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Original Citation

Wakefield, Jonathan P. and Lawlor, Ian (2010) Profiling of Academically Successful and Unsuccessful Students on Music Technology and Production Degree Courses. In: Forum for Innovation in Music Production and Composition (FIMPaC), 20-21 May 2010, Leeds College of Music, Leeds, UK. (Unpublished)

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Profiling of Academically Successful and Unsuccessful Students on Music Technology and Production Degree Courses
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University of **HUDDERSFIELD**

Introduction

Academics often have a "gut feeling" about which categories of students are successful or unsuccessful on their courses. Sometimes this is based on ad hoc anecdotal evidence, e.g. citing examples of a few strong or weak students, or sometimes based on back of the envelope analyses. It is not unusual to hear staff hypothesise that mature students do better/worse than 18 year olds or National Diploma entry students do better or worse than "A" level entry students. However, staff experiences with subgroups of students can be misleading and not representative of the true picture of the student cohort as a whole.

This project adopted a systematic approach to identify the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful types of students on a suite of Music Technology and Production degrees graduating between 2001 and 2008.

Background

Department of Engineering and Technology at University of Huddersfield offers following 4 courses:

BSc (Hons) Music Technology and Audio Systems (MTAS)
BSc (Hons) Music Technology Software Development (MTSD)
BSc (Hons) Popular Music Production (BSc PMP)
BA (Hons) Popular Music Production (BA PMP)

The first two courses can be considered "technical" although they are broad and cover music production and computer composition in addition to software electronics, DSP, and audio theory. The later two are broad and music production industry focussed with the BA including an element of performance.

Methodology

• Extract data from University's Applicant and Student Information System
• Fill in any missing data either from system or old paper records
• Condition data e.g. UCAS points system changed during time period so old UCAS points needed converting to new UCAS points
• Compare groups of student's entry profiles with the outcome of their studies.
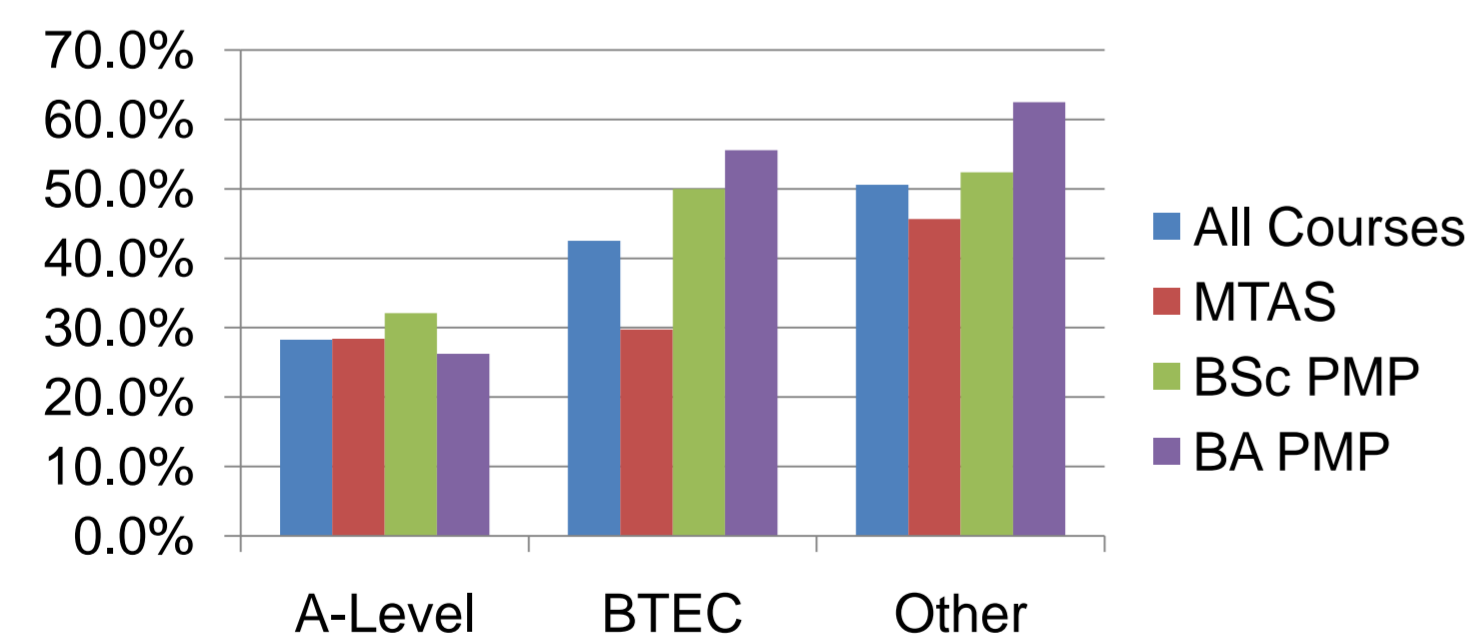
Definitions

