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Is a MOOC the answer to Student Engagement?

Janet Bird
Principal Lecturer, Careers,
The University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE
jebird@uclan.ac.uk
01772 895072

Keywords
MOOC, employment, engagement, support, practical

Abstract
One of my remits at the University of Central Lancashire is to encourage students to find meaningful work experience whilst they are studying. I am frequently frustrated by students who will not engage in the process and in many cases it is apparent that they just don’t know where to look and expect the opportunities to fall into their laps. My personal exasperation is increased as I am employed in a central service and so have no “ownership” of a particular cohort of students and so am working to support and inspire students across a huge campus and diverse range of courses.

At UCLan we embed “Employability Essentials” at every level of each undergraduate course and we work hard to ensure that our students are employable. What we have found is that students have, in the main, a good sense of what it means to be “employable” but they lack the skills and knowledge to find employment through anything other than the traditional means of looking on the Internet, going to the Job Centre or looking in the local press.

What we wanted was something that was easily accessible to all students so we designed a MOOC – Massive Online Open Course. This is a simple 10 step guide to sourcing employment. It is totally online, so we reach all students wherever they are but there is an option of face to face sessions. The first steps were around the usual employability key skills of CV writing, covering letters, speculative applications, portfolios, telephone interviews, interviews, self-awareness, skills awareness etc. It then moves onto activities to encourage the students to use the FAME database to start sourcing companies and putting together action plans. They work with an academic facilitator to create LinkedIn profiles, follow potential employers, networking, creative use of social media to source employment, using recruitment agencies, uploading CVs to job websites and providing them with knowledge of how to successfully get through an Assessment Centre. We have also embedded Webinars and Interview Stream. With the latter students can practice answering standard interview questions and they receive feedback from their Facilitator on their performance.
It is very practical and lasts for only 10 days and students can join it on a rolling basis. We can attach the module to our students via our University systems and we are about to launch it to our graduating cohort. The plan is to introduce this over the Summer and open it up for prospective placement students in the new academic year to help them source good placement positions.

I would appreciate an opportunity to demonstrate the MOOC in a workshop at the conference with an opportunity for feedback from colleagues on the content, delivery and how useful they feel it might be for supporting Placements.

Presentation
What We Did

• Programme of workshops
• Dedicated one to one and Skype support
• We built a MOOC
  • Practical 10 Step Guide to Getting a Job

What is a MOOC?

• Massive Open Online Course
  • “A course of study made available over the Internet without charge to a very large number of people”
  
  Oxford Dictionaries Online

Promotion of the MOOC

• Email
• Facebook
• Newsletter
• Leaflets outside examination rooms
• Placed it at the top of their online Portal of courses

10 Step Guide

1. Being ready in person and on paper
2. Know the sort of job you want to do
3. Finding your future employer
4. Looking good on LinkedIn
5. Using other social media platforms
6. Registering with recruitment agencies
7. Conquering recruitment websites
8. Developing your networks
9. Interviewing like a professional
10. Getting through an assessment centre

Julie Hardy, Senior Lecturer, Employability and Enterprise

Within Each Step

• A talking head as an introduction
• A PDF file of the content
• A Prezzi presentation with voice over
• Two activities
• Discussion forum
• Additional reading, web links etc

Certification

• A UCLan Certificate of Achievement was offered
  • One specified activity had to completed and submitted via email for each of the 10 steps
  • Personal Statement
  • Personal Description
  • SMART Action Plan
  • LinkedIn Statement
  • 10 Best # Tags
  • Source 3 Agencies
  • 10 CV Phrases
  • Networking Mind Map
  • 3 Criteria For Job Description
  • Plan for a Presentation
  • Feedback was provided to each student by an Academic

Access Statistics

• We ran this for 3 weeks

MOOC Access

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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</table>
### MOOC Access

- **1600** - Unique student accesses
- **713** - More than 3 hours
- **166** - More than 5 hours
- **37** - More than 10 hours (up to 47 hours)
- **13951** - Accesses to the course in total
- **3715** - Total hours of use

### What Did the Students Think?

- “Useful and valuable”
- “I did enjoy the 10 steps course, it was interesting”
- “Very useful and handy documents”
- “I liked that I could save the PDF files for future reference”
- “It gave me the key and essential information regarding the jobs market and application process”
- “Very complete”
- “I enjoyed all the activities as they were varied and had the opportunity to work on different things”
- “The activities were interesting and made you think carefully about each step”
- “Videos offered some helpful advice and information”

### So Did It Work?

- Workshops (16 June – 6 July – 10 workshops)
- Mix of face to face classroom based and webinars
- **243 Bookings**
- **102 Attendees**
- One to one consultation sessions
- **272 Bookings**
- **174 Attendees**
- Skype
  - Not recorded but considerably less than face to face sessions
- MOOC
  - **1600 views**

### So Is It The Answer To Student Engagement?

- The student feedback, in the main, was very positive
- We did reach 1600 students in 3 weeks
- Resident resource with multiple usages

### Next Steps

- Start a Business section
- Roll it out to schools offering sandwich degrees
- Consideration of embedding as an “Employability Extra” option

### Any Questions?
Engaged or not Engaged? That is the question

Krystyna Nosek
University of Wolverhampton
k.nosek@wlv.ac.uk
01902 321457

Keywords
Student Engagement, Employability, Career Planning, Good practice

Abstract

The aim of this workshop is to look at; how we as placement practitioners have to change our way of interacting with our students. The objective is to highlight good practice and share this with others.

Over the years we have changed direction in how placements happen, the twelve month sandwich placement, historically has been an integral part of the course and compulsory. Many institutions over the last 5/10 years have made the placement an option. Speaking from my institution and concentrating on the School of Technology which covers Computer Science, Computing, Maths, Engineering, Construction, Architectural design, oe this happened, many students took the easy option – not wanting to complete a placement and just continue with their studies. There aren’t many universities that still provide a compulsory placement scheme, if any.

