

Developing leading learners, learning to lead



Sue Thompson, Jenni Bradford,
Vanessa Cui

National Teaching Fellowship Project

Learning to be Professional
Sceptre, March 2009

Overview



- Context
- The challenge
- The project
- Discussion

Employability agenda



- National skills agenda (Leitch, 2006);
global competition
- Increasing competitiveness of graduate
recruitment market
- A degree alone is not enough

LJMU Strategic Employability Initiative



- From 2007 all LJMU undergraduate
programmes now include:
 - Work-related learning
 - Opportunities to develop World of Work (WoW)
skills
- This student focused skills agenda has been
developed in consultation with employers

Work-related learning at LJMU: a whole curriculum model



- Learning about oneself
- Learning and practising skills and personal attributes of value in the world of work
- Experiencing the world of work
- Experiencing and learning how to learn and manage oneself in a range of situations

(Adapted from Moreland, N. (2005) *Work-related Learning in higher education* Learning and Employability Series Two, Higher Education Academy)

The challenge



Employers say they want graduates:

- who are emotionally intelligent, self aware and self confident
- have the ability to make a difference and make things happen

In other words, they want leading learners with leadership qualities

but ...



- 'soft skills'
- 'wicked competences'
- complex skills and attributes

can be....

- hard to define
- problematic to teach and assess

'Some problems are so complex that you have to be highly intelligent and well informed just to be undecided about them.'

(Laurence J. Peter)

The question...



- How do we design authentic curriculum and assessment opportunities that will prepare students for a complex world?

So how are we tackling the problem?



- Strategic 'World of Work' initiative
- CETL
- NTF Project
- Egs of 'real world' learning opportunities
- Using 'real world' data
- Self – efficacy/self – awareness work
- Role of reflection
- Creativity

Research Context



- Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)
- Across two faculties: Education and Science
- Subject focus: sport, exercise, dance & physical activity
- Theme: employability, leadership, entrepreneurship
- Coordinated by academic development unit

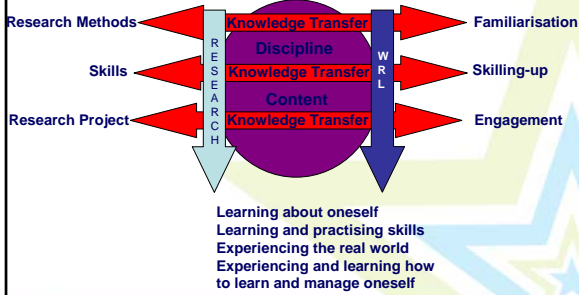


NTF Research Project



- 'Developing Learning and Assessment Opportunities for Complex World.'
 - UK Higher Education Academy funded three year National Teaching Fellowship project
- <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/professional/ntfs/projects>

An example from Sports Science



But it wasn't that simple....



- We got 'lost in translation'
- Employers, staff and students have different linguistic frameworks

The research project



- Congruence and dissonance: in perceptions of students, staff and employers on employability skills and competences for 21st century graduates
- Use outputs to develop aligned learning and assessment opportunities to bridge gaps in perception and understanding

'Close-up' research



- **Qualitative:**
observations of practice, interviews, staff and student 'immersive experience' stories and reflective accounts
- **Quantitative:**
questionnaires and surveys

Theoretical frameworks



- Close-up Research eg Prichard & Trowler (2003)
- Learning for Complexity eg Barnett (2000,2007)
- Professional Learning eg Eraut (1994, 2000)
- Curriculum & Assessment eg Knight & Yorke (2004); Boud & Falchikov (2007); Yorke (2008)
- Reflective Practice eg Knowles et al (2001, 2005, 2006)

Examples of research we are undertaking...



Narrowing the perception gaps...



Questions:

"How do academic staff and final year students understand issues on wicked competences development?"

"How do people's level of engagement in learning and teaching affect their perceptions?"

"What can be done to narrow the perception gaps between staff and students?"

Project plan



- **Methodology:**

- Close-up research
- Phenomenography
- Empirical and theoretical

- **Participants:**

Academic staff and students from 4 sport education-related programmes in Liverpool John Moores University

- **Methods:**

- Interviews

Investigating stakeholder perceptions



Four stage research process:

1. Immersion Phase – investigating what we already know about what employers want
2. Interview Generation
3. Interviewing Alumni
4. Investigating student perspective

Possible Result – highlight areas for development in the curriculum design?

Where we are now and next steps



- Set up project team
- Project Coordinator
- 2 PhD studentships
- Wider stakeholder involvement
- Phase 1: researching perceptions and understandings
- Informed by wider debate
- Make connections/ find synergies

Contact us:



- See www.ljmu.ac.uk/ntf
- Email ntf@ljmu.ac.uk