Centre for Excellence
in Teaching and Learning for Employability (e3i)

Employability Case Studies

Contents

For more information on the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for Employability (e3i), visit the CETL website at www.shu.ac.uk/cetl or e-mail e3i@shu.ac.uk

Introduction

As part of the work of the Sheffield Hallam University Centre for Excellence in Employability (e3i), we have identified examples of Learning, Teaching and Assessment practice that support the development of employability skills. The Employability CETL has invited colleagues to share their employability teaching practices with a wider audience. Within this booklet you can find a selection of case studies, providing examples of actual approaches to pedagogy implemented within a variety of subject groups and faculties within Sheffield Hallam University. These case studies answer the "how" question in employability teaching and allow us to learn from colleagues about interesting and innovative ways that encourage and support students in developing their employability skills.

Through the development of an employability framework at Sheffield Hallam, employability is now an essential part of course validation. A summary of the framework is presented on this page.

Using The Case Studies With Validation

The case studies presented here are exemplars of good practice from across the university in the nine areas which the employability framework highlights as key features of employability. They come from a range of subject areas and disciplines from across all four faculties and some central services. These case studies have been selected as they represent practices and activities which can be transplanted to other disciplines and subject areas.

As can also be seen in the case studies, many employability innovations encompass multiple areas of the employability framework.

Further Support

There are more case studies available online on the e3i website at http://extra.shu.ac.uk/cetl/e3i/

Also if you need any further support with employability aspects of validation contact us on: e3i@shu.ac.uk

The Employability Framework

The University Framework provides a definition of employability and outlines those features of a course which contribute to enhancing students' employability. Its aims are to ensure that University staff and students share a common understanding of employability, to enable Faculties to develop their own curriculum and support strategies appropriate to their portfolio of courses and to build on and extend existing good practice. The framework is shown below:

1. The progressive development of autonomy
2. The development of skills
3. Personal Development Planning
4. The inclusion of activities which are similar to those required in external environments
5. Students' explicit reflection on their use of knowledge and skills
6. The encouragement of career management skills
7. Engagement with work-related learning

Other features which may be provided by a programme of study:

8. Preparation for specific professional areas
9. Engagement with activities with a specific enterprise focus

The Framework is underpinned by the following key features:
- the development of employability is focused on student needs and should reflect the diversity of individual career and life paths
- good learning, teaching and assessment practice is the corner stone of employability development in students
- the encouragement of the transfer of learning on the course into employment and other lifestyle choices e.g. accredited learning from work through independent study, work placement etc.
- the framework builds on and integrates current and developing policies and strategies related to Key Skills, Learning from Work, Progress Files, Enterprise and Career Management.

Community history module

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Faculty of Development and Society

Subject group:	History
Number of students involved:	20
Elements of the employability framework addressed:	• Development of autonomy • Key skills development • PDP • Real world activities • Work related learning • Reflections on use of knowledge and skills: transfer of those to work environment • Preparation for specific professional areas • Enterprise, innovation and creativity

Description of learning and teaching approach adopted

Teaching and Learning

The module is organized into three sections:

Weeks 1-4: University-based preparatory work

For the first four weeks, teaching and learning on the module takes place in the university, in the form of lectures, seminars and workshops on the following subjects:

Community History: what is it?

- an introduction to some of the major sources of use for studying families, parishes and communities since 1800;

- the developments in British social history which have seen the growing popularity of family, community and oral history in the post-war years;

- key concepts in community history;

- community history and community 'regeneration'.

Oral History:

- oral history: theory and practice;

- the problems of memory

Heritage:

- the growth of the heritage industry;

- the 'heritage debates'.

Schools' History:

- History at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3;

- Local history in school

The lectures introduce the theoretical aspects of the subject area, while the appended seminars enable students to develop and practice some of the research skills necessary to undertake project work in the field of community history.

Week 5: Students meet your project contact and draw up an initial project proposal.

Weeks 6: work-in-progress session plus oral history training (for those doing oral history)

Weeks 5-11: the community history project

Weeks 5-11 will be mainly spent out of the university. This is likely to involve visits to the 'site', meetings with appropriate people, visits to record offices and possibly doing oral history interviews.

Students work either individually or in small groups to produce something of use to the community group concerned. This might be a report, a piece of primary research, an education pack, a number of oral history interviews and transcriptions, or (skills allowing) a DVD, etc.

An individual learning contract will be drawn up which will specify the nature of a student's contribution to the project and the project work required for assessment. We will have regular drop-in work-in-progress sessions at the University, to ensure that you are on track and to iron out any difficulties with the project.

Week 12: feedback and debriefing session

This session will be University-based. Students will be expected to present their project to the seminar group as a whole.

Assessment:

Project - 50%

This will be the major piece of work (3000 words if a written report) that comes out of the community history, and will be worth 50% of the total marks. This will be negotiated between the student, tutor and community history group, as appropriate. It might take the form of a report, a set of transcribed interviews, an education pack, a booklet, a piece of primary research for a community-based organisation. It will be marked by the tutor in consultation with the community group representative. The project will be developed on a group wiki on the Community History blackboard site.

Portfolio - 50%. This includes:

- a critical appraisal of a primary source used by family and community historians (eg Census, wills etc) (500 words).

- a 1500 word individual project analysis which reflects upon the successes and problems of the project (1500 words). Students need to consider: the project formulation; clarity of aims; degree of difficulty; achievement of aims. They are to comment on personal issues (time management, reliability, attitude, initiative,

team work, verbal communication skills, flexibility, research skills); any external support, including that of supervisor; the overall value of the project. Students are expected to clearly introduce the project; to set in its appropriate historical contexts; to use primary sources; to be critical of both sources and methodology.

- a weekly on-line learning diary or blog, in which students record and reflect upon the development of their community history projects and placements.

Employability objectives and intended learning outcomes

Clearly the module addresses a range of 'employability' issues, in terms of developing both transferable and specific skills related to 'doing history' in different contexts. In particular, the module is concerned with the practice of History in the 'Real world'. We examine the difference between academic and public history, and explore issues relating to the presentation of history within the heritage industry and within 'regeneration' projects within the locality. Students acquire skills in oral history, and are able to put these into practice in interviews. This year, I have added a session on History in the National Curriculum, both to further facilitate the educational materials that some students are engaged in producing, but also in response to students' reports that the clear links with their planned PGCEs were not made explicit enough in the course of the module.

Description of and tips for good practice; lessons learned

One of the joys of this module is that it changes each year, depending on the requirements of the community history groups with whom we work. As a result, the portfolio of possible projects is continually expanding, and students now have (some excellent) past work to consult. (One of the problems early on was a lack of confidence about what was being asked of them). So one lesson I have learned has been that this module becomes easier to run each year, as it brings with it a body of work and actually generates enthusiastic partners who want us to work with them.

A really important part of this module is that we do good quality work for the external partner. Early on, I hadn't given much thought to 'keeping sweet' the partners, and so now make sure I am in regular contact with them, partly to make sure they have realistic expectations of what the students can achieve and to iron out any difficulties. This followed a particularly bad experience last year, with an over-controlling and hyper-critical 'partner', with whom we won't be working again! A key part of the project is negotiating the different styles of the partners: some want control, and I have to try to loosen their grip; others remain quite distant, and I then have to step into a more actively supervisory role; while others are very inspiring and give considerable leeway to the students (this latter is something I have learned from in turn also).

