Evaluation of the Study Skills Masterclass Programme (2023/24): A report to LiNCHigher

Lucy Mallinson and Anthea Rose

Lincoln Academy of Learning and Teaching (LALT)
University of Lincoln

September 2024

Contents

Tables

Figures

Executive summary

Programme overview

This report presents the findings for the evaluation of the Study Skills Masterclass Programme designed in conjunction with Complete Careers and delivered by LiNCHigher in low-attainment schools for the first time in the academic year 2023/24. This year the Office for Students asked all Uni Connect partnerships to identify methods of raising attainment in their area; the Study Skills Masterclass Programme was LiNCHIgher's response to this request. Partnerships were also asked to stipulate which of the Office for Students raising attainment aims would underpin their activity. The Study Skills Masterclass Programme fell into the 'tackling non-academic barriers to learning' category.

The Study Skills Masterclass Programme comprises seven sessions, six one-hour sessions delivered in school, and an optional campus visit. The six Study Skills Masterclass Programme sessions are:

1. Staying organised and motivated
2. Creating a learning environment
3. Revision skills
4. Strategies for success
5. Exam preparation and techniques
6. Focus on the future.

Together the sessions aim to improve student confidence and motivation in their study skills. The programme was designed to help Year 10 and 11 students working at Grade 4 with the potential to reach Grade 5, in their core subjects, prepare for their GCSE exams. The programme was delivered in six of LiNCHIgher's low attaining schools to small groups of students (ideally a maximum of ten) between September 2023 and April 2024. A total of 100 students took part in the programme, 50 Year 11s and 50 Year 10s. Each session has also been mapped to both the Gatsby benchmarks and NERUPI framework.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation of the Study Skills Masterclass Programme was conducted by the LiNCHigher evaluation team in the Lincoln Academy of Learning and Teaching at the University of Lincoln. A theory of change was first developed and then the evaluation approach was embedded into the programme. The evaluation took a mixed methods approach consisting of both quantitative and qualitative data. Data were collected through the following evaluation activities:

- Pre and post surveys for each of the six sessions delivered in schools.

- Baseline and progression (Year 10) / exam (Year 11) data for both the students that attended the sessions and comparison groups.

- Student focus groups.

- Semi-structured interviews with school Careers Leads and LiNCHigher staff who delivered the Study Skills Masterclass Programme in schools.

Quantitative data:

The quantitative data comprised pre and post session surveys for each of the six sessions delivered in the schools. A total of 103 students were involved in the programme throughout its duration, however three students withdrew, two after the first week and one after the third. This meant that 100 students finished the programme, 55 female students and 45 male students.

In addition to the surveys, baseline assessments of students' grades at the beginning of the academic year were compared to grades at the end of the year for Year 10 students both those that took part in the programme and a comparison group. For Year 11, final GCSE grades were compared to baseline grades, again for both students that took part in the programme and a comparison group. SPSS was used to analyse all quantitative data that was collected.

Qualitative data

The qualitative data consisted of student focus groups that took place during March and April 2024, with Year 10 and 11 students that had taken part in the Study Skills Masterclass Programme. The students that attended the focus groups were asked what they had and had not enjoyed, what they had learnt, how useful they had found the resource pack and if they had any suggestions for improving the programme.

The evaluation team spoke to 81 (out of a possible 100) students: 34 males and 47 females; 37 Year 10s and 44 Year 11s. Not all students that had participated in the programme attended their focus group session. Some were absent from school on the day the focus group ran and some simply did not turn up.

The evaluation team also conducted six individual interviews with the school Careers Leads and three members of the LiNCHigher delivery team. All interviews and focus groups were audio recorded, transcribed and then coded and analysed using NVivo.

Limitations

Not everyone that was selected for the programme engaged with the evaluation. Some students did not complete the pre and post surveys at each session as some arrived late or left early or did not attend the session. Some students, for a variety of reasons, mainly absenteeism that day, were not present for the focus group session. Therefore, it was not possible to solicit the views and experience of all students that participated in the programme. It was also not possible to compare the pre and post survey findings at a school level as the numbers were small due to students being absent from school.

Key findings

Overall findings

The evidence, from both the qualitative and quantitative data, shows the main aims of the programme were largely met. As the programme progressed, students not only became more motivated and confident, but they were also able to take their newly acquired knowledge and apply it to their studies, especially their revision and exams. The evidence, from both the qualitative and quantitative data, shows these objectives were largely met. The data obtained from the pre and post session surveys, Careers Leads and student focus groups demonstrated the positive impact of the programme. However, the progression grade data did not show this as clearly.

Overall, the programme appears to have been most beneficial to the Year 11 students. This is probably because they were able to immediately see the relevance and put their learning into practice and had started to see the positive difference it was making.

Main quantitative-specific findings

- Overall, for all students, the difference between the pre and post session score for all questions was positive and statistically significant for every session.

- Overall, the pre and post session survey data demonstrated the programme had a greater impact on Year 11 students.

- In general, female students from both year groups travelled the furthest in terms of their confidence and knowledge during the sessions, even when they started from a lower baseline.

- The extent to which students improved during a session increased incrementally as the programme progressed suggesting that student learning and engagement with the programme increased over time.

- Obtaining the predicted grade data, especially for the comparison groups, in a timely manner, proved challenging.

- Grade data findings were mixed and did not provide the additional evidence of the impact of the programme. Maths grades for female students improved over the academic year for both participant and comparison groups. English grades decreased for all students for both groups across both years.

Qualitative-specific findings

- Each of the programme sessions helped to build student confidence and motivation and students were able to easily make the links from one session to the other.

- The key learning students took from the programme was how to revise effectively. However, students did not have a great deal to say about this session specifically. It therefore appears that it is the programme as a whole that provides students with the skills, knowledge and confidence to revise effectively rather than any one specific session.

- Students liked the small group delivery model. However, some of the Careers Leads and the LiNCHigher delivery staff felt that the programme could be delivered to slightly larger groups.

- When the gap between sessions was too long, or timetabling was inconsistent, students said they forgot much of their previous learning.

- University campus visits continue to be popular and have a positive impact on students.

- Students were more engaged and willing to actively participate when the LiNCHigher member of staff delivering the session was the only adult present.

- Students valued learning the non-academic revision strategies as much as the study skills themselves. Many said they had made positive changes to the way they studied as a result of being on the programme.

- Students enjoyed the programme more as it progressed as evidenced by the improvement found in the pre and post session surveys. Few were fully aware of what the programme was about beforehand and consequently took time to settle in and appreciate its value.

- Some sessions were reported, by both Careers Leads and students, to be a little light in content.

Main recommendations

For LiNCHigher

- Develop a pack containing guidelines and templates to give to schools at the first point of contact so that they are clear what information is required of them and the criteria on which students should be selected for the programme.

- Produce a leaflet or flyer about the programme that schools can give to their students in advance. This will help students understand not only what will be expected of them but also the benefits of taking part.

- Given the inconsistency of progression grade data, i.e. teachers interpreting grade prediction frameworks in different ways, particularly for small groups which the Study Skills Masterclass Programme is aimed at, and the difficultly in obtaining the data consider using alternative measures of impact.

- If grade data is to be used in future evaluations, make it a mandatory condition that schools provide grade data for both the participating students and the comparison group prior to the programme being delivered.

- Consider slightly increasing the number of students on the programme to 15 or a maximum of 20, any more could risk losing students buy-in and engagement as they appreciated the small group delivery model.

- Encourage schools to facilitate Year 11 students to participate in the programme, as the data clearly shows that they were the year group that benefited the most.

- Investigate if the number of sessions could be reduced or if the content of some sessions could be bolstered as well as having additional activities for schools that run 60-minute lessons.

For schools

- Talk to the students selected for the programme before the first session to explain what the programme is about, why they have been chosen and how it will help them.

- Consider group dynamics, along with attendance and behaviour, as part of the selection criteria to aid student engagement.

- Plan the Year 11 sessions in as early in the year as possible to enable them to employ their new study skills in their mock exams before their actual exams.

For LiNCHigher and schools together

- Consider timetabling the delivery of the programme over a shorter period and at regular times agreed at the start. This would help with student attendance and engagement, consolidate learning and group dynamics.

- Ensure a campus visit is planned into the programme from the start, as the evidence shows that the students valued this opportunity and that it had a positive impact.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings for the evaluation of the Study Skills Masterclass Programme (SSMP) which was designed in conjunction with Complete Careers and delivered by LiNCHigher in low-attainment schools for the first time in the academic year 2023/24. This year the Office for Students (OfS) asked all Uni Connect (UC) partnerships to identify methods of raising attainment in their area; the SSMP was LiNCHigher's response to this request. Partnerships were also asked to stipulate which of the OfS' raising attainment aims would underpin their activity. SSMP fell into the 'tackling non-academic barriers to learning' category.

The SSMP comprises seven sessions, six one-hour sessions delivered in school, and an optional campus visit that could be scheduled either at the beginning or end of the programme. Whilst the sessions were designed to be delivered sequentially, they do not necessarily have to be delivered in a six-week block and schools chose their own timetabling. The six SSMP sessions are:

7. Staying organised and motivated
8. Creating a learning environment
9. Revision skills
10. Strategies for success
11. Exam preparation and techniques
12. Focus on the future.

Together the sessions aim to improve student confidence and motivation in their study skills. The programme was designed to help Year 10 and 11 students working at Grade 4 with the potential to reach Grade 5, in their core subjects, prepare for their GCSE exams. The programme was delivered to students in small group settings, ideally a maximum of ten students per group, between September 2023 and April 2024. Each session has a key theme (for example, session one confidence, session two organisation, and so on) and has been mapped to both the Gatsby and NERUPI framework.

2. Evaluation approach

The evaluation of SSMP was conducted by the LiNCHigher evaluation team in the Lincoln Academy of Learning and Teaching (LALT) at the University of Lincoln (UoL). A theory of change was first developed for the programme (appendix A) and then the evaluation approach was embedded into the SSMP. The evaluation took a mixed methods approach consisting of both quantitative and qualitative data. Data were collected through the following evaluation activities:

- Pre and post surveys for the six sessions delivered in school.

- Baseline and progression (Year 10) / exam (Year 11) data for both the students that attended the sessions and comparison groups.

- Student focus groups.

- Semi-structured interviews with school Careers Leads and LiNCHigher staff who delivered SSMP in schools.

Case study schools

The evaluation was carried out in all six of the low attaining LiNCHigher schools where the programme was initially delivered. The characteristics of each case study school are detailed in table 1. Note, of the six case study schools involved in the SSMP only School D had a sixth form.

Table 1: Key characteristics of the case study schools.

School	Area	Ofsted rating	% Free School Meals (FSM)	% Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Size / Students on role
School A	Urban city and town	Inadequate – September 2022	58.3%	25.9%	Medium ~700
School B	Rural town and fringe sparse setting	Good – December 2022	46.6%	14.1%	Medium ~630
School C	Rural town and fringe	Good – January 2022	25.3%	19.7%	Small ~570
School D	Urban city and town	Requires Improvement – December 2023	60.9%	26.6%	Large ~1,020
School E	Rural town and fringe	Requires Improvement – March 2023	36.6%	18.1%	Small ~590
School F	Rural town and fringe	Requires Improvement – September 2023	37.0%	18.2%	Medium ~720

NB: Percentage of FSM and number of pupils on role are from academic year 2023/24 and are taken from the Government's online 'Get information about Schools' service[1]; proportion SEN are taken from the HEAT database and relates to data collected in the annual school census in the academic year 2022/23.

Table 2 provides further context as to why the six case study schools were chosen by LiNCHigher for the SSMP. The table shows the percentage of students achieving maths and English at each of the case study schools as well as their Attainment 8 and Progression 8 scores. All data are from the academic year 2022/23 taken from the Government's online 'compare school performance' service[2].

Table 2: Attainment grades of the case study schools.

School	% achieving grades 9-5 in English and maths GCSE	Attainment 8 score	Progress 8 score
School A	18.0%	37.8	-0.39
School B	20.0%	37.5	-0.46
School C	39.0%	41.7	-0.10
School D	11.0%	32.8	-0.57
School E	6.0%	29.6	-0.98
School F	17.0%	34.6	-0.48

Across the six case study schools a total of 101 students started the programme in week one: 50 Year 10s and 51 Year 11s. Two Year 11 students withdrew from the programme after the first week and another after the third week. Two further Year 11 students joined in week three, giving a total of 100 students who completed the programme: 55 female students and 45 male students. However, distribution was not equal, not all schools offered the programme to one Year 10 and one Year 11 group of students as originally envisaged. Table 3 shows which year groups received the programme

---

[1] Available from: https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/
[2] Available from: https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk

in the case study schools, the time period in which the sessions were delivered and the attendance levels for each group.

Table 3: Year groups and delivery times

School	Delivery	Year Groups	Number of students attending:			
			All sessions	Missed 1–2	Missed 3 or more	Withdrew
School A	Sept – Mar	Year 11; 2 groups of 10	8	8	4*	1
School B	Jan – mid Feb	Year 10; 1 group of 10	5	5	0	0
	Jan – mid Feb	Year 11; 1 group of 11	4	6	1*	1
School C	Nov – Mar	Year 10; 1 group of 10	3	4	3	0
School D	Nov – Mar	Year 10; 1 group of 10	2	6	2	0
School E	Dec – Apr	Year 10; 1 group of 10	5	5	0	0
	Dec – Apr	Year 11; 1 group of 10	4	6	0	0
School F	Nov – Mar	Year 10; 1 group of 10	5	3	2	0
	Nov – Mar	Year 11; 1 group of 12	5	5	2*	1
Total Year 10	50		20	23	7	0
Total Year 11	53		21	25	7	3

* Number includes a student that withdrew from the programme; Two School F Year 11 students that joined in session three, they are included as missing either 1-2 or 3+ sessions.

Selecting the students

The case study schools were asked to select students who could potentially raise their attainment from a grade 4 to a 5 in GCSE core subjects. However, schools interpreted the selection criteria in various ways, for example some chose to include students working at Grade 3 with the potential to reach Grade 4, some only considered maths and English as core subjects whilst others included sciences. The Careers Leads were asked how students were selected. The selection criteria used by each case study school are detailed in table 4.

Another factor for the evaluation team to consider was whether or not the students selected for the programme had received any other additional study skills / revision interventions during the school year and if so what and how much. This is also detailed in table 4.

Table 4: Selection criteria and other interventions

Schools	Selection criteria	Other interventions
School A (Yr 11)	Students working at grade 3/4 on ability and effort. Students were selected on their mock maths and English results at the end of last school year (July 2023).	Depending on need, the selected students also received the following additional tuition for maths and/or English: - half an hour, four mornings a week in tutor time. - three evenings a week. - most had been removed from another subject to have an extra lesson. - Plus, additional support on drop-down and inset days for vocational subjects.
School B (Yr 10 & 11)	Heads of Year 10 and 11 were asked to look at students with a good attendance record and working on the grade 4/5 boundary across *all* subjects on Progress 8 scores taken in November, but potentially students who could achieve a grade 6. The list, of around 20 students, was then 'whittled down' to those who they felt would engage positively with the programme. Group dynamics was also a consideration.	No other interventions
School C (Yr 10)	Students working at grade 3/4 according to their core subject results in maths, English and science at the end of last school year (July 2023) and who were not receiving any other additional support.	No other interventions
School D (Yr 10)	Head of Year 10 was asked for students working on the grade 3/4 cusp in maths and English. Students that appeared on both lists were selected for the programme.	No other known interventions.
School E (Yr 10 & 11)	Heads of maths and English were asked to identify Year 10 and 11 students that were working at the grade 4/5 borderline, and they felt would benefit from being on the programme. Some students were lacking in confidence, or it was felt they did not know how to "work correctly" in school.	All Year 11 students have access to the voluntary after school club revision sessions, the Easter school and 25 mins intervention for maths, English and science in tutor group time.
School F (Yr 10 & 11)	The students were chosen by the Heads of Year 10 and 11. They were students working at grade 3+ in maths, English and science at the end of the previous academic year (July 2023) and were capable of working at a grade 4/5. They were also students with *no behavioural issues*. These students were termed the 'grey' students; those that would benefit from additional support.	Year 11 students had a two-hour Made Training revision skills session in March. They were also offered additional revision classes after school, at lunchtimes, Saturday mornings and during the Easter holidays.

Quantitative data:

The quantitative data comprised pre and post session surveys for each of the six sessions delivered in the case study schools. In addition, baseline assessments of students' grades at the beginning of the academic year were compared to grades at the end of the year for Year 10 students both those that took part in the programme and a comparison group. For Year 11, final GCSE grades were

compared to baseline grades, again for both students that took part in the programme and a comparison group. SPSS was used to analyse all quantitative data that were collected.

Qualitative data: Student focus groups and staff interviews

Qualitative data were collected through ten student focus groups in the six case study schools, six individual interviews with school Careers Leads and interviews with three members of the LiNCHigher delivery team. All interviews and focus groups were audio recorded, transcribed and then coded and analysed using NVivo.

The student focus groups took place during March and April 2024, once programme delivery had been completed, with Year 10 and 11 students that had been on the SSMP. The students were asked what they had enjoyed and not enjoyed, what they had learnt, how useful they had found the resource pack and session worksheets and if they had any suggestions for improving the programme.

Report caveats and data limitations

Not everyone that was selected for the programme engaged with the evaluation. Some students did not complete the pre and post surveys at each session as some arrived late or left early or did not attend the session. Some students, for a variety of reasons, mainly absenteeism that day, were not present for the focus group session. Therefore, it was not possible to solicit the views and experience of all students that participated in the programme.

Report structure

This report presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative data separately, before drawing out the joint key findings from the SSMP evaluation. The report concludes with a series of recommendations for LiNCHigher and schools to consider when delivering the programme in the future.

3. Quantitative data:

Pre and post session surveys

Each of the pre and post session surveys were designed to assess the impact of the objectives of the individual sessions. The questions were all asked on a five-point scale appropriate to the question. The number of questions asked differed for each session depending on the number of objectives. The responses are considered here session by session: for the programme overall, by year group and gender. School comparisons have not been included, as previously discussed the distribution of year groups was not equal across schools and often lack of attendance meant that the number of surveys collected at a session were too few to make meaningful comparisons.

Statistical analysis

Completion rates given at the beginning of each section detailing the session are the number of students that either completed or partially completed both a pre and post survey.

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to determine if there was a median difference between matched observations in the pre and post session survey for each of the groups and matched baseline and progression/attainment grade data. A *p*-value of less than 0.05 was the criterion for statistical significance.

It is worth noting that statistical significance is affected by sample size. Therefore, some differences, whilst looking greater than others, may not be statistically significant if the number of responses were low, and conversely some differences that might look small could be significant if the sample size was sufficiently large.

Error bars on the charts represent standard deviation (SD) which show how the data are spread; mean score ± SD captures about two thirds of the data points.

Session 1: Staying organised and motivated

Of the 102 students due to start the programme, 74 completed a pre and post session survey for session one. The reason for the missing responses was in part due to one school starting the programme early (School A) with one group of Year 11 students as a pilot session, resulting in the survey not being given out to that group. The remaining missing responses were either due to absence from school or incomplete surveys.

Students were asked five questions at the start of the session and then again at the end:

- How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to plan your work?
- How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to prioritise your work?
- How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to organise your work?
- How do you rate your current level of study motivation?
- How do you rate your current level of study confidence?

All students

Students overall reported being more confident about planning, prioritising and organising their work after the session. The change from pre to post was statistically significant for all three questions. Similarly, levels of study motivation and confidence increased, the changes were also statistically significant. However, for all five questions the post session score was only just over midway on the scale. Table 5 and 6 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 1 and 2 show the same data in chart format.

Table 5: Session 1 – Q1 to Q3 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to plan your work (n = 74)	2.65	3.05	+ 0.40
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to prioritise your work (n = 74)	2.39	3.04	+ 0.65
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to organise your work (n = 74)	2.79	3.23	+ 0.44

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

Table 6: Session 1 – Q4 and Q5 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How do you rate your current level of study motivation (n = 74)	2.35	3.07	+ 0.72
How do you rate your current level of study confidence (n=74)	2.58	3.11	+ 0.53

NB: scale = 1 is 'low' to 5 is 'high'

Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 1: Session 1 – Q1 to Q3 all students mean score pre and post session.

Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 2: Session 1 – Q4 and Q5 all students mean score pre and post session.

By year group

For both year groups all changes between pre and post were positive and statistically significant. For question 1 and 2, Year 10 and 11 reported similar means for the post survey, however the Year 11 students reported a lower baseline and therefore travelled further. Table 7 and 8 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 5 to 7 show the same data in chart format.

Table 7: Session 1 – Q1 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Grp	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to plan your work	Year 10 (n=37)	2.76	3.05	+ 0.29
	Year 11 (n=37)	2.54	3.05	+ 0.51
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to prioritise your work	Year 10 (n=37)	2.51	3.03	+ 0.52
	Year 11 (n=37)	2.27	3.05	+ 0.78
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to organise your work	Year 10 (n=36)	2.72	3.17	+ 0.45
	Year 11 (n=37)	2.86	3.30	+ 0.44

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

Table 8: Session 1 – Q4 & Q5 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Group	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How do you rate your current level of study motivation	Year 10 (n=37)	2.27	2.97	+ 0.70
	Year 11 (n=37)	2.43	3.16	+ 0.73
How do you rate your current level of study confidence	Year 10 (n=37)	2.59	3.05	+ 0.46
	Year 11 (n=37)	2.57	3.16	+ 0.59

NB: scale = 1 is 'low' to 5 is 'high'
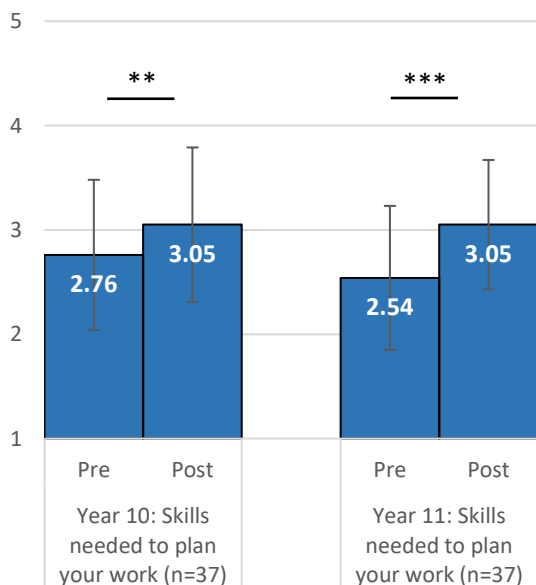
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 3: Session 1 – Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group.
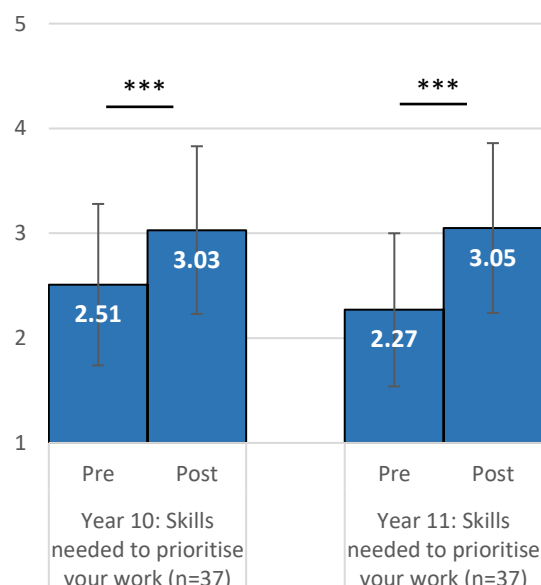
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 4: Session 1 – Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 5: Session 1 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 6: Session 1 – Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 7: Session 1 – Q5 mean score pre and post session by year group.

By year group and gender

For both female and male students in Year 10 and 11, all changes between pre and post were positive. However, for two groups the mean post session score for some questions remained below midway on the scale. These were question 2, 4 and 5 for Year 10 female students and question 4 for Year 11 male students. The two highest reported mean scores were for questions 3 and 4 (3.43 and 3.35 respectively) both by Year 11 female students. Tables 9 to 12 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 8 to 12 show the same data in chart format.

