

# Enhancing our knowledge of students' independent learning techniques via qualitative techniques.

BREMNER, P.A.M, PIRIE, T., FORBES-MCKAY, K. and GOODHAND, K.

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# ENHANCING FOR IMPACT

RGU'S ANNUAL LEARNING AND TEACHING CONFERENCE

**Enhancing our knowledge of students independent learning techniques via  
qualitative techniques**

*Dr Pauline A M Bremner, Tracy Pirie, Dr Katrina Forbes McKay and Dr Kate Goodhand*

# Enhancing our knowledge of students independent learning techniques via qualitative techniques

## *The Aim*

Enhancing our knowledge of students independent learning techniques via qualitative techniques



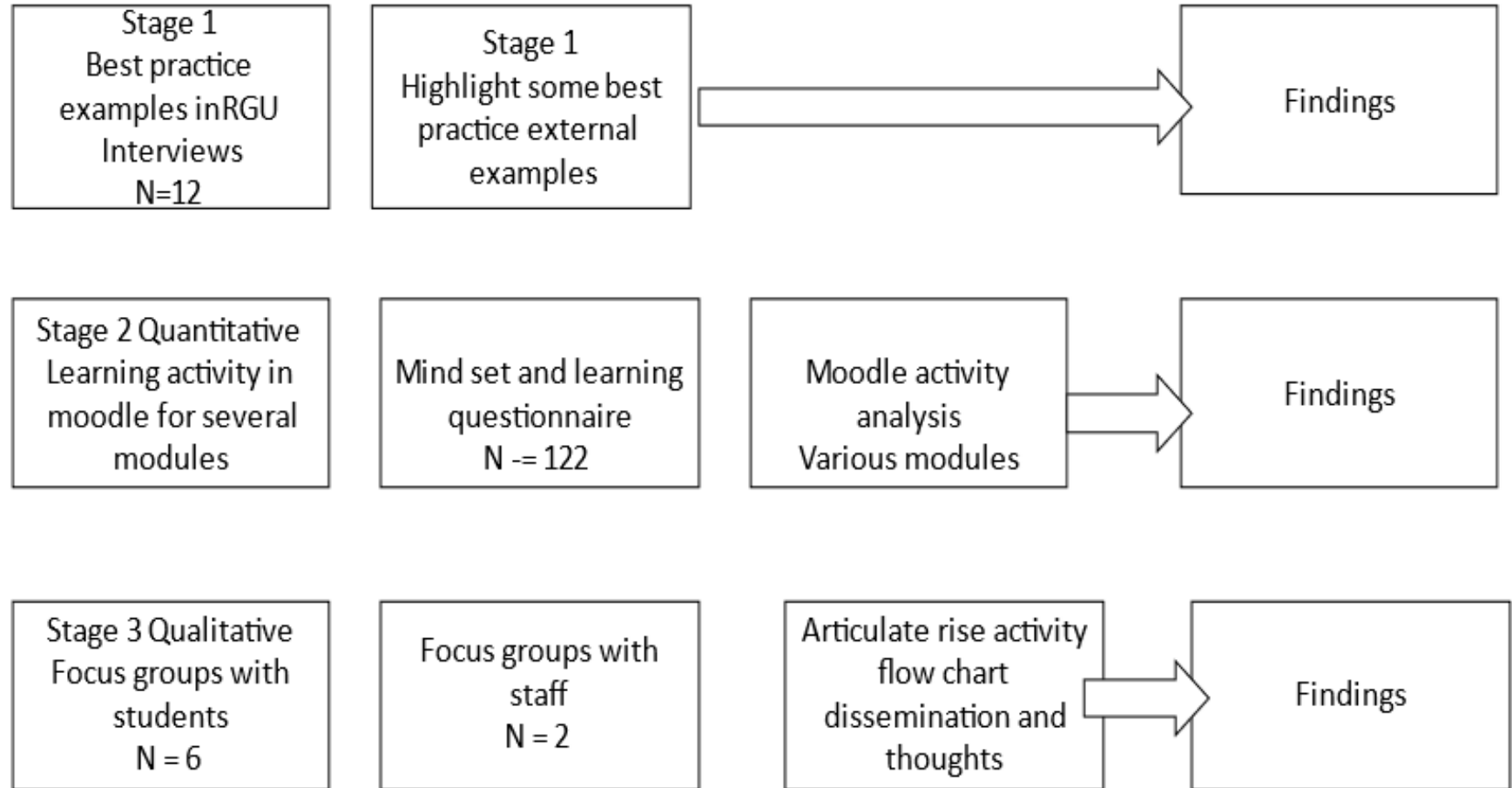
## **Key Learning Points:**

1. To outline what independent learning is academically
2. To highlight the ways in which students use strategies for enhancing their independent learning
3. To highlight staff perceptions of what students, need to be independent learners
4. To identify the best way forward given the findings of research

## **Independent Learning:**

*Independent learning* is a method or learning process where learners have ownership, control, and a desire to develop their own learning. They learn by their own actions and direct, regulate, and assess their own learning. The independent learner can set goals, make choices, and decisions about how to meet their learning needs, take responsibility for constructing and carrying out their own learning, monitor their progress towards achieving their learning goals. They can reflect, seek out and action the feedback. (Adapted from [Independent Learning | SpringerLink](#))

