

Activity name	Pre-16 How to Study Effectively
Date	12 individual dates delivered throughout Tranche 6 (September 2021 to June 2022)
Total number of students	766
Total number of target students	257
Institutions involved <i>* Institutions that completed surveys</i>	Bodmin College*, Ilfracombe CoE Academy*, Notre Dame RC School*, Stoke Damerel Community College*, Teignmouth Community School, The Park Community School, The Taunton Academy*, UTC Plymouth*

Introduction

This report outlines the impact of the How to Study Effectively sessions delivered by Next Steps South West (NSSW) staff. These sessions were designed to give students the tools to improve their revision skills and reduce exam stress. The sessions were delivered to students in Years 10 and 11 across eight NSSW target schools and colleges throughout the 2021-22 academic year; the Tranche 6 (T6) period for NSSW. Sessions were delivered in person.

Aims

The How to Study Effectively sessions aimed to help students identify how they learn best and give them the skills to revise effectively. These aims align with one of the key barriers to HE progression identified by NSSW; lack of *Soft Skills*. Table 1 details the anticipated outcomes of the How to Study Effectively sessions.

Table 1. Anticipated outcomes of the How to Study Effectively sessions

Barrier to HE	Short-term outcomes	Indicators
<i>Lack of Soft Skills</i>	Increased confidence in the ability to use study skills effectively	Students report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness of different learning styles and techniques - Increased ability for the student to identify their preferred learning style(s) - Increased confidence in their ability to study independently

Evaluation Design and Data Collection

The How to Study Effectively workshops were evaluated using anonymous post-activity evaluation surveys, including quantitative and qualitative questions. The surveys were designed to evaluate the short-term outcomes by using the indicators as outlined in Table 1.

Results

This section presents the analysis of findings gathered from 406 student surveys collected throughout T6 and the impact these sessions had on addressing the barriers to HE progression.

Students were asked their level of agreement with four statements about study skills (see Figure 1).

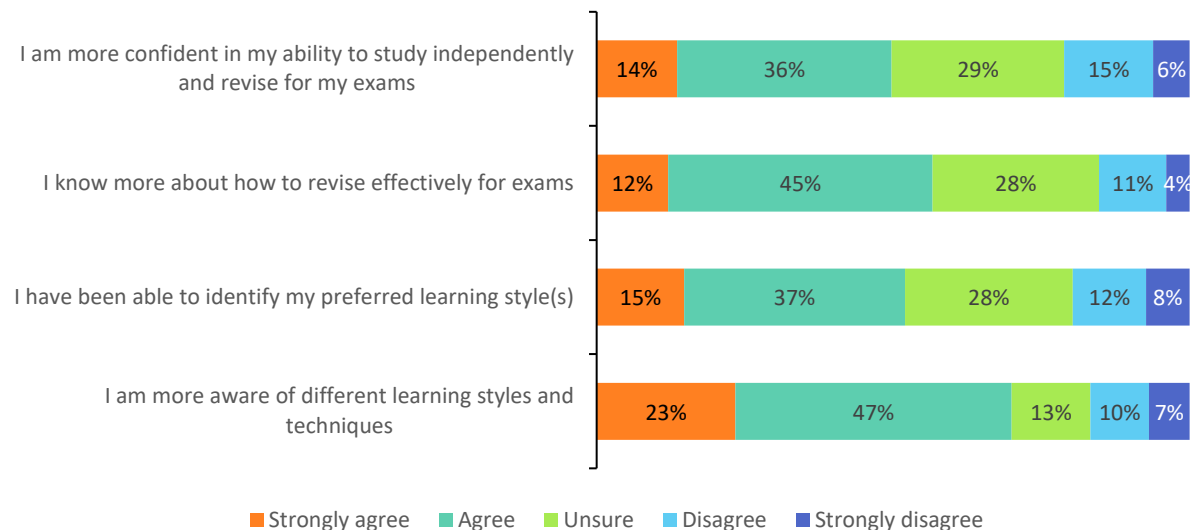


Figure 1. Students' knowledge of study skills following the session.

At the end of the session, 70% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were more aware of the different learning styles and techniques. This result shows that there has been a positive impact on developing this soft skill. However, the results for the other statements show more of a mixed response. 50% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident in their ability to study independently and revise for their exams, 29% of students said they were unsure and 21% did not agree or strongly disagreed. 57% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they knew more about how to revise effectively for exams, 28% were unsure and 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 52% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to identify their preferred learning style, 28% were unsure and 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Students were asked to give an example of at least one revision or study skill that they had learnt (see Figure 2).

