



# *University of* **HUDDERSFIELD**

## **University of Huddersfield Repository**

Corley, Caroline

Academic skills in higher education: Does age matter?

### **Original Citation**

Corley, Caroline (2010) Academic skills in higher education: Does age matter? In: Society for Research into Higher Education Annual Post Graduate and Newer Researchers Conference 2010, 14th to 16th December 2010, Celtic Manor, Newport. (Unpublished)

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/8921/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: [E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk](mailto:E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk).

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>

## **ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

# **Academic Skills Issues in Higher Education: Who needs them and wants them?**

***Caroline Corley***

***caroline.corley@hud.ac.uk***





# **ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

## Outline

**Aims**

**Study Area**

**Academic Skills**

**Data Collection**

**Data Analysis**

**Results**

**Implications**



## **ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **Aims**

**What are the academic skills issues for students?**

**The similarities and differences of the perceptions between student groups.**



## **ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **Study Area**

**Post-1992 'New' University**

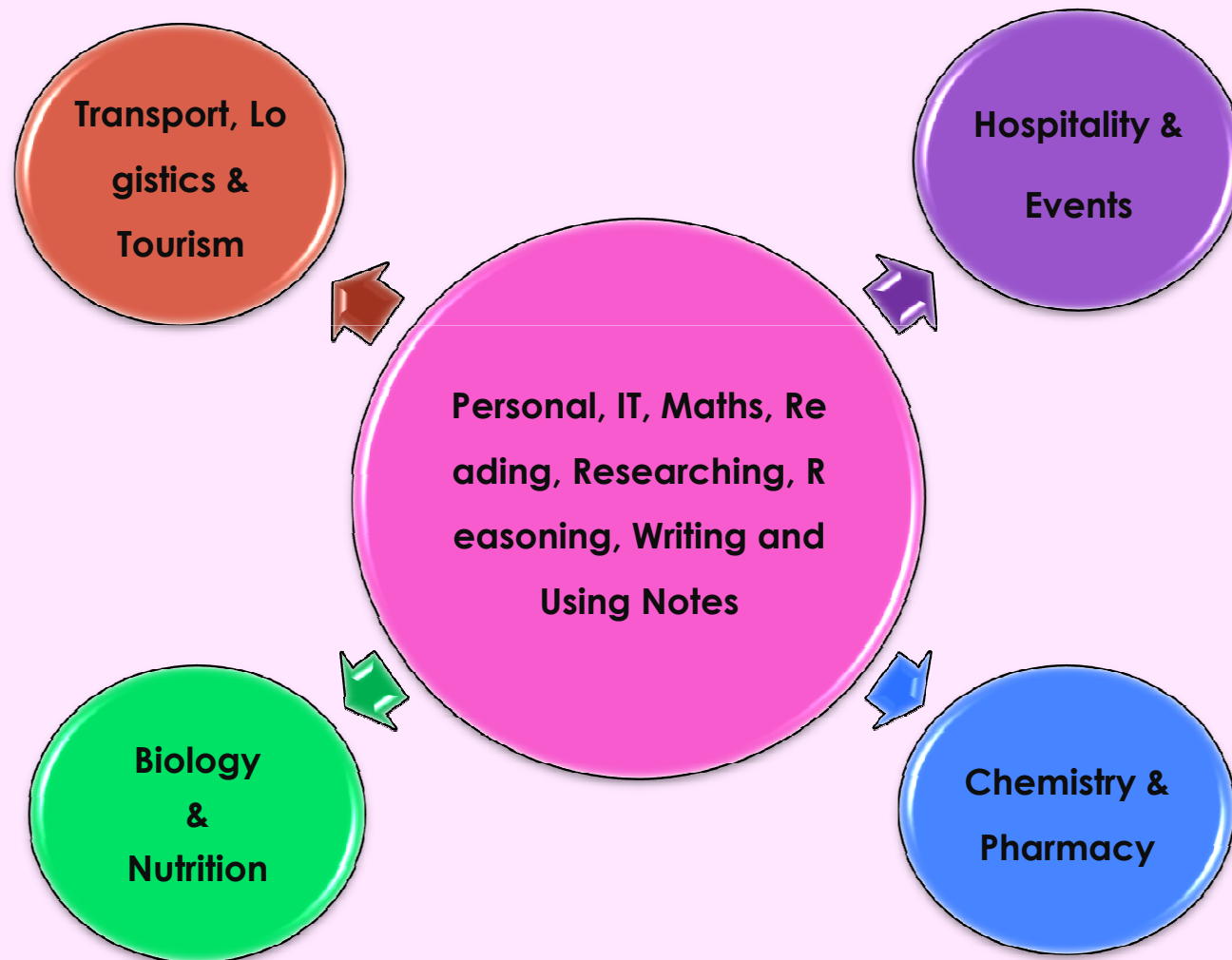
**Department of Chemical & Biological  
Sciences (DOCABS)**