I have learned that it is good practice to give students a lot of autonomy in the planning and execution of the project. I feel more relaxed about this now that the project development is done online, i.e. via a (small group) wiki and (individual) learning diary. I can give the students a lot of scope with their work while also satisfying my need for some degree of surveillance! So, the framework is important; if it is well structured and well organised, it is easier to facilitate autonomy.

I have changed the module to include more focus on teaching history in schools, in response to student feedback. A good number of the students who take this module are planning to do a PGCE, and come highly motivated regarding producing teaching materials. An understanding of history at key stages 1, 2 and 3; of themes and challenges in history teaching; and reflection on their own school history education, have thus become a key component of the module.

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

Some comments from 2005-06:

'Our project is complete and I've enjoyed it very much. By far, my favourite module this year… This course was very challenging; it required the learning of many new skills and demanding much more commitment than any other one that I had partaken in before. Despite this however, I found it thoroughly enjoyable. It has provided me with the opportunity to try many new skills and with the forum to meet lots of very pleasant people, whom I would otherwise not have had the opportunity to meet. For this reason alone I would recommend it to future students.'
(Student 1, female)

'... The transcription was long and arduous and extremely time consuming, but once done there is a sense of achievement which has been unique amongst my modules this semester. I think this project has definitely been the highlight of my module choices and I would advise any student thinking of taking it next year of two things. Firstly, I would warn them that it is a big commitment, and you have to be prepared to organise, arrange and meet with complete strangers sometimes in places you've never been before, so it is best to be as confident and positive as possible. Secondly I would say, go do it! Despite the work load being high, and without sounding melodramatic, I think (I and Marie) will have gained more than just points and grades from this module. Although it has been hard, it has also been a lot of fun and I would definitely consider helping on another community research project in the future.'
(Student 2, male)

'It is hard to say what overall value the project will have to the school children who carry it out but for me it has proved invaluable. As an aspiring teacher, it has given me experience in planning projects and will help me next year in my teacher training. Local history has proven to be important to many communities and I feel proud to have been part of something that encourages this… If there was anything I would change it would have been the time we had for the project... Overall it has been a pleasure to do the project and I feel that I worked well and am pleased with the work that I have done.'
(Student 3, female)

Resources used

Community History

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2. Drake, M. and Finnegan, R. (eds) (1994), Studying family and community history, vol. 4,
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4. Dymond, D. (1999), Researching and writing history: a practical guide for local historians,
5. Golby, J. ed., Communities and Families
6. Hey, D. (1987), Family History and Local History in England
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8. Hey, D. (2004), Journeys in Family History
9. Higgs, E. (2005), Making Sense of the Census
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12. Iredale, D. (1980), Local history research and writing: a manual for local history writers
13. Lewis, C. (1989), Particular places: an introduction to English local history

14. Phythian-Adams, C. (1991), Re-thinking English local history
15. Pryce, W. (ed.) (1994), From family history to community history (Studying Family and Community History: 19th and 20th Centuries, Vol. 2
16. Read, P. (1996), Returning to Nothing: A Study in the Meaning of Lost Places
17. Riden, P. (1983), Local history: a handbook for beginners
18. Rogers, A. (1977) Approaches to local history
19. Snell, K. Local and Regional Societies since c 1650: approaches and skills
20. Spick, M and Ayling, K. Sources for Local History: a resource pack for teachers and students
21. Taksa, L. 'Defining the Field', in P. O'Farrell, John Ingleson and Louella McCarthy (eds), History and Communities: A Preliminary Survey (Sidney, 1990), pp. 11-30.
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Videos

1. Doorstep discovery [VIDEO]: working on a local history study. English Heritage, 1993.
2. History at home [VIDEO]: family detectives finding the past Rob David. English Heritage, 1996.
3. Investigating local history [VIDEO] / Sallie Purkis
4. Landmarks [VIDEO OFF-AIR]. Investigating local history. The Victorians in Sheffield. BBC 1996
5. Who do you think you are? [DVD OFF-AIR] 2 and 3 (Amanda Redman and Sue Johnston)

Journals

Local historian, COLLEGIATE STACK 1968-2001
Local history news [SERIAL], 1995-2001
Family and Community History

Oral History

1. Bertaux, D. (1981), Biography and Society: the Life History Approach in the Social Science
2. Caunce, S. (1994), Oral history and the local historian (1994)
3. Chamberlayne, P., Bornat, J., Wengraf, J. (eds) (2000), The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Sciences
4. Frisch, M. (1990), A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History
5. Gluck, S. & Patai, D. (eds) (1991), Women's Words: the Feminist practice of Oral History
6. Hatch, J. & Wisniewski, R. (eds) (1995), Life History and Narrative
7. Josselson, R. & Leiblich, A (eds) (1993-9), Narrative Study of Lives, Vols 1, 3, 6,
8. Lummis, T. (1988), Listening to History: the Authenticity of Oral Evidence
9. Miller, R. (1999), Researching Life Stories and Family Histories (1999)
10. Passerini, L. (1978), 'Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism', History Workshop Journal, 8, 82-108.
11. Passerini, L. (1987), Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class
12. Perks, R. & Thompson, A. (eds) (1998), The Oral History Reader
13. Personal Narratives Group (1989), Interpreting Women's Lives
14. Portelli, A. (1991), The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories: form and meaning in oral history
15. Portelli, A. (1997), The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the art of dialogue
16. Radstone, S. (2000), Memory and methodology
17. Ritchie, D. (2003), Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide
18. Rosen, H. (1998), Speaking from Memory: the Study of Autobiographical Discourse
19. Rosenwald, G. & Ochberg, R, (eds) (1992), Storied Lives: the Cultural Politics of Self-understanding
20. Samuel, R. & Thompson, P. (eds) (1990), The voice of the past: oral history
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22. Tonkin, E. (1992), Narrating our Pasts: the Social Construction of Oral History
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Heritage

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2. Aplin, G. (2002), Heritage: Identification, Conservation and Management
3. Arnold, J., Davies, K. and Ditchfield, S. (eds) (1998), History and Heritage: Consuming the past in Contemporary Culture
4. Boniface, P. and Fowler, P. (1993), Heritage and tourism in the 'global village'
5. Boswell and Evans (1999), Representing the Nation: A Reader, esp chapters by Rojek, Samuel and Urr.
6. Brisbane, M., Wood, J. (eds) (1996), A Future for our Past? An introduction to Heritage Studies
7. Chase, M. and Shaw, C. (1989), 'The dimensions of nostalgia', in The Imagined Past: History and nostalgia'
8. Delafons, J. (1997), Politics and preservation: a policy history of the built heritage, 1882-1996
9. Dodd, M. (10 Dec 2001), 'The New Rock 'n' Roll, the New Statesman
10. Fladmark, M. (ed.) (1993), Heritage: conservation, interpretation and enterprise
11. Hewison, R. (1987), The Heritage Industry: Britain in a climate of decline
12. Hunter, M. (ed.) (1996), Preserving the Past: the Rise of Heritage in Modern Britain
13. Jordanova, L. (May 2000), 'Public history', History Today
14. Kean, H., Martin, P., Morgan, S. (2000), Seeing History: Public History in Britain Now
15. Lowenthal, D. (1998), The Heritage Crusade and Spoils of History (1998)
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17. Samuel, R. (1984), Theatres of Memory, 'Unofficial knowledge', pp. 3-48 and 'Heritage baiting' in Part 4, pp.259-271.
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History in Schools