With 20 years’ experience and managing a team of placement officers I have realised that the motivation and engagement of the students is now crucial. Our University Employability Strategy stresses that all students be given the opportunity of carrying out an accredited placement. So it is up to us to look at work experience in a number of forms, be it 12 month placement, summer placement, voluntary placements, live briefs and post graduate schemes.

Recently the placements function within our institution was centralised and the skills and experience that the team now have, compliment each other, it has been a learning process, as we now provide a mixed bag of opportunities. Understanding how important it is to promote placements, we start the process of marketing the placement at Open Days, targeting not only the prospective students but their parents, making sure that the importance of work experience is paramount in my engagement with the audience.

I have now with the help of academics secured slots in the Welcome week programme for first years, before now we have always concentrated on starting the process in the second year, so now we are planting the seed earlier so the students throughout the first year are already starting to think about their futures. This will mean providing support to help them plan their careers earlier,
possibly giving them the opportunity of carrying out some voluntary work, and this may not be in the subject areas that the students are studying, but to enhance their interpersonal skills.

We will look at arranging company managers or alumni who carried out work experience as part of their studies to come in and deliver presentations on company expectations and ethics and running workshops on CV writing/completing application forms, interviewing techniques and assessment centres.

It is up to us as placement practitioners to move this forward, if we want more successes for our students. The journey to success can be a long one, but ensuring that students know that they have support along the way will make them more secure in their application.

This is where their journey towards employability starts.

**Presentation**

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### Engaged or not engaged?
**That is the question.**

**Krystyna Nosek**

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### Employers say......

- Year on year graduates do not have the necessary skills to meet the needs of business

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### So what can we as Placement practitioners do?

- Engage with students and encourage the work experience
- Support—in the form of one to ones, workshops, lecturers by managers and students
- First Years, Second Years, Final Years
- Open Days and Inductions

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### What students say:
What Universities want:
Seek to ensure that their graduates are equipped with the right skills, self awareness, and business acumen employers want.

Getting the message across
- The University Employability Strategy says:
- All students will be given the opportunity of carrying out work experience, whether credit bearing or not.
- Promotion, marketing – getting the message across

The Press are telling us:
"Record number of jobs are going to students with experience with employer"
(Mail online, 14 January 2013)

The Graduate Market in 2013:
- Over half state “not very likely/not at all likely” to recruit a graduate with no work experience (irrespective of the academic results)
- 36% of 2013 entry level vacancies filled by applicants who have already worked for the organisation as an undergraduate; in some sectors this is over 50%

Times have changed
- Years ago placements were compulsory for most courses taught
- Now we have seen a decline in numbers choosing to take the option of a placement
- Why is this though????????

Why don’t they see the benefits?
We hear different reasons to why students do not go onto to do a placement. Some not uncommon to the reasons researched highlighted:
- Time pressures of applications,
- Uncertainty of securing a placement,
- Strong peer pressure to opt out,
- Difficulties in finding a placement close to their university or parents home (Wilson 2012)

Discussion
- How can we get students to motivate themselves and and reap the benefits of what can be the start of a successful career
- 72% of our Computing students were offered a graduate role
- What is the secret to making students commit to a work option?

What can we do
- ??????
We don’t ask about learning needs as the culture is inclusive: preparing students with dyslexia and dyspraxia for work placements

Chris Scholes
Additional Learning Support Manager
Bournemouth University
cscholes@bournemouth.ac.uk
01202 965663

Keywords
disclosure, dyslexia, difference, inclusivity, adjustments, support

Abstract
Staff employed in the Additional Learning Support (ALS) unit at Bournemouth University (BU) currently work with an annual average of 1600 students with disabilities and learning differences. The majority of BU undergraduates take a twelve month work placement in their third year, whereupon those with ‘hidden’ differences, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, must choose whether or not to disclose these conditions to a potential employer. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a majority of ALS students decline this option, fearing that negative judgements may be made concerning their abilities. Subsequently, the work placement can be a dispiriting experience for all stakeholders: for example, problems with time and task management that could be easily rectified through reasonable adjustments remain unexplained to the manager or mentor. Conversely, positive traits such as the ability to offer innovative problem solving solutions are under-utilised. Thus, it follows that placement encounters can inform a student’s perception of their employability and future decisions affecting disclosure.

ALS is currently undertaking funded research into the disclosure of dyslexia and dyspraxia by undergraduates applying for work placements. The aim, through final outputs in a variety of media, is to enhance the process; thereby improving the experience for students, placement providers and employability advisors, as well as providing training and development resources.

The initial research strand, conducted through questionnaires and interviews with students, has been successfully completed and a number of videos for public dissemination have been produced. However, the second strand, involving employers, has proven to be more complex. This has raised a number of unexpected issues from which a reconsideration of the original research objectives and strategies is currently in progress.
Working in collaboration with the BU Careers and Employability service, we asked Placement Development Advisors (PDAs) to conduct a structured interview with contact staff at the placement locations. From a sample target of 120 placement providers, only 37 face to face interviews have been returned. Although this is a work in progress, ALS researchers surmise that not only do employers know very little about learning differences, they would prefer them to remain hidden. The title of our workshop typifies this. Further, whilst some PDAs have entered into the spirit of the research with enthusiasm, others have been reticent which may suggest a lack of self-confidence in engaging with the topic.

We would like to base our workshop around the questionnaires to encourage placement and employability professionals to consider issues of which they may have little knowledge.

**Aims:**
To consider the impact of disclosure of learning differences when applying for work placements
To add new perspectives to ALS research

**Objectives:**
Increase awareness of dyslexia and dyspraxia
Recognise employers’ perspectives of learning differences
Evaluate student’s decisions to disclose learning differences
Recommend strategies to increase disclosure

**Workshop Format:**
Introduction to research
Participants to discuss implications of workshop title
Participants view video of students discussing disclosure
Groups to consider strategies to support students and placement providers with regard to dyslexia & dyspraxia

**Presentation**
Please see below a transcript of the workshop presentation, which did not use slides.
The workshop was based around the questionnaires to encourage placement and employability professionals to consider issues of which they may have little knowledge. There was also the opportunity for Q and A...