**Department of Logistics & Hospitality  
Management (DOLHM)**

**1<sup>st</sup> year form 39.6 % of population**

# ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Academic Skills





## **ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **Data Collection**

**Quantitative and qualitative**

**Online questionnaire for 1<sup>st</sup> year students:**

**cohort 2008/9 (21.1%)**

**cohort 2009/10 (35.1%)**

**Overall 27.2% = 228 students**

**Focus groups for students**





## **ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

### Data Analysis Areas

**Descriptive and statistical analysis  
with qualitative triangulation.**

**Students' skill rating**

**Instructed on course**

**Would prefer further training**

**Sought additional support**



# ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Students' Own Skill Ratings

Academic Subject	Mean skill rating		unpaired t-test p value	Importance Ranking	
	1 low 5 high			1 high 8 low	
	A+	<A		A+	<A
Personal	3.61	3.48	0.20	1	1
Writing	3.41	3.29	0.26	6	4
Reading	3.55	3.42	0.17	5	3
Research	3.62	3.71	0.41	7	7
IT	4.22	3.90	0.02	2	2
Notes	3.51	3.42	0.42	4	6
Reasoning	3.44	3.15	0.03	8	8
Numeracy	3.89	3.52	0.002	3	5
Mean	3.66	3.49			
STD	0.27	0.23			



## ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### Students Own Skill Comments

It's been over 10 years since I have been in school, and technology and accessing resources have changed dramatically (*Student 56, <A*)

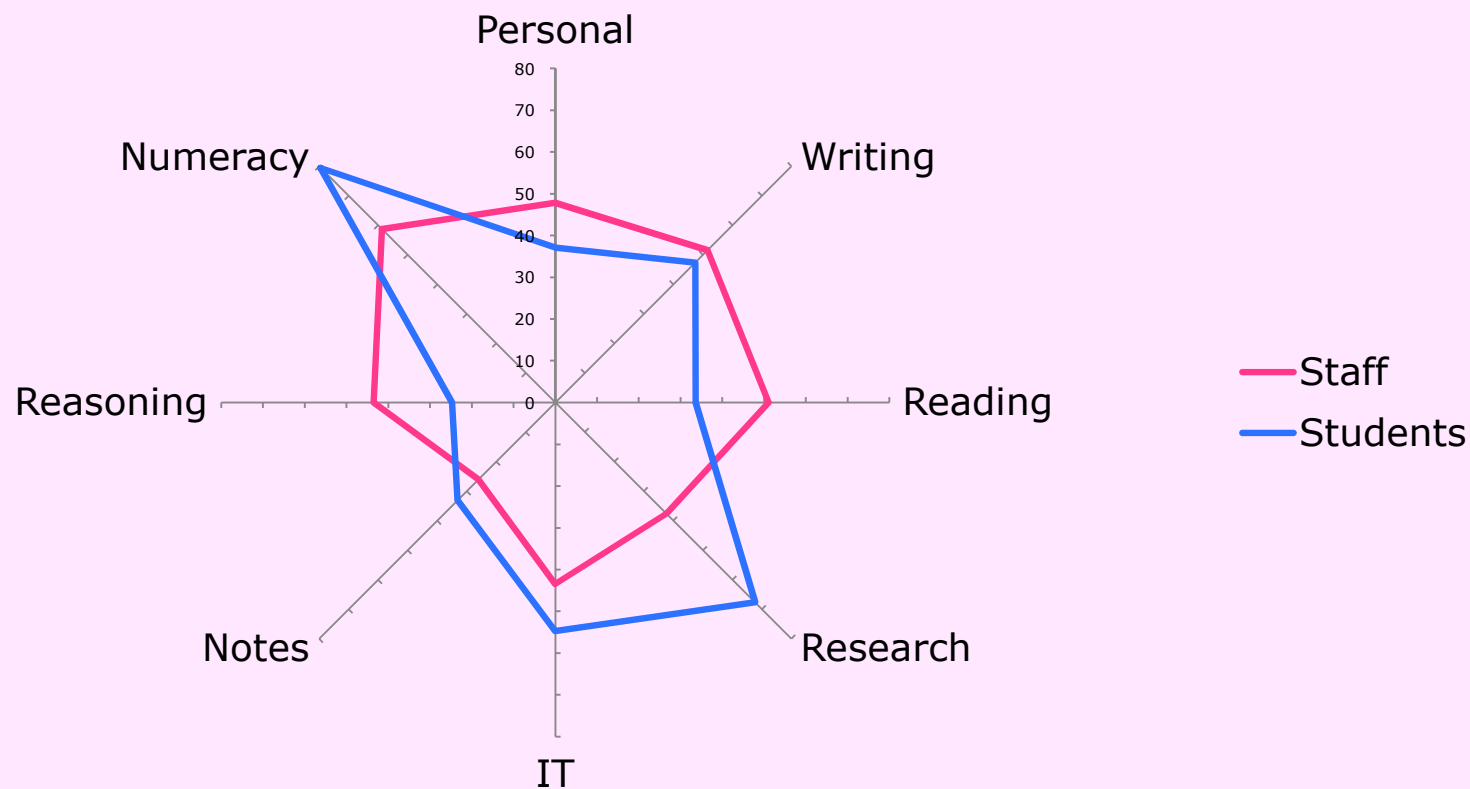
It would be useful for the academic staff to remember that we are not all fresh from college (*Student 1, <A*)

