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

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

2023

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

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

## *The Aim*



# Key Learning Points:

To define what independent learning is

To outline the ways in which students use strategies for enhancing their independent learning

To highlight staff perceptions of what students, need to be independent learners

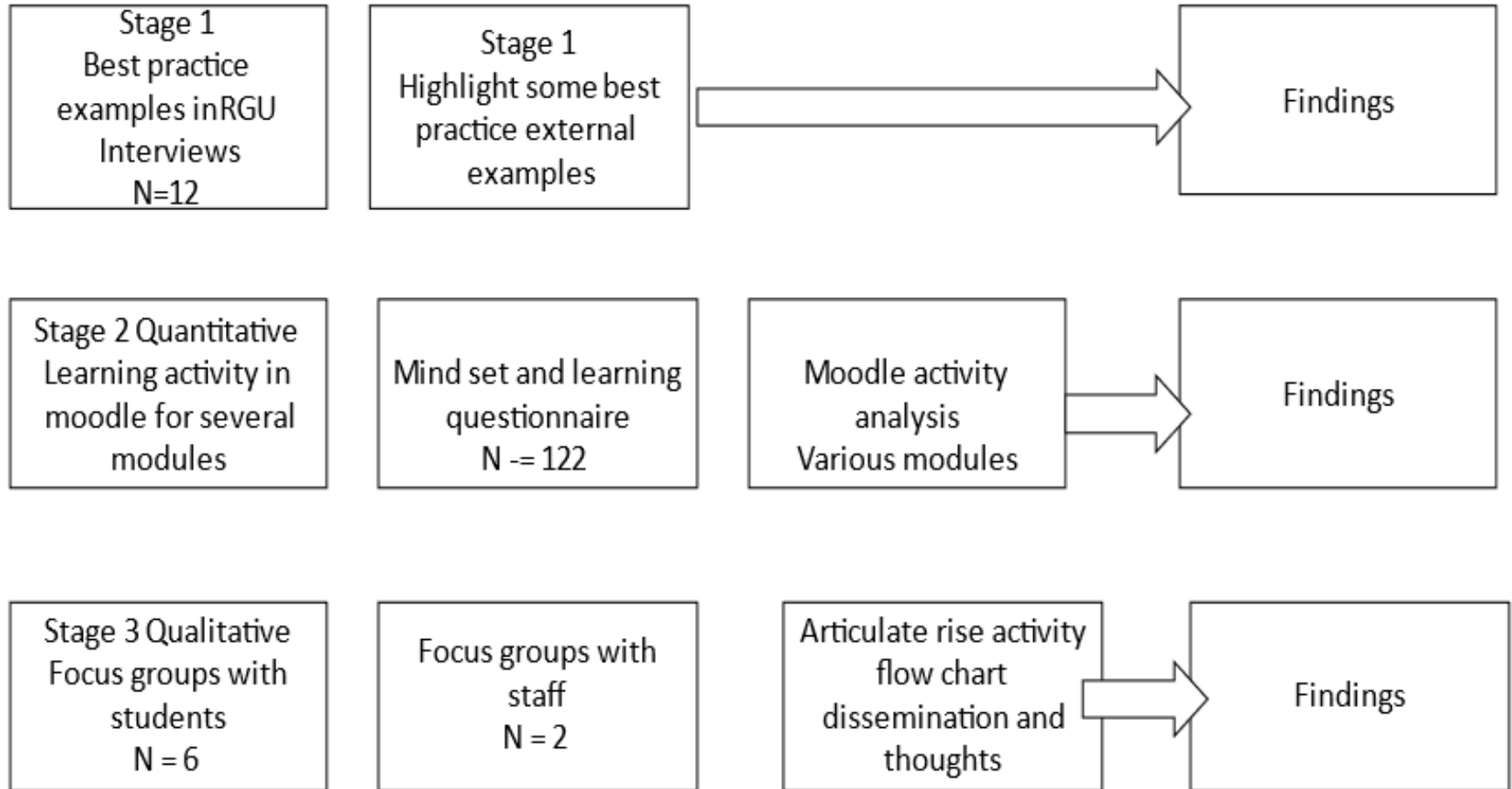
To recommend the best way forward given the findings of research, considering the SDG's, in particular, goal 4 focusing on lifelong learning



