

The Higher Education Academy

History Subject Centre

NEWSLETTER



In this final Edition of the Newsletter:

- A report from the 13th Annual Conference
- A new course for early career historians
- The student essay winning entry
- News from network events

The
Higher
Education
Academy

REPORT FROM THE 13TH ANNUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HISTORY CONFERENCE

The 13th Annual Conference for Teaching and Learning in History took place during the period of restructuring of the Higher Education Academy. The new structure sees the end of the Subject Centre network and some uncertainty about how the discipline will be supported in the coming years. The year 2010-11 has also witnessed a change of government, the Browne Review of Higher Education, the imminent introduction of fees, and the ending of state funding for the Arts and Humanities. Therefore, it might be expected that the delegates who gathered for the conference would be in a gloomy and pessimistic mood. In fact, the contrary was the case. Although there were anxieties expressed about the future there was a strong commitment on the part of delegates to focus on supporting excellence in all aspects of the learning and teaching of History in the UK. The emphasis was on collaboration, knowledge exchange and innovation.

The first session of the conference was devoted to a discussion of continuing the good work of the History Subject Centre after its closure in July 2011. This took the form of an interactive workshop where delegates detailed the three activities of the Subject Centre that they thought were the most important to continue. When these were pooled, four areas emerged as most valued:

- the annual conference
- early career support
- publications
- regional networks

Delegates then grouped together to discuss ways in which these activities could be supported in the future. The resulting recommendations were added to by other delegates throughout the conference and resulted in the publication of a fuller briefing paper, *After the History Subject Centre* (www.historysubjectcentre.ac.uk/elibrary/internal/br_richardson_afterthehsc_20110501) which makes recommendations for History Subject Associations, Heads of Departments, the Higher Education Academy and the wider History community on the key areas of support required in the near future.

As usual the conference was enhanced by delegates attending from the US, Australia and Europe as well as from all parts of Britain. The papers delivered demonstrated the diversity of exciting and innovative research and practice taking place to develop resources and case studies to inspire others. This year, generous time allowances were made for audience discussion and participation and many speakers benefited from the advice and considered insights of other delegates. An added attraction of this year's conference was the presence of a professional film crew (Robin Hood Media) who filmed a number of sessions and interviewed many of the delegates about their teaching practices. The latter filming is part of the History Passion Project, funded under the wider umbrella scheme: History Graduates with Impact, and the filmed interviews will be published on the project website this summer. The filmed conference sessions have been uploaded to the Subject Centre website to enable those who were not present to follow the discussion on the conference theme of Thriving in Difficult Times.

A number of other speakers spoke eloquently on issues such as curriculum reform, employability and assessment and feedback – all key issues in this current period of uncertainty.

As this will be the last conference organised by the History Subject Centre, the whole Subject Centre team would like to thank all past and present supporters of the conference and the work of the Centre as a whole. We wish you the best of luck for the future.



THE TWO-DAY PROGRAMME INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING PRESENTATIONS:

- History Passion Project, Value and Pleasure – Alan and Jeanne Booth (University of Nottingham)
- Teaching the History of the Big Society – George Campbell Gosling (Oxford Brookes University)
- The Great History Conundrum – Alex Moseley (University of Leicester)
- How Best to Use Student Failure to Motivate and Instruct in the Classroom – Andrew Koke (Indiana University)
- Lessons to be Learnt from School History – Karl Hammarlund (Halmstad University)
- A Student's Eye-View of Historiography – Marcus Collins (Loughborough University)
- Thriving in Difficult Times: The Hull History Partnership – Amanda Capern (University of Hull)
- From a Three-Point to a Seven-Point Grading Scale – Henrik Agren (University of Gävle)
- Liberated by Flip: Student Presentations, Academic Feedback and the Moving Image – Chris Szejnmann (Loughborough University)
- Home and Away: Internationalisation and First Year Transition in HE History – Melodee Beals (History Subject Centre/University of Warwick)
- After Standards: Australian Historians Grapple with a Compliance/Audit Future – Sean Brawley (University of New South Wales)
- The Employability and Future Career Progression of Undergraduates – David Hussey (University of Wolverhampton)
- Employability and the History Curriculum – Alison Twells (Sheffield Hallam University)
- It's Good to Talk – Sam McGinty and Alasdair Blair (De Montfort University)
- Beyond the Portfolio: Assessing WPL in Undergraduate History Programmes across UK HEIs – Richard Hawkins and Harvey Woolf (University of Wolverhampton)
- Thriving in Difficult Times: Cameron, Cuts and Careers - the 'Utility' of History? – Freya Cox Jensen (Christ Church, Oxford)

To look in detail at any of the conference presentations or videos please visit the elibrary and search 'TLC 2011' by keyword.