• A **successful student** is defined as a student that achieves a 1st or 2(i)
• An **unsuccessful student** is defined as a student that fails, withdraws, transfers or suspends and does not return. They do not reach final year and have not been awarded an interim award.
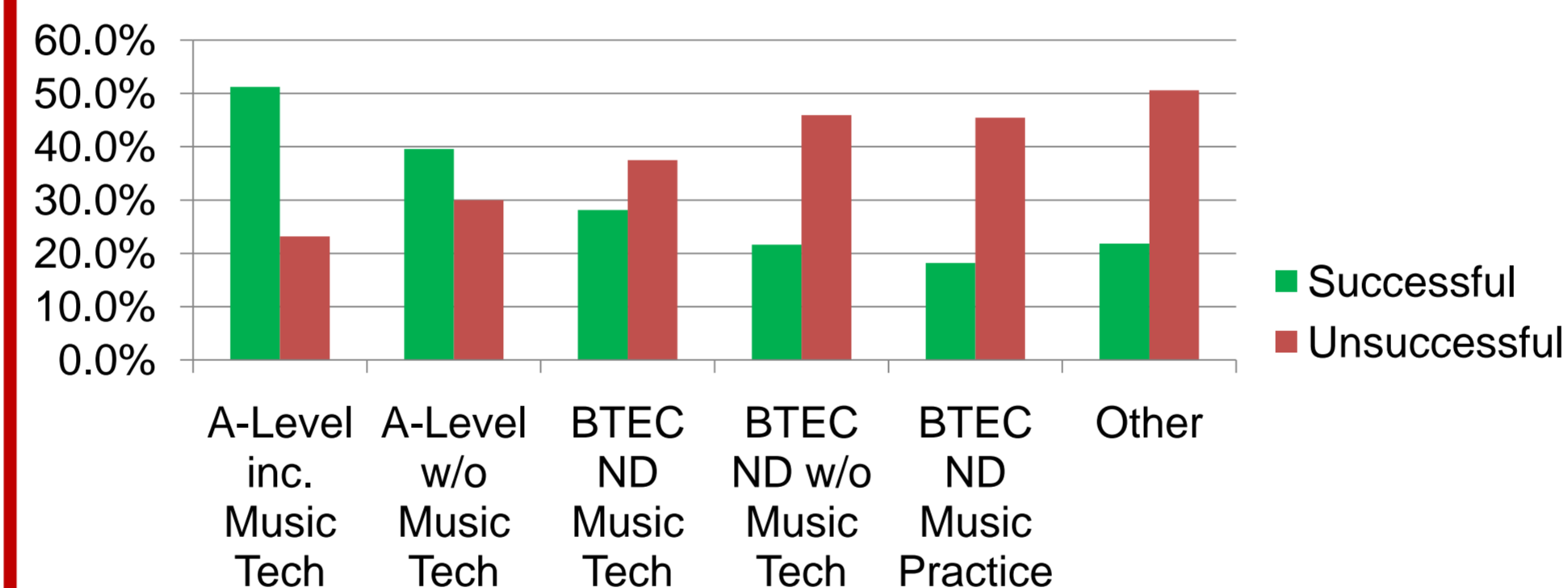
Analysis by Course

