



Analysis of an adapted reduced programme for  
First-Year students who didn't make a good start  
in Higher Education.

A case study lead in the Faculty of Veterinary  
Medicine of the University of Liège.

EFYE 2019 - Cork

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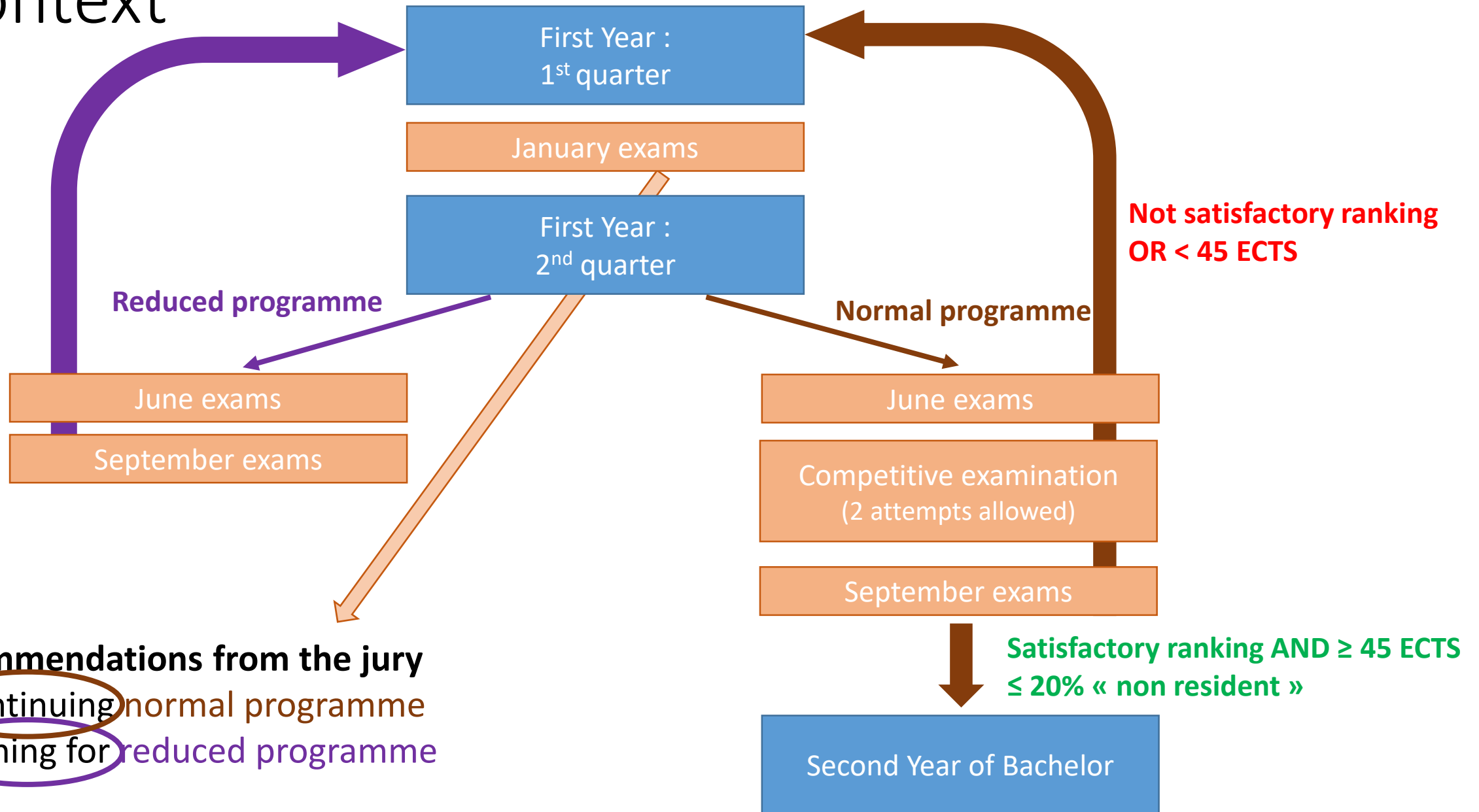
Institute for Research and Training in Higher education (IFRES)

University of Liège (Belgium)

