

Background

The LIFT OFF Learning Skills course was developed by LIFT OFF using advice from partner schools, colleges and universities to help to make the transition from school to Higher Education easier for S5 pupils. It looks at some of the key areas where learning is different, and gives pupils a chance to practice some of the key skills that they'll need for learning in Higher Education. This module is credit rated and carries 3 credit points at SCQF level 6.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this module pupils should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding and expanded knowledge of the role and value of HE, and how this differs from previous learning experiences;
2. Undertake self-reflection and set meaningful and realistic goals within the context of improving learning skills;
3. Develop and practise some of the higher level skills associated with learning in HE;
4. Plan, design and deliver a group presentation.

Previous Recommendations

Based on the previous year's programme recommendations, the following changes were made to the LOLS 2020-21 delivery:

- On the recommendation from Fife College, changes were made to the presentation criteria. Firstly, a maximum time limit of 6 minutes was added as a time management tool. Secondly, whilst still running on a pass or fail basis, a marking structure was added to each of the presentation framework criterion, enabling pupils to understand what they had to do to achieve and assess where to focus their efforts in future skills development.
- A standardisation meeting and exercise to discuss and agree the minimum standard the student has to attain, as well as to ensure parity in the application of the marking criteria and scoring was held prior to delivery and was supplemented with frequent full team discussions throughout the assessment period.
- The Assessment Policy was updated with a section detailing what the IV should do if they don't agree with the assessment decisions made by the Assessor. This detailed the procedure to follow if discrepancies were found in the sample of evidence provided.

- The Academic Writing workshops were redeveloped to reflect pupil feedback on the previous cycle of delivery and included more reference to academic journal articles and lecture content to support presentation development.
- Pupils expressed that the workshop length should be reviewed in the 19-20 cycle. It was originally suggested that these be reduced during campus event delivery, with an additional in-school session added to maintain learning hours. Due to COVID adaptations the campus element was removed but the workshops were still reduced to reflect pupil feedback.

Covid-19 Adaptations

Restrictions on business travel and national lockdowns impacted both the timeframe in which LOLS is usually delivered and the method of delivery. The following changes were made to LOLS 2020-21 delivery:

- To accommodate for increased resource development timeframes and an uncertain planning landscape, the LOLS delivery schedule shifted from the October school holiday period to the Easter holiday period.
- Promotion and sign up for the event were completed digitally using video resources and a MS form sent via email and phone.
- As HEI campus access was restricted, workshops pivoted to a digital platform and were all delivered virtually via MS Teams. Pupil group presentations were also delivered virtually on the platform.
- Pupil materials were all converted to a digital format and were hosted on a secure MS Teams private LOLS21 channel. Materials were sent to pupils using the assignment function.

Delivery

Virtually supported promotions resulted in 55 initial applications to participate in the programme, 46 pupils began the course with 39 of these pupils completing the full course delivery. Workshops were successfully delivered virtually utilising MS Teams as the main platform during the Easter holidays.

Group presentation assessments were delivered virtually 2 weeks after the initial delivery with logbook submissions falling one week after the final presentation delivery date. The initial assessment marking and internal verification process took place over 4 weeks and pupil feedback was delivered in early June, 2 months after the initial workshop delivery.

Pupil assessment evidence and documentation was compiled and structured before sharing with the Credit Rating Body Fife College for external moderation purposes in mid-June.

Programme Evaluation

To effectively evaluate the programme, pupils were given the opportunity during their feedback sessions to anonymously review elements of the LOLS programme. The 2020-21 cycle utilised a digital form and individual feedback opportunities to gather this evidence. Staff were also given the opportunity to reflect on the delivery cycle to gain an internal perspective.

Impact evaluation:

To assess the impact of LOLS, questions surrounding content in addition to LIFT OFF's internal tracking questions used to assess confidence and knowledge surrounding post school learning, were completed pre-LOLS delivery and post-LOLS delivery to gauge the impact of the course -

Fig 1. LOLS delivery feedback:

