

LINK 25

Learning from Developments in Higher Education in Wales

Translated from the Welsh...

Hiraeth is a Welsh word that has no direct English translation. A best approximation is a longing or yearning for home – a consciousness experienced when away from home of that which is dear. It suggests a particular but indefinable Welsh experience with special and unique features. Is this the same for higher education in Wales?

In LINK 21, we looked at developments in Scottish higher education generally and in our subject grouping. We wanted particularly to learn from sharing the insights and experiences available through the Scottish “Enhancement Themes”. Now, in LINK 25, we turn our focus upon developments in Wales...and what a rich source of innovative and creative practice it is! This issue is positively bursting with ideas and perspectives to inform our practice across the UK and our approaches to enhancing the learning experiences and opportunities of our students.

The particular geographic, political and economic dimensions of the Principality provide a context which is a stimulus for change and a scale in which implementation is achievable. It is a less sprawling and congested higher education landscape than in England. Institutions can collaborate to mutual benefit relatively easily if they wish; expertise can be identified, made available and capitalised upon; and institutions can differentiate themselves, their provision and their “catchment areas” from competitors.

But let’s not imagine that this makes Wales in any way parochial. Far from it. The contributions to LINK 25 demonstrate a cutting edge in approaches to learning and teaching, curriculum development, employability issues and links with the skills agenda, Education for Sustainable Development, and student engagement...Wales is the perfect test bed for innovation from which we can all benefit.

LINK 25 is all about Wales and the work of our colleagues in Welsh institutions. It also illustrates a microcosm in which the same challenges as those faced universally can be readily engaged, solutions found and positions taken – the outcomes of which can be of much wider influence. We are delighted to help bring these developments to a wider audience.

Clive Robertson
Director

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UWIC in Pole Position in the Development of Welsh Medium Education

Daniel Tiplady and Carwyn Jones, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff

UWIC is at the forefront of developing sport-related programmes through the medium of Welsh at higher education (HE) level. In general, Welsh medium education at undergraduate and postgraduate level across Wales is significantly less than that provided by the secondary school sector, and this is equally true of higher education sport-related programmes. A small but dedicated team of academics at the Cardiff School of Sport in UWIC is working with the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education on developing sport-related provision through the medium of Welsh. UWIC has successfully bid for three postgraduate scholarships in sport-related areas, to create and deliver Welsh medium education to the existing Welsh speaking students studying at UWIC (159 fluent Welsh speakers enrolled at the Cardiff School of Sport in 2009/10), and to attract new students. The development is focused on four key areas of teaching and research strength within the school: socio-cultural aspects of sport, coaching, sport and exercise physiology, and research methods.

A proportion of students at HE institutions in Wales have received the majority, if not all, of their previous education through the medium of Welsh (15% of UWIC students in 2009/10 are recorded as being able to speak Welsh). The Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme was created in response to the low numbers of lecturers at HE level able to deliver Welsh medium education.

The Scheme funds a scholarship for 3 or 4 years and partly funds a final fellowship year. After the first year of the Scheme the

holder is required to deliver an increasing amount of provision in Welsh, year on year, throughout the duration of the Scheme. Following the completion of the Scheme, UWIC will create a post with education in the Welsh language as a core element. This will mean three new lecturing posts over the next three years (2010, 2011 and 2012) as each Scholarship comes to an end. In addition to meeting the increasing demand for lectures and seminars in Welsh, the staff at the Cardiff School of Sport are producing resources to support the student experience. To date, one multi-disciplinary coaching focused book in Welsh has been produced and circulated to other HEIs and libraries, and another is being prepared. Both these projects were funded by the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education.

UWIC has a long tradition of Welsh medium education within key areas; with support from its Welsh Language Unit, and with the employability of students as a key driver, the Schools in UWIC are planning Welsh medium provision in new areas. The developments in the Cardiff School of Sport are in line with the National Development Plan (NDP) for Welsh medium education agreed by the sector in Wales. Within this plan there is specific provision for sport, and a subject panel of academics from all over Wales (chaired by UWIC) working to develop and enhance provision, has been set up.

References are available at:

www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

UWIC ar Flaen y Gad o ran Datblygu Addysg Cyfrwng Cymraeg

Daniel Tiplady a Carwyn Jones, UWIC

Mae UWIC ar flaen y gad o ran datblygu rhaglenni sy'n gysylltiedig â chwaraeon drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg ar lefel addysg uwch (AU). Yn gyffredinol, mae'r addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg a ddarperir ar lefel israddedig ac ôl-raddedig ledled Cymru yn llai o lawer na'r hyn a ddarperir gan y sector ysgolion uwchradd, ac mae hyn hefyd yn wir am raglenni addysg uwch sy'n gysylltiedig â chwaraeon. Mae fîm bach ond ymroddedig o academyddion yn Ysgol Chwaraeon Caerdydd yn UWIC yn gweithio gyda'r Ganolfan Addysg Uwch Cyfrwng Cymraeg i ddatblygu darpariaeth sy'n gysylltiedig â chwaraeon drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Mae UWIC wedi gwneud cais llwyddiannus am dair ysgoloriaeth ôl-raddedig mewn meysydd sy'n gysylltiedig â chwaraeon er mwyn creu a darparu addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg

i'r myfyrwyr sydd eisoes yn siarad Cymraeg yn UWIC (cofrestrodd 159 o Siaradwyr Cymraeg rhugl yn Ysgol Chwaraeon Caerdydd yn 2009/10), ac er mwyn denu myfyrwyr newydd. Mae'r datblygiad yn canolbwyntio ar bedwar maes allweddol o gryfderau addysgu ac ymchwil yn yr ysgol: agweddau cymdeithasol-ddiwylliannol ar chwaraeon, hyfforddi, ffisioleg

ymarfer corff a chwaraeon a dulliau ymchwil.