TEACHING AS A POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHER

This year, the History Subject Centre hosted a series of workshops throughout the UK on teaching as a postgraduate researcher. The workshop series took place at the University of Bristol in November; the Institute of Historical Research (London) in February and concluded with Newcastle University in March. We were very pleased to be able to involve a large number of academics from Welsh, English and Scottish universities as well as postgraduates from all four nations.

‘I now feel more enthused about post-doctoral life and what to do to start a career in academia.’

The events each provided delegates with short introductions on where and when to find teaching, how to understand their first year students, lecturing, eLearning and pedagogic research. Here, the lecturers were able to

pass on their knowledge and experience from the beginning of their teaching careers, as well as the top tips they had gathered along the way. The event also hosted two hands-on workshops where the delegates could try out two of the most common parts of the postgraduate teaching experience; small group teaching and assessment. Prior to the event, the delegates each marked two Level 4 (non-honours) essays according to a set marking criteria. During the workshop, they formed small groups to discuss their feedback and marks and tried-not always successfully-to reconcile their marks into an agreed grade. Nearly all of the delegates were surprised at the marks the papers had received (many being harsher or more lenient) and it was generally agreed that being able to work through their marking together gave them more confidence and an awareness of where they currently stood on the harshness-spectrum. The second workshop, on small group teaching, separated the delegates into small groups of 5-7 students-each of whom were given a personality trait, such as talkative-and a tutor with a discussion topic. Each group was given a different seminar style to emulate, after which we reconvened and discussed the pros and cons of each style. Although the sharing of

past experiences was a crucial aspect of this seminar, as was discovering that they were not alone in not being able to get some students to talk, what was most interesting to learn was that most history postgraduates are extremely hammy actors. The events could not have been put on without the support of a wide range of lecturers who donated their time to these events, and the History Subject Centre is particularly thankful for their continuing contribution.

The Subject Centre would like to offer their thanks to:

- Kate Bradley, University of Kent
- Sharif Gemie, University of Glamorgan
- Josie McLellan, University of Bristol
- John Wood, Coventry University
- Kimm Curran, University of Glasgow
- Sam Harper, Institute of Historical Research
- Michael Weatherburn, Imperial College London
- Helen McCarthy, Queen Mary, University of London
- Lucy Allwright, History Lab
- Alyson Mercer, History Lab
- Pauline Elkes, Staffordshire University
- Charlotte Wildman, University of Manchester
- Samantha McGinty, De Montfort University
- Tanja Buelmann, Northumbria University



TEACHING AS AN EARLY CAREER HISTORIAN

In May, the History Subject Centre hosted an event for final stage PhD researchers and post-docs to explore teaching as an early career historian. Generously hosted by Loughborough University, the event allowed delegates to learn, from those in more advanced stages of their career; the joys and pains of departmental administration, distance learning, alternative assessment techniques, student engagement and work placements. These information sessions ranged widely and opened up new possibilities to the delegates. While not all suggestions could be easily implemented by the delegates in their current environment, it was agreed that work-placements and multimedia assessments were certainly worth pursuing when the opportunity arose. More importantly, the delegates were able to add context and qualification to the presentations, letting their colleagues know about practices and techniques that had been employed in their own universities.

The afternoon involved two workshops on module design. Prior to the event, delegates were asked to 'inherit' a survey module from a colleague who no longer worked at the (fictitious) university at which they had just been hired. Although very few of the delegates had teaching or research experience on the module content, they had to remodel the course guide to a) fit into a new university timetable b) include lectures and seminars that the individual could teach on their own. Once at the workshop, delegates presented their creations and questioned each other's' choice and changes. After initial discussions, new considerations were raised, such as changes to assessment, consistency and style of lecturing and the prescriptiveness of seminar format for postgraduate tutors. In the end, most came to the realisation that they too could teach a course on the 'wrong' time period or continent. The second half of the afternoon was spent exploring how to create a special subject module (and get it approved by your university). Delegates were led through the paperwork and considerations that special subjects, much more than surveys or optional modules, had to take into account. As an observer, it was amazing to see the depth and

breadth of special subjects on offer in the near future by these delegates and part of me wished I could be an undergraduate again.

The Subject Centre would like to offer their thanks to:

- Marcus Collins, Loughborough University
- Billy Frank, University of Central Lancashire
- Alison Twells, Sheffield Hallam University
- Sharif Gemie, University of Glamorgan
- Alex Bamji, University of Liverpool

'I feel this workshop may have had a critical impact on my professional development—I would now feel confident talking about how I would teach a course on Modern Britain and one day would actually like to teach the sample syllabus I developed for this.'