Table 9: Session 1 – Year 10 Q1 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to plan your work	Female (n=19)	2.74	3.00	+ 0.26
	Male (n=18)	2.78	3.11	+ 0.33
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to prioritise your work	Female (n=19)	2.26	2.95	+ 0.69
	Male (n=18)	2.78	3.11	+ 0.33
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to organise your work	Female (n=19)	2.61	3.22	+ 0.61
	Male (n=18)	2.83	3.11	+ 0.28

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

Table 10: Session 1 – Year 10 Q4 & Q5 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How do you rate your current level of study motivation	Female (n=19)	2.26	2.89	+ 0.63
	Male (n=18)	2.28	3.06	+ 0.78
How do you rate your current level of study confidence	Female (n=19)	2.37	2.95	+ 0.58
	Male (n=18)	2.83	3.17	+ 0.34

NB: scale = 1 is 'low' to 5 is 'high'

Table 11: Session 1 - Year 11 Q1 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to plan your work	Female (n=23)	2.57	3.00	+ 0.43
	Male (n=14)	2.50	3.14	+ 0.64
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to prioritise your work	Female (n=23)	2.17	3.00	+ 0.83
	Male (n=14)	2.43	3.14	+ 0.71
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to organise your work	Female (n=23)	2.96	3.43	+ 0.47
	Male (n=14)	2.71	3.07	+ 0.36

NB: Scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

Table 12: Session 1 – Year 11 Q4 & Q5 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How do you rate your current level of study motivation	Female (n=23)	2.65	3.35	+ 0.70
	Male (n=14)	2.07	2.86	+ 0.79
How do you rate your current level of study confidence	Female (n=23)	2.70	3.13	+ 0.43
	Male (n=14)	2.36	3.21	+ 0.85

NB: scale = 1 is 'low' to 5 is 'high'
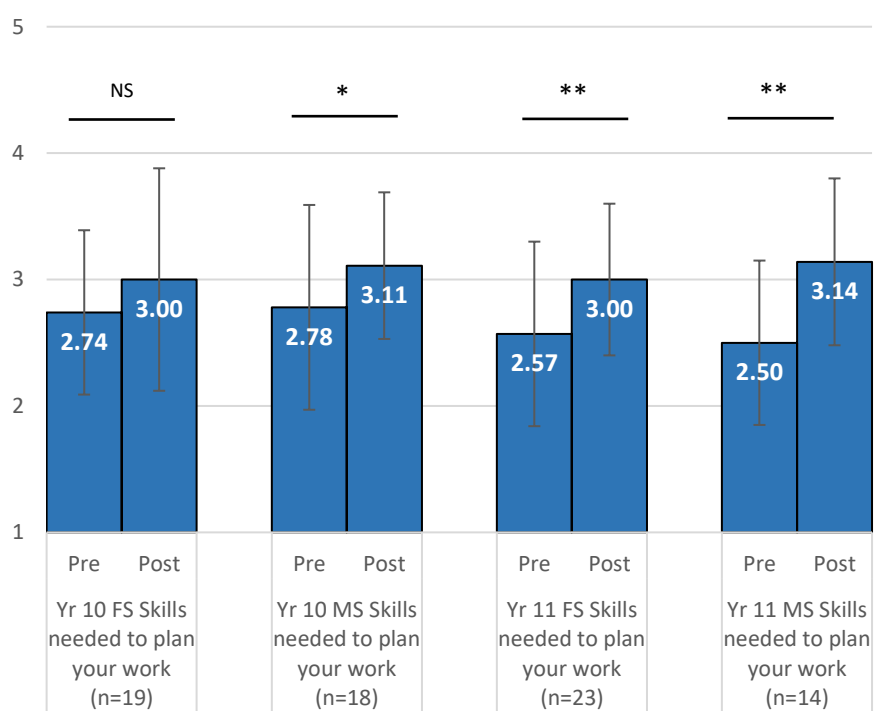
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 8: Session 1 – Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
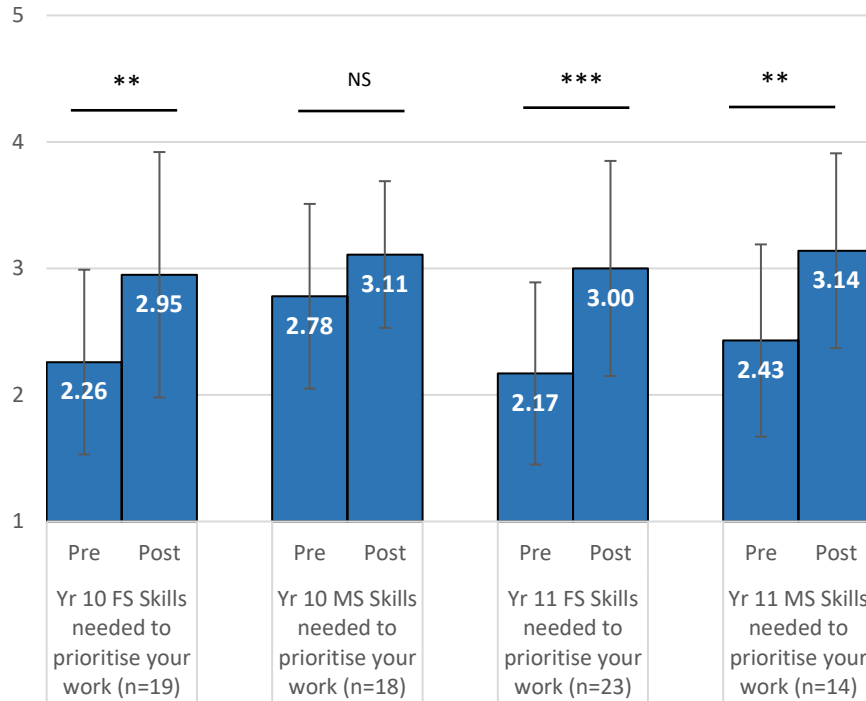
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 9: Session 1 – Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
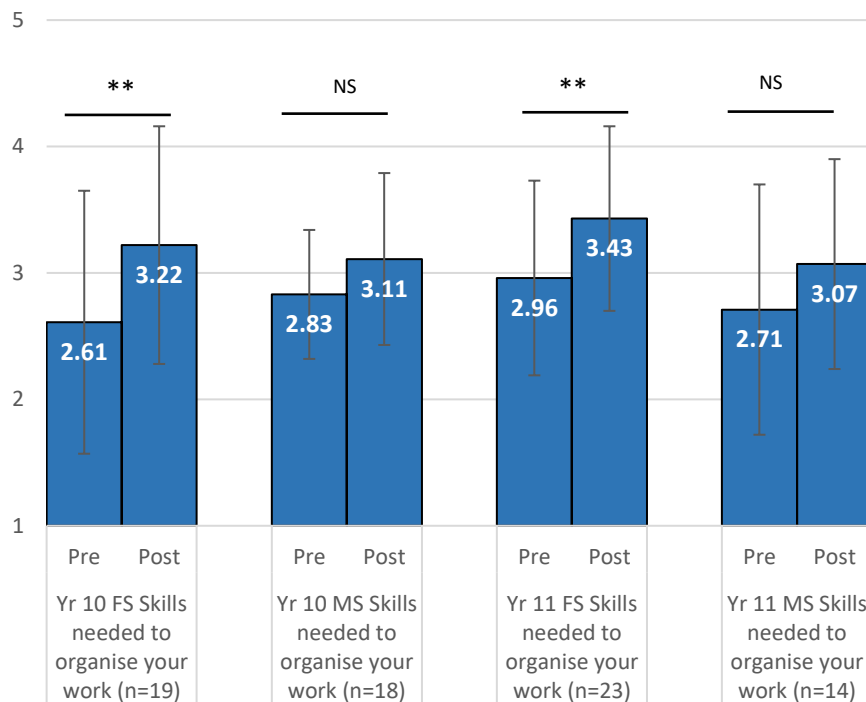
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 10: Session 1 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
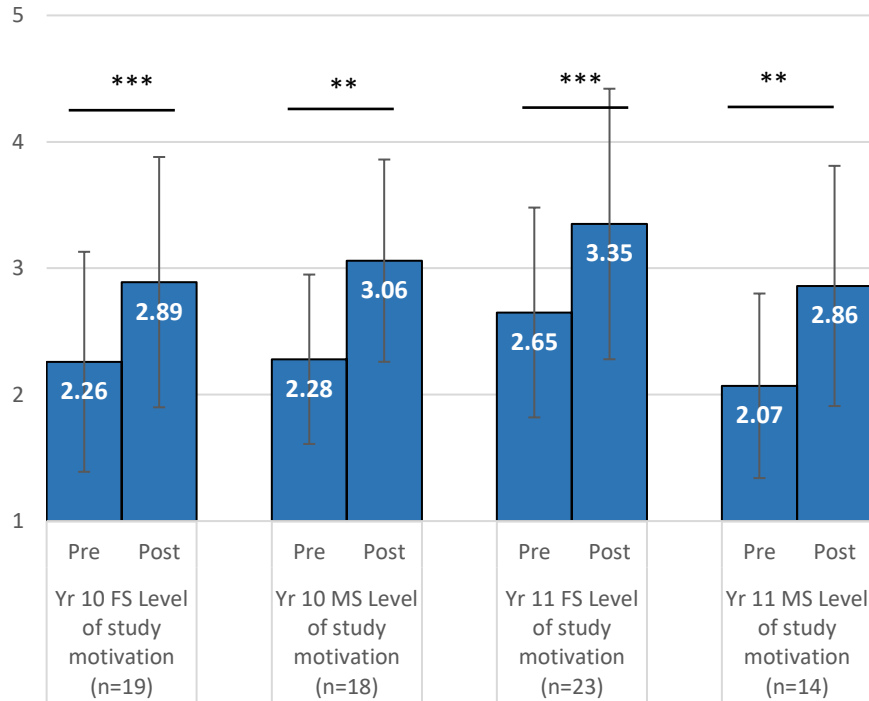
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 11: Session 1 – Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
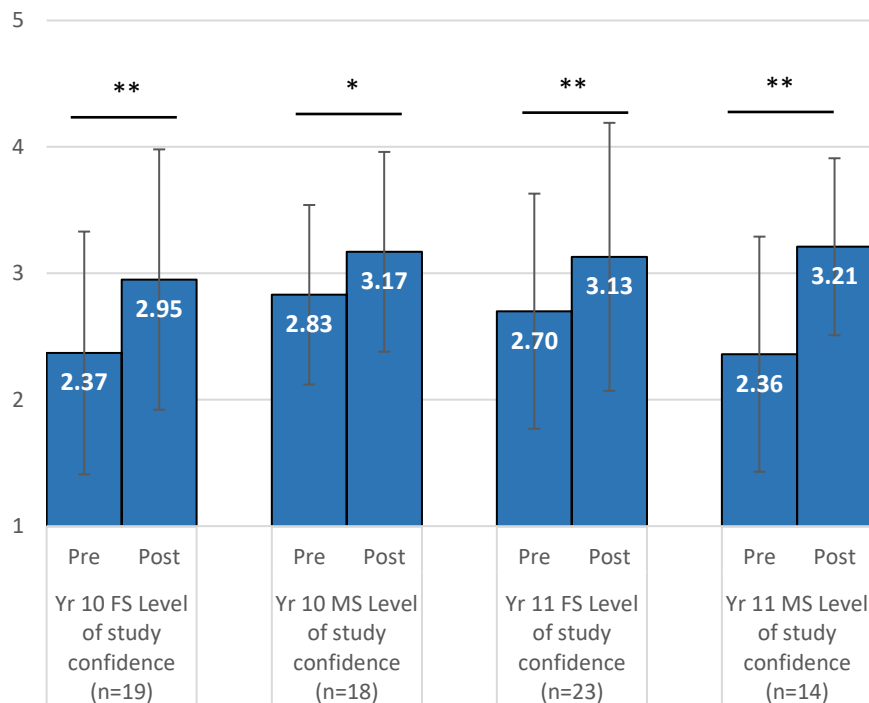
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 12: Session 1 – Q5 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

Session 2: Creating a learning environment

Eighty-seven students completed a pre and post survey for session two. Students were asked five questions based on the learning outcomes at the start of the session and then again at the end:

- How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to identify what makes a positive learning environment?
- How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to identify resources to support personal study?
- How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to create a personal study plan?
- How do you rate your ability to study in different locations?
- How do you rate the importance of creating a positive learning environment?

All students

Students overall reported being more confident about identifying and creating a positive learning environment, identifying resources, creating a personal study plan and their ability to study in different locations. The difference between the mean score for each of the questions from pre to post session were statistically significant. Tables 13 and 14 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 13 and 14 show the same data in chart format.

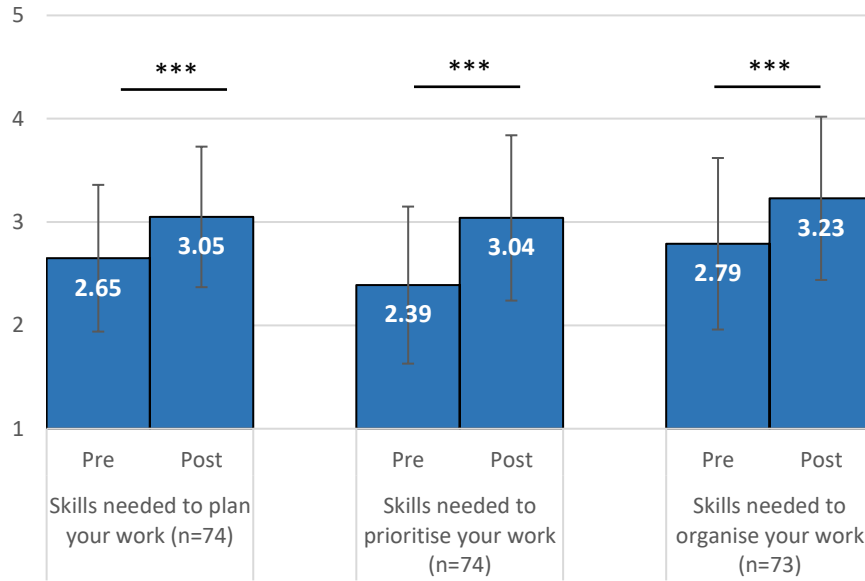Table 13: Session 2 – Q1 to Q3 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to identify what makes a positive learning environment (n = 87)	2.78	3.64	+ 0.86
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to identify resources to support personal study (n = 87)	2.54	3.41	+ 0.87
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to create a personal study plan (n = 87)	2.26	3.13	+ 0.87

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

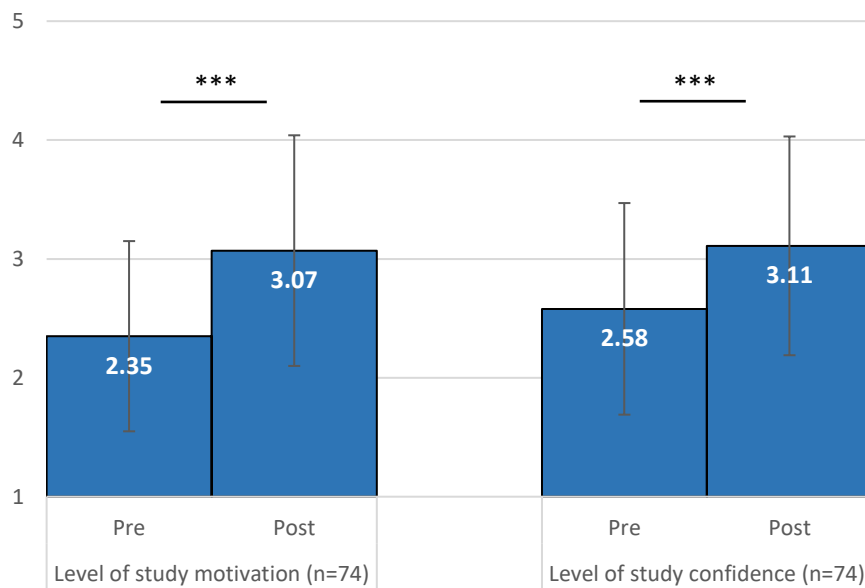Table 14: Session 2 – Q4 and Q5 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How do you rate your ability to study in different locations? (n = 85)	2.85	3.48	+ 0.63
How do you rate the importance of creating a positive learning environment? (n=85)	3.51	3.96	+ 0.45

NB: scale = 1 is 'low' to 5 is 'high'
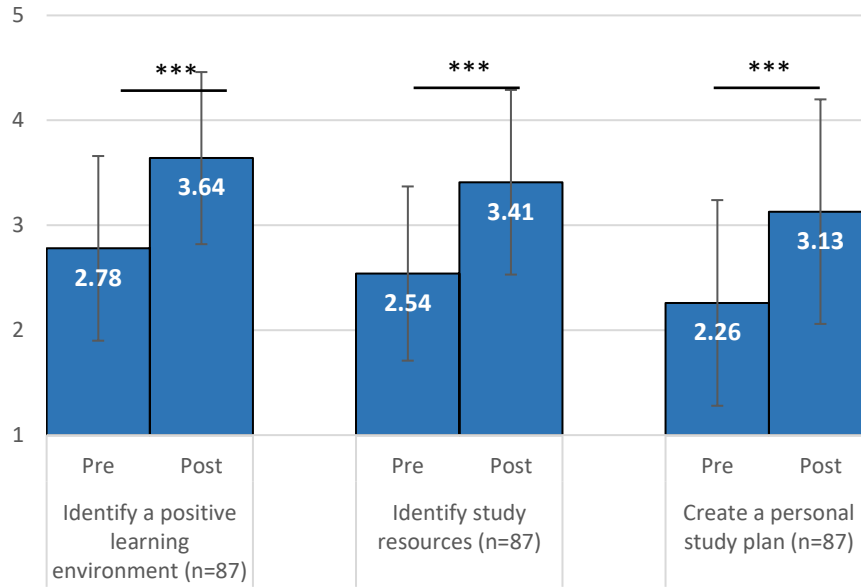
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 13: Session 2 – Q1 to Q3 all students mean score pre and post session.
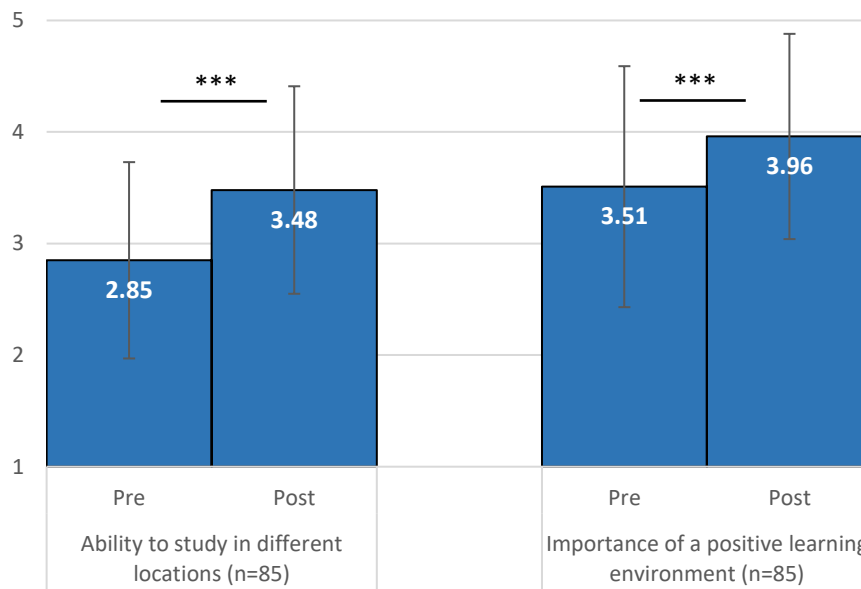
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 14: Session 2 – Q1 to Q3 all students mean score pre and post session.

By year group

For both year groups all changes between pre and post were positive and statistically significant. Despite scoring lower than Year 10 at the start of the session for three of the questions, Year 11 students were more confident about all five of the questions by the end of the session. Tables 15 and 16 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 15 to 19 show the same data in chart format.

Table 15: Session 2 – Q1 to Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Group	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to identify what makes a positive learning environment	Year 10 (n=44)	2.82	3.61	+ 0.79
	Year 11 (n=43)	2.74	3.67	+ 0.93
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to identify resources to support personal study	Year 10 (n=44)	2.57	3.27	+ 0.70
	Year 11 (n=43)	2.51	3.56	+1.05
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to create a personal study plan	Year 10 (n=44)	2.14	2.95	+ 0.81
	Year 11 (n=43)	2.40	3.30	+ 0.90

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

Table 16: Session 2 – Q4 and Q5 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Group	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How do you rate your ability to study in different locations?	Year 10 (n=44)	2.86	3.45	+ 0.59
	Year 11 (n=41)	2.83	3.51	+ 0.68
How do you rate the importance of creating a positive learning environment?	Year 10 (n=44)	3.30	3.68	+ 0.38
	Year 11 (n=41)	3.73	4.27	+ 0.54

NB: scale = 1 is 'low' to 5 is 'high'
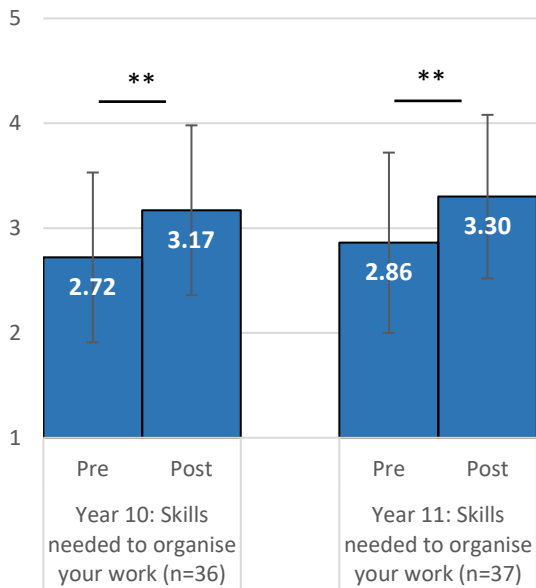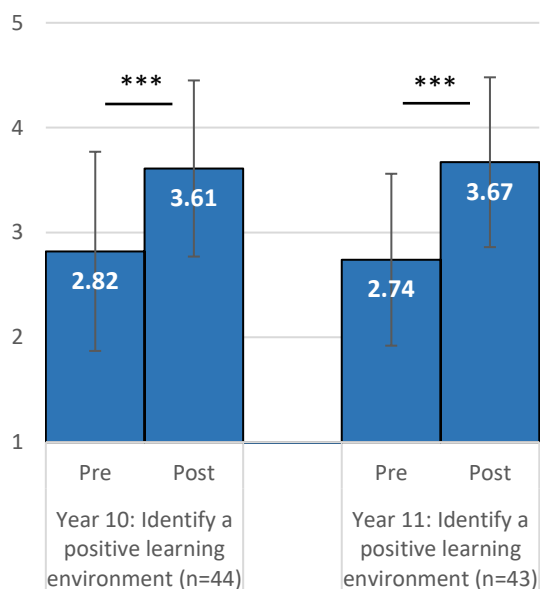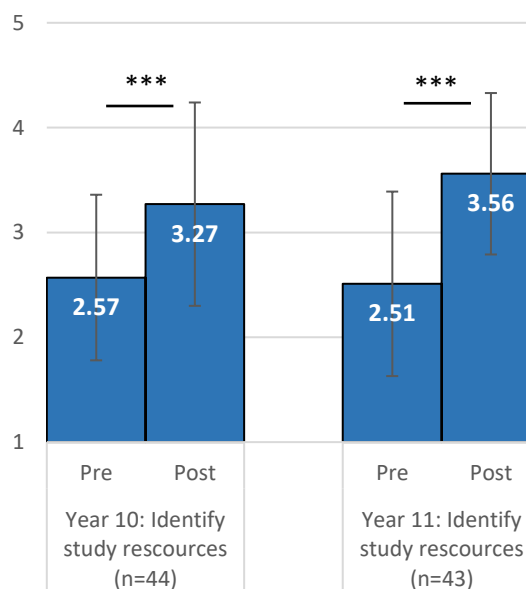

Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 15: Session 2 – Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group.

