Hurdle or Ladder? Student views and experiences of the transition from secondary school to undergraduate history

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New history undergraduates:
- Collaborative learners?
- Independent learners?
- Enquiring learners?
- Discursive learners?
Key questions:

• How do we prepare students for the demands of UG history - reading, independent learning, organisation?
• How do we support our students to become more collaborative, independent, enquiring and discursive?
• How can we highlight the importance of these to students for history learning and teaching?
• Overall: how can we make transition more of a ladder than a hurdle?
Method

- Pilot survey L4 students 2017/2018
- L4 and L5 students survey 2018/19
- Questionnaire - closed/open questions
- Planned follow-up surveys for L4/5/6 undergraduates 2019/20
Hurdle or ladder?

How do you *most* like to learn history?

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Working in groups
- Debates
- Student-led Presentations
- Discussions in class
- Working in pairs
- Reading
- Working with sources
- Other

L4 history undergraduates
L5 history undergraduates
Hurdle or ladder?

How do you *least* like to learn history?

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Working in groups
- Debates
- Student-led presentations
- Discussions in class
- Working in pairs
- Enquiry-led learning
- Reading
- Working with sources

L4 history undergraduates
L5 history undergraduates
Which of the following do you think you have *most* developed this Semester?

- Critical thinking
- Time management
- Organisation of work
- Confidence in speaking
- Confidence in written
- Reading books, journal articles
- Research and enquiry skills
- Working with others

Hurdle or ladder?

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Which of the following do you think you have least developed this Semester?

- Critical thinking
- Time management
- Organisation of work
- Confidence in speaking
- Confidence in written
- Reading books, journal articles
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Limitations

- Small sample for each cohort
- Did not distinguish between different groups
- Did not capture/compare school v. university experiences
- Limited ‘depth’ to the data collected
Key issues:

- Students unprepared for the demands of UG history – ‘sink or swim’: how they learn and what they learn. Hibbert (2002), Booth (2005)
- Student perception of learning history changes during their undergraduate study Collins (2011), Retz (2016), Mansfield (2018)
- Student preference for traditional methods of learning and teaching i.e. lectures & note-taking Hibbert (2006), Booth and Nicholls (2005)
- Need to actively manage the transition: providing a ladder of support Booth (2005), Hibbert (2006)
Impact

- Review of undergraduate of history programme at UH
- Discussion & development of pedagogical practice
- Transition work with high school students and their teachers
- Collaboration between academic history, school history and history education


