courses.

UBC Faculty of Dentistry created Canada's first four-year undergraduate degree in dental hygiene in 2008!

Research questions & Rationale

Student feedback and pilot studies suggest that these two tracks of students face unique challenges in transitioning into the program over their first year.

Our research questions are:

What contributes to successful academic, social, and emotional transitions for first-year students in the two tracks?

How can we facilitate successful transitions for student retention, engagement, and overall success?

From our research, we are modifying curriculum, making changes to student services, and offering tailored workshops. Modifications will continue as we learn more about how to support first-year DH students!

Transitions in higher education

We draw from literature in higher education on student retention and transitions to better understand factors that contribute to success:

Tinto, 1975: A pioneer in studying transitions and retention in higher education. His research found that both academic and social integration were important for student success

Astin, 1984: Builds on Tinto's theories. Showed that successful student transitions and retention depend upon: **Inputs** (what the student brings with them, i.e., cultural, social and academic capital) **Experience** (their academic and social during the university program) **Outcomes** (how they perform in the program).

Bean & Eaton, 2000: Bring together more psychological lenses to understanding successful first-year transitions, noting the importance of:

- ✓ developing self-efficacy
- ✓ students' attitudes and behaviours
- ✓ whether students engage or disengage socially and academically
- ✓ whether students attribute the locus of control internally (positively correlated) or externally (negatively correlated)

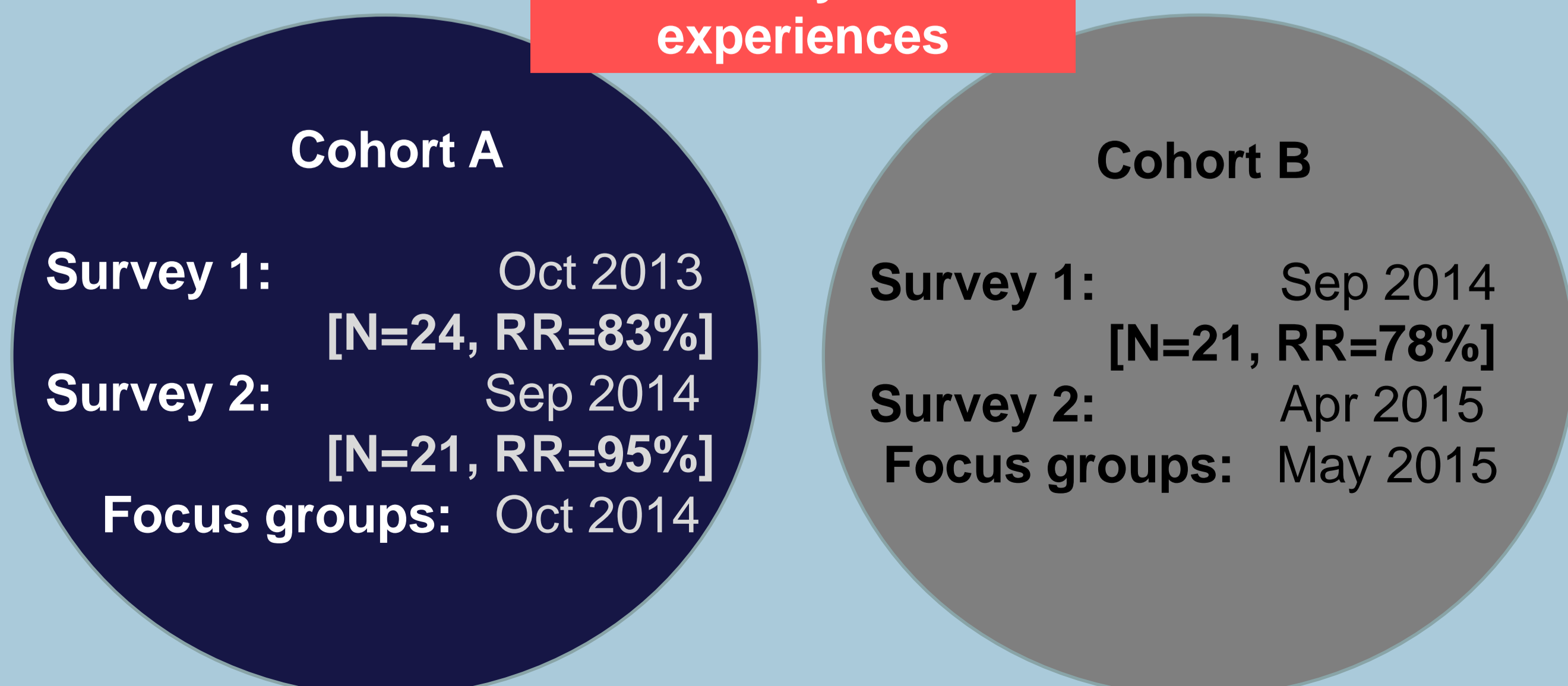
Academic, social, and emotional experiences all matter!