Mae cyfran o fyfyrwyr mewn sefydliadau AU yng Nghymru wedi cael eu haddysg flaenorol yn bennaf, od nad yn llwyr, drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg (nodwyd bod 15% o fyfyrwyr UWIC yn 2009/10 yn gallu siarad Cymraeg). Lluniwyd y Cynllun Ysgoloriaeth Ôl-raddedig mewn ymateb i'r nifer isel o ddarlithwyr ar lefel AU sydd yn gallu darparu addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg.

Mae'r Cynllun yn ariannu ysgoloriaeth am dair neu bedair blynedd ac yn cyfrannu'n rhannol at ariannu blwyddyn gymrodoriaeth derfynol. Ar wahân i flwyddyn gyntaf y Cynllun, mae'n ofynnol i ddeiliad yr ysgoloriaeth gynyddu'r ddarpariaeth yn Gymraeg,

o flwyddyn i flwyddyn, drwy gyfnod y Cynllun. Ar ôl cwblhau'r Cynllun, bydd UWIC yn creu swydd y bydd addysg Gymraeg yn elfen graidd ohoni. Bydd hyn yn golygu y caiff tair swydd ddarlithio eu creu dros y tair blynedd nesaf (2010,2011,2012) wrth i bob Ysgoloriaeth ddod i ben. Yn ogystal ag ateb y galw cynyddol am ddarlithoedd a seminarau yn Gymraeg, mae'r staff yn Ysgol Chwaraeon Caerdydd yn llunio adnoddau i gefnogi profiad myfyrwyr. Hyd yma, mae un llyfr Cymraeg aml-ddisgyblaethol sy'n canolbwyntio ar hyfforddi wedi'i gynhyrchu a'i ddsbarthu i Sefydliadau AU a llyfrgelloedd eraill, ac mae un arall wrthi'n cael ei baratoi. Ariannwyd y ddau brosiect hyn gan y Ganolfan Addysg Uwch Cyfrwng Cymraeg.

Mae gan UWIC draddodiad hir o ddarparu addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg mewn meysydd allweddol; gyda chymorth ei Huned Iaith Gymraeg a chyfogadwydd ei myfyrwyr fel ysgogiad, mae'r Ysgolion yn UWIC yn bwridu darparu addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg mewn meysydd newydd. Mae'r datblygiadau yn Ysgol Chwaraeon Caerdydd yn unol â'r Cynllun Datblygu Cenedlaethol ar gyfer addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg y cytunwyd arno gan y sector yng Nghymru. Mae darpariaeth benodol ar gyfer chwaraeon yn y cynllun hwn, ac mae panel pwnc o academyddion o Gymru gyfan (a gadeirir gan UWIC) wedi'i sefydlu, sy'n gweithio i ddatblygu a gwella'r ddarpariaeth.

Amgyfeirnodau ewch i: www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Current Approaches to Enhancing the Quality of Teaching in Wales

Howard Colley, Senior Associate, Higher Education Academy

A joint study in 2009 by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the Higher Education Academy (the Academy) explored changes in quality assurance and quality enhancement taking place in Wales. A previous report in 2008 focused on England and Northern Ireland. The purpose of the project was to reflect current practice and development in quality assurance and enhancement back to the Welsh HE sector. It was hoped that the study would encourage institutions in the enhancement of quality at various levels such as, on the one hand, through curriculum development and, on the other, as part of a planned and systematic institutional approach. It was timed to coincide with the revision of the QAA institutional review process in Wales. As with Scotland, England and Northern Ireland, the new Welsh process placed an added emphasis on quality enhancement. The project involved collecting and analysing data from information gathered through semi-structured discussions with HE institutions in Wales conducted through QAA's institutional liaison scheme.

A key feature identified for the Welsh context was the "closeness" of government to higher education (HE). Over the last decade the Welsh Assembly Government has set out a range of priorities for HE. Most prominent have been priorities relating to widening access, sustainable development and

global citizenship; increasing Welsh-medium provision, skills and employability; and reconfiguration and collaboration between HE institutions. In response, strategic developments in HE institutions have addressed the need to improve access and retention; enhance the skills and employability of graduates; continue the growth of Welsh medium provision; and consider increased collaboration across the Welsh HE sector. In the QAA-HEA study institutions noted concerns about the small size of the HE sector in Wales, the bilingual challenge and the need to avoid parochial approaches to quality enhancement. These concerns reflected recognition that Welsh institutions competed within a UK-wide and global environment.

