

# Learning Effective Study Skills

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# Introduction

- Students enrol for academic courses to attain knowledge
  - Involves studying, lectures, seminars etc.
- Students have to achieve a certain level of understanding for them to achieve success in their studies
- Gettinger and Seibert (2002: 361) – study skills fundamental aspect towards academic competence
  - they reduce failure and
  - enable students to take advantage of learning opportunities
- This study will begin by reviewing the literature on study skills and lay out the method used and provide the result and finally concluding.

# Background and Motivation

- To establish how finance students at UKZN-PMB approached their studies
  - e.g which they put emphasis, how much time
- students may not always apply the correct study methods
- Better assistance can be provided if students are understood
- Gersten (1998) argued that many students who face academic difficulties tend not to have learnt the “tricks of the trade” that are used by those who study competently.
- Students preoccupied with calculations and solutions and not content

# Literature

- Study – skilful, required practice as well as training that would help the learner to acquire, retain, organise and use information
  - should be intentional/deliberate
  - Conscious effort
  - Personal and individualised, self regulatory initiative; (Gettinger and Seibert, 2002: 351)
- effective study skills have a positive association with desirable outcomes across different academic content areas (Gettinger and Seibert, 2002: 350).
- Devine (1987) – study skills are supposed to include a range of coordinated cognitive skills to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a student's learning.
- study skills can be grouped into four clusters which are procedural study skills, repetition-based skills, cognitive-based skills and metacognitive skills.

- Repetition based skills
  - include rehearsal, rereading or repetition of information
  - Very useful for mathematical/multiplication facts.
    - is not effective if it is used in isolation (Jones *et al.*, 1992).
- Procedural or organization based study skills
  - Students may fail to succeed in their students because of lack of organisation.
  - Eg. time management, development of study routines and material organisation Some of the useful skills of procedural skills include:
    - Completing the most challenging work when one is most alert
    - Division of work into manageable units
    - Varying the type of study tasks
    - Flexible scheduling breaks if conflicts arise
    - Organisation helps with consistency of study and this will ultimately lead to better academic outcomes.

- Cognitive based study skills

- The goal of these set of skills is to guide students so that they engage in the appropriate thinking with regards to the information they are required to learn
- If students identify how the material is interconnected it becomes more meaningful and remembered better.
- Eg. cognitive maps to map out relationships between ideas or content

- Metacognitive based study skills

- look at the students' ability to monitor, plan, implement and evaluate the study approaches they would have used as well as their ability to assess the need for studying
- Eg. “Why am I studying this passage?” “Do I understand the material I am studying?” and “Should I reread or revise my study strategy?”
- Training metacognitive strategies improves performance

# Method

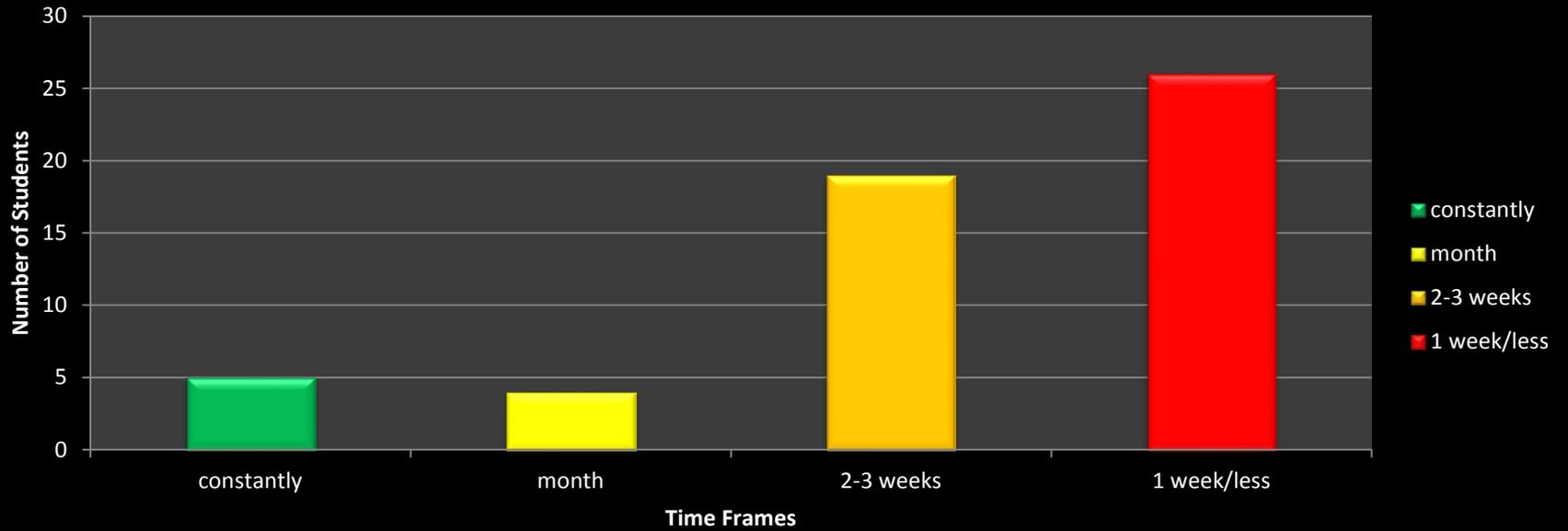
- Issued questionnaires to third year finance students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (PMB)
  - obtained 54 responses from the students
- Study questionnaire aimed at assessing the study strategies as suggested in the literature.
  - Two categories; the first one is their approach in general and the second one is their finance study approach. The findings of the first category are presented below.

