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Measuring library impact on learning at the University of Huddersfield

Recent research at Huddersfield has shown a correlation between library use and final degree result. It has also revealed the extent of usage/non-usage of library resources across courses.

What was measured?
- Access to e-resources (using logins to MetaLib recorded regardless of location and study)
- Book loans (using statistics from the Horizon Library Management System)
- Visits to the library (using gate entry statistics from Sentry)
This data was then matched against the Student Records System.

What were the results?
- In broad terms, a correlation between final degree and access to e-resources and book borrowing.
- A less significant link with library visits, explained in part by the common entrance with student support services.
- Significant levels of low or non use of library resources.

Average total library usage v final degree class (all 2007/8 & 2008/9 graduates)

Points to note
- Pattern of usage varies between Schools but there is an overall correlation with book and electronic usage.
- Important to acknowledge subject differences. There are often pedagogic reasons for apparent low usage of library resources. Practice-based subjects in Art and Design may have less of a requirement to borrow books or access e-resources than Humanities-based subjects. For example...
- This is not a cause and effect relationship and libraries must be careful not to overstate the case. There will be many variables which impact on a student’s final degree result, and use of library resources will be just one.

Library usage/non-usage data

The graphs to the left illustrate library usage/non-usage data extracted for each School.
- Data shows extent of library usage ranging from no use (red) to relatively high use (green)
- Appears to be a significant amount of low/non-use. Despite steady increase in most subjects in recent years, there is clearly potential for much greater usage.

Next steps
- Apply tests of statistical significance to data
- Share findings with Heads of Department and academic managers
- Liaise with course tutors to explore reasons for unexpectedly low usage
- Agree Action Plan, to include:
  - Targeted promotion of resources to students and staff
  - Review of induction
  - Embedded information skills training
  - Targeted resources allocation - agree Resource Statement with each department
  - Monitor improvements
  - Benchmark with other institutions


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