Although the study identified no general agreement on a definition for quality enhancement it was commonly acknowledged that enhancement was primarily concerned with the student experience, particularly the learning experience. A common perception was that quality enhancement was a natural development of quality assurance. The latter, through its processes, provided evidence and material for the foundation of quality enhancement. Processes such as annual monitoring, programme validation, and thematic review were seen as providing the evidence which could inform enhancement activities and development. Institutions saw the need for

external scrutiny to assist the institution in upholding quality and standards, particularly at an institutional level. However, there was general agreement that external scrutiny of enhancement at a classroom level needed to be sensitive to institutional context and to the relationship between innovation and risk. The fear was that excessive scrutiny would deter individual teachers from taking forward innovative practice.

Institutional responses indicated a universal acceptance of the close link between quality assurance and quality enhancement but opinion was divided on the degree to which they needed to be integrated. Integration of assurance and enhancement depended to some extent on internal structure and operating practice, with some institutions co-locating assurance and enhancement staff, and others placing more emphasis on integration through committee structures. Overall the physical integration of “quality” staff was not a priority for senior administrative staff in Welsh institutions.

The drivers of enhancement were identified as both top-down and bottom-up. The top-down drivers reflected the requirements of QAA and national policy and required the leadership of senior management within the institution. Leadership was commonly provided by a Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellor who usually had a portfolio that covered the development of learning and teaching. The bottom-up approach reflected practice and developments within the classroom and was generally nurtured at Faculty or School level, frequently with the support of a dedicated unit such as a Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. Institutions did not see quality enhancement as a principal driver of institutional strategy but did regard it as a key aspect in all the work of the institution and an integral part of institutional planning.

Student engagement with enhancement was seen primarily as offering evaluation of modules, programmes and the institution in general through internal surveys, through the National Student Survey (NSS), and by participation in staff-student consultative committees and other forums. The present study found that student input was viewed as largely concerned with quality assurance processes and there was little indication from institutional responses of a more active engagement with enhancement. For example, there was no mention of using experienced students as mentors for new entrants even though this is known to be well established practice in most Welsh institutions.

Overall the study revealed a strong and vigorous interest in the promotion of quality enhancement in Welsh institutions. As expected there were various approaches to enhancement and the project did not seek “right” answers for promoting enhancement. Nevertheless there was a good deal of common ground among institutions which possibly reflected the small size and “tight knit” of the HE community in Wales. This common ground included acceptance that enhancement primarily applied to the student experience; acknowledgment that the “deliberate steps” definition of enhancement proposed by QAA was suitable for the purpose of review; use of the NSS as a tool for evaluation and informing action; the high to very high level of overall satisfaction of students reported through the NSS.

This short report is based on the executive summary of the full QAA-HEA report, *Quality Enhancement and Assurance in Wales – A Changing Picture*, available from www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/ourwork/nations/wales/wales_quality_enhancement_report_eng_sep09

Research-Teaching Links in Wales

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What makes higher education higher? Many argue that it is research and its findings that give higher education its unique and distinctive characteristics. Curricula should be overflowing with cutting-edge material derived from a lecturer’s own research, and learning should take place within a culture of enquiry and problem solving. Yet this is often far from the situation at many higher education institutions (HEIs), with local and national drivers often splitting off teaching and research active staff into different silos, reducing the cross-over between the two and arguably affecting the student experience.

Not so long ago, the UK Government discussed establishing research and teaching-only HEIs, but such a notion has been shelved for now. Many academics would agree with the benefits of linking of research and teaching, both in developing curricula and influencing student learning, but what is available to support the lecturer? The Higher Education Academy (the Academy) has championed what is often referred to as the research-teaching nexus through a number of publications and the funding of advisors to talk to groups of academics in workshops, seminars

and keynote lectures. The publications include several monographs authored by Professors Alan Jenkins and Mick Healey, all of which are freely available for download from the Academy website (Jenkins, 2004; Jenkins & Healey, 2005; Jenkins *et al.*, 2007; Healey & Jenkins, 2009). These authors also provide advice to academics through Academy events, sometimes through the Subject Centre Network.

In Wales, the Higher Education Academy Welsh Institutional Group established the All Wales Research-

Teaching Nexus Action Set, early in 2009, to collate and disseminate practice and explore ways in which the nexus may be strengthened in Wales. I was invited to Chair the Action Set and representatives from all Welsh HEIs attended the first meeting at the University of Wales, Newport, in February 2009. It was decided at this meeting to organise a workshop later in the year to fully explore and develop an approach to strengthening research-teaching links in Welsh HEIs.

The workshop took place at the University of Wales's Gregynog Hall, near Newtown, Powys, on 1-2 September. It was facilitated by Professors Jenkins, Healey and myself, and was attended by around 25 colleagues from most Welsh HEIs. The workshop was a success and a number of actions and recommendations came from it:

1. The creation of an Action Set blog (<http://nexus-wales.blogspot.com>) to collect reactions and resources arising from the workshop.
2. The publication of Welsh research-teaching nexus case studies. This volume is to be published by the Academy and is aimed to be jointly released at the Academy Annual Conference in June 2010 and at an event in Wales.
3. To organise a series of discipline-focused research-teaching nexus workshops throughout Wales in association with appropriate Subject Centres.
4. To convene a second All Wales workshop to focus on enhancing the links between research and teaching in institutional strategies.