DEVELOPING ACADEMIC PRACTICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION HISTORY: A NEW ONLINE MODULE

Building upon the success of the Teaching as a Postgraduate Researcher workshop series, the History Subject Centre, in conjunction with the University of Warwick, has now developed a 10-week online module entitled Developing Academic Practice in Higher Education History. The module is designed to provide a supportive environment and an introduction to higher education pedagogy for those at the early stages of their teaching development. The module begins with an introductory seminar, hosted by the University of Warwick, which familiarizes participants with the module, providing a structured environment for developing peer support, engaging with reflective exercises and exploring the online interface. Over the following weeks, participants watch pre-recorded lecture sessions, which include transcripts and PowerPoint downloads, undertake a

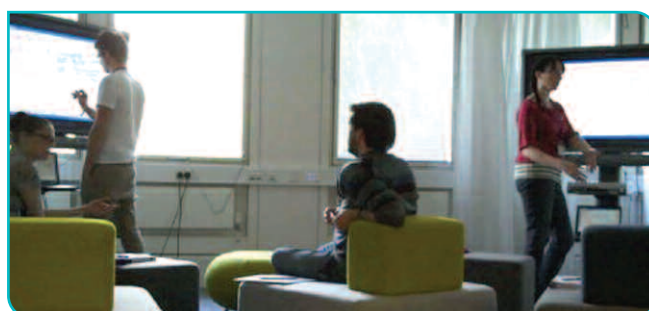
Teaching in Higher Education as a Postgraduate Research Student in History



- Module Information
- Module Timetable
- Assessment

Welcome to the Teaching as a Postgraduate Researcher online module. This module aims to provide you with a discipline-specific background to the teaching environments you are likely to encounter during your postgraduate experience. It is intended to act as a component of the postgraduate teaching qualifications offered through your own university. If you have not already done so, you may wish to contact your home department regarding this qualification.

selection of pedagogic readings, engage with a variety of reflective exercises and discuss their progress with their peers through an online message board. Topics covered include small-group teaching, assessment and feedback, eLearning and student engagement, including internationalisation and inclusion. The module concludes with another face-to-face seminar, where participants review their action plans and reflect upon their current teaching practice and those steps they intend to take in the near and long-term future. The programme, which ran as a pilot scheme during June 2011, will be available as a transferable and accredited unit through the University of Warwick's History Department in 2011-2012. For more details contact Sarah Richardson (sarah.richardson@warwick.ac.uk)



'EARNING AND LEARNING': WHAT IS THE REAL VALUE OF A HISTORY DEGREE?

Congratulations to the winner of this year's Student Essay Competition: Ryan Kemp from Oxford University. Students from across the country, at a range of institutions submitted essays on the topic 'Earning and Learning': What is the real value of a history degree? We received a number of thought-provoking entries, and commendations must also go to the two runners up, Georgia Fardon of Liverpool University, and Claire Price from the University of East Anglia. Ryan's essay is reproduced here .

Questioning the value of a degree has never been more relevant. The tuition fee for a standard undergraduate degree has now risen to a maximum of £27,000. The value of History is especially prone to criticism. As a non-vocational course, it does not lead to one particular career. In a wider sense its importance is also being queried. The cut to all Humanities funding is symptomatic of a belief that the more "practical" scientific subjects are of greater value to society.

However it can be shown that the value of a history degree both for a career and the individual can all too easily be underestimated.

For the future earner, the value of a degree for future prospects is critical. A History degree provides both skills which are extremely valuable and the freedom to choose between various careers. History is above all founded on the study of people and attempts to understand them. It provides an appreciation of the past which can be integral for a number of professions. The skills developed through its study are as useful as they are transferable. History cultivates the capacity to absorb and analyse great quantities of information. Debate and discussion form cornerstones of historical study, and the ability to reason with clarity and persuasion will always be useful in later life. Generating ideas,

good organisation and the independence created by personal research are all of real value to an employer. As a result History graduates take careers in many fields. For Law, History provides a useful background but job prospects in administration, teaching, commerce, journalism, business and politics are all common. Often they involve the administration of human affairs, and the ability to understand people, events and society through studying beyond our own experience is a key skill fostered by historical study. For the future earner the value of a History degree should be in no doubt, for it can open a multitude of exciting paths.

Although the opportunities for History graduates are considerable, it is elsewhere that the real value of a History degree lies. The approach that History teaches is by far its most important contribution. It encourages a sceptical approach to the views of others. Whilst this may sound negative, this desire to question and query underpins many of the skills outlined above, as well as being critical in its own



right. Good history works by reviewing the evidence and allowing it to tell its own story as much as possible. It should not use evidence to support pre-conceived judgements. When this occurs, the historian not the evidence is deciding History. This concern to be honest and impartial is idealistic, but it is not unimportant. Good history according to Sir Geoffrey Elton "advances in the crucible of debate". It preserves what is valuable in past studies and

disregards what is not. Through this constant revision, historical study will never be complete, but hopefully will instead reach better conclusions. It is for this approach and commitment, that a History degree really becomes valuable and worthwhile.