## 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.

# Methods





# Methods

## Themes



Settling questions

General Independent Learning  
questions

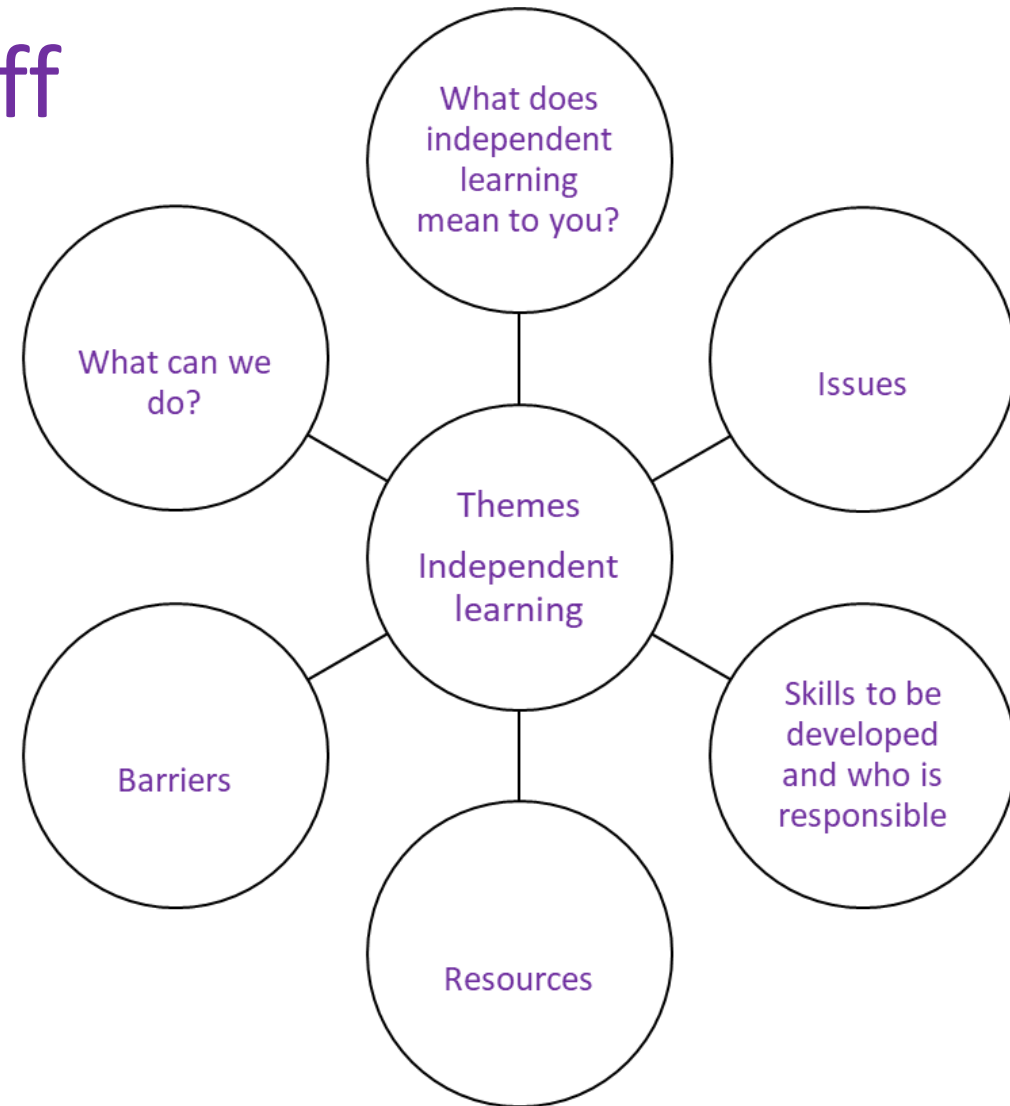
Resources for Independent Learning  
questions

# Findings: Staff

The composition included

The disciplines covered

The focus groups were  
(Braun and Clark  
2006)