At Bournemouth, we support students with a wide range of potentially disabling conditions but we concentrated our research on dyslexia and dyspraxia. These are the most common of hidden learning differences and arguably the most misunderstood.

We purposefully refer to these conditions as learning differences and not difficulties or needs. Although our preferred terminology helps to raise the self-esteem of students with dyslexia or dyspraxia, it is understood that elements of these conditions can be seen as problematic by others.

Moreover, whilst students have developed enabling strategies, many workplaces have the potential to disable them. This is particularly true where students have not disclosed a difference. In such cases, employers are unaware that introducing reasonable adjustments could help to make the work–placement a positive experience for everyone.

We discovered that a cycle of non-disclosure exists whereby students feel unable to explain their dyslexia and dyspraxia and placement providers fail to enquire:

‘I don’t know – possibly dealt with by HR’
‘Seen to be discriminating so I wouldn’t ask’
‘Don’t know what the procedures are …’

Typical comments when asked about opportunities given to BU students to disclose a learning difference. It became evident that many of the placement providers knew very little about how dyslexia and dyspraxia manifest in the workplace therefore had no idea of the kinds of reasonable adjustments that could be applied.

‘I was struggling to produce work to a high standard and was told off’
‘I was worried about my credibility so I just struggled on’
‘I didn’t want to look like I was making excuses or being lazy’

With students unable to explain their problems and employers wary of asking, the conditions remain hidden, the students’ anxieties increase and the placement providers miss the opportunity to exploit the positive attributes associated with dyslexia and dyspraxia.

The reality of working life influenced the views of some of our participants:

‘If they asked me, I don’t see why not. I wouldn’t want to work for a company if they discriminated against me or anyone else’
‘I’m honest and I don’t want them saying at a later stage – why didn’t you tell us?’

These quotes are from students who disclosed their dyslexia and for whom reasonable adjustments were made. Conversely, students who did not disclose or for whom no reasonable adjustments
had been made were no better off. 57% of respondents still maintained that they would never reveal their dyslexia or dyspraxia perceiving it as a hindrance to their employability.

Traits that some students may display on some occasions:

- Poor timekeeping/organisational skills
- Difficulty in maintaining focus
- Unable to multi-task or react quickly in a busy environment
- Forgetting instructions
- Difficulty in finding their way about
- Badly written material such as emails or reports

Employers participating in our research showed a far greater recognition of what are perceived to be problematic associations with dyslexia/dyspraxia. This seems to reflect generalisations made in wider society.

Potential contributions from dyslexic/dyspraxic students:

- Heightened empathy
- Innovative problem-solving
- Intuitive
- Naturally creative
- Environmentally aware
- Excellent verbal communication skills
- Highly computer literate

The majority of employers, when presented with this list of contributions, agreed that they had been unaware of these potential benefits to their company. The greatest number was 38% who said that they had previously noted a capacity for innovative problem-solving by certain placement students.

On a positive note, some students in the research sample experienced reasonable adjustments as a result of disclosing their learning differences:

‘The company is aware of why I might make mistakes and they will know what they need to look out for and where I will need help’
‘I was given more time to take in information’
‘Things were explained to me one to one’
‘They proofread reports that were published for the newsletter and website’
When the employers who participated in our research saw how minimal adjustments can be, their responses were very encouraging. 69% agreed that they could help with task prioritisation, 76% felt able to instigate proofreading and 83% would be proactive in asking questions to check understanding.

Questions were taken from the floor and continued after the workshop time was ended. There is a lot of interest in what we are doing at BU and there is the potential to mine this particular seam in the future. There was a very great interest in the Guidelines being produced for employers to support students in the workplace.

To view the DVDs shown during the workshop use the following link:

http://levelplayingfields.wordpress.com/research/
Alumni Mentoring Project for Undergraduates in Construction and Surveying

Robert Stott
Glasgow Caledonian University, Cowcaddens Road, Glasgow, G4 0BA
R.Stott@gcu.ac.uk
+44 (0)141 3313146

Keywords
Mentoring, professional placement, graduate attributes, alumni

Abstract
The workshop will discuss the background to and progress of an academic scholarship project at Glasgow Caledonian University involving an alumni mentoring project for undergraduate students in the Department of Construction and Surveying.

The overall aim of the project is to develop an alumni mentoring scheme which provides work-related support to students from the early stages of their undergraduate programme prior to entering Professional Placement in Level 3.

It is considered that the project will help to encourage the development of graduate attributes early in the academic careers of undergraduates in the Department of Construction & Surveying.

The current challenge is for undergraduate students to recognise the professional importance of developing graduate attributes, while ensuring that a substantial proportion of students secure professional work experience to complement the early stages of their academic studies.

Level 1 students in the department currently study the innovative Professional Orientation and Practice (POP) module, which provides for a mix of generic learning skills and specific professional focus relevant to their own programme of study. The professional focus is provided with the assistance of alumni and appropriate professional bodies.

The aim of the project is to formalise those alumni links more fully through a voluntary mentoring scheme, with a view to providing a direct link between POP and Professional Placement in Level 3.

The workshop will discuss the design of the mentoring scheme, having regard to established practice and models devised at other institutions. The approach adopted in introducing the first phase of the scheme from September 2013 will be discussed, along with reflection upon its success midway through the academic year as a means of refining delivery of the second phase from Spring 2014.

Finally, a report will be given on the success of the first phase of the project at the end of the academic year following analysis of research undertaken with participants by a questionnaire survey and selected interview over the Summer of 2014.