This is especially important, considering the birth of History as a professional subject. Throughout the 19th century, its midwife was undoubtedly that of nationalism. The government money poured into historical scholarship was designed to create a national identity that could then be defused through a national curriculum. Across the continent museums were designed to generate interest in the history of the nation and its current achievements. The creation of the Monumenta Germanica Historia in 1819 provides a clear example, editing the documents of previous Germanic people.

'EARNING AND LEARNING'

The projection of the nation into the past has not been useful for History. A recent report by Stuart Foster and John Nicholis concluded that "all nations are to some degree guilty of using history textbooks as means of promoting a view of the past from a nationalistic perspective". For students in the US the Second World War began in 1941 in dramatic emotive terms. In Japan, textbooks emphasise the previous US sanctions and embargos throughout the 1930s. The true value of a History degree, lays in escaping the shackles into which professional History was born, and seeking instead to review the past and everyday life without such bias. A degree in History and the sceptical approach it teaches can be used to question events and individuals with a greater accuracy and sensitivity. Parallels in history are frequently drawn, but often incorrectly. Last year, the BNP published children's cartoons featuring "Billy Brit's" interpretation of historical figures, from Boudicca and Shakespeare to Enoch Powell and Nick Griffith. In 2001 the Twin Towers attacks were carried out by men who called their enemies Byzantines and Crusaders. The ability to judge other interpretations of the past, sometimes with blatant political aims, can be vital. History provides a better grounding than any other degree, to be critical of such parallels and to foster personal judgement.

In conclusion, the true value of a History degree does not merely lie in career prospects. It can, like many degrees, provide you with greater opportunities. As a degree, History can open doors like any other. But it has so much more to offer than this. It can create an attitude towards the interpretations of others which is critical but not pessimistic. History is better placed than any other degree, to promote a questioning attitude to all aspects of life, making it more interesting, more exciting and more personal. It can help see through the lies of one interpretation and the truth of another. Most importantly of all, it lets you, through good evidence decide. The immediate experience of all of us, in the grand scheme of things is not extensive. On a final note then, History is perhaps most fascinating when it helps us move beyond our short lifetime and connects us, however fleetingly, with civilisations, cultures and people of whom we would otherwise know nothing. It is here along with its critical attitude that the real value of a History degree emerges, and even appears overwhelming.

PUBLICATIONS

The publications strategy of the History Subject Centre over the past two years has been to provide a range of online and hardcopy resources covering research skills, teaching methods and pedagogical research. These have proven to be extremely popular and valuable to the history community both as downloads and in hard copy where available. We will be distributing the last of our stock of hard copy publications in the autumn and so if you have any requests please contact us by email: heahistorysubjectcentre@warwick.ac.uk as soon as possible, or use our online request form: <http://www.historysubjectcentre.ac.uk/publications/request>. Our e-publications will continue to be available on our website. Our key publication series include:

HISTORICAL INSIGHTS: FOCUS ON TEACHING

In total we will have published eight of these teaching guides by July 2011. Each provides guidance on how to approach teaching specific topics as well as examples of key themes, class materials and indicative resources. The guides have reflected the diversity of History teaching in the UK offering support for modules from the medieval period to the present day:

- Andrew Dawson, *Hollywood for Historians* (September 2009)
- Kate Bradley, *Teaching as a PhD Student* (September 2009)
- Robert Liddiard, *Medieval Castles* (March 2010)
- Kate Bradley, *Contemporary Britain* (June 2010)
- Ralph McLean, *The Enlightenment* (October 2010)
- Richard A. Hawkins, *Digitised Newspapers* (February 2011)
- Jonathan Shepard, *Teaching Byzantium* (July 2011)
- June Balshaw and Alison Twells, *Work-related Learning in History* (July 2011)

Just to say I came across your publication on teaching the history of contemporary Britain. An excellent resource - thank you! [Academic]



HISTORICAL INSIGHTS: FOCUS ON RESEARCH

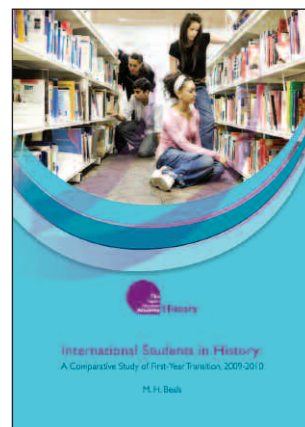
The sister series to Focus on Teaching is the Focus on Research guides published in conjunction with the Institute of Historical Research. These pamphlets give practical examples of key research skills for historians along with exemplar resources, further reading and electronic material. They are applicable for those teaching research skills to students as well as those undertaking research in a particular area themselves. Our three handbooks reflect areas where particular guidance and support is required:

- Mark Freeman, *Quantitative Skills for Historians* (March 2010)
- Graham Smith, *Oral History* (January 2011)
- Melodee Beals and Lisa Lavender *Newspapers* (May 2011)



further the interest in and study of history both at school and university. It provides information and case studies by staff and students from the History community to encourage collaboration, a better understanding of study requirements at university level and effective preparation for transition.

