

The impact of an online mastery exercise on introductory psychology students' writing and plagiarism

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- › Challenges facing the large first year courses:
 - School leavers unaware of referencing rules (which leads to negligent plagiarism)
 - The many challenges of first year university results in copying work from other students (dishonest plagiarism)
 - Lack of familiarity with the writing style expected for university and psychology (i.e. APA format)
 - Lack of understanding of what constitutes good writing (i.e. they need examples)

Previous plagiarism reduction interventions

- › Landau, Druen, and Arcuri (2002) taught undergraduate students about plagiarism identification and proper paraphrasing skills - plagiarism was reduced.

- › Brown, Robin, and Jordan (2008) from the University of Adelaide implemented and evaluated a 6-lecture program on plagiarism using an e-learning website – unfortunately very few students accessed this online resource.

- › Goals of the current USyd interventions (2007 to present)
 - › i) To increase students' writing skills
 - › li) To reduce plagiarism cases

Year	Semester 1 Essay (PSYC1001)	Semester 2 Report (PSYC1002)
2007	Plagiarism software introduced and students warned	Plagiarism software introduced and students warned
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Writing exercise involved:

- In class, students were given a paragraph from a real article (with the reference for the article), and were asked to write a paragraph about the information
- Students submitted their paragraph online in the same way they were about to submit their essay
- Paragraphs were run through plagiarism software and were also evaluated for quality
- Full feedback posted online for all students to consider
 - And those students supplying the plagiarised ones were emailed and warned

Question 1 : Plagiarism

Hypnotherapy is an appropriate way to combat acute stress disorder (ASD). Spiegel, 1996 stated that hypnotherapy may reduce the symptoms that characterize ASD due to **the focused attention and involvement linked with hypnotic techniques** (Bryant, Moulds, Guthrie, & Nixon (2005)). Bryant, Moulds, & Guthrie, 2001 highlights that the possible **use of hypnosis is underlined by evidence** **that ASD participants are more hypnotizable than trauma survivors who do not develop ASD** (Bryant et al. 2005). Kirsch, Montgomery, & Sapirstein, 1995 found that **using hypnosis in combination with CBT is beneficial** as it is evident that using **hypnosis in conjunction with CBT leads to greater gains than providing CBT alone** (Bryant et al. 2005). Brom, Kleber, & Defares, 1989 compared the effectiveness of **desensitization, hypnotherapy, psychodynamic therapy, and a wait-list control group posttraumatic stress. They found that all three active treatments were comparably effective** (Bryant et al. 2005)

This is an example of plagiarism. The student has attempted to correctly reference the source of the information, but has failed to acknowledge that they stole most of the words too. Everything highlighted in RED has been copied exactly. If you copy someone's words use quotation marks: "...". **Changing one word per sentence does not make it your own work!** In addition the student is referencing their information as if they have read the original sources, but all they have read is Bryant et al. (2005). They should have referenced like this: Brom, Kleber, & Defares (1989, cited by Bryant et al., 2005)

WRONG: Bryant, Moulds, & Guthrie, 2001 highlights that the possible use of hypnosis is underlined by evidence that ASD participants are more hypnotizable than trauma survivors who do not develop ASD (Bryant et al. 2005). **CORRECT:** Bryant, Moulds, Guthrie, and Nixon (2005, p.124), conclude based on previous findings (Bryant, Moulds, & Guthrie, 2001; cited by Bryant et al., 2005) that "the possible use of hypnosis is underlined by evidence that ASD participants are more hypnotizable than trauma survivors who do not develop ASD".

If you find yourself often having to put "cited by" – it means that you are not using the primary sources, and are relying on what someone else read and thought.

