To what extent does peer to peer support encourage second year students to actively seek placements?

Vicki O’Brien, University of Central Lancashire. Supervised by Francesca Walker University of Central Lancashire. With thanks to Debbie Scott at the University of Chester.

Abstract

This report investigates the success changes to an existing module, ‘Transition to Work’ within the Lancashire Business School; the module prepares students planning to undertake a full year on placement. Following a full and extensive module review, it was felt by staff and students alike that the module lacked both student engagement and success. Module tutors and students alike felt disengaged with the module, attendance was low, and students did not appear to be actively seeking work placements. Module changes were implemented at the beginning of the academic year 2013 -2014. The changes brought together pre-placement students studying on the ‘Transition to work module’ and students who had successfully completed a placement and had now returned to study the ‘Continuing Professional Development’ module. The interaction was in the form of student-led workshops developed and run by 4th-year post placement students; engagement was compulsory, in that assignments were devised for both second and fourth-year students to encourage engagement.

Within the first semester changes were already apparent with more placements secured than in previous years, it was at this point the research project was successful in securing funding by ASET to investigate the effectiveness of peer to peer support. Questionnaires were developed, piloted and circulated between the pre and post-placement groups followed by a full analysis of the responses. Further validation of the responses took the form of a feedback session with the module tutor that formed part of the assessment. Based on the feedback received from both pre and post-placement students, the results were found to be largely positive with benefits of peer to peer interaction noted in both those seeking placement and those students who offered the peer support. Success rates for those seeking placements from within the ‘Transition to Work’ module have far exceeded expectations and for those students graduating this year, a record number of First Class Honours degrees have been awarded within the post placement module.

Keywords

Peer to Peer Support, Placements, Mentoring, Coaching, Undergraduates, Business School, Graduates. Success, Degree award.
Introduction

This research was undertaken due to the level of dissatisfaction with the second year pre-placement module ‘Transition to Work’. Students had the opportunity to provide feedback on modules within their course at Student Staff Liaison Meetings (SSLM). These meetings were held once a semester. It was here that feedback was received that students felt that there was a great deal of repetition in the module that students stopped attending, lacked engagement and motivation as the module progressed. This was reflected in the level of frustration felt by staff members and the number of re-assessments required at the end of the module.

The Module Leader undertook a full review of the module at the end of 2013, recognising the level of support required as noted in research 'Beyond Placement Extinction' (2010) ‘Generation Y have experienced a great deal of support throughout their educational careers, our assumption that they are suddenly independent and able to work their way through the minefield that is the path to the workplace and work experience is letting them down.’ (Walker & Bowerman 2010). The Module Leader also recognised the value of peer to peer support as evidenced anecdotally from sessions entitled ‘Placemingle’ which were part of the ‘Transition to Work’ module for second years and ‘Continuing Professional Development’ for fourth year students. Placemingle was a single two hour interaction between the two years. The Module Leader recognised that this needed to be expanded and that the current knowledge being brought back to the university of recruitment and selection processes experienced by the fourth year students was invaluable to both second years and to staff.

A full review of the ‘Transition to Work’ module for second years and ‘Continuing Professional Development’ for fourth years was undertaken as part of a pilot study. Both modules were directly linked via assessment to ensure that both years engaged. At this stage, it was recognised that this was a high-risk strategy as the final year students would be under a great deal of pressure to succeed in their studies. The level of engagement required was in effect above and beyond the ‘normal’ level of requirements for an assessed module (See Appendix 1: Assignment Brief Assignment 1). The programme for second year students was changed to a prescriptive delivery which ensured that there was significant interaction with both staff members and student peers.

At the end of the first semester it became clear that the new structure was having an impact. It was at this stage that the decision was taken to apply for the ASET research bursary with this pilot study in mind. The research proposal was developed to gauge the effectiveness of peer to peer support on pre and post placement students within the Lancashire Business School. It was felt a topic of great interest to the university, particularly the module tutors who supported pre-placement students. Interest in the relationship between placement years and academic success has been growing for a number of years, with positive findings being found over a decade ago with researchers including Gomez, Lush and Clements, (2004), Mandilaras, (2004) stating that those students who took placements achieve higher degree classifications than those who did not, more recently Green, (2011:49) stated that “The evidence presented suggests that the completion of a placement year on average, improves the final classification award achieved by students.
from 2.2 to 2.1” interestingly Universities such as Aston and Loughborough now include the benefits of placement years as increasing not only job prospects but their performance and degree classifications on their web pages. It is therefore important to universities to encourage, support and nurture students to be successful in achieving a placement position, not only to increase the students’ final degree classification but also as a way of differentiating and offering students added value when looking to select a university.

At the time of writing students within the Lancashire Business School who wish to take a placement enrol on the module entitled ‘Transition to Work’ during their second year. Due to the number of students who wish to take a placement, the year group is split two module groups with three module tutors. Of these groups, 47 students enrolled in the second year module became the pilot group and a further 40 second year students enrolled in the same module with two different tutors. It was planned that the second group would form the comparator group to aid the research to understand the effectiveness of peer to peer support.