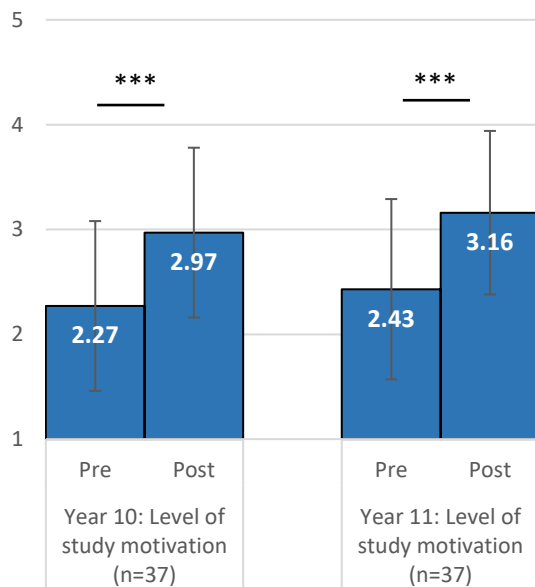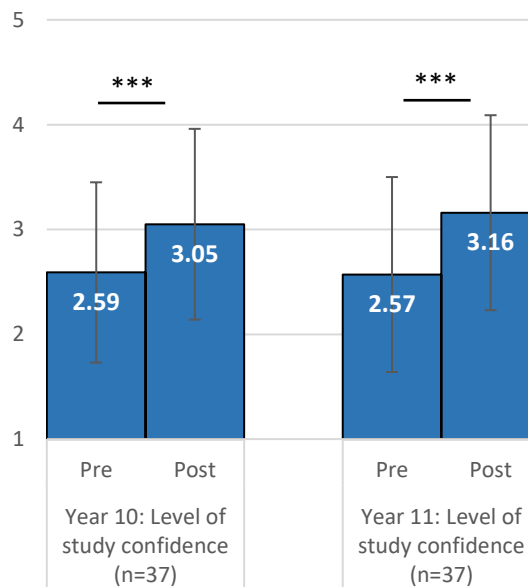Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 16: Session 2 – Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.
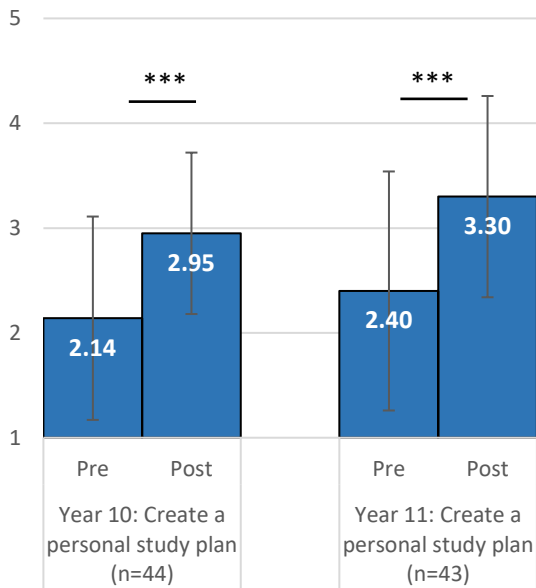
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 17: Session 2 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group.
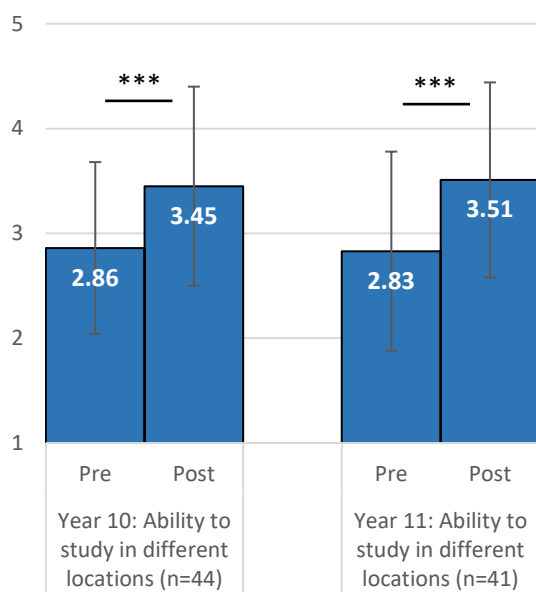
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 18: Session 2 – Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 19: Session 2 – Q5 mean score pre and post session by year group.

By year group and gender

For both female and male students in Year 10 and 11, all changes between the pre and post score were positive and statistically significant (with the exception of question 5 for Year 10 male students which was not significant). Year 10 female students' confidence in their ability to create a personal study plan remained below midway on the scale at the end of the session. This was the question that all groups of students scored the lowest out of the five. The difference between the score from pre to post session was larger across all five questions for female students in Year 10. This was the same

for female students in Year 11 except for question 5. Tables 17 to 20 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 20 to 24 show the same data in chart format.

Table 17: Session 2 – Year 10 Q1 to Q3 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to identify what makes a positive learning environment	Female (n=25)	2.68	3.56	+ 0.88
	Male (n=19)	3.00	3.68	+ 0.68
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to identify resources to support personal study	Female (n=25)	2.48	3.32	+ 0.84
	Male (n=19)	2.68	3.21	+ 0.53
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to create a personal study plan	Female (n=25)	1.96	2.88	+ 0.92
	Male (n=19)	2.37	3.05	+ 0.68

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

Table 18: Session 2 – Year 10 Q4 and Q5 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How do you rate your ability to study in different locations?	Female (n=24)	2.71	3.33	+ 0.62
	Male (n=20)	3.05	3.60	+ 0.55
How do you rate the importance of creating a positive learning environment?	Female (n=24)	3.33	3.79	+ 0.46
	Male (n=20)	3.25	3.55	+ 0.30

NB: scale = 1 is 'low' to 5 is 'high'

Table 19: Session 2 – Year 11 Q1 to Q3 mean score pre and post session by gender.

| Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to identify what makes a positive learning environment	Female (n=22)	2.86	3.82	+ 0.96
	Male (n=21)	2.62	3.52	+ 0.90
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to identify resources to support personal study	Female (n=22)	2.55	3.68	+ 1.13
	Male (n=21)	2.48	3.43	+ 0.95
How confident are you that you have the skills needed to be able to create a personal study plan	Female (n=22)	2.32	3.27	+ 0.95
	Male (n=21)	2.48	3.33	+ 0.85

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

Table 20: Session 2 – Year 11 Q4 and Q5 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How do you rate your ability to study in different locations?	Female (n=20)	2.90	3.60	+ 0.70
	Male (n=21)	2.76	3.43	+ 0.67
How do you rate the importance of creating a positive learning environment?	Female (n=20)	3.90	4.30	+ 0.40
	Male (n=21)	3.57	4.24	+ 0.67

NB: scale = 1 is 'low' to 5 is 'high'
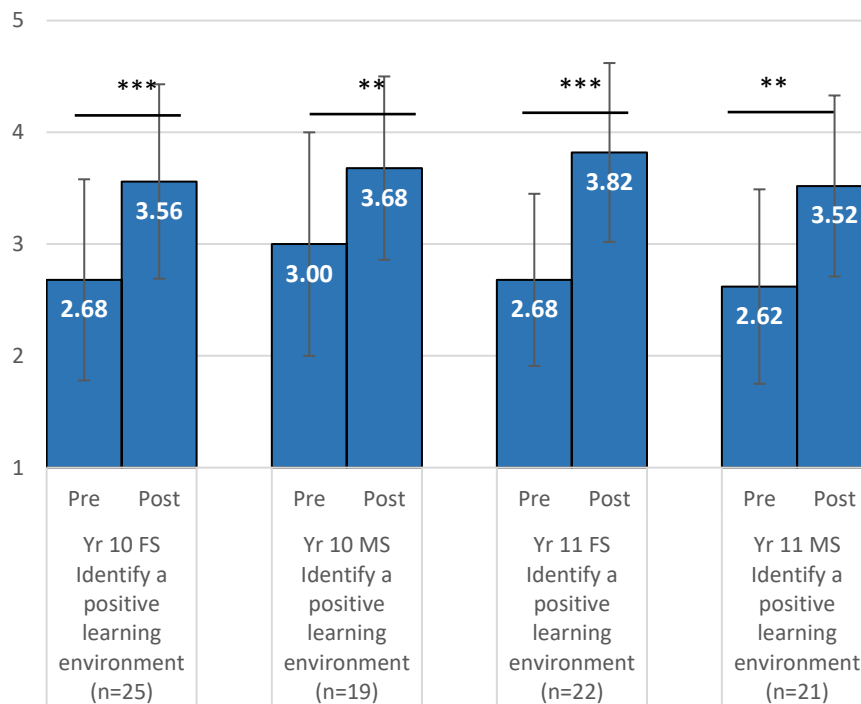
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 20: Session 2 – Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
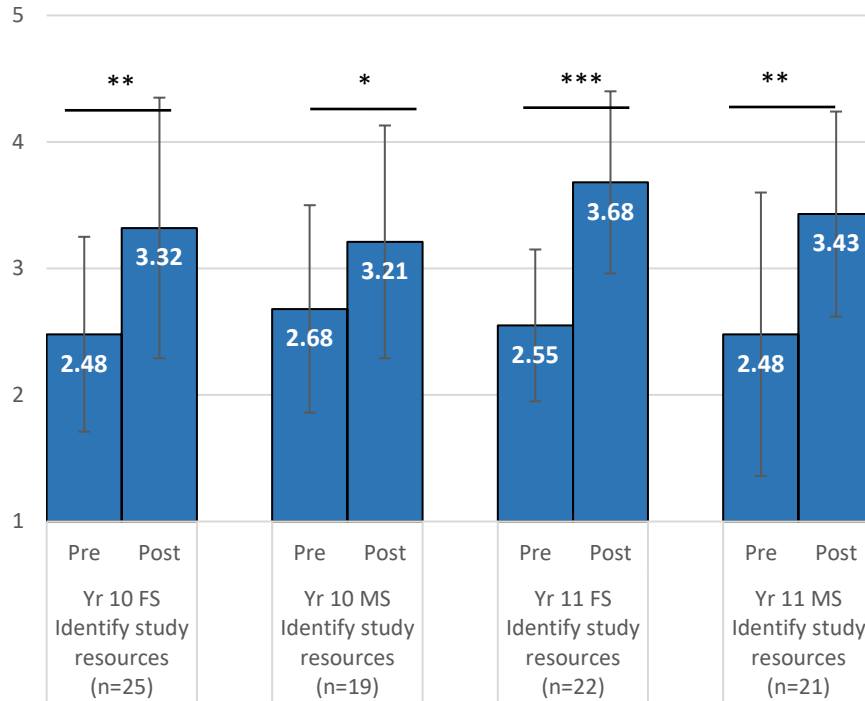
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 21: Session 2 – Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 22: Session 2 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 23: Session 2 – Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 24: Session 2 – Q5 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

Session 3: Revision skills

Eighty-three students completed a pre and post survey for session three. Students were asked four questions, based on the learning outcomes, at the start of the session and then again at the end:

- How aware are you of the range of different techniques available to use for revision?
- How aware are you of your personal study preferences?
- How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to identify effective revision techniques/skills?
- How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to create your own study map?

All students

Students overall reported having a greater awareness of different revision techniques and their personal study preferences after the session. They were also more confident that they had the knowledge to identify effective techniques and to create a study map. The difference between the mean score for each of the questions from pre to post session was statistically significant. Table 21 and 22 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 25 and 26 show the same data in chart format.

Table 21: Session 3 – Q1 and Q2 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How aware are you of the range of different techniques available to use for revision? (n = 83)	2.92	3.90	+ 0.98
How aware are you of your personal study preferences? (n = 83)	2.84	3.80	+ 0.96

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very aware'

Table 22: Session 3 – Q4 and Q5 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to identify effective revision techniques/skills? (n = 79)	2.54	3.43	+ 0.89
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to create your own study map? (n= 79)	2.35	3.28	+ 0.93

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'
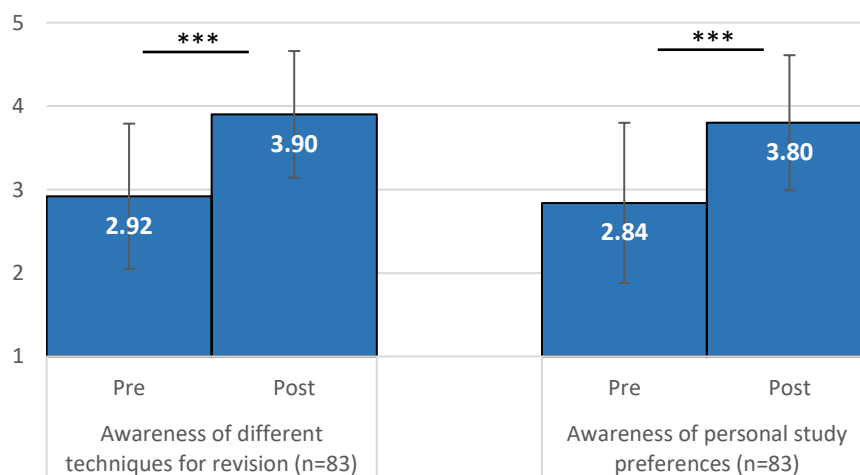
Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 25: Session 3 – Q1 and Q2 all students mean score pre and post session.
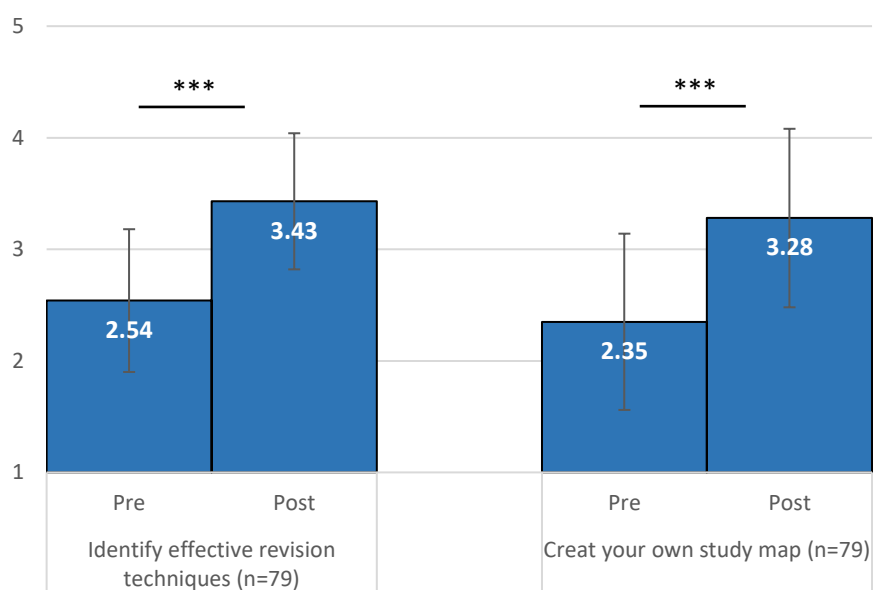
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 26: Session 3 – Q3 and Q4 all students mean score pre and post session.

By year group

For both year groups all changes between pre and post session were positive and statistically significant. Year 11 students were more positive about three of the four questions compared with Year 10 students by the end of the session. Table 23 and 24 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 27 to 30 show the same data in chart format.

Table 23: Session 3 – Q1 and Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Group	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How aware are you of the range of different techniques available to use for revision?	Year 10 (n=41)	2.71	3.71	+ 1.00
	Year 11 (n=42)	3.12	4.10	+ 0.98
How aware are you of your personal study preferences?	Year 10 (n=41)	2.59	3.61	+ 1.01
	Year 11 (n=42)	3.10	3.98	+ 0.88

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very aware'

Table 24: Session 3 – Q3 and Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Group	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to identify effective revision techniques/skills?	Year 10 (n=38)	2.53	3.32	+ 0.79
	Year 11 (n=41)	2.56	3.54	+ 0.98
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to create your own study map?	Year 10 (n=38)	2.50	3.29	+ 0.79
	Year 11 (n=41)	2.22	3.27	+ 1.05

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'
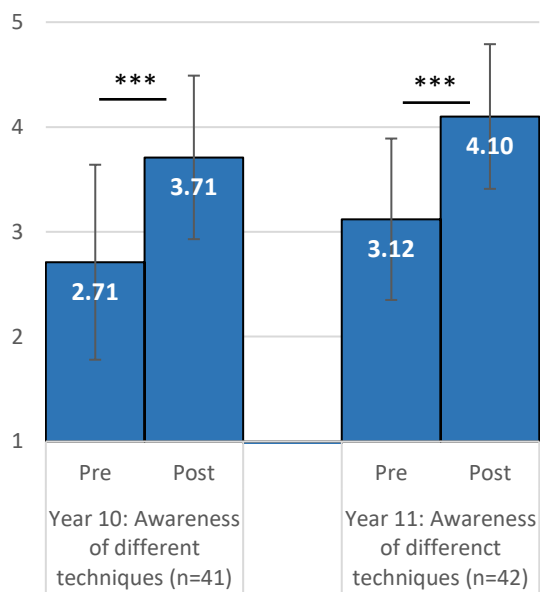
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 27: Session 3 – Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group.
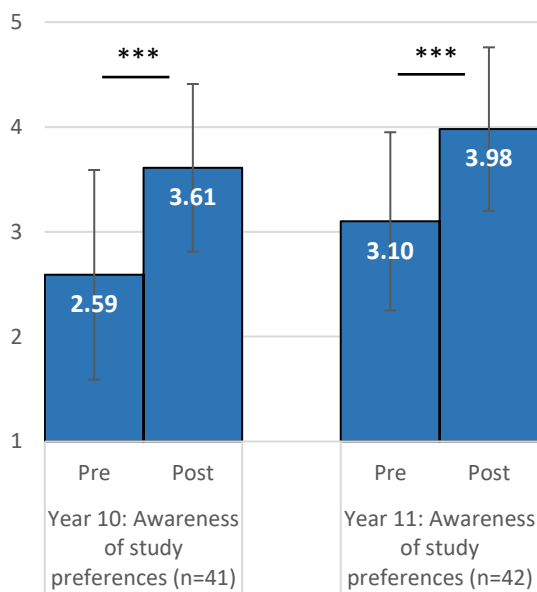
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 28: Session 3 – Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

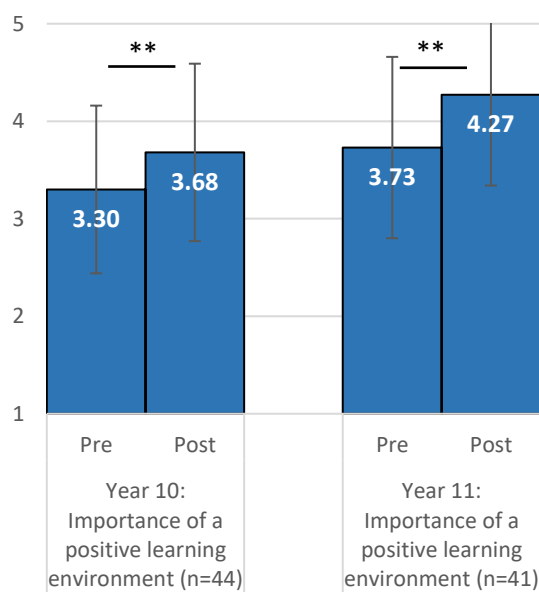Figure 29: Session 3 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 30: Session 3 – Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group.

By year group and gender

For both female and male students in Year 10 and 11, all changes between the pre and post score were positive and statistically significant. Whilst female students in both year groups mostly scored

the questions lower than male students at the start of the session, the difference in their scores by the end were greater (with the exception of question 2 for year 10). Table 25 to 28 show the mean scores pre and post session and figures 20 to 24 show the same data in chart format.

Table 25: Session 3 – Year 10 Q1 and Q2 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How aware are you of the range of different techniques available to use for revision?	Female (n=21)	2.62	3.76	+ 1.14
	Male (n=20)	2.80	3.65	+ 0.85
How aware are you of your personal study preferences?	Female (n=21)	2.48	3.48	+ 1.00
	Male (n=20)	2.70	3.75	+1.05

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very aware'

Table 26: Session 3 – Year 10 Q3 and Q4 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to identify effective revision techniques/skills?	Female (n=20)	2.45	3.30	+ 0.85
	Male (n=18)	2.61	3.33	+ 0.72
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to create your own study map?	Female (n=20)	2.60	3.40	+ 0.80
	Male (n=18)	2.39	3.17	+ 0.78

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

Table 27: Session 3 – Year 11 Q1 and Q2 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How aware are you of the range of different techniques available to use for revision?	Female (n=21)	3.00	4.19	+ 1.19
	Male (n=21)	3.24	4.00	+ 0.76
How aware are you of your personal study preferences?	Female (n=21)	3.19	4.10	+ 0.91
	Male (n=21)	3.00	3.86	+ 0.86

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very aware'

Table 28: Session 3 – Year 11 Q3 and Q4 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to identify effective revision techniques/skills?	Female (n=19)	2.53	3.53	+ 1.00
	Male (n=22)	2.59	3.55	+ 0.96
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to create your own study map?	Female (n=19)	2.00	3.42	+ 1.42
	Male (n=22)	2.41	3.14	+ 0.73

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'
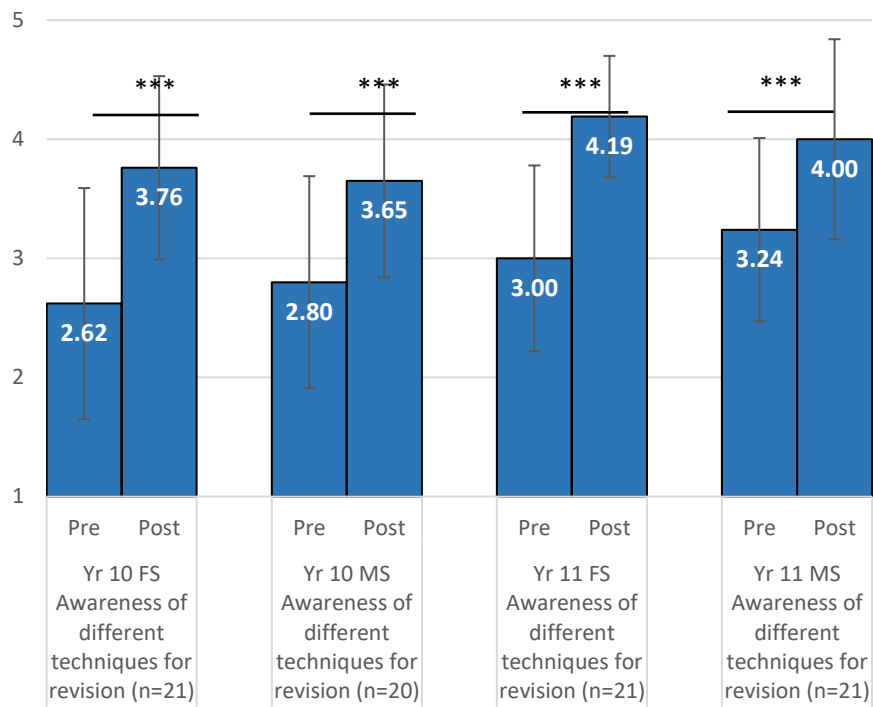
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 31: Session 2 – Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
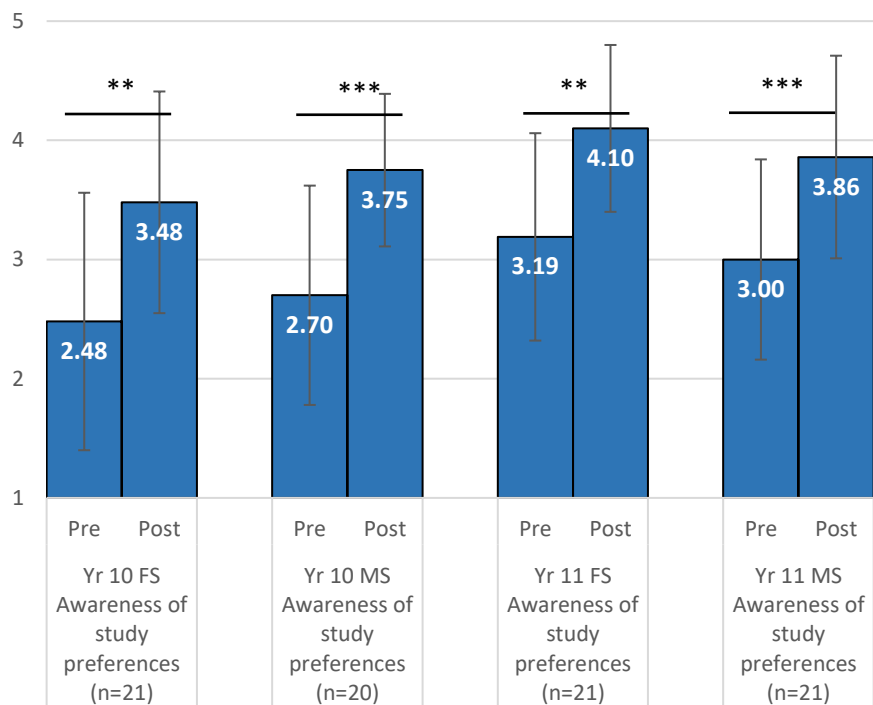
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 32: Session 2 – Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

