

Deepening Participation for First Year English Students



Commenced: 2005

What is it?

This project is to help students doing BA English Studies and BA Film and Literature to get the most out of their learning from their very first day at University. The objective is not only to make the first year itself a supportive, involving, enjoyable and challenging experience, but to create ways of thinking and working which will make the entire degree a deeply satisfying and creative learning process. This year the project centres on the module 'Introduction to English Studies', but over the next few years it will broaden to cover other modules.

What is involved?

Essentially, the project involves working with students' own experience of learning to produce a module which helps students to work with confidence on the creative possibilities which degree level English should ideally offer. The module seeks actively to transform conceptions of learning and conceptions of what English studies is, so that tutors and students can work together on developing their own ideas.

Why is the project important to the CETL and the University?

The project is important first of all to the English students and tutors involved in helping to deliver the promise that higher education makes: to offer learning at the highest level. High level learning is more autonomous, involving exploring boundaries, choosing your own material to study, constructing answers from the 'raw ingredients' rather than second-hand, each person participating as fully as possible. It is this real, specific experience which will make the project's contribution to the CETL important—in exploring the multiple benefits of more autonomous and deeper learning. Though the project works very much with particular subject expectations about what English is (or is expected to be), the approaches to learning and to developing students as confident, independent experts in their own subject and in ways of learning should mean that it can be applicable to other disciplines in the university.

What do you hope the project will achieve?

Real higher education—an environment which gives students the best possible start and enables them to be real students from the very beginning, not just when they get to third year dissertation stage.

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This information can be made available in other formats.
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