The use of a comparator group appealed as it would further validate the answers generated and look at the differences between the two groups, one with access to 4th year pre-placement students and one group who did not have access to the 4th year students. The modules had similar students studying the same module, with assignments with the same learning outcomes. The students enrolled in the two groups, pilot and comparator initially had the same desire, to seek a placement.

However problems arose with the use of the comparator due to a low response rate from the questionnaires circulated to this group and the discovery that the modules were delivered in a completely different way; whilst the assignments were the same and the overall outcome was to support students in seeking a placement, the comparator group differed in structure. Whereas the Pilot group utilised a year long delivery method with a mixture of lectures and seminars the comparator group focused on a semester one delivery, 15 teaching weeks of lectures and seminars, followed by drop-in sessions in semester two. It was with these differences in mind that the decision to exclude them from the findings was made.

The majority of students within the business school who have successfully completed a year in industry return to study and complete the module ‘Continuing Professional Development’ in their final year; a part of this module was engagement with the second year students. The fourth years had free reign to choose the methods of interaction. The students chose to develop workshop sessions, these workshops took many forms, from poster displays, videos and presentations to more formal report structures, all of which were devised to provide help and support to students considering undertaking a placement. For both groups there was a link to assessment whilst this took the form of a single reflective piece for the second years (10% of the module), it formed a larger part of the module evaluation for year fours, accounting for 20% of the module grade.
Literature Review

An issue that first arose when reviewing the literature around peer support is the many various terms that are used to discuss the subject, including mentoring, coaching and support roles as discussed by Andrew and Clark (2011:15). Andrew and Clark (2011:15) discussed the interchangeability and mixed up use of this terminology which can often result in confusion about what peer support, peer mentoring and peer coaching really is.

Giving thought initially to the role of mentoring, ‘Mentoring is the one to one non-judgemental relationship in which an individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. Typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee’s life’ (Active community unit, Home office, 2001). Similarly, the mentoring and befriending org (2014) also draw on the voluntary element and comment on the benefits to both parties ‘A voluntary, mutually beneficial and purposeful relationship in which an individual gives time to support another to enable them to make changes in their life’. What is key here and for the majority of mentoring schemes is the reliance of volunteers to ‘Mentor’ mentees. If we are to move on and consider peer mentoring rather than peer support role that this research focuses on, Topping (2005) cited in Andrew and Clarke (2011) provides an argument that the role of peers is one that is conducted by people of equal standing, rather than a mentoring system that uses a hierarchical system in which to mentor those in positions lower than them … ‘Peer mentoring is typically conducted between people of equal status’ (Andrew and Clarke 2011:321). Not only is there a requirement for volunteers to mentor, but mentors of equal standing for it to be compliant to a peer to peer support setting.

Considering the impact of peer support within the university environment thought is given to the views of several authors (Collier 1966, Ruddock 1978, Anderson & Boud 1996) who have found that there are a number of positive impacts related to peer support including that students are much more involved in the field of study, their attendance is greater, they spend more time outside the classroom on their work and they feel an increased pressure to complete the task set.

More recently in the postgraduate setting, Kiley (2005) and Stracke and Kumar (2014) discuss peer support as effective in creating a sense of belonging to the course, additional benefits of peer support have also included an increase in the probability of successfully completing the course and a more enjoyable experience of their course. Similarly, although using the term peer mentoring, Allen, McManus and Russell (1999) give positive reports on the benefits of peer mentoring in that second year MBA students provided support that was of great value to the first year students.

Proctor (2012) investigated the relationship between students employed to mentor students seeking placements. Proctor (2012) states that students who had been successful in achieving placements in the past and had returned to complete their course were funded to mentor those seeking placements in a variety of ways including workshops, drop in sessions and via social media, specifically Facebook. Although amendments were made to the delivery of the mentoring, feedback was inconclusive with mixed results whilst placements increased, the mentoring system was not fully utilised, particularly the social
media aspect. However, Proctor (2012) suggests that mentors believed the program would have been more successful if mentoring be made compulsory.

In addition to the confusion regarding terminology there also appears to be a lack of peer to peer support programmes established in an academic setting within the United Kingdom, whilst programmes utilising peers seem readily accessible in the Australasian continent: ‘Academic peer mentoring programs have gained a firm place in higher education student support over the last couple of decades’ (Couchman, 2009:87). This is further evidenced with the dedicated Australasia Journal of Peer Learning. Similarly, peer mentoring programs also appear ingrained in the American continent as evidenced through the International Centre for Supplemental Instruction (SI), an academic peer-assisted study program developed to support high-risk courses rather than individuals. SI courses utilise high achieving students from the course which leads and develops sessions with a view to providing enriching sessions and develop students’ study skills, both the attendee and student course leader benefit from these session through transferrable skills, higher grades and transference through to other modules. (UKMC: 2014).