1. Andretti, K. (1993), Teaching History from Primary Evidence
2. Blyth, J. (1994), History 5 to 11
3. Bourdillon, H. (1994), Teaching History
4. Brown, R. (1995), Managing the Learning of History
5. Griffin, J. & Eddershaw, D. (1994), Using Local History Sources
6. Haydn, T. (1997), Learning to Teach History in the Secondary School
7. Husbands, C. (1997), What is History Teaching?
8. Lomas, T. et. al. (1996), Planning Primary History for the Revised National Curriculum, Key Stage 1 & 2
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12. Geoff Timmins, Keith Vernon and Christine Kinealy (2005), Teaching and Learning History
A. Twells (1992), Colonialism, Slavery and the Industrial Revolution: The Empire in South Yorkshire
A. Twells (2007), Olaudah Equiano in Sheffield

PDP in BSc Mathematics

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Faculty of Arts, Computing, Engineering and Science

Subject group:	Mathematics and Statistics
Number of students involved:	150
Elements of the employability framework addressed:	• Development of autonomy • PDP • Reflections on use of knowledge and skills: transfer of those to work environment

Description of learning and teaching approach adopted

Students on the BSc Mathematics programme are required to complete an on-line Progress File comprising a portfolio of work, in the form of a personal website, and a reflective logbook. In their logbook students provide, for each module, a reflective commentary on their learning, identifying in particular what is going well and problems that need to be resolved. They are encouraged to develop an action plan to address the problems they have identified, and report progress made towards resolving them.

In year one, the expectation is that students make entries for each module at least weekly. These entries are assessed, and provide (in total) 20% of the mark for one module. Each student receives simple weekly feedback, in the form of a mark awarded against published assessment criteria; at the end of the year students provide a longer reflective summary of their development over this time, for which they receive fuller email feedback.

In year two, students continue as above, but the entries are marked bi-weekly with the marks again contributing towards a core module. The logbook marks comprise part of a general employability element of assessment in this module, as students prepare to apply for an industrial work placement.

In the final year, the logbook assessment is built into the Project module, comprising 5% of the 30 credits available. This keeps the Project work higher on students' list of priorities and helps tutors to track their progress.

Throughout the course, staff are able to view students' logbook entries, with the system providing many views of the data. Staff can view all entries for their module, sorted by date - this provides very useful feedback on lectures, for example, within hours of delivery. They can also view the latest entries, to keep track of comments made that day. The system provides an easy way to reply to a student entry by email, so that many problems or questions can be dealt with quickly.

In order to provide a measure of privacy within peer groups, student logbooks are not visible to other students. Hence, in the current system, assessment is carried out by staff. Students do not have access to peer feedback and support in using the logbook as it is meant to be private and personal; they do, however, make full use of this when creating and maintaining their web portfolio of work.

This year (2007-8) the Technology and Management programme have also adopted the on-line Progress File system, bringing the number of courses and students involved to 10 and 230 respectively. Since the start of the session, these students have contributed more than 12,400 entries, comprising over 960,000 words (correct to March 4).

Employability objectives and intended learning outcomes

The use of the system described above to embed PDP in the curriculum is intended to help students develop their ability to:

• reflect on their learning, identifying what went well or badly - and why;

• identify problem areas, develop a strategy to deal with them and report on progress made towards its implementation;

• take control of their learning;

• develop autonomy: By providing a direct communication link with staff, the system also encourages students to take the initiative by contacting tutors for support as necessary. This in turn helps them to become more autonomous.

Description of and tips for good practice; lessons learned

To work effectively, a system such as this needs to be very easy to use (both for staff and students).

It also needs the active engagement of staff. Students will perceive the logbook as having more value if they receive prompt replies or feedback to their entries.

Although students understand the importance of developing employability skills, they prioritise their work according to credit received, so it is important that the logbook entries are assessed.

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

The system has been running now for five years. At the end of each year, students are asked to provide a summative review and feedback of the system, for which they receive some logbook credit. The results of this feed into the action plan for developing the system for the following year. Some selected students comments are shown below:

Positive

'While I was writing something that I was afraid of, I was becoming stronger and with more courage to face all my problems.'

'I have found this progress file very useful throughout the year, in helping me to record my thoughts and feelings on all the modules, I have also found it useful in helping me to organise my time better by finding where my weaknesses and strengths are so I am able to see where I need to concentrate most on.'

'I also think that the progress file has helped me to develop my communication skills and to become more confident in talking about my own work and feelings on the course. It also allows you to see for yourself how you have progressed, or dealt with any personal problems.'

'The online progress file has been a huge help in making the jump from being in a 6th form to university. It forces you, once a week, to actually think about what you have done and what you still need to do.'

'From my positive comments, I was able to build on these as well as feel confident about the work. From my comments that showed I was struggling, looking back made me realise what I needed to do to improve and also build on aspects where I had problems. I could do this by giving myself targets and this is a way of recording them.'

'The logbook, looking back now, has made me realise how much I have improved, particularly in my computer skills.'

'Talking about my self the first thing that I thought it was that it would be terrible due of my problem that I faced in English language. As the year passing, day by day I was feeling more confident to write everything that I wanted to ask or everything that I wanted just to say.'

'I feel that this online diary has been a good way of looking back on how you feel you have been coping throughout the year.'

'It also lets me see how I felt at the beginning of the year about the course and compare to how I feel now.'

'it was a way to express my feelings without thinking of what my teacher will think about me. I like this very much and makes me more strong because when a teacher send me an email as a reply of what I wrote in the logbook I fell that our teacher really care about our progress.'

Negative

'I also found that sometimes I would be writing in the logbook just for the sake of writing in it because I knew if I didn't I would lose marks.'

'However, I expected responses sometimes but didn't always get them which made me question whether some lecturers actually read the progress files.'

'Why should it deserve marks? At degree level, is documenting the request for help a valid allocation of the marks?'

Resources used

Custom developed set of web pages hosted on a web server running appropriate software (PHP/MySQL).

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 • Reflections on use of knowledge and skills: transfer of those 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.

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 coordinator

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.

Impact Career Mentoring Scheme

Annette Baxter

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Student and Academic Services, Careers and Employment Service

Subject group:	Open to all courses/all years
Number of students involved:	40-50 per year
Elements of the employability framework addressed:	• Development of autonomy • Key skills development • Real world activities • Work related learning • Reflections on use of knowledge and skills: transfer of those to work environment • Career management skills • Preparation for specific professional areas • Enterprise, innovation and creativity

Description of learning and teaching approach adopted

The Impact Career Mentoring Scheme involves matching a student to a work-based professional from a local/national organisation who has the skills and knowledge to share and who could give the student an insight into the work place or job role. The scheme lasts six months during which time mentees are expected to meet with their mentor for four one-hour appointments. At least one of these meetings should be at the employer's workplace.

The scheme aims to give the mentee appropriate knowledge, skills and insights into the work place or job role so the mentee can face their job search with confidence.

Students not only get insights into a job role or organisation that interests them, but may also see the practical application of their subject knowledge within the workplace and develop their employability in terms of negotiation, planning, time management, professional networking and interpersonal skills etc.

Students are encouraged to set their own objectives and review these at the end of the scheme. They are also asked to complete an evaluative summary report of their experiences reflecting upon their experience and learning outcomes.

Initially established at SHU in 2003 as an externally funded, regional and collaborative positive action project designed to develop the competitiveness and employability of UK Black and Minority Ethnic students; the scheme was later funded by Aimhigher to work with disabled students, and non traditional entrants to university. The scheme now proactively promotes itself to attract applications from Hallam's diverse and widening participation student population but is now also open more widely to benefit any home undergraduate student.