# Context

- In Belgium, access to higher education is (generally) open to all students with a secondary school diploma
- Since 2006: quotas for “non-resident” students in some medical and paramedical studies
- Veterinary medicine in the French-speaking community
  - No admission requirements for entering the first year of the Bachelor programme
  - $\leq 20\%$  of “non resident” students
  - Since 2016: competitive examination at the end of first year

# Context



## Recommendations from the jury

- Continuing normal programme
- Signing for reduced programme

# Reduced programme: legal basis in Belgium

- Decree defining the landscape of Higher Education in the French-speaking Community of Belgium (2013)
- Decree related to the studies of Veterinary Sciences (2016)

# Reduced programme: content

- **First quarter courses only**
  - Five courses: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Statistics and English
  - Opportunity to follow max. 1 second quarter course
- Original remediation activities for each course
  - Alternative teaching methods comparing to 1<sup>st</sup> quarter  
(less theoretical contents/more exercises, more formative assessment, closer relationship and availability of staff...)
- Follow-up by a pedagogical advisor
  - Relay person for demands and concerns to the teachers, frequent meetings
- Methodological support
  - 2 specific sessions dealing with time management and preparation for exams

# Students who chosed reduced programme

- **14 students**

- 11 ♀ and 3 ♂

- 6 non resident students !

- 12 students attended regularly remedial activities

**Very small group**

- **Their motivation** (when signing for the programme)

- **Continuing** the Veterinary Medicine curriculum the following year (13/14)

- Reorienting the following year (1/14)

# Objectives of the research

**Case-analysis** of a group of students who experienced reduced programme during the academic year 2017-2018, investigating:

- specific positive and negative **perceptions** among the factors described as predictors of engagement or performance of students
  - A) quality of **interactions with peers** (Tinto, 1993 - Maslow, 1943)
  - B) quality of **interactions with staff** (Tinto, 1993)
  - C) **expectancy**, judgements of competence and task difficulty (Wiegfield & Eccles, 2000)
- ... crossed with their **performances** in the 5 courses in terms of :
  - score progression between January and June exams
  - success or failure

# Data collection and analysis

## **Semi-directed interviews**

- conducted with 10 voluntary students
  - 7 ♀ and 3 ♂
  - 5 non resident students → competitive examination and quota (5/5)
- focused on (30 to 45 min) :
  - Motivation to enter the reduced programme
  - Opinion on remedial programme for each course
  - Opinion on methodological support and follow-up
  - Social relations during reduced programme
  - Perceived ability after reduced programme

## **Qualitative analysis**

- exploratory and thematic analysis (mostly syntactic and lexical)
- using NVivo software



# Results

## A) Quality of interactions with peers



## Expression of a good quality of interaction related to the 'Reduced programme'

	Students	Comments
<b>Being together, meeting up, chatting (informal, after class time)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>
Maintaining contacts / friendship with students from the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	8	13
Not detrimental to catch up with friends from the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter outside classes	6	7
Taking additional courses from the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	5	7
Maintaining a sense of normalcy	1	1
Catching up with friends from the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	4	4
Taking one's courses further	4	5
?Tightening relationships with student from the 'Reduced programme' group?	0	0
<b>Importance of knowing each other within the group (during courses)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>
Meeting new people, getting along with peers	3	3
Not becoming lonely again by joining the 'Reduced programme'	5	5
Knowing everyone in the group	2	2
Sense of belonging to a group	2	2
Becoming uninhibited to ask questions in public	7	9
Small group effect	6	8
Following a friend	1	1
<b>Mutual aid, course notes exchange, working together</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
? With students from the first quarter ?	0	0
Between students from the 'Reduced programme' group	5	7
Specific friends from the group	1	1
Solidarity within the whole group	5	6



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Taking one's courses further	4	5
? Tightening relationships with student from the 'Reduced programme' group ?	0	0

- *First, they were sad because they thought we would not see each other anymore, but finally no, it didn't change that much, **we still see each other** as much as we did before.*

- ***We've kept on writing messages to each other, for example in order to go out eating together.***

- ***We are still going to celebrate the end of the exams together.***

Expression of a good quality of interaction related to the 'Reduced programme'	Students	Comments
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- *We are still a small group so I'm not **really** lonely.*

- *Almost half of my friends have chosen the reduced programme too, so I **didn't stay alone finally.***

