



Skills for Learning | Case Studies

Guiding Students through a Large Scale project: a partnership between the Academic Skills team and SOBE.

AIMS

- Prepare level 6 Architecture students for an extended project
- To enable students to define their own project titles
- To enable students to undertake independent research
- To improve students' awareness of reading techniques and writing up research

"The clarity was to a brilliant level, where the class understood." Student feedback

HOW DID WE EMBED IT?

- Three sessions delivered on: Defining a research title, Finding and Using Literature and Structuring a Dissertation
- Sessions delivered at the start of the module for module staff to build upon
- All sessions co-taught with an academic member of staff to provide context to the module

"...how to build arguments." Student feedback

DATA

- 20 students attended the sessions
- 8 hours of teaching provided over three sessions
- Uptake from students of extra Skills for Learning support also increased

The L6 project for Architecture students comprises an extended piece of paper based research. The project also required students to devise their own title and focus for the work. As students following a fairly practical programme, this could be daunting for some of the students, and required early engagement to ensure that students had a co gent idea to take forward once allocated a supervisor.



Lynne Crook,
Academic Skills
Consultant for SOBE

"Very easy to talk to and helpful if we don't understand." Student feedback

Three sessions were embedded within the module, led by the Academic Skills Consultant, but also team taught with a member of programme staff and with input from the Academic Support Librarian for the School. The intention of these were to provide practical skills on defining a research question, finding and assessing academic materials, as well as structuring and writing the piece of work. The sessions were also linked to the students' individual projects, and one-to-one feedback provided in class. These skills could then be applied to the students' individual projects. This groundwork could then be built upon by the students in conjunction with their individual supervisors.

The sessions also used alternative teaching methods to help engage the students, and also play to their strengths as visual and active learners. Students were encouraged to mind map ideas to help with defining research ideas. A practical session to coach students in finding resources was delivered by the Academic Support Librarian, and text mapping was used to help students read efficiently. A session on structuring written work also involved the use of Lego to help students think about 'building' an assignment.



Oren Lieberman,
Module Leader

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Contact your Academic Skills Consultant well in advance if you want to embed sessions
- Meet with your Academic Skills Consultant to discuss the students main needs and assessments
- Consider team teaching, or being present at, the session to give context to the students

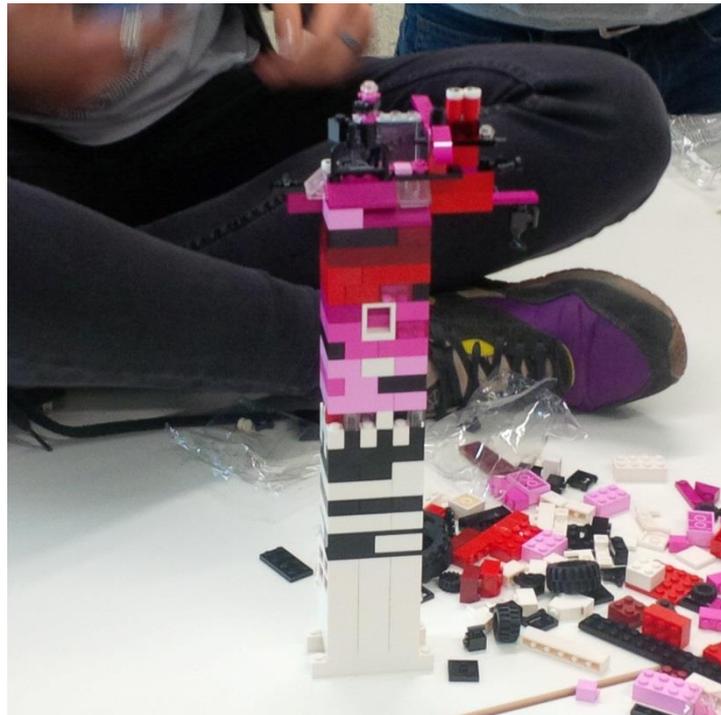
About Skills for Learning

Based in the Library, Skills for Learning is the University's one-stop-shop for study support. We offer a wide range of eLearning, study guides, videos and workshops designed to help your students develop essential study, information and digital skills. Our Academic Support team can help students find subject information and are on hand to answer their study and IT related questions. The Library also offers Wordscope, a ten week tuition programme that will help your students develop academic writing skills.

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"The support about finding articles and how to analyse main information from articles/books [was most useful]" Student feedback

Our advice for embedding sessions into your modules is to ensure that the topics are directly relevant to upcoming assessment. We would also recommend that sessions are team taught. This allows academic staff to give context to the skills advice, and also refer back to the sessions in future advice to students.



Embedding a session led by your Academic Skills Consultant into your module

- Ask students to do some preparation in advance:
 - Populate a Padlet wall with questions which can be addressed in the session
 - Read materials sent by the Academic Skills Consultant
 - Bring devices so the session can be interactive
- Provide materials used on the module as examples to be used
- Provide assignment briefs to be used as a basis for the session
- Follow up the session by linking it to advice in later lectures/seminar