Employability objectives and intended learning outcomes

It was intended that the mentoring scheme would be a mutually beneficial relationship for all participants. With this in mind, the benefits have been drawn for mentees, mentors and organisations as follows:

Benefits to mentees

- Based upon the insights, advice and support from a work based professional the scheme enables the student to make well informed and realistic decisions about their career choice;

- To give the mentee an 'insiders guide' to the application and job hunting process and therefore develop appropriate strategies to succeed in the industry/career role;

- To boost the mentee's confidence through greater understanding and insight into a job role or organisation;

- To give students opportunity to develop specialist skills appropriate to their career choice;

- To give the mentee an extended network of contacts;

- To give students opportunity to take responsibility for their own personal and professional development. Once the student mentee is 'matched' and introduced their mentor, the student is encouraged to take the lead in arranging meetings, setting the objectives for the partnership, negotiating outcomes, planning agendas for meetings and reviewing their progress;

- Provide an opportunity for the students to review their strengths and skills and develop key employability skills especially in communication, negotiation and interpersonal skills appropriate to professional work environment;

- To give the student opportunity to explore their own strengths and development needs and identify strategies to meet these needs.

Benefits to mentors

- Career Development - Mentoring is becoming increasingly popular in modern business. Mentors receive training and the opportunity to develop this highly regarded skill and polish their people management and relationship building skills.

- A New Perspective - Mentors get a chance to look at their own job with fresh eyes.

- Learning on a mentoring scheme can be a two-way process - the mentee may have new ideas and knowledge to share.

- Job Satisfaction - As well as the satisfaction of helping others, previous years' mentors reported an increased sense of job satisfaction.

- Increased Understanding - The scheme enables mentors to keep up to date with developments within higher education, qualification structures and the needs or experiences of students and graduates.

- Continuing Professional Development - mentoring is recognised by some professional associations as CPD activity which will help a member maintain their professional registration, practitioner or Chartership status.

- Networking - An opportunity to broaden their professional network by meeting mentors from other organisations.

Benefits to the employing organisation

- The organisation will benefit from a higher profile on campus. The students you help are potential customers and clients.

- By taking part in the mentoring scheme, mentees are more aware of an organisation as a potential employer.

- Participation demonstrates commitment to promoting diversity and equality of opportunity.

- Introductions to potential future employees.

- An opportunity for organisations that don't currently recruit graduates to see how they might benefit the company.

- To help an organisation to keep up to date with developments in higher education and develop a potentially valuable relationship with the University.

Description of and tips for good practice; lessons learned

Recruiting student mentees:
The scheme was promoted via Careers and Employment Service netWORK vacancy site. Information about the scheme was also provided at careers induction talks and leaflets were distributed around campus and to placement teams. We recommended and referred students in to the mentoring scheme via our 1-1 career guidance appointments with clients. Where work insights were diagnosed as appropriate the needs of the client mentoring activities complemented a model of career guidance, planning and coaching.

We contacted appropriate student union societies and offered a mentoring taster session via the Students Union 'Why Don't You' programme.

To proactively promote the scheme to those students who, according to much research, may face hardship in the job market we used targeted SHU email alerts to groups such as BME students, disabled students. We also sent emails via Disabled Student Support team emails system, provided information to Faculty WP Officers, and presented at WP events, CETL Diversity SIG events.

Offering a scheme open to all students of all years and courses may have serviced to 'dilute' the impact of the publicity. The more specific and well defined the student cohort to be targeted is, the more focused and tailored the publicity materials and channels of promotion can be.

Recruiting mentors:
To recruit mentors, we approached local business associations such as the Chambers of Commerce and circulated details to the local and national employers with whom the Careers and Employment Service already had an established relationship. Publicity was posted on Hallam Alumni website to encourage

SHU graduates to volunteer. Also targeted professional associations such as Chartered Institute of Marketing, British Computer Society, Law Society etc.

To attract employers with a strong commitment to addressing diversity agendas, we approached relevant local associations such as Sheffield Black Business Forum, Business in the Community and Diversity Managers within organisations.

Matching (The chicken and egg - which to recruit first?)
Finding the right mentors for the right students can be a challenge. We found it was best not to make a match at all unless it was the right mentor/mentee pairing. When mentors apply they specify the areas of their experience and what skills they can offer support with. Conversely, on their application form, mentees specify areas of career interest which are of interest and which they hope to develop. Matching is done by comparing these check lists.

Where there is doubt, we found it was preferable to ask the student to select their mentor from the choices available. We would not make a 'match' unless we were confident it was appropriate to the student's requirements. We did not make promise that all mentors would be matched therefore, since their realm of professional interest may not have matched the career interests of the students applying in a particular year.

Managing the relationship and maintaining support of unmatched mentors is therefore important and we have tried to address this by inviting mentors to be involved in other university events such as the Choices and Voices conferences, careers workshops etc.

Where we did not already have a mentor from the career focus of interest to the mentee, we proactively approached organisations to identify appropriate contacts. This may be done by contacting HR departments, heads of relevant departments, diversity champions within organisations, or people within organisations who are responsible for the Corporate Social Responsibility agenda for that organisation. Generally, organisations and people have been positive and keen to be involved.

Motivation of participants:
Students apply for the programme and are interviewed. This is not to put up barriers to participation, but to check motivation, commitment and clarify expectations are realistic and appropriate.

Preparation for mentoring for both mentees and mentors:
To ensure all participants expectations were appropriate and they were able to make the most of the experience, all mentees and mentors are invited to a preparation 'training' / induction to mentoring meeting. This is held at the beginning of the academic year and is both a training induction event but also an opportunity to introduce mentor/mentee partnerships. It is also a networking event for mentors and a mentor/mentee 'speed dating' opportunity for those present who have not been matched.

Where people join the programme after this first launch event, mentor training and preparation is organised on an individual basis or for small groups.

Mentees and mentors are given resource pack of materials to support their partnership e.g. learning styles exercises, career motivations tasks, SWOT analysis sheets and mentees are given a mentoring card sort to help them consider, clarify and prioritise their objectives from the mentoring partnership. This has proven to be much valued by students in helping expand their understanding of the potential of mentoring and prioritise their own personal expectations.

Ongoing support for mentees and mentors:
Once matches have been introduced the partnerships should be self regulating. It is useful to have someone as the link referral point for participants during the scheme however. We have also found it useful to have occasional optional informal 'get togethers' of mentees to ensure they were progressing with the partnership, to hear of any updates/issues that needed addressing and for them to compare experiences of others, share tips and ideas of what could be negotiated.

To keep in touch with mentors and reinforce 'a connection' to the programme, we found it helpful to send occasional emails to mentors (especially important as mentioned earlier, for those volunteer mentors who had not been matched). If required, mentors could also post requests for information, ideas or support via a Mentors' Email Network so (while obviously respecting the confidentiality of their mentee) they could share ideas, tips and advice with each other.

Recognition:
There are no academic credits awarded for participation on the scheme, and as such mentoring is evidence of a student's autonomy, initiative and personal motivation. It was felt however this needed to be recognised, so an award certificate is presented to all participants and in the 2007/08 academic year it was also agreed with Hallam Union that students undertaking mentoring could use this experience to achieve the Hallam Award.

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

- Feedback forms are given to both student mentees and mentors at the end of the programme;

- A 'Recognising achievement' event is held in April bringing together all participants to hear of their experiences, outcomes achieved and to evaluate the scheme;

- Students are asked to complete a reflective report on their experience summarising any learning points.

