



Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

Title: Embedding transferable academic skills in a Financial Management Module

Transition(s) the practice supports: This practice supports international transitions, initially involving students from China, providing specific guidance as part of the module in key academic and information skills.

Abstract: This practice was prompted when it became apparent at the start of an Accountancy Module that 80% of the class were direct entrants from China whose grasp of critical thinking, information literacy and academic writing was fairly limited. Students were introduced to these academic skills by embedding them in the context to their Module assignments. Over the years, the number of overseas students taking this Module have dropped, but the session embedding these academic skills is still considered to be relevant to all students irrespective of whether they are continuing or direct entrants from FE or overseas.

Description: A two hour lecture is delivered by the subject librarian in the Business School together with an Academic Skills Advisor (ASA). The lecture starts with the ASA outlining and explaining critical thinking in general terms. This discussion is then placed in the context of the Module Assignment. Students become aware of what academic skills may be needed to successfully answer the question posed. The Subject Librarian then explains how to formulate a search strategy when looking for information online and outlines which resources may be best to use. A search is demonstrated and a discussion follows about how to evaluate the results achieved and how to utilise the results correctly and effectively. Referencing and citing sources are discussed during this part of the session. The next part of the lecture looks at ways in which students can engage with theory in answering the assignment question and this is demonstrated by way of a search using one of the University's e-resources, ABI/Inform. Keywords are selected from the Module assignment and used as search terms. This shows the students how and where to find quality academic papers that are relevant to their response to the assignment. Finally, the ASA discusses approaches to essay writing.

The session's continuing success is attributed to the fact that the various parts of

the lecture takes students through the entire process of engaging with an assignment from start to finish. The session answers basic questions such as 'How do I answer this?' 'Where do I find information to inform my answer?' and 'How do I write this all in an essay?', which are common questions that students might not otherwise articulate or find answers to.

Each cohort of students have differing characteristics and experiences as learners, so being able to engage them all is an important challenge. A particular strength of the session is that since it follows a linear progression, skills learnt in this session can be applied to other areas of research and associated academic writing. The success of this intervention to support student transition has been shown through the demand for this module; year upon year.

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