### Successful students
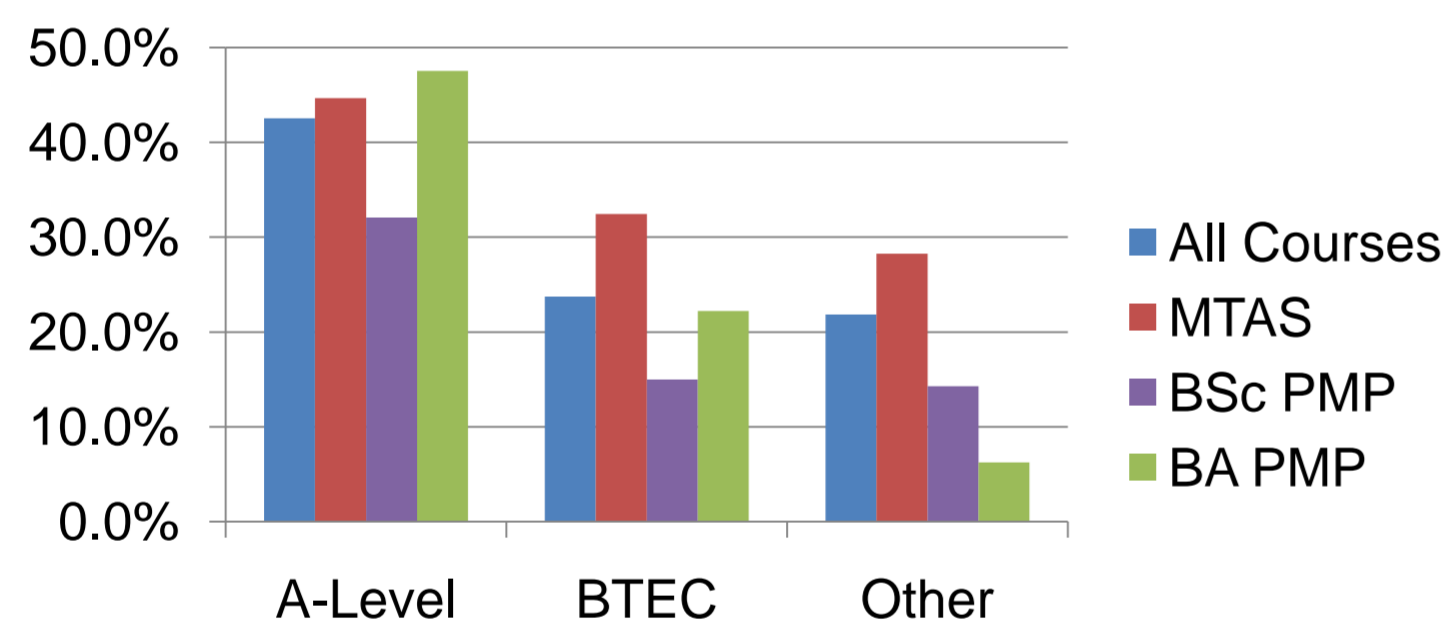
Unsuccessful students

Do results vary by type of Music Tech course?

Results are more or less consistent across the courses with A-Level best, BTEC second and others last. Only variation is for BTEC ND students who perform worse on the two PMP courses but almost as good as A-Level students on MTAS course.