Achievements gained (summarised from discussion groups at the last Recognising Achievement event):

Mentees	Occupational awareness
	Making contacts
	A social network
	Self-development and self-esteem
	Confidence building
	Choosing a career path
	New direction
	Help with CV and applications
	Interview techniques
	Learning from others' experiences
	What disability provision I should expect at work
Mentors	Satisfaction
	Giving something back to community
	Sharing knowledge
	Insight into problems students face getting jobs
	Understanding of the motivations of students entering the job market
	Introducing students to industry
	Links to the universities
	Encouraging diversity in recruitment
	Helping someone not to make the mistakes I made

Some of the comments from evaluation forms include:

Student Quotes

'A mentor is a fantastic career resource. They have lots of useful experience and knowledge to pass onto you. If you are unsure about the next step after uni, get involved in the mentoring scheme.'
Student 1, SHU

'The mentoring programme has helped me get my foot on the ladder for my chosen career and without it I would still not really have any idea where to start'
Student 2, SHU

'I have gained more confidence to speak to and have meetings with people that I do not know, and I have discovered what a useful tool networking can be... I have also arranged some job shadowing through my mentors contacts'
Student 3, SHU

Mentor Quotes

'Gives you confidence as it makes you realise how much you know and how your soft skills have developed.'
Mentor 1

'Being involved with mentoring allows you to be involved with young people and keep your mentoring skills finely 'tuned'
Mentor 2

The scheme has received recognition from the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation and achieved Approved Provider Status. In addition, the scheme won the AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services) Diversity Award in 2005.

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A Guide To Enquiry Based Learning

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What Is Enquiry Based Learning?

- Enquiry Based Learning is a natural form of learning, borne out of our innate sense of curiosity and desire to understand
- It is generically applicable, and has grown from modelling learning in a number of subjects
- It promotes inter-professional and interdisciplinary learning
- It helps develop student autonomy and employability.

EBL is particularly good for developing a range of key skills that transcend subject knowledge:

- Academic skills of research and information processing
- Intellectual skills starting from knowledge acquisition and manipulation, moving through application and analysis, culminating with synthesis and evaluation
- Professional skills including leadership, and project management, through the practical application of theory in a team context
- Personal skills of accepting responsibility, being creative and time management.

EBL enhances student motivation by socialising their learning and engaging with authentic real-world problems.

Recognisable forms of EBL

- Enquiry-based learning activities include
- Design
- Problem-based learning
- Case-based learning
- Field trips
- Dissertations and project-based learning
- Research.

The defining feature of EBL is that once students have been given an open brief, they go on to determine their own lines of enquiry and identify what information they need, in order to hypothesise a solution. They then go on to implement their strategy in order to attempt to fulfil the brief.

Current examples of EBL implementation in ACES

Engineering: SHU Racing

"All Sheffield Hallam students are invited to join the team. If you feel that you have the enthusiasm and dedication to work on an exciting motorsport project from start to finish, then you could make an ideal member of the Formula Student team."


http://www.shu.ac.uk/shuracing

Sustainability: Eco-house - a project for sustainable living

"The 'eco-house' project funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), has helped students learn about sustainability...."

SL Andy Young has led students in engineer a scaled down model of a house that implements ecologically friendly technologies.

http://materials.shu.ac.uk/e-news/issue6/ecohouse.html
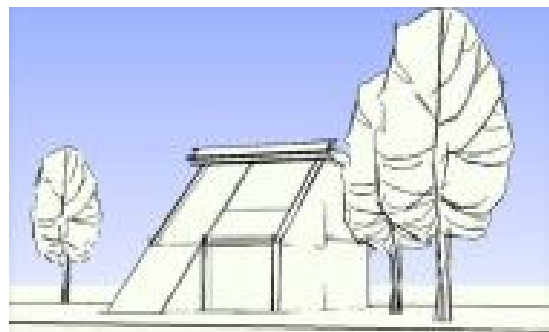
Creative Media Practice

"All students on the BA Digital Media Production degree work with students from the BA Animation, BA Film and Visual Effects and BA Games Design to carry out an integrated project where an EBL approach is used."

http://prospectus.shu.ac.uk/op_UGlookup1.cfm?id_num=526&CurrTab=4

Considerations for a typical EBL project

Choosing a suitable project

Key questions for project leaders to consider from the outset include the following:

How do I choose a topic that lends itself to enquiry-based learning and promote the development of learner autonomy?
The topic should be capable of being specified via an open brief, allowing students to determine their own lines of enquiry and to identify what information they need, in order to hypothesise a solution. The topic should be suitably flexible to allow students to implement their own strategy in attempting the brief.

How do I stimulate the enquiry?
Group-based projects are often an excellent way to facilitate EBL and the development of learner autonomy as well as nurturing team skills.

In order to achieve student by-in, one should aim to kindle a desire within the students to engage with an enquiry-based learning project prior to the commencement of the module. This could be done by asserting a number of learner autonomy problems typically faced by students, without immediately suggesting a solution. The enquiry-based learning project then fills the vacuum that has been created by the posed problems.

Next, it is important to identify what it is that will excite the students' imagination? The answer to which may involve choosing a topic with open-ended possibilities or a clear challenge, as well as one that has clear links to the students' subject.
In order to motivate the students, milestones can be set to give the students something to aim for, as well as helping with assessment.
To provide fuel throughout the duration of the project, mini incentives can be introduced such as competitions or potential placements with employers.

How do I form the groups?
Staffs should consider and be aware of the kind of groups, for example: democratic, chosen or random as well as team size.

The benefits of a democratically chosen group include:
*   The burden of responsibility for team selection is lifted from the shoulders of the lecturer and placed onto the students.
*   Students can engage with the selection process, learning to consider issues such as team roles and diversification.
*   Students gain ownership from the outset.

The disadvantages of a democratically chosen group include:
*   Students may avoid working with perceived 'slackers', leading to the formation of a 'slacker' group.
*   Students often self select same-race groups, leading to a lack of integration and therefore a conflict between University values.
*   Elite students may form an elitist group, therefore depriving other groups of a strong core.

The benefits of a randomly chosen group include:
*   The potential for students to mix with other students they would normally avoid.
*   The eradication of discrimination.

The disadvantages of a randomly chosen group include:
*   The chance formation of elite groups, slacker groups, mono racial groups, pour distribution of the sexes- for example one female and nine males in one group and five females and five males in the other group etc

Other key questions would include:
*   How do I achieve inclusion and buy in?
*   How do I facilitate the process?
*   Will I be pro-active or reactive?
*   How do I assess the outcome?

The focus of an EBL project is not typically to impart subject-centric knowledge to students but to develop more general, real-world life skills, such as the ability to manage one's own learning in a team context.

Many of the projects developed using the LA CETL funding will also be cross-Faculty, where students from different degree courses (or different years of a course) work together on a given problem. In such situations imparting subject-centric knowledge is not practical and focussing on the development of general skills is appropriate.

Projects should therefore seek to enable students to synthesise the subject knowledge they have acquired up to that point.

Choosing and enforcing suitable project boundaries

Below is a list of typical areas where EBL can be used:
*   Design
*   Problem Based Learning
*   Case Based Learning
*   Field Trips
*   Dissertations, projects
*   Research

All of the above areas, being open ended, may lead to situations that may conflict with:
*   Values and standards of the University
*   SHU regulatory frameworks
*   Societal ethics
*   British and EC law
*   Health and safety
*   Internal student group values
*   Safe financial practice

You need to be aware of this and make sure that students adhere to these boundaries.

