e3i Employability Case Study

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

Employee Development Module

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Subject group:	Organisational Behaviour & Human Resource Management
Number of students involved:	Approximately 100 students
Elements of the employability framework addressed:	• Development of autonomy • Key skills development • PDP • Real world activities • Work related learning • Reflection on use of knowledge and skills; transfer of these to work environment • Career management skills • Preparation for specific professional areas • Enterprise, innovation and creativity

Description of learning and teaching approach adopted

Employee development module

The pedagogy is based on a methodology of experiential and action learning (Argyris & Schon 1978, Bandura 1977) where after an initial input by the teaching team (3 workshops) ownership of the teaching & learning is transferred to the student group. Students are asked to help develop the module curriculum within some general subject specific guidelines which is line with research on the Corporate Curriculum & Knowledge Management (Harrison & Kessels 2004; Garvey & Williamson 2002). Students then carry out research to design and deliver a two hour workshop. As part of this process students are encouraged to operate as learning sets (Revans, Dewey) to help them develop critical reflection and reflexive skills. Their experience and learning from these activities are captured through the use of reflective journals.

The assessment for the module has three tasks. The students produce a portfolio which records the workshop and which is a document than can be taken with them when applying for jobs. The workshops they design and deliver are not assessed to facilitate creativity, innovation and risk taking. There are two additional pieces of work; the first one is designed to help students reflect on the group process, leadership, power, learning styles and conflict resolution. The second develops critical reflection but more importantly reflexivity which is concerned with how individuals process information and how creating knowledge to guide life choices, can be taken to imply that individual problems are the consequence of poor decisions. (D'Cruz, Gillingham & Melendez. 2006). The other important learning outcome to come from the reflective journal is the requirement for students to develop a critique of the learning methodology employed by the module. We encourage them to take a critical perspective in analyzing the module in the context of other learning methods and pedagogy experienced during their course of study.

It is intended that the module develop concrete and transferable skills and competencies that will enable students to make an immediate contribution in the workplace.

Employability objectives and intended learning outcomes

Research from employer's organisations and the Learning & Skills Council on graduate employees highlight the missing skills and competencies they are experiencing. This module addresses these concerns by developing a series of skills around, communication, interpersonal skills, problem solving, creativity and innovation. This is designed to embed employability skills in future graduates.

The learning outcomes are:

a) Evaluate and critique the practical aspects of researching, designing and delivering development and training interventions for the organisation.

b) Develop your cognitive skills through the analysis and application of the theories and research in the field of learning & development.

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c) Understand the nature and value of individual and organisational learning theory in the context of Human Resource Development Strategy

d) Develop the capability and understanding of how to reflect on your learning and apply in the context of future personal and professional development.

e) Appreciate and evaluate the value of group dynamics in helping provide creative and problem solving solutions.

Description of and tips for good practice; lessons learned

It is evident from the feedback from students over the past four years that the module comes as a 'shock' in terms of the requirement to become an autonomous learner and take responsibility for their own actions and learning. Emotive words such as 'anxiety, fear, uncertainty,' are evident as the start of the module. We deal with this by including extracts from the reflective journals in the first session from previous students. These help in showing students the 'journey' that they go though and the positive outcomes achieved by the majority of students. We include small tutorial sessions with tutors and give intensive and immediate feedback after their two hour session. Students become aware of the importance of breaking away from 'friendship' groups and dealing with the uncertainty of working with new people.

It is important to provide example of the portfolios and reflective journals so that students have a clear idea of the standard and quality of work that can be achieved.

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

The reflective journals provide a rich source of feedback on the student experience and learning from the module. Students are asked to be honest about the value of the learning experience and constructive criticism and suggestions for changes are welcome. Over the years modifications have been made on the basis of students' suggestions. The module team meet frequently and discuss issues raised by students and ideas for improvements. Some students are very clear that they do prefer more traditional teaching methodologies but at least know they can make that comparison.

The subject external examiner who was the HR Director for an NHS Trust Hospital commented on reading some of the logs on the evidence of 'deep level' learning (Biggs 1983).

Resources used

Blackboard; Discussion Boards; Tutors; Visiting Speakers; DVD; E-Learning

References

1. Argyris, C. and Schön, D. (1978), *Organizational learning: a theory of action perspective*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

2. Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory.* New York: General Learning Press.

3. D'Cruz, Gillingham & Melendez. (2006) *Reflexivity, its Meanings and Relevance for Social Work: A Critical Review of the Literature.* British Journal of Social Work 2007 37(1):73-90

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6. Harrison, R & Kessels, J. (2004) *Human Resource Development in a knowledge Economy*, Palgrave, Bristol, UK.

7. Revans, R.W. (1998). *The ABC of action learning.* London: Lemos & Crane.

This information can be made available in other formats. Please contact us for details.