



Graduate attributes, learning outcomes and assessment: Beyond alignment to engagement

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Overview of our research

- Data = graduate attributes, 39 Australian universities, 20 year period
- What is the intended curriculum at Australian universities? How has this changed over time? To what extent do graduate attributes align with teaching (enacted curriculum) and learning (experienced curriculum)? (Marsh & Willis, 2007)
- Previous analysis = social inclusion, student engagement, global citizenship





This study:

- Alignment between graduate attributes, learning outcomes and assessment tasks
- Random purposeful sample of 40 undergraduate units, 1st year and 3rd year, Business and Arts
- Evaluated for passive, active, and/or critical engagement
- Word frequency analysis (NVIVO)

Passive, active, critical

Passive engagement = acquiring/ understanding knowledge.

- E.g. “Become exposed to how models are implemented in MS Excel” or “Consider the social and political movements of the 1980s and 1990s”

Active engagement = applying/ adapting knowledge.

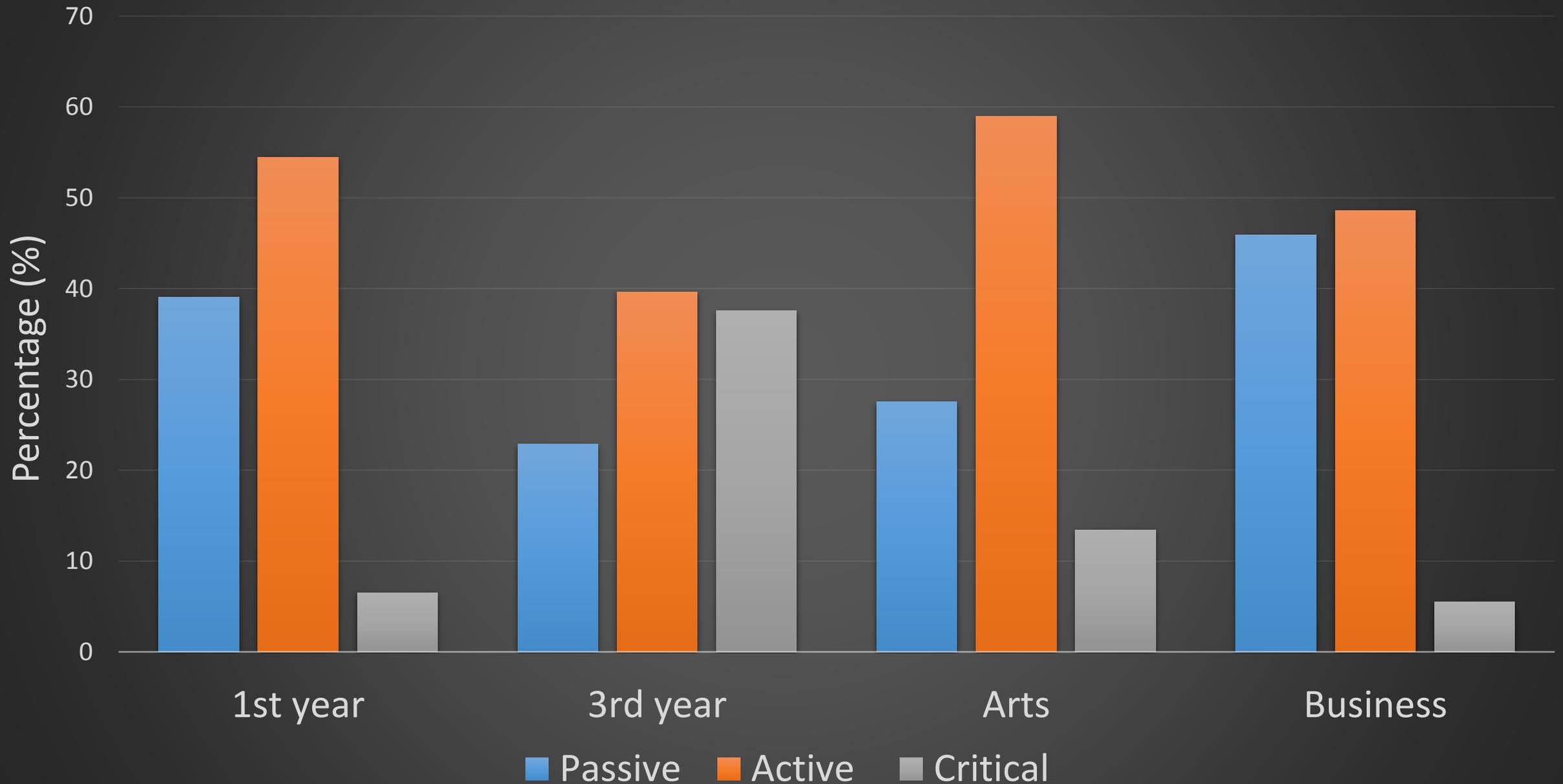
- E.g. “Confidently read and discuss financial publications” or “Engage in informed criminological discussion with staff and other students”

Critical engagement = questioning/ creating knowledge.