Some tasks are unsuitable for enquiry-based learning. For example, students cannot be expected to discover how to use certain engineering machinery. This is because engineering machinery has to be used in one way only, which is the correct way, and cannot be improvised. Improper use of machinery can result in massive financial losses and student injury. This type of knowledge is best taught practically by an expert to enable student proficiency through supervised use. In this document we shall refer to the aforementioned knowledge category as tutor-imparted critical knowledge.

When choosing a project it is also advisable to consider the consequences of student failure within a project task, when students adopt a particular line of enquiry. Ideally such failure should only be of an academic nature and one where students can learn from this failure. An example of a poorly selected project task would be one requiring students to repair laptop computers without insurance cover, as this would conflict with safe financial practice.

When working in groups, students need to be sensitive to each others values and perspectives. You should ensure that any conflict be resolved.

Reflection

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Faculty of Development & Society

This is an Employability CETL resource which draws upon existing good practice in the faculty of Development and Society (D&S). It comprises examples of good practice, questions which teams can collectively consider and discuss as well as recommendations for addressing the employability agenda when writing for validation. It draws evidence from evaluative work on the validation documents submitted by course planning teams in 2007 and is intended primarily as part of a pack for teams preparing for validation.

Examples of good practice
Within validation documents, reflection is closely related to and articulated in the context of PDP processes. The tool for delivering reflective learning and teaching is frequently a progress file or e-portfolio. There are a number of educational purposes which the portfolio can be used for:

- A learning tool - developmental to students' ability to reflect
- A track record of achievement, which can be used to enhance CV writing and therefore employability
- Part of an accreditation process, where the portfolio is used to gain membership to a professional organisation

All of these features of portfolios contribute to enhance learners' employability and are constituent parts of employability provision for students. They are most effective however when they are applied in a way which complements each of these purposes. There is a danger in seeing eportfolios solely as a track record of achievement, as this does not guarantee that abilities to reflect will develop in students, as demonstrated by research studies on reflective portfolio use (Duffy et al., 2008). Similarly, while using eportfolios as part of an accreditation process would contribute to learners' employability, as demonstrated by courses in MSc Housing and Neighbourhood Management (2007), there are befits to be gained from a focus on learning and developing reflective ability to support this, in order to ensure students are not merely jumping through hoops. One good example comes from MA International Criminal Justice courses (2007) where the objectives of reflective activity are clearly articulated:

'Identifying and locating employment preferences and reflecting on how the process of study and learning is associated to the development of employability skills'

(MA International Criminal Justice, 2007: 18)

A preoccupation with describing the tool used to deliver reflective learning (e-portfolios, blogs, reflective journals, self assessment assignment sheets) is evident in much of the validation writing (BA Hons English, 2007: 13). This is understandable as e-portfolios and new platforms provided by technology expand the possibilities for making reflective learning accessible to students. It would be useful however to place an equal focus on discussing pedagogical models for developing reflective learning practice, the perceived outcomes of reflection to learners' employability and the assessment processes attached to this. These three aspects determine the way reflection is resolved as pedagogy and it would be useful for them to remain at the forefront of validation writing.

Questions to consider/discuss
Are there opportunities to further articulate within validation writing:
- Pedagogical models for structuring/understanding reflection (e.g. Jasper, 2003; Baxter Magolda, 1992; Gibbs, 1988)
- The perceived outcomes of reflection to enhancing learners' employability
- The way assessment of reflection is approached Is the reflective process used in a balanced way to address all of the following:
- As a learning opportunity to enhance the students' ability to reflect;
- As a track record of achievement, which can be used to develop CV writing skills and employability;
- As part of an accreditation process, where the portfolio is used to gain membership to a professional organisation;

Recommendations for addressing the employability agenda when writing for validation
Some examples of good practice when writing for validation and addressing reflective learning can be found in courses which had articulated clearly the perceived outcomes of reflection to the learner's employability (MA International Criminal Justice, 2007: 18; MSc Real Estate Investment and Management/MSc Real Estate Construction and Development, 2007: 5).

There were a number of positive uses of reflective progress files articulated in the validation documents. In all of these cases there is a need to always relate them to expected outcomes, enhancing learners' employability: where the progress file develops students' ability to reflect, how would this ability enhance their propensity for lifelong learning once they are in employment? Where it is a track record of achievement, how would that influence CV writing skills and the ability to articulate these skills in a job interview? Where the progress file is used to gain membership to a professional organisation, how would this enhance students' understanding of the demands of the world of work?

References to definitive documents:

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Real life commercial project - working for students

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Sheffield Business School

Subject group:	Business Operations and Financial Information Systems (BOFIS)
Number of students involved:	Up to 40 per delivery
Elements of the employability framework addressed:	• Development of autonomy • Key skills development • PDP • Real world activities • Work related learning • Reflections on use of knowledge and skills: transfer of those to work environment • Career management skills • Preparation for specific professional areas • Enterprise, innovation and creativity

Description of learning and teaching approach adopted

Students receive a short block of intensive lecture sessions covering:

• Approaches to consultancy and theoretical foundations
• Contracting and management
• Management of change and cultural sensitivity
• Reflective practice and consultancy project selection

Once the autonomous student teams have selected a specific project, from the project briefs we gain from external organisations (i.e. client sponsors) they are then left to work at their own pace and on their own initiative, this is after a first meeting for them with the client company which is also attended by their academic project supervisor.

Each team is assigned an academic supervisor who is usually a member of the BOFIS subject group, though this need not be the case if expertise is required from other subject groups within the faculty.

Prior to the Christmas break, all teams are brought together, with their respective supervisors, to deliver a short presentation to the whole cohort as to their progress, problems encountered, changing terms of reference, action and project planning etc. This session is designed to facilitate questioning by all present, and also for everyone to make suggestions. The benefit of a fresh informed or not informed pair of eyes has really made some teams see their projects differently after this session. It also builds relationships and furthers the learning experience. Throughout the delivery of this module students are continually encouraged to reflect upon events, their contribution, key skills and how it and they develop, their strengths and weaknesses

relevant to the interventions and thus identifying skills gaps and providing opportunities for career action planning. It is recommended that they keep a journal or learning log. Though this is not collected or formally assessed it does form the basis of their individual reflective assessment component.

From this point student teams progress with the aid of their supervisor, to the point where they deliver the assessed elements of the module.

It is important to note that the success of this module is also due to the excellent attitude of the whole BOFIS subject team who are willing to spend time with student teams and discuss their problems and ideas/solutions whether they are receiving time tabled hours for this or not.

The assessment package is two-fold:

Academic Formal Assessment:

A group report and presentation to the clients, around Easter, timed to suit the diaries of all relevant stakeholders (40% and 20% respectively). These are assessed and moderated by two academics.

An individual reflective account of the intervention process and of individual learning (40%) again assessed and moderated by two academics.

We especially reward creative, innovative and enterprising solutions and recommendations and approaches to actually conducting the consultancy interventions. Some of the more modern approaches to managing the process are covered in the intensive sessions.

Client Business Solution Informal Assessment:

In addition to the academic package of assessment the students also feel a massive amount of informal and personal assessment based upon whether the sponsoring client likes, accepts and implements their proposals. This is really taken to heart by them and is without doubt one of the major factors in explaining their tremendous enthusiasm and commitment to these consultancy interventions.