Most of us have come from college straight away and haven't done proper reports or essays (*Student F2, A+*)

I think the teachers expect you to come to university with all the relevant knowledge but that isn't always the case and you feel stupid when you don't know what to do (*Student 162, A+*)

# ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## DOCAB Instruction %

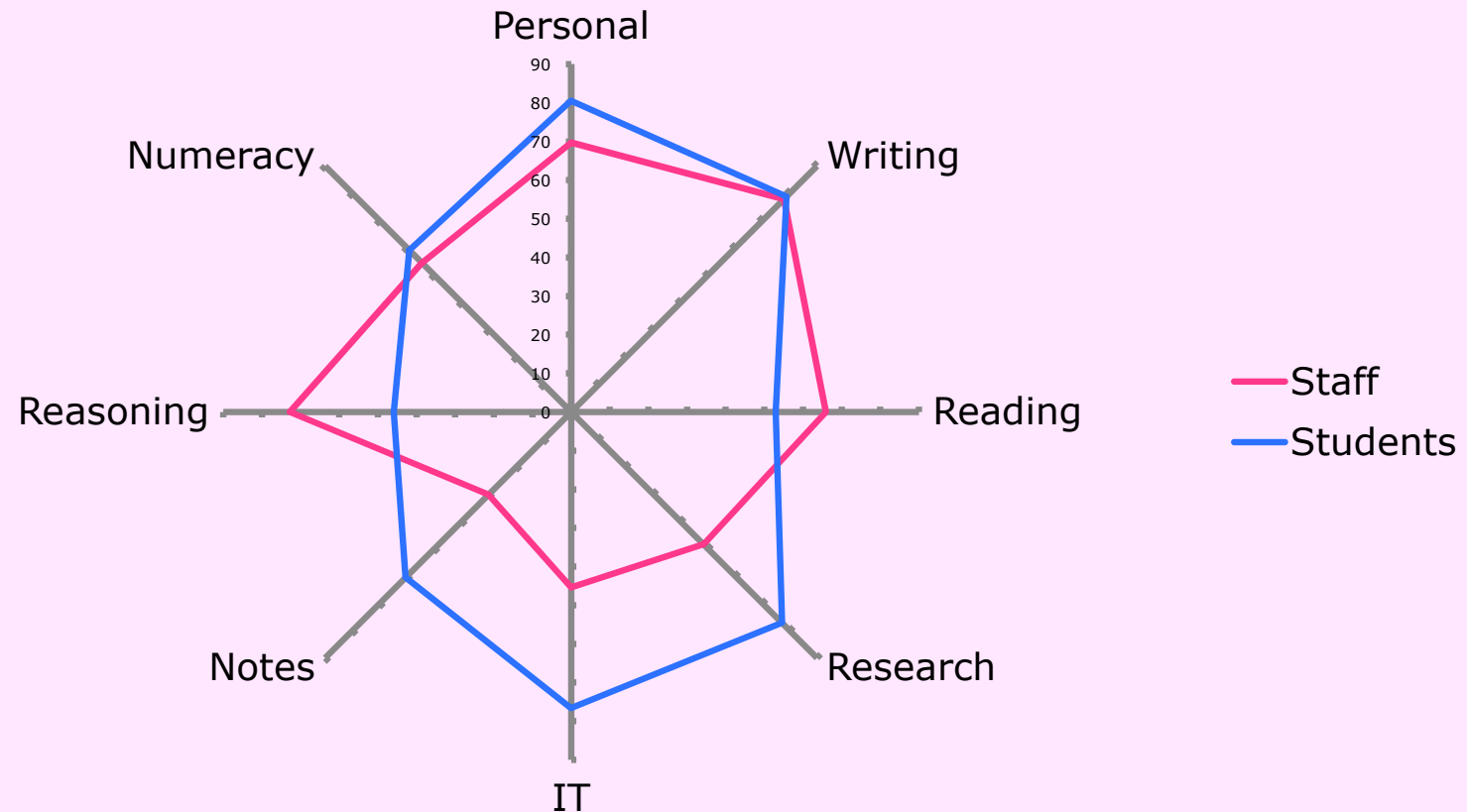