Whilst this review of the literature has considered the benefits surrounding peer mentoring, despite the differing terminology and focuses on the benefits that these different provisions provided for students in a higher education establishment, it has been unable to clarify if peer to peer support offers students the same benefits that more formal mentoring or coaching would provide nor has it been able to find evidence to suggest that provisions for peer to peer support are established with the UK higher education industry. With this in mind the research study has been established to investigate the effectiveness of peer to peer support within a university setting, specifically the effect peer to peer support has on second year students to effectively seeking out a placement.

**Methodology / Approach**

The research conducted focused around three groups of students studying modules based within the Lancashire Business School. All students who participated had enrolled onto the modules with a view to successfully gain a placement year or had recently returned from placement.

A quantitative approach was taken for data collection meaning that the methodology sought to measure data collected and produce statistical analysis from this.

A questionnaire was chosen as the method of data collection as it met the needs of the research, in that the researcher had the power to control the information they were looking for, easily filter through information and would quickly allow for the researcher to understand the attitudes and behaviours of the respondents. It was also easy to distribute, allowed for anonymising of the information collected and automatically fed into online software to analyse the data.

A pre questionnaire was devised and piloted on a sample of students from each of the research areas, 2nd year students in the pilot group, 2nd year students not enrolled on the pilot, but still seeking placement, and the 4th year post student placement students.
Feedback was taken on ease of use, understanding of the questionnaire and question relevance. Minor amendments were made on the feedback given.

The surveys aimed to look at factors such as motivation for applying for placement, numbers of placements applied for, and questions of a more qualitative nature, concerned with understanding how students felt.

Please see the appendices for copies of questionnaire. (Appendix 2 shows the questionnaire submitted to the year 2 pilot group and Appendix 3 shows the questionnaire distributed to the year 4 students).

A non-probability sampling approach was used with a case study design, questionnaires were distributed as follows:

- 47 students enrolled on the 2nd year pilot study of which the response rate of 77% was achieved with 33 respondents
- 40 Students enrolled on the comparator group of 2nd years of which the response rate was 20% with only 8 respondents.
- 24 Students enrolled on the post placement module of which 100% response rate was generated.

Due to a low uptake of responses from the comparator group, and the discovery that the module ran in a different way in semester two as previously mentioned, it was felt that these results were not a true representative of a comparator group, and thus excluded.

Findings

The findings have been divided into two sections to clarify the findings from the second year pre placement perspective and then from the fourth year post placement student perspective. This is to enable for a clear understanding of the findings to each group, before bringing together the results in the conclusion section.

Findings - Part One

Considering the effectiveness of peer to peer support from a second year pre-placement perspective

A response rate of was 70% achieved from the group, which equated to 33 respondents, of which 17 were male and 16 female. Of these respondents 74%, 23 students, were actively seeking placements, nine respondents were no longer actively seeking placement and gave the following reasons:

- 1 respondent had secured a placement.
- 1 respondent had secured a summer placement,
- 1 respondent was pursuing other leads,
- 2 were deferring searching for placement until deadlines had passed and they had more free time.
- 3 who no longer wished to take a placement year.
It was felt important to understand how many students were still actively seeking placements as this could potentially impact on their engagement in the pilot study.

The survey initially sought to look at the reasons why students sought placements and their motivation for applying the main driving factors were found to be:

- To gain work experience.
- To add credibility to a CV.
- To gain insights into the work place.
- For personal development.

Half of the respondents questioned had applied for between 1 and 10 placements with just under a quarter, 7 respondents, applying for between 11-21 and 22-32 placements; 2 respondents had applied in excess of 32 placements.

Considering the pilot study, the workshop sessions run by the 4th year students, were attended by 56 % (18) of the respondents from the year two pre-placement students. Further analysis of the data showed that those that attended the workshop sessions applied for more placements than those who did not attend see, Figure One: Bar chart illustrating workshop attendance / Number of placements applied for.
As the sessions did not necessarily have to be attended by second year students to meet the assessment criteria, the motivation behind attendance was probed, responses included:

“To gain insights into life on placement” “To see what experiences those on placements had “ “Advice on CV and covering letters” along a similar theme included “To get my CV and covering letter checked “

17 respondents gave positive feedback about the workshops that they attended, comments included “It was really helpful to know where to search” “gained useful advice about life on placement” “gained insights into the different types of placements.”

Of those that attended the sessions, 6 students made changes to the way they looked for placements, these changes included using LinkedIn for job searches, looking at different career options, applying speculatively to different organisations, and applying for more placements. Only 1 student decided that having sought advice from those who had been on a placement year that they no longer wished to take one.

Positively, when questioned only 1 attendee had found the workshop sessions unenjoyable, with 8 expressing how much they had enjoyed the sessions. Furthermore, motivation following a session with 4th year students was high, with 79% of respondents feeling motivated or very motivated after attending a session.
Figure Two - Motivation after workshop session attendance.