Melodee Beals, *International Students in History: A Comparative Study of First-Year Transition*. Based on an extensive survey of first year students in History courses throughout the UK, this report provides history lecturers, tutors and pastoral staff with new disciplinary perspectives on the first year experience of international and home undergraduates and new avenues for discussion with their peers and students on first year transition.



BRIEFING REPORTS

Each year we commission reports on key areas of interest to the History community. Our major publication for 2011 will be *History Graduates with Impact* which is discussed in more detail on page 10. Some of our popular briefing reports have included :

Alexandra Cronberg, *History Departments and the National Student Survey*. This report has been invaluable for those wanting to add discipline-specific context to the annual student satisfaction survey. It presents the results in a comparative fashion in order to understand the relative student perceptions of history departments across all institutions, particular strengths and weaknesses and any patterns that are identifiable across different institutional groupings and regions of the country.

Lisa Lavender, *History in Schools and Higher Education*. This publication is invaluable to those interested in widening participation, inclusion and transition. It aims to highlight practical ways in which teachers in schools and HE can

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Our other publications have included a monthly e-bulletin which focuses on the news, resources and events of the Subject Centre; our bi-annual newsletter for in-depth articles and analysis; our social networking presence including our blog, Twitter and Facebook sites; conference reports and case studies.

The HEA History Subject Centre has been an invaluable resource that is the first place I would turn to when thinking about how major teaching issues relate to my academic discipline. To provide just one example, the analysis of History and the NSS was an extremely useful document. [Head of Department]

HISTORY GRADUATES WITH IMPACT

The various projects within this important area for our discipline are currently being concluded in preparation for the publication of 'History Graduates with Impact' later this month. The Subject Centre would like to thank the project leaders for their hard work in delivering their project findings within a tight timeframe. Their reports will no doubt contribute to the discussions amongst colleagues and departments as we face a concerning and no doubt changing landscape in higher education for History and the wider Humanities.

Progress on all the projects and additional resources can be found on the History Graduates With Impact website: <http://www.historysubjectcentre.ac.uk/research/gwil> but here are some of the highlights so far...

David Nicholls's update to his 2005 work on 'The Employment of History Graduates' has been completed and is available to view online at: http://www.historysubjectcentre.ac.uk/research/gwil/emp_report.

David's work is a timely and effective study when we consider (in his words) '... the challenges of 2005 pale in significance when set alongside those currently facing history.'

Amanda Capern's 'Hull History Partnership' has completed the pilot phase of providing integrated internships with public history organisations, compulsory education providers and research archives and libraries in a History programme. The programme has involved a lot of hard work but has produced very positive results from the students involved in the pilot. The programme will be rolled out to a full cohort of 18 students next year.

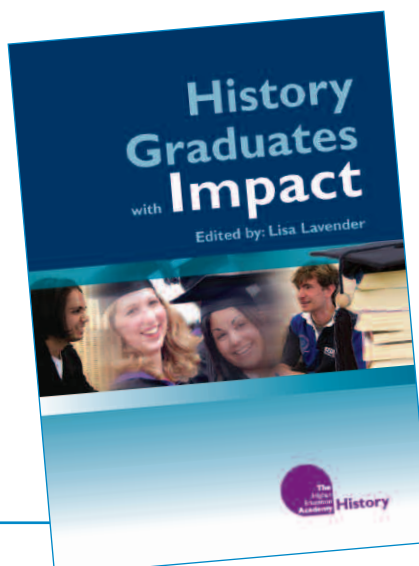
Following the excellent 10% response rate of teachers in UK HE History departments Alan and Jeanne Booth have been analysing the extensive survey findings. Their work will go on beyond this year; but for our publication will concentrate on two key questions raised in the survey:

- In your view what can students get from history teaching at its best?
- How would you describe the value of these things to policymakers?

Graduates History with Impact



To reserve your FREE copy of the publication simply email L.A.Lavender.1@warwick.ac.uk stating your name, address and the number of copies required, or complete our simple online request form: <http://www.historysubjectcentre.ac.uk/publications/request>. Posting will be carried out through the summer.



NEWS FROM THE NETWORKS

The Networks have again organised some interesting and effective events in the second half of this academic year, our thanks go to all the network convenors past and present for their hard work in enabling us to share teaching pedagogy and best practice with history communities. We hope that their work will continue...

NORTH AMERICAN HISTORY TEACHERS' NETWORK MEETING: KEELE UNIVERSITY, 18 MARCH.

The Network was organised in summer 2010 by Catherine Armstrong who felt that there were few forums for lecturers in American History in the UK to meet and discuss their teaching practice: the network now has over 30 members. The first meeting discussed important issues such as postgraduate teaching, curriculum design and provision of sources. The second meeting, held in March at the David Bruce Centre for American Studies (University of Keele) was organised by Laura Sandy, a specialist in colonial and antebellum slavery at Keele.