All students


A-Level Students without Music Technology
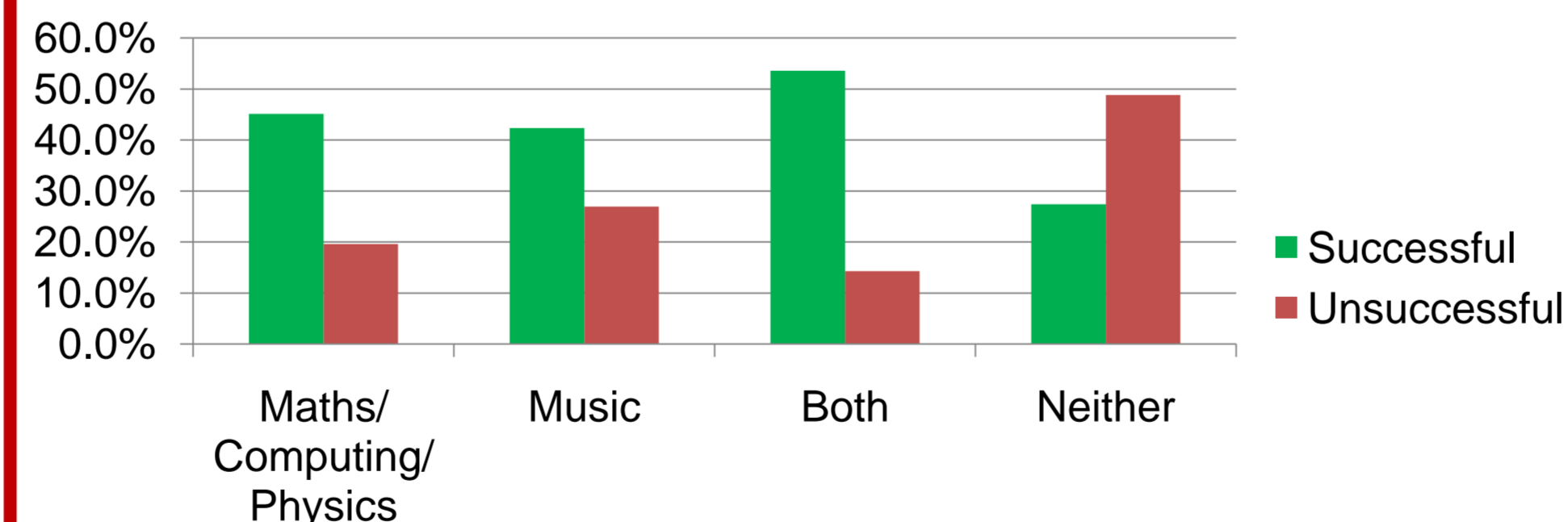
Does having a Music Tech qualification lead to better performance?

Not necessarily. Order of best to worst performance is: A-Levels inc. Music Tech, A-Levels without Music Tech, ND Music Tech, other National Diploma/qualification. In terms of specific A-Levels, Maths/Computing/Physics and/or Music students compare favourably with A-Levels inc Music Technology.