Presentation
Aims of the workshop

- Discuss the background to, and progress of, an academic scholarship project at Glasgow Caledonian University introduced in September
- Project involves an alumni mentoring scheme for undergraduate students in the Department of Construction & Surveying

Aims of the workshop (continued)

- Discuss the design of the mentoring scheme having regard to established practice and models devised at other institutions
- Discuss the approach adopted in introducing the scheme in September 2013
- Reflect upon the success to date and consider refinements

Aims of the project

- Overall aim to develop an alumni mentoring scheme which provides work-related support to students from early stages of their UG programme prior to Professional Placement in level 3
  - Should encourage the development of graduate attributes early in the academic careers of UGs in Department of Construction & Surveying
  - Current challenge for UG students to recognise professional importance of developing graduate attributes
  - Additional challenge for majority to secure professional work experience

Department of Construction & Surveying

- Undergraduate programmes:
  - BSc (Hons) Building Surveying
  - BSc (Hons) Construction Management
  - BSc (Hons) Property Management & Valuation
  - BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying
- Full-time 4 year sandwich (6-12 months)
- Accredited by Civil Institute of Building (CIOB) and Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

Professional Placement (level 3)

- Covered by 2 university modules (each 60 credits)
  - Trimester A – 6 month placement (all programmes)
  - Trimester B – additional 6 month placement for BSc (Hons) Property Management & Valuation
- Students encouraged to register for CIOB/RICS Assessment of Professional Competence
  - Max. 12 months diarised experience of min. 24 months can be obtained pre-graduation

Existing Level 1/2 cohort (September 2013)

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<tr>
<td>BSc (Hons) Construction Management</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSc (Hons) Property Management &amp; Valuation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Professional Orientation and Practice module at Level 1

- Delivered across all departmental undergraduate programmes over the duration of Level 1
- A mix of generic learning skills and specific professional focus relevant to individual programmes
- Involvement of Learning Development Centre, Careers Service and practitioners (many past alumni)
Definition of mentoring provided by the Industrial Society (1995)

- ‘a confidential one-to-one relationship in which an individual uses a more experienced, usually more senior person as a sounding board and for guidance.’
- ‘It is a protected, non-judgemental relationship which facilitates a wide range of learning, experimentation and development.’

Higher Education Academy model

- Predicated on the idea that the mentor and the mentee can fruitfully share different experiences and incorporate some element of training for the mentee
- While the precise area of training has not been defined, the key feature of the scheme was for the particular experiences of mentors as alumni to be used for the benefit of the mentees

University of Brighton (Higher Education Academy, 2012)

- Following mentoring of undergraduates by industry professionals, anticipated benefits of alumni mentoring scheme:
  - Support to students in their academic studies, through advice and guidance of mentors;
  - Mentees increase knowledge of the industry;
  - Activity could lead to improved job opportunities either within the mentor’s organisation or an associated organisation;
  - Personal support by mentors offering a ‘helping hand’
- Second benefit anticipated to be most significant, potentially leading to the third
- Voluntary scheme has implications upon first benefit

Work shadowing/work placement opportunities

- Anticipated that the project could lead to work shadowing/employment opportunities (although expressly no expectation)
- Liaison with the mentor should help students to appreciate the importance of both Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge, as highlighted by Gibbons et al (1994)

Selection of mentees

- All 59 level 1/2 students within the 4 programmes invited to participate
- Positive responses:

<table>
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<th>PROGRAMME</th>
<th>No. OF STUDENTS</th>
<th>No. OF MENTORS</th>
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Selection of mentors

- On a programme basis
- Alumni 2-8 years post-graduation
- Database refined and updated from that received from Alumni Office
- Identification of willing and suitable mentors by programme leaders

Typical mentor organisations

- Range of private and public sector organisations
- Major contactors
  - AMEC, Carillion, Lendlease, Ryden, Thomas & Watts, Workman
- International consultancy
  - Cushman & Wakefield, Deloitte, PriceWaterHouseCoopers, Jones Lang Lasalle
- National construction
  - Balfour Beatty, Carillion, Costain, Kier, Lendlease, LMJ
- Small private surveying companies
- Public sector
  - Local authorities, NHS
Typical mentor organisations

- Range of private and public sector organisations
- Major contractors
  - AMEC, Carillion, Lendlease
- International construction/property consultancies
  - Cushman & Wakefield, DTZ, Jones Lang LaSalle, Savills
- National construction/property consultancies
  - Doig and Smith, Gerald Eve, GVA, Ryden, Thomas and Adamson, Watts, Workman
- Small private surveying practices
- Public sector
  - Local authorities, Network Rail, British Waterways

Matching of mentors to mentees

- Main criteria
  - Gender
  - Age (maturity)
  - Geographical location
  - Recognition of existing relationships
  - Discussions with programme leaders

‘Instructions’ to mentors and mentees

- Confirmation of the general role and expectations
- Made clear that there was no specific expectation of work placement, although opportunities may present themselves as relationships develop
- Specifically no advice to be given on CV preparation (at the request of Careers Service) although expectation that advice may be given in relation to organisational competency requirements
- Compliance with organisation’s Health and Safety policy

Beginning of the relationship

- Mentors advised of their mentee along with ‘instructions’
- Mentees advised of their mentor along with ‘instructions’ and requested to make initial contact
- Suggested contact through university e-mail / employer e-mail
- Informal contact would be made with mentors / mentees after c. 1 month to check progress
- More formal review of progress through questionnaire after about 3 months

The on-going scheme

- Formal review of progress midway through academic year – end trimester A (after about 3 months)
  - Nature of relationship/activities/positives/negatives/main benefits to mentee and mentor/suggestions for improvement
- Role out of the scheme for 2014 Level 1 students during trimester B (to include 2 additional programmes)
- Matching of new mentors and mentees by the end of trimester B
- Formal review after first year in Summer 2014
  - Questionnaire plus interviews
- Questionnaire forwarded to all 16 mentee participants
  - Through university and private e-mail and some work placement e-mails
- Total of 9 respondents
- 4 interviews undertaken

Q1: Please specify your programme

- Answered: 9    Skipped: 0
Q1: Please specify your programme
• Answered: 9    Skipped: 0

Q2: Which category below includes your age?
• Answered: 9    Skipped: 0

Q3: What is your gender?
• Answered: 9    Skipped: 0

Q4: What was your main reason for participating in the project?(please tick all that apply)
• Answered: 9    Skipped: 0

Q5: After receiving confirmation of your mentor's details, how soon did you make contact with them?
• Answered: 9    Skipped: 0
Q5: After receiving confirmation of your mentor's details, how soon did you make contact with them?
- Answered: 9  Skipped: 0

Q6: Over the year how frequent has been the contact with your mentor?
- Answered: 9  Skipped: 0

Q7: Availability/responsiveness of mentor
- Answered: 9  Skipped: 0

Q8: Have you personally met with your mentor?
- Answered: 9  Skipped: 0

Q9: I have not met with my mentor because
- Answered: 1  Skipped: 8
Q9: I have not met with my mentor because

- Answered: 1    Skipped: 8

Q10: If you have met your mentor, how frequently have the meetings been?