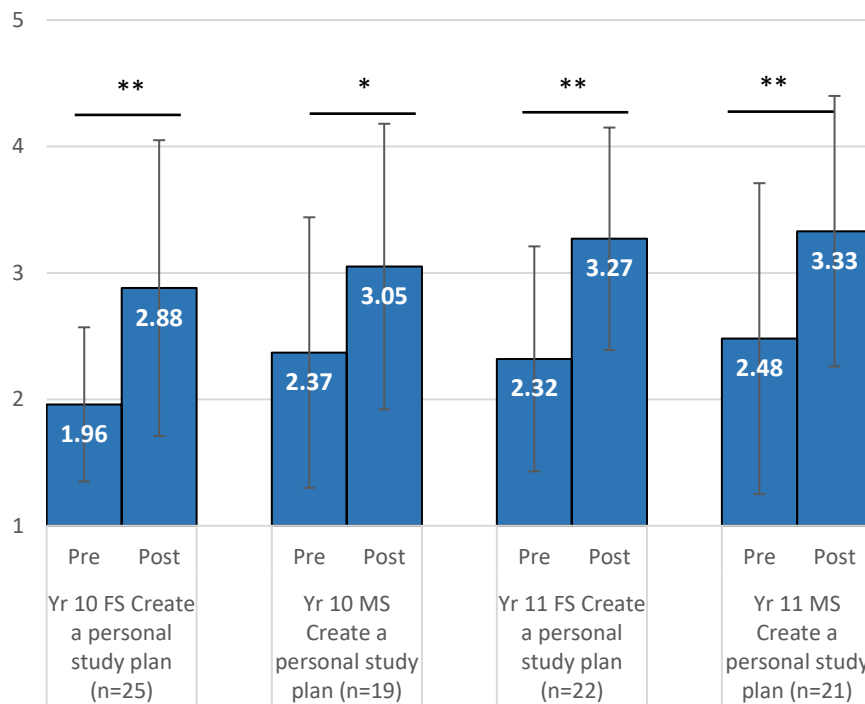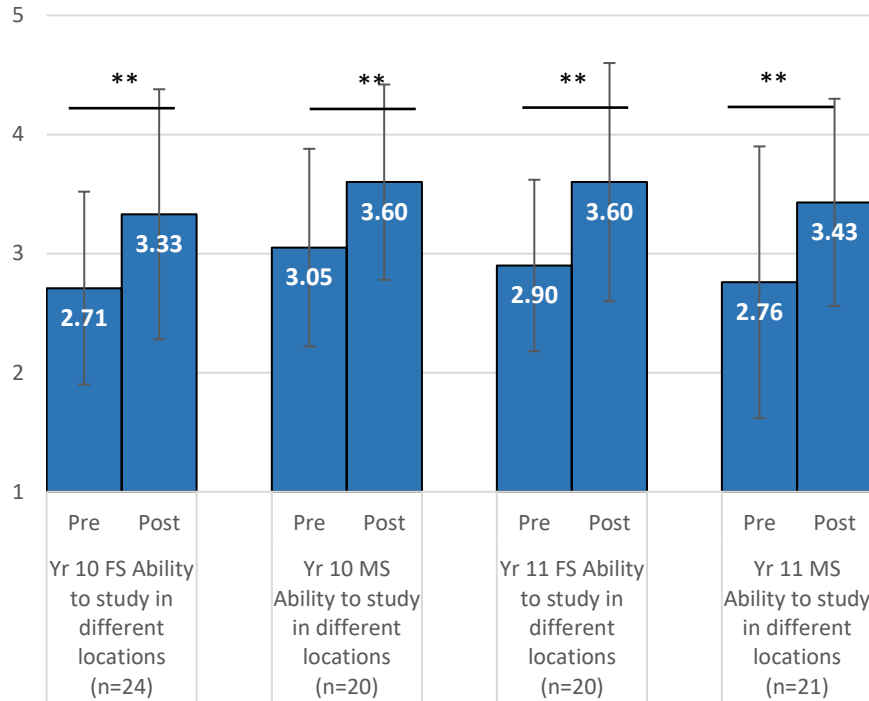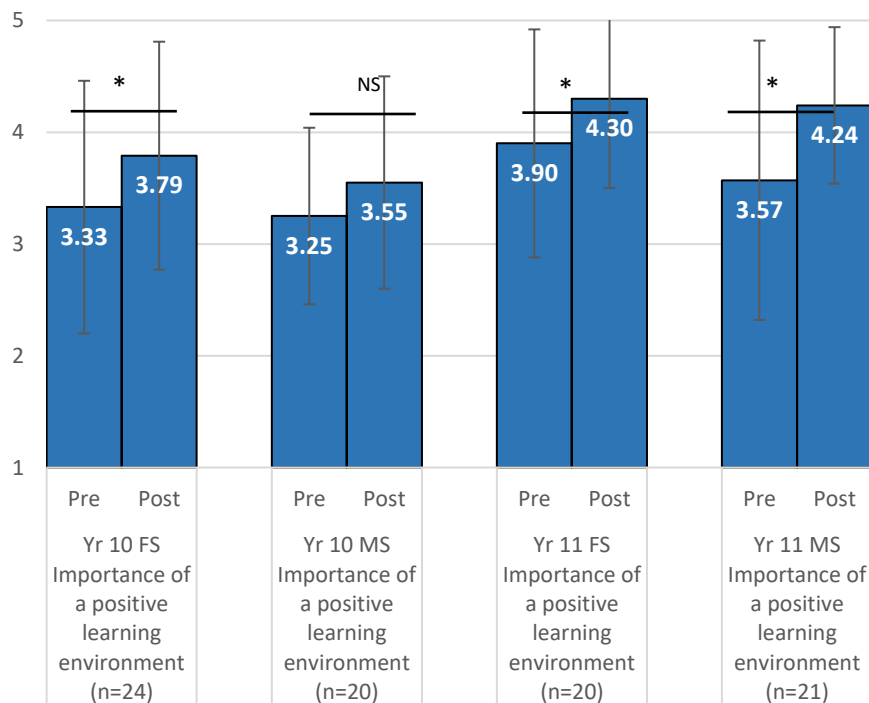Figure 33: Session 2 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 34: Session 2 – Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

Session 4: Strategies for success

Seventy-eight students completed a pre and post survey for session four. Students were asked four questions based on the learning outcomes at the start of the session and then again at the end:

- How often do you take time to do things that will help maintain a positive wellbeing?
- Thinking about times that you might feel under stress, how good are you at identifying what causes you to be stressed?
- How confident are you that you have the knowledge to be able to identify effective ways of managing stress?
- How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to create a workable revision plan that focuses on key topics?

All students

Overall, students reported being more confident about identifying effective ways of managing stress and their ability to create a revision plan and were more positive at the end of the session that they would focus on their wellbeing and now knew identifying the causes of stress. The difference between the mean score for each of the questions from pre to post session were statistically significant. Tables 29 to 31 show the mean scores pre and post session and figures 35 and 36 show the same data in chart format.

Table 29: Session 4 – Q1 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How often do you take time to do things that will help maintain a positive wellbeing? (n = 78)	2.95	3.73	+ 0.78

NB: scale = 1 is 'never' to 5 is 'very often'

Table 30: Session 4 – Q2 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How good are you at identifying what causes you to be stressed? (n = 77)	2.94	3.78	+ 0.84

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very good'

Table 31: Session 4 – Q3 and 4 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the knowledge to be able to identify effective ways of managing stress? (n = 76)	2.61	3.37	+ 0.76
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to create a workable revision plan that focuses on key topics? (n= 76)	2.51	3.26	+ 0.75

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'
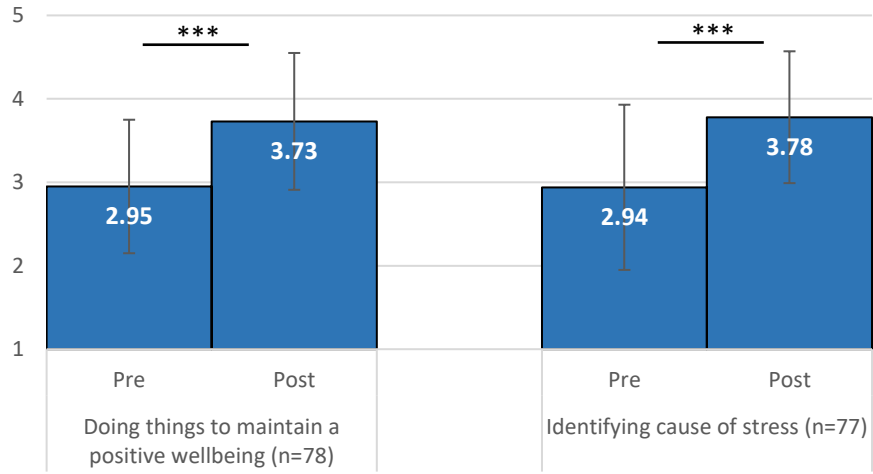
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 35: Session 4 – Q1 and Q2 all students mean score pre and post session.
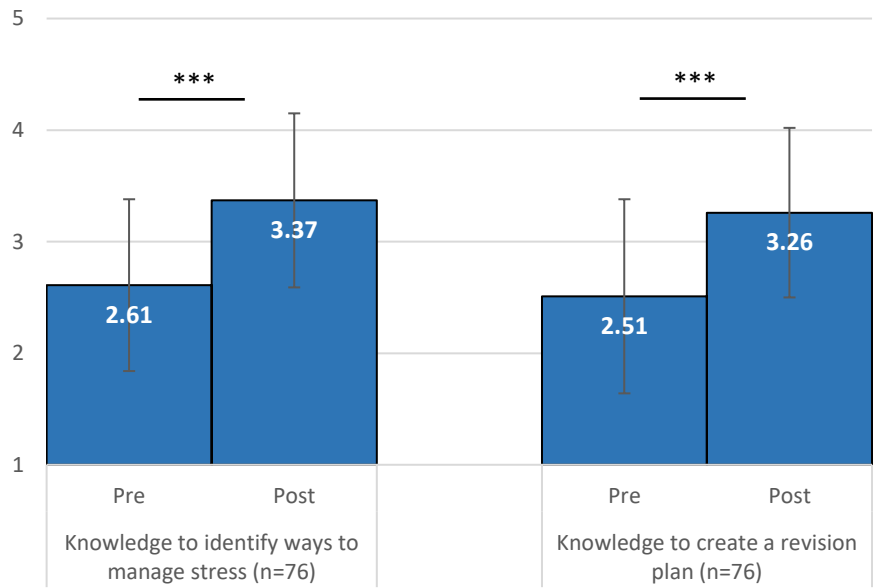
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 36: Session 4 – Q3 and Q4 all students mean score pre and post session.

For both year groups all changes between pre and post were positive and statistically significant. The differences between the post session scores for Years 10 and 11 were not very pronounced for this session. Interestingly Year 10 students reported being better at managing stress than Year 11 students both before and after the session. Tables 32 to 34 show the mean scores pre and post session and figures 37 to 40 show the same data in chart format.

Table 32: Session 4 – Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Group	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How often do you take time to do things that will help maintain a positive wellbeing?	Year 10 (n=36)	2.78	3.67	+ 0.89
	Year 11 (n=42)	3.10	3.79	+ 0.69

NB: scale = 1 is 'never' to 5 is 'very often'

Table 33: Session 4 – Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Group	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How good are you at identifying what causes you to be stressed?	Year 10 (n=35)	2.94	3.77	+ 0.83
	Year 11 (n=42)	2.93	3.79	+ 0.86

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very good'

Table 34: Session 4 – Q3 and Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Group	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the knowledge to be able to identify effective ways of managing stress?	Year 10 (n=35)	2.63	3.51	+ 0.88
	Year 11 (n=41)	2.59	3.24	+ 0.65
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to create a workable revision plan that focuses on key topics?	Year 10 (n=35)	2.46	3.26	+ 0.80
	Year 11 (n=41)	2.56	3.27	+ 0.71

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'
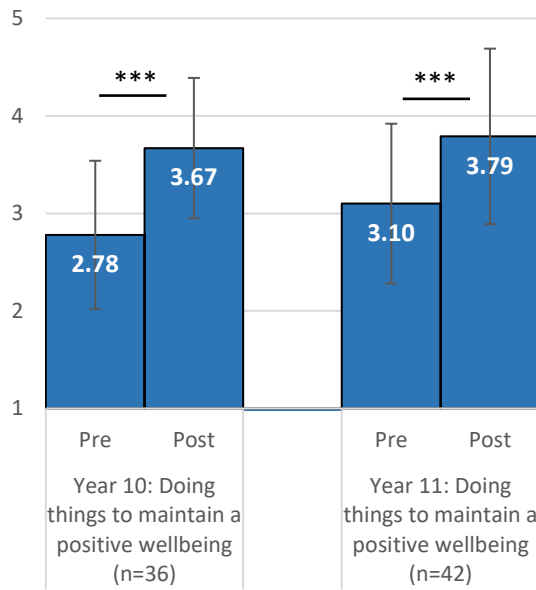
Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 37: Session 4 – Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group.
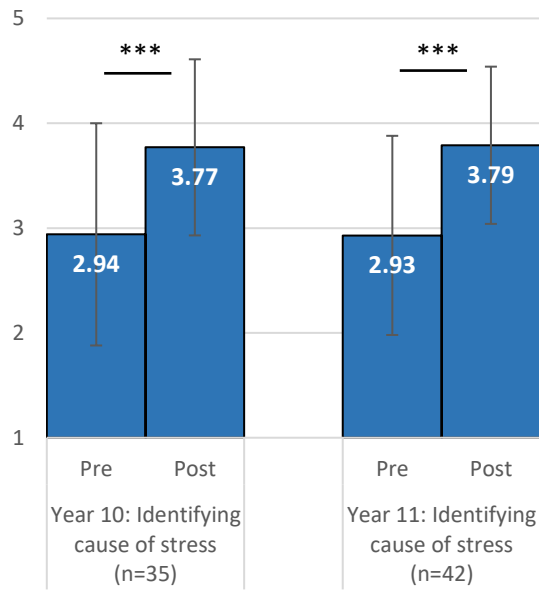
Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 38: Session 4 – Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.
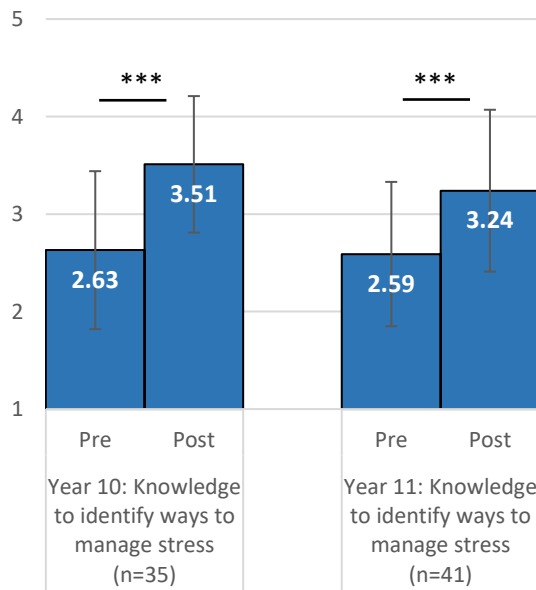
Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 39: Session 4 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group.
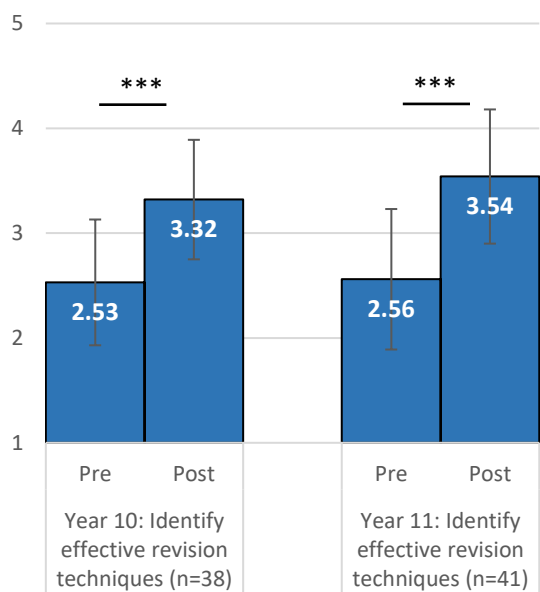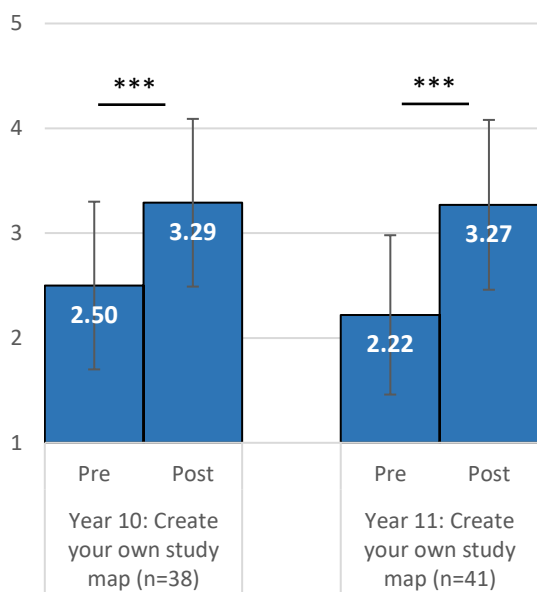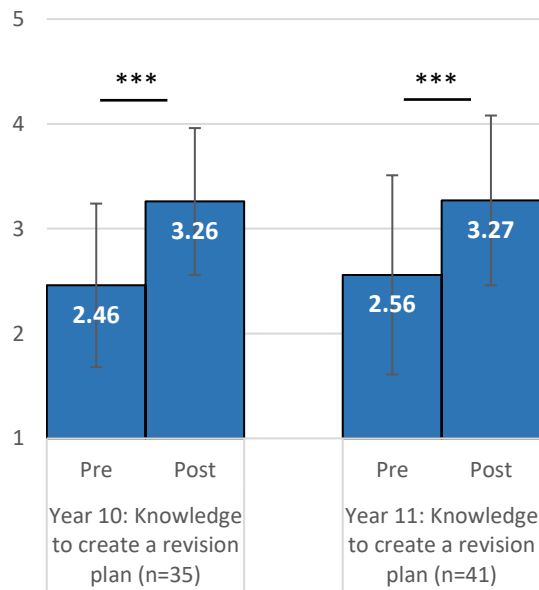

Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 40: Session 4 – Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group.

By year group and gender

For both female and male students in Year 10 and 11, all changes between the pre and post session score were positive and statistically significant. Year 10 students' scores followed the same pattern for all four questions: male students' scores both at the beginning and end of the session were higher than female students', however the difference travelled was greater for female students. This was similar for Year 11 were the difference between the pre and post session scores were greatest for female students in three of the four questions. Male students scored the highest post session score in three of the four questions but again, this was from a higher baseline. Table 36 to 40 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 41 to 44 show the same data in chart format.

Table 35: Session 4 – Year 10 Q1 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How often do you take time to do things that will help maintain a positive wellbeing?	Female (n=21)	2.52	3.57	+ 1.05
	Male (n=15)	3.13	3.80	+ 0.67

NB: scale = 1 is 'never' to 5 is 'very often'

Table 36: Session 4 – Year 10 Q2 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How good are you at identifying what causes you to be stressed?	Female (n=20)	2.60	3.65	+ 1.05
	Male (n=15)	3.40	3.93	+ 0.53

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very good'

Table 37: Session 4 – Year 10 Q3 and Q4 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the knowledge to be able to identify effective ways of managing stress?	Female (n=20)	2.40	3.40	+ 1.00
	Male (n=15)	2.93	3.67	+ 0.74
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to create a workable revision plan that focuses on key topics?	Female (n=20)	2.35	3.25	+ 0.90
	Male (n=15)	2.60	3.27	+ 0.67

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

Table 38: Session 4 – Year 11 Q1 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How often do you take time to do things that will help maintain a positive wellbeing?	Female (n=22)	3.09	3.91	+ 0.82
	Male (n=20)	3.10	3.65	+ 0.55

NB: scale = 1 is 'never' to 5 is 'very often'

Table 39: Session 4 – Year 11 Q2 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How good are you at identifying what causes you to be stressed?	Female (n=22)	2.77	3.73	+ 0.96
	Male (n=20)	3.10	3.85	+ 0.75

NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very good'

Table 40: Session 4 – Year 11 Q3 and Q4 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you that you have the knowledge to be able to identify effective ways of managing stress?	Female (n=21)	2.52	3.10	+ 0.58
	Male (n=20)	2.65	3.40	+ 0.75
How confident are you that you have the knowledge needed to be able to create a workable revision plan that focuses on key topics?	Female (n=21)	2.52	3.24	+ 0.72
	Male (n=20)	2.60	3.30	+ 0.70

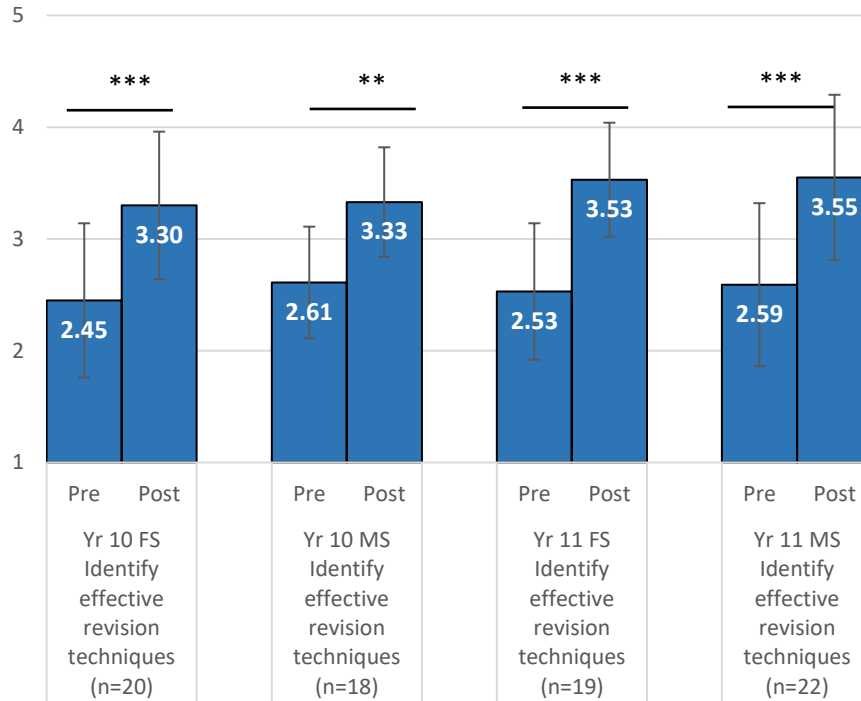NB: scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'
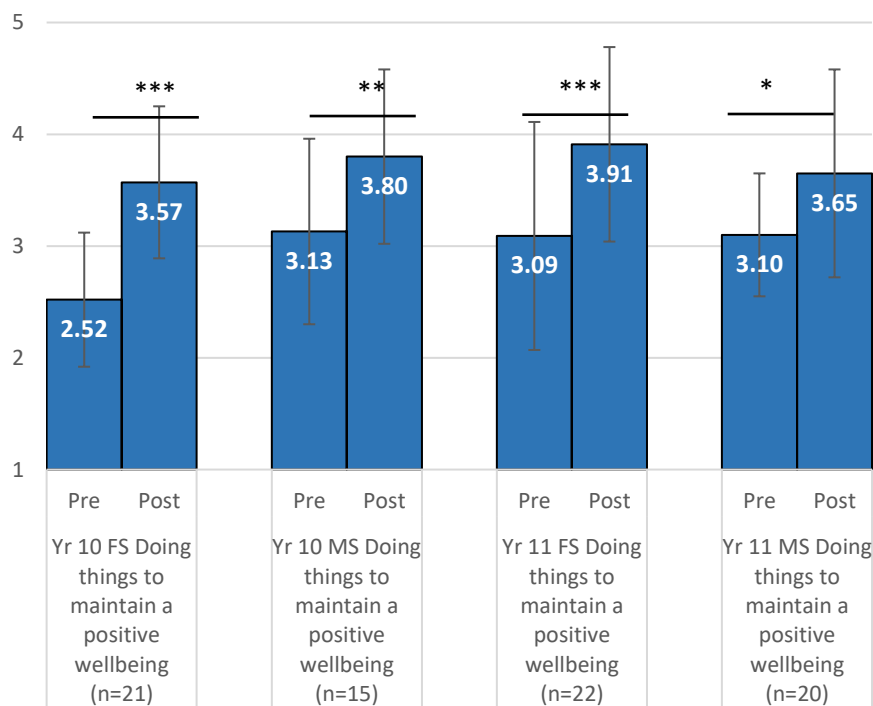
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 41: Session 4 – Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
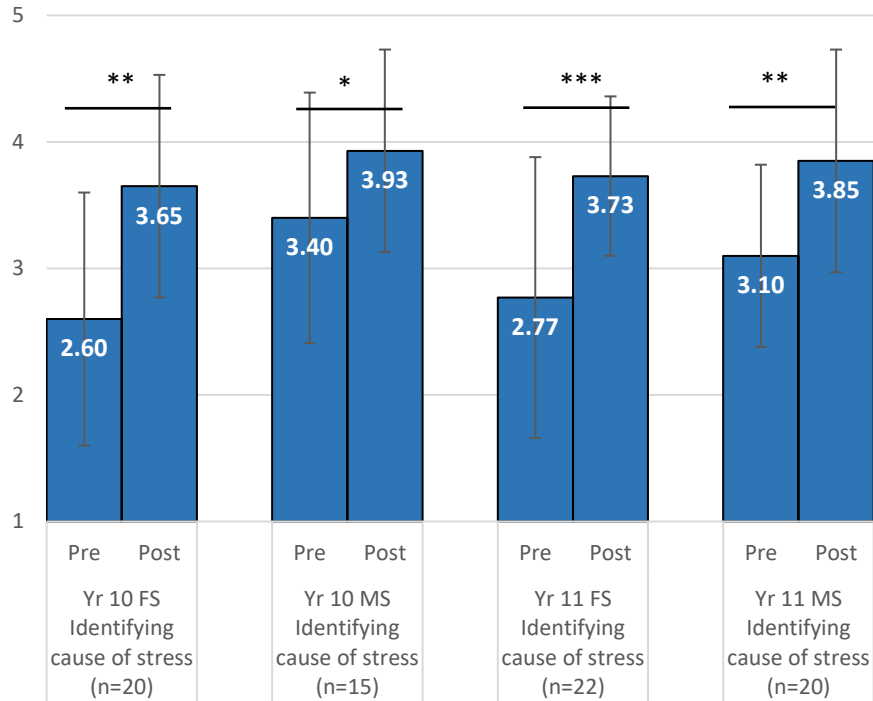
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 42: Session 4 – Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
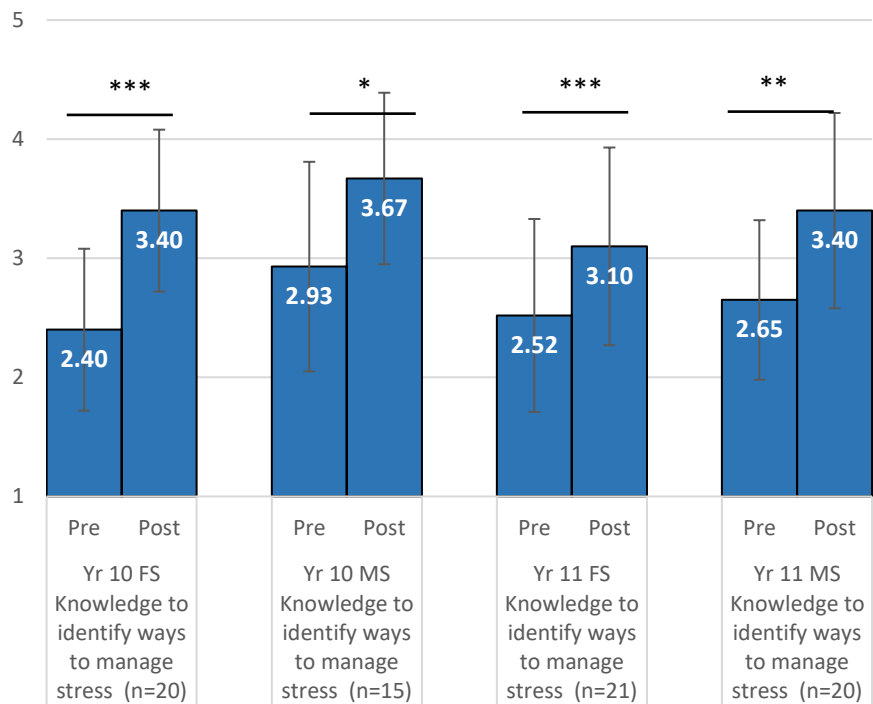
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