Q16: How motivated to apply for placement were you after attending a workshop session

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<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32%</td>
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1- Not at all motivated, 2- Unmotivated 3 – Neither motivated nor unmotivated, 4 – Motivated, 5 Very motivated.

Of the students who attended a workshop session 17 students remained in contact with a year 4 student for the benefit of placement, either through email, Facebook or in person, with some 4th year students, assisting 2nd years to gain placements with their previous employers.

When looking at reasons for non-attendance, the 15 who did not attend did so due to workload commitments, timetable clashes or other non-university commitments, 7 of these students felt that they had missed out on vital information, and expressed an interest in attending should these sessions run again. When all 15 students who didn’t attend were questioned, they believed that the workshops should become a compulsory part of the module for second year students.

Overall the workshops sessions had a positive effect on those second years that participated with statements such as “I felt more motivated to apply for placements” “I did not give up looking” “...Keep applying to be more successful” “they made it seem more attractive and possibly to get one” Less positive statements included not addressing certain personal issues that some year two students had, such as housing issues (however this had been addressed in earlier sessions), or that they felt the year four student had spent too long discussing their own personal experience.

When asked “Do you think that advice from the 4th years is important in regards to placements?” 24 students responded, with 23 rating the experience as either important or very important, only 1 respondent felt that they had not benefitted.
Findings - Part Two

Considering the effectiveness of peer to peer support from a year four perspective

We now move on to focus on the effectiveness of peer to peer support from the fourth year student’s perspective, those students who had completed a placement and provided the peer to peer support to second year students.

A 100% response rate was achieved from the 4th year students of which 14 respondents were male and 10 female.

The respondents were polled on a range of questions, including their own experiences of securing a placement when they were in the second year. It was felt this was important to understand how they felt the process had been in securing a placement and if they felt that they would have benefited from a similar scheme with the benefit of hindsight.

The questions which were asked looked at the reasons for seeking a placement, the number of applications made, when their placement was confirmed, whilst these questions may not appear related to the effectiveness of peer support and their current role in mentoring second years, they provided insights into the processes that the year four students undertook in order to seek out, secure and undertake a placement. This then enabled year four students to provide support to their peers, offering first-hand experiences which in turn motivated and encouraged the year two students as shown in the earlier comments such as “I did not give up” and “keep applying to be more successful”.

Two questions shown below, focused on the opportunities or lack of, that year four students had had in meeting post placement students at the time of applying for placements, as previously explained these students had only experienced the Placemingle event run during their transition to work module. They were asked whether, on reflection, a peer led approach would have been of more benefit to them. 19 students responded positively, see figure three below:

Figure Three: Responses to question twelve.

Q12: Reflecting back, speaking to post placement students would have aided my search for a placement

Again the year four students responded positively, in that they would have liked more opportunities to meet with post placement students, perhaps showing how much value they had placed on peer to peer interaction.

Figure 5:

**Q13: Reflecting back, I would have liked more opportunities to speak to post placement students in order to seek their advice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next stage of the research focused on the benefits of peer support to the year four students themselves. Positively it was found that 21 of the students, 88%, felt that they had benefitted from offering peer support.

Figure six:

**Q16: 4th year students benefit from interaction with second year students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes - Please go to question 17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No - Please go to question 18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
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The benefits that students felt they had gained ranged from developing skills including personal development, learning new skills, increasing the UClan name, additional skills for their CV. See figure seven below
Of those students who did not feel a benefit to the interaction reasons cited included “It’s not my job to lecture” and “I had to find my own placement without help” and “Second years don’t turn up”.

In addition to the research conducted an end of year report was compiled by the fourth year module tutor. In this report comments on the benefits of peer to peer action are noted, and included

“Gained the ability to pass on help and learned the importance of being approachable. The interaction helped my leadership and people management skills; it also helped me work with others”

“I gained communication skills – I am a very shy person and don’t like speaking out, even if I think I’m right I don’t like speaking out. I can really relate to those who are very shy, this helped with my confidence”

“I think that people like to help people, you get satisfaction. When I was in second year I wanted help, so I have given as much as I would have wanted to have. My communication skills have developed and I feel like I am a mentor, I have never had that opportunity before, I feel good about myself, just helping people”

For more comments please see Appendix 4

From the comments mentioned above and further comments in the appendices, it is clear that the students who participated and responded all gained on a personal level. Furthermore, the results achieved by the year four students in terms of degree results far outweighed previous cohorts with a record number of first-class degree recommendations achieved and lower failure rate on the module than subsequent years.

It is felt that the peer to peer support provided by year four students had a positive impact on these students, not only did grades increase, but so did confidence, enthusiasm and maturity. Students initially started the process as a compulsory part of their module, designed to support the pre placement students, however we have observed and seen a
continued effort to stay in touch and support these students as the sought out and even after placements had been gained. Students engaged more with each other and in class which in turn I believe had a positive effect on their grades and performance.