- ***Then I was alone.** I mean « alone »... after that, I got on well with the peoples from the reduced programme group.*

Specific friends from the group

1

1

Solidarity within the whole group

5

6

<b>Importance of knowing each other within the group (during courses)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>
Meeting new people, getting along with peers	3	3
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Small group effect	6	8

- *With the reduced programme, we were more able **to ask questions within a small group.***
- *But here, we are only eight people, **we all know each other well, so asking a question is not a problem.***
- *But knowing that we were **a small group**, it's always the same thing, I think it's **easier to ask questions.***
- *I think it's simpler **at the communication level** than it is when you're in an auditorium where 300 people will listen to you.*

Expression of a good quality of interaction related to the 'Reduced programme'	Students	Comments
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<b>Mutual aid, course notes exchange, working together</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
? With students from the first quarter ?	0	0
Between students from the 'Reduced programme' group	5	7
Specific friends from the group	1	1
Solidarity within the whole group	5	6

*- I've especially worked with those from the reduced programme*

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Knowing everyone in the group	2	2
Sense of belonging to a group	2	2
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Mutual aid, course notes exchange, working together	5	7
With students from the first quarter	0	0
Between students from the 'Reduced programme' group	5	7
Specific friends from the group	1	1
<b>Solidarity within the whole group</b>	5	6
Tightening relationships with student from the 'Reduced programme' group	0	0

- *We all have - let's say – difficulties, so **we are all there to help too.***
- *We had discussed it **all together**, we had submitted two or three exercises during this two-hours session.*
- *We had created a [Facebook] group in order to answer questions, if someone in the group had a question or anything. So **we were helping each other.***

with students from the first quarter	0	0
Between students from the 'Reduced programme' group	5	7
Specific friends from the group	1	1
Solidarity within the whole group	5	6



<b>Expression of a bad quality of interaction related to the 'Reduced programme'</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Being with unknown people</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Not becoming uninhibited to speak</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Uncomfortable feeling related to the signing in for the 'Reduced programme'</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
Reinforcement of the sense of failure	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Sense of abnormality	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Sense of shame	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Sense of loneliness	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Sense of exclusion, of being isolated	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
(From indefinite students)	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
From students who have failed	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Why did you do that?'	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Feeling of abandoning friends	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Isolate oneself from others willingly in order to work	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>Uncomfortable feeling related to the signing in for the 'Reduced programme'</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
Reinforcement of the sense of failure	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Sense of abnormality	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Sense of shame	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Sense of loneliness	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Sense of exclusion, of being isolated	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
(From indefinite students)	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
From students who have failed	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Why did you do that?'	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Feeling of abandoning friends	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Isolate oneself from others willingly in order to work	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Feeling of abandoning friends	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Isolate oneself from others willingly in order to work	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

Uncomfortable feeling related to the signing in for the 'Reduced programme'	6	8
Reinforcement of the sense of failure	1	1
Sense of abnormality	1	1
Sense of shame	1	1
Sense of loneliness	2	2
Sense of exclusion, of being isolated	4	5
(From indefinite students)	1	1
From students who have failed	2	2
Why did you do that?'	3	4

- Many have failed like me, but they have continued and they don't understand **why** I chose the reduced programme.

- It's especially the judgements made by the others, saying « **Why** did you do that ? Only zeros do that »

- They asked me **why** I was doing that.

# Results

## B) Quality of interactions with staff





<b>Expression of a good quality of interaction related to the 'Reduced programme'</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Becoming uninhibited to speak, to ask questions</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>
Interpersonally	5	6
(Unspecified)	3	3
Publicly	5	5
<b>Availability of faculties/staff</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>
Availability after class time	1	1
Feedbacks on students' performances	1	2
The teachers inquire about students' levels of understanding	3	3
The teachers have, take more time	4	6
<b>Importance of the support person</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
To reassure	1	1
Relay person for demands and concerns to the teachers	1	2
Supporting reflection on strengths and weaknesses	1	1
Support academic integration	1	1
Opportunity to open up about things they would not dare to say to teachers	3	3
<b>Opportunity to express choices, opinions</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
Positive answer to requesting additional exercises	2	2
Positive answer to requesting additional theoretical explanations	1	1
<b>Passive consumers</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>Becoming uninhibited to speak, to ask questions</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>
Interpersonally	5	6
(Unspecified)	3	3
Publicly	5	5