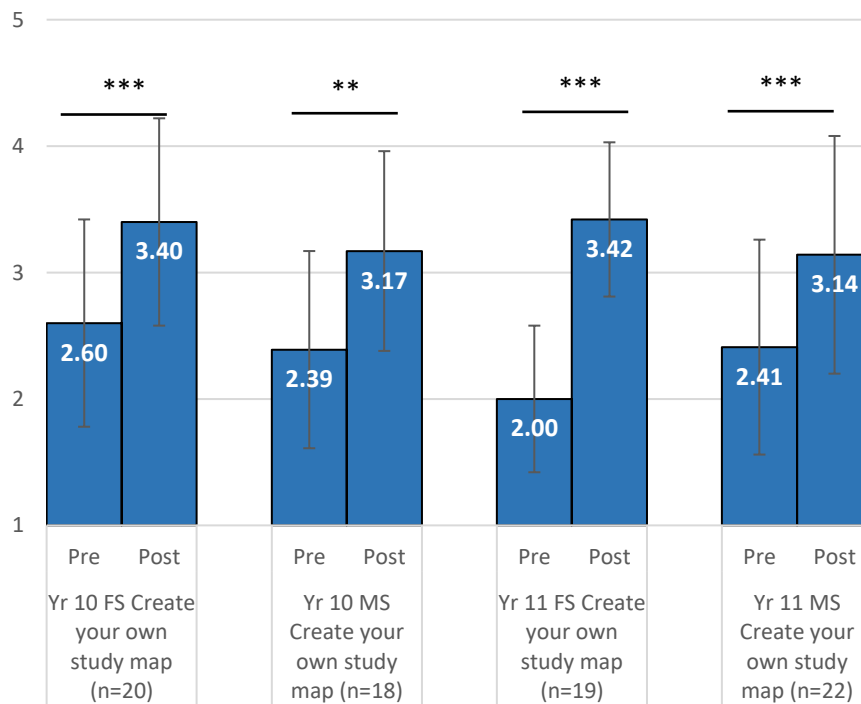Figure 43: Session 4 – Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
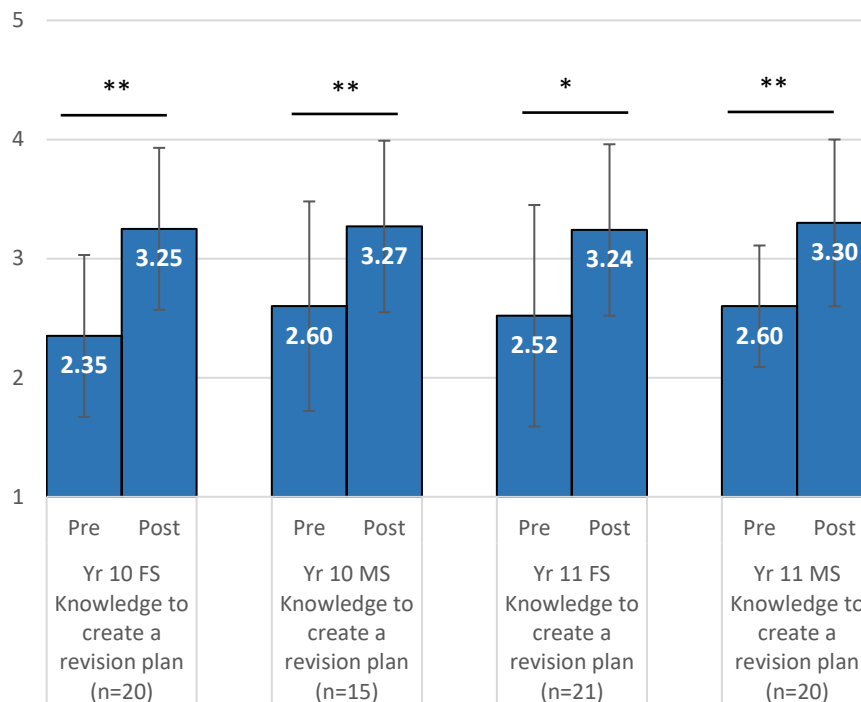
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 44: Session 4 – Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

Session 5: Exam preparation and techniques

Eighty-one students completed a pre and post survey for session five. Students were asked four questions based on the learning outcomes at the start of the session and then again at the end:

- How aware are you of the different strategies available to help answer exam questions effectively?
- How confident are you to be able to identify command words in an exam question?
- How confident are you to be able to identify content words in an exam question?
- How confident are you to be able to allocate your time effectively in an exam?

All students

Overall, students reported being more confident about their ability to identify command and content words in an exam paper and that they could allocate their time effectively during an exam by the end of the session. They were also much more aware of the different strategies they could use to answer exam questions effectively. The difference between the mean score for each of the questions from pre to post session were statistically significant. Tables 41 and 42 show the mean scores pre and post session and figures 45 and 46 show the same data in chart format.

Table 41: Session 5 – Q1 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How aware are you of the different strategies available to help answer exam questions effectively? (n = 77)	2.86	4.12	+ 1.26

NB: Scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very aware'

Table 42: Session 5 – Q3 to Q4 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you to be able to identify command words in an exam question? (n=81)	2.78	3.79	+ 1.01
How confident are you to be able to identify content words in an exam question? (n=81)	2.69	3.58	+ 0.89
How confident are you to allocate your time effectively in an exam? (n=81)	2.54	3.43	+ 0.89

NB: Scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'
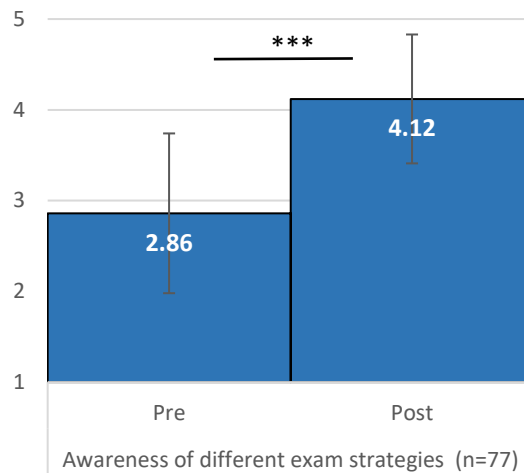
Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 45: Session 5 all students Q1 mean score pre and post session.
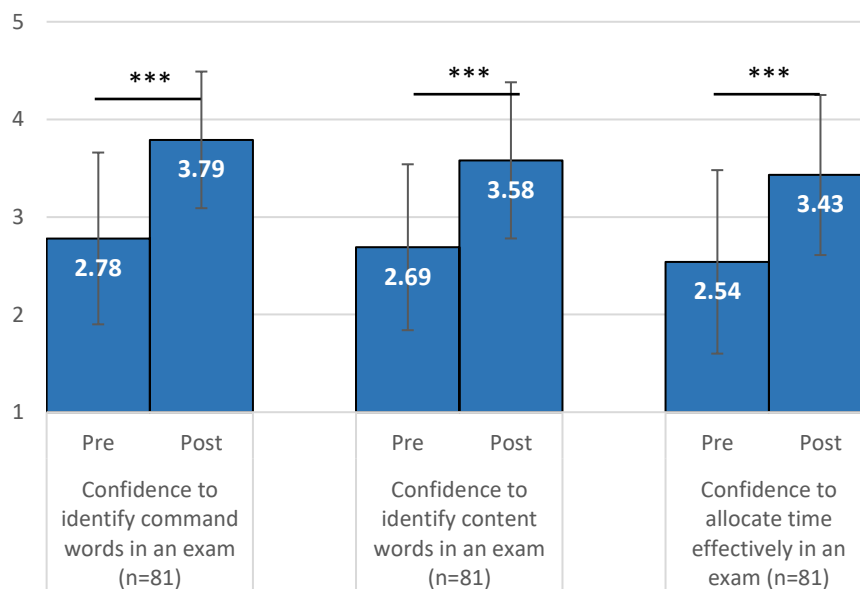
Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 46: Session 5 Q2 to 4 mean score pre and post session.

By year group

For both year groups all changes between pre and post session were positive and statistically significant. Year 11 students were more positive than the Year 10s at the end of the session for all four questions (the difference between Year 10 and 11 was statistically significant for questions 1 to 3). Tables 43 and 44 show the mean scores pre and post session and figures 47 to 50 show the same data in chart format.

Table 43: Session 5 – Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Group	Mean pre-session* (SD)	Mean post session* (SD)	Difference
How aware are you of the different strategies available to help answer exam questions effectively?	Year 10 (n=40)	2.72	3.95	+ 1.23
	Year 11 (n=37)	3.00	4.30	+ 1.30

NB: Scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very aware'

Table 44: Session 5 – Q2, Q3 and Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Year Group	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you to be able to identify command words in an exam question?	Year 10 (n=41)	2.49	3.61	+ 1.12
	Year 11 (n=40)	3.08	3.97	+ 0.89
How confident are you to be able to identify content words in an exam question?	Year 10 (n=41)	2.59	3.37	+ 0.78
	Year 11 (n=40)	2.80	3.80	+ 1.00
How confident are you to allocate your time effectively in an exam?	Year 10 (n=41)	2.37	3.34	+ 0.97
	Year 11 (n=40)	2.72	3.53	+ 0.81

NB: Scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'
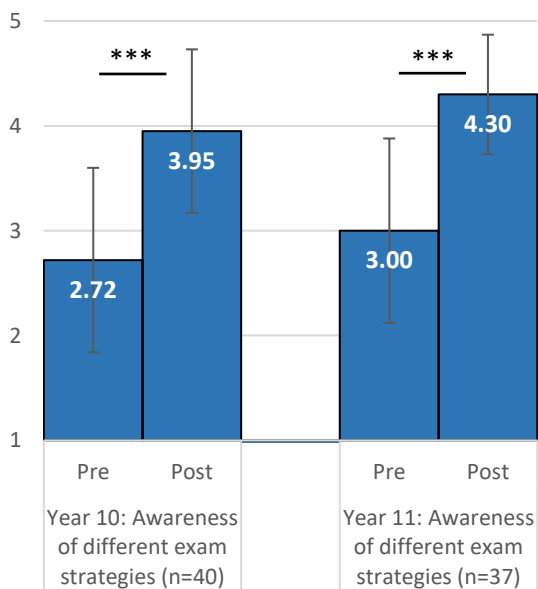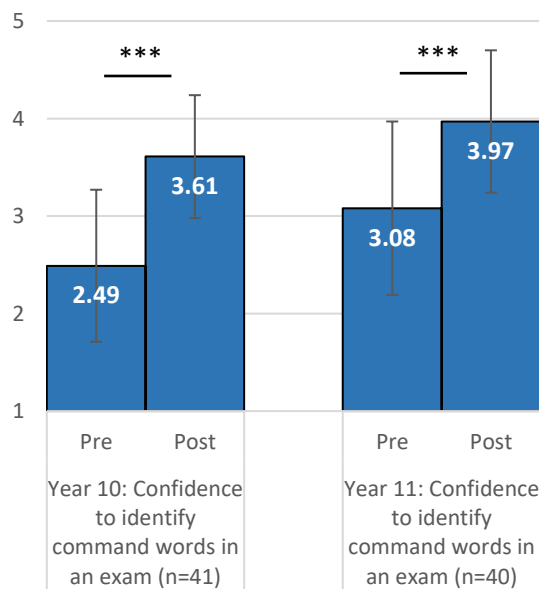
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 47: Session 5 Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 48: Session 5 Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.
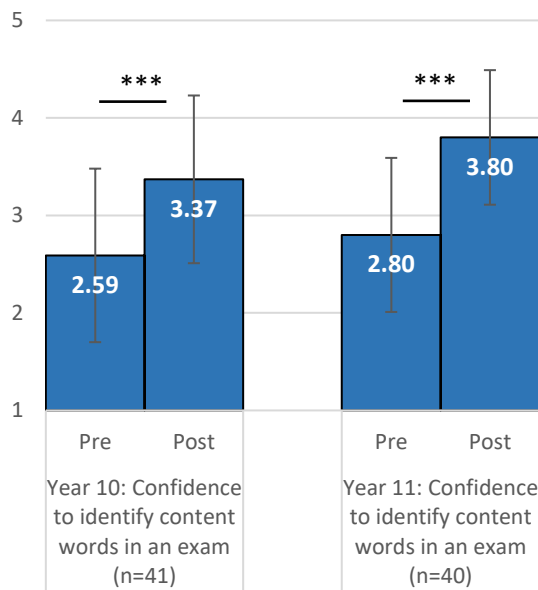
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 49: Session 5 Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.
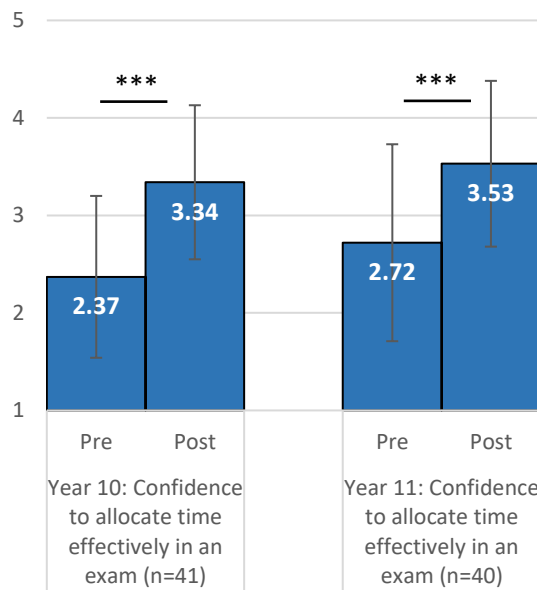
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 50: Session 5 Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.

By year group and gender

For both female and male students in Year 10 and 11, all changes between the pre and post session score were positive and statistically significant. Year 10 students' scores followed the same pattern as the previous session: male students' scores both at the beginning and end of the session were higher than female students' for all questions, however the difference travelled was greater for female students. There was no particular pattern for this session Year 11, for two of the questions male students were more confident and equally for the other two the female students were more confident. Table 45 to 48 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 51 to 54 show the same data in chart format.

Table 45: Session 5 – Year 10 Q1 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How aware are you of the different strategies available to help answer exam questions effectively?	Female (n=21)	2.57	3.86	+ 1.29
	Male (n=19)	2.89	4.05	+ 1.16

NB: Scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very aware'

Table 46: Session 5 – Year 10 Q2, Q3 and Q4 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you to be able to identify command words in an exam question?	Female (n=22)	2.41	3.55	+1.14
	Male (n=19)	2.58	3.68	+ 1.10
How confident are you to be able to identify content words in an exam question?	Female (n=22)	2.41	3.27	+ 0.86
	Male (n=19)	2.79	3.47	+ 0.68
How confident are you to allocate your time effectively in an exam?	Female (n=22)	2.18	3.27	+ 1.09
	Male (n=19)	2.58	3.42	+ 0.84

NB: Scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'

Table 47: Session 5 – Year 11 Q1 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How aware are you of the different strategies available to help answer exam questions effectively?	Female (n=16)	2.87	4.38	+ 1.51
	Male (n=21)	3.10	4.24	+ 1.14

NB: Scale = 1 is 'not at all' to 5 is 'very aware'

Table 48: Session 5 – Year 11 Q2, Q3 and Q4 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
How confident are you to be able to identify command words in an exam question?	Female (n=19)	3.00	3.84	+ 0.84
	Male (n=21)	3.14	4.10	+ 0.96
How confident are you to be able to identify content words in an exam question?	Female (n=19)	2.53	3.74	+ 1.21
	Male (n=21)	3.05	3.86	+ 0.81
How confident are you to allocate your time effectively in an exam?	Female (n=19)	2.84	3.58	+ 0.74
	Male (n=21)	2.62	3.48	+ 0.86

NB: Scale = 1 is 'not at all confident' to 5 is 'very confident'
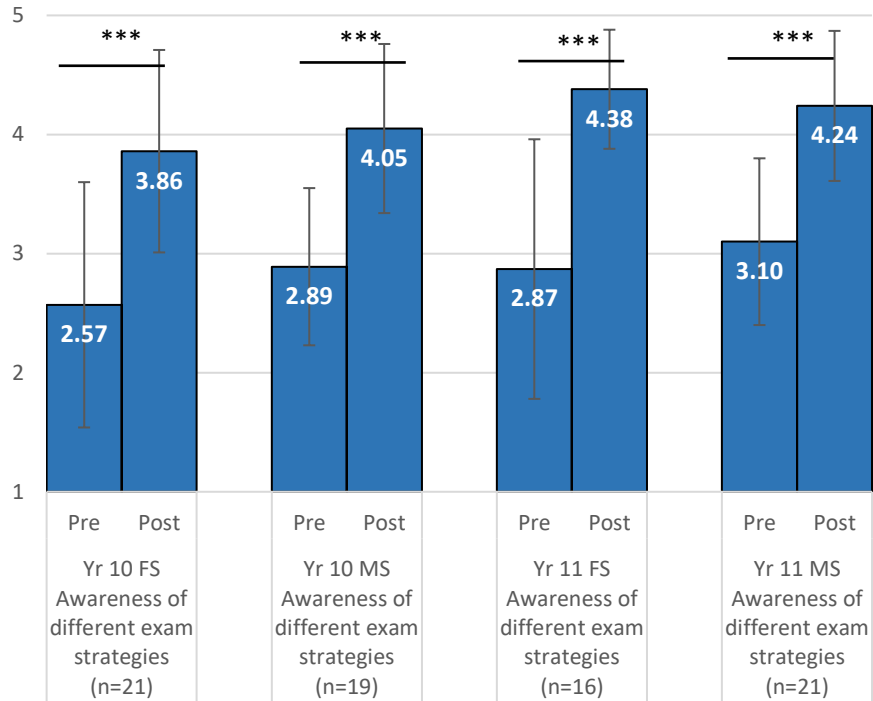
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 51: Session 5 Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
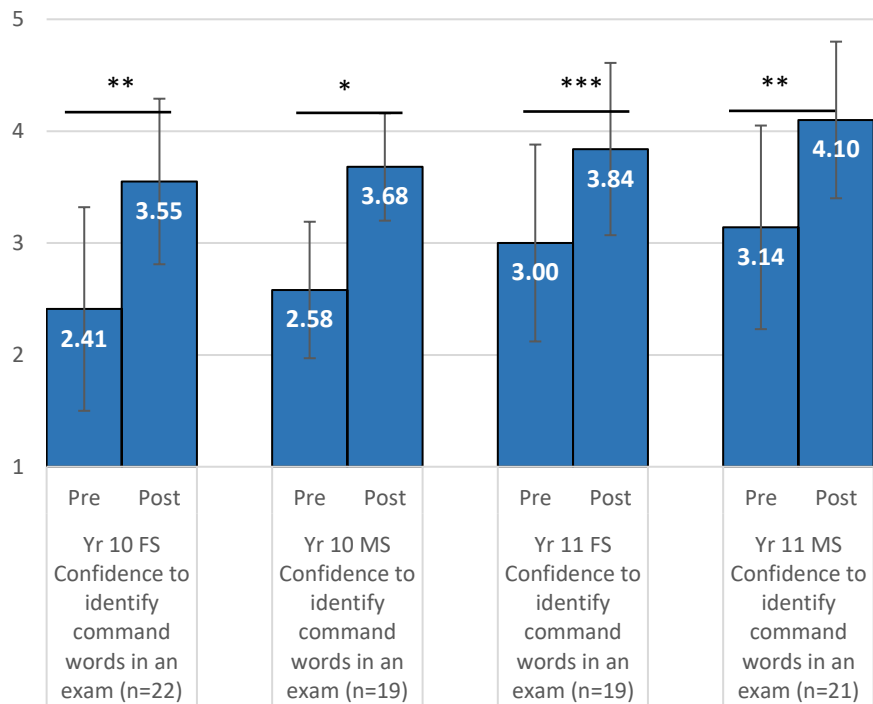
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, NS=not significant

Figure 52: Session 5 Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
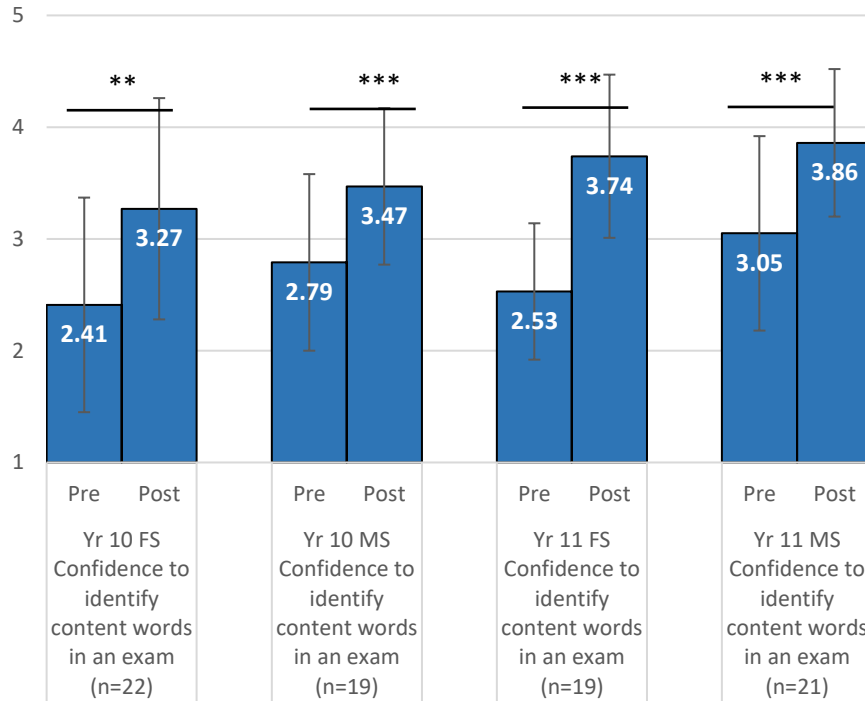
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 53: Session 5 Q3 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
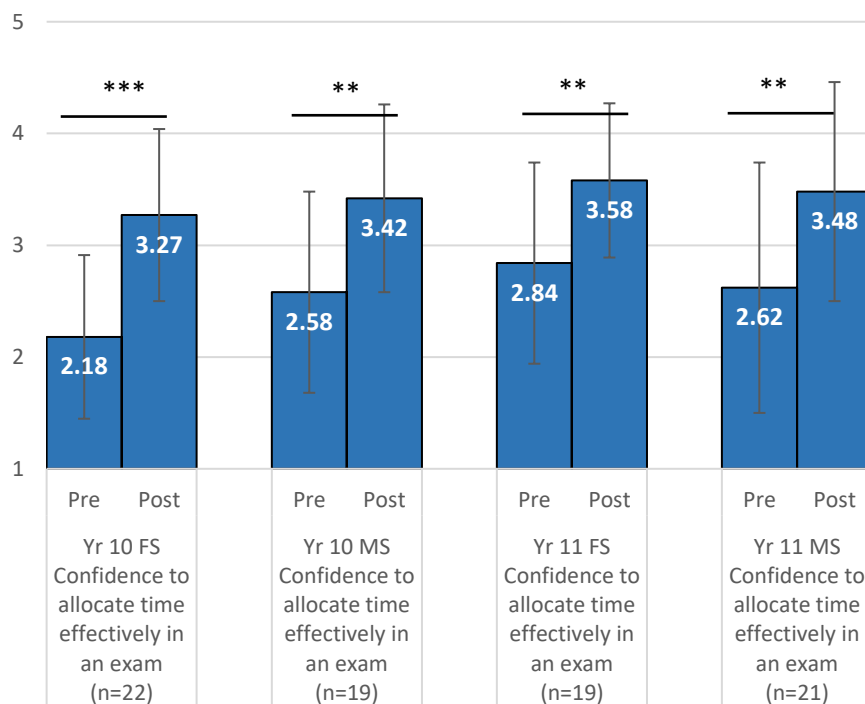
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 54: Session 5 Q4 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

Session 6: Focus on the future

Seventy-eight students completed a pre and post survey for session six. Students were asked two questions based on the learning outcomes at the start of the session and then again at the end:

- I have heard of SMART targets and know how to apply them
- I have a good understanding of how SMART targets can support effective goal setting

All students

Overall, students appeared either to have not heard of SMART targets or only to be vaguely aware of them at the start of the session. This session recorded the largest distance travelled between pre and post session scores and the differences were statistically significant. Table 49 show the mean scores pre and post session and figure 55 show the same data in chart format.