Conclusion

The research method used for this paper built on the changes to the module already in place, that a pilot study had already successfully completed its first semester; positive results were already being seen in terms of placements already secured by students on the module. It was felt that a case study approach would, therefore, suit both the circumstances and allow for the research question to be fully explored, critiqued and answered.

Whilst a comparator group would have been useful to compare and contrast within the same university settings, the low uptake of student respondents and different delivery of the module prevented a true analysis to be undertaken, however it would be recommended that in subsequent research a comparator group is used.

To summarise the finding of the research paper in relation to the discussion within the literature review, Collier (1966), Ruddock (1978), Anderson & Boud (1996), Allen McManus, and Russell (1999) suggested that students who participate in peer mentoring activities become more involved in the field of study, attendance is higher, students have a great value from the knowledge that they shared. This corresponded to the findings of this research project in that students had an increased commitment to gain a placement, students remained in contact with peers for the purpose of study, the module saw an increase in the successful attainment of a placement in the case of second-year students and the increase in first-class honours degrees for those year four students undertaking the supportive role. In addition, the findings of UMKC.edu(2009) that students who attended peer led sessions on average achieve a grade and a half higher than their counterparts is also replicated in the higher than average awards for first class degree.

In terms of success of the pilot study and in response to the research question, ‘to what extent does peer to peer support encourage students to actively seek placements’, the research conducted, thus far, has shown:

- Students feel more motivated to apply for placements following workshop(s) with year 4 students.
- Attendees of workshops applied for more placements than those who did not.
- Contact extended outside of workshop sessions, with year four students providing contact details and additional support.

Year Four students

- For students delivering the workshop sessions a sense of accomplishment was achieved,
- Year Four students recognised that they had gained or developed skills.
Respondents from both year groups strongly believed in the use of year four students supporting year two students and recommended that it formed a compulsory element of the module going forward.

Students who had not benefitted from the peer relationship also indicated that they felt that there would be a benefit to interaction in the future.

Finally, in terms of success rate in securing placements, of the 47 students who participated in the pilot study and to answer the research question posed initially ‘To what extent does peer to peer support encourage second-year students to actively seek placements’ a record number of students actively sought out and secured placements, results to date are:

18 students have secured yearlong placements
5 have secured summer placements

Giving an overall module success rate in gaining a placement of 48.93 %, this is an increase of over 20% of students going out on placement from the Lancashire Business School from the previous year.

Recommendations

Whilst it is important to recognise that this is only a small scale survey, the results have proven to be so positive that it is recommended

- That peer to peer support is continued in the pre and post placement modules.
- Peer to Peer support forms a compulsory part of the transition to work and enhancing employability module.
- Larger pool of data for comparison.
- Analysis of data from students unsuccessful in securing placements in order to understand why students failed to gain a placement, had they disengaged with the process, if so why, what can be done to decrease this failure rate?
- Expand on the data collected and conduct further analysis in order to further prove that peer to peer support succeeds in supporting students in not only gaining a placement, but also increasing student performance.
- Consideration of similar pilots / schemes in other higher learning institutes or conducting a pilot in other schools or universities to ensure that the increase in placements cannot be attributed to any other factor, for example regional development.
- Expansion of the subject to include other module / groups, for example, the Lancashire Business School’s LaunchPad program. It is suggested that this is an area for further investigation for Peer support within the university setting in terms of support whilst at university, in gaining placements and in searching for graduate positions.
- Expansion of the subject to include the use of social media platforms as a way in which to offer peer support, as suggested in the feedback received, students would be keen to utilise social media as a way of offering and gaining peer support.
• Longitudinal study into the benefits of peer support, implementing reassessing and evaluating based on the feedback from this report.
• Development of a peer support program, taking on board the recommendations of students from this study.

References

Active Community Unit, Home Office. (2001). Definition of mentoring.


Walker, F.D., Ferguson, M., Thwaites, S., Approaching Placement Extinction (2009)
Appendices

Appendix One

Assignment 1 – Presentations to 2nd Years 20% of the module

Presentations to 2nd Years can work very well but only if students attend and take part enthusiastically. Sometimes both of these happen and everything is just fine. But sometimes not. So this year you will have the creative choice of several ways to achieve the learning outcomes listed in the MIP [in this case 1 and 2]. The following are ways in which you can interact with the 2nd years:

- **Participate in a Presentation(s) / Workshop(s)** with pre-placement students. You schedule these to suit your timetable and theirs. There are no set rules for these, so it is down to your planning and interaction with the students.

- **Prepare and deliver a presentation** to the 2nd years (Mondays 12.00 – 13.00 ABLT) which outlines your experiences and will be used subsequently to remind the students of your key messages. You might cover advantages of placement, or how to get one, how to get the best out of employment, or be specific to your placement. It might have words, diagrams, photographs.