- Answered: 6    Skipped: 3

Q12: Where have the meetings with your mentor taken place? (please tick all that apply)

- Answered: 6    Skipped: 3

Q13: For e-mail and personal meetings, discussions with your mentor have been in relation to: (please tick all that apply)

- Answered: 9    Skipped: 0

Q14: Has the mentoring led to any of the following activities within the mentor's organisation? (please tick all that apply)

- Answered: 2    Skipped: 7
Q19: Overall appraisal of mentorship

- Answered: 9    Skipped: 0

Interview findings/comments from 4 mentees

"Speaking to a mentor about his routine and what sort of work he was involved in, how he got the job; it was useful knowing how that happened"

"It was good to ask any sort of questions on an informal basis and to hear from somebody who was actually in the industry rather than lecturers"

"He spoke to me about his experience at interviews and there was one particular point I remember very well...don’t mention something at interview that you don’t know about"

"He advised me to prepare speculative applications before Christmas and to send them out in January when firm’s are quiet"

"I only met him twice but wish I’d met him more. I thought he would be busy, but he was actually expecting to see me more"

"My mentor was able to tell me in detail about specific roles in the profession, what the work entails and what skills are needed. I was able to ask about how the market is now and how closely competitors work with each other"

"I felt that the mentoring really helped me get a placement because I kept remembering my mentor’s advice at interview on what to say here and what to say there"

"It’s good to have a contact that can lead to networking opportunities for your future career, not just for placement"

"I think one of the biggest things was going into the office of a surveyor and getting a feel for the office environment prepared you for interviews and placement"

"He was most interested in what I was doing"

"It was most useful on a specific project and he put a call in and ensured I obtained relevant interviews and information"

"He was up for work shadowing and it was left to me, but I didn’t take it up due to course works and other commitments"

"Work shadowing would have been a good opportunity and I do regret not pursuing it"

"Getting an insight into the commercial role he had was very interesting along with a tour around offices, because it’s not something you get to do unless you’re actually doing the job (as a property agent)"

"I met him after a couple of weeks at his office at JLL in Glasgow and discussed his role and how the office worked, which was very informative"

"Somebody clarifying their professional role and how it operates on a day to day basis was most useful"

"You can’t get a clearer picture on what’s happening in the industry than discussing with someone who’s currently working in it and discussing the importance of networking"

Thank you for listening.

Any questions?
How to develop a more comprehensive, cohesive and consistent approach to employability at an institutional level

Doug Cole
Head of Employability & Enterprise, Research & Business Services, Northumbria University, MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8XS
doug.cole@northumbria.ac.uk
0191 3495208

Keywords
Employability, framework, process, quality, strategic, dissemination

Abstract

In developing and implementing effective approaches to employability that will support graduates to be successful in a competitive and global graduate labour market and to deal with change and uncertainty, HEIs need to consider a number of key areas;

1. What their interpretation of employability is and is this view shared across their departments, schools and faculties?
2. How this maps against current practice and where are the gaps?
3. How these areas are either shared or addressed in practice
4. How to monitor progress.

To support them, they need a flexible framework that they can apply which encourages ownership and provides a process for discussion, reflection, action and evaluation. Recently launched, the HEA publication *Defining and developing your approach to employability by Cole & Tibby (2013)* provides a framework which focuses on three core areas; purpose, people and process. It aims to make the ‘implicit’ much more ‘explicit’ and provides key questions to aid reflection, facilitate discussion and encourage action. It seeks to engage by providing stakeholders with ownership of the process and the support of an underpinning structure.

Employability is a university-wide responsibility. This resource has therefore been designed to engage a diverse range of people and encourage ownership and use across the HEI. It can be used by anyone who is involved with employability and at a range of levels; senior management, academic departments, course teams, support areas and the students’ union.
The questions provided at each stage of the process are designed to facilitate discussion across the HEI.

It provides four stages in a cyclical process all leading to the achievement of the central goal - a defined, cohesive and more comprehensive approach to employability.

Stage One: Discussion and Reflection-creating a shared point of reference
Stage Two: Review and mapping-of what is being done/not done?
Stage Three: Action-sharing, enhancing provision and addressing gaps
Stage Four: Evaluation-measuring impact and building on success

The proposed discussion session will involve presentation of the framework and focus on its use-the challenges and opportunities. Delegates will be invited to ask questions and a number of key issues and questions will be posed to generate discussion.

Issues addressed will include;
- Barriers and challenges
- How to engage staff and stakeholders with employability and the framework
- How to work in partnership and utilise support networks to implement effective employability support

Delegates will have the opportunity to;
- Learn more about the framework and how it can be used to inform an institutional employability strategy
- Reflect on how the framework can be used to engage staff with employability
- Consider their own experiences of embedding and supporting employability
- Share good practice
- Discuss issues that need to be addressed in embedding employability and creating a culture of employability across a HEI

Presentation
How to develop a more comprehensive, cohesive and consistent approach to employability at an institutional level

Doug Cole
Head of Employability & Enterprise
4th September 2014

Aim of the session
- Reflecting on your own experiences and considering future opportunities
- Why do we need a framework?
- How the framework works
- Barriers & challenges
- Sharing practice

Recent news or old news?
- More than half of major employers say that the graduates they hire are not ‘work ready’ on leaving university
- ‘Communication skills, teamwork, resilience and punctuality are among the attributes employers want’
- Research by YouGov with 635 employers, The Times (2013)
- Students lack understanding of the skills and attributes that employers’ want.