The programme of the day was varied and informative, allowing for general HE History concerns and issues more specific to historians of North America to be discussed. Gervase Phillips (Manchester Metropolitan University) set up a debate on the potential of podcasting in teaching. Joined by his colleague Faye Simpson, the second talk explored options for embedding 'employability' in the History curriculum. David Gleeson (Northumbria University, formerly of the City College of Charleston) led a session on what the UK could learn from the experiences of the privately-funded US mass education system. There was much discussion around his positive take on the future, but all agreed that there was plenty that the US did well about which Americanists could educate UK colleagues. He



highlighted the importance of student evaluations in the US system and suggested that these might be better used in the UK to allow students to express their dissatisfaction. David also alerted us to the range of 'value-added' activities that faculties offered students in the US, such as history societies.

In terms of teaching improvements, the use of attendance requirements to pass a particular course and student-led honours courts to judge cases of plagiarism were cited as innovative. From this side of the Atlantic, the Sheffield American History wiki was highlighted as an example of good practice, which allowed students and staff to contribute to a list of electronic resources.

The session drew to a close with delegates sharing advice on how Americanists could use connections in the US to enhance their own careers, such as using college housing whilst on research trips in return for giving a paper, or by asking an American institution to offer a research fellowship giving access to the library, but which would also look impressive for the REF.

A third meeting is currently being planned for Autumn 2011. If you are interested in joining the network, please contact the convenor Catherine Armstrong – C.M.Armstrong@mmu.ac.uk

CHINESE HISTORY TEACHING NETWORK

In previous newsletters we have brought you news about the Chinese History Teaching Network. The network was established in September 2009 following a workshop on the teaching of Chinese History, held with History Subject Centre funding, led by Jeremy Taylor at the University of Sheffield. The network aims to bring together people who teach Chinese History at institutions in the UK to share best practice, access to new resources and materials, and general experiences in the field.

The Networks new resource website is now live!
<http://www.chinese-history-network.group.shef.ac.uk/>

It understands Chinese history in the broadest possible sense, and includes people who work on all periods and from all angles (including the history of China itself, as well of Chinese societies outside China and the Chinese Diaspora).

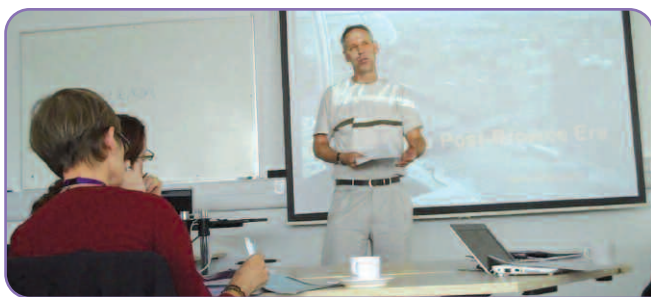
The network plans to hold a second, larger workshop in 2012. It also hopes to develop contacts with similar networks and institutions abroad.

WHAT DO HISTORY STUDENTS WANT?

BOOSTING UNDERGRADUATE RECRUITMENT, ENGAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

A HEA HISTORY SUBJECT CENTRE MIDLANDS NETWORK WORKSHOP

On the 3rd of June, 2011, the History Subject Centre held its final event in conjunction with the Midland Network of Historians. Hosted by the University of Loughborough, the event included a wide range of speakers from throughout the country and an equally wide range of delegates from throughout the Midlands region.



The day began with an opening musing by organiser Marcus Collins (University of Loughborough) on the idea of the day: What do History Students Want? Beginning somewhat jokingly with the idea that "students want a 2:1" he thoughtfully explored several underlying themes including the fact that academic historians often want very different things than their students want and reconciling these can be very difficult. Marcus was followed by Melodee Beals (History Subject Centre) who related her own experiences of being a student in a liberal arts environment and the challenges that come about from understanding what students want and giving them what they need. This, in turn, was followed by a talk by Chris Szejnmann (University of Loughborough) on the future of History in the post-Browne Review era. With teaching funding due to be dramatically reduced, and the source at least fundamentally redirected, and the level of fees set to greatly increase, he posited that there would certainly be an increased level of competition between universities in order to obtain those students willing and able to attend university. Moreover, humanities would be particularly pressed to maintain student numbers against other disciplines with stronger visible ties to graduate employment. He concluded, however, that most History students undertake the course out of love of the subject and would continue to do so regardless of the changing HE context.

Following on from these opening thoughts were two students from Loughborough University, Jola Groves and Alice Hughes, with the results of their research project on student perceptions of the Loughborough History programme. One of the key questions asked of their focus groups was "If you could change one thing about the History programme, what it would be?" The answers were numerous, not all of which were unsurprising. What was most interesting, however, was how they ranked their favourite modules; the content-based surveys were overwhelmingly their first and second choice whereas skills-based and theory-based modules were near-consistently third or fourth.