Methods

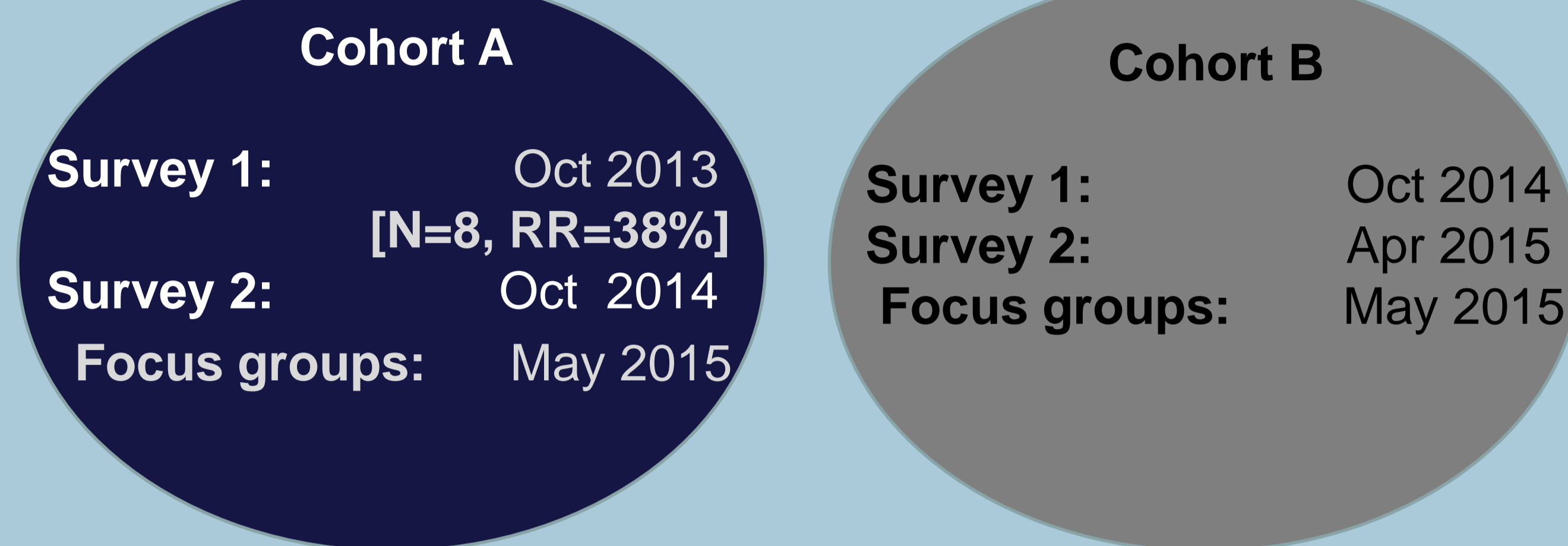
Entry to Practice Track

Oct 2012. A pilot study with 60 students across all four years

First-year experiences

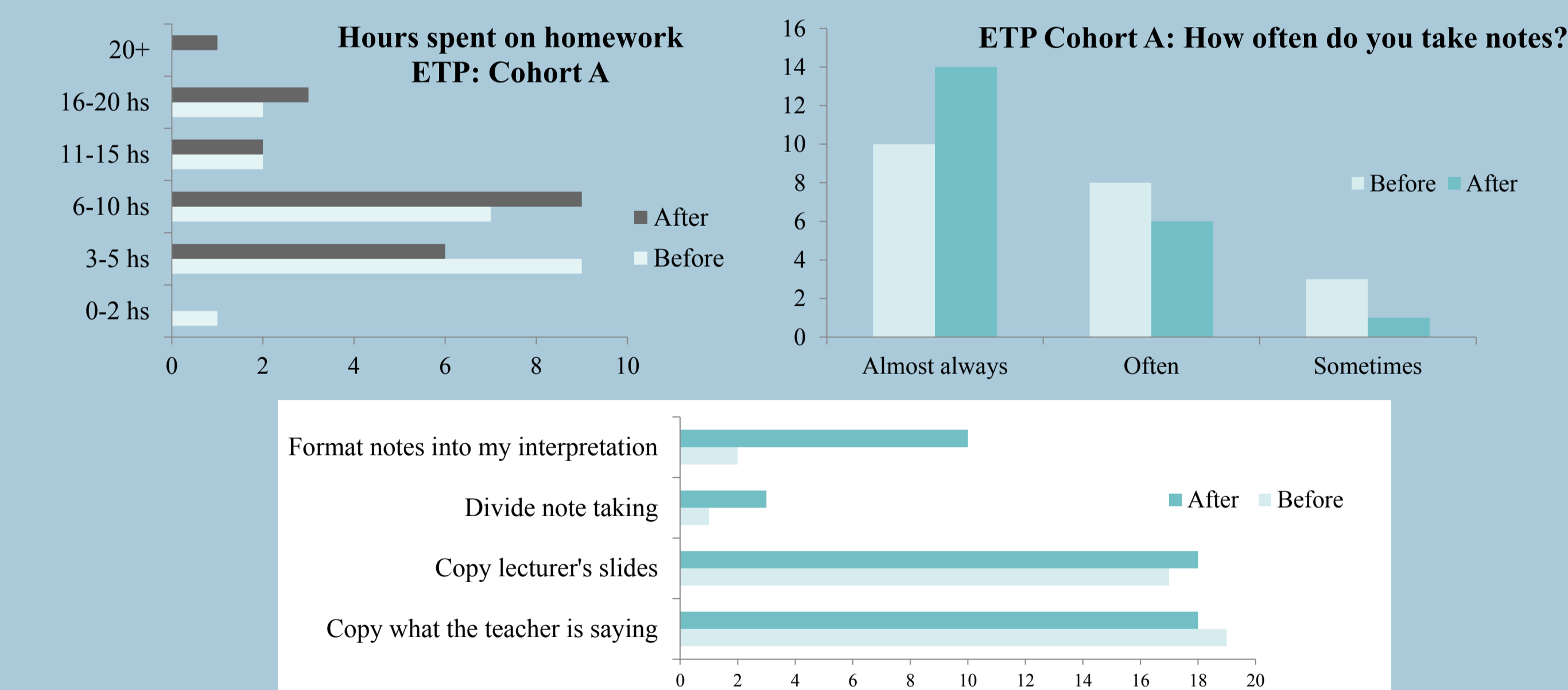
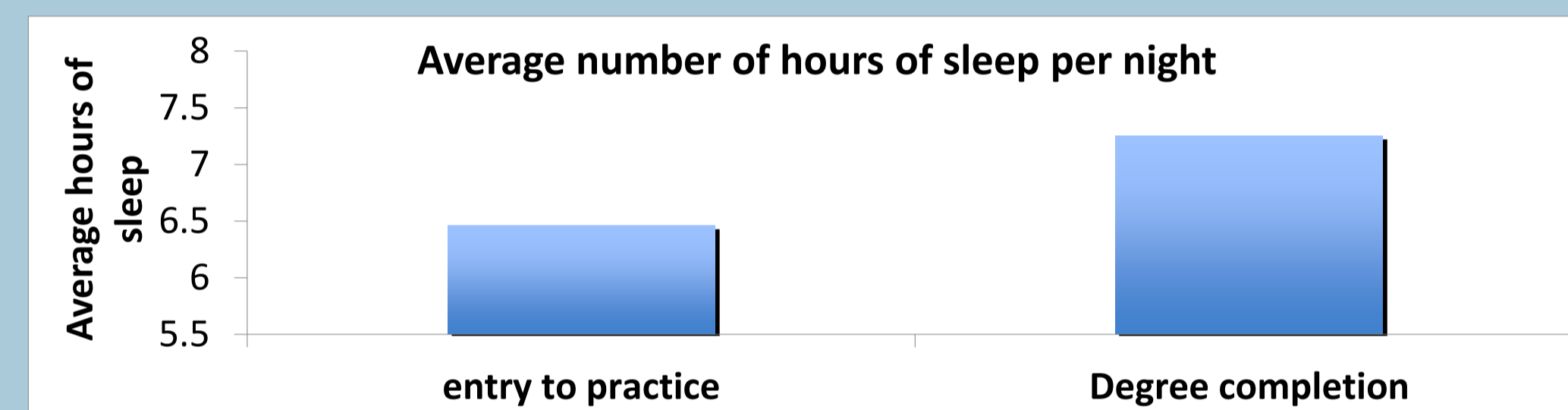


Degree Completion Track



Preliminary Findings

Entry to practice	Degree completion
70-80% come straight from high school	Enter 2-19 yrs after high school
Most have no post-secondary education	Average 4 years PSE
Greater study awareness	Fewer study tools upon entry
Stress predominantly emanates from exams, classes & studying & finances	Stress emanates from classes, finances and outside work



Main challenges identified by students

Entry to practice	Degree completion
Chemistry & biology	Blackboard Connect
Clinic (By end of year 1)	Group assignments
Time management	Time management with outside work

Changes made so far

- Tailored tutoring services in Chemistry and Biology for first-year students
- Creation of new workshops on studying and time management
- Increased opportunities for first years to interact with staff and faculty outside of curricular time
- Discussion of shifting DH courses currently offered in Term 2 to Term 1 to facilitate earlier integration into the program