- **Make a video** aimed at – your choice – staff, students, employers. Relevant topic of your choice.

- **What else?** Anything could be acceptable if you present evidence to demonstrate your achievement of meeting the learning outcomes.

- **Multiple contributions** Will attract higher grades than the minimum.

**Deadline**

There is no set deadline for this assessment.

Your final grade will be determined through a one to one interview with Francesca Walker and or other nominated members of staff. You should therefore consider your current commitments and book a one to one interview. You will also need to consider what you plan to do, the length of time you need to gain an effective outcome and what a successful interaction with the 2nd years looks like. You also need to liaise with the rest of BC3001 to ensure that there are a variety of interactions.
Assessment Criteria

70%+  Strong commitment to and insightful awareness of own development and that of others, conveyed in a professional way to pre-placement students. Opportunity taken to share this learning in several ways. Exceptionally well presented. Goes beyond the defined requirements. Creative.

60%+  Commitment to and awareness of own development and that of others. Well presented. Fully meets all the specified requirements.

50%+  Some attention to own development and that of others. Limited in some areas of coverage. Meets a majority of the specified requirements.

40%+  Limited involvement in own development and that of others. Limited involvement in meeting Year 2 students. Meets some of the specified requirements.

<40%  Insufficient evidence of own development or attention to that of others.
Appendix Two – Second year Pre placement student in the pilot group questionnaire.

Screen shot of how the questionnaire looked

B2000 Pilot Group

The information provided by you in this questionnaire will be used for research purposes. It will not be used in a manner which would allow identification of your individual responses.

Please answer the questions as truthfully as you can.

Thank you for your participation.

*Required

Q1: Course Title *

Please enter your course title

Q2: Age *

Please enter your age

Q3: Gender *

Please enter your gender Mark only one oval.

- Male
- Female
Q4: Do you have any work experience? *

Please tick the box to indicate if you have had any prior work experience including part time, full time or voluntary.

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q5: Please select your residential status *

Please select your living arrangements whilst at University Mark only one oval.

☐ Live in student accommodation
☐ Live in another type of rented accommodation
☐ Live with Parents
☐ Other: ........................................................................................................

Q6: Are you actively looking for placements? *

Please select from the following options, actively means that you are looking for and applying for placements.

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes - please move to question 9
☐ No - please move to question 7

Q7: Please state why you are not actively seeking a placement Select your answer from the options stated before moving to Question 10 Mark only one oval.

☐ I have already secured a placement
☐ I no longer wish to take a placement year
☐ I have not had enough time
☐ I do not know where to look
☐ I have had too many rejections
☐ I have given up, I don’t think it’s possible
☐ I will apply when I have got more time / deadlines have passed

After speaking to the Year 4 students I decide a placement was not for me (Please answer question 8)

☐ Other: ........................................................................................................
Q8: How did a Year 4 student influence this decision?

Please explain how this discussion affected the decision to no longer take a placement. Then move to Question 10.

9: Why are you seeking a placement?

Please select all that apply. Tick all that apply.

- To gain relevant work experience adds credibility to my CV
- To gain insights into the workplace
- To test my career path
- For personal development
- To increase my business networks
- Break from University
- To secure a job after graduation with placement organisation
- It will help me to achieve a higher degree classification
- Opportunity to move around the country / abroad
- Other:

Q10: How many placements have you applied for? Please select the total number of placements you have applied for Mark only one oval.

- 1-10
- 11-21
- 22-32
- 33-44
- Other:
Q11: Did you attend the 4th year student’s workshops?

Please answer the question (4th year student is a post placement student) Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes if yes please move to question 12

☐ No if no please move to question 23

Q12: How many 4th year students’ workshop sessions did you attend?

Please state how many sessions you attended as accurately and honestly as possible Mark only one oval.

☐ 1-5

☐ 6-10

☐ 11-15

☐ 16-20

☐ 20+

Q13: Why did you attend the workshops sessions? Please give your reasons as to attending the workshop sessions

Q14: Did you feel you had gained anything from attending the workshop session? Please provide a short answer
Q15: How enjoyable did you find the workshop session

Please select from the scale based on your overall experience of the workshop sessions Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not enjoyable at all 0 0 0 0 0 Very enjoyable

Q16: How motivated to apply for placement were you after attending a workshop session Please select the most appropriate answer based on your overall experience? Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not motivated at all 0 0 0 0 0 Very motivated

Q17: Did you make any changes to your approach to placement search after attending a workshop session? Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes - Please move to question 18
☐ No - Please move to question 19

Q18: Please detail what changes you made to your placement search? Briefly state what changes you would make

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Q19: Did you attend subsequent workshop session sessions

After the first workshop session, did you attend any further 4th year run workshops? Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes please move to question 20
☐ No Please move to question 21
Q20: How many more work shop sessions did you attend?

Please check the appropriate box for the number of workshop sessions attended. Tick all that apply.

