Why don’t students attend lectures?

Profiling factors that link to student attendance.

Prentice, G.R. Richardson, R.L. de Búrca, B.
“Why are there empty seats in our lecture theatres? Are we driving our students away? Are work or family commitments preventing them from attending? Or, on a positive note, have we designed our courses in such a way that we have provided all the tools necessary for them to learn independently? The latter is a very comforting thought, although we suspect that only a small percentage of students are self-learners – those who are able to achieve good results by engaging fully with the material...”

— CORBIN, BURNS & CHRZANOWSKI (2010, p. 13)
Lecture attendance has been a key factor in enhancing student performance (Arulampalam, Naylor & Smith, 2012).

**Our aim**
To examine student pattern of attendance in relation to:

- **Class start time**
- **Gender**
- **Nationality**
- **Subject**
- **Mode of study**
- **Year of study**
- **Likelihood of assessment failure**
Class Start Time

Day time students:
Earlier classes, lower attendance rate?

Evening students:
Late arrival to first class?
Leave before the second class?
Gender

Females are:-

Sensitive to potential social disadvantages in life (Francis, 2000; Smith, 2004; Woodfield et al, 2005)

More conscientious and conformist (Rudd, 1984; Chapman, 1996; Carr, 2001; Marks, 2001; Pirie, 2001)

Harder and more consistent workers (Woodfield et al, 2006)

Males are:-

Easily distracted and less motivated (Francis, 2000; Pirie, 2001; Smith, 2004; Woodfield et al, 2005)

but are also

Conformists and risk-averse (Francis, 2000; Pirie, 2001; Smith, 2004; Woodfield et al, 2005)
Nationality

Irish students versus the rest of the world

GNIB regulations

Learning style differences:

*Individualists – learn by doing*
*Collectivists – learn by watching*

*(Sugahara & Boland, 2009)*
Subject

Arts versus Business

Vocational versus Non-vocational courses

Practical versus Theoretical courses

Our Courses

Accounting & Finance
Arts
Business & Management
Counselling & Psychotherapy
Information Technology
Law
Marketing & Event Management
Media & Journalism
Professional Accountancy
Psychology & Social Science
Study Mode

Number of Commitments
(Prentice & Caska, 2009; Levine, 1993)

Balancing Family and Work
(Prentice & Caska, 2009; Wooten, 1998)

Performance differences (e.g. Prentice & Caska, 2009)
Year of Study

Does it get easier or harder as students move through the academic years?
A lot of academics and researchers think so but correlations between attendance rates and student results vary between weak (0.29) and strong (0.73) (Caska & Prentice, 2009; Van Blerkom, 1993).

Likelihood of assessment failure

Established link between attendance and academic achievement?
18,319 cases

[Females (51.5%), Males (48.5%); International (38.9%), Irish (61.1%); Level 1 (32.9%), 2 (28.8%), 3 (38.4%); Arts (32.8%), Business (67.2%); Daytime (72.2%), Evening (27.8%); Failing (10.3%), Passing (89.7%)]

12-week semester

2015-2016 academic year

Latent Class Analysis & Multi-nominal logistic regressions
Results & Discussion

The Whole Sample.

Latent Class Analysis & Multi-nominal Logistic Regressions
Results & Discussion

PLOT SHOWING PROBABILITIES OF ATTENDING EACH WEEK OF SEMESTER 1 (2015-2016) ACCORDING TO 3 LATENT CLASSES.

Frequent attenders

Intermittent

Non-attenders

There is a dip in attendance within the Intermittent and Frequent attender classes at the start middle and end of the semester but the Frequent attenders were more likely to attend across the whole semester. The Non-attenders class were not likely to attend any of the weeks.
Intermittent attenders were more likely to have some/most or all of these characteristics: to be daytime students, be at level 1 or level 2, male, Irish, doing an Arts degree and failing.
Graph 2.

The likelihood of being a non-attender versus a frequent attender will...

- **Decrease**
  - Blue dots: If classes are earlier
  - Orange dots: If in daytime course
  - Grey dots: If student in level 1

- **Stay the Same**
  - Yellow dots: If student in level 2
  - Light blue dots: If student is female
  - Green dots: If international student

- **Increase**
  - Brown dots: If student is failing
  - Dark blue dots: If Arts student

Non-attenders were more likely to have some/many or all of these characteristics:- have earlier classes, be evening students, be at level 2 or 3, male, Irish, doing an Arts degree and failing.
Results & Discussion continued
Daytime Student Sample.

Multi-nominal Logistic Regressions
Daytime intermittent attenders were more likely to have some/many or all of these characteristics:- have earlier classes, be at level 1 or level 2, male, Irish, doing an Arts degree and failing.
Daytime non-attenders were more likely to have some/many or all of these characteristics: have earlier classes, be at level 2 or level 3, male, Irish, doing an Arts degree and failing.
Results & Discussion continued

Evening Student Sample.

Multi-nominal Logistic Regressions
Graph 5.

The likelihood of being an intermittent attender versus a frequent attender will...

- **Decrease**
  - If classes are earlier

- **Stay the Same**
  - If student in level 1
  - If student in level 2

- **Increase**
  - If student is female
  - If international student
  - If Arts student
  - If student is failing

Evening intermittent attenders were more likely to have some/most or all of these characteristics: have later classes, be at level 3, Irish, doing an Arts degree and failing.
Evening non-attenders were more likely to have some/many or all of these characteristics:- have earlier classes, be at level 2 or 3, Irish, doing a Business degree and failing.
Conclusions

WHOLE SAMPLE
Intermittent and Non-attenders are at least twice as likely to fail compared to frequent attenders

DAYTIME SAMPLE
Target (in descending order of importance):
Arts, level 2, level 1, Irish, Male, Earlier Classes

EVENING SAMPLE
Target (in descending order of importance):
Earlier Classes, Level 3, Level 2, Business