If most of the assignment is like this

Mark	Grade
>64	CREDIT or greater
50-64	PASS
1-49	FAIL
0*	Not a serious attempt

*Student must resubmit another assignment (for no marks)

- Advantages:
 - Students see real plagiarism and understand precisely what the software does
- Disadvantages:
 - Extremely difficult to run and took 30 minutes of class time; however from 2008 onwards we were able to repost the same feedback

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› Writing mastery quiz involved:

- As part of their regular continuous assessment students completed 7-9 online quizzes; **one** of which was on the existing writing tutorial (which had previously only been assessed with the assignment).
- Quiz features
 - unlimited attempts with a forced 3 hour break*
 - *possible on webCT but no longer possible on Blackboard
 - 11 questions on referencing, quotation, plagiarism, plagiarism penalties, 'cited by', number of references needed, psycINFO (search engine) use, and the sharing of work
- Advantages:
 - Students encouraged to participate because of real course rewards
 - Seamless integration into existing quiz structure
 - Questions link together all course resources on writing
 - Instant computer scoring and feedback
- Disadvantages:
 - While the psycINFO questions involved actual use of the search engine, no actual writing was being done anywhere

A student submits an assignment where most paragraphs are like this one:

Knowing what hypnosis is affects how people behave when apparently hypnotised. Barber & Calverly (1964, 1965) conducted an experiment. Meeker & Barber (1971, p 103), described an experiment by Barber & Calverly (1964) where: "subjects were randomly assigned to experimental groups. One group was told that it was participating in a hypnosis experiment and another group was told that it was to be tested for ability to imagine. The subjects in both groups were then treated identically; that is, they were tested individually on response to the standardised test suggestions of the Barber Suggestibility Scale." Results from the experiments by Barber & Calverly, 1964) claim that: "the subjects told they were participating in a hypnosis experiment were significantly more responsive to the test suggestions than those told they were participating in an imagination experiment." Meeker & Barber (1971, p103).

Note that all the words in red are the exact words of Meeker and Barber.

How will the student's work be assessed?

- The student has referenced correctly. However since they have contributed almost nothing to the writing, and have simply quoted what other people said, if most of their assignment was like this they would receive a FAIL grade.
- The student has referenced correctly. While the writing is just a summary of past research, it seems relevant so if most of their assignment was like this they would receive a PASS grade.
- The student has not referenced correctly. Because so many words are taken directly from the source the student is guilty of plagiarism. If most of their assignment was like this they would receive 0, and be required to start again and submit a new assignment on a different topic for no marks.
- The student has referenced correctly and selected the key information from the source to present. If most of their assignment was like this they would receive a High Distinction.
- The student has not referenced correctly. They should have used footnotes to indicate the references. Because some attempt has been made to reference they will not be accused of plagiarism or failed outright, but if most of the assignment was like this they would receive only a low PASS grade.

Only feedback for the submitted response is given, and the student keeps trying until they find the correct answer



Feedback

- 100.0% a. Correct: The referencing is correct, with quotation marks used and a page number referred to. However this is an example of "too many quotes". If you cannot put the issues into your own words, the marker will assume you are unable to understand what is going on.
- 0.0% b. Incorrect: There is no evidence the student has understood anything, they just seem to be skilled in quoting other people!
- 0.0% c. Incorrect: This is not an example of plagiarism. The student has correctly used quotation marks (and referred to the page number).
- 0.0% d. Incorrect: The use of quotations might be correct, but to achieve a High Distinction a student needs to demonstrate they fully understand the material, and can create an original argument in their own words. If they do nothing but copy words, how could they possibly show the marker they understand anything?
- 0.0% e. Totally incorrect: The psychology APA referencing rules require in text references, and not footnotes.

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› Critique of a ‘bad’ essay tutorial*

- Previously tutorial involved tutor talking about all the formatting and referencing ‘rules’ for 50 minutes!