Employability objectives and intended learning outcomes

The aims and intended learning outcomes are, as defined in the module specification:

Summary of Aims:

The taught element of the module aims to provide a foundation of consultancy theory upon which subsequent interventions in real-world organisations can draw.

The consultancy intervention itself will locate this theory in a practical context. The work will usually demand some integration of methods, techniques and approaches, drawn from across relevant modules within the fields of business and management. However the precise content of the work is driven by negotiation and balanced between the client's requirements and academic expectations.

Arriving at this agreement is seen as a key part of the intervention, in addition to placing demands upon students to deliver added value for their clients, the aim of the intervention is

to enable students to put their learning about the consultancy process into practice, and to provide a vehicle for its critical examination.

More often than not, in the first meeting where the above takes place, the original project brief supplied by the client organisation requires little more than some clarification and fine tuning - negotiated between themselves and the students and this does provide an opportunity for reflection.

Anticipated learning outcomes:

On completion of the module students will be able to:

- Understand the nature of consultancy processes and the factors which a consultant needs to consider to design and manage a successful intervention;
- Use structured approaches, relevant concepts and theoretical frameworks to advise clients facing complex problem situations;
- Demonstrate professional consultancy skills appropriate to a role as management advisor or change agent;
- Appreciate the challenges of managing relationships in consultancy practice - notably handling the pressures within a consultancy team and the inevitable tensions of the client-consultant relationship - from project inception to completion;
- Evaluate the underpinning theories of consultancy and their implications for practical interventions;

The employability objectives are somewhat more implicit:

Students develop their autonomy as they request advice and supervision as they feel appropriate, the projects are student managed.

As well as developing consultancy knowledge the students have to assess their own key skills strengths and weaknesses and attempt to plug any gaps that exist in relation to the specific real world work related projects – these projects are real, live and often time critical to the sponsoring organisations which constitutes work related learning.

Plugging the skills gaps can be via additional learning on behalf of individuals or by group member selection (we cover skills analysis/audits in one of the intensive directed sessions) or by a combination of both. Students are required to reflect upon this as part of their individual submissions and relate it to professional and personal development planning (PDP) as well as reflecting upon how they have transferred skills and knowledge to the working environment of the sponsor organisation.

Description of and tips for good practice; lessons learned

The mode of delivery – i.e. short intensive sessions followed by student led working with occasional feedback checking sessions is very much liked by the final year students, especially as they know they can draw on academic supervision and advice as necessary.

In the past some student groups have not, in our opinion, drawn sufficiently upon the academic support. As such this has been noted and the supervisors have become more active in calling for updates either face-to-face or via the use of IT.

As a mark of good practice, this module at level six, by far, gives students the best possible opportunity to bring together their learning from levels four and five, along with their learning, experiences and developed acumen from their placement year. This really appeals to them as it develops both module/ intervention content and process, in addition, it also provides them with a major project and achievement which they are proud to add to their CV and has in cases created a major discussion topic in interviews.

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

We have several letters of thanks from sponsor organisations and have had interest from the Sheffield Business Link, Asda Walmart and Microsoft in taking part in future deliveries. Organisations which have taken part in the past have always been ready to continue with their support and have also provided feedback as to the implementation of the student's recommendations/solutions.

In the past two deliveries, the external moderator has singled out this module for special praise in terms of its excellent student results and for its promotion of employability and development of external links.

Students are surveyed each delivery and the comments are again 100% positive. A selection of project sponsor and student comments are provided below:

"I really enjoyed this module… I would enjoy doing the experience again"

"We felt a responsibility to achieving high aims for the client"

"We became united as a team"

"This is the first group project that I have ever been happy with the results!"

"I've learnt a great deal from the experience"

"The presentation was such a high point"

"We were all very proud of our achievements"

"Nearly all of the ideas will be implemented – thank you"

"One of the two best modules I have ever taken"

"In the first year I would never have believed that I could have achieved so much"

"We can implement this with confidence – thank you"

"Give me XYZ's email addresses I want to offer them a position with us"

Last delivery did result in three job offers to our students, one of which was taken up. This student is already earning an above average salary and is still with the sponsoring organization who still support this module.

Resources used

The module requires relatively few resources. Allocated hours to IT enabled lectures total just 15 hours (5 * 3) with supervision of groups hours allocated around 5 – 8 per project group. Supervision rarely requires rooms to be requested as may take place informally in the University Delis or in staff offices.

Mostly, assessed presentations take place at the sponsoring organisations place of business, though some do prefer to visit the University hence some room requests and odd refreshments are requested.

If the module is to develop further there is ample opportunity to utilise technologies such as video conferencing and also to extend the use of SHUSPACE facilities such as WIKIs collaborative group working tools and discussion boards etc.

Group work assessment

Peter Smith

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Faculty of Development and Society

Subject group:	Secondary Education (Mathematics)
Elements of the employability framework addressed:	• Development of autonomy • Key skills development

Description of learning and teaching approach adopted

This study examined some of the benefits and pitfalls of group work assessments. It is my belief that group work can be an important tool which can contribute to the agenda of 'assessment as learning' (Povey and Angier, 2004).

Perhaps partly due to the professional nature of the course, but also significantly as a response to some of our commonly shared beliefs about teaching and learning within the Mathematics Education Centre, our agenda for these students includes a shift in their perception of what it means to be engaged with mathematics. In GCSE and A level mathematics, students often develop a view of mathematics which is algorithmic, which is to say that they learn to recognise a range of mathematical problems, and to apply practiced algorithms, or sequences of steps, which produce an answer. They often do this without more than a superficial understanding of the mathematical ideas which underpin their method.

Changing this well-practiced view of what it means to engage in mathematical activity is an explicit item on our agenda for first year undergraduate students, as well the postgraduate students on our 2 year conversion PGCE route. I believe our inclusion of assessments which require the students to work in small groups contributes to their developing understanding of themselves as professionals, as autonomous learners, and as researchers and 'doers' of mathematics.

As teacher educators, we also seek to model good practice for out student teachers. Group work assessments make an important contribution to the wide variety of assessment strategies we offer.

My developing interest in assessed group work has grown up through 3 particular modules which I have taught over a number of years. My study explored all three modules, one forms 60% of a level 4 module, one a complete 10 point level 5 module and the most complex (because the group size is typically slightly larger) is a 20 point level 5 module.

In each case, I take particular care in setting up the groups, and in putting procedures in place, documented within the assignment handbook, explaining what will happen if things do not run smoothly.

In a second strand of this project, I interviewed two colleagues who had also experimented with group work assessments, Ros Garrick in Early Child Studies, and Anna Cox from primary mathematics.

Employability objectives and intended learning outcomes

I have noted, and colleagues have reported, a wide range of important benefits which can arise from students engaging in group work assessments. These include:

- practice in meeting commitments;
- developing time management skills;
- practice in learning to negotiate with peers;
- learning to set limits for oneself and for others;
- learning to challenge inappropriate behaviour from peers;
- seeking support appropriately from peers and from the tutor;
- listening skills;
- developing research skills.

Description of and tips for good practice; lessons learned

There seem to be a number of issues which commonly occur in the context of group work assessment

Fairness

- Individuals being 'carried' by the rest of the group (loafers);
- Different work rates and contributions;
- Contributions from group members unequal.

Possible strategies:

- Allow group to set balance of marks for the project between themselves;
- Assessment mark shared between a group, and an individually assessed component.

Managing different learning styles:

Different learning styles can conflict, e.g. some students carefully plan and schedule their work, others may tend to leave tasks to the last minute; some learners like to do all work collaboratively, while others may prefer time and space to work individually and quietly before making their contribution.

