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Plugging the gap: making mathematics students information literate
Theme: Embedding and enriching

During 2005 a new compulsory Information skills in Mathematics module was introduced at the University of Leeds for level 3 undergraduate students. The implementation of this module marked the first steps taken towards embedding information literacy in the Mathematics curriculum at Leeds.

The module content, structure and teaching materials were designed by the Faculty Team Librarian (FTL) for Mathematics and delivered to a group of 135 students through an introductory lecture and a programme of hands-on task-based workshops. Students were then expected to complete a "research log" assignment set by the FTL using skills acquired during the workshops. Assignments were assessed in collaboration with the School of Mathematics and student feedback was sought.

This paper will focus on the challenges of embedding information literacy in a curriculum where assessment is largely examination based, coursework requirements are minimal and as a result students are typically low users of library resources and often lacking in transferable skills.

The success of the first year of the module will be measured against lessons learnt during preparation and teaching, assignment marks awarded and feedback from students and the School. Future plans and changes to the module will be discussed.

Practical tips for designing, delivering and assessing a module in information skills in a challenging HE environment will be provided.