Academic skills in chemistry is taught reasonably well (*Student 5, <A*)

Not enough time was spent on the more important areas such as essay and report writing (*Student 223, A+*)

# ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## DOLHM Instruction %

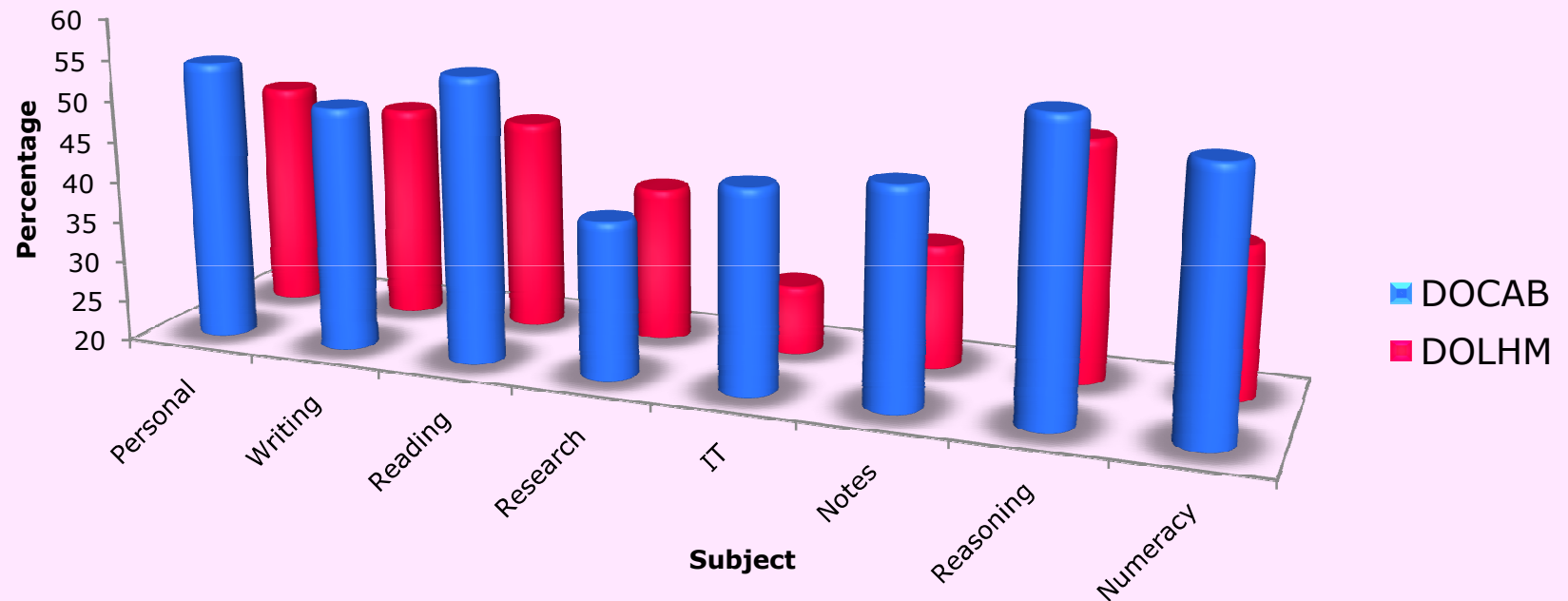


Sometimes we had just given a sheet and then expected to just read it; not really being taught how to do it (*Student F3, A+*)