It is this last action that is seen as the most important because all Welsh HEIs have been asked by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to provide the next generation of Learning and Teaching Strategies, in 2011. The Gregynog workshop highlighted the fact

that few current Learning and Teaching Strategies make explicit links to research, and that Research Strategies are even worse at mentioning teaching! Therefore, the Action Set has a significant opportunity in 2010 to strongly influence the strategic direction of Welsh HEIs and to forge closer links between research and teaching.

In some HEIs this is already happening to an extent, and the Action Set has helped them to gather momentum. For example, in my own institution at the University of Wales, Newport, clear targets involving research-informed teaching were set in the current strategy that led to the creation of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). With recent activity focusing on the research-teaching nexus, and the promotion of research-informed teaching as an internal quality enhancement theme, it was decided to invite Alan Jenkins to give a keynote lecture in December 2008, followed by a workshop in January 2009. As Director of CELT, I wrote a guide to the background and lexicon of research-teaching links, published in the *Newport CELT Journal* (Haslett, 2009). Also, the 2009 University's Annual Learning and Teaching Conference was entitled the *Newport NEXUS Conference*. Mick Healey gave the opening keynote and the *Proceedings* were published providing a valuable resource (Haslett & Rowlands, 2009). The theme is being continued this year and NEXUS 2010 is taking place in Newport on 14-15 June (<http://celt.newport.ac.uk/nexus>).

The All Wales Research-Teaching Nexus Action Set is also involved in advising the organisation of a new biennial Welsh Higher Education Learning and Teaching Conference, scheduled for 14-15 April 2011. The Action Set is backing the publication of proceedings arising from the conference, and is also encouraging colleagues from Wales to participate in other conferences, such as the Annual Conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSoTL) in Liverpool in October 2010 and, for the second year running, the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) is holding its Annual Conference in Wales, at the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport in December. Altogether, with a new generation of strategies on the horizon and opportunities for academics to develop and disseminate their practice, there is great potential to forge strong links between research and teaching in Wales. The Academy Action Set is making an important contribution within Wales and will help to shine this out beyond the country's borders.



Participants of the All Wales Research-Teaching Nexus Action Set Workshop, Gregynog Hall, 1-2 September 2009.

References are available at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Springboard Wales/Sbardun Cymru – Supporting Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism

Gareth Edwards,
Springboard Wales,
Education Director

Springboard is an educational charity which provides support for young people, the unemployed and disadvantaged groups across the UK who wish to make a career in hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism. Springboard Wales/Sbardun Cymru was established 12 years ago, following a successful model that had originated in London 6 years earlier.

The charity has become the industry's natural partner in improving its image, attracting new talent and addressing skills shortages. It is the only organisation dedicated to promoting careers in the sector, and works closely with schools, colleges, further and higher education, as well as careers companies (Careers Wales West, Skills Development Scotland, Education Business Partnership companies in England) and trade bodies. Springboard also has a strong business partnership scheme which ensures that industry has a strong influence on the materials we produce and the activities we run.

Springboard was born out of a real crisis; that of recruiting enough home-grown talent to meet the needs of the vibrant tourism sector. Every year, Springboard manages to deliver a full range of programmes across the UK that reach out to millions of people of all ages and backgrounds.

Our combined resources reach over three million potential recruits in what is still, arguably, the UK's largest industry. We facilitate over 25,000 work taster sessions, and answer some 30,000 careers enquiries. The work is vital, as the challenges to the industry's recruitment and skills remain a combination of slow but steady growth (the economic situation has meant that "staycation" has probably helped the market stand up relatively well), demographic impact, a highly competitive labour market, issues around poor image and most recently changes in visa regulations. The Springboard emphasis on attracting home grown talent becomes even more important.

Our vision is to be the UK's leading provider of specialist careers, vocational education and employment services relating to hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism; thus supporting the community identified as our charitable remit. We are already recognised and valued for the quality of the services we provide, with particular emphasis on the 14-19 sector.

The education and youth programmes are our largest initiatives and within them we offer the following:

The FutureChef Programme

This is a 4-stage nationwide competition aimed at 12-16 year olds. Students plan, time manage, develop and cook a two course meal for two people at the school heat, with the winner progressing to the local heat at an FE college. The winner from that competition then moves to the regional final, normally held in an FE/HE establishment, and finally to the national final, showcased at Westminster Kingsway College, where the 12 finalists from around the UK are able to display their skills. At all stages Springboard endeavours to link industry or college mentor chefs with each

school and winning candidates, in order to encourage continuous improvement and to share knowledge and techniques which will help young people develop important life skills. Currently 730 schools are participating, with around 8,000 young people involved. The benefits to learner, educator and industry are obvious and the intention is to develop the programme further so that it can include housekeeping, front of house and possibly marketing.