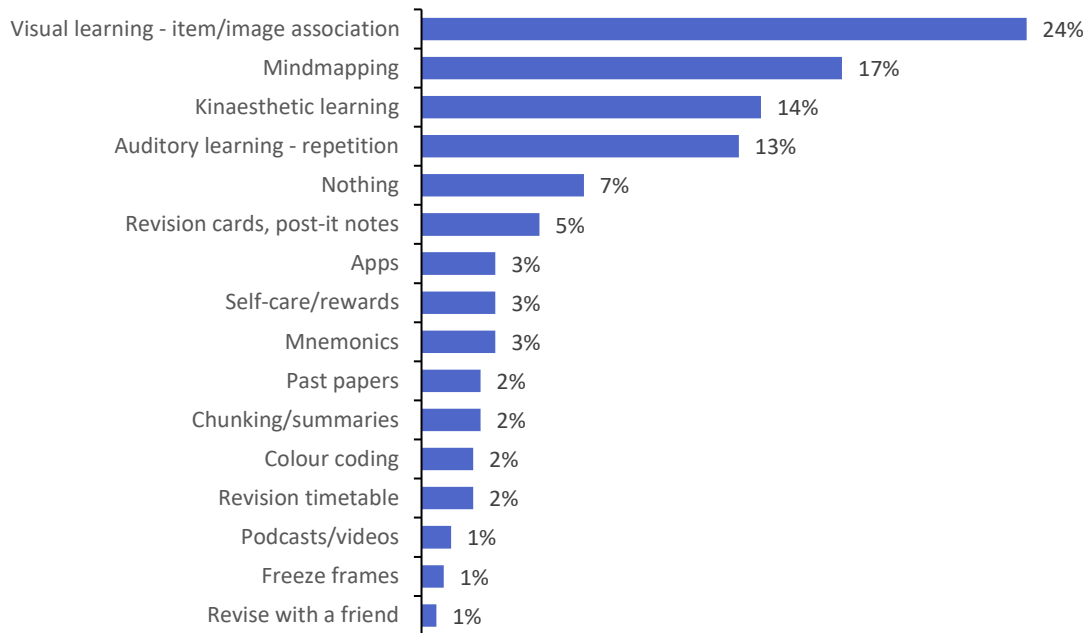


Figure 2. Revision or study skills learnt by students

324 students responded to this question with some giving more than one example of what they had learnt. The three most popular responses were about visual learning, mind mapping and kinaesthetic learning. Of those students who responded to this question, 7% said that they had learnt nothing as they already knew these techniques. However, overall, 88% of students who took part in the sessions were able to give at least one technique they had learnt.

Students were asked what they thought was the most useful thing that they had gained from the session (see Figure 3).

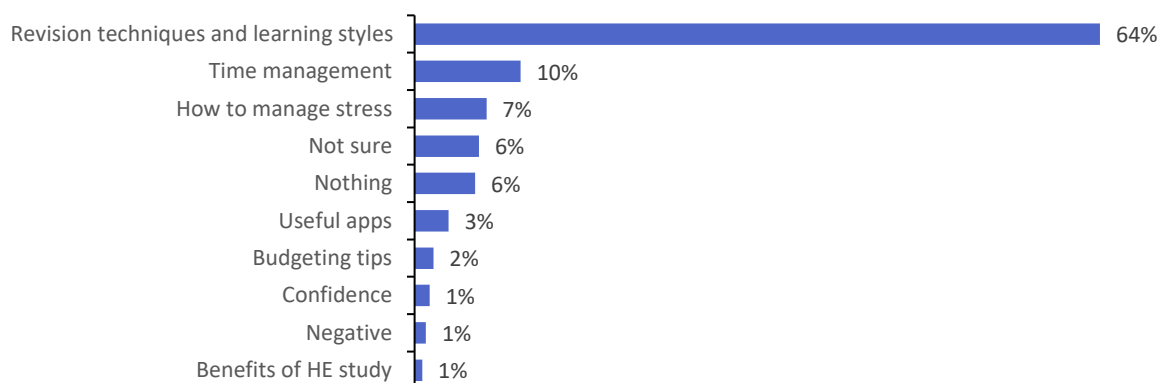


Figure 3. Most useful thing gained from the session

Of the 272 students who responded to this question, the most popular response (64% of responses) was the revision techniques and learning styles. Other responses included how to manage their time (10% of responses) and how to manage stress (7% of responses). One student said that they had learnt that they can “fit in revision in 10-20 mins blocks” with another saying, “planning my time out and making a timetable will help me stick to a routine.” Another said they had received “guidance on how to

revise and how to calm down when stress levels rise too much. I have gained support from this. 6% of responses were that they had learnt nothing. One response said, for example, “Nothing - I knew the techniques and already have a revision timetable at home.”

Conclusions

To monitor the success of the How to Study Effectively sessions, results were evaluated against short-term targets and outcomes as presented in Table 2. The table illustrates that the target was not achieved.

Table 2. How to Study Effectively sessions – Outcomes achieved in T6

Barriers of HE	Short-term Outcomes and Targets	Indicators, we are able to report:	Evidence	Target Outcome
<i>Lack of Soft Skills</i>	Increased confidence in the ability to use study skills effectively to prepare for exams by ≥ 60% of students	<p>Increased awareness of different learning styles and techniques.</p> <p>Increased ability for the student to be able to identify their preferred learning style(s).</p> <p>Increased confidence in their ability to study independently.</p>	<p>70% of students report they were more aware of the different learning styles and techniques.</p> <p>52% of students report they were able to identify their preferred learning style</p> <p>50% of students report they felt more confident in their ability to study independently and revise for their exams.</p> <p>Target 60%: T6 achievement 50%</p>	Overall Not achieved

The session is effective at increasing students’ awareness of different learning styles and techniques, but it is not having enough impact on increasing students’ ability to identify their own preferred learning style or their confidence to use those techniques to study independently and revise for exams. It is difficult to give any definitive reason for this. It may be that some students had prior knowledge of these techniques and had previously found them ineffective for them or that the techniques were already effective but that there was no further increase due to this session. As such, they were not reassured that what they had learnt in the session would help them. It is also possible for those students who gave neutral responses that they need time to reflect on what techniques and styles suit them best and to have the opportunity to put them into practise.

Recommendations

To have a more positive impact, it may be necessary to introduce a reflective exercise to give the students time to identify what may work best for them. It might also be helpful to establish what study skills are already taught at the school so that students do not feel that they are not learning anything new.