Transition and Adaptation What do students think?

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@UNNC

- University Life Skills (2017-18)
- Four-week discussion course
- 150 students per course
- 100% sign-up
- 4 courses
- Pre-reading, Discussion, Quiz + Reflective Writing
- SPDPO credits

Pre-reading

Week 1 High School versus University and adaptation

Please read this before coming to the discussion

The main differences between high school and university are in terms of responsibility for personal organization, the amount of independent study you have to do, the amount of individual support you receive, and the nature of study and assessment. Overall, you have much more independence and responsibility. You will have to make decisions about how to spend your time, and live with the consequences. You will also meet new people, and for most students, you'll have to learn to live more independently and co-operate with other students in your dormitories.

At university, there will be many times when you have no classes, or times when you take classes with different students in different buildings. You are responsible for organizing your schedule, being in the right place at the right time and being prepared for your classes. If you turn up in the wrong class, without a pen or paper, you are not ready for university.

At university, you will have fewer classes but you will have to do many more hours of homework and independent study. You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class and to review class notes and text material regularly. You will have to do substantial amounts of additional reading and note-taking. In class, the lecturer may not discuss what you have read, but will assume that you have done it

Discussion

The University of Nottingham

Before you joined UNNC, what did you think would be the biggest difference between high school and university?	Now that you're here, what was the biggest difference between high school and university?
Have your feelings about UNNC changed since you've been here?	If you could give advice to someone who was thinking of coming to UNNC, what would you say?

Quiz

What two things does the text suggest are the biggest differences between high school and university?

Select one or more:

☐   a. the amount of free time you have

☐   b. the amount of personal responsibility you will have

☐   c. the level of difficulty of the topics you study

☐   d. the amount of independence you will need

☐   e. the number of problems you will face living with other students

Reflective Comment

Please write a short paragraph of 50 or more words:

What do you feel have been the main differences between high school and UNNC? Was this the same for the other people you talked to in your discussion?

Student responses!

I have found many things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. I have found a lot of things. ¶

Coding: 3-4 categories per response
N=330 (5 spoiled)

I have more spare time to take part in many communities. It is very important to learn **self-study**. Asking questions is essential but **we should get information by ourselves**. We become more **independent** and **responsible**. The class becomes less people so we have *more chances to speak to our teachers*. All of us are living in an English environment. It is a little bit challenging for me.
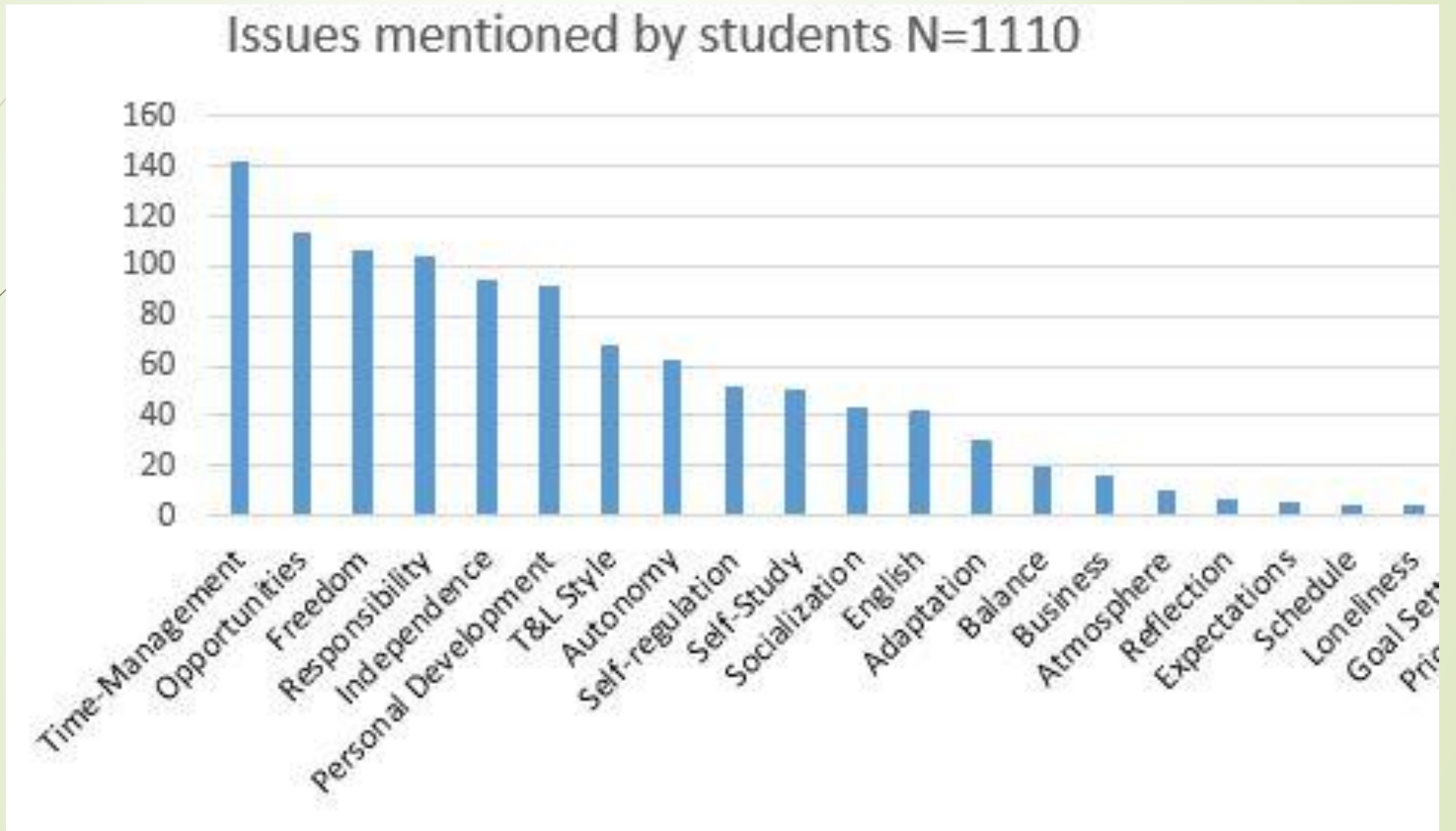
Opportunities¶