## Methods:





## Methods:



- Themes

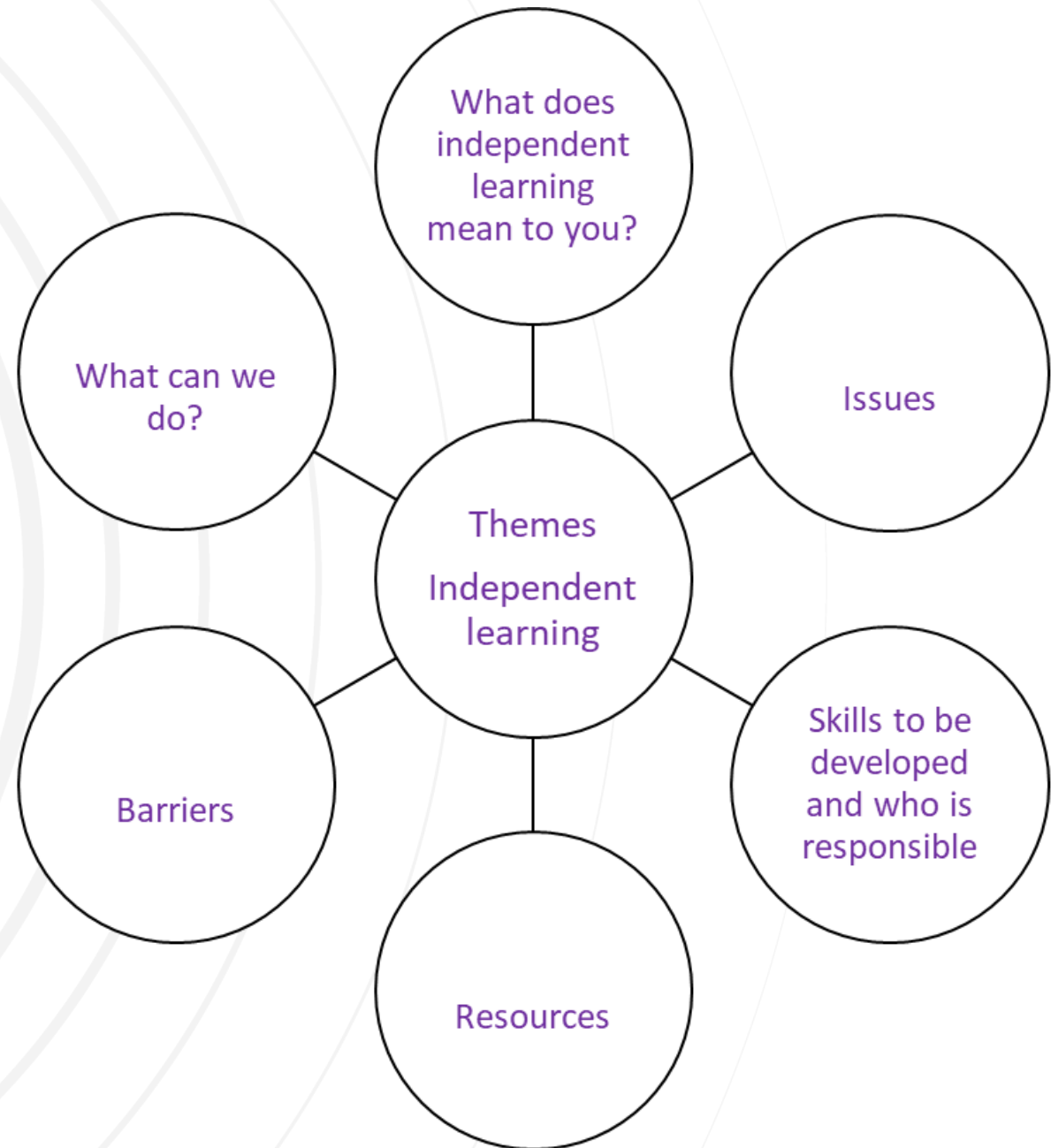
Settling questions

General Independent Learning questions

Resources for Independent Learning questions

## Findings: Staff

The composition included one Professor, two TEFs, A reader, three lecturers and three Course Leaders. The disciplines covered information management, journalism, fashion, architecture, fashion, marketing, law, and digital marketing. The focus groups were transcribed verbatim, and inductive thematic analyses (Braun and Clark 2006),



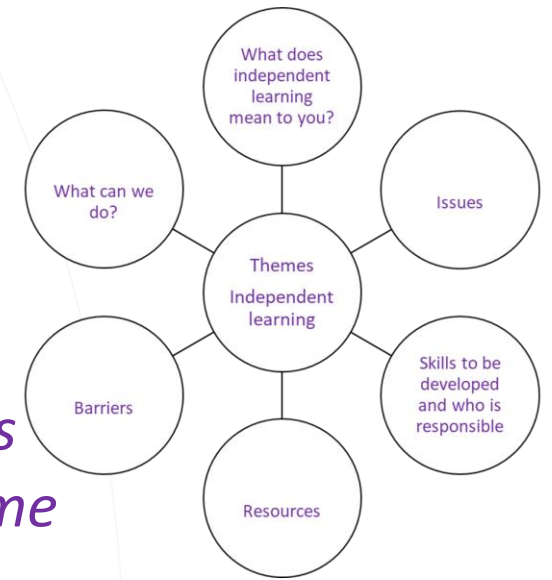


# Findings: Staff

Students need to be able to work on their own to an extent, with one member of staff recognising there is a spectrum of independent learning in students. They noted there is a *'spectrum, I think that takes place where you've got different levels of independent learning for some people'*. However, it was also pointed out that students need a foundation to be independent *'I think they need a foundation. They need a knowledge foundation that will help them do that'*.

Many staff highlighted that there are a number of resources to help with IL maybe too many which is the main issue information overload

It was highlighted that the skills sets *'change year on year'* and that for supporting *'direct entrants we put in extra things, and we try to sort of share resources so that they're not, we're not duplicating'*.