Employability: What is it?
- Kumar (2007)
- Dacre Pool & Sewell (2007)
- Knight & Yorke (2004)

Employability: What it is not
- Common misconceptions/assumptions – Short-term / narrow view
- “Employment” V “Employability” – Employment is about a job, employability is about a career!
- Lack of understanding / Resistance / An insult to academic purity!

Where is the sector now?
- Work placements
- Internships in the UK and overseas
- Embedded work related learning
- Career management
- Live projects and briefs
- The HEAR
- Community projects
- Employers consulted on course design
- Guest lectures and industry panels
- Alumni networks and partnerships
- An ad hoc approach?
- What is missing?

What does the research tell us?
- Employability: we have a number of definitions & models & we describe how we ‘do it’
- There is very little in relation to the praxis describing how these two areas connect
- What is the ‘rationale’ that underpins this work and what holds it all together?
- Why do we do what we do? What are we not doing that we could do? Have we got a joined up approach?
- How can we ‘wrap all of this up’ in terms of defining an ‘approach’ to employability?
The framework for employability
- Designed to engage a diverse range of people
- Deliberately concise to promote accessibility and encourage ownership and use (Engagement)
- Provides questions at each stage to aid reflection & seeks to stimulate and facilitate discussion and prompt action

The framework for employability
- A defined, more consistent, comprehensive and cohesive approach to employability
- Aims to make the ‘implicit’ much more ‘explicit’
- Is flexible, takes into account current practice and can support all institutions
- The outcome – ‘Programme Employability Summary’

Defining and developing your approach to Employability

Stage 1. Discussion & Reflection
- Translating employability
- Engaging staff

Stage 2. Review / Mapping
- Action
- How do we address ‘gaps’?

Stage 3. Action
- How do we share and target?
- How do we address ‘labels’?

Stage 4. Evaluate
- When have we reached our goal?
- New ‘Programme Design’ process led by Academic Registry.

Engagement
- How would you seek to engage colleagues in this process?
- Dialogue & language
- Engaged staff – Engaged student?
- @ Bucks - ‘Programme Review & Evaluation’ process led by the Academic Quality Directorate (Existing process not additional).
- @ Northumbria - seeking to embed the framework in the new ‘Programme Design’ process led by Academic Registry.
- Faculty / Department / Programme / Individual level buy-in
- Support & CPD
- HR & appraisals?

Vision 2025
A research-rich, business focussed professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence.

Eight Schools became four Faculties

- School of the Built  & Natural Environment
- School of Computing, Engineering & Information Sciences
- School of Health, Community & Education
- School of Arts & Social Sciences

Goal:
A defined, cohesive and more comprehensive approach to employability

Barriers & Challenges
- What is stopping you developing an institutional approach to employability?
- Language!
- DLHE – short term focus
- ‘Developing a culture’
- Are personal relationships enough?
- Support from the top?
- ‘Labels’

Joining up the dots
- ‘Translating Employability’ = Engaging all!
- Working with stakeholders; Careers, SU, RBS, Employers
- Stage 1 - ‘Building a foundation’ - Understanding current interpretations / Sharing good practice / Identifying gaps and targeting support
- Strategic planning in Stage 2
The flipped student – education from the other side

Lisa Ward¹, Mark Potter and Daniel Yip

¹Head of Teaching and Learning Institute
University of Huddersfield
L.Ward@hud.ac.uk

Keywords
Soft skills, challenges, team working, adapting, politics, event management

Abstract
Whilst present understandings of employability in Higher Education [HE] have been critically

Aims and Objectives
The workshop will focus on the learning journey of two placement students who will present their experience of working within a department in the university. It aims to give greater understanding about the placement and skills developed from a student’s perspective.

Experiences Covered and Issues to be addressed:
• What the student’s expected to learn?
• What did students learn?
• Challenges and Opportunities
  o University processes
  o Adapting to changing environment
  o Building consensus
  o Working with a wide range of ‘characters’
  o Understanding Teaching and Learning
  o Quality control of work
  o Event management
  o Personal development opportunities

Plus the Employer’s Perspective:
• What sort of students apply for this experience?
• The interview process

This session aims to be interactive. There will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues involved.
Presentation

The Flipped Student – Education from the other side.

Keywords:
Soft skills, challenges, team working, adapting, politics, event management.

What did the student’s expect to learn?
• Different expectations due to the nature of our courses
• How does a University function from the inside?
• Learn how a university sets its teaching goals
• Develop soft skills
• Contribute to better Teaching and Learning within the University

What did students learn?
• Event Management
• Presentations to Senior personnel of the University and other Universities
• Auditing
• Working with different groups of people
• Soft skills
• Internal Politics plays a major part in decision making

Challenges and Opportunities – Adapting to changing environments
• Alien environment
• Office life
• Promoting the strands
• Dealing with the non-believers

Group Task
• What did you expect to get out of your placement?
  – Salary?
  – Job?
  – Experience?
• And did you get it?

Challenges and Opportunities – University processes
• The University has a Teaching and Learning strategy, in which all the schools have to comply with and achieve each strand by 2018.
• Each school has an evaluation report of their approach towards the strategy.

Presenters
• Lisa Ward – Head of Teaching and Learning Institute, University of Huddersfield
• Mark Potter – Yr. 3 Accountancy and Finance Placement Student and TALI Project Assistant
• Daniel Yip – Yr. 3 Chemistry with Forensic Science Placement Student and TALI Project Assistant

Keywords: 
Soft skills, challenges, team working, adapting, politics, event management.