- *Just ask a question and she would come to you and explain.*

- *In an auditorium with three hundred students, you won't necessarily dare raise your hand and ask the teacher your question. Whereas, we are eight, at the end we all knew each other. So... we were asking questions without really thinking: "Oh, there are people."*

Support academic integration	1	1
Opportunity to open up about things they would not dare to say to teachers	3	3
<b>? Support activities from the academic advising service ?</b>	0	0
<b>Opportunity to express choices, opinions</b>	3	3
Positive answer to requesting additional exercises	2	2
Positive answer to requesting additional theoretical explanations	1	1
<b>Passive consumers</b>	2	2



<b>Availability of faculties/staff</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>
Availability after class time	1	1
Feedbacks on students' performances	1	2
The teachers inquire about students' levels of understanding	3	3
The teachers have, take more time	4	6
Availability after class time	1	1

- *If we ever have a question, if we have a doubt, and sometimes we don't dare to ask it, **the professor can more easily spot it** and thus encourage us to ask the question.*
- *Teachers were more attentive, **they really wondered what was wrong**, they took the necessary time to answer.*
- *So, when we had a question, **they could really take their time** to answer our question.*

Positive answer to requesting additional theoretical explanations	1	1
Passive consumers	2	2



<b>Expression of a bad quality of interaction related to the 'Reduced programme'</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Respondents who don't ask questions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Misplaced (yet conscious) self-esteem	1	1
Not seizing opportunities	2	2
Not becoming uninhibited	2	3
To speak in public	2	2
To speak individually to the teacher	1	1
<b>No additional interaction (comparing to the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter sessions)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>No given opportunity to express an opinion directly to the teacher (only through the relay person)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Would have preferred individual contacts with the support person</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Support activities from the academic advising service</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Very 'frontal' pedagogical methods</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Unsatisfied passive consumers</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>Respondents who don't ask questions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Misplaced (yet conscious) self-esteem	1	1
Not seizing opportunities	2	2
Not becoming uninhibited	2	3
To speak in public	2	2
To speak individually to the teacher	1	1

*- I don't speak. I listen, but in the end I still come out with the same questions as when I arrived.*

*- No, I didn't dare.*

Support activities from the academic advising service	1	1
Very 'frontal' pedagogical methods	1	1
Unsatisfied passive consumers	2	2

# Results

## C) Expectancy and performance



## Expectancy

Students Comments



### Positive vision of the ability to succeed

10

32

**Declared benefit (are able to accomplish something they didn't before reduced programme)**

6

11

**Feeling of increasing chances of success through reduced programme**

6

8

Pass the exam(s), be prepared to exams

5

7

For one specific course

2

4

Globally

3

3

To understand everything

2

2

**Feel able to provide the required work in reduced programme**

2

2

**Favourable self-assessment so don't take an opportunity**

4

7

Don't need remediation for this subject

3

5

Don't need methodological help (working method, time management)

2

2

### Negative vision of the ability to succeed

5

8

**No declared benefit (aren't able to accomplish something despite remedial activities)**

3

4

**Aren't able to solve a problem without help**

2

2

**Are not sufficiently prepared to pass exam(s)**

2

2



## Expectancy

Students      Comments

**Declared benefit (are able to accomplish something they didn't before reduced programme)**

6

11

*- I've had a lot of troubles with the open-ended questions, I remember, during the january exam. But this time **I succeeded in doing it.***

*- I have the feeling that it's clearly easier [...] **now I'm able to do it.***

*- **When I was leaving the room, I used to know how to do an exercise and I was happy. While in january, I was not able to do it after the tutorial classes.***

Don't need remediation for this subject

3

5

Don't need methodological help (working method, time management)

2

2

**Negative vision of the ability to succeed**

5

8

**No declared benefit (aren't able to accomplish something despite remedial activities)**

3

4

**Aren't able to solve a problem without help**

2

2

**Are not sufficiently prepared to pass exam(s)**

2

2

## Expectancy

Students

Comments

Declared benefit (are able to accomplish something they didn't before reduced programme)

6

11

programme)

