

e3i Employability Case Study



We Love Planet Earth!

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Subject group:	Science, ICT and Education
Number of students involved:	6
Elements of the employability framework addressed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of autonomy • Key skills development • PDP • Real world activities • Work related learning • Reflection on use of knowledge and skills; transfer of these to work environment • Career management skills • Preparation for specific professional areas • Enterprise; innovation; creativity

Description of learning and teaching approach adopted

Overview of Project

The project We Love Planet Earth is a large-scale project which would see an originally-devised performance by school students in the summer of 2008 (as part of the Sheffield Children's Festival programme) on the theme of the environment, conservation and climate change. This will

involve Chaucer, Yewlands and a number of Primary School feeders. There are 3 distinct phases to the project each with specific outcomes:

Learning and Teaching Approach

In terms of learning and teaching, students involved in the project will be responsible for facilitating pupil learning within schools under the tutelage and guidance of specialist staff from within SHU, external professionals and teachers in each school.

Research Phase

Students from Environmental Management/Studies, Professional Writing and the Built Environment have been given an overview of how environmental issues fits within the National Curriculum, with each student focussing upon a particular topic area e.g. renewable energy resources, recycling, energy conservation etc. The intention is for these students to facilitate pupil learning by devising innovative methods of engaging pupils in finding out about each of these topic areas. Assessment as to the success or failure of this phase will be measured by the range and depth of resource materials generated by both the student and the pupils.

Employability objectives and intended learning outcomes

Student experience linked to employability

The science students have been recruited from Environmental Management, Professional Writing, the Built Environment and Secondary ITT - their role being to go into the school over a 3 - 4 week period to facilitate pupil research into environmental themes linking in with the National Curriculum. The outcome being to produce a package of information to be given to the creative teams who will then devise performances based around the pupils' research. The research students selected have all expressed an interest in pursuing a teaching career upon graduation from their subject specialist route, so this project gives those students the opportunity to engage with young people across 3 Key Stages and thus give an insight into teaching as a potential career option. The Secondary ITT students gain an opportunity to explore novel and innovative ways of delivering the curriculum which could be incorporated into their practice as developing teachers.

In addition, a student from the PGCE 14 - 19 cohort has designed all the graphics and logos associated with the project; this was done in collaboration with all project team managers including specialist technical experts. This

particular student has gained commercial experience of working with professional to devise a corporate image for the project - he has responded very positively to constructive feedback and amended designs according to specifications.

Key skills development

Students involved in the research phase will gain the opportunity to apply their learning in a new context, thus developing communication skills, organisational skills and research skills. The students are responsible for generating original research and resource materials for use by the pupils and further delivering 'mini' lessons under the guidance and tutelage of SHU staff. This could potentially enhance their future employability and provide a useful addition to their CVs. Materials generated by the students will be uploaded onto the associated website in order to create a bank of materials for use by teachers in subsequent years thus lending longevity to the project.

Work related learning

As the students have little experience of working within schools they will gain a realistic insight into the role of the teacher and can thus make an informed decision as to their potential career path. They will learn by observation a range of teaching strategies to maintain classroom discipline, how to structure a 3 part lesson, how to engage and maintain the interest of pupils and how to get the best from the pupils with whom they are working. In addition they will learn a little about the National Curriculum and how it is structured and further how by engaging pupils in a range of activities they can cover the syllabus in a creative and innovative manner. The students would also learn a little about the organisational structure of the schools and the importance of working with the parents and carers of pupils. It is anticipated that this project could be regarded as a model for similar ventures in the future.

As the project involves 5 schools the students will also learn how, by effective collaboration, larger scale projects of this nature can come into being.

Enterprise, innovation and creativity

The enterprising and creative nature of this project requires students to approach their tasks innovatively in order to fully engage the pupils in their learning. An example of a student adopting an innovative approach is Ross Kelly who, with the schools permission, is dressing in full combat gear [he is a member of the ATC] emulating an 'eco-warrior' and getting the pupils to undertake a 'treasure hunt' activity to explore different habitats within the school grounds. Clues and items are to be strategically placed around the grounds to aid learning in a 'fun' manner. Another student has created a 'mini' Scheme of Work itemising how he intends to link theory with practical application of knowledge in that the outcome of his work is a large scale model 'eco-village' created by the pupils for display at the venue on the days of the performance.

Whilst all pupils involved in the project may or may not be involved in the actual performance [it is acknowledged that not

all pupils are comfortable in performing arts] their input into the project will still be recognised by for example artistic displays and helping out with the script writing/poetry phase of the project. The creative and innovative aspects of the project thus provide opportunities for students to take 'measured risks' in their visionary approaches to the teaching and learning of young people.

Description of and tips for good practice; lessons learned

In terms of good practice, one of the lessons learned is that when undertaking a project of this nature effective organisation is vital. There is also a need for effective collaboration and information exchange between all parties involved – to this end a series of regular newsletters has been generated giving an overview of progress. The newsletter serves two purposes in that it provides information and also maintains momentum and enthusiasm for the project. The participants are now feeding into this newsletter in that students and staff are submitting articles for inclusion.

One of the key challenges in a project of this nature is logistics, in terms of ensuring the availability of students, teachers and staff to meet on a regular basis to undertake the research and creative phases. Additionally the logistics of ensuring all participants are transported to the performance venue is potentially fraught with difficulties. Similarly the provision of activities for the pupils between performances is an aspect to be considered – to this end entertainment and lunch has been organised to fulfil this need.

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

Student evaluations are to be incorporated on to the associated website as interviews, where students are discussing their experiences and what they have gained from the experience.

The general consensus thus far from students is that they are very excited about their involvement in the project and see it as an opportunity to enhance the knowledge and understanding of pupils in a 'fun and enjoyable' way, as well as increasing their own knowledge base. Students who have been interviewed to date have responded in a very positive manner giving details of their involvement, what they have learned and how it links into the project as a whole.

Staff members involved in the project are similarly excited to be leading on a project with a measurable outcome that will be of benefit to all parties concerned.

Resources used

Website - to be developed as part of the project [with input from students]

National curriculum documentation

Film-making equipment for student interviews and final performance.

This information can be made available in other formats.

Please contact us for details.