

## **Shortened Case Studies**

### **Individual Initiatives:**

#### **Sociology:**

##### **Angus Bancroft, University of Edinburgh**

This interview looked at Angus's level 1 and Honours level teaching. He noted that in level 1 that students were exposed to raw data (such as interview transcripts) and encouraged to analyse the evidence rather than being given the final products as a *fait accompli*. He also commented on the fact that in his honours class, discussions and tasks undertaken by the class have explicitly contributed to research that he has published. Angus noted that his redesign of his teaching methods came from a realization of a pedagogical problem rather than an explicit desire to raise awareness of research-teaching linkages. He also recognized that, though not deliberate, the redesign was more aligned with the graduate attributes emphasized within employability approaches.

#### **Psychology, level 1,**

##### **Elaine Duncan, Glasgow Caledonian University**

This interview focused on Elaine's teaching of the Introductory Skills for Psychologists module at Glasgow Caledonian University. This module has taken the unusual step of abolishing lectures altogether and replacing them with research based 3 hour workshops, which start with guiding students through the initial steps of research in terms of literature searches and library skills.

Students worked in groups and were given tasks with a series of mini deadlines. There was a strong emphasis on helping students to interact with the most recent research and they were also encouraged towards the end of the module to start posing their own research questions. Students were also given advice on the research process by 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students during the workshops.

#### **Theology Honours,**

##### **James Davila, St. Andrew's University**

This interview focused on James's teaching of an Honours module on the Dead Sea Scrolls in which the students produced a seminar essay. This was discussed in bi-weekly seminars before their essay abstracts were posted onto a weblog. Another seminar discussion followed this and a summary of the discussion was also posted onto the blog afterwards.

The students had an opportunity after the final seminar to rewrite their essays before being assessed on them. The blog was accessible to the international academic research community in order to encourage sharing of material and provide the students with a platform that enhanced their opportunities to have their research published. Students only submitted the finalised abstract for inclusion on the blog but had opportunities beforehand to receive feedback on their essays.

## **Education**

### **Aileen Kennedy, University of Strathclyde**

In this interview Aileen outlined a level 4 course which focused on exposing students to research-practitioners and enabling students to critique what was presented and how it was presented. This was achieved through practitioner delivered lectures on which students reflected, but also a more practical element that involved a group research project supported by academics. Aileen implied opportunities for developing a range of graduate attributes, particularly:

- Understanding the provisionality of knowledge
- Developing research questions
- Analyzing and critiquing information
- Having the confidence to critique the work of those considered authorities
- Participating appropriately in interactive group work

Though this design applied to a level 4 course, as Aileen Kennedy explained,

‘I think so much of it [developing graduate attributes] is about attitudes and in some ways what we are doing in level 4 is actually challenging attitudes that we as an institution have instilled in our students [in levels 1 & 2] that the curriculum is there and it’s set and you just implement it rather than, what is it? Why is it? And a lot of that we actually do to them and then we undo when we get here [to Honours]. So I think looking at attitudes and dispositions towards research and enquiry as a part of any professional discipline could easily be implemented at all stages for undergraduates’.

In essence, Aileen has pointed the way forward to curriculum redesign for the first year experience, thus linking this QE theme with another one, the first year experience.

## Discipline in the National Context: History

The discipline of history in a national context has a vibrant and robust research culture. This is matched both within and outwith the University environment. Public history, academic history and the professional bodies of history such as the Institute of Historical Research, the Royal Society of Historians and the Historical Association are all currently engaging with the question of graduate attributes in one form or another. In February this year the second annual event at the Institute of Historical Research saw academics historians from across the UK come together to debate the future of the history curriculum. One strand of this day specifically explored the role of research in the future of the curriculum. It was clear from the debate that undergraduate programmes are not uniformly focused on traditional ‘lectures and seminars’ methods of programme design, but rather have been enhanced to recognize research processes and practices as useful informers of pedagogical approaches. Thus exemplars included:

- Embedded exposure to research processes from level one onwards. A Scottish example of this is the level one Scottish History option:

### **Karin Bowie, Level 1 University of Glasgow**

Karin's teaching of a level 1 Scottish History course involves engaging the students in a research-type process. This process comprises of an overarching stress on the existence of multiple arguments within history (rather than dependence on a text book); an assignment in which students are required to do initial identification of possible essay questions within a theme themselves (without a focused reading list to direct them), attend a tutorial where they refine the question in dialogue with the tutor (who also helps identify appropriate references and sources) and then go onto answer the question independently. This design, however, was fundamentally linked to a recognition by the staff of the need to expose students to the most up-to-date subject matter in the area.

Of note: Student evaluations expressed discomfort at this process and Karin emphasized the importance of the opportunity to attend a dialogue-based tutorial. Enhancements designed around a research process model might not be popular as they require more engagement by the students.

Attribute development here is through exposure to:

- Confidence to act: uncertainty around format of question and resources to both construct and answer the question, followed by relief, less self-doubt in the face of unfamiliar tasks in the future?
- Construction of knowledge and answers via dialogue;
- Independent critical analysis in writing (appropriate to level 1)

- Add on 'doing' History courses;
- Individual essays supported by tutorials;
- Introduction of ideas of research article-construction through group work activities in which students would produce a 'group article' as an outcome;
- Engagement with public history through placements that then feed back into students' study. A Scottish example of this can be found at University of Glasgow:

**Stephen Marritt, Pilot project leader, Level 3, University of Glasgow**

As well as teaching the staples of medieval history (i.e. honours courses drawn from his own research area and a special subject that focuses on primary source analysis), Stephen has also implemented a project that provides opportunities to undertake a piece of local history research as their dissertation. What is unusual in this project, however, is not the focus on local history (rather than broader national / international historical themes) but that Stephen has established links with a local history publisher who also acts as a mentor for those students undertaking the projects, with the understanding that the best outcomes will be published as local histories.

This project is of particular interest as it links the research-teaching nexus to knowledge transfer, PDP, and work-related learning (through the SFC funded project: Aiming University Learning @ Work).

The History subject centre also has uploaded case studies of research-teaching linkages across the UK and abroad relating to history. It is clear from this that for some disciplines the professional bodies and subject networks can, if so enabled, influence academic staff approaches. A longer term question is: *how can links be made more effectively between disciplinary professional bodies and academic departments?*