Possible strategies:

- Raising self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses, e.g. Belbin exercise (http://www.belbin.com);
- Recording all group meeting, with a record of work completed, and future agreements.

Difficulty for students in challenging inappropriate peer behaviour

This is a frequently reported issue for groups. It commonly arises from some form of broken agreement. Frequent problems arise around students either not attending, or arriving late to arranged meetings, or from agreed work not having been completed.

Possible strategies:

- Encourage students to make and adhere to agreements, and to record these in writing

- Ensure close friends are not working together, experience shows that the tensions of working within a group can have several undesirable outcomes for close friends, either they form a defensive sub-group, that is, they jointly characterise 'others' as the problem, or the strain on their friendship damages the relationship with consequences for the rest of the course
- Raising self-awareness: Tutor meetings with whole group

Collusion around incorrect information

- Sometimes the group will agree a 'fact', perhaps found n the internet, and incorrectly agree its validity. The conviction generated by the agreement within the group may end further research on the point which is then built upon.

Possible strategies:

- Monitor the group's progress through periodic meetings with the tutor.

Different cultural expectations
- Group work can be alienating to students whose cultural background has given little or no experience of working cooperatively (which has sometimes been noticed with international students).

Possible strategies:

- International students may need particular encouragement and the opportunity to discuss with the tutor, and within the group, their understanding of what is required.
- Where possible, it may be helpful to place several international students in the same group.

Avoiding overload for the student
- Group work typically needs opportunities to meet outside the programmed sessions, this can be difficult for some cohorts / individuals;
- Difficulty of multiple group work assignments running concurrently;
- Group size is critical, in a pair there is one inter-relationship, with three students there are 4, with four students, there are 11, and with 5 there are 26! (taking into account all the possible combinations of several sub-groups of people working together from the larger group).

Possible strategies:

- Programme in scheduled meeting times for the groups to meet;
- Use the cohort academic tutor to check on whether there are existing group work assessments within the programme;
- Group size is critical, in my experience, a paired task is a good first experience, and a group of 4 is a practical maximum in many contexts.

Avoiding overload for the tutor:
- Group work, especially for 'groups' larger than 2, can be very time consuming for the tutor

Possible strategies:

- In your module planning, allow time for:
- setting up the projects
- regular meetings with the groups to monitor both the development of the work, and any difficulties within the group

- giving formative feedback on projects in progress
- allow time for dealing with crisis management
- allow time for moderation of projects
- Seek advice from colleagues with experience in group work assessment

Managing absence and personal crises
- Any extended absence, or partial engagement due to a personal crisis by a member of a group can be problematic

Possible strategies:

- Have a strategy in reserve for dealing with this, for example, an individual version of the work which can be given to a student who you decide cannot fairly be allowed to continue to work as part of the team.
- Where possible, involve the whole group in the decision, and reassure remaining group members that you will mark the work in such a way that they are not penalised by 'missing' work from the withdrawn member

Managing difficulties between members of the group
- I find it is relatively rare for all the groups within a cohort to go smoothly, group work tends to create considerable pressures as the contribution of each member is perceived as affecting the credit of the others. A range of particular difficulties which may arise are outlined above, for example, see the notes on fairness, managing inappropriate peer behaviour and different learning styles.

Possible strategies:

- There will always be several points of view when a serious difficulty arises. Make it a rule that you will listen to anyone who has a concern about how the group is working together, but that to help the group to move forward, you will only discuss the difficulty with the whole project group present;
- Arrange a project group meeting as soon as possible after the difficulty has come to your attention;
- Try to help the group reach it's own solution about how to move forward, but be prepared to be directive if it becomes clear that the group is unlikely to reach a solution acceptable to all the group members.

Uncooperative students
- Occasionally, one encounters an uncooperative student who may try to sabotage the process by not turning up; destructively criticising others; using aggression to trying to coerce the group into agreement with their point of view.

Possible strategies:

- Only very occasionally have I felt it necessary to remove a student from a group. If the success of the group working together is directly assessed, that is, you have indicated that marks will be awarded according to the coherence of the report (which is one way to assess group work effectiveness) the student could be penalised if they do not moderate their behaviour so that they can continue to work in the group. Where you think this could be an issue, it is important to write this into the assessment handbook.

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

The key points arising from feedback collected over many years of practice have been incorporated into the previous section where they have informed the 'possible strategies'.

Embed enterprise and employability into your course or module

Venture Matrix

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Venture Matrix - providing real world opportunities

The Venture Matrix aims to improve the enterprise skills and to develop the employability of students by enhancing their entrepreneurial capabilities during their academic study. Students are given the opportunity to tackle real life business challenges within a secure and safe environment whilst gaining new skills.

The Venture Matrix is a vehicle by which you can build enterprise teaching and employability skills into existing courses or form part of the validation process when developing new modules.

How it works

The Venture Matrix is open to staff and undergraduate students across all subject areas of the University. It operates via a bespoke website, venturematrix.shu.ac.uk, which provides a gateway to an interactive 'trading estate', creating an online hub.

Students submit a short description of their proposed venture. Once accepted it becomes live on the website and they can apply for Venture Matrix resources (known as Squids) to enable the Venture group to trade within the Venture Matrix

Activities include:

- Seeking out opportunities to trade with other venture groups
- Trading within the virtual environment
- Maximising the loan given to their venture group

To facilitate the Venture Matrix process, all members are asked to read and accept a code of practice before membership is activated. They are also offered online partnership agreements that venture groups can adopt to help formalise how members behave in their venture group

Facts and figures

- 40 per cent increase in the number of BSc (Hons) Business and Technology students taking a placement as a result of their Venture Matrix experience
- BCs (Hons) Sport Technology increased student placements from their traditional zero to 50 per cent of the cohort
- An evaluation report carried out in 2007/8 by Ester Ehiyazaryan and Nicola Barraclough of the e3i (Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability) Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, demonstrated the enhancement of students' employability skills after participation in the Venture Matrix project.

How to get involved

The Venture Matrix is a membership-based project. All university students and staff are automatic members and they can activate their membership by getting involved. The Venture Matrix currently delivers work-related learning to approximately 860 students across the three faculties and the Sheffield Business School (SBS).

Validation and assessment

There are three ways of embedding Venture Matrix into a course either as part of an existing course or as part of the validation process when developing new modules.

- **Fully embedded into core modules**
  BSc (Hons) Business and Technology embedded Venture Matrix throughout all 3 levels of study, awarding 20 credits at each level

- **As a single module**
  BSc (Hons) Sport Technology adopted a module based around enterprise from level 4 BSc (Hons) Business and Technology

- **As part of an existing agreement**
  BSc (Hons) Computer Network and Engineering made minor modifications to learning outcomes so they now demonstrate student reflection on future employability

Support and training

Our dedicated Venture Matrix staff team provide support and training to tutors and students alike, including

- direct support and training to students involved in business, and schools and college opportunities, including student drop-in sessions
- Formal briefings given to academics wishing to get involved with Venture Matrix
- An induction week presentation to students at all levels across the University
- Monthly network trade fairs offering networking opportunities to the entire Venture Matrix community - students, academics, support staff, schools, colleges and external organisations

In addition, students undertaking a business to student, or school and college, opportunity can have access to one-to-one careers advice sessions and attend networking events such as the Venture Matrix lunch club and Executive Dinner

Venture Matrix
Providing real world opportunities