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The effectiveness of support for students with non-traditional mathematics backgrounds.

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Summary: This article describes an initiative introduced at Loughborough University by SIGMA, a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), to support physics students who were mathematically less well-prepared than their counterparts. The article outlines how students were identified as being less well-prepared. These students were taught in a separate group, using different materials and a different teaching style, but the same assessment methods were used for both groups. An evaluation of the success of this initiative is made by comparing the results of the less well-prepared students receiving support in 2005–06 with those of the less well-prepared students (taught in the mainstream group) in 2004–05. A key outcome of this comparison is an increase in the pass rate from 48% to 67%.

Classification: D35

Keywords: bridging courses; effectiveness

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