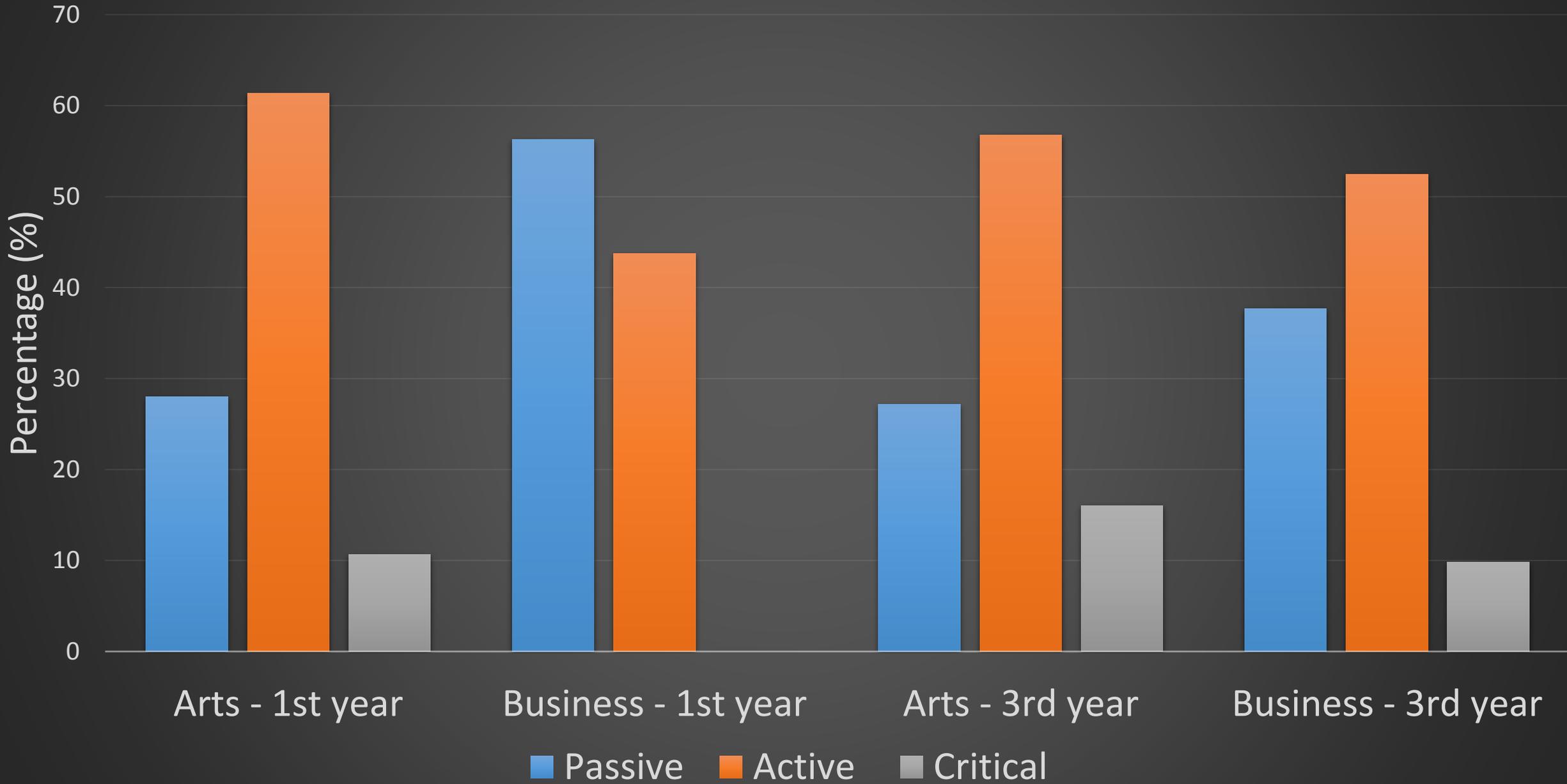
- E.g. “Critique the accounting profession’s contribution to society through discussion of ethical and professional conduct” or “Analyse the values of your placement and whether you have integrated them into your own views and practices”



Comparison across year and discipline (% of learning outcomes in each category)



Comparison by discipline (% of learning outcomes in each category)

