



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Stepping Up to Honours Workshop

17 September 2014

Presenter: Abby Shovlin

Attendees: Approx. 58 attendees, 52 feedback sheets received.

Components of Workshop:

- Look back at first and second year (self-review and discuss with partner)
- Honours hopes and fears (discuss with partner)
- Intro to SCQF levels
- Honours handbooks-expectations
- What the research says :
 1. Schweinsberg, S. and McManus, P. (2005) 'Exploring the Transition Coursework to Research-Based Study in the Geography Honours Year' *Geographical Research* March 2006 44(1):52–62
 2. McCune, V. and Hounsell, D. (2005) 'The Development of Students' Ways of Thinking and Practising in Three Final-Year Biology Courses' *Higher Education*, 49 (3) pp. 255-289
 3. Nieminen, J., Linblom-Yanne, S., Lonka, K. (2004) 'The development of study orientations and study success in students of pharmacy'. *Instructional Science* (32) pp. 387- 417
- Students asked to take notes on above and compare notes with partner
- SCQF levels in more detail: what does *dynamic* knowledge mean? (what do you really know? activity with partner)
- How 'not really knowing' links to academic language (hedging)-spot the non- academic language activity (not in pairs)
- What do I know? Critique of my recent research 'Through Your Eyes'-students work in pairs
- Challenges and difficulties can be good things: Jo Boaler and Carol Dweck's mindset videos:
<http://youcubed.org/students/2014/boosting-messages/#more-120>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wh0OS4MrN3E>
- Looking ahead: what will the challenges be for you and how will you take a proactive approach
- Questions

Workshop aims:

To 'demystify' Honours by helping students achieve a concrete understanding of the rise in and nature of expectations in working at Honours level by:

- Exploring the SCQF framework
- To offer students a space in which to reflect upon their first and second years, think about how 3rd and 4th year will differ from this and how they can proactively respond to the challenge
- To further explore some of the key indicators/terminology from the SCQF levels e.g. dynamic nature of knowledge, critical analysis and research methodologies
- To offer students some positive and practical ways of viewing/ dealing with difficulties e.g. Carol Dweck's' mindset ideas and IAD workshops
- To encourage students to plan ahead (the looking forwards section at the end of the workshop)
- To answer students questions (time allotted for this at end of one and a half workshop-room booked for extra 30 minutes)
- To ascertain whether there is a demand for this type of workshop-and find out what the nature of this demand is.

Key
Green: aims achieved
Orange: negative feedback
Yellow: what we could do differently next time
Pale blue: subject specific comments
Pink: feedback on presenter

	Very helpful	Helpful	Neutral	Not very helpful	Not at all helpful
How helpful was this workshop	10	33	8	0	1
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The strategies suggested in the workshop are appropriate and will be useful to me	11	33	6	1	0

Free Text Comments

The thing that was most helpful was:
The end video on having an open mindset
Thinking about my weaknesses and strong points. How to respond to the fear of 4 th year
SCQF expectations and skills
Mindset video
Teaching about evidence based judgement. She was very fun!
Feedback from other students in research study like how they approached their honours
About the critical thinking, SCQF levels
Clarifying SCQF levels