As an important by-product, Springboard recognises that CPD for teachers runs hand in hand with this sort of activity, and that there is an opportunity to collaborate with HE during, for example, a school inset day. UWIC and Springboard are currently working on the design and implementation of such a product. The demand from schools is for daylong practical workshops and updating on what is new in the sector.

Summer School

This is a 3 week course for Years 11 and 12 but can be adapted for Years 9 and 10. The Summer School provides a structured work experience and accredited qualifications in Food Safety, Customer Care, and Health and Safety, and is run over June, July and August. The aim is to encourage young people into employment, apprenticeships or college courses related to the industry. It also encourages those in Years 9 and 10 to consider a vocational course in school or FE. For the last 3 years Springboard has teamed up with UWIC's Widening Access Unit and in particular the Campus First project. This has allowed young people to get a flavour of the University and what it has to offer.

The Springboard Education Programme can also provide teachers and lecturers with training days and placements with our industry partners to help supplement their knowledge. We link this to our resource pack materials and our online Resource Gateway.

Taster Day and Discovery Trail

One of our most successful activities has been the Springboard Taster Day, which introduces school and college students to the world of hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism, and highlights the career opportunities that are available. These are made possible with the co-operation of our Business Partnership and schools report that the experience can influence students who are in Year 9 and about to make GCSE choices. This is supplemented by a Discovery Trail – a quiz style journey around Cardiff Bay highlighting, for example, the developments in the industry and supporting essential skills, such as teamwork, problem solving and lateral thinking.

A natural development from the Taster/Discovery Trail is for students to graduate to a Skills Challenge. This involves industry-based competitions and activities that put even more fun into learning at an external venue.

Young Managers' and Ambassador Programmes

For students in Years 11 and 12 we have created the Young Managers' Programme where students are set a real industry problem to solve by a Springboard Business Partner. They then feed back to management with their solutions and receive a critique from the establishment about their ideas.

Our Ambassador Programme involves a training and presentation course over two days for people already working in the industry, to develop their skills and spread the word about working in the sector. Ambassadors visit the school or college, or arrange for an on-site visit, or offer the chance for students to visit their place of work.

Work with the Master Innholders

In a new development, Springboard Wales has been assisting the Master Innholders in their inaugural competition: Innovation in Hospitality. Initial entries were received from Oxford Brookes University, University College Birmingham, Westminster Kingsway College, Llandrillo College, Bournemouth University and Ecole Hôtelière, Lausanne, who eventually won. Springboard and the Master Innholders are planning to expand the competition in forthcoming years after a review and evaluation process.

All Springboard Wales' collaborative activity aims to create a talent pipeline that industry can tap into, and if used wisely by schools and colleges, students can pick up an activity or use one of our bespoke resources, every year of their secondary school education.

Our support materials include the Resource Gateway - online support for teachers of hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism, Careerscope, DVD and CD packages.

For more information visit www.springboarduk.net

Student Engagement: Strengthening the Student Experience in Wales

**Katie Dalton, NUS Wales
President**

The student experience is currently a hot topic in the higher education (HE) sector, with titles such as Pro VC (Student Experience) and Pro VC (Students) being created in HEIs in Wales and across the UK. Although the introduction of tuition fees of over £3,000 put the emphasis on institutions to deliver more, do students still enter HE simply for "the experience"?

In recent years, record levels of graduate debt and an increasingly competitive job market seem to have put more emphasis on achievement rather than experience, something that was demonstrated by the findings of the NUS/HSBC Student Experience Report (2008). When students were asked to give the main reasons they wanted to go to university, the

most popular responses were: "to gain qualifications" (68%), "to improve my chances of getting a job" (53%), and "to improve my earning potential" (44%). Only 29% of students said that one of the main reasons for them wanting to go to university was "for the experience".

The student experience, however, is key to a successful future for our students and graduates. At a time when graduate jobs are scarce, when graduate pay has been frozen, and Wales has the lowest average starting graduate salary in the UK, students in Wales are feeling under increased pressure to leave HE with more than "just a degree". With the introduction of top-up fees and graduate debt reaching over £20,000, students

want to get as much out of HE as possible. Employers also want to see graduates with an increased range of skills – leadership, communication, initiative, and the ability to work in a team – skills that can be gained from both the academic and non-academic sides of HE. In order to do this, students must have access to a complete student experience, one that combines excellent learning and teaching with a range of extra-curricular opportunities.

On the academic side of the student experience, students are concerned about contact hours, assessment and feedback, and the quality of the facilities and teaching. Year on year, NSS results show that students are most dissatisfied with assessment and feedback, both in Wales and across the other parts of the UK. Students expect prompt feedback that they can learn from and use as a tool to progress. Institutions must work hard to ensure that these kinds of issues are tackled, and a vital part of this is listening to the student voice throughout the duration of study. In fact, the 2008 NUS/HSBC Student Experience Report showed that the vast majority of students are eager to be involved in shaping their learning experience during their time in HE (see Figure 1).