### Perceptions crossed with actual performance

11 comments declaring a perceived benefit

→ 2 (from 2 students): **not related to a progression in performance (+ 0 to -1)**

→ 9 (from 5 students) : **related to a progression in performance (+1 to +17)**

→ 5 (from 3 students): **related to success in passing concerned exam**

Feel able to provide the required work in reduced programme

2

2

Favourable self-assessment so don't take an opportunity

4

7

Don't need remediation for this subject

3

5

Don't need methodological help (working method, time management)

2

2

Negative vision of the ability to succeed

5

8

No declared benefit (aren't able to accomplish something despite remedial activities)

3

4

Aren't able to solve a problem without help

2

2

Are not sufficiently prepared to pass exam(s)

2

2

Feeling of increasing chances of success through reduced programme	6	8
Pass the exam(s), be prepared to exams	5	7
For one specific course	2	4
Globally	3	3

### Perceptions crossed with actual performance

2 students declaring a perceived increasing in their chances to pass specific exams

- 1 : related to success in the 2 concerned exams
- 1 : not related to success in the 2 concerned exams

### Favourable self-assessment

3 students declaring a perceived increasing in their global chances of success

- 2: related to success (4/5 and 3/4 courses)
- 1: not related to success (1/5 courses)

No declared benefit (aren't able to accomplish something despite remedial activities)	3	4
Aren't able to solve a problem without help	2	2
Are not sufficiently prepared to pass exam(s)	2	2



## Expectancy

	Students	Comments
<b>Positive vision of the ability to succeed</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32</b>
Declared benefit (are able to accomplish something they didn't before reduced programme)	6	11
Feeling of increasing chances of success through reduced programme	6	8
Pass the exam(s), be prepared to exams	5	7
For one specific course	2	4
Globally	3	3
To understand everything	2	2
Feel able to provide the required work in reduced programme	2	2
Favourable self-assessment so don't take an opportunity	4	7
Don't need remediation for this subject	3	5
Don't need methodological help (working method, time management)	2	2
<b>Negative vision of the ability to succeed</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>
No declared benefit (aren't able to accomplish something despite remedial activities)	3	4
Aren't able to solve a problem without help	2	2
Are not sufficiently prepared to pass exam(s)	2	2



## Negative vision of the ability to succeed

	5	8
No declared benefit (aren't able to accomplish something despite remedial activities)	3	3
Aren't able to solve a problem without help	2	1
Are not sufficiently prepared to pass exam(s)	2	2
Pass the exam(s), be prepared to exams	5	7

3 comments declaring no perceived benefit

- 1 (from 1 students): **not related to a progression in performance (-2)**
- 2 (from 2 students) : **related to a progression in performance (+1 to +5)**
  - **None related to success in passing concerned exam**

Favourable self-assessment so don't take an opportunity	4	7
Don't need remediation for this subject	3	5
Don't need methodological help (working method, time management)	2	2
<b>Negative vision of the ability to succeed</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>
No declared benefit (aren't able to accomplish something despite remedial activities)	3	4
Aren't able to solve a problem without help	2	2
Are not sufficiently prepared to pass exam(s)	2	2

# Main findings: interactions with peers



Relations **after class time**: with **friends met in the first quarter**

VS

**Working** together: with students from the **reduced programme group**

Emergence of **solidarity** into the group

Importance of knowing each other

**Small group** effect

Not becoming **lonely** again



Uncomfortable feeling : **exclusion, incomprehension** on the part of some students

# Main findings : interactions with staff



## Feeling **closer to the staff**

Being uninhibited to ask questions

Availability of the staff



**Inhibition** to ask questions / talk to the teachers **persists in some situations**

# Main findings: expectancy and performance



A majority of students **declare benefits**

In some specific skills

In terms of chances of success

→ Often related to a progression in **performance**



But **not** consistently related to **success in passing exams**

# Conclusion and perspectives

- Those results could be both inspiring and transferable to various kinds of adapted First Year programmes aiming to give students a second chance to make a successful transition from high school to university.

## Further questions and perspectives

- What is the academic path of these students the following year, once back in the normal university curriculum?
- Other aspects to investigate further :
  - What approaches to learning were adopted by students during reduced programme (strategic +++ ?)
  - Do they demonstrate new self-regulation abilities after reduced programme ?