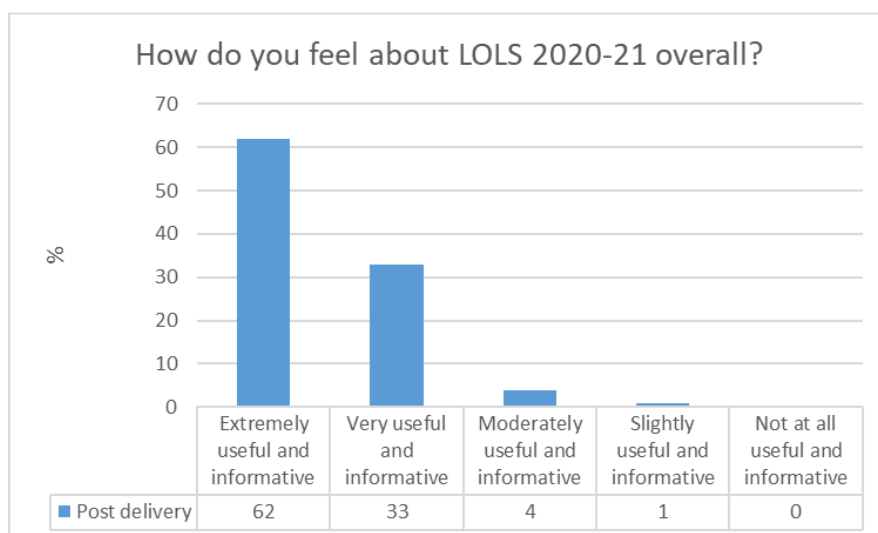
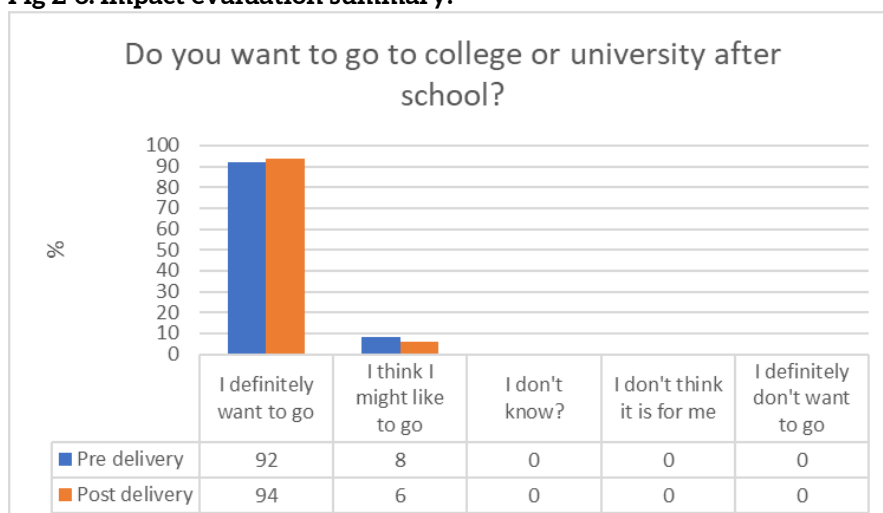
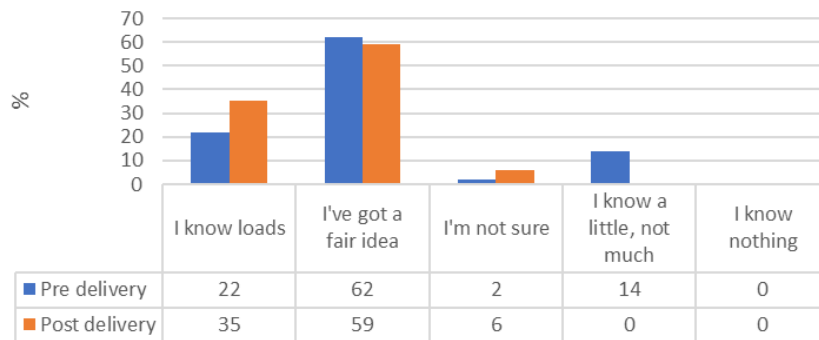


Fig 1: It can be seen from Fig 1. that the majority of pupils (95%) found the LOLS course to either be extremely useful and informative (62%) or very useful and informative (33%).

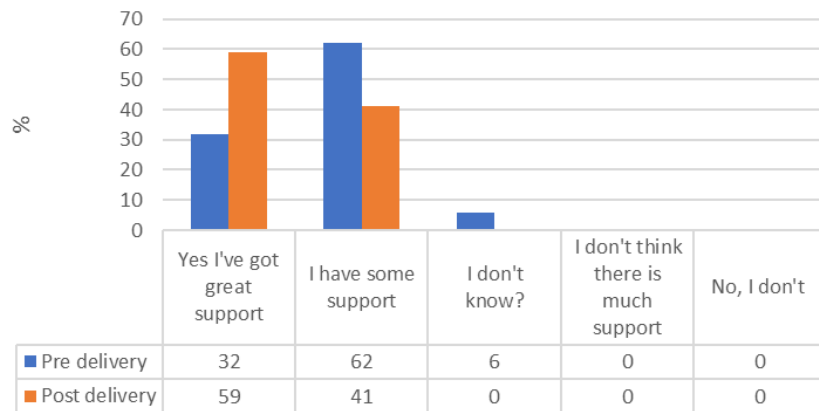
Fig 2-6. Impact evaluation summary:



