

Sarah Parsons, Harper Adams University

Face-to-face interaction: All creatures great and small

Day 2 – Parallel V (14.30-15.00)

Mathematics Support at Harper Adams University, which has been operating since 2001, is run as small group tutorials, drop-ins for specific modules, and individual appointments with the Mathematics Support Tutor. This presentation will describe a selection of the support provided to a broad range of students and highlight the benefits of face-to-face interaction.

In many cases face-to-face appointments of one or two hours have helped students with whole modules, successfully preparing students for assignments and examinations, and raising student confidence. Face-to-face interaction enables students to receive immediate personal feedback on their progress and assistance, also providing the necessary reassurance for anxious students. This generally prepares the student to be a more independent learner in the future, once the need or impediment has been addressed. If a student doesn't know or understand what to do it is difficult for them to assess and address their own needs remotely. Some students have even reported that they felt more able to work on problems on their own just knowing that the support was available if they got stuck, and that in other situations where support was not available they had given up trying.

Statistics support for student final year projects is considered a particular case where individual tailored support is necessary; each student project is unique and carries a high mark weighting, making the project outcome and the advice given so crucial to the students' overall success on their course.

The opportunity for group discussion on the benefits and disadvantages of face-to-face interaction will also be included.