☐ 1-5
☐ 6-10
☐ 11-14
☐ 15-18
☐ 19-22
☐ 22+

Q21: Could you make any suggestions to improvements to the workshop sessions? Briefly explain any suggestions / changes you would make to the suggestion to assist second year students.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Q22: What was the reason for not attending more workshops sessions?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

23 Q23: Did you make or keep in contact with any of the 4th year students for the purpose of placement advice Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes please move to question 24
☐ No Please move to question 29
Q24: How did you keep in touch with the 4th year students? Please select all that apply before moving to Question 29. Tick all that apply.

- Email
- Facebook - added as friend
- Facebook - Placement group
- One to One
- Other: ........................................................................................................

Q25: I missed out on advice & useful information that would aid finding a placement by not attending the workshops

Please select from the scale how accurate you find this statement. Mark only one oval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Q26: For what reason did you not attend the workshop sessions? Tick all that apply.

- Did not know that they were running
- Had other commitments (work, family)
- Had too much uni work on
- Already got a placement
- I would not learn anything
- Waste of my time
- Not compulsory
- I had timetable clashes
- No longer looking for a placement
- Other: ...............................................................

Q27: I would attend the workshop sessions if they were to run again Please select how accurate you find this statement. Mark only one oval.

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<tr>
<td>Very unlikely</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Q28: Do you feel that the workshop session should form part of the seminar sessions please select from the answers below. Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
Q29: Do you feel the 4th year students impacted on your search for a placement? Please explain any impact had

Please explain any affect positive or negative the 4th year students may have had on this module.

☐ ..................................................................................................................................................

☐ ..................................................................................................................................................

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Q30: Do you think that advice from the 4th years is important in regards to placements?

Please explain your answer

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Please explain your answer in the text box below

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Q31: What would be your preferred method of interaction with 4th years? Please tick all that apply

Tick all that apply.

☐ In seminar sessions

☐ Facebook Group

☐ Workshops outside seminars

☐ Drop in sessions

☐ LinkedIn Group

☐ Appointment system for one to one

☐ other: ..................................................................................................................................................
Q32: I have been (continue to be) well supported in my search for a placement. Please select on the scale how true you find this statement. Mark only one oval.

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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Appendix Three

Post Placement students (Year Four) Questionnaire

BC3001 – Questionnaire in Full

Screen shot of Questionnaire as distributed online.

BC3001 C

The information provided by you in this questionnaire will be used for research purposes. It will not be used in a manner which would allow identification of your individual responses.

Please answer the questions as truthfully as you can.

Thank you for completing the survey

*Required

Q1: Age *
Please enter your age

Q2: Gender *
Please select your gender
☑ Male
Q3: How many placements did you apply for *

Please state as accurately as possible how many placements you applied for

Q4: What month was your placement confirmed in *

Please state in which month you successfully gained a placement egg April

Q5: Why did you undertake a placement?

Please select all that apply Tick all that apply.

☐ To gain relevant work experience
☐ Adds credibility to my CV
☐ To gain insights into the workplace
☐ To test my career path
☐ For personal development
☐ To increase my business networks
☐ Break from University
☐ It will help me to achieve a higher degree classification
☐ To secure a job after graduation with placement organisation
☐ Opportunity to move around the country / abroad
☐ Other:
Q6: If you were to be given the choice again would you still take a placement year? * Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes - Please go to question 8
☐ No - Please go to question 7

Q7: Why would you not take a placement year?

Briefly explain your reason(s) below

Q8: Would you follow the same process again for applying for placements Select from the options below Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes - Please go to Question 10
☐ No - Please go to Question 9

Q9: If no what would you do differently? Please briefly state what you would do.

Q10: Reflecting back, I felt very well supported in gaining a placement * Please select on the scale how true you find this statement Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

Q11: Reflecting back BC2000 provided me with the skills and resources that I needed to gain a placement *

Please select on the scale how true you find this statement Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree
Q12: Reflecting back, speaking to post placement students would have aided my search for a placement *

Please select on the scale how true you find this statement Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly disagree

Q13: Reflecting back, I would have liked more opportunities to speak to post placement students in order to seek their advice *

Please select on the scale how true you find this statement Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly disagree

Q14: How important do you feel peer to peer support is, between pre placement students & post placement students? *

Please select from the scale how true you find this statement Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Very Unimportant ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very important

Q15: How effective is your interaction with the second year students in supporting their search for a placement? *

Please select on the scale how true you find this statement Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Very ineffective ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very effective
Q16: 4th year students benefit from interaction with second year students

* Please select from the options below Mark only one oval.

- Yes - Please go to question 17
- No - Please go to question 18

Q17: How do you feel that you have benefited from the interaction

Please select all that apply Tick all that apply?

- Personal Development
- New skills
- Increasing UCLan name
- Further skills for CV
- Completion of project
- Skills for interviews
- Meets module requirements (it's compulsory)
- Paying it forward
- Increases value of UCLan degree
- Other:

Q18: Why do you not feel interaction with 2nd years is of no benefit?

