Humanities PDP and Careers: Speed Networking with SHU Graduates

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Student and Academic Services in collaboration with D&S Humanities

Subject group:	Humanities: English History English and History Film and Literature History and Criminology History and Film
Number of students involved:	22
Elements of the employability framework addressed:	• Development of autonomy; • PDP • Real world activities; • Reflection on use of knowledge and skills: transfer of these to work environment; • Career management skills; • Enterprise, innovation and creativity.

Description of learning and teaching approach adopted

This was a single event inviting SHU Humanities graduates (see Resources listings below) from a range of employment sectors to speak about their career paths, current roles, skills profiles and degree relevance to an audience of Humanities students. This was followed by a 'speed networking' session enabling a free exchange between guests and students using a 'real life' connection which resulted in a very active and sociable exchange, which is reflected in the positive feedback.

After refreshments the event was brought together by discussing the emerging issues and consolidated by the demonstration and navigation of the PDP Career resources on the Blackboard site designed specifically for the separate subject groups. This was corroborated by guest interjection as to the value of work experience, proactive career planning, taking on opportunities and thinking about the transferability of skills from respective degrees.

Students who had undertaken a Careers and Employment Service 'Impact' mentoring programme (see other e3i Case Study: Impact Career Mentoring Scheme - http://extra.shu.ac.uk/cetl/e3i_Case_Studies/AnnetteBaxter.pdf) or business start-up through the Enterprise Centre's 'Hatchery' (see www.shu.ac.uk/studententerprise) also contributed to the talks and speed networking. This was a learning curve for several students who were in awe of their peers.

To this end the students gained an in depth understanding of career choice and pathways; the transferability of skills inherent in their degrees; the importance of work experience, mentoring or enterprise projects and accessing support in the university.

Sheffield Hallam University

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Employability objectives and intended learning outcomes

Objectives

1. Use' real life' scenarios to promote awareness of career management, and the autonomy of personal development planning.

2. To introduce students to bespoke resources, support and opportunities.

3. To bring to life the relevance of materials and the need for PDP through contact with Alumni/ Humanities graduates in different employment sectors.

4. To inspire students as to the range of options and graduate potential.

Outcomes

1. Students will engage directly with 'real life' professionals across different employment sectors to understand career development and relate this to their own potential journey.

2. Students will reflect on skills inherent in their degrees, university and external opportunities/ activities to enhance their learning and career development.

3. Students' awareness and self determinism will be challenged and enhanced in a supportive environment.

Description of and tips for good practice; lessons learned

Finding alternative routes to student engagement

Integrating PDP and Careers workshops into the non-vocational curriculum is problematic and can meet with resistance. Positive action to address this shortfall of input to the student experience at SHU needed to be tackled through alternative means.

To this end a collaboration between course leaders Tom Rutter (English) Matthew Roberts (History) and Alison McHale (Careers and Employment team, Student and Academic Services) organised a Wednesday afternoon event combining guest speakers, speed networking and an introduction to bespoke Blackboard PDP and career materials.

Communication

1. Advertising through Shuspace email mailbox reveals how few students check on this. Corroborative endorsement is needed from tutors direct to students to clinch attendance.

2. Students do not comply with sign-up methods which can seriously skew the management of the day.

3. Securing speakers was challenging and some students were disappointed that featured guests did not show. This is difficult to mitigate. If students organised this themselves they would understand more of the complexity of event management!

Inspiration

Speed networking is a fun and informal teaching/learning method. Real life scenarios beat any formal lectures and it is rewarding for guest participants too, encouraging their connection to the university for future events.

Key points of any feedback gathered or evaluation undertaken with students or staff

9 responses out of 22 through Survey Monkey emailed feedback survey.

Key words: interest, insight, importance, inspiration, information, high value...

What value did you gain from the external guest speakers?

1) 'It's very useful and encouraging finding out how people have got into the careers you are interested in pursuing. It helps to make clear what pathways you can take to get into certain career fields, as well as allowing opportunities to network.'

2) 'Some great insights into the world post-degree.'

3) 'Was of a very high value.'

4) 'Found out a lot about breaking into industries and some very helpful advice on building my CV and applying for jobs.'

5) 'Gave an interesting look into a diverse range of jobs available specifically for our courses.'

6) 'Very interesting to see how they have ' made it'-..And what they did to get where they are now. Liked hearing about jobs I knew nothing about, and I got some good contact details.'

7) 'Useful advice on getting head start on chosen career paths.'

8) 'I learnt about some of the different jobs that where available from studying History and factors to consider when graduating such as funding myself if wanting to do a postgraduate course.'

9) 'Learning to keep going and not give up on pursuing your dream career.'

What value did you gain from the student guest speakers?

1) 'They offer more immediate plans of action and things you can get involved in within the university.'

2) 'Good insight into student projects.'

3) 'Thought the talk about enterprise business was very interesting - will more than likely be following that talk up with some ideas.'

4) 'Inspiration on utilizing study time effectively.'

5) 'I learnt the importance of work experience and I also learnt about enterprise which is something that I had not heard of before.'

6) 'To ask for advice, guidance and help whenever you need it, and that it is accessible.'

7) 'I think that the PDP blackboard site is a very good idea and I felt that it was very well explained on the event and so I am definitely glad that I went to the event for that reason. Also, there are some very useful websites on there.'

8) 'After the event, I felt a bit more confident and clear about what I wanted to do for my future career.'

Resources used

Bespoke PDP Blackboard sites for English and History (separate) for navigation and demonstration, developed by Alison McHale Careers and Employment team, SAS. (Please contact Alison McHale (A.McHale@shu.ac.uk) to be enrolled through Shuspace Blackboard)

Sheffield Hallam Humanities Graduates:

Iain Broome: Copywriter at 'the Workshop, novelist and events/ web entrepreneur

Abigail Chandler: Script trainee/assistant at Headline Pictures

John Tanner: Barnsley MBC Museum Project Director

Brett Shaw: Sheffield City Council Dual Heritage Project co-ordinator

Charlotte Roberts: Teacher in primary private sector

Sarah Maule: 3rd Year English student speaking about Mentoring experience and career decision making

James Mack: 3rd Year English student speaking in conjunction with **Emma Hackett** (placement student) from the **Enterprise Centre** regarding Business Start-up through the Hatchery and linkage to Independent Study Units and Hallam Award recognition.

Alumni listings from Marketing to trace past graduates in region.

This information can be made available in other formats. Please contact us for details.