Some lecturers give information but you don't get the opportunity to practice with answers available (*Student 204, A+*)

# ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Further Training Required %



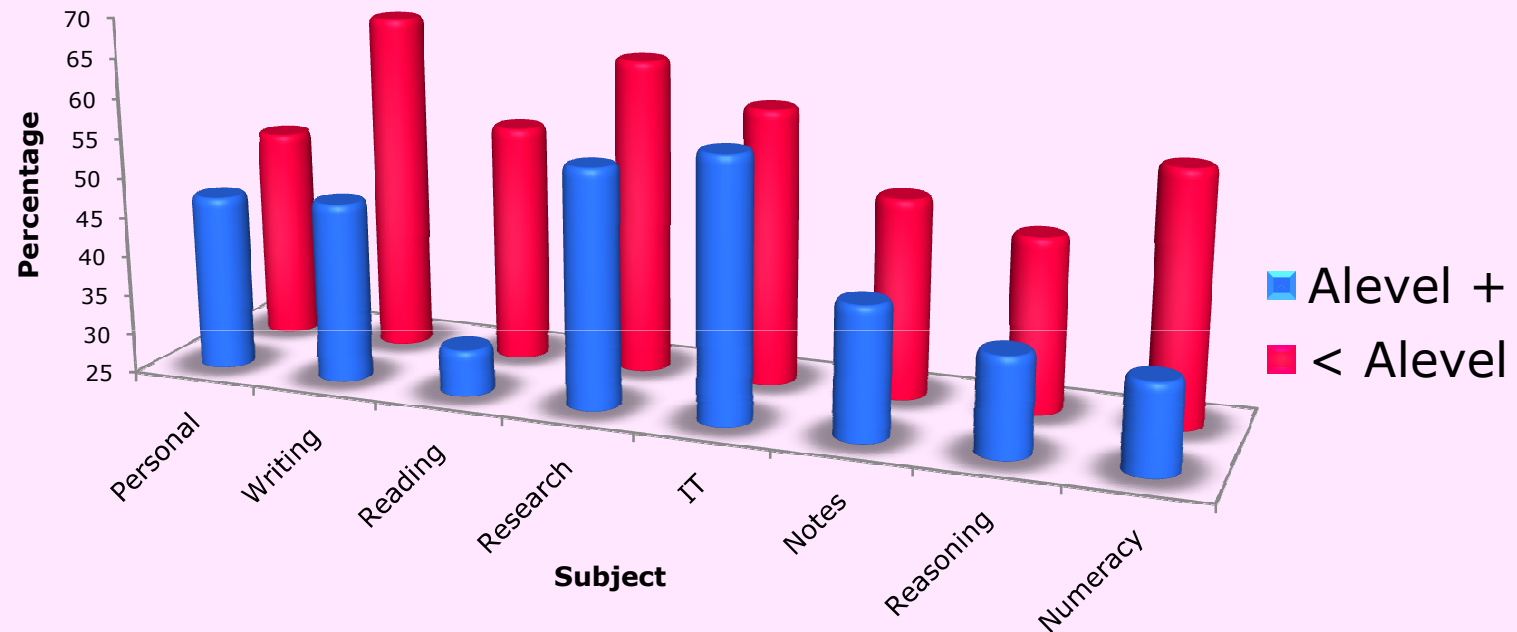
Without training my work is unlikely to improve much and achieve its maximum potential (*Student 10, A+*)

I never know where to start an essay. It makes me want to leave it until the last minute and then I stress about getting it done (*Student 171, <A*)



# ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Additional Support by Subject %



Some of the lecturers don't seem to understand that first years need more help to begin with than they are given (*Student 195, A+*)

Academic skill which I need are available at the uni but you have to hunt them down and make appointments (*Student 97, <A*)



## **ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

# Implications

**When something new is required, students would benefit from being shown the expected way of doing it, rather than being left to work it out for themselves.**

**Universities need to be more aware that some problems are about perceptions and confidence in abilities.**

**There is a fundamental issue about the lack of higher level skills that students possess when starting university.**

**It is important to have academic skills instruction in first year for all students as there are no guarantees that students are prepared for studying at a tertiary level.**





## **ACADEMIC SKILLS ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Caroline Corley**

**School of Applied Sciences  
University of Huddersfield**

**[caroline.corley@hud.ac.uk](mailto:caroline.corley@hud.ac.uk)**