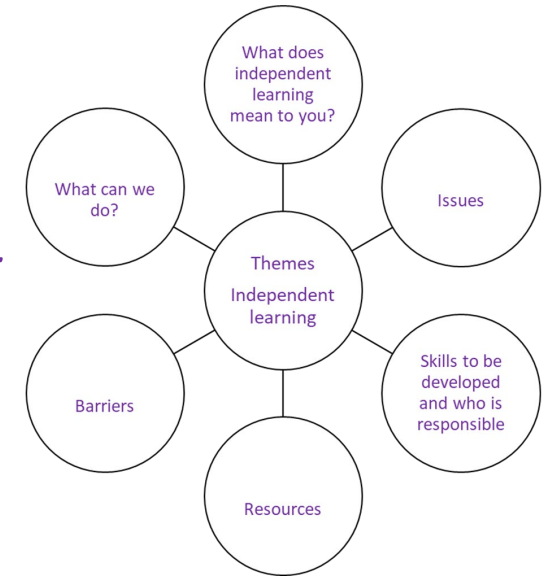


## Findings: Staff

Students need to be able to work on their own  
*‘spectrum, I think that takes place where you've got different levels of independent learning for some people’.*  
*‘I think they need a foundation. They need a knowledge foundation that will help them do that’.*

There are a number of resources to help with IL maybe too many which is the main issue information overload

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’.*

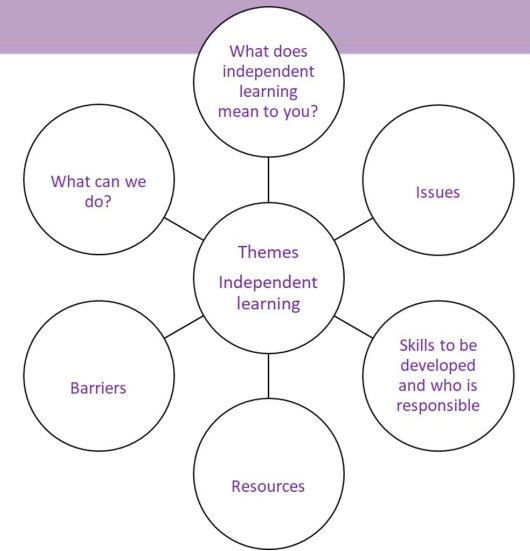


## Findings: Staff

Barriers to IL are many: physical and technical  
Enabling tools suggested were:

Assessment  
Module  
Explain what IL is  
Ethos  
End of year feedback and not SEQs  
Measurement tools