## Findings: Staff

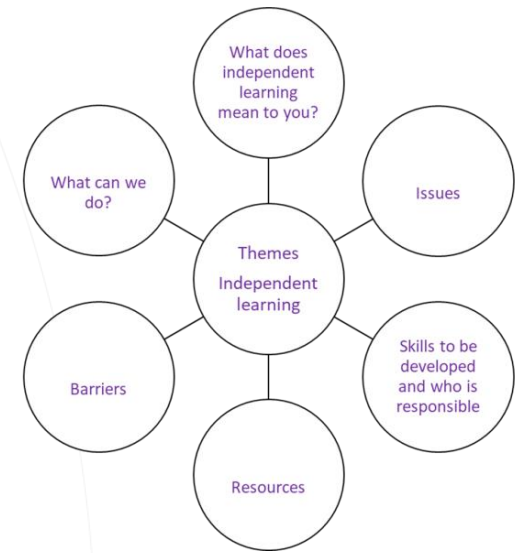
Staff were aware of many resources but barriers to IL are many: physical and technical

Aiding tools suggested were:

Assessment  
Module

Explain what IL is  
Ethos

End of year feedback and not SEQs  
Measurement tools

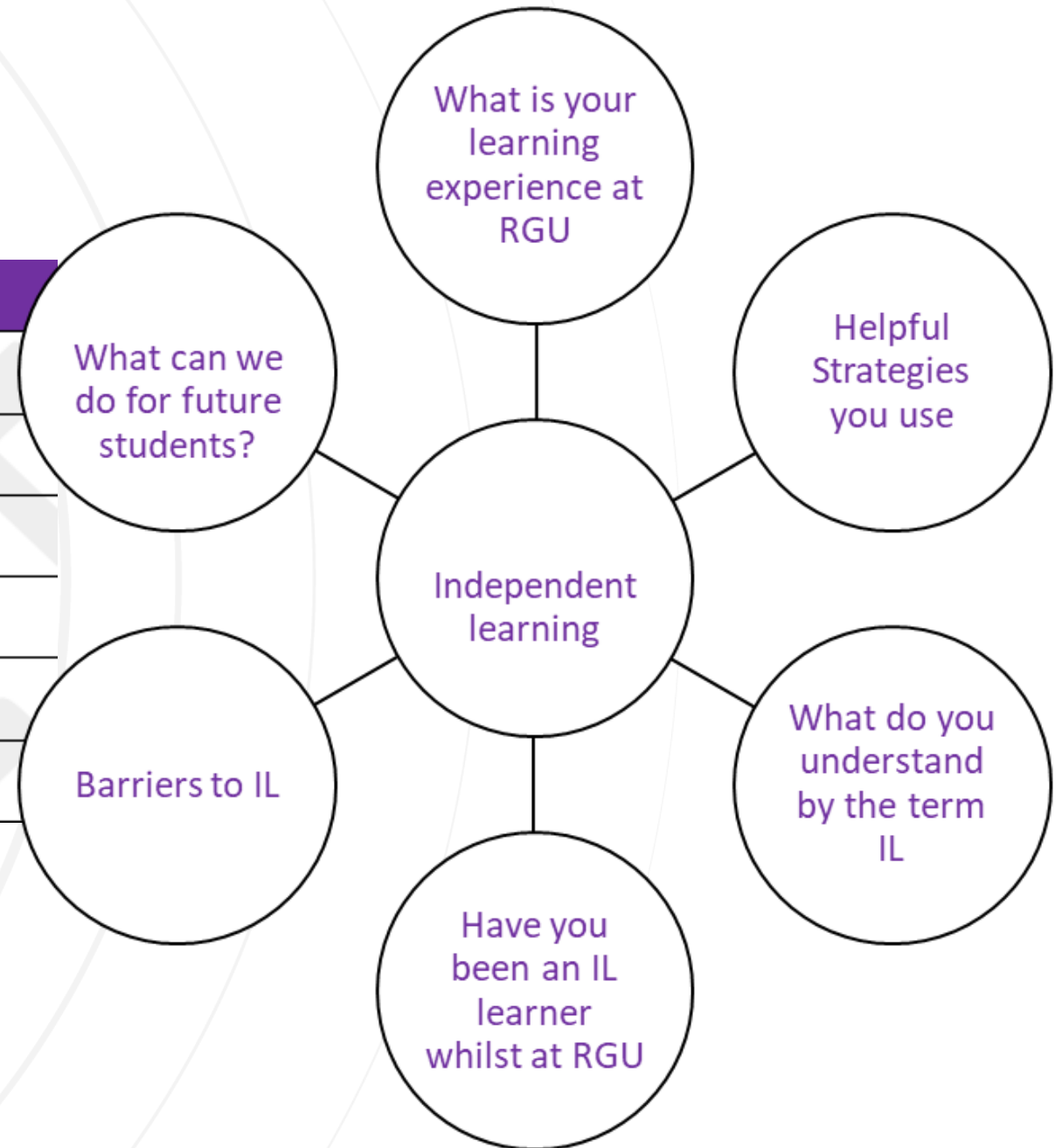


*'I want this student who comes in and who's going to make a great contribution to whatever profession' as it is a bit sad 'that we're doing a kind of remedial'.*

## Findings: Students

Group number	Total participants
1 CB 1-6	6
2 CB 1-6	6
3 mixed	7
4 mixed	5
5 Mixed	5
6 Mixed	4

The disciplines covered information management, international marketing, journalism, fashion, architecture, fashion, marketing, law and digital marketing and nursing

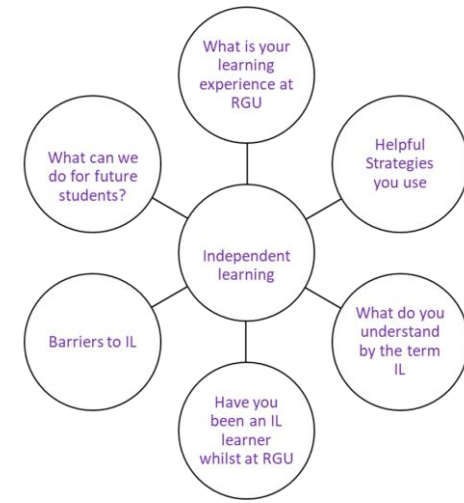


## Findings: Students

The majority of the students identified RGU as having a supportive learning environment with many resources available. Students use a number of strategies, professional services, specialist to their course and ad hoc.

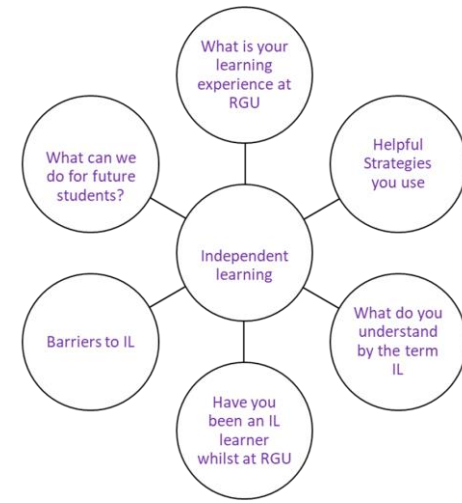
Students did not really recognise the meaning behind IL. The students highlighted more functional activities rather than IL definitions as such, with time taken over stipulated hours being mentioned, and taking control being highlighted,

*‘We learn as we do, and I think that's really good to be able, to just sit in the class and listen passively’.*



## Findings: Students

Have you been an IL whilst at RGU - some noted the changes in technology have enhanced the speed at which they can do things with a love hate relationship



*'I loved and hated the online teaching'*

Barriers to IL - As one noted *'it makes it a bit tricky for me to be an IL if I don't know the expectations'*.

Students noted for the topic of IL to move forward it is about motivating students to work in that way, developing creativity and curiosity and having resources at their fingertips helps

## **Recommendations**

A university wide definition of independent learning

A module/micro credential examining independent learning could be added to all degree programmes

A bringing together of information sources into one articulate rise programme or APP

A handout showing the correlation between moodle use and results



# Conclusions

- The definition of IL is not clear to all
- There are many varied responses to what it is and how it can be developed
- BUT
- If we wish our students to be more independent we need to let them know what this is and how the responsibility lies with them
- Resources need to be streamlined, more accessible and become a toolkit as a 'go to' when students require to. Maybe in the form of an APP

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