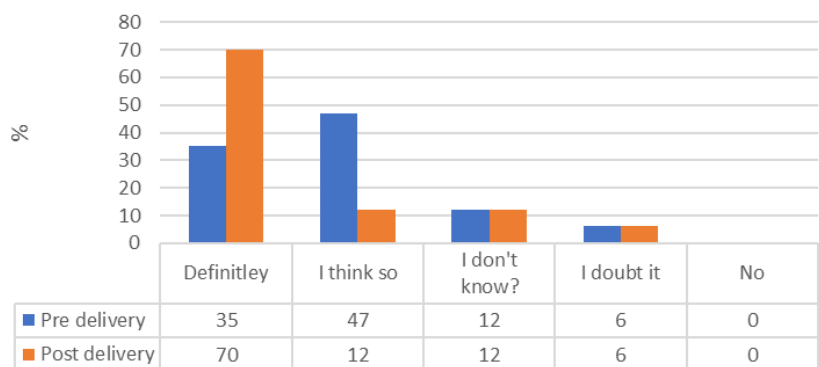
How much do you know about the range of courses and subjects that can be studied at college and university?



Do you think you have a good level of IAG to help you choose what you want to do after school?



It's not just about exam results! Do you think you are learning other skills and qualities to help you succeed at college or university?



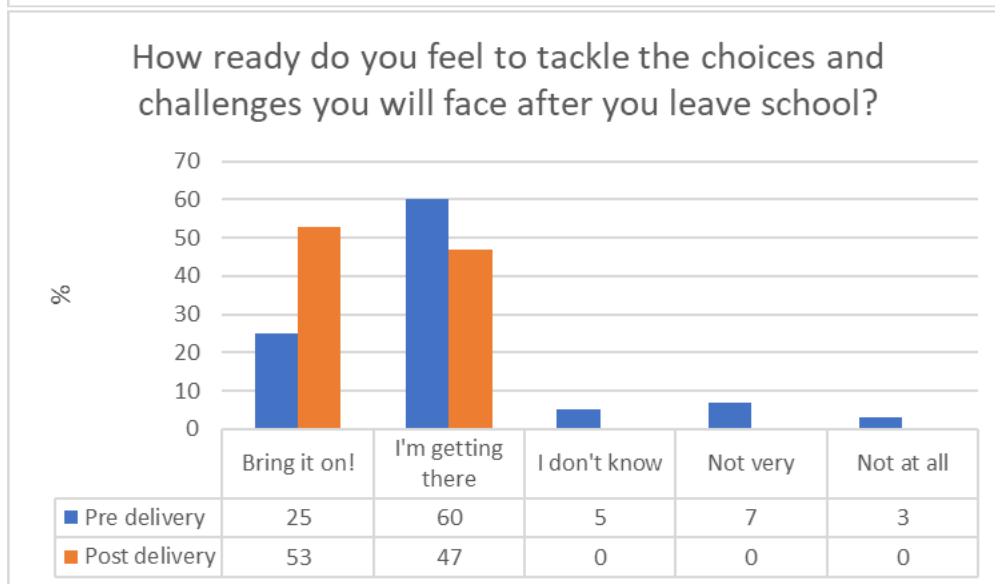
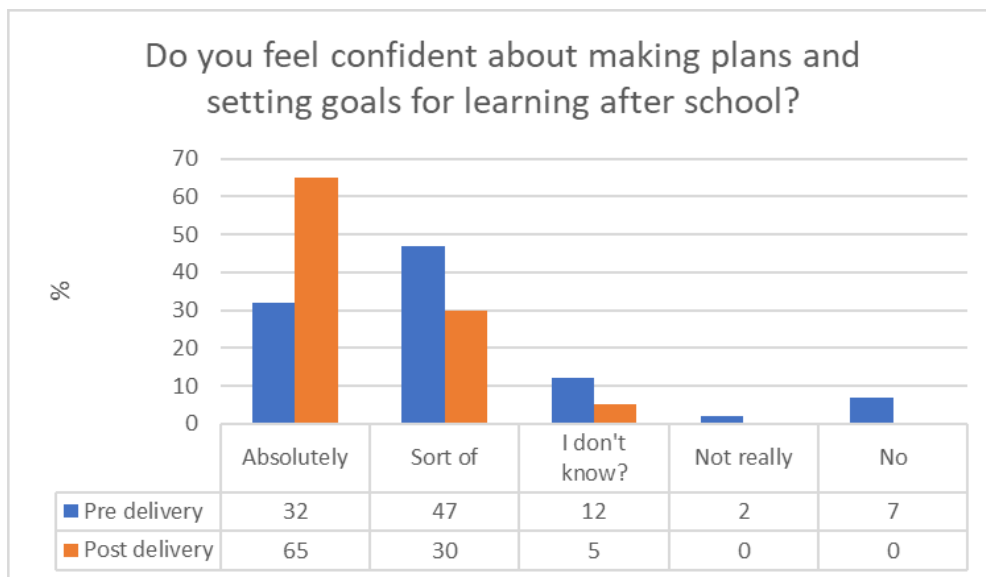


