

Lindy Syson's workshop
Chairs notes

This session reported on a small scale collaborative research project, evaluating an online resource, Skills Plus (originally developed by library staff at the University of Northumbria) in particular its use with students on a diploma in nursing programme. This resource includes interactive materials on information literacy, IT skills and study skills. The group discussion focussed on:

- the location of study support staff within student services and their interaction with library and academic staff - picking up on recent discussions on LDHEN jiscmail list about location and identification of LD services at different HEIs
- how the resource had been integrated into a Level 1 module in Professional Information and Communication Skills and plans for further development
- the extent to which these students came from 'non-traditional' backgrounds and were perceived to need more support
- feedback from student focus groups particularly the sense that this was valuable as 'a space to make mistakes'
- the difficulty of negotiating disparate views between staff - even those in the same department - about what constitutes a good essay
- the importance of numeracy for nursing students (eg in relation to drug calculations) and the need to address previous negative experiences and maths 'phobia' for some students - importance of distinguishing 'I can't' from 'It's difficult'
- the fact that nursing and other professionally oriented students often have to learn to take on two new identities: 'being a good nurse' and 'being a good student' and the frequent mismatch between students' capabilities in the clinical setting and lower levels of confidence in their university work.