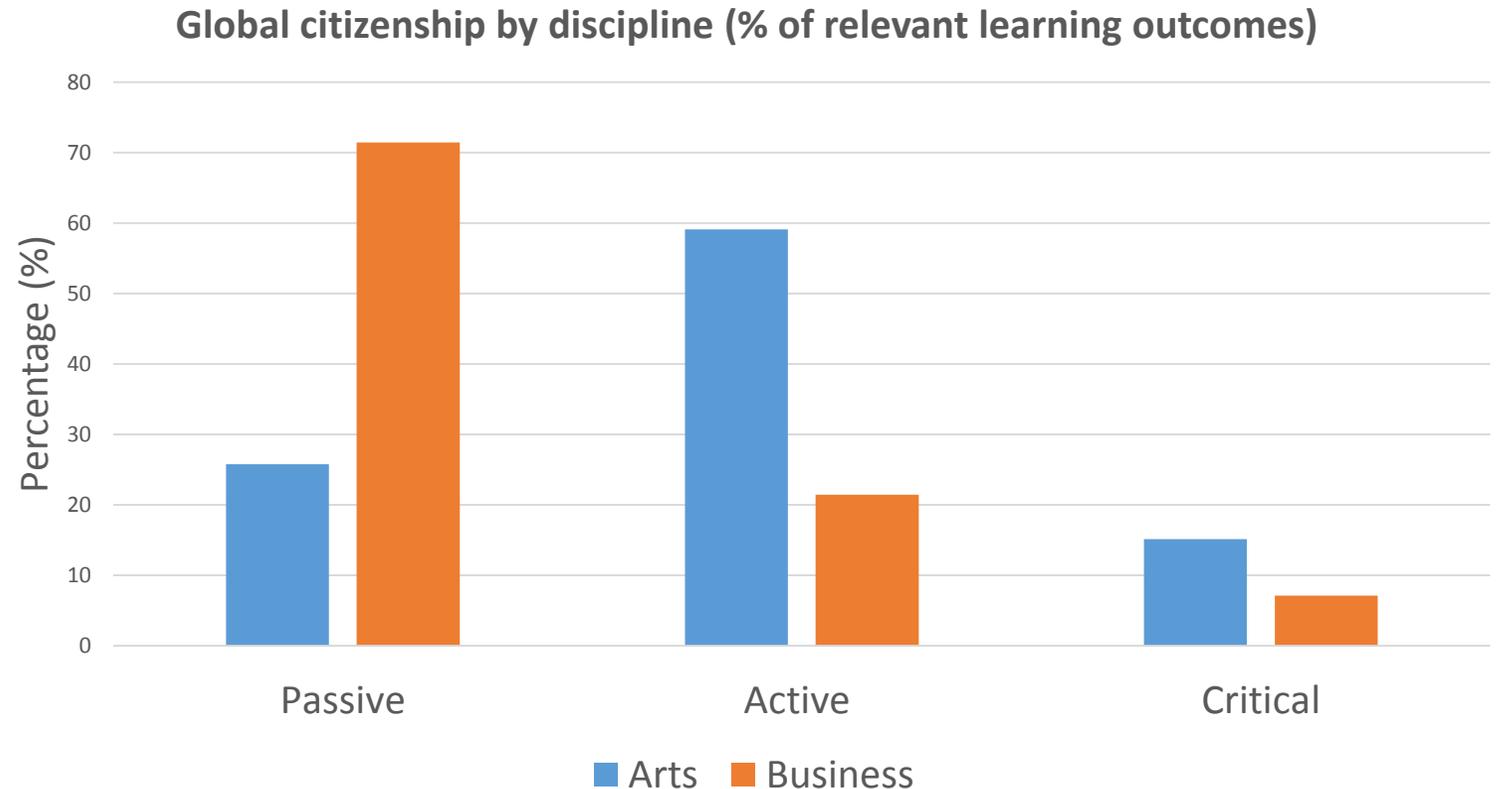


Global citizenship (23 units)

Passive: “A sense of the complexity and importance of cross-cultural dialogue on gender issues”

Critical: “Develop, critique and advocate legal policy reform proposals in the area of criminal justice”

Assessment: written task (100%), participation (39%), exam (21%)



Global citizenship

- 95% of Australian universities have global citizenship as graduate attribute
- “soft” global citizenship education vs “critical” approach (Andreotti, 2006)
- Soft = “raising awareness of global issues” or “greater awareness of problems”
- Critical = “engagement with global issues and perspectives” or “independent/ critical thinking and more informed, responsible and ethical action” (Andreotti, 2006)
- passive global citizenship is easier to implement (Shulz and Jorgenson, 2008)
- passive global citizenship is a “politically neutral if not banal concept” (Caruana, 2010, p. 61)

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