On 12 November 2009, the Welsh Assembly Government’s Minister for Education hosted the launch of the Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE), where representatives from across the sector came together to recognise and celebrate the role that students play in shaping their learning experience. WISE aims to strengthen student representation in HE institutions across Wales and is supported by a number of sector bodies, including HEFCW, who are funding the project, HEA, QAA, HEW and NUS Wales.

All of these organisations recognise the invaluable expertise that students possess with regards to their learning experience and the positive impact that greater student engagement has, not only in term of benefits to the sector’s ability to react and grow stronger, but also as an opportunity for students to develop essential skills which they can take with them when entering the job market. The HE sector in Wales has encouraged students to become more active contributors and we are now seeing student representation at every level of HE, from students sitting on learning and teaching committees, to student unions’ presidents taking their place on governing bodies, to HEFCW’s recent invitation for the NUS Wales President to join its council as an observer.

Many HE courses in Wales have benefited from improved interaction between students and the mechanisms for producing meaningful change in the quality and delivery of their course. More and more we are seeing how students are being valued as partners in shaping the future of learning and teaching in Welsh institutions and improving the student experience for future generations of students. Ensuring that students are represented at every level of HE not only helps to highlight issues early on, but it also creates an opening for students to praise the good work of their lecturers and institutions, and push for the sharing of good practice across their university and beyond.

Until now, student representatives in Wales have received varying amounts of training, with little consistency across and within institutions. In the vast majority of cases they carry out their role and responsibilities on an entirely voluntary basis because they are committed to improving the student experience in Wales. It is these students, and their vision of a more proactive approach, who have shown the positive impact of student engagement and the benefits of sharing joint responsibility for improving HE in Wales.

WISE will make concrete steps towards training – increasing numbers of course reps and empowering existing representatives by providing them with the tools to create a pool of knowledge which can be passed on from year to year. For example, a series of online networks will be developed to help course representatives interact electronically across the country, from Bangor to Newport, from Glyndwr to Lampeter, and at the same time annual events where they can meet up and share experiences will be organised. A toolkit with information on feedback at every level of the HE sector, from formal and informal internal mechanisms to external ones such as the National Student Survey or the Quality Assurance Agency’s student submission, is being developed.

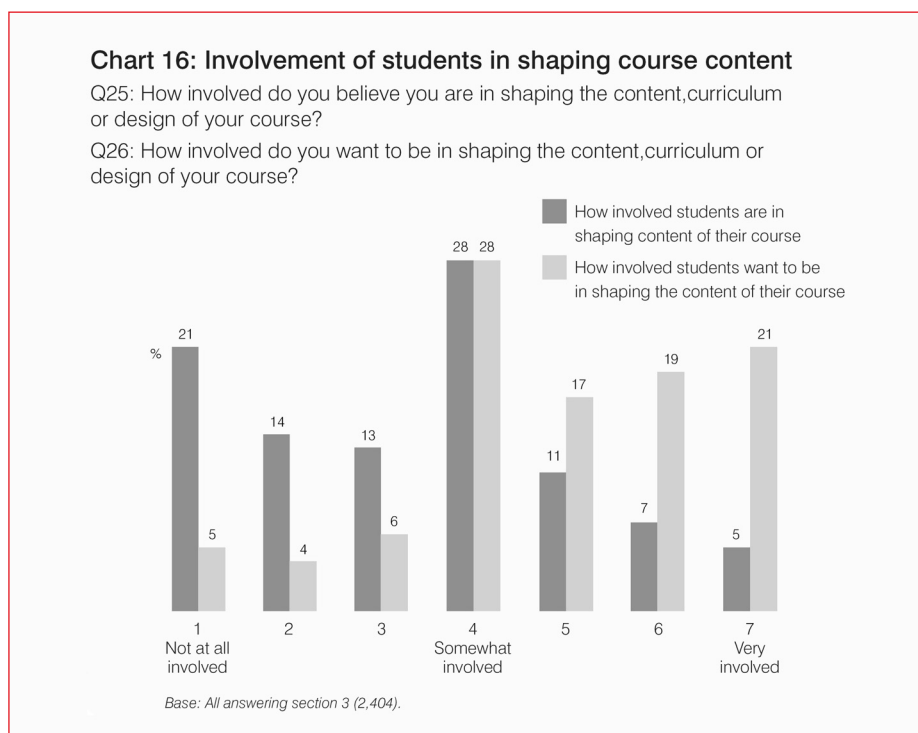


Figure 1: NUS/HSBC Student Experience Report (2008)

It is also important to recognise that the student population is changing. More people are deciding to go to university from schools and colleges, but also from less traditional backgrounds. As a result, the profile of the student body is becoming ever more complex, with the number of mature students predicted to continue to rise, alongside an increasing international student population. Everyone in the HE sector faces a challenge in ensuring that institutions are in a position to meet the changing needs of this ever diversifying student population. WISE is the opportunity to do just that, to identify when and where those changes take place, and to take action accordingly through a constant stream of communication with the student population.

For this to be effective, student representation and feedback mechanisms must be accessible to all students, from the traditional 18 year old who can run over from halls of residence to attend a last minute course committee meeting, to the mature student parent who lives 20 miles away and needs at least a couple of weeks notice in order to arrange childcare. The student population is transforming, and the sector must become increasingly flexible in order to meet the needs of such a diverse group of people.