# Findings

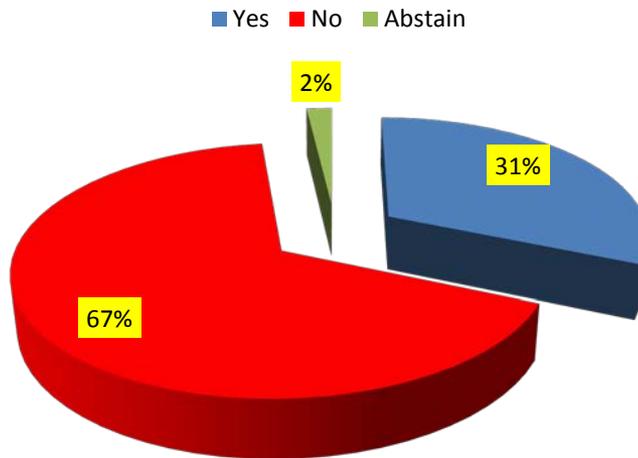
Graph and Pie charts.

Give an insight on how students study and prepare for tests/exams

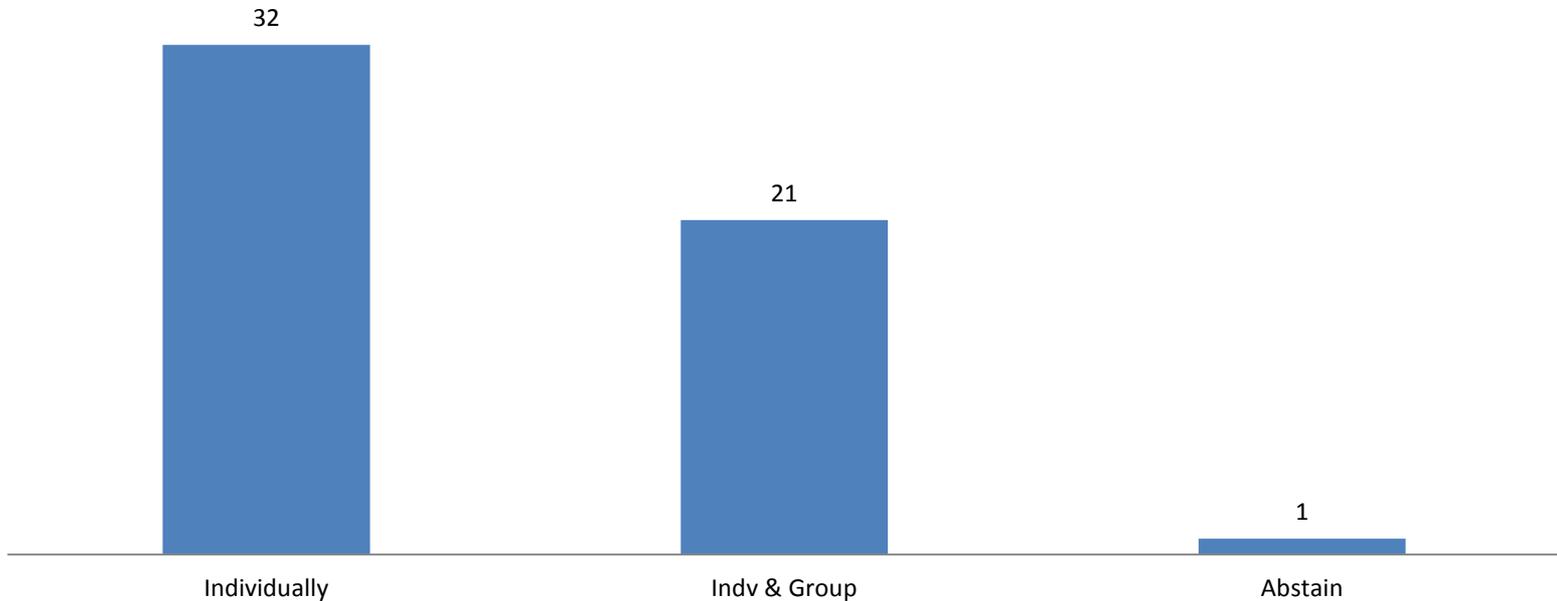
## Time for Test/Exam Preparation



## Is it Sufficient?



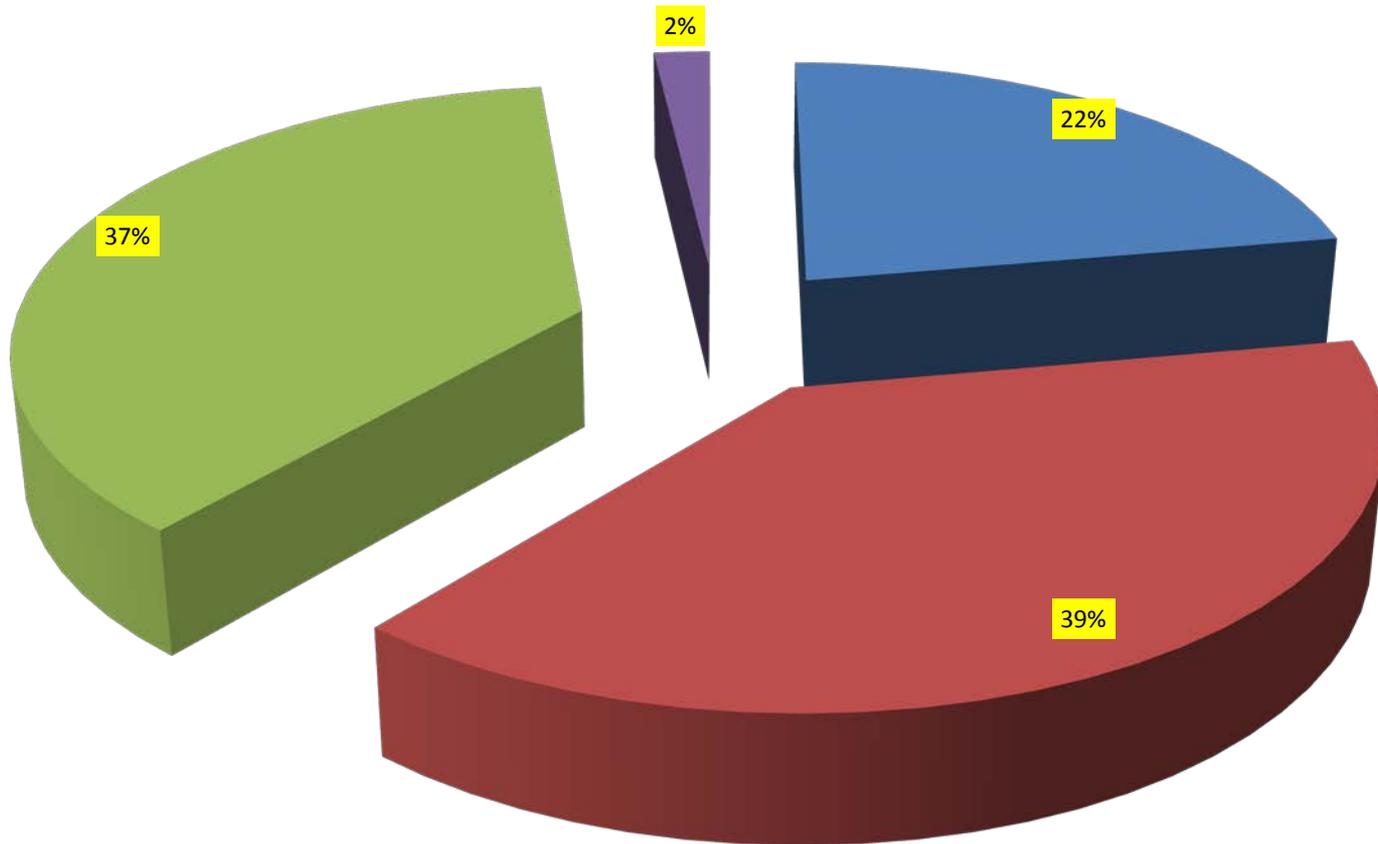
## How Do You Study?