- In this new tutorial:

- Students given a complete essay online
- In class the week before, students form groups and are asked to prepare a presentation on a small section of the essay (e.g. Group 1: just the Abstract and first paragraph)
- Students are explicitly told the essay is a ‘bad’ example of writing and are instructed to critique it in as many ways as they can (writing style, referencing, expression etc.)
- Groups of students then take turns critiquing the essay while the tutor moderates

- Advantages:

- Students are faced with a real example of writing and practice putting themselves in the place of the marker
- In these courses, students’ assignments are marked by tutors, so it’s very useful to hear tutors give feedback on the critique like:
 - “yes that’s a terrible mistake, and a critical one too”
 - “it’s technically wrong, but it’s not always worth worrying about”
- What inevitably happens is that students focus on minor errors like typos but miss more global errors like poorly connected paragraphs, so the tutor is able to point these out as the presentations take place

- Disadvantages:

- Still no writing being done

*Sadhana Raju and Sarah Eskandari pioneered this kind of tutorial for our Summer School versions of these units earlier in 2011.

> Writing tutorial

- The challenge: How can you give feedback to so many students in a tutorial?
- What we did:
 - Students receive a handout 'resources sheet' (which can be reused since it isn't written on) consisting of paragraphs from academic sources on particular topics
 - With one student per computer, a program* then asks them to write sentences or even whole paragraphs based on that material
 - The class does each question at the same time, and at the end of each question the tutor tells the program to switch students' responses with another random student in the room
 - The tutor then makes a short presentation (with an overhead) instructing students what to look out for, and then each student critiques one other student's response
- The tutor then wraps up the feedback session, and then uses the program to send the feedback across the room to whoever did the initial writing.
- Students can enter their email address if they find the actual feedback valuable
- This process then repeats for the next exercise chosen by the tutor
- Advantages:
 - Students actually write, and all that writing is actually read
 - The variability in skill on display is part of the lesson; when instructed to write in a group situation, some students power away, others plan their writing on a scrap of paper and others flounder. It's useful for students to experience this early in semester.
 - Any writing skill can be built into an exercise (e.g. referencing, paraphrasing, forming an argument, linking sentences, writing concisely)
- Disadvantages:
 - Weak students give fairly poor feedback unaided, hence the necessity of the tutor intervening with advice

Maquet et al. (2003) have investigated the detrimental effects of sleep deprivation on underlying brain activity using a visuomotor adaptation task—the only such study to date. Subjects were trained on the task, tested, and retested three days later, with half the subjects deprived of sleep the first night. Controls, who slept all three nights, showed both enhanced behavioral performance at retest and a selective increase in activation in the superior temporal sulcus (a region involved in the evaluation of complex motion patterns) relative to subjects deprived of sleep the first night. In contrast, no such enhancement of either performance or brain activity was observed in these subjects, indicating that sleep deprivation had interfered with a latent process of plasticity and consolidation. This study indicates that sleep deprivation disrupts not only consolidation, but also the underlying neural mechanisms that support it.

From page 156 of a paper by Walker and Stickgold (2006)

The 'resource sheet' sits next to everyone on their desk and consists of many indexed paragraphs

After responses are submitted but *before* the critiques, the tutor uses a powerpoint and has a mini lesson to train everyone as a marker

