

e3i Employability Case Study

Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability Promoting Learner Autonomy Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability Inter-professional e-learning Promoting Learner Autonomy Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability Promoting Learner Autonomy Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability Inter-professional e-learning Promoting Learner Autonomy Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability Promoting Learner Autonomy Inter-professional e-learning Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability Promoting Learner Autonomy Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability Inter-professional e-learning Promoting Learner Autonomy Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability Inter-professional e-learning Promoting Learner Autonomy



Physical Education, Sport Development and Coaching Student Conference 2009

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Subject	PE, Sport Development and Coaching
Number of students involved:	480
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 and transfer of these to work environment; • Career management skills; • Enterprise, innovation, creativity

Description of learning and teaching approach adopted

Background & Introduction

The development of a professional annual student conference aimed at those studying PE, Sport Development and Coaching (PESDC) was devised in 2006 in order to achieve a number of learning & teaching outcomes.

The 3rd Annual Conference was successfully run over 2 days in January 2009 and is continuing to grow in terms of profile both internally and externally. The PESDC Subject Group is committed to providing the conference as an annual learning

and employability opportunity for its student cohort and it continues to act as a motivational learning tool not just for students, but for staff and visiting speakers alike.

Summary of 2009 Event

The 3rd PE, Sport Development and Coaching Student Conference attracted 480 UG and PG students from within the programmes of:

- BSc Sport Development with Coaching
- BSc PE & Youth Sport
- MSc Sport Development
- PGCE Physical Education

For the first time, the 2009 event also hosted a small number of professional School Sport Partnership staff from the Sheffield Partnerships as part of their ongoing financial sponsorship of the conference programme. Their inclusion added even more value to the workshops as they were able to input additional industry experience.

The event was billed as 'compulsory' and was held the week before official teaching commenced in January. There were a number of assessments attached to the conference which assisted in maintaining attendance levels, however the uptake was phenomenal considering the timing of the event itself.

Conference Format - Speakers & Facilitators

Experienced industry practitioners deliver keynotes and facilitate practical and classroom -based workshops within the following broad themes:

- Coaching (theory and practical)
- Sport Development
- Physical Education (theory and practical)
- Health & Physical Activity
- Employability - skills and capabilities required by employers within PESDC

The 2009 conference attracted 50 keynote and workshop facilitators from across the UK with many speakers returning for a 2nd or 3rd year. Increasingly, a large number of these speakers are ex-PESDC students who are also able to give a valuable insight into their own career development since leaving SHU.

Assessment Linked To The Conference

There are a number of modules which explicitly link to the conference in that students must give relevant examples throughout presentations/reports/reflective group work etc in terms of how their assessment questions relate to the reality of the industry and its need.

In 2010, a new module will roll out that is wholly based upon participation at the conference. This level 6 module will involve not only a reflective piece of work but also involvement in the actual planning and design of the conference itself.

Employability objectives and intended learning outcomes

Overall Conference Outcomes:

1. To develop learner autonomy through involving students within the planning, running and evaluation of the conference;
2. To maximise the PESDC Subject Group's external speaker 'resource';
3. To further strengthen SHU's relationship with the PE & sport's profession/industry via an annual event;
4. To act as a marketing tool for the suite of degree programmes within the PESDC's portfolio through promoting the conference via open days and prospectus literature;
5. To provide valuable CPD for Staff through gathering valuable resources and updates in terms of their own subject knowledge;
6. To incorporate employability, autonomous learning and inter-professional learning within course curricula through the exposure of students to a professional conference environment;
7. To capitalise upon the University's 'Lighting the Flame' initiative and being a high profile project within the Faculty's 2012 aspirations.

Description of and tips for good practice; lessons learned

The conference format has been successful for a number of reasons and the additional unforeseen spin-offs a welcome bonus. These include the raising of the University's profile externally to such a degree that we are approached by organisations wanting to deliver at future events.

The first and foremost rule for us as organisers is to look after the speakers. We gain the vast majority from contacts that teaching staff have and it is vital that these speakers experience a quality event. If they are happy, the students are happy! This relates to a high level of communication and service, both leading up to and during the event itself and the speakers also welcome the professional networking opportunities that the conference affords them.

Most of our speakers comment upon how impressed they are at the levels of knowledge, maturity and enthusiasm which the students exhibit. As staff, we do a huge amount of pre-conference work in terms of what they will get out of it, questions to ask, 3rd years assisting 1st years in workshops etc and this seems to pay off.

The professional website which contains all the conference information plus acts as the booking site (with a database contained within it) is also a vital tool which allows us to easily manage the communication necessary for an event of this size. This was initially developed by a placement student within LITS and who has continued to give us support on the subsequent events.

The website allows students to have complete control over which workshops they wish to book onto in line with their own personal career aspirations.

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

A full evaluation of the event from the students' perspective has been undertaken although the full set of results is not yet available. However we have obtained a number of comments from speakers in terms of how they view the event from an industry perspective:

Example Speaker Testimonials - Conference 2009

Lisa Mchendry - Youth Sport Trust

"Each year I have seen an increase in the level of engagement of the students from the workshop they are now really seeing the potential of this as a learning opportunity and maximizing it!! This is great for us as deliverers to really be challenged and questioned - but obviously great for the industry to know there are students with this kind of level of knowledge and skills embarking on careers in the future!"

Keep up the fantastic work - as a former student it is an honour to be a part of event and to really see how you have grown the provision and reputation of the faculty and the University."

Stuart Johnson - England Volleyball

"As a Sheffield Hallam alumni I was delighted to be able to contribute to the PESDC Conference. It is testament to the university staff that such a distinguished group of keynotes were assembled that provided useful information and insight important to the sports development professionals in attendance as well as the undergraduates. I was also pleased to be given the opportunity to promote directly to the students what gaining a degree at Sheffield Hallam means in the professional arena and hopefully to contribute to their confidence and belief that they are the best graduates to be entering the world of work and whilst success is not guaranteed a Sheffield Hallam degree is certainly a positive step in the right direction."

Personally it is great to know that even having graduated 4 years ago the university and the SDC staff are still providing me with excellent opportunities to test, challenge and develop myself professionally in the Sports Development industry."

Resources used

Conference Website:

<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/pesdc>