Self-study¶

Independent¶

Responsible¶

T&L Style¶

English¤

Category Count

Issues mentioned by students N=1110

Category Word Cloud

Category Classes

Situational	Personal	Adaptational	Academic
Freedom	Opportunities	Time-Management	Use of English
Independence	Socialization	Self-study	Teaching and Learning Style
Responsibility	Personal Development	Self-regulation	
Autonomy		Balance	
		Busy-ness	

Student Voice: situational

Students are going to arrange their life themselves; it is a cool and interesting thing!

Student Voice: situational

We are responsible for our decisions. I feel very excited and happy.

Student Voice: situational

I feel so nervous about the school life, which is a challenge to me, because I need to face it independently and alone.

Student Voice: situational

In high school, I just need to follow my teacher, but in university, I have to arrange myself independently. So I am all at sea and do not know how to adapt to the campus life.

Students Voice: personal

I became more active and have made friends that are more interesting. I am feeling good!

Students Voice: personal

It is good. I have much time to learn something I want (e.g.: AE, PE.), discover the secret about the Universe. In addition, many clubs' activities are fun. What's more, I can learn something different in these activities.

Students Voice: personal

There are plenty of options around you; you ought to make suitable choices for yourself. I feel quite nervous and a little confused for dealing with study tasks and social activities. Maybe I have not adjusted to university life fully.

Students Voice: adaptational

I found it not so difficult to adjust myself to the life in university and I enjoy it a lot.

Students Voice: adaptational

Everyone has different things to do. We have different schedule and many different friends. Life is quite busy and sometimes lonely. However, things are getting better and I am getting used to this

Student Voice: adaptational

I am so busy that I even have no time to sleep (I stay up late every night). I think it is a big challenge for me who is used to living in a plan like high school's life.

Student Voice: adaptational

I wish I would have enough time to eat and sleep in future. I am just so busy that I do not have time to take care of myself. I am trying to make more friends but enjoy my time being alone at the same time. [I am] Really looking forward to hav[ing] some rest.

Student Voice: academic

[I]n high school, we must do things in the same ways and answer the questions according to the fixed pattern. In university, the teachers encourage us to expression our own ideas […]. I like this teaching method and the atmosphere of class a lot, for they can inspire my creativity.

Student Voice: academic

Compared to the high school, we need to have awareness of autonomous learning. And we need to master time and arrange it. I find it so hard to me. However, it is amazing that I learn it so fast due to the open atmosphere in the school.

Student Voice: academic

The tutor will not tell you how to do [things] and you need to find the right way by yourself. Therefore, when I want to study hard, I always find it difficult to get the specific direction. I want the school to have a class to tell students how to achieve their future goals.

Student Voice: academic

I'm afraid my English is not every good, so I'm afraid to communicate with teachers. I'm not sure teachers can exactly know what I mean.

Student Voice: academic

I feel very nervous and worrying about my poor listening and speaking since I came here. Even more, I have no confidence.

Conclusion and Discussions

Range of responses all four category classes.

Students adapting at different rates.

Some students looking for support and guidance.

Issues / Caution

No way to check validity of responses

Respondents are self-selected so unlikely to be representative

Coding bias.

Not longtitudinal.

Interpretation: ***difference*** does not mean ***problem***

New initiatives to evaluate, address and resolve 'problems' may disempower students by undermining their independence and taking away their sense of agency.

Proposals (institutional response)

- Oral Communication Skills 'gentler' introduction to English, more open communication and confidence building activities.

- CAS Introductory Lecture for Students (induction week)

- Online self-study support (in progress)

- Advising Focus (first weeks of semester)

- Workshops for Tutors (induction week and CPD)

- Early Student Survey (trialled by CAS members)

- Mentoring by Senior Students (proposed)

- Introduction of SEAtS software to monitor 'engagement' (proposed)

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Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was given for this study by the Ethical Approval Panel for CELE.

All student names have been removed and no student identities can be recovered from the data.

Students were asked if they agreed that their responses to the reflective questions could be used in this research; only responses from students who consented have been used.

Questions?

Thank you.