- 10 – meet regularly at least more than once a week
- 15 – only before test/exam
- 29 - Abstained

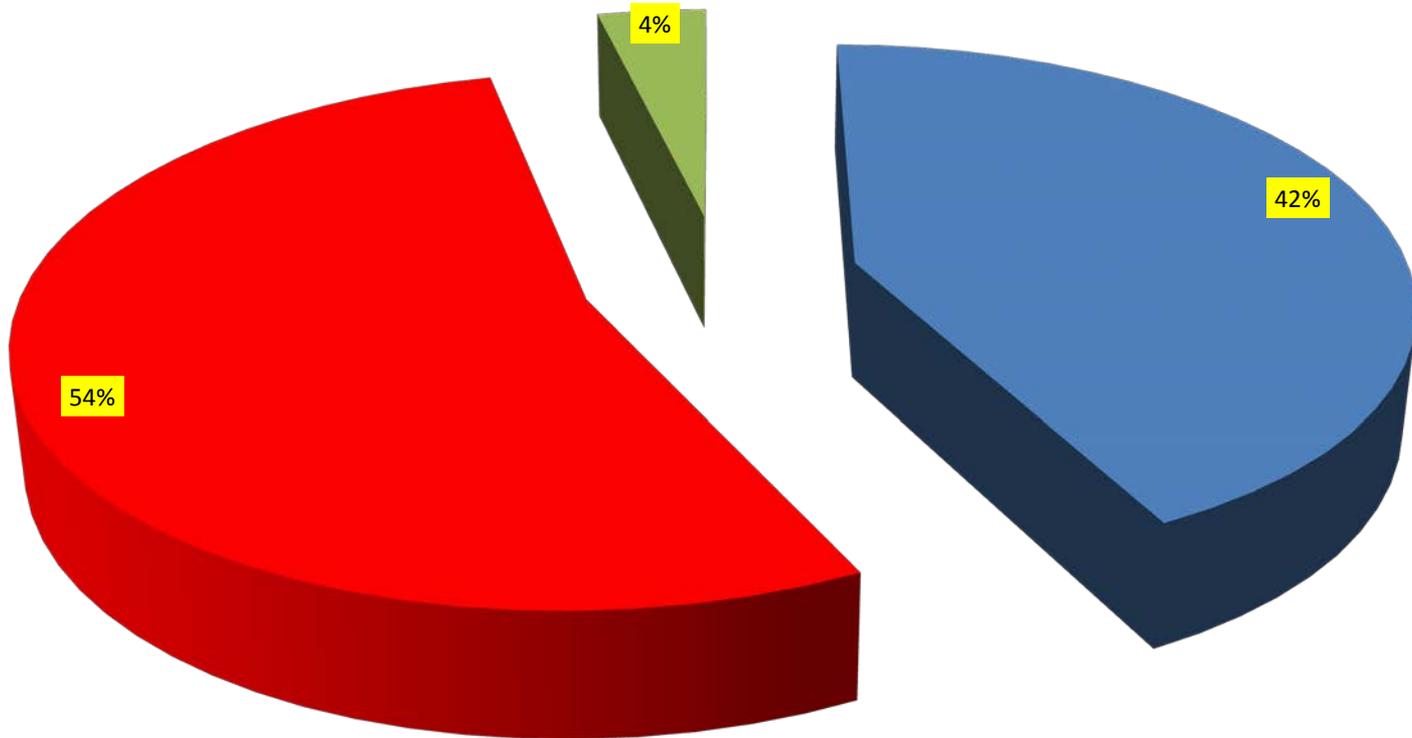
# Important Area of Study

■ Theory ■ Calculation ■ Both ■ Abstain



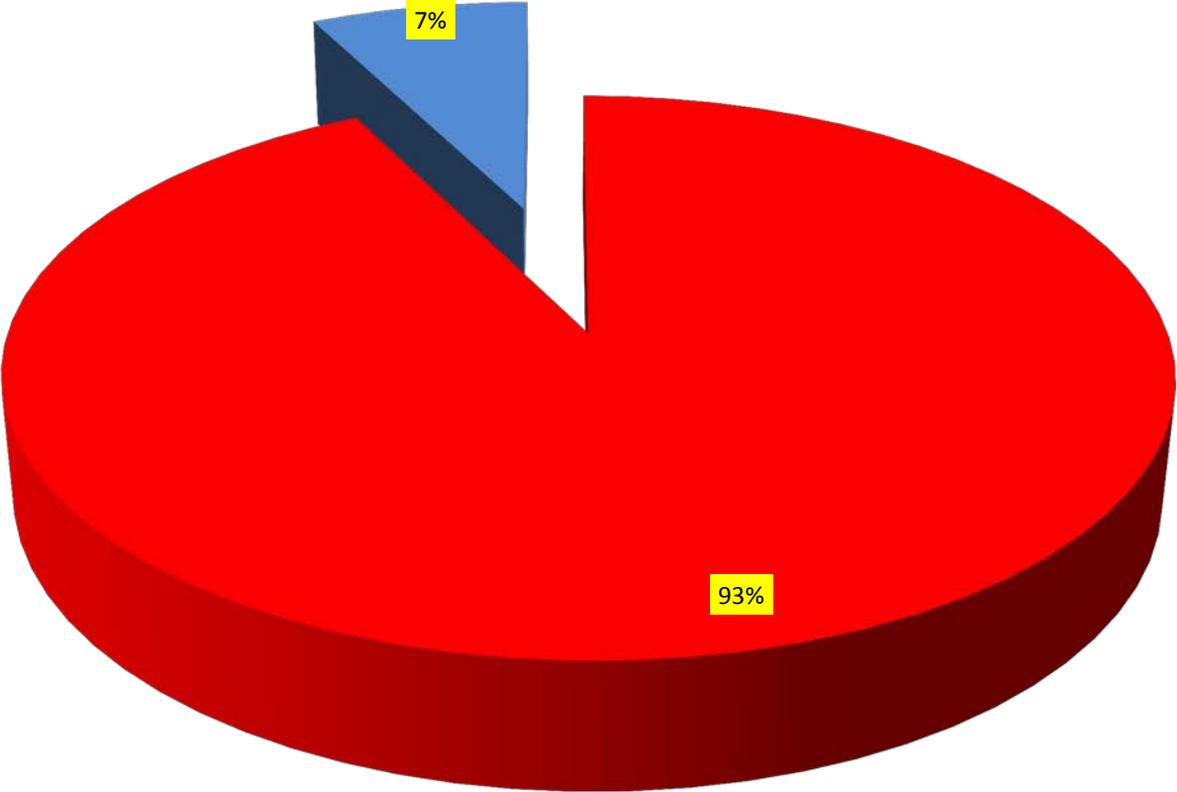
# Do You Assess Your Study Method?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Abstain



# Are Your Study Efforts Sufficient?

■ No ■ Yes



# Interventions Requested

- more practice questions & class examples 21
- Past papers<sup>11</sup>,
- Find a better study group<sup>7</sup>
- Need assistance with theory<sup>4</sup>,
- pointers about what will come in the test<sup>3</sup>,
- give more time to one self's study<sup>2</sup>,
- clearer lectures<sup>2</sup>,
- Increase number of tutorials
- One on one sessions,
- improve lecturer consultation quality,
- references to the book in class notes,
- being told what is required of them in the module,

# Conclusion

- Study gave insights about how finance students prepared for tests/exams
- Important information about students' value areas.
- Study can be broadened
  - More students
  - More questions