HE in Wales is already changing to meet some of these challenges, thanks to the Welsh Assembly Government's (2009) commitment to a Federal College* to ensure the promotion of Welsh-medium education in universities; a National Bursary Framework to improve fairness, transparency, and social justice when supporting students at the point of entry; and the Heads of the Valleys project, which seeks to break down the barriers to improve education and skills in one of Wales's most economically deprived areas. The Welsh Assembly Government is taking definite steps to ensure that those who have the potential are encouraged to access HE and we all have a responsibility to ensure that these students benefit from a world

class student experience. WISE is in its early stages, but will work towards ensuring that students are represented in their institutions and are able to shape the future of learning and teaching in Wales. All parties who are involved in this project are keen to make Wales a leader in student engagement and committed to securing a high quality student experience for all.

Endnote

* Coleg Ffederal is a Governmental project to encourage the development of teaching in HE through the medium of Welsh by funding the training of postgraduate students studying in Welsh and encouraging the development of a more comprehensive framework to make more courses available bilingually or in Welsh.

References are available at:

www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Developing an International Agenda for Leisure, Tourism and Sport Programmes: Experiences of Keeping a Diverse Portfolio on Interests

Andrew Jones, *Swansea Business School, Swansea Metropolitan University*

Background

In 2002 the Leisure, Tourism and Sport (LTS) subject area group at Swansea Metropolitan University was incorporated into the newly expanded Faculty of Humanities, having previously existed as a School in the Faculty of Business. A further restructuring in 2009 led to the emergence of Centres that are sited within larger Schools in the Faculty. The Centre for LTS is currently incorporated fully into the Swansea Business School, enjoying the benefits both of management autonomy and growing synergy with other business programmes.

The current LTS team is small: 5 full-time members of staff who divide their time between the LTS teaching and research and other teaching and management roles. Many of the team

have had years of experience within the LTS industries and this enhances the vocational focus of programmes offered. The LTS group, at one time or another, has offered a diverse range of undergraduate and postgraduate LTS programmes – for example BAs in Tourism and International Tourism Management, Sport and Leisure Management, MSc Tourism and Leisure Management and more recently an MBA (International Tourism) together with MPhil and PhD research. Such provision has been driven by both internal and external forces. These forces have included the expertise and experience of its teaching staff, the result of in-depth market research, response to employer feedback, and increasingly the international dimension. It is this international focus that has become a priority for development since 2008 and the centre's recent incorporation into the Business School.

International Initiatives and Development

Leisure, tourism and sport are by definition, international subjects. The issues which emerge in leisure, tourism and sport are broadly more similar than they are different. Locations and communities have their own unique characteristics. Institutions and the legal and regulatory framework surrounding the industries have their own dimension within each country. The scale of the industries also differs significantly by area. However, the basic principles and practices of planning, development, marketing, information technology, industry operations, organisation and finance are recognisably similar. This has provided new opportunities for expanding the LTS portfolio, with its ability to develop transferable skills for students undertaking programmes in Swansea or overseas. The international dimension of the Business School and LTS programmes has been truly global and is not restricted to the European Union. Initiatives are wide ranging and (although not exhaustive) have manifested themselves in a number of ways. They include the following main avenues:

European Union Erasmus Programme

The European Union student exchange programme (including SOCRATES and ERASMUS) has provided the backdrop for the initial development of international collaboration for many years, back to the late 1980s. A sound body of experience has developed as a result. This has been particularly beneficial in terms of staff and student exchanges, curriculum development, cultural exchange including planning and executing international field study visits, access to and participation

in international conferences, exchange of information, and mutual assistance in programme design and subject development. Some European students have studied a term or a year of the current degree course in Swansea. These students have come from the universities of Brittany and Perpignan in France, Hame University-Polytechnic in Finland, the Universities of Deusto and Maresme in Spain, and Harstad University College in Norway. As an added bonus some have stayed to study post graduate programmes. The arrangements have worked well and the school continues to support such collaboration and encourage more Swansea-based students to take up short periods of academic studies at such institutions, although this still remains a challenge.

Developing Collaboration with International Professional Organisations

The Centre has also been an active member of ATLAS (European Association of Tourism and Leisure Educators) and ATHE (Association for Tourism in Higher Education) and contributes to both its academic and research work. This has brought a host of benefits for staff and students associated with LTS programmes in Swansea, allowing them to engage with their respective academic communities, participate in joint field trips, engage with joint research projects, participate in higher education policy discussions and become involved with LTS joint curriculum developments.

International Placements and Exchange – The Leonardo Student Mobility Initiative

The Centre has been successful in securing European Union Leonardo Da Vinci student mobility funding under its own TEXT initiative (Tourism European Exchange Training). This works with a network of universities in Italy, Spain, Malta, Cyprus, Portugal, France, Germany and Norway to place and fund students on vocational training programmes. This has been of particular benefit for students who have expressed a desire to gain international work experience or undertake international research work. Leonardo funds have allowed students to obtain financial assistance for travel and subsistence for up to a 15 week period in an EU member or partner state.