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Challenges and Opportunities – University processes
• The University has a Teaching and Learning strategy, in which all the schools have to comply with and achieve each strand by 2018.
• Each school has an evaluation report of their approach towards the strategy.
Challenges and Opportunities – Building Consensus

- Working together
- Sharing ideas
- Best practice
- Try not to let Politics get in the way
- Act as referee when required!

Challenges and Opportunities – Working with a wide range of ‘characters’

- Gaining staff trust in our abilities
- Dealing with difficult staff.
- Escaping the boundaries of being a student.

Challenges and Opportunities – Understanding Teaching and Learning

- Many initiatives to help improve the learning experience.
- What is Teaching and learning?
- Why is it relevant?
- Does it make a difference to the student experience?

Challenges and Opportunities – Quality control of work

- Difficult to achieve sometimes too many chefs in the kitchen approach
- Sometimes indecisive of what is required
- Lots of different databases within the university

Challenges and Opportunities – Event Management

- A task we both have never done, due to our course backgrounds.
- ‘Like a fish out of water’
- Understanding the logistics of the events, and making sure everything is as presentable as it can be for Senior personnel.

Challenges and Opportunities – Personal development opportunities

- As a staff member we received staff privileges which included staff development in which we enlisted for a few course, which was an excellent opportunity to develop ourselves.
  - Collecting Qualitative Analysis
  - Analysing Qualitative Analysis
  - Agresso training and coding
  - Attending best practice seminar series

Group task

- If you were to go back to being a student today on a placement:
  - What skills did you learn which have helped in your career?
  - What skills did you lack when you left University which could have been learnt on your placement?
  - And finally which one skill do you rely on, daily in your career?
**Employer’s Perspective:**
What sort of students apply for this experience?

- Students don’t really know what we do
- Challenges in getting students to apply
- Mixed quality of applications
- Insight into our potential graduates
- Bursary – may be more attractive to international students

**Employer’s Perspective:**
What are we looking for?

- Desire to learn
- Professional standards
- Ability to get along with people
- Proactive approach
- Interest in what we do
- Independence and drive

**Employer’s Perspective:**
The interview process

- CV and covering letter
- Shortlisting
- Interview panel
  - Presentation
  - IT aptitude tests
  - Q and A session
  - Board considers applicants performance
- Formal offer of placement

Any Questions?
Bridging the Gap: Student Engagement with Growth-orientated Small Businesses

Tracy Scurry¹ and Leigh Sear²

¹Newcastle University Business School, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK
t scoop@ncl.ac.uk
0044 (0) 191 2081574

²Chief Executive, SFEDI Solutions, Aycliffe, UK
leigh.sear@sfedi.co.uk
0044 (0) 1325 307 336

Keywords
graduates, careers, small businesses, SMEs, engagement

Abstract:
This interactive workshop will explore the ways in which careers and employability professionals can seek to stimulate the relationship between undergraduates, small businesses, employability professionals and Higher Education Institutions more widely. It will look at strategies in relation to exposure, engagement, education and experience.

Recent research undertaken for the UK government by Sear et al. (2012) highlighted that there are a number of barriers and challenges to growth-potential small businesses and graduates working together, not least a lack of awareness of the value of graduates to the development of small businesses and the perceived dynamism of the small business as a work environment for graduates. The research also identified a number of market failures in the relationship between graduates and small businesses which form the basis for a case for policy intervention at a regional and national level.

One of these failures related to the extent of understanding amongst graduates of the world of small business and the understanding of small business owner-managers of the ‘commercial’ value of graduates.

The workshop will explore this gap in understanding and practice by considering graduate preparation for the labour market and mechanisms to increase their exposure to SMEs (experience
and opportunity). In addition it will consider strategies for building effective relationships with SMEs. In so doing, the workshop:

- Explore the barriers to graduates and SMEs working together
- Develop strategies for engaging employers
- Evaluate options for effective engagement

The workshop will start with a presentation drawing upon the research undertaken by Sear et al. (2012) and our experiences of a recent project, funded by the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal, which aimed to bring together students and growth-orientated small businesses, in the North East, looking for students and graduates to add value to the development of their business. This will form the basis for facilitated small group work to work through a number of key areas of ‘need to know’ and develop a shared agenda for action and practical strategies. Therefore, the workshop will provide participants with access to latest thinking on student engagement with small businesses as well as an opportunity to exchange experiences and examples of effective practice.

**Presentation**

**Workshop Overview**

- Introductions
- ‘Bridging the Gap’ – A Case Study
- Challenges to graduate recruitment in SMEs
- Overcoming the challenges
- Strategies and actions

**Context: Uncertainty and Ambiguity**

- Challenging labour market conditions – for both graduates and SMEs
- Uncertainty and change
- Evidence of a gap between needs of SMEs and abilities and skills of graduates
- Recognition that there is a need to do things differently

**Context: What We Know ...**

- The characteristics of the SME life-world influence perceptions of the contribution/value of graduates to business development and approaches to recruiting and developing people
- Research has shown that graduates tend to see SMEs as a back-up option, reflecting negative perceptions about pay, benefits, working conditions and opportunities for career development and progression
- There is a need to ensure that graduates are able to demonstrate their employability to prospective SME employers
- The research suggests that graduates have limited engagement with SMEs during their time at university (e.g. programme content, placement opportunities and guest speakers)
‘Bridging the Gap’: A NISR Funded Project

- Two workshops provide students from across the University with an opportunity to meet the owner-managers of a group of growth-orientated small businesses from the North East region
- Between 10 and 12 small businesses will participate in each workshop. The businesses will be from different sectors and at stages of business development (start-up, first-stage growth) and all businesses will have growth-potential and a willingness to employ students and graduates to support the development and growth of the business
- Up to 50 students will be allowed to attend each workshop
- Informal atmosphere – e.g. very few ‘rules’

‘Bridging the Gap’: Emerging Outcomes

- 50% of the students attending would consider working in a small business after graduation
- 100% of the students agreed that larger businesses provide more secure employment
- 100% of the students thought that working in larger businesses was considered to be more acceptable to family and peers