Showing the difference between the different levels showing higher level thinking
The SCQF handbook bit
Extensive info about honours
Explanation how knowledge is actually produced through construction
Breakdown of what is expected in honours
Learning about surface vs. deep learning methods (the difference)
SCQF levels
The discussion about research journals and the correct approach to take when reading them
Explanation of each SCQF levels. Criticising Abby's research study
Being reinforced into you that Honours is more about deep understanding and getting your own knowledge together than 'pre-packaged' info
Understanding topics can be understood from more than one perspective
Making me think to look for a database for my subject making me think to look deeper at my courses-reading/analysing
Mindset video and info about being more independent
Year 1,2,3,4 expected outcomes
The PowerPoint slides
Research on what was expected at honours level
Enjoyed the critical analysis of paper-helpful to point out what I'll need in the future. Loved 'lecturer smaller, you bigger' 😊
Understanding the SCQFs
Thinking back to 1 st and 2 nd year and in that way realizing what I needed to work on
Getting to think about how I think
Going through each year-what is expected of you
Seeing the SCQF guidelines-would have been useful to have seen this before first year
SCQF made everything v. clear. Lots of resources!
Learning how to be a better learner. Deep approach!
SCQF portion
SCQF levels-what I should be doing in 3 rd year
Reading through the SCQF levels to see what is expected now we are in 3 rd year honours
The application and explanation of SCQF levels to my junior honours year
Understanding the differences between 1 st and 2 nd year and honours years
Learning about the expectations (of learning etc.) of third and fourth year
SCQF and handbooks
Making me think what changes I need to make this year and what is expected of me
Breakdown of levels, ways of critical thinking
Learning the subtle changes between 2 nd and 3 rd year expectations-moving to honours level
Teaching about evidence based judgement. She was very fun!
Telling me what skills do I need in honours years
Knowing the difference in SCQF levels
The summary of what we should be able to do in each year and how it develops as a level
Finding out about SCQF expectations
Explaining the progression
I like the idea of looking up random topics to get used to sources
Realising that other students from other subjects are facing similar problems and talking about how we can solve them
Showing the differences between 2 nd and 3 rd year pointing out the changes and identifying that it is not just harder than 2 nd year but different work. Knowing that there is sometimes no answer
Gaining awareness of expectations of Honours years
Extensive info about honours

As a result of the workshop, name one thing that you will continue to do:
I will try and remain positive throughout the year
Lots of reading around my subject
Critical thinking, make judgements and be confident with it
Critically analyse things
Try to be critical on things
Carry on using the databases and reference lists
Read critically
Not sure
Research
To discover and expand my academic voice and position
Keep an open mind when analysing research
Use my research methods
Read journals, lots and lots of journals (and criticise them)
Extensive research and selecting useful/appropriate sources
My own reading
Critically think
Constant evaluation of the field I'm studying (e.g. check online articles)
Use reference lists of articles to help find more articles on the subject
Work on in depth knowledge and critical thinking
Think critically and not take anything for granted
Read around myself and use databases
Independent learning-breaking up my day effectively to work on different tasks for courses
Prepare and think about the lit before I tackle an essay
Be critical when reading papers
Participate in other IAD workshops
Criticise information
Self-regulated learning, continue to follow my schedule my methods that sit with the deep mindset
Expand my research, use different resources
Stay ahead/on top of work
Constant evaluation of the field I'm studying (e.g. check online articles)
Use reference lists of articles to help find more articles on the subject
Work on in depth knowledge and critical thinking
Collect subject specific knowledge
Look at year requirements/expectations
Develop my growth mindset
Think critically and not take anything for granted
Be determined to succeed
Think more about presenting arguments and critical analysis. Focus on becoming a deep learner.
Be critical when reading papers
I will continue to build on my strengths and improving weaknesses. Learning from feedback.
Expand my research, use different resources
Wider reading, be organised