The instructions are presented by the program

Exercise 2

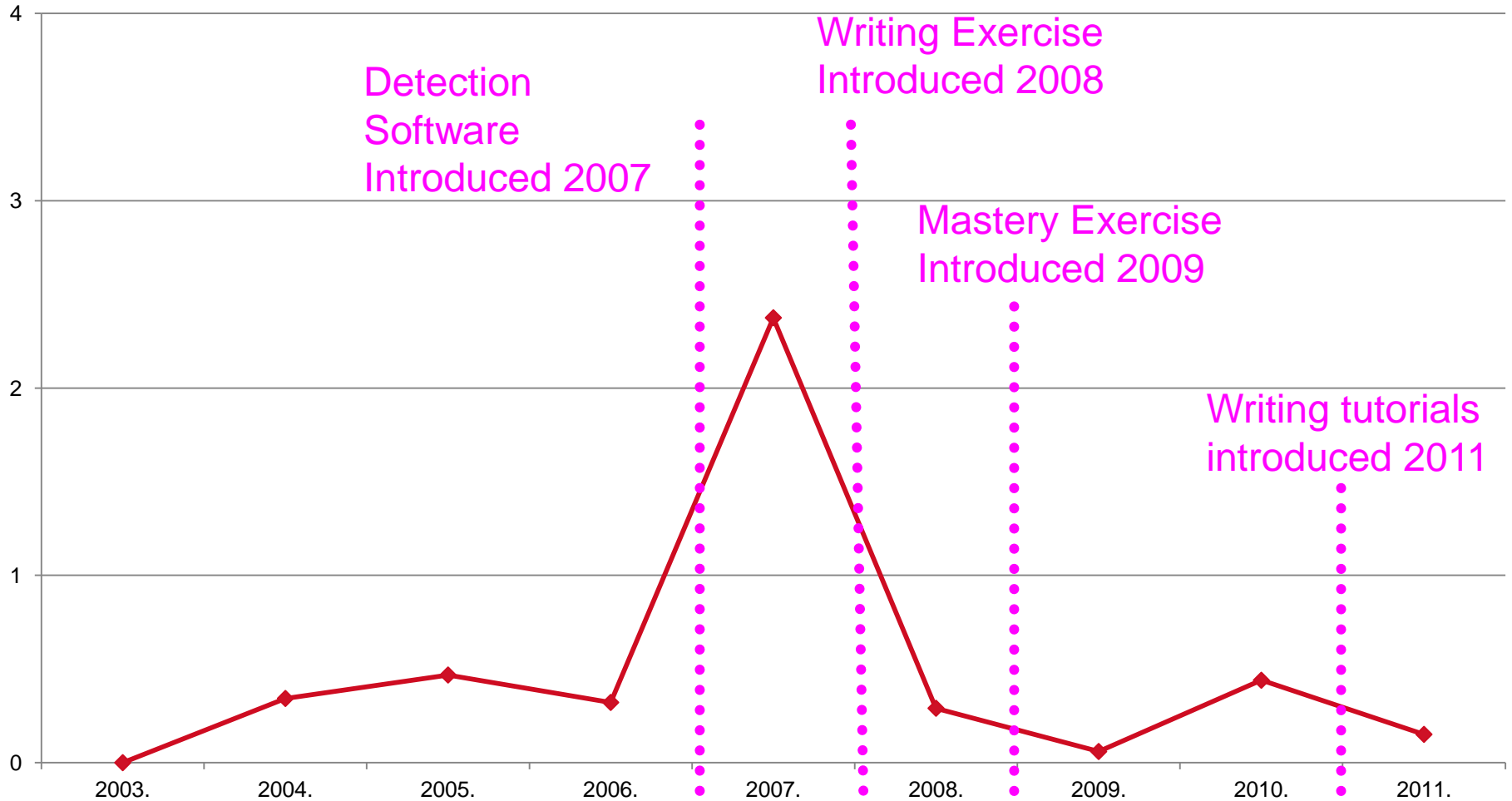
- Refer to paragraph B1
- From this information, write three sentences as you would in your essay.

