

WHEN TWO BECOME ONE: A JOURNEY OF THE AUTONOMOUS LEARNER

Roger Lloyd-Jones
SHU

The Module

- *Level 5 compulsory single (Hon) History
- Approx 80 students (4 groups)
- No lectures, 4 wks of 2hr seminars/workshops
- Remaining 8 wks drop-in/feedback sessions

PURPOSE

- Prepare students for level 6 dissertation
- Focus on developing student AL capabilities
- Students invited to develop their own project, set the agenda, and think and reflect on the process
- Challenge- unconventional module – emphasis on learning

LEARNING PROCESS: 4 PARAMETERS

- 1. **Confidence**: student outside comfort zone of conventional module
- Student: 'Although the project provided a great opportunity to undertake self – supported work it was difficult to **know where to start**'
- Critical importance of 1st 4 wks- how to cultivate student confidence

LEARNING PROCESS

- **2. Progression:** In first 4 wks student share responsibility in groups –**prepares the transition to individual activity**
- Use of practical exercises and group assessment
- **Groups foster discussion of project feasibility, sharing ideas and testing out potential models**

LEARNING PROCESS

- **3. Innovation:** End of wk 4 students have to make their case for individual project, justify choice and have a tutor allocated as mentor
- **Opportunities & Constraints:** the Hitler problem!

LEARNING PROCESS

- 4. **Independence**: after wk 4 students weaned – develop their individual project and use drop-in-sessions to monitor progress
- Important that students focus on **design process and reflection** rather than producing a finished product
- 4 parameters over 4 wks act as the 'governor' the learning process

ASSESSMENT

- 1. A group exercise – to test learner ability to organise work in groups, select research topics, and search for evidence (submit Wk 5 -20% of total-feedback wk 6)
- 2. Individual research proposal (submit Wk 7 -20% of total- feedback wk 8)
- 3. Individual research report + individual learning log (submit Wk 12 -60% of total)

STUDENT REFLECTION

- 'The research undertaken for this study was more in depth than **any essay** I have written at SHU...I know that I am capable of research in depth as an individual thus building my **confidence**...
- 'Above all being more **responsible** and more accountable **for my own work and level of commitment**'.