As a result of the workshop name one thing that you will do differently
I will try and change my mindset and be more positive about the subjects I find harder
See difficulties as challenges and continue
Try to change mindset. Learn as I go because I don't revise well. That will help me not cram and maybe learn to be confident and creative
Critically analyse and not be scared to disagree
Worry less about 3 rd year and focus on sharpening my skills described in workshop
Change my fixed mindset
Open mindset, time management, forward planning
Do more in depth analysing
Filter through research information better to be more concise
Read papers and question 'why' they did something not just the 'what'?
Read more! Try to be more focussed in learning and develop deep understanding. Avoid making sweeping statements because one or two articles support that view
Time management. Leave myself enough time for the selection of sources
More reading
Writing essays to account for different perspectives
Think more critically of papers-only one opinion
Think more positively
To be more independent
Try and improve my skills at being critical of papers
Have a more open mindset to individual learning
Criticise modern research conclusions (biology) and how they were conducted
Do more external research apart from lecturers
Read more widely and question knowledge
Use the HANDBOOK
Be less fixed about my ideas
Look up honours handbook
Be more open to learning myself rather than taking what I'm told as 100% fact
Increased critique, it's ok to say that there is no answer
Try to learn as I go, not cram
Do further research on subjects I'm not understanding fully using academic papers more than textbooks
Read and continue to link back course handbook and learning outcomes to course work
Think more about presenting arguments and critical analysis. Focus on learning as a deep learner
Question information I've heard and research it further instead of blindly accepting as true
Organise more and more efficiently
Spend more time studying
Reflect on my own criticisms for deeper analysis and believe I can improve
I will try to improve my literature searching skills and try to think critically about what I'm learning
Search for and read through findings/references that are not provided by the course
Try using Google Scholar
Will come to ask more Qs about how I should prepare for my knowledge and career development
Be more conscious of how I'm thinking. Be organised!
Read handbook
Try to find alternate theories rather than just accepting one
Not give up as quickly
More reading and critical thinking

Be aware of expectations of fourth year.
To do more in depth analysing
Be more independent
Try and improve my skills at being critical of papers
Read more widely and question knowledge
Look up my honours handbook
Do further research on subjects I'm not understanding fully using academic papers more than textbooks
More reading critical thinking

One suggestion for improvement of the workshop is...
More on coping with having to do things by yourself such as time keeping, dealing with deadlines
Make it 1hour
HOW to be creative I already knew that I had to be. More help.
Maybe use bullet points to present the main points instead of block of texts. Maybe use TED Talk
More on time management
Might be a bit shorter-difficult to concentrate
No
Have a small break halfway through
Maybe having a whole afternoon session (with a break)
More tips on time management and independent study etc.
Make it longer. Offer a 2 nd one
Less info in longer space of time
Maybe make it 2 hours next time
Slightly longer session (2 hrs)
Provide refreshments
More workshops
More coping mechanisms for stressful times
More interaction, as some points of the presentation could be given to read A guidebook?
Subject specific would actually be really useful
To be school specific
Have a break
The lecturer was funny!
The advice given was all common sense and should be already known
Waiting for us to complete evaluation before closing off the workshop
N/A
More time to talk to peers so we're not just sitting and listening
Less info on slides
Less focus on ALL of the SCQF stuff-but just years 3 + 4?
Going through the exercises we are asked to go through like note taking to see if we have actually achieved the task
Good but could do without silly video
I'd like more info on what to do with differing opinions, say, when writing an essay
Smaller groups and more interactive
More tips-time management, independent study etc.
More focus on forward planning

Possibly include effective ways of studying or time management? And how to become a deep learner
How to identify reliable evidence
More concise and focus on one degree
To be school specific
Have a break-more course orientated/less course specific-felt geared towards science/English, arts are a bit different
Separate workshops for courses
Perhaps split into science and humanities workshop. Only half really seemed useful for each side.
I would really like science/Chemistry specific help
Allow students from similar/same degrees to converse, have separate section for this
More interaction and practicing the skills mentioned. How to put the skills into practice
I'm expecting about how to manage longer essays. But since IAD have separate sessions too, so no need
No video
Cut down amount of content, not enough time for everything
How to get better at things-just kinda pointed out to me the things I need to be doing (still helpful)
Slightly longer session to cover all points in more detail (2 hours)
Separate the class into different groups according to the courses and then talk about specific skills for specific courses