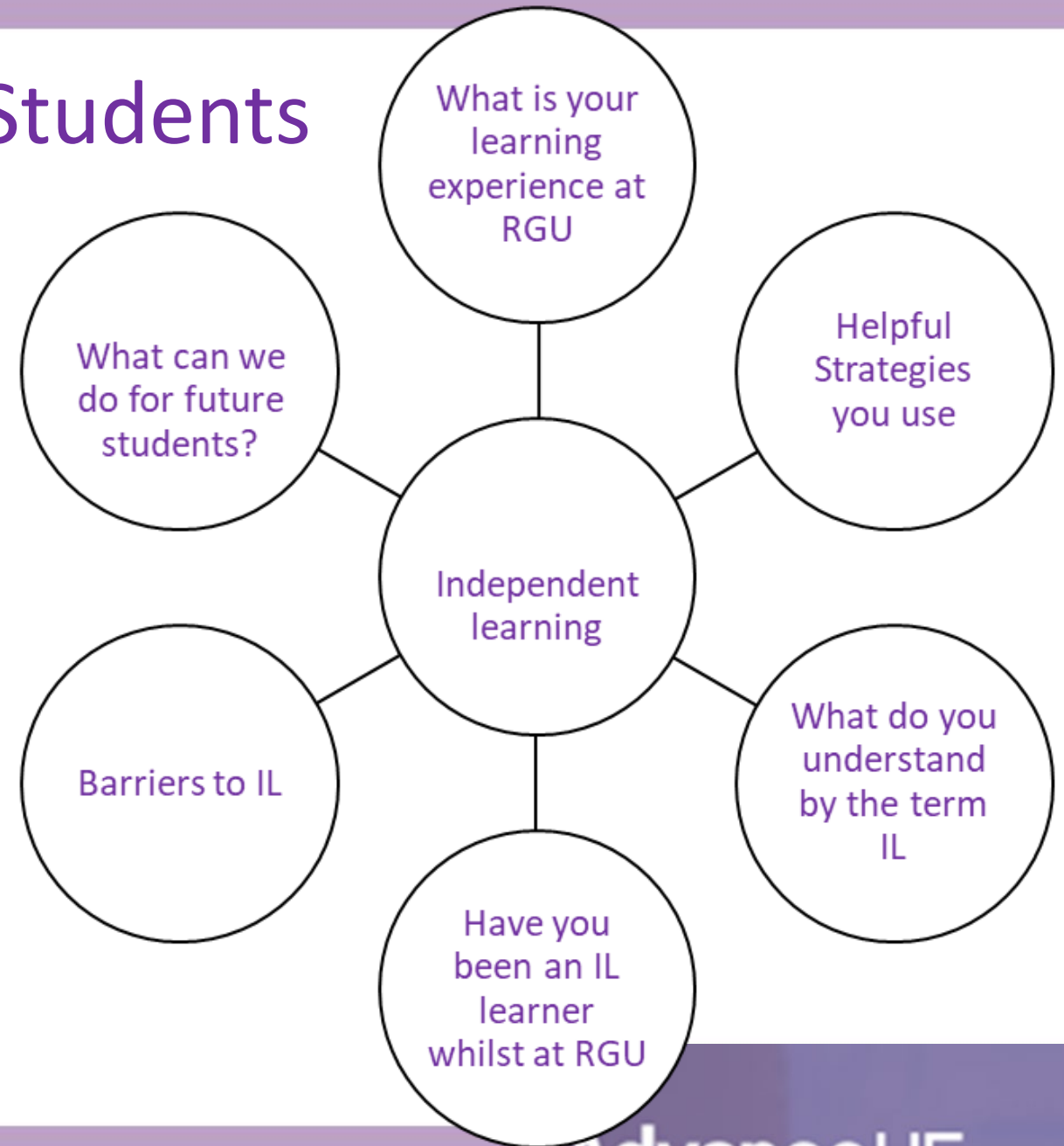
*'I want this student who comes in and who's going to make a great contribution to whatever profession' as it is a bit sad 'that we're doing a kind of remedial'.*



# Findings: Students

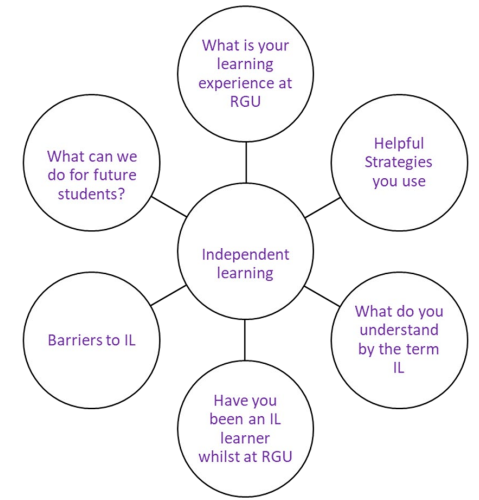
Group number	Total participants
1 CB 1-6	6
2 CB 1-6	6
3 mixed	7
4 mixed	5
5 Mixed	5
6 Mixed	4

The disciplines covered



## Findings: Students

The majority of the students identified RGU as having a supportive learning environment, 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'.*

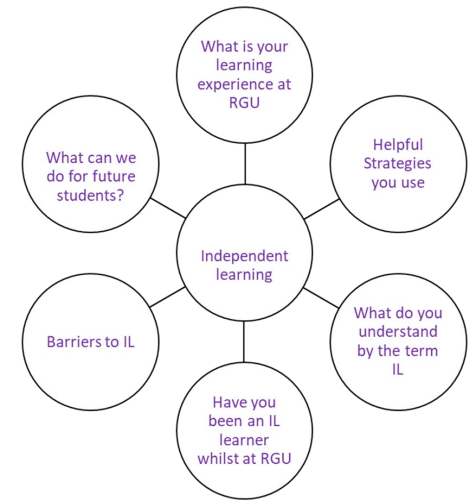
# Findings: Students

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



AdvanceHE

What approaches can independent learning take in educational settings to stimulate lifelong learning ?





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