Mature vs. Non-mature
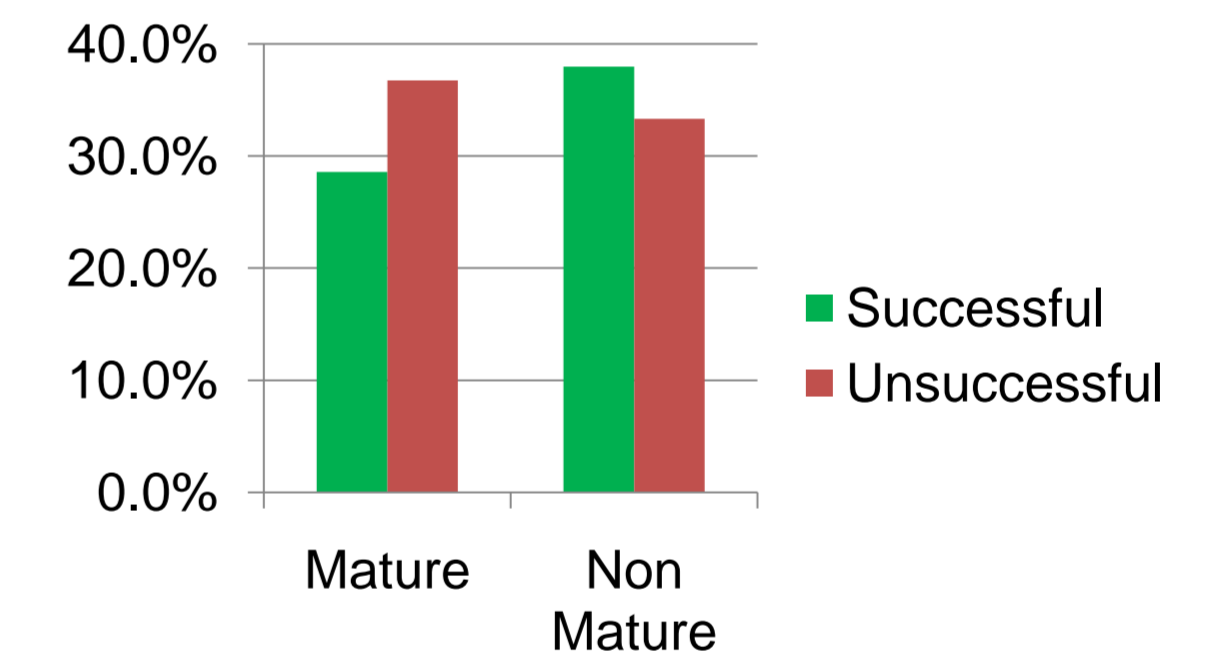
Un/Successful by UCAS points (excl. mature)
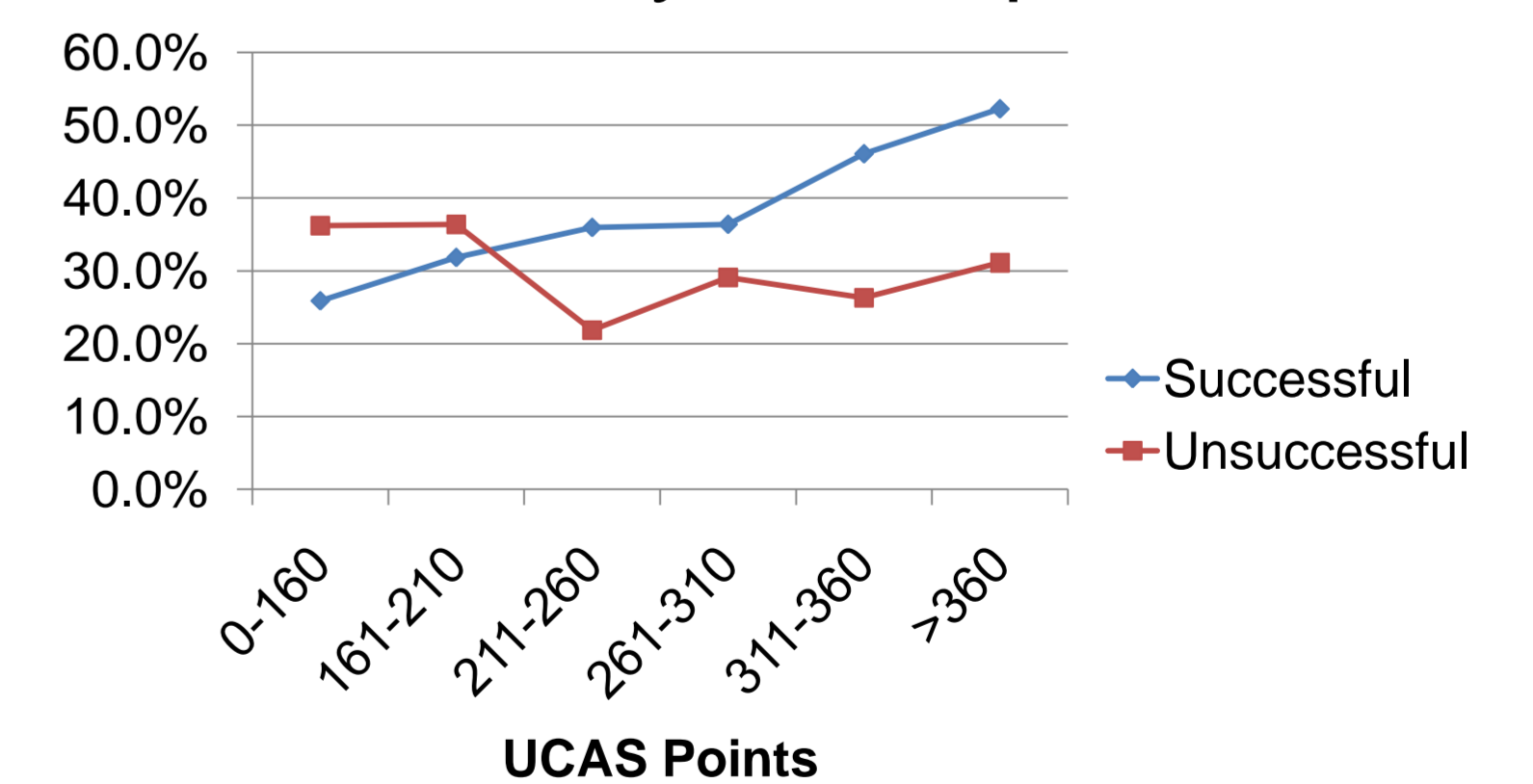
UCAS Points

Is the number of UCAS points a reliable indicator of performance on these courses?

For successful – YES
For unsuccessful – NO

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