Information and Library Studies on a Virtual Campus

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The RGU Virtual Campus
http://campus.rgu.com

- Established in 1999
- Courses include e-business, nursing, publishing
- By December 2000, over 2,200 users
- HTML superstructure
- Teaching materials in PDF and PowerPoint
- Supported by e-mail and telephone tutorials, electronic discussion forums and community groups, etc
PGDip/MSc ILS by Distance Learning

- PGDip/MSc ILS course launched September 2000
- PGDip element consists of 8 modules, undertaken over a minimum period of 2 years
- Further year required for MSc dissertation
- Modules split into ‘Topics’
- Subject content identical to that taught to campus-based students
- Course approved by LA and IIS
ILS Course: Evaluation Methodology

Conducted in Week 5 of the course

- **Students**
  - E-mail questionnaire
  - 29 out of 31 completed (93.5%)

- **Staff**
  - Paper-based, self-completion questionnaire
  - 3 out of 6 completed
Survey of ILS Distance Learning Students

- Of the 29 respondents, 27 were female
- 27 were in work, 26 of them in libraries or information services

Reasons for joining course

- Importance of gaining a professionally recognised qualification
- Improve career prospects
- Expand knowledge and understanding of chosen work environment

Reasons for joining a distance learning course

- To avoid a career break / year out of work
More than half (16 of 29) felt that they were coping well; the rest expressed some reservations.

Potential problems identified:
- isolation
- lack of interaction with teaching staff

Course structure and format was praised.

Some felt they could get more involved in activities and discussions.
Some felt overawed or daunted by input of others in discussion forums

Course is demanding of time and effort, but offers a flexible approach

Access to resources is a major issue

Additional support required - evening telephone tutorials
Survey of Teaching Staff

- Most positive experience: level and standard of communication and interaction with students
- Most negative experience: time-consuming e-mail replies
- Navigation around Virtual Campus straightforward
- Most useful features included: discussion groups; Campus Profile; Campus Induction Module
- Suggested improvements: access to readings in electronic form
- Some plans to change teaching materials and teaching styles for future modules and cohorts