Please select all that apply

- It's not my job to lecture
- I had to find my own placement without help
- Second years don't turn up to workshops
- I'm too busy
- Can't see the point in it
- Other:

Q19: What advice would you offer to those seeking placement?

Please briefly state what advice you would give second year students

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Q20: What method of interaction would you suggest for post placement and pre placement students
* Please check all that apply

Tick all that apply.

☐ Compulsory Seminars
☐ Facebook group
☐ No interaction
☐ Discussion via blackboard
☐ Other: ________________________________
Appendix Four

Feedback received from year 4 students in relation to the peer to peer support.

What did you gain (or not) from the interaction with the second years. How did it help your own development?

Gained the ability to pass on help and learned the importance of being approachable. The interaction helped my leadership and people management skills; it also helped me to work with others.

Working with the second years helped to be objective about my own placement experience and to reflect on a rather negative experience and move on from it.

Made me realise how much I have changed and developed. Looking back I am more confident now and have developed so many skills. Recognising how much I had changed made me want to keep developing.

Due to shyness I am often unwilling to talk to strangers; I used the sessions with the 2nd years to help me with this, which was especially useful as I am attending assessment centres. Overall, the experience enhanced my communication skills with unfamiliar people.

I was disappointed at first that the 2nd years didn’t engage well with us, but then I realised that this would be how I come across and that I should be looking for jobs too. It motivated me.

I learned more about my own placement through reflection. I completely understood how they were feeling. Working with the 2nd years improved my confidence and made me more open to helping people; it opened the door to my own development.

I gained confidence in my own abilities, sometimes I feel like I am not as good as other graduates, but I learned that I know quite a lot of this stuff. After talking to the 2nd years I took my own advice and started researching for graduate roles.

I understood that my experience was relevant and remembered what it was like being in their position. I am more self-aware now due to placement experience. When looking for placements I had lots of bad experiences, but I am more aware now of who I am and what I can do.

I like sharing my experiences; I know just how difficult it was to find placements. Working with the 2nd years reinforces what I have to do now – the advice that I’m giving them is the advice that I need and remind myself of when searching for graduate roles.

The 2nd years didn’t seem to have a desire to have a placement, but neither did I. By working with the 2nd years I was able to develop confidence when speaking in small groups and enhancing my presentation skills.
I gained communication skills – I am a very shy person and don’t like speaking out, even if I think I’m right I don’t like speaking out. I can really relate to those who are very shy, this helped with my confidence.

I gained how much of an effect one student can have on another; peer support has a much greater impact. I further developed my skills in communication and persuasions as you have to keep ‘drilling it in’ (going for a placement); it can be disheartening when you don’t get accepted.

I became more determined and more responsible when helping others - I wanted to be a role model, I have developed myself and can now help others.

I have chosen to go into teaching, I didn’t know it at the time, but any opportunity to teach is invaluable. We ran workshop sessions over an hour and were able to gauge reactions; the experience continually confirmed to me that that this (teaching) is the right thing to do.

I gained more self-confidence through sharing information. My presentation skills and ability to help others also improved. Working with the 2nd years motivated me to get a graduate role; it was interesting looking at the 2nd years and reflecting on how I am now.

I didn’t gain anything, which sounds bad – the interventions could have been organised better, you need to communicate more with people and understand their needs.

It taught me that it’s nice to give guidance and I would have liked that. At first I was uncomfortable working with the 2nd years, but it does make you reflect on how you felt and makes me think about how I have developed.

I gained satisfaction that I was helping others, it also helped me with practising mentoring – I’ve not done anything like this before.

I gained reflection on my achievements and provided greater interaction with the final year group; it also helped me with graduate job hunting. I found giving back hugely rewarding. By working with the 2nd years and developing a portfolio I spent much more time on me than I would have.

My skills were developed in terms of team work, collaboration and presentation skills. It was interesting that I had to really think about the structure of emails. It has been fun talking to the students and it made me think about mentoring and how much I would enjoy this in a future role (nurturing others), it has improved my attitude to helping others. Passing on advice made me think about the process as a whole (applying for jobs), it has also made me reflect on my personal development and helped me to provide evidence of my development to other university modules.

I gained confidence; it is nice to have people get value from what you’re saying. The whole process has helped to improve my planning and project management abilities. – I had identified this as an area for development at the end of my placement. Working with the 2nd years also helped to build relationships with the 4th years. There were frustrating times through the year but overall the interaction with the 2nd years shows that I like mentoring, I get more out of it – I liked training people on placement, this exercise reinforced that.
I think that people like to help people, you get satisfaction. When I was in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} year I wanted help, so I have given as much as I would have wanted to have. My communication skills have developed and I feel like I am a mentor. I have never had that opportunity before, I felt good about myself, just helping people.

I learned that the students were willing to learn and were well ahead of where I was at the same point in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} year. I realise now that I have to raise my game.