



“They expect more of you in second year”: University of Worcester students’ perceptions of the transition to level five

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Background

- ▶ The challenges of progression from level four to five was one of the core themes to emerge from research on the student learner journey
- ▶ The so-called “second year slump” is highlighted repeatedly in the literature
- ▶ Library Services typically provide fewer taught sessions at level 5, and what we do meets fewer criteria in Library Services’

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From the literature

"the forgotten year"
(Tobolowsky, 2008, p.59)

"stranded in no-man's land" (Lemon and Richmond, 1985, quoted in Gahagan and Hunter, 2008, p.45)

The "focal point for declining performance, persistence, and satisfaction" (Webb and Cotton, 2019, p.173)

Students fail to develop "academic self-efficacy" (Tower *et al.*, 2015, p.1131)

"high levels of need"
... "less satisfied"
(Thompson *et al.*, 2013, p.5)



Silent sufferers

- ▶ The biggest concern about second year “slumpers” is their tendency to be “silent sufferers” (Thompson *et al.*, 2013, p.16)
- ▶ This means we need to understand where the problems at level 5 arise and what we can do to pre-empt them; Larmar and Lodge (2014, pp.98-99) suggest the seeds of the second year slump are sown in first year, and this was echoed by UW research participants

From students

In first year you can get by with D-minuses in everything

At level 5, I'm expected to "go away and figure it out for myself"

"you get to the second year and everything's different"

First years are treated with "kid gloves" which means they struggle in second year

"left in the dark ... and not supported"

Going from first to second year it's just like 100% more workload

They said "this is the assignment you'll cry at" ... and I did cry

Second year, second semester is by far the hardest

"If we'd done it (a literature review) in first year, it would've helped almost everyone"



Implications for practice

- ▶ Learning needs to be scaffolded and students made aware of how skills developed at level 4 will support their studies later on
- ▶ Encourage independent learning early on
- ▶ The importance of consequence: do students think that level 4 does not really matter?

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