

Teaching Information and Study Skills (ISS) to HE students in FE: An investigation into the impact of varying approaches of structure for delivery on student performance at Northampton College

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Abstract

This study is an investigation into the impact of the Information and Study Skills (ISS) delivery to Higher National Diploma (HND) students with three different degrees of embedding and time-table integration - timetabled through-out the academic year, six-week compulsory programme and optional to students. It also aims to discover students' perceived value for each skill and their confidence in applying the information and study skills towards their independent learning.

Data was collected from students and lecturers: Students completed a before and after surveys which were administered in the classroom environment. Informal interviews were conducted with the lecturers at the beginning and end of the academic year. Observations of the students' skills application were conducted during the sessions.

The study finds that students valued referencing skills the most, followed by copyright and plagiarism and writing skills. The least valued skill is research skills which they were introduced to the primary research skills. All students who took part in the study are confident internet searchers and Google is their preferred search engine due to ease of use and being perceived as having all the answers to their queries. Students are most confident applying a keyword search and least confident applying the Boolean operators. After the intervention, students are more confident in applying the phrase search as it is perceived to give more relevant results to their queries. The three different interventions have shown no difference on the students' performance. Other social factors were also identified by the lecturers as having an influence towards the students' performance such as personal interest, health, family and work commitments. However, most of the students (11 out of 16) and lecturers believed that the programme had made an impact on the students' confidence and improved their skills which helped with their coursework.

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