The day then turned to a variety of practitioners, who shared their research and experience. Robert Whan, of Queen's University Belfast, described the efforts of his university to integrate enterprise and work related learning into the History curriculum in a holistic and multipolar fashion. Meanwhile, Richard Hawkins and Harvey Woolf of the University of Wolverhampton placed Robert's presentation in perspective, providing a survey of work-related programmes throughout the UK. After lunch, Melodee Beals of the History Subject Centre explored her recent study into first year transition and posited the use of exemplar essays to aid academic writing provision in core History modules, while Sam McGinty and Alastair Blair of De Montfort University explored the possible role of exam feedback in improving student engagement. The day concluded with two papers on the role of traditional and new media in History teaching. Erin Bell and Ann Gray explored the world of television history through the eyes of students, producers and academics while Tony Churchill provided an enthusiastic view of the use of lecture-capture technology in increasing the value of contact hours in the HE environment.



THE AFTER STANDARDS PROJECT

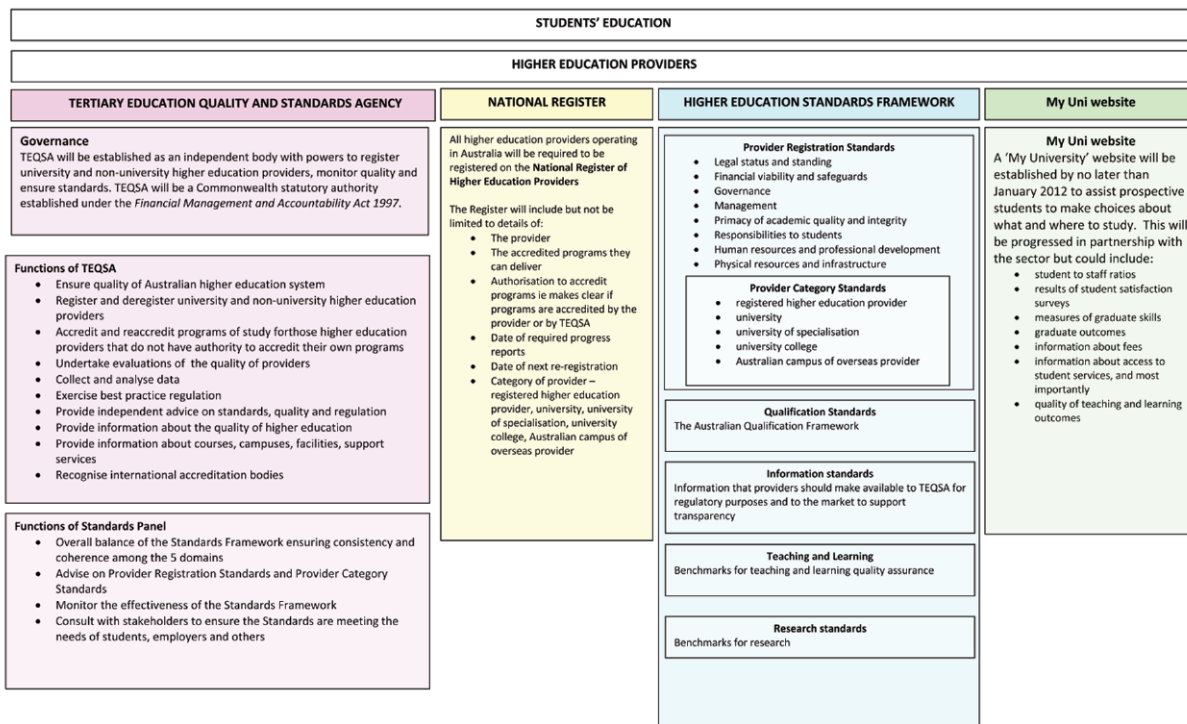
ENGAGING AND EMBEDDING HISTORY'S STANDARDS USING INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE TO INFORM CURRICULUM RENEWAL

The Australian government is developing a new Higher Education Quality and Regulatory Framework as part of its revolution in education. There are five elements to the regulatory framework:

Provider standards	Qualification standards	Learning and teaching standards	Research standards	Information standards
National protocols and ESOS Act	Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	Threshold learning outcomes	Excellence in research in Australia (ERA)	For the market and regulators

History was one of the first disciplines to develop its Threshold Learning Outcomes at the Bachelor's level in 2010, overseen by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC). These are similar to the UK History Subject Benchmark statement although are not as detailed because the Australian degree programmes operates a system of 'majors' rather than single/joint honours. It is expected that the next phase will be for the new Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to develop methods of assuring adherence to these learning and teaching standards and the quality of tertiary education in Australia more generally (for a detailed model see diagram). As historians in Australia have little experience of a national standards environment the After Standards project aimed to bring together historians from across the country, in conjunction with some international experts, to discuss the implementation of this new framework. The project also has a much wider ambition: to build a "community of practice" through which Australian historians are able to - systematically, universally, collegially, reflectively and effectively - respond to standards implementation and the resulting opportunities for curriculum renewal.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF THE NEW QUALITY AND REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION



THE AFTER STANDARDS PROJECT

The workshop was held at the University of New South Wales in April, 2011. Thirty Australian universities sent representatives to share experiences and discuss a range of issues including quality assurance, curriculum development, assessment strategies, content and skills, and e-learning. There were also international representatives offering perspectives from the UK and US. In advance of the workshop all participants had provided data on their programmes which provided an important evidence base for the delivery of History at HE level in Australia. One outcome of the workshop for participants was the development of a diagnostic curriculum mapping tool for History at their own institutions. The workshop sessions were designed to be collaborative and interactive, developing resources and strategies for academics to take back to their institutions. The session on 'Measuring Compliance' for example, looked at the UK model of programme reviews and institutional audits established by the Quality Assurance Agency and discussed whether this may be modified for the Australian system. There were also important sessions discussing progression, assessment and feedback, and curriculum content and design. The lively session on 'Content versus Skills' rehearsed the arguments and research on this key issue for degree programmes in History. The interactive discussions then developed ideas of embedding skills within the curriculum including the following practical suggestions:

- Telling stories from different perspectives of participants
- Deconstructing the 'mechanics' of essay writing
- Relevance – sending students out into the streets to find examples of the history they are learning

The workshop also had taster sessions on pedagogical research projects to encourage international collaboration. The final day focused on how the momentum developed by the workshop could be continued as the standards agenda evolves into practice in the Australian context.

Full details of the project and resources from the workshop may be found on the After Standards website: <http://afterstandards.omeka.net/>



The After Standards project has interesting implications for UK historians in Higher Education as we enter the post-Browne era. Firstly, the Australian workshop demonstrated the benefits of developing a 'community of practice' where

academics from across the country came together to strengthen teaching in their discipline. In the new fees environment, UK historians will be faced with pressure to compete rather than to collaborate. The danger in adopting a competitive approach is that it may lead to a reduction in the number of institutions offering History as a degree programme. Secondly, the workshop demonstrated the value of developing practical resources as well as providing a robust evidence-base rooted in a disciplinary context. This was viewed as particularly important for establishing best practice for the teaching of history as opposed to some of the more generic, top-down initiatives that were being imposed by institutions. Systems for measuring compliance, for example, could be used to defend the discipline and teaching practices and should not be seen as endangering them. Finally, the project offered a model for international collaboration and demonstrated the benefits of sharing practice transnationally.

CONTACTING THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY IN THE FUTURE

We would like to thank the History community for supporting the work of the Subject Centre over the past ten years. We hope that the events, publications, activities and resources that have been developed will continue to be of value.

At the time of writing, the new disciplinary lead for History at the Higher Education Academy has not yet been appointed. History will be part of an Arts and Humanities cluster and the disciplinary lead will be the primary point of contact. For further information on the new structure of the HEA please keep checking their website: www.heacademy.ac.uk. We have also prepared a briefing paper, After the History Subject Centre, which compares the work of the Subject Centre with the services paper developed for the restructured HEA. This may be found in our e-library.

The History Subject Centre team will effectively end their work on 31st July 2011. We will offer some limited transitional support until the end of October. We are also in discussions with the History subject associations about the continuation of some of our activities and resources. The Subject Centre website will remain as an archive at www.historysubjectcentre.ac.uk but will not be updated. We will also be transferring some of the key resources into the Humanities teaching and learning repository, Humbox: www.humbox.ac.uk. As discussed on page 6 we have developed a mostly online version of our early career workshops and hope that this will provide support for those new to teaching History at HE level as well as to offer the opportunity to share experiences.

It is a challenging time for all of us teaching in HE and we wish you luck as we go forward into the new environment.



Dr Sarah Richardson
Director,
History Subject Centre



THE HISTORY SUBJECT CENTRE



Subject Director: Sarah Richardson
sarah.richardson@warwick.ac.uk

Academic Co-Ordinator: Lisa Lavender
l.a.lavender.1@warwick.ac.uk

E-Learning Advisor: Rob O'Toole
r.b.o-toole@warwick.ac.uk

Academic Co-Ordinator: Melodee Beals
m.beals@warwick.ac.uk

Administrator: Kerry Drakeley
k.j.drakeley@warwick.ac.uk

Administrator: Tracy Smith
t.smith.2@warwick.ac.uk

History Subject Centre
Department of History
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 7AL

Tel: 02476 150892

Email: heahistorysubjectcentre@warwick.ac.uk

Website: www.historysubjectcentre.ac.uk