Table 49: Session 6 – Q1 and Q2 all students mean score pre and post session.

Question	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
I have heard of SMART targets and know how to apply them (n = 82)	2.09	3.89	+ 1.80
I have a good understanding of how SMART targets can support effective goal setting (n = 82)	2.12	3.90	+ 1.78

NB: scale = 1 is 'strongly disagree' to 5 is 'strongly agree'
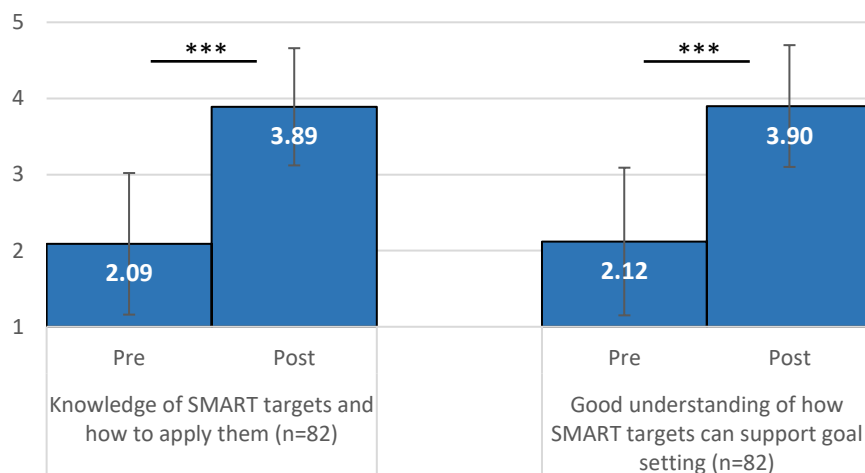
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 55: Session 6 all students Q1 and Q2 mean score pre and post session.

By year group

For both year groups all changes between pre and post session were positive and statistically significant. Year 11 students were more positive than the Year 10s at the start and end of the session for both questions and travelled the furthest (the difference between Year 10 and 11 post session score was statistically significant for question 2). Table 50 shows the mean scores pre and post session and figures 56 to 57 show the same data in chart format.

Table 50: Session 6 – Q1 and Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
I have heard of SMART targets and know how to apply them	Year 10 (n=40)	2.03	3.77	+ 1.74
	Year 11 (n=42)	2.14	4.00	+ 1.86
I have a good understanding of how SMART targets can support effective goal setting	Year 10 (n=40)	2.05	3.70	+ 1.65
	Year 11 (n=42)	2.19	4.10	+ 1.91

NB: scale = 1 is 'strongly disagree' to 5 is 'strongly agree'
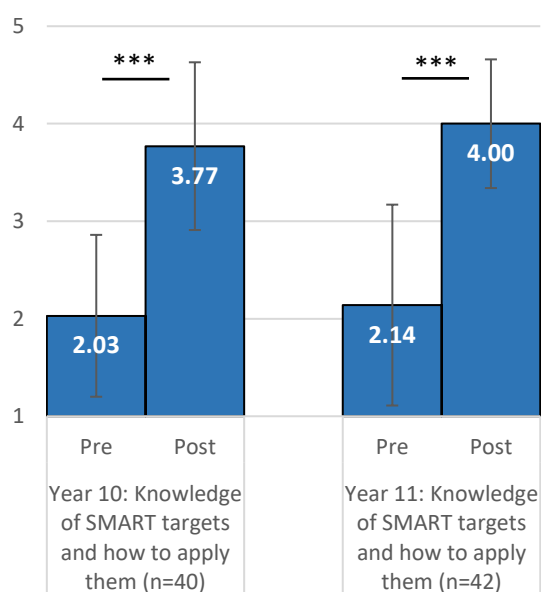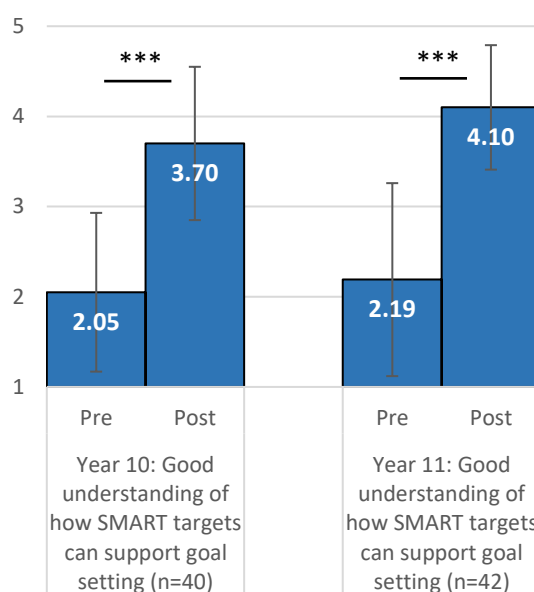
Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 56: Session 6 Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group.

Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 57: Session 6 Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group.

By year and gender

For both female and male students in Year 10 and 11, all changes between the pre and post session score were positive and statistically significant. Both Year 10 and 11 male students started the session with a higher score than female students and ended the session similarly. Tables 51 and 52 show the mean scores pre and post and figures 58 to 59 show the same data in chart format.

Table 51: Session 6 – Year 10 Q1 and Q2 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
I have heard of SMART targets and know how to apply them	Female (n=23)	1.87	3.70	+ 1.83
	Male (n=17)	2.24	3.88	+ 1.64
I have a good understanding of how SMART targets can support effective goal setting	Female (n=23)	2.00	3.61	+ 1.61
	Male (n=17)	2.12	3.82	+ 1.70

NB: scale = 1 is 'strongly disagree' to 5 is 'strongly agree'

Table 52: Session 6 – Year 11: Q1 & Q2 mean score pre and post session by gender.

Question	Gender	Mean pre-session	Mean post session	Difference
I have heard of SMART targets and know how to apply them	Female (n=23)	2.04	3.96	+ 1.92
	Male (n=19)	2.26	4.05	+ 1.79
I have a good understanding of how SMART targets can support effective goal setting	Female (n=23)	2.13	4.00	+ 1.87
	Male (n=19)	2.19	4.10	+ 1.91

NB: scale = 1 is 'strongly disagree' to 5 is 'strongly agree'
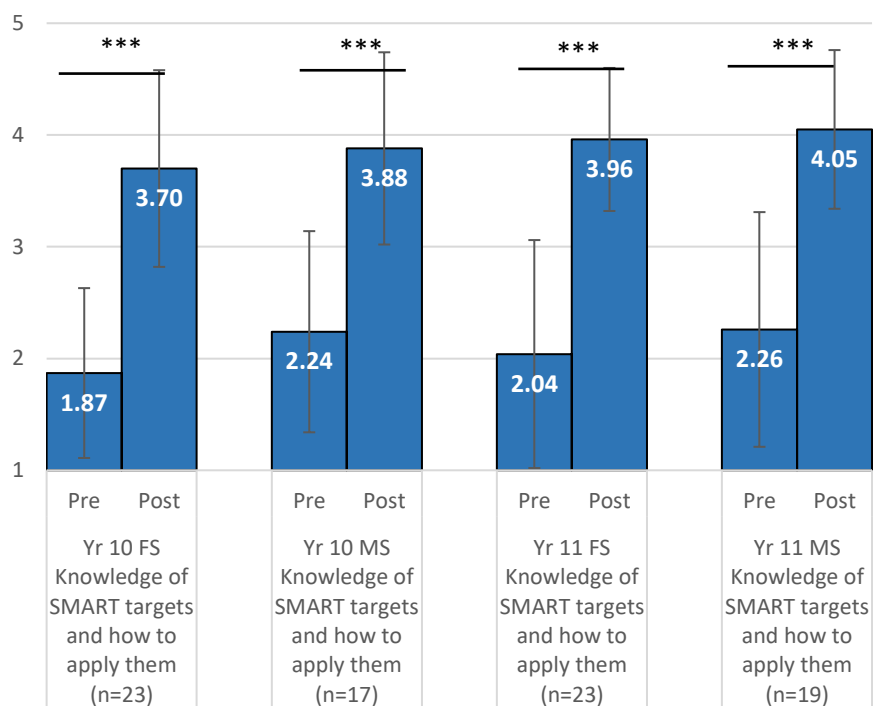
FS/MS = female and male students; Error bars show standard deviation; ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, NS=not significant

Figure 58: Session 6 Q1 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.
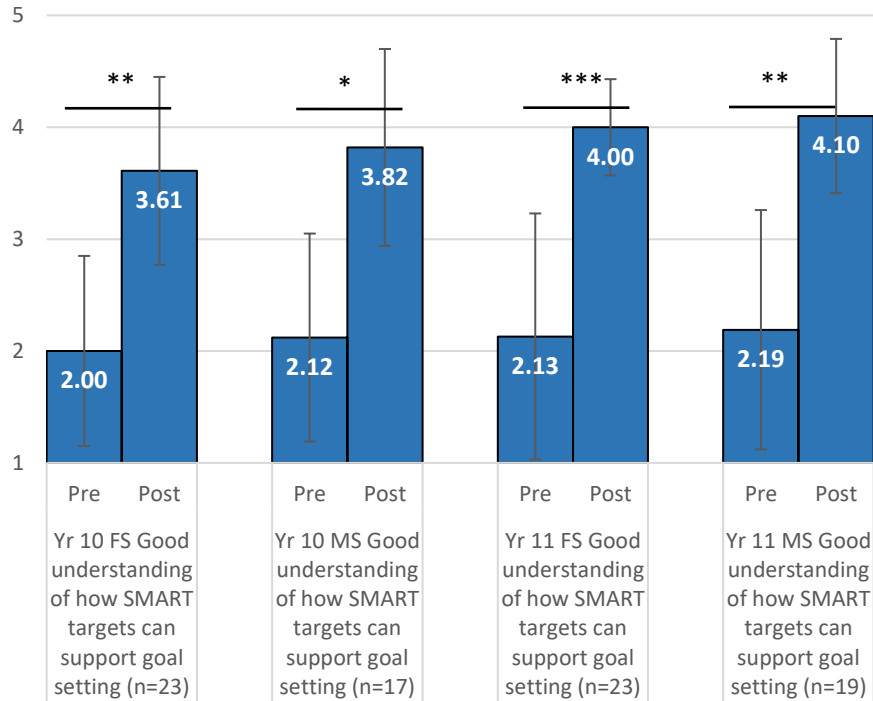
Figure 59: Session 6 Q2 mean score pre and post session by year group and gender.

End of programme reflections

As this was the final masterclass session, students were asked to indicate how much the overall programme had helped improve certain skills:

- Becoming an effective independent learner
- Developing increased motivation
- Developing resilience in managing workload and exam stress
- Knowing your own learning style and using that to identify study and revision techniques
- Ability to prepare a revision plan
- An awareness of the skills needed to help plan for the future

Year 11 students were more positive about the extent the programme had helped them improve on the skills listed than the Year 10 students were. Overall, the proportion of students that said the programme had not helped them with a particular skill was low. However, a large proportion of Year 10 students didn't feel the programme had particularly helped with developing resilience in managing workload and exam stress or developing increased motivation, 45.0% and 35.0% respectively said it had not helped or had only helped them a little.

Becoming an independent learner

	Has not helped	Helped a little	A moderate amount	Helped a lot	Helped a great deal
Year 10 (n=40)	8%	18%	55%	18%	
Year 11 (n=43)		16%	40%	37%	5%

Developing increased motivation

	Has not helped	Helped a little	A moderate amount	Helped a lot	Helped a great deal
Year 10 (n=40)	10%	25%	23%	35%	8%
Year 11 (n=43)	12%	14%	30%	33%	12%

Developing resilience managing workload and exam stress

	Has not helped	Helped a little	A moderate amount	Helped a lot	Helped a great deal
Year 10 (n=40)	13%	33%	28%	23%	5%
Year 11 (n=43)	5%	21%	35%	33%	7%

Figure 60: Skills improved through the whole programme part 1.

Knowing your own learning style

	Has not helped	Helped a little	A moderate amount	Helped a lot	Helped a great deal
Year 10 (n=40)		10%	38%	40%	10%
Year 11 (n=43)	7%	7%	26%	44%	16%

Ability to prepare a revision plan

	Has not helped	Helped a little	A moderate amount	Helped a lot	Helped a great deal
Year 10 (n=40)		20%	35%	35%	8%
Year 11 (n=43)	5%	12%	30%	37%	16%

Awareness of skills to plan for the future

	Has not helped	Helped a little	A moderate amount	Helped a lot	Helped a great deal
Year 10 (n=40)	5%	18%	38%	33%	8%
Year 11 (n=43)	5%	12%	30%	44%	9%

Figure 61: Skills improved through the whole programme part 2.

Finally, students were asked how useful the programme was overall and how likely they would be to recommend the programme to friends/other students at their school (scales were 1 to 5 from 'not at all useful' to 'very useful' and 'not at all likely' to 'very likely'). Overall, Year 11 students were slightly more positive about the programme than Year 10, but this difference was not statistically significant. Similarly, Year 11s were slightly more likely to recommend the programme to friends or to other students.
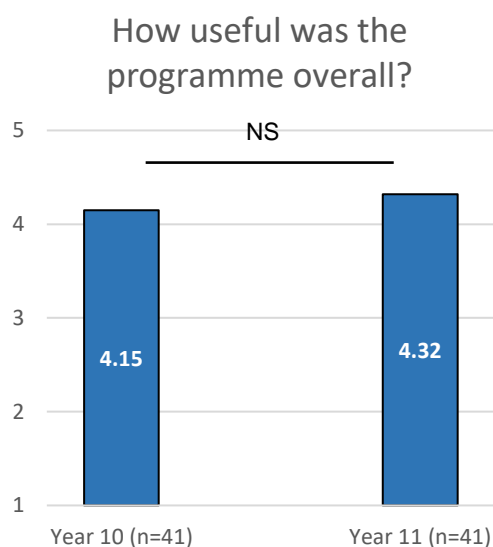
Figure 62: How useful was the programme by year group.
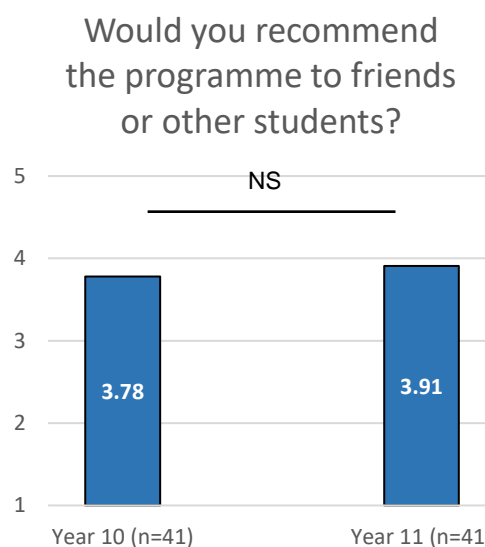
Figure 63: Would you recommend the programme by year group.

4. Qualitative findings: student focus groups and Careers Lead interviews

The student focus groups took place during March and April 2024, with Year 10 and 11 students that had been on the SSMP when delivery had been completed, but not necessarily after the campus visit. The impact of campus visits has been well documented in previous evaluation reports to LiNCHigher and was therefore not the focus of this evaluation. Just two of the case study schools, Schools A and C, had had a campus visit by the time the focus groups took place; one at the start of the programme and one at the end. The students that attended the focus groups were asked what they had enjoyed and not enjoyed, what they had learnt, how useful they had found the resource pack and session worksheets and if they had any suggestions for improving the programme. Students were also asked about the five NERUPI framework learning outcomes for the programme.

Where students were reluctant to talk, (which was the case with one group in particular) the students were asked to discuss the evaluation questions in pairs and write down their answers. These were then collected in at the end of the session and written up.

Not all students selected for the programme attended their focus group session. Some were absent from school on the day the focus group ran and some simply did not turn up. In total the evaluation team spoke to 81 (out of a possible 100) students: 34 males and 47 females; 37 Year 10s and 44 Year 11s. The number of students that attended the focus groups by case study school and year group are detailed in table 53.

Table 53: Number of students that attended the focus groups by case study school.

	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Year 10	-	6	5	8	10	8
Year 11	15	10	-	-	9	10
Total	**15**	**16**	**5**	**8**	**19**	**18**

In addition to the focus groups, qualitative data was collected via interviews with each of the six case study school Careers Leads and three members of LiNCHigher delivery staff. All focus groups, and interviews, were audio recorded, fully transcribed and then coded and analysed using NVivo.

What students enjoyed and did not enjoy about the programme overall

In general, students enjoyed the programme. They found it useful, sessions interactive, on the whole, and easy to understand. They enjoyed finding new and different ways to study and revise for their exams and learning new skills. They particularly liked the Lego duck and many of them still had the duck either in their school bags or at home. The LiNCHigher delivery staff also commented on how well the Lego ducks had been received by the students and that they had helped them to build their relationship with the students. The students at School C particularly valued being given the resource pack at the start of the programme commenting that:

> One of the best parts of it when they gave us the pack, it's like, they love telling you how to do it, but then you don't actually have the stuff to do it when they gave it to us. It was like, it allowed you to actually do what you'd like been told to do, or learn to do.

> (School C Yr 10 student)

Having someone from outside of the school deliver the sessions was also well received by most of the students, particularly one of the student groups from School A. They described the tutor that had delivered the sessions as "brilliant", "understanding" and a "gem". Student comments on why they enjoyed having someone external deliver the sessions included:

> She understood that she shouldn't be a teacher to us, she should teach, but be comfortable with us.

> (School A Yr 11 student)

> We got to know her and everything and I think it was like after each session, we got like more engaged with her. And I think that she was very helpful. She got us all engaged. And it was nice to like, know that we didn't have our teacher there, so we could all do our work.

> (School B Yr 10 student)

> [The teacher] was nice and kind she didn't like rush any of us to say anything.

> (School D Yr 10 student)

> I liked that it was just someone different, like it wasn't someone we see every day at school, it was someone else coming into the school to talk to us about stuff.

> (School E Yr 11 student)

All the students liked the small group approach of the programme. They found sessions to be quieter, less overwhelming, less disruptive and they said it made it easier to speak in the sessions compared to being in a large group of students. They felt small groups aided discussion and gave everyone in the group the chance to ask questions and put forward their views. It also helped them focus and they

felt more involved in the sessions. One student compared the difference between a 'Positively You' session delivered in the main hall to the whole year group with the SSMP small group sessions:

> *That one in the hall, you started talking to your friend because it's just so big, and there's just so much going on around you, you lose focus on what's actually going on, whereas in here that doesn't really happen.*

(School B Yr 11 student)

Their Careers Lead agreed with the students that small group delivery worked best. However, some of the Careers Leads felt slightly larger groups of 15, 20 or even 25 students would also work well, as did the LiNCHigher delivery staff.

Other student comments on small group delivery included:

> *I love the fact that it wasn't in a large group. I feel like if it was a large group, you'd have less chance to get to know people.*

(School A Yr 11 student 1)

> *When I'm in bigger group, it's harder to speak up and stuff like that because I get nervous speaking in front of people, but when it's in little groups I can get to know everyone and know that say maybe if I say a certain thing in front of one person, I'm not gonna get called a slob.*

(School A Yr 11 student 1)

> *I think it was a lot easier because we all had like our own opinions on things. Whereas if there was a lot of us, not everyone would have their own say. So, I think it was nice that we all had a turn each to say something.*

(School B Yr 10 student)

> *I do like the smaller group idea more because I think anxiety is like really induced when you're the only one speaking in a group of like, a lot, a lot of people in like an assembly or something like.*

(School E Yr 11 student)

> *There was more discussion when we're in a small group because everyone's a bit more comfortable, I think.*

(School F Yr 11 student)

There was very little about the programme that the students did not enjoy. Their main complaint was that they had been pulled out of other lessons to attend. School C students, particularly, did not like missing physical education (PE); the lesson most students were timetabled for. Students suggested that if they did have to miss a lesson it should be an option subject, rather than a core subject. The Year 11 students at School A did not like the fact the sessions were spaced out over a long period of time or that session times and dates were frequently changed. These students would have liked the sessions to have run fortnightly. The two groups of Year 11 students were also changed part-way through the programme, which they had found unsettling with one student commenting, "*I got comfortable with the group that we started with, and then I got shuffled about*". However, they recognised that most of these were issues with the school and not a fault with the programme itself.

The Year 11 students at School F did not really enjoy the first session because they did not really know why they were there and what the programme was all about, with one student stating: "*When you got into it more, we kind of expected what it was…but the first one we didn't really expect. we*

didn't know what to expect". They enjoyed subsequent sessions much more once they were familiar with the programme and the tutor.

Resources

Resource pack

The resource packs given to the students at the start of the programme were well received, especially the squishy star and the revision/flash cards which many of the students had subsequently used. The clear pencil case that they needed for exams and the stationary, particularly the sticky notes, were also welcomed. Comments on how they had been used included:

Squishy star:

> *It helps when you're really stressed, when you squeeze it, it likes makes you less distracted, because you're focused on it, it also focuses the work.*

> (School A Yr 11 student)

Revision flashcards:

> *They are pretty useful like for example, I use it for French. I put the French word on one side and on the other side I put the English word and my mum can say, "so what does this mean?"*

> (School A Yr 11 student)

> *I revised for this science test by using the flashcards to I write down like formulas and stuff.*

> (School B Yr 10 student)

General:

> *It came with like all the like the revision stuff and we got given like revision cards and everything that we needed to be able to like study at home and stuff.*

> (School B Yr 10 student)

Worksheets

The students found the worksheets used during the sessions easy to understand and follow, useful "at the time" and pitched at the "right level". Whilst some had subsequently lost them, many of the students still had the worksheets at home and some, particularly those from School F, said they would "definitely" refer back to them when it came to doing their exams.