Challenges and Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of market failure</th>
<th>Example barriers/behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information failure</td>
<td>Demand side – the perceived need for graduates versus the perceived supply of graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supply side – lack of consideration of SMEs as a graduate labour market outcome, perceived lack of status of SME employment, perceived lack of career opportunities within SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SME capacity constraints</td>
<td>Resources available to recruit graduates through formal methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources available to support the development of graduates who work in employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Consumer/producer’ behaviour</td>
<td>Entry points into SMEs for SME trainees to working with graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attractions/disadvantages of small businesses vs. large business ‘branched’ for University Career Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overcoming the Challenges

- Storytelling
- SME/Graduate Champions
- Case studies
- Mentoring
- Internships
- Recruitment/portal
- Placements
- Enterprise education
- Engagement events


Policy makers
Wider society
HEIs
Career professionals
Academics
Programme developers
Employers
SMEs
Recruiters
Intermediaries
Undergraduates
Parents
Peers

Source: Sear et al., 2013. Graduate recruitment to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
The Rocky Road to Employability

Mary Clarkson and Tugrul Esendal

De Montfort University, Faculty of Technology
The Gateway, Leicester LE1 9BH
mclarkson@dmu.ac.uk
the@dmu.ac.uk
0116 2551 551

Keywords
Employability, placements, student attitudes to employment, employability framework

Abstract:

The aim of this workshop will be to

1. Present our findings from a pilot study into a group of second-year computing students’ opinions on employability and expectations of employment; and,

2. Invite discussion on these findings, with a view to formulating a practical, employability-boosting framework of student activities, drawing in individual delegates’ local experiences.

The presenters believe that employability can be defined in terms of four profiles that every student possesses: personality, academic performance, extra-curricular activities, and, in a minority of cases, disability. Each profile can, and in many cases does, make the road to employability rocky. This model will be starting point of the presentation.

Personality and, for some, disability profiles, are mostly beyond students’ control. Even so, awareness of the various factors involved and, in particular, the employers’ attitudes to those factors are of great value to individual students, the aim being to encourage a positive mind-set. By the same token, academic performance and extra-curricular activities are very much within students’ control and it is in these areas that students must recognise the need for and be encouraged to become proactive. In other words, all students must be made aware of what opportunities higher education offers them in developing their full potential in all four profiles. The underlying need is for each student to take ownership of their own development and know what that means for them. For some students, this is the biggest “rock” in their path.

It was in this context that the pilot study was run; a number of interesting issues came to light. For example, it is generally agreed, by students, staff and employers alike, that a 12-month placement is a major (if not the major) boost to any student’s employability portfolio. And yet, too many students make decisions that higher education professionals and employers see as fundamental mistakes. Either:
1. they actively choose not to do placement, for which their reasons vary from plans to join the family business, to not seeing as being relevant to their immediate future; or,

2. they leave it too late in the year to start looking for a job, for which their reasons vary from thinking that there is still time to get one, to wanting to see how well they are doing in their studies before they commit themselves.

The presenters, both lecturers, were recently appointed as Faculty of Technology Employability Champions and are, therefore, in a unique position to combine academic and non-academic viewpoints. It is in this context that the presenters will be seeking the delegates' ideas and participation in building a framework of student activities, designed to explore employability issues.

Experiences offered
1. Our four-profile employability model, which is emerging from our research
2. Report on the pilot study on student intentions and attitudes to placements and employability
3. Classroom and personal tutorship observations of how students perceive and behave towards employability
4. Contribution to the framework of student activities towards employability

Workshop format

Presentation

The session will start with a summary of the pilot study and its findings, as set out above in the abstract.

Discussion

Delegates will then be invited to give feedback on the findings and discuss the best way forward to boost employability.

Dissemination

The presenters will subsequently disseminate to all interested parties a document containing a summary of their pilot study and their conclusions, extended by the arguments put forward and discussed during the session.

Presentation
The Rocky Road to Employability

Mary Clarkson & Tugrul Esendal

Agenda

- Introduction
- Student employability goals (what students are trying to do)
- An employability model
- Discussion 1 – Rocks in the way?
- Pilot study – findings and thoughts
- Discussion 2 – Carrots along the way?
- Discussion 3 – Questions, questions, ...
- Conclusions & further action

Who are we?

- Mary Clarkson
  - Senior lecturer in computer system development topics
  - Extensive industry experience doing computing and management, including graduate recruitment
- Tugrul Esendal
  - Senior lecturer in computer system development topics
  - Extensive experience as a placements tutor and liaising with industrial placement employers

Both presenters were recently appointed as Faculty Employability Champions

Who are you?

- Mix of practitioners and academics?
- Supporting students to
  - Raise their employability profiles?
  - Find employment?

Student employability goals

- Get the interview...
- Get the job....
- Keep the job....

Student Employability Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic profile</th>
<th>Personality profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject/discipline</td>
<td>Work ethic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree class</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module contents &amp; marks</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical expertise</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability profile</th>
<th>Employment activities profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of disability</td>
<td>Leadership activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severity</td>
<td>Social representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable, deteriorating, or improving</td>
<td>Student union involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature &amp; level of support and adjustments received or required</td>
<td>Club/society roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliance on support</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real or implied expectations of the workplace</td>
<td>Negotiating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The model requires academic and non-academic support

Discussion 1 – Rocks in the way

What the group thinks?

The academic perspective?

Pilot Study

what the students think of employability and employment?

Our findings and thoughts
Discussion 2 – Carrots along the way
What the group has found that works?

The academic perspective?

Discussion 3 – Questions, questions, …

Conclusions…

What emerges from the discussions?
Do we get discouraged?
Or do we take heart and carry on?

Action stations

Thank you and let us stay in touch…

Contact details if you would like to be kept informed

Mary Clarkson  mclarkson@dmu.ac.uk
Tugrul Esendal  the@dmu.ac.uk
De Montfort University, Faculty of Technology, Leicester