Exercise 2

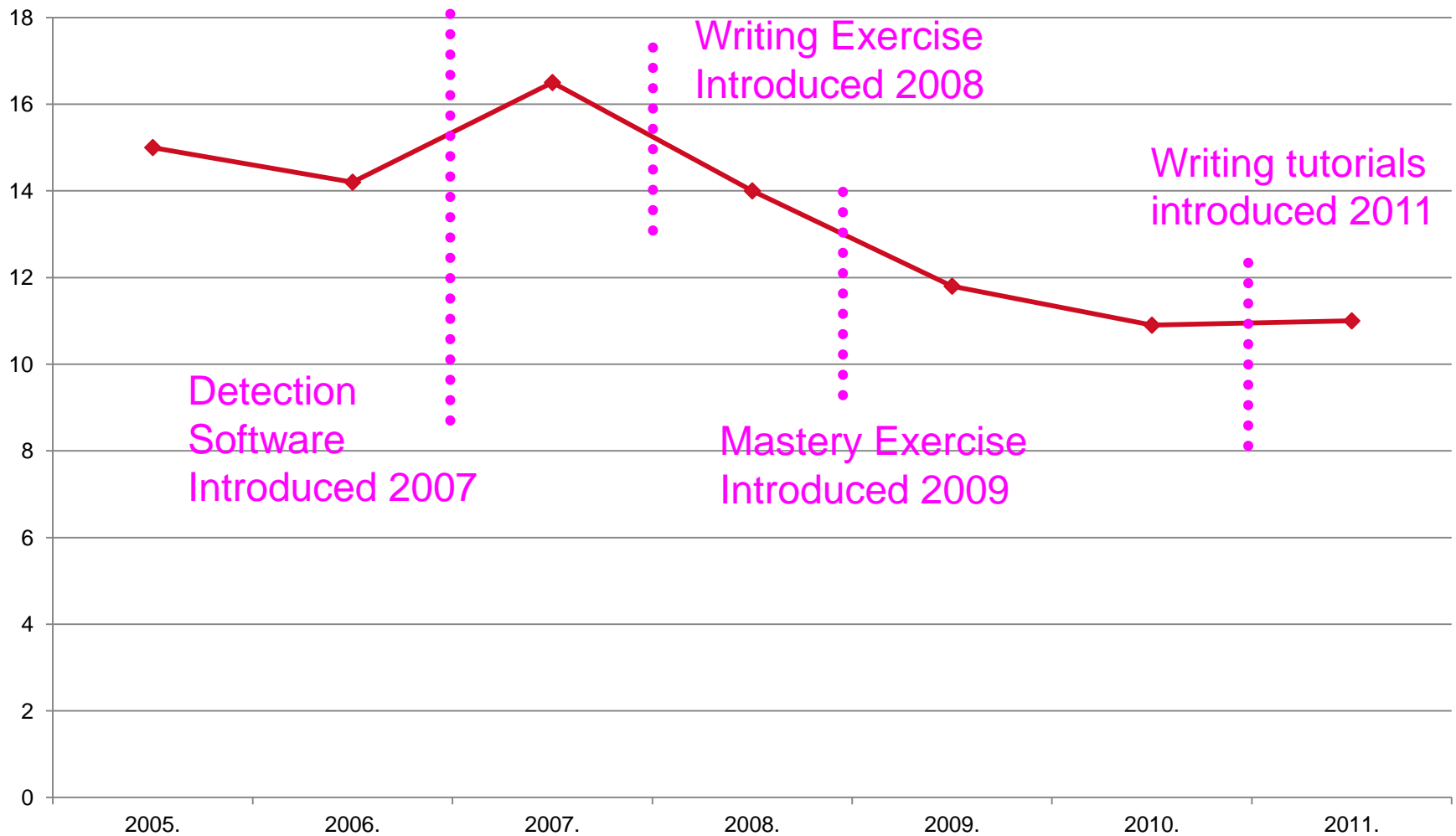
- Marking
 - You read the opinion of Maquet et al. (2003), as interpreted and described by Walker and Stickgold (2006); so has a reference to the true source been included?
 - E.g. *sentence then* (Maquet et al., 2003, as cited by Walker & Stickgold, 2006)
 - E.g. Maquet et al. (2003, as cited by Walker and Stickgold, 2006) concluded that...
 - Writing points for:
 - Describing succinctly the study that was actually done (not just summarizing the conclusion)
 - Criticizing or questioning the conclusions drawn