Student views of, and learning from, individual sessions

Campus visit

At the time the focus groups were conducted, just two of the schools had taken up the offer of a campus visit as part of the programme: Schools A and C. Year 11 students from School A had visited the university at the start of the programme in September 2023 whilst the School C Year 10 students had visited at the end, in March 2024. However, just three of the five School C students that attended the focus group had also taken part in the campus visit, therefore feedback was limited. All but one of the students enjoyed the campus visit with a student from School A stating it was "*definitely the best part*" of the programme. They enjoyed looking around the campus, talking to the student ambassadors and receiving the course booklet. One student reflected on the experience:

Being able to talk to students who did it might like open views for people…I got information on where I could go to university for what I want to do, because one of the ambassadors takes what I want to take.

(School A Yr 11 student)

Even the students that had decided not to go to university found the visit useful and interesting with one commenting:

I never really thought of going to university, ever, so it was an eye opener just to see what it's all about. But I don't want to go to university. It really helped me to know what it's like to be in university.

(School A Yr 11 student)

The student who did not enjoy the visit felt it was a waste of time because most students had already decided not to go to university.

Session 1: Staying organised and motivated

Note, in each school all of the sessions were delivered by one designated member of LiNCHigher staff (with the exception of one session due to sickness) throughout the programme. It was felt that consistency was important for a defined programme to small groups of students such as SSMP.

This session was seen as helpful with most students learning how to better organise and prioritise their revision as well as being made aware of the importance of having a growth mindset. As a result of the session some had devised their own revision timetable, complete with built in breaks. The School A Year 11 students particularly, found the growth mindset aspect of the session both interesting and useful as this dialogue extract from the focus group shows:

Girl 1: It was very helpful for me because I didn't think I had a fixed mindset but when we went through like the examples, I realised that I did, and I need to change.

Boy 1: I was the same. Like I did have a pretty open mindset, but there was a couple of things that like helped out a lot with that session. Just like learning how to change your mindset if you need to. I think it was helpful.

Girl 2: I think it helped highlight what bits that I need to like, work on, which bits I need to be more open minded about, not using that fixed mindset.

(School A Yr 11 students)

However, one student, the same one that had not seen the point of the campus visit, disagreed. They did not find the session very helpful because, "*I just know I have a fixed mindset and a 15-minute session isn't' going to change it that much*".

Other positive comments about the session included:

Girl 1: It teaches you how to keep all your stuff organised and make a study guide.

Girl 2: And to keep days organised instead of rushing around to do everything.

(School D Yr 10 students)

The video made me plan and organise my schedule for revising which I find very useful.

(School E Yr 10 student)

I just feel like I know what I'm doing, if that makes any sense? Like, beforehand, I was like, "where do I even start?" And "how do I do this?" "How do I do that?" After these sessions, I feel like I actually have an idea of like what I'm actually meant to be doing.

(School E Yr 11 student)

Session 2: Creating a learning environment

This session was well received with many of the students making positive changes to their learning environment following the session, which they said was enabling them to study more effectively. Some had found tidying their study space had helped, some were now seeking out quiet spaces and some had actively removed as many distractions as possible, included their mobile phones, during study times. Some students found it more difficult to achieve their best learning environment than others, mainly those who had younger siblings at home, but following the session, they all agreed they had a greater aware of what worked best for them. Comments included:

I don't have a study environment, but I know like places I can go when I need one. And my main one is school because that is where I'm able to like sit down and actually use my brain but if I'm at home, it's too chaotic for me to actually think of anything.

(School A Yr 11 student)

Before I used to get really distracted like if I wasn't in the right place to like, study, then I knew that I wouldn't get anything done. But like after the session, I knew what was stopping me from doing that. And so like, I've tried to take away all the other distractions and stuff.

(School B Yr 10 student)

I've tried but it's very hard with two little siblings who just barge into your room.

(School D Yr 10 students)

I do two things; I study here but I also study Early Equine Management at my riding stables. So, I have to study a few different things sometimes. Because I work there on the weekends at the lunch I sit outside and just work on it. And then during like at the end of the school day, I'll go down to like the coffee shop or something and study there as well.

(School D Yr 10 students)

Like I always study in my room, right and to be honest with you, my room is just an absolute tip all the time but after the sessions where it's like, what was it "tidy space tidy mind" was like I began tidying up my room and I've noticed like I feel a lot better while studying.

(School E Yr 11 student)

I make more room and I kind of like tidy the area first because I don't know, it's just easier, it's more focused. So, I've done that. And then it's just like, my revising is quieter.

(School F Yr 11 student)

Session 3: Revision skills

Students liked finding out what type of learner they were, and that the session gave them a range of new revision techniques that they were then able to put into practice accordingly. Using revision cards, creating study maps and revising with a friend were popular strategies that they had adopted following

the session. Students at School B enjoyed the study star and School E students, particularly, liked the power hour technique. Both groups of students at School E had found these useful.

The Year 11 students from School F liked the images that accompanied the session showing the different revision techniques available to them.

> *They had like pictures on the board so you could really see like, instead of all words, it was pictures so you can actually see the different techniques and it was really helpful because then you could pinch their ideas.*

<div align="right">(School F Yr 11 student)</div>

Other comments on the usefulness of the session included:

> *I mean, it's like whatever works better for you. Some people find mind maps or flashcards, or I forget what it's called, but you'd read everything you've got to read, write what you can remember on the paper, then read it back. And then just repeat that until you've got as much as you can down.*

<div align="right">(School D Yr 10 student)</div>

> *The third session was useful as it helped find new revision techniques and presented a good enough variety so that you can find the best one for you.*

<div align="right">(School E Yr 10 student)</div>

> *Revision skills helped me understand how I study best and how to organise my day to fit revising in using power hour and revision maps.*

<div align="right">(School E Yr 10 student)</div>

> *Where you choose a past paper, revise it and then do a question around that and then get your teacher or someone to mark it, or look at the mark scheme to see where you need improving.*

<div align="right">(School E Yr 11 student)</div>

Session 4: Strategies for success

Most students felt this session had provided them with strategies to manage their stress levels and this had helped reduce how stressed they felt coming up to exams. Some had started to take regular breaks and plan these into their revision timetables and some saw the cross-over between this session and session two, creating a learning environment, with one Yr 10 student from School C commenting: "*It kind of comes into like the environments that you have as well, if you're in a better place, you won't be stressed about it.*" Other student comments about the session included:

> *Like take more breaks if you struggle staying still for so long. That if you can't sit in complete silence, put music on in the background or if you can work in dull lighting work in dull lighting because like bright light gives some people headaches.*

<div align="right">(School D Yr 10 students)</div>

> *I felt when I was going into my mock exams, "Oh wow. Like this is what it's gonna be like, I don't know what I'm doing. How am I going to do this?" But with the study it's like, "right, I know I can do this. I know how to do this. And do this". It's definitely helped relieve a lot of stress.*

<div align="right">(School E Yr 11 student)</div>

Session 5: Exam preparation and techniques

This session was popular with the students, they learnt a range of techniques that they had employed both in preparing for their exams and during the exam. For example, they commented that they now understood the importance of a good night's sleep and having a nutritious breakfast, taking regular breaks from revision, that they knew how to approach an exam and could identify the key action words in an exam question such as 'compare' and 'explain'. However, some students, in particular the Year 11 students from School A, said they already knew about the command and content words in questions and felt some of this information was "*common knowledge*". Some of the students from Schools B and C felt the techniques were more useful for some subjects than others, for example, English.

> *I think there were a few things on that. Like making sure you're prepared so that you're not stressed in the morning and like making sure to get a good night's sleep. A nice nutritious breakfast.*
>
> (School A Yr 11 student)

> *How you would organise your exam. Like first would you get in and get straight on with questions or would you get in make sure you've got your pencil case and your equipment?*
>
> (School D Yr 10 student)

> *It was more useful because when I look at the question now, I know what to look for. Like I can look at it and then pick out the key words so that I make sure that I've answered the question rather than just like going away and doing something random. Like I know what to do.*
>
> (School E Yr 11 student)

> *Always have your drink out when you're doing your exams. Then you're going to stay hydrated.*
>
> (School F Yr 10 student)

> *How to answer the question in an effective way. Like if you feel like you want to take the long questions first, it goes to the back and then you make it easier on yourself when you go through the paper.*
>
> (School F Yr 11 student)

Session 6: Focus on your future

Students found session six useful for them to begin to think about what they would like to do in the future and how best to get there. Whilst the Year 11 students from School F particularly seemed to find this session helpful, the Year 11 students from School B struggled to remember or comment on it. Many students had not previously thought about their future in any detail, and they liked that this session helped them to focus on their goals. Whilst some students remembered the SMART targets, few seemed to have used them when thinking about their future pathways. One group of Year 11 students from School A felt this session would work best at the start of the programme to help anchor their thinking throughout the rest of the programme. Student comments on this session were short and included the following:

> *Session six on purpose was useful and made me feel more motivated on my dream job and to be more productive.*
>
> (School E Yr 10 student)

It kind of give you an insight into what you want to do when your older and how you can get there.

(School F Yr 11 student)

It just helped you a lot. It gave you like a very good idea of what to do in the future.

(School F Yr 11 student)

I think it really laid out like the path that you're actually gonna take instead of just thinking about it. You like it actually see what you actually want to do.

(School F Yr 11 student)

Non-academic strategies

A number of students had implemented several new non-academic strategies to help them with their exam revision and preparation notably, having a good night's sleep / early night and a good breakfast before the exam, being prepared and being more organised, for example having a revision timetable and that they stuck to. Some were also eating better and taking regular breaks which in some cases involved a short walk outside. One School E Year 11 student commented on how this had helped him: "*I think after I did start going on very short walks…going outside and getting some exercise. And I think that's helped a bit*".

Learning outcomes: students' top programme takeaways

At the end of the focus group session the students were each asked what was the one thing, the main learning, they would take away from the programme that would help them with their exams. The most frequent takeaway from the programme, mentioned by approximately a third of the students, was how to revise effectively. They liked the different revision techniques and being able to use a variety of strategies. Some felt this prevented them from getting "*bored*". The revision timetable was the second most cited takeaway, followed by knowing the best environment in which to study. Increased confidence and motivation, and therefore self-belief, were also popular, "*thinking that I can do it and not giving up straightaway*" (School B Yr 11 student) along with how to have a more open, growth mindset. Other takeaways included taking regular breaks, knowing how to prioritise their revision, identifying the type of learner they were and taking on board some of the non-academic tips such as having a good night's sleep and eating properly. Many students had started to put these strategies into practice and felt they were already seeing the benefits. Comments included:

I think the different techniques for revising help way more than the ones I used in the previous mocks and the flashcards actually give were quite good to use as well.

(School B Yr 11 student)

I think after all the sessions that we've done, I think I feel more motivated, and I've been able to do more revision at home, and I've been able to use all the tips that we've got given. I've been able to use them properly.

(School B Yr 10 student)

I think it was the growth mindset the most because I was really like closed off by everything. But then after having like that session, it just gave me the confidence to like not be as closed off.

(School B Yr 10 student)

Probably like remembering to eat so you're like focused while you're working.

Feeling more confident going into my exams and actually taking them because of my organisation and revising and everything like that.
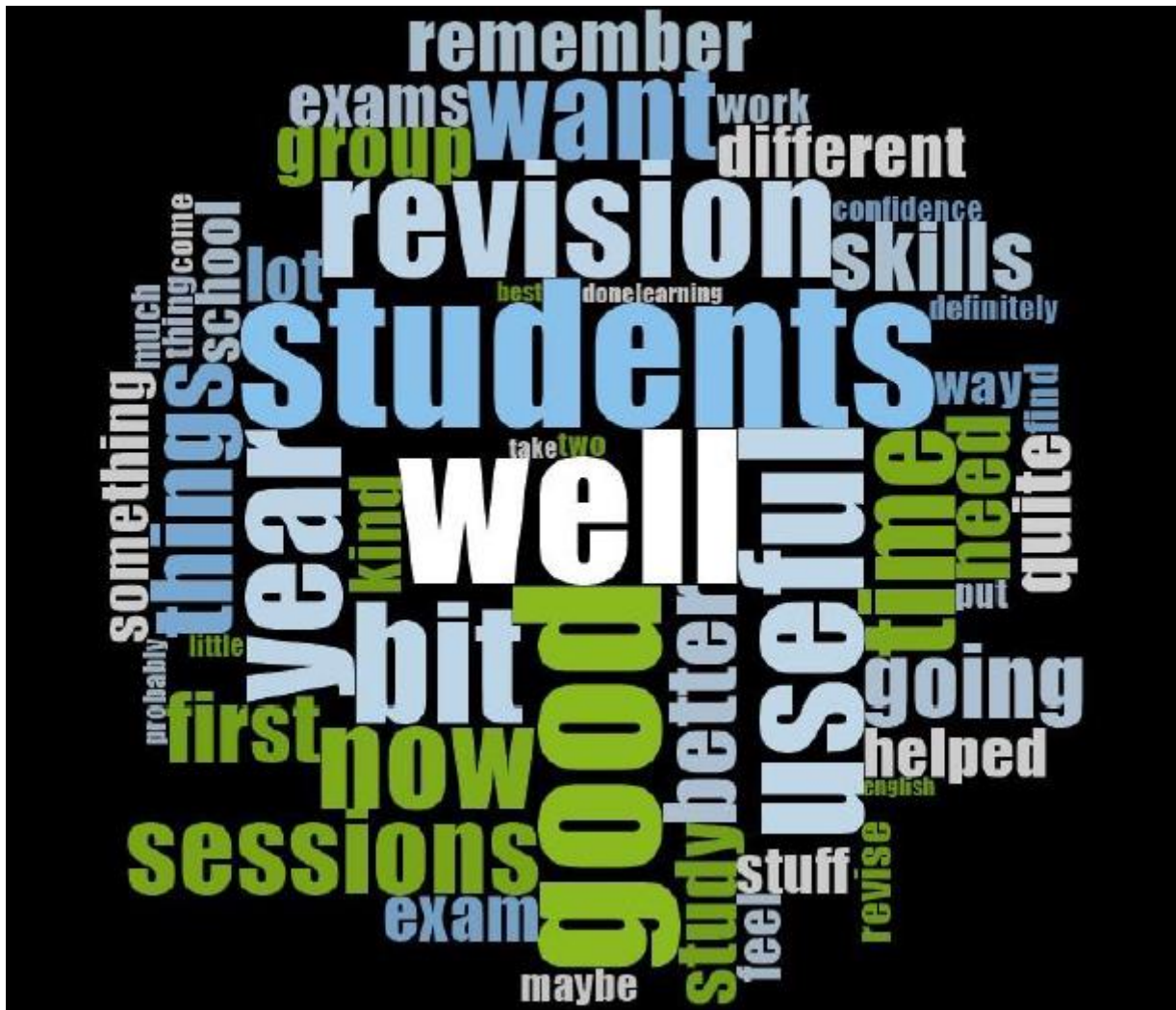
Figure 64: Word cloud representing students' top programme takeaways

Programme aims

Students were asked which of the eight words or phrases from the 'aims of the programme' PowerPoint session slide they felt they had improved upon as a result of attending the programme: knowledge, motivation, resilience, skills development, confidence, self-belief, reflection and wellbeing.

The most cited improvement was in the student's motivation followed by confidence and knowledge. Some students felt that the programme had helped them, but to a much lesser degree, with their skills development, mainly revision techniques and self-belief. A few said it had improved their wellbeing and resilience. Many students reported improvement in at least two or three of these areas. However, most felt that their resilience was no different at the end of the programme than it had been at the start. Reflection was the least mentioned area of improvement and was seen as something that had

not really been covered during the sessions. Students' comments on the areas they had improved upon and the difference it had made to them were generally brief but included:

> *I think I have more motivation because I'm more willing to do something instead of like not doing it.*

<div align="right">(School B Yr 11 student)</div>

> *I think it was very helpful to, it was very helpful for me. I think I gained a lot of confidence after all the sessions, and I was able to motivate myself a lot more than I used to.*

<div align="right">(School B Yr 10 student)</div>

> *I'd just say confidence because I know what to do to answer a question and that really helps.*

<div align="right">(School E Yr 11 student)</div>

> *I think it's helped me with resilience. Like when I said that I went off on walks and all that, I think it helps me study. I've got like a clear mind when I go back after taking a break. I think that's helped a lot.*

<div align="right">(School E Yr 11 student)</div>

> *It kind of give us like, probably a bit more courage to study and a bit more knowledge of how to study properly instead of having to stress about things going on around you.*

<div align="right">(School D Yr 10 student)</div>

> *Just like not giving up with your work and not thinking that "oh, I can't do that subject that's gonna fail my GCSEs" but actually having a bit of belief is making me want to try harder as well.*

<div align="right">(School B Yr 11 student)</div>

> *Wellbeing because it's just little, it's like, remembering to have a healthier breakfast in the morning and sleep always helps.*

<div align="right">(School B Yr 11 student)</div>

NERUPI outcomes

The students were asked how the programme had helped them with each of the five NERUPI outcomes. However, it soon became clear that any impact of SSMP on the NERUPI outcomes was secondary, and almost incidental, as the feedback in this section demonstrates.

<u>A greater awareness of the benefits of going to further or higher education</u> – Some students felt the programme had helped with this "*a little bit*", especially the School F students. A few students were now considering going onto university as a result of the programme.

<u>In a better position to make own post 16/18 decisions</u> – Most students felt the programme had 'definitely' given them the confidence, and in some cases the self-belief, to make their own post 16/18 decisions. It had helped some students clarify that the decisions they had made about their next steps were the right ones for them. The campus visit, for students from Schools A and C, had made the biggest difference here. Students from School C liked the course booklet they were given, and the visit had made a big impression on one School A student in particularly who commented:

> *The visit to the uni made me realise what actually is involved in going to university… it just really put into perspective what I'm in for. So that I know what to expect and I'm not just going in blind.*

<div align="right">(School A Yr 11 student)</div>

Another Year 11 student from School F felt the programme as a whole "*…kind of gives you the confidence to know, to believe in yourself and what to do*".

A better understanding of the skills needed to succeed in the future – Overall the students agreed that the programme had given them a better understanding of the skills they needed to succeed in the future but were unable to articulate exactly how or why.

A greater awareness of their strengths and areas they need to work on – students felt the programme had helped them identify some of their weaknesses, specifically in terms of revising for their exams. Whilst most were unable, or unwilling, to say what these were, two of the Year 11 students from School A did comment:

> *Dividing my revision time, not just revising the subjects that I like. Like, I'm really bad at maths and I hate it. I'm good at English and I really like English, and I prefer to revise English. But I've realised that that's probably not the best idea…And like at the same time I don't want my grades dropping in a subject that I'm good at so it's just figuring out how to divide my time fairly.*

<div align="right">(School A Yr 11 student 1)</div>

> *Trying to not go in with a negative mindset. Like try to think positive, and revise and just keep practising until I get it. Like, I don't know how anyone else revises, but when I revise, if I'm struggling on something, I'll keep doing it until I'm better at it, until I can answer it and I'm not hesitant.*

<div align="right">(School A Yr 11 Student 2)</div>

A better understanding of their post 16 and 18 options – The general consensus amongst the students was that they had a better understanding of their post 16/18 options after taking part in the programme. One School A student said it "*…has made me realise what I need to do to get to do what I want to do*".

Suggested programme improvements

On the whole students were happy with the way the programme ran and the content of the sessions. Some students, especially Year 11s from Schools A and F, would have liked the programme sessions' to have been delivered weekly or fortnightly so that they did not forget the previous session and to aid consistency and student engagement, so that "*…it would have stayed fresh*" as one student put it. Some felt it would have been beneficial if it had been delivered when they were in Year 9, repeated in Year 11 before their mock exams, however, others felt it had been delivered at the right time.

Some students would have liked more engaging or practical activities such as team or small group work (School D students in particular) to prepare them for this type of learning at college and university. The School D students felt the worksheets could be more colourful with one student describing them as "a *bit green*" and another as "*just a bit dull and blank*". Year 10 students from School B wanted to know about what actually happens in an exam and how they should divide their time effectively between questions.

School C students would have liked an additional session on future employment possibilities "*on what you can do after and how to get there.…*". The Year 11 students from School A would have also liked more sessions or for some of the sessions to have been developed further and a fuller recap at the start of a session to check students had both remembered and understood the previous session. One student suggested an additional session where students could anonymously ask questions, by writing them down, of the areas that they might be struggling with in relation to their exams and future plans. The School A Careers Lead felt that some of the activities could have been developed and more time given to students to practice some of the skills they had learnt, for example, creating a revision timetable in the session. They felt getting the students to "*personalise it there and then*" would have

been beneficial. They also felt that good attendance should be added to the programme's selection criteria.

Year 11 students from School F felt some of the sessions were a little bit short and that two sessions could have been rolled into one reducing the overall number of sessions to five. Students commented:

I feel like some of them, they were quite short…some of the lessons had a spare 10 minutes or they dragged on a little bit because there wasn't that much information to really know.

(School F Yr 11 student)

Like we learned all the skills within like half an hour but there wasn't much for us to learn, like we couldn't add on to it. So, we could have had another session or something similar that linked in with it…

(School F Yr 11 student)

Their Careers Lead agreed, also feeling that some sessions had been put together for a 50-minute lesson and they needed to be *"…a little more padded out for the hour"*, which was the length of their lessons. Alternatively, the programme could be delivered with fewer, but slightly longer, content-rich sessions; something which some members of the LiNCHigher delivery team also support. In addition, the Year 11 students from School F would have liked a summary of the six-week programme before it started. The Year 11 students from School A would have liked more on revision techniques and a session on what they can do with their qualifications in the future.

The School B Careers Lead suggested a follow-up session to see what the students had learnt and put into practice as a result of being on the programme, to continue what they called the "*drip drip drip*" of information and skills given to the students. They would also like the opportunity to meet with other Careers Leads that have had the programme to share good practice and learning.

Recommending the programme

Despite some suggested improvements, nearly everyone, students and staff alike, would recommend the programme to others. Comments on why students and staff would recommend the programme included:

Student's comments:

It's a nice way to get to know yourself.

(School A Yr 11 student)

I would recommend this to a friend as it may be an opportunity for them to understand which styles of revision is best for them.

(School A Yr 11 student)

It helped me to like, actually want to revise for my exams. Like first I just couldn't be bothered. And I thought I knew everything. I thought like the lessons were already helping me, but I didn't think revision was important. So, it helped me to get motivation to actually revise for them.

(School B Yr 10 student)

They get so they can understand the skills development and the confidence they would get going into an exam.

(School E Yr 11 student)

Careers Leads comments:

I just think it gives some students who are quite quiet that the opportunity, something specifically for them, because some students who just do what we ask them to do every day can get overlooked. We think "oh, they're alright". So, it's actually quite nice for some of those students to have something specifically for them. And I hope they feel that they were chosen for that and therefore, you know, a bit special in that way.

(School E Careers Lead)

Oh, yeah, definitely. Yeah, I'd definitely recommend it to other schools. Definitely. I just thinking it was just really useful. Really useful.

(School F Careers Lead)

Just one student said that they would not recommend the programme to others, the School A Yr 11 student who had the closed mindset and who did not enjoy the campus visit, who said, "*honestly, not really, because I can count on my fingers the things I will take away from the programme*". The School A Careers Lead would recommend the programme but not for the cohort (Year 11) that received it this year or under the current criteria as the school struggled to fulfil all of the criteria commenting:

I don't know. I'd have to think long and hard because them coming to this means they're not going to a subject intervention. And I'd have to, I've got to do the analysis myself as to the improvements against those that haven't been part of it to see whether or not I would want to do it with the current criteria.

