

Developing study skills in a first year mathematics course

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Abstract

Students who enrol in first year courses are novices to learning at university with the result that many of them have an uncertain start. One of the main contributing factors to this uncertain start is the student's unrealistic expectation of the amount of work and time involved in university study. This combined with the fact that increasing numbers of full time students participate in paid work means that development of time management and other study skills are more important than ever before. Literature on development of study skills in students indicates that the most effective programs are those in which study skills are integrated into the curriculum. This paper investigates what study skills are necessary for success in a first year service mathematics course and proposes a model of integration based on a management structure in which students participate in a cycle of planning, organising, leading and controlling. Implementation of the model is described in a first year mathematics course that services science, information technology, engineering and surveying students in both on campus and distance modes. Examples from and preliminary evaluations of study materials, assessment practice and development of group problem solving skills are presented.



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