Any other comments?
Abby was very nice and enthusiastic, really easy to listen to 😊
Nursing moves from level 8 to level 10 in our honours options course papers of 4000-500 words in 3 rd year
Unfortunately most of the content had already been covered in Nursing studies-so although a great session for other students, I didn't really gain anything new
Thank you!
You were a very good teacher, was really enjoyable
Loved the energy and positive-ism!
Great energy and humour
Very good lecturer but a bit dull and drawn out in some places
Thank you!
Really liked Abby-though she was engaging and interesting and not intimidating
Good-but could do without silly video
I'd like more info on what to do with differing opinions, say, when writing an essay
Thank you!
This workshop was really helpful. It was interesting to find out that all subjects are composed of dynamic knowledge and not just my own!
Thank you😊
Very helpful and friendly lecturer-it was good to speak to other students to see how they are feeling
V. good-should be better promoted so more students benefit😊
Very interesting and helpful workshop
Thank you
Short lecture was length of normal lecture. Enthusiasm was great.
Thank you very much!
It was really interesting, just too long in one sitting
I would really like Science/Chemistry specific help

Thank you!
Horrible example in the video. Soccer/football skills area motor skill, which can improve with practice even without conscious/active thought, as opposed to cognitive skills
Thank you!
Thank you!
Thank you very much!
Subject specific would actually be really useful
Separate the class into different groups subjects and talk about what each needs
Thank you😊
Thank you very much!
Thank you!:)

Comments from AS:

This was the first time that I had delivered this workshop. I booked DHT Faculty Room North (which can accommodate 75) and advertised the event as widely as I could: designed flyer, wrote blurb about workshop for Student Comms Student Newsletter, advertised the workshop on MyEd and sent flyer to Induction Team’s list of contacts.

The workshop was successful and I achieved the aims that I had set myself. All of the activities that I had designed were mentioned in the ‘the thing that was most helpful’ section. Jenna’s idea of using the SCQF levels as a point of discussion proved to be the most popular activity of the workshop.

The feedback shows that there is a significant demand for more of these types of ‘Stepping Up To Honours’ workshops. A substantial number of students also requested that these workshops be subject specific.

Following on from this feedback I would like to propose the following:

- Longer versions of this generic ‘Stepping Up To Honours’ Workshop (that incorporate the improvements that the students have suggested)-perhaps a seminar style event, lasting either a morning or afternoon (with breaks!) to be run at various key points in the AY i.e. beginning of semester one and beginning of semester two
- That I contact Tonks Fawcett in Nursing to find out the nature of the Honours sessions that this school provides. Perhaps this is a model that can be translated to other schools?
- Develop different models of workshops/resources that could be developed as templates for workshops and Schools.
- To work with two or three schools to design and pilot subject specific ‘Stepping Up to Honours’ style workshops
- To assess the impact of this workshop by contacting the workshop participants at a later date to ask them which strategies they have implemented.
- Long term: to integrate these workshops into a UG Transitions Framework

Appendix One: Flyer



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New students



Stepping up to Honours

An interactive skills building lecture for all 3rd and 4th year students

Stepping up to Honours is a new interactive workshop style lecture that has been specifically designed to help you succeed at Honours level study.

Honours level work has been described as a 'major shift in gear' and **Stepping up to Honours** will provide you with practical tools and tips that you can use to take a proactive approach to the new challenges that Honours will bring.

Based on student feedback on stepping up to 3rd and 4th year, this lecture will offer Honours level academic skill building activities in the following key areas:

- **Planning and managing longer essays, larger assignments and research projects**
- **Performing extended literature searches and compiling longer literature reviews**
- **Enhancing your capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking**
- **Taking a more in depth approach to your subject**
- **Finding your own academic voice**
- **Bringing new levels of sophistication to your own work**

The session will also offer you the opportunity to have your own questions answered.

Where? : David Hume Tower Faculty Room North

When? : Wednesday 17th September 1330-1500

Book your place now on MyEd

<https://www.myed.ed.ac.uk/>

Log on with your Ease Password

Event listed under Event Booking tab

Or email Abby.Shovlin@ed.ac.uk