(School A Careers Lead)

Careers Leads and LiNCHigher delivery staff views on the SSMP

Both the Careers Leads and the LiNCHigher delivery staff felt that the programme had gone well and had been successfully delivered. There were no issues arranging the sessions with LiNCHigher. It was described by the Careers Leads as "*a positive experience*" that was "*well run and well received*" by the students. The School F Careers Lead said they had noticed "*a development of confidence*" in the Year 11 students that had taken part and that it had "…*been really nice to see their confidence grow and how they feel about their exams".* It had served to introduce the Year 10 students to thinking about the important of revision skills when it comes to their exams. Both groups of students had turned up to sessions without being chased and the small group dynamics had worked really well. According to the Careers Lead the students were engaged with the sessions and felt they could speak out without being judged. The School E Careers Lead also noted that students had responded well, even though they were often quiet commenting: *"…they might have been quiet, but I definitely think it was going in and having heard some of the feedback I do think it's been beneficial*". However, the Careers Lead from School A had a slightly more negative view of how well the students had engaged stating: "*I feel I've had to drag them to it as opposed to them wanting to willingly participate".* They strongly felt this was because of the unsuitability of the selection criteria for their students.

From the point of view of the LiNCHigher delivery staff, the students at School B seemed to be the most prepared for the programme, the Lego Duck went down well and introducing more interactive activities into the sessions had been beneficial. This was especially the case for sessions five and six where the students could see the practical benefits of what they were learning, for example through the command and content practice exam questions.

All of the schools had welcomed the opportunity to take part in the programme to help them improve their results. One Careers Lead (School B) stated "…*anything that comes our way that we can actually use, then we will".* Another (School F) commented:

We wanted it because we're trying to raise attainment. We're a low aspirational school. We're always fighting against that unfortunately. But we want to raise the attainment of the students so that they can access more opportunities, higher opportunities, not just university but high-level apprenticeships in the future.

(School F Careers Lead)

For the most part, the Careers Leads' expectations of the programme had been met. However, some, for example, Schools A and B in particular, are keen to see if there has been any progress with grade improvement (predicted for Year 10 or actual for Year 11). The Careers Lead from School C felt it had given the students more tools for their revision and exams that they would be able to apply.

Key student learning

Some of the Careers Leads had seen a noticeable change to the students on the programme. They reported students had grown in confidence, learnt new revision skills and how to manage exam stress better. One Careers Lead felt it had helped students clarify the revision and exam process. Another said that if the students had not been learning and finding the sessions beneficial, they would have "*voted with their feet*". After the focus group session, the Careers Lead from School E commented on the impact the programme had made to one particular student stating: "*I noticed this morning when [he] was giving his feedback, I would never have heard him speak like that…I was thinking, gosh, [he] has really come out of his shell*".

Challenges of delivery

The main two challenges reported by the Careers Leads was getting student buy-in and the logistics of arranging the delivery, especially timetabling the sessions in school and finding a suitable classroom. A few students who were selected for the programme refused to take part, however, this was not specifically an issue with the programme, more that these students (mainly girls) refused to engage with much at school in general.

Finding a suitable lesson in which to deliver the session was challenging for most of the schools, they needed buy-in from other members of staff as well as the students and some students did not like missing the chosen lesson, especially when it was an exam subject or PE. A popular choice was to run the sessions during personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons, or similar. In some cases, the Careers Leads had to trade off which lesson to schedule the sessions with continuity and some chose to spread the burden and others went for consistency to aid timetable planning. Overall, the Careers Leads reported the booking in and delivery of the sessions had gone relatively smoothly, that LiNCHigher had been efficient, organised and flexible, all of which they greatly appreciated.

From the LiNCHigher delivery perspective the main challenges were finding a suitable space to deliver the sessions and getting students engagement, which was closely tied to group dynamics, as the students did not always know each other very well at the start of the programme. An example of a good learning environment to deliver the small group sessions was the Library at School B. However, the drama studio at School E had not been suitable as it was too big and had no desks. Group dynamics was felt to be key to the successful delivery of the programme. It was also something the Careers Leads had come to realise over the lifetime of the programme with most stating that next time they would consider group dynamics, and student behaviour, as factors when choosing students. Late arrivals and having a member of the school staff in the sessions were also challenging. In general, when a staff member stayed in the session the students were not as forthcoming as they were when the adult was absent as this extract from one of the delivery staff at LiNCHigher highlights:

At School D, I was usually left alone, and so the students were quite honest and would talk to me quite a lot. At School E, there is very much a culture of sitting silently and working completely

independently, and a member of staff was also in the room. This meant students rarely spoke, or contributed, in sessions.

<u>Future thoughts on the programme</u>

All of the Careers Leads would like to have the programme again, especially for their Year 10 students. However, one Careers Lead (School A) would be hesitant to use the same selection criteria next time as she struggled to find enough students. Also, the students that fulfilled the criteria already have "*a significant diet in terms of extra intervention[s]*". She would like to offer the programme to students working at Grade 5, that have no other interventions but want to achieve higher, to students:

> *…that really have that desire to work independently, but they don't know how to work independently. So, I think it would have been better aimed at students who have the desire to want to do really, really well, but don't have the skills to be able to put that into practice.*

Running the programme next year would also very much depend on the improvement this year's students have made. The Careers Lead from School D said they would not be able to run it for Year 11 students as they are off limits, but they would like it to be delivered to a larger cohort if possible. The School E Careers Lead would run it for Years 10 and 11 but would like delivery to Year 11s to be much earlier in the academic Year. The Careers Lead from School F said that next time they would explain the programme better to the students beforehand to ensure they were ready from the start.

From the perspective of LiNCHigher delivery staff they would like to see clearer written guidelines given to schools at the initial contact phase of the programme outlining precisely what information the school is expected to provide to LiNCHigher. The guidelines would detail the selection criteria, which should include consideration of group dynamics and student behaviour records as well as a standardised excel sheets or forms for schools to provide the details of student comparison groups, including their predicted grades. Finally, constant review and revision of the sessions is required to keep the programme up to date, relevant and interesting for the students.

5. Progression and attainment data

Schools were asked to provide a baseline assessment of students' grades for core subjects at the beginning of the academic year, for both the participant and comparison groups. This information was expected to be the level at which students were currently working at and not a prediction of what they could achieve by the end of the academic year.

Year 10 baseline data and progression data were based on teachers' assessed grades. Year 11 baseline data were also based on teachers' assessed grades, but the progression data comprised the grades students actually achieved in their GCSE exams sat in Summer 2024. English and maths were used to compare baseline and progression grades because the criteria that schools used to select students for the programme differed, i.e. some schools but not all also used science as a criterion.

<u>Selecting the students for the comparison groups</u>

The students for the comparison groups were chosen by the schools. The evaluation team requested certain characteristics to be matched to the participants of the programme. These were: working at a similar level in the core subjects, gender and the number of UC target students. However, on examination the comparison groups were not matched in all cases. In particular, the average baseline grades for Year 11 comparison students from School F were higher than those of the participant group. During the interviews with the Careers Leads it became evident that the students in the comparison groups had been chosen for being 'similar' rather than using a systematic matching

process. Tables 54 and 55 below shows the composition of the participant and comparison groups by school for each year group.

Table 54: Year 10 participant and comparison groups' characteristics

School	Participant group						Comparison group						
	F	M	UC	E	M	Tot	F	M	O	UC	E	M	Tot
School B	6	4	2	4.60	4.60	10	5	5	-	5	4.20	4.40	10
School C	5	5	6	4.44	4.67	10	5	5	-	3	4.00	4.90	10
School D	6	4	7	3.60	3.50	10	6	4	-	7	3.00	3.43	10
School E	5	5	1	4.60	3.10	10	4	5	1	2	4.80	2.80	10
School F	6	4	5	4.40	4.10	10	5	5	-	2	3.78	2.89	10

F = female, M= male, O = other, UC = Uni Connect target students, E = English, M = maths

Table 55: Year 11 participant and comparison groups' characteristics

School	Participant group						Comparison group					
	F	M	UC	E	M	Tot	F	M	UC	E	M	Tot
School A	13	6	11	3.89	2.58	19	11	9	11	3.10	2.95	20
School B	5	5	6	4.70	4.60	10	6	4	6	4.60	4.30	10
School E	5	5	2	4.50	2.90	10	5	4	1	4.30	2.70	9
School F	4	7	6	3.73	3.91	11	5	6	5	5.00	5.11	11

F = female, M= male, UC = Uni Connect target students, E = English, M = maths

Overview of the progression and attainment grade data

The findings from the progression and attainment data were mixed: maths grades improved for students overall across both year groups, however when this was broken down by gender the improvement was for female students, grades reduced marginally for male students. English grades were lower in July 2024 when compared to September 2023 for both participant and comparison groups and across both year groups. As an improvement in the maths grades was demonstrated for both participant and comparison groups it is not possible to attribute the increase to the SSMP. The grade data did not demonstrate the positive impact of the programme that had been evidenced by both the pre and post session surveys and the qualitative data.

As an alternative to collecting baseline and progression/GCSE grades, the Careers Lead at School B suggested using a comparison of Key Stage 2 data and GCSE results. This is the method that they use as being a more accurate measure of 'value added' than teachers' predicted grades and also less subjective. However, as Key Stage 2 data are collected when students are in Year 6, it would not be an appropriate comparison for measuring the impact of the SSMP. They also explained that they did not feel that the grade data measured "…*the soft impact*" of the programme on the students that they had observed, for example, "*the impact on their attitude, their self-belief and the impact on what they do post-16*".This was a sentiment that was echoed in the interviews with other Careers Leads and demonstrated by the students themselves in the focus groups.

Year 10

All students

Overall, the July progression grades for English were lower than the baseline grades with the difference being the same for both the participant and comparison groups; neither were statistically significant. For maths, the July grades were higher for both groups, but again neither were statistically

significant. Tables 56 and 57 show the baseline and progression data for English and maths for all students.

Table 56: Year 10 English grade data – all students

English		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=49)	Mean September baseline grade	4.33 (0.94)	-0.13	p = 0.109
	Mean July grade	4.20 (0.89)		
Comparison Group (n=46)	Mean September baseline grade	4.02 (1.02)	-0.13	p = 0.272
	Mean July grade	3.89 (1.20)		

Table 57: Year 10 Maths grade data – all students

Maths		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=49)	Mean September baseline grade	3.98 (1.15)	+0.14	p = 0.336
	Mean July grade	4.12 (1.11)		
Comparison Group (n=46)	Mean September baseline grade	3.72 (1.29)	+0.26	p = 0.133
	Mean July grade	3.98 (1.13)		

Grades by gender

The grades for English were lower in July compared with the beginning of the academic year for both female and male students and for both participant and comparison groups. Male students' grades reduced more than female students', but none of the differences were statistically significant.

Grades for maths increased for female students and were the same or marginally decreased for male students. As for English none of the differences were statistically significant. Tables 58 to 61 below show the baseline and progression grade data for English and maths by gender.

Table 58: Year 10 English grade data – female students

English female students		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=28)	Mean September baseline grade	4.61 (0.74)	-0.07	p = 0.414
	Mean July grade	4.54 (0.51)		
Comparison Group (n=23)	Mean September baseline grade	4.17 (1.19)	-0.04	p = 0.915
	Mean July grade	4.13 (1.29)		

Table 59: Year 10 English grade data – male students

English male students		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=21)	Mean September baseline grade	3.95 (1.07)	-0.19	p = 0.157
	Mean July grade	3.76 (1.09)		
Comparison Group (n=22)	Mean September baseline grade	3.86 (0.83)	-0.22	p = 0.096
	Mean July grade	3.64 (1.09)		

Table 60: Year 10 Maths grade data – female students

Maths female students		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=28)	Mean September baseline grade	3.89 (1.03)	+0.32	*p* = 0.101
	Mean July grade	4.21 (0.88)		
Comparison Group (n=23)	Mean September baseline grade	3.52 (1.16)	+0.44	*p* = 0.076
	Mean July grade	3.96 (1.33)		

Table 61: Year 10 Maths grade data – male students

Maths male students		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=21)	Mean September baseline grade	4.10 (1.30)	-0.10	*p* = 0.672
	Mean July grade	4.00 (1.38)		
Comparison Group (n=22)	Mean September baseline grade	4.00 (1.38)	0	*p* = 0.952
	Mean July grade	4.00 (0.93)		

Year 11

All Students

Overall, the GCSE grade average for English was lower for both groups than the average baseline grade from September 2023 with the differences between the two being very similar. Neither of the differences were statistically significant.

The GCSE grade average for maths was higher for both groups than the baseline grade with the difference for the participant group being the greatest, although as they started on a lower baseline their overall GCSE grade average was lower. Neither of the differences were statistically significant.

Tables 62 and 63 show the baseline and GCSE grade data for English and maths for all students.

Table 62: Year 11 English grade data – all students

English		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=50)	Mean September baseline grade	4.14 (1.07)	-0.34	p = 0.062
	Mean GCSE grade	3.80 (1.33)		
Comparison Group (n=47)	September baseline grade	4.09 (1.33)	-0.32	p = 0.081
	Mean GCSE grade	3.77 (1.11)		

Table 63: Year 11 Maths grade data – all students

Maths		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=50)	Mean September assessed grade	3.34 (1.24)	0.20	p = 0.135
	Mean GCSE grade	3.54 (0.97)		
Comparison Group (n=47)	September assessed grade	3.66 (1.40)	0.04	p = 0.715
	Mean GCSE grade	3.70 (1.30)		

Grades by gender

The GCSE grade average for English decreased for both female and male students in both the participant and comparison groups. For female students in the participant group and male students in the comparison group, this decrease was statistically significant. For maths the GCSE grade average was higher for female students from both groups and the difference for the participant group was statistically significant. The difference for male students was marginally negative.

Tables 64 to 67 show the baseline and GCSE grade data for English and maths by gender.

Table 64: Year 11 English grade data – female students

English female students		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=27)	Mean September baseline grade	4.19 (1.00)	-0.41	p = 0.045
	Mean GCSE grade	3.78 (1.25)		
Comparison Group (n=26)	September baseline grade	4.08 (1.44)	-0.20	p = 0.569
	Mean GCSE grade	3.88 (1.21)		

Table 65: Year 11 English grade data – male students

English male students		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=23)	Mean September baseline grade	4.09 (1.16)	-0.26	p = 0.431
	Mean GCSE grade	3.83 (1.44)		
Comparison Group (n=21)	September baseline grade	4.10 (1.22)	-0.48	p = 0.045
	Mean GCSE grade	3.62 (0.97)		

Table 66: Year 11 Maths grade data – female students

Maths female students		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=27)	Mean September baseline grade	3.04 (1.19)	0.40	p = 0.028
	Mean GCSE grade	3.44 (0.97)		
Comparison Group (n=26)	September baseline grade	3.69 (1.44)	0.12	p = 0.467
	Mean GCSE grade	3.81 (1.39)		

Table 67: Year 11 Maths grade data – male students

Maths male students		Mean (SD)	Diff	Sig
Participant Group (n=23)	Mean September baseline grade	3.70 (1.22)	-0.05	p = 0.960
	Mean GCSE grade	3.65 (0.98)		
Comparison Group (n=21)	September baseline grade	3.62 (1.28)	-0.05	p = 0.782
	Mean GCSE grade	3.57 (0.93)		

6. Key findings and recommendations

Summary of key findings

The main aim of the programme was to tackle non-academic barriers to learning by improving student confidence and motivation in their study skills and in so doing help them to be better prepared for their exams. The evidence, from both the qualitative and quantitative data, shows these objectives were largely met. The data obtained from the pre and post session surveys, Careers Leads and student focus groups demonstrated the positive impact of the programme. However, the progression grade data did not show this as clearly. There is evidence of unreliability and inconsistency of teacher assessed grades (see: Education Policy Institute 2024[3], BBC News 2024[4]) and therefore it is debateable whether using the grade data as a metric of the impact of the programme is a useful measure.

As the programme progressed, students not only became more motivated and confident, but they were also able to take their newly acquired knowledge and apply it to their studies, especially their revision and exams. Most students felt they were now able to identify the causes of stress and were more capable of managing stress around their exams than they had been.

Overall, the programme appears to have been most beneficial to the Year 11 students. This is probably because they were able to immediately see the relevance and put their learning into practice straightaway, and they had started to see the difference it was making.

Quantitative-specific findings

- Overall, for all students, the difference between the pre and post session score for all questions was positive and statistically significant for every session.

- Overall, the pre and post session survey data demonstrated the programme had a greater impact on Year 11 students.

- In sessions one and two, mainly for Year 10 female students, the post session score remained below midway point on the scale for some questions. This is an indication that at this point in the programme there is still a settling in period for female students.

- In general, female students from both year groups travelled the furthest in terms of their confidence and knowledge during the sessions, even when they started from a lower baseline.

- The extent to which students improved during a session increased incrementally as the programme progressed. For example, the difference between the highest and lowest score pre to post in session one was 0.40 to 0.72 compared to 1.78 with 1.80 in session six, suggesting that student learning and engagement with the programme increased over time.

- The quantitative data shows that student attendance varied greatly from School C (60%) whose sessions were not as well managed by the school, for example rooms were often unavailable and students not always aware of when sessions were running, to School B (89%) where the school was very organised, ICT were always on hand, rooms booked, and students knew exactly when and where their sessions took place. In addition, group dynamics and behaviour issues also appeared to have had an effect on student attendance.

- Obtaining the baseline and progression/GCSE grade data, especially for the comparison groups, in a timely manner, proved challenging.

---

[3] https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/analysis-gcse-results-day-2024/

[4] Four takeaways from 2024's GCSE results - BBC News

- There appeared to be some confusion between Careers Leads and teachers/heads of year as to whether the baseline grade data were to reflect the level at which students were working at in September 2023 or their predicted GCSE grades.

- Grade data findings were mixed and did not provide the additional evidence of the impact of the programme. Maths grades for female students improved over the academic year for both participant and comparison groups. English grades decreased for all students for both groups across both years.

Qualitative-specific findings

- Each of the programme sessions helped to build student confidence and motivation and they were able to easily make the links from one session to the other.

- The key learning students took from the programme was how to revise effectively. However, students did not have a great deal to say about this session (three – revision skills) specifically. It therefore appears that it is the programme as a whole that provides students with the skills, knowledge and confidence to revise effectively rather than any one specific session.

- Students liked the small group delivery model and preferred this to being in larger settings. It enabled them to build a good relationship with the person delivering the session and they felt comfortable asking questions. They reported feeling more engaged. However, some of the Careers Leads and the LiNCHigher delivery staff, felt that the programme could be delivered to slightly larger groups.

- When the gap between sessions was too long, or timetabling was inconsistent, students said they forgot much of their previous learning.

- University campus visits continue to be popular and have a positive impact on students.

- Students were more engaged and willing to actively participate when the LiNCHigher member of staff delivering the session was the only adult present.

- The resource pack given to students at the start of the programme was very welcomed and the Lego duck was a popular icebreaker.

- Students valued learning the non-academic revision strategies as much as the study skills themselves. Many said they had made positive changes to the way they studied as a result of being on the programme, for example, ensuring they had a good night's sleep, finding their most effective learning environment and the importance of taking regular study breaks.

- Students enjoyed the programme more as it progressed as evidenced by the improvement found in the pre and post session surveys. Few were fully aware of what the programme was about beforehand and consequently took time to settle in and appreciate its value.

- Some sessions were reported, by both Careers Leads and students, to be a little light in content.

- Some Year 10 students were still unsure what actually happens in a formal exam, and how to time manage exams effectively.

- Reflection was the one session aim that was not met. Students did not feel that this was something that the programme had touched upon.

- For some schools offering the programme to Year 11 students is not an option.

- One Careers Lead said they would ideally plan the sessions earlier in the school year to allow students the opportunity to put their learning into practice for their mock exams.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the SSMP are drawn from both types of data (quantitative and qualitative) presented in this report.

For LiNCHigher

- Develop a pack containing guidelines and templates to give to schools at the first point of contact so that they are clear what information is required of them and the criteria on which students should be selected for the programme.

- Produce a leaflet or flyer about the programme that schools can give to their students in advance. This will help students understand not only what will be expected of them but also the benefits of taking part.

- Given the inconsistency of progression grade data, i.e. teachers interpreting grade prediction frameworks in different ways, particularly for small groups which the SSMP is aimed at, and the difficultly in obtaining the data consider using alternative measures of impact.

- If grade data is to be used in future evaluations, make it a mandatory condition that schools provide grade data for both the participating students and the comparison group prior to the programme being delivered, ideally before the Christmas break. This ensures that all data is collected at the same points of the school year and enables comparisons between participating and non-participating students.

- Similarly, if grade data is to be used, provide clearly written guidelines for Careers Leads for establishing baseline grade data in order that they understand exactly what to ask teachers or heads of year for.

- Consider slightly increasing the number of students on the programme to 15 or a maximum of 20, any more could risk losing students buy-in and engagement as they appreciated the small group delivery model.

- Encourage schools to facilitate Year 11 students to participate in the programme, as the data clearly shows that they were the year group that benefited the most.

- Investigate if the number of sessions could be reduced or if the content of some sessions could be bolstered as well as having additional activities for schools that run 60-minute lessons.

- Include specific reflection-building activities into the programme to help meet this programme aim.

- Review the content of each session, especially the activities, on a regular basis, in light of student feedback to see if any changes are required.

- Include more exam practice and insights in the sessions to improve student confidence in taking their exams especially for Year 10s.

- Continue to assign a designated member of the LiNCHigher team to deliver the programme in a school from start to finish wherever possible. This will help to ensure consistency and aid relationship building between the students and the LiNCHigher member of staff delivering the sessions, an important aspect in the programme's successful delivery.

- Ask schools whose Year 10 students participated in the SSMP this academic year for their GCSE grades in Summer 2025. A comparison of these with their end of year predicted grades from July 2024 will provide longitudinal evaluation of the programme.

For schools

- Talk to the students selected for the programme before the first session to explain what the programme is about, why they have been chosen and how it will help them.

- Consider group dynamics, along with attendance and behaviour, as part of the selection criteria to aid student engagement.

- Plan the Year 11 sessions in as early in the year as possible to enable them to employ their new study skills in their mock exams before their actual exams.

For LiNCHigher and schools together

- Consider timetabling the delivery of the programme over a shorter period and at regular times agreed at the start. This would not only help with student attendance and engagement, but it would maximise and consolidate learning and aid the building of a relationship between the students and the LiNCHigher member of staff delivering the programme as well as group dynamics. An example would be to deliver the sessions once a fortnight over a 12-week period.
- Ensure a campus visit is planned into the programme from the start, as the evidence shows that the students valued this opportunity and that it had a positive impact, particularly on their motivation to succeed in their exams.

Appendix A

1 Situation	To achieve the raising of pre-16 attainment in selected secondary schools. Increase levels of self-efficacy and confidence in metacognition skills improving ability to prepare for GCSE exams.			
2 Aims	Through the delivery of the Study Skills Masterclass Programme, students will raise their levels of GCSE attainment and will be better prepared and more confident to apply to further and higher education in the future.			

7 Inputs	**5** Activities	**6** Outputs	**3** Outcomes	**4** Impact
Process			**Impact**	
1. Through analysis of school attainment levels across Lincolnshire, identify those which would most benefit from the attainment raising programme. 2. School Engagement Officers (2) to be available to deliver the lessons in schools from September 2024. 3. School resources include the use of teacher support time and classroom space. 4. School attainment data for students participating and comparison group.	1. Design of the programme and materials by Complete Careers ensuring that all lessons embed learning outcomes and the Gatsby Framework and CEIAG to meet the school's and learner's learning outcomes. 2. Consistent design and accessibility to all the presentations and worksheets produced for the programme of lessons. 3. Full Evaluation Team involvement resourcing comprehensive resources to evaluate the entire programme ranging from individual sessions to multiple engagements with views of Teachers, learners and presenters all collected and analysed.	1. Six Study Skills Masterclass Programme lessons complete with lesson plans, outcomes, presentations and activities. 2. Delivery of the Study Skills Masterclass Programme in 10 identified schools to cohorts of 2 x 10 learners from Yr. 10 or Yr. 11 who are on GCSE grade 4/5 boundary. 3. Embedded evaluation during and after each lesson delivery coordinated by School Engagement Officers/SLT and Evaluation Team.	1. Identification of necessary amendments to the Study Skills Masterclass Programme through experience of School Engagement Officer and student feedback. 2. Mid-point (Lesson 4) evaluation questions in Pre/Post Survey to understand student's enjoyment and commitment to the programme. 3. All students engaged with the Study Skills Masterclass Programme at the outset are committed to complete the full programme.	1. Students engaged with the Study Skills Masterclass Programme understand how to implement strategies to increase self-efficacy and confidence in study skills. 2. The Study Skills Masterclass Programme (Year 1) provides empirical evidence to support the use of metacognition tutoring and support to increase pre-16 attainment levels. 3. Schools recognise the value of the Study Skills Masterclass Programme in their student attainment levels and support wider engagement in Year 2.

8 Rationale & Assumptions	1. Schools with low Progress 8 and Attainment 8 scores will welcome opportunities to increase attainment levels. 2. Research evidence from Education Endowment Foundation is an accurate indication of activities impact on attainment raising.