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Detected Plagiarism ESSAY %



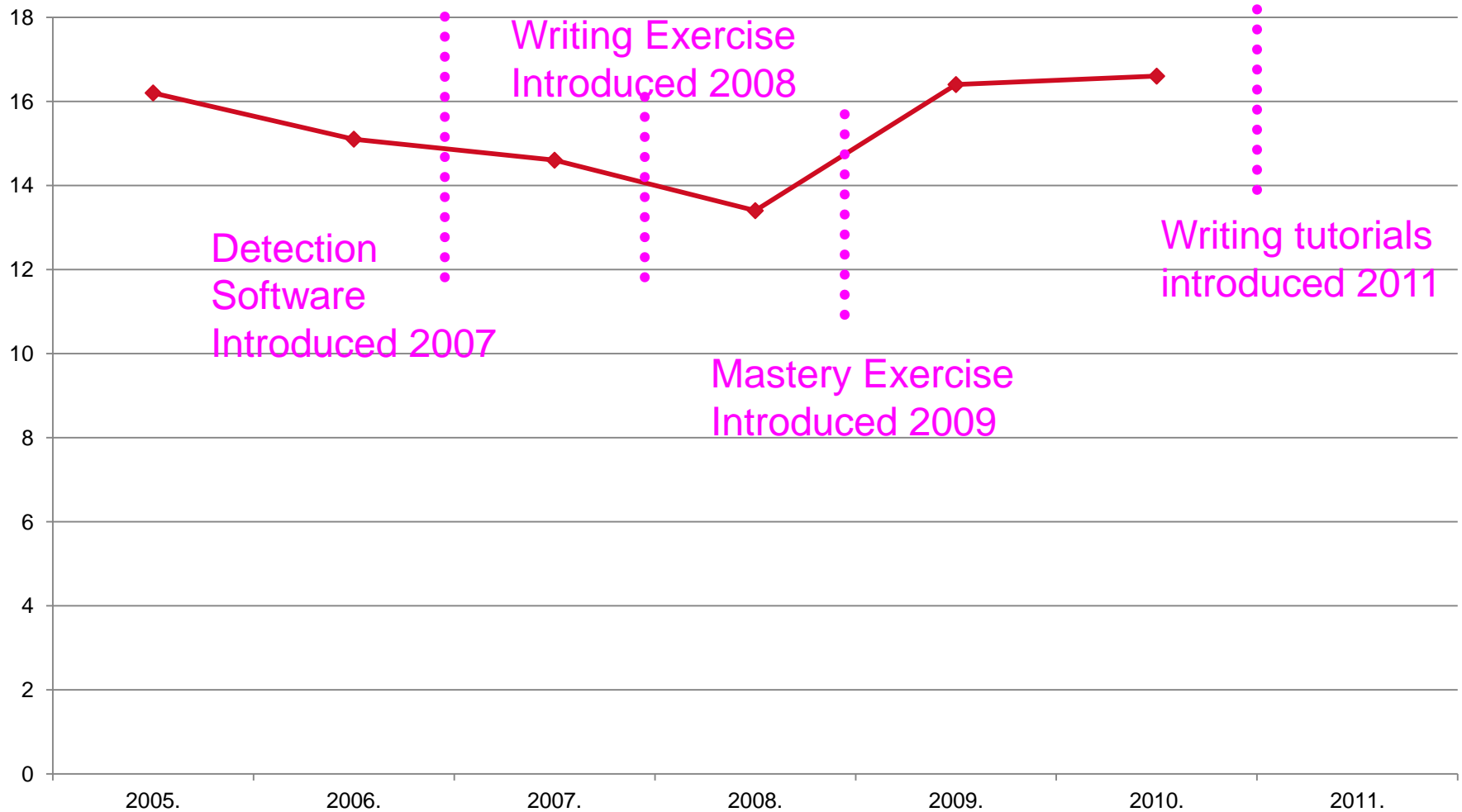
Essay fail rates %



Detected Plagiarism REPORT %



Report fail rates %



- › Fail rates are used because they are not fitted to a distribution (like Ps Cs D's and HDs).
- › Fail rates may depend on the difficulty of the assignment (especially for the report where students have no choice – they do choose their essay topic though)
- › Fail rates for the report might not expect to be modified as much with writing interventions as for the essay, given that they involve APA formatting which is more technical in nature (i.e. For the results and methods sections).
- › The final data points are missing on the report graphs because we don't know yet (but kept them on the same scale and width for easy comparison)



> THANKYOU

- > Some of this research was funded by the 2008 University of Sydney Teaching Improvement and Equipment Scheme (TIES).
-