Fig 2-6: Shows the pupil tracking questions pre-LOLS delivery and post-LOLS delivery. It can be seen from Fig 2-6. that the impact of the LOLS course on all areas of pupils' post school aspirations, knowledge and confidence has been a positive one. Particularly in the area of skills development, knowledge of HE routes and confidence in achieving post-school goals, areas that LOLS is specifically intended to develop.

Success Rates:

Fig 7. Participation summary

Summary	
No of pupils who participated	46
Withdrawn	7 (15%)
Unsuccessful	2 (5%)
Passed	37 (95%)
Overall Pass rate	95% pass rate

Summary No of pupils participated 46 Withdrawn 7 (15%) Unsuccessful 2 (5%) Passed 37 (95%) Overall pass rate 95% pass rate

Fig 7: Shows that of the 39 pupils who completed the full course and once those that withdrew, the overall pass rate for LOLS (pre-moderation) sat at 95%, a 3% increase on the previous cycle in 2019-20. The withdrawal rate was largely impacted by an unforeseen clash with COVID adapted school assessments in place of the traditional exam diet.

Pupil Feedback

Pupils were encouraged to share their experiences about all of the elements of LOLS during the feedback sessions through a reflective exercise worksheet (MS Form hosted) and in one-to-one follow ups with a member of the LIFT OFF Team. This data produced a number of common themes -

- The majority of the pupils reviewed the presentation topic positively, with a particular reference to the material being both relatable and current.
- Despite reports of anxiety surrounding presentations, the overwhelming majority of pupils still preferred to be assessed via a presentation as opposed to an alternative method e.g. essay format, stating that this remains a core transferable skill that they rarely get to develop in school
- Some pupils expressed that some subject specific information would be beneficial from those that are currently studying at college and university.
- Some pupils felt that the time allocated to prepare for presentations after the workshops could have been extended slightly in the face of digital planning and rehearsal restrictions.
- Group call functionality and breakout room activities were positively received by the majority of pupils when evaluating the workshop delivery timetable.

Staff Feedback

LIFT OFF Core staff acted in delivery, assessor and IV capacities across the LOLS course and provided feedback at multiple debriefing opportunities, pre, post and during delivery -

- Although pupil numbers are lower than in previous years, sign up to this digitally hosted year was considered a success, particularly when compared to levels of digital engagement reported from partner schools during COVID restrictions and in the face of “recovery of learning” and assessment pressures. As such, staff recognise the value of transferring some content to a digital capacity in future LOLS delivery cycles.
- Workshops were clustered more fully on the first day of delivery to allow for shorter days across the rest of the week and a shorter delivery period. Staff felt that this was slightly too demanding for both delivery staff and pupils and recommended limiting academic workshops to a maximum of 3 per day.
- MS Teams as the host platform was very positively received, with particular reference to the assignment function for assigning pupil materials and providing detailed feedback.

Future Recommendations

Reflecting on both pupil and staff feedback, the following recommendations have been made for the next cycle of LOLS delivery (AY 2021-22):

- A hybrid model containing the most successful elements of digital delivery and in-person delivery is suggested for the next academic year (2021-22) dependent on school/HEI access.
- To avoid impacting school assessment and study periods, it is suggested that the LOLS 2021-22 delivery cycle reverts to the former timeframe of the October holidays. A blended approach of twilight, digital workshop delivery and in-school delivery/assessment sessions is the first wave plan, with fully digital provision acting as a contingency if required.
- A presentation as the concluding assessment criteria element will be maintained.
- The “Webinar” function on MS Teams should be explored as an alternative group delivery method prior to the next cycle of delivery to ascertain whether there are enhanced functionality benefits to this versus a group call approach.
- As some pupils expressed a desire to engage with current HE students to explore subject specific information, the involvement of LIFT OFF Student Volunteers in some capacity should be explored for the next LOLS delivery cycle.