European Union Erasmus Mundus Programme

The School has decided to participate in applications for the European Erasmus Mundus programme which will assist the mobility of students within LTS who can spend periods of up to one year studying in partner institutions outside the European Union. Swansea will receive students to study on LTS programmes from partner institutions outside the European Union. Access to an alternative income stream and a new student pool are the perceived future benefits of providing funding for overseas students to study on the LTS programme. Diversifying the student cohort mix is perceived as an added advantage in this respect.

University of Wales International “Hybrid” Programmes

As a member of the University of Wales, SMU and the School have also been developing overseas collaboration with the University of Wales’ “Hybrid” model which

focuses on validating existing SMU LTS programmes under the University of Wales brand. This uses the University of Wales' international expertise to validate home-based programmes overseas. The key advantage of such a process is that it allows the development and delivery of existing LTS programmes to overseas providers but obviates the need to duplicate quality assurance measures. Other key advantages for Swansea include the provision of new income streams for the programme and a more diversified student intake for LTS programmes. This is particularly the case for recruiting top-up degree students from overseas centres. These links have also provided a degree of stability in what can often be perceived to be a volatile and changing international market. So far, initiatives have taken place with HKMA Lignan University, Hong Kong, CSUFT, China and AEC, Singapore. These centres will now deliver the School's leisure portfolio in Honk Kong, Mainland China and Singapore under the University of Wales banner.

Summary

The diversification of the programme to focus increasingly on international collaboration has brought with it both benefits and challenges. The LTS team is a small part of the business school. Demands on staff time mean that the ability to engage with international development initiatives remains a challenge. It is a challenge, however, that will become increasingly important as reliance on more formal avenues of student recruitment through traditional local A-level and GVNQ routes become more unpredictable, especially in the light of predicted government capping and cuts in funding for universities.

Engaging with international collaboration at a number of levels has genuinely enhanced the profile and learning experiences of staff and students at Swansea. The benefits, both tangible and intangible, are considerable. Clearly engaging with international development can bring measurable outcomes including enhanced revenue streams from overseas collaboration and an increase in student numbers, both through registered students at overseas centres and through providing avenues for students to undertake their studies or top-up in Swansea via collaborative partners. The less tangible but nevertheless important benefits, particularly for individual career development, are generally associated with experiential learning, cultural exchange, vocational training, research opportunities and curriculum development. Engaging with academic partners and mentors within an international dimension have provided enhanced student experiences and produced positive outcomes for research.

The challenges, however, remain fairly significant. At a strategic, institutional level, being committed to the process of overseas collaboration is an important starting point. Having the appropriate support infrastructure and procedures to facilitate international cooperation and exchange is very much dependent on such strategic support. Aligned with this, having appropriate funding available to "seed" initial or potential collaborative

projects is generally essential for success. Initial costs of investing in overseas initiatives can be daunting to a small institution and department like ours. However, if shared with collaborative partners such as in Swansea and the University of Wales, costs can be managed and kept to a sustainable level. Having a medium-to-long term vision (at least 4-5 years) also makes returns on investing in such collaboration more attractive economically, and often puts such initiatives on a firmer economic footing. In this context short term year on year economic auditing of such ventures can make collaboration, in some instances, look less attractive or sustainable.

At an operational level, ensuring staff time to facilitate international collaboration and coordination remains a key challenge for the school. Managing staff time and balancing duties for such work in a climate of prioritising staff time for teaching and other programme administrative duties within the school has become increasingly difficult. This is especially the case in the light of ever increasing demands for efficiency gains not only within our own institution but across the higher education sector in general. Balancing, maintaining and ensuring international relevance in curriculum design is also a challenge especially in making sure that curriculum is both relevant and robust for home based students and overseas providers alike. Addressing such issues is essential to ensure the successful recognition of programmes internationally. A summary of institutional benefits and challenges can be seen in Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1: Institutional benefits for international collaboration

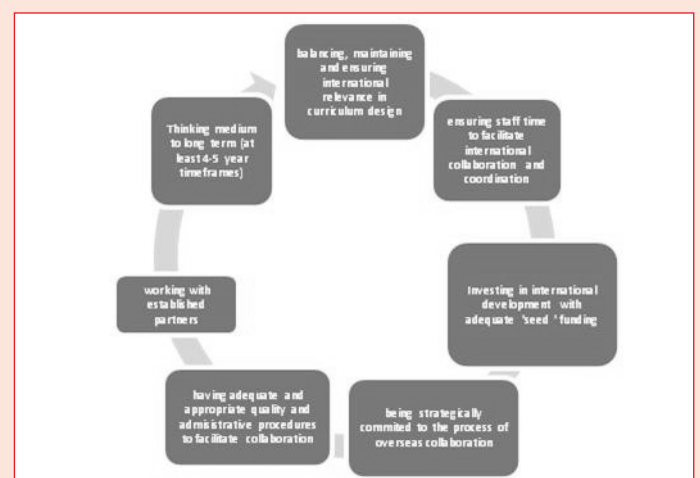


Figure 2: Institutional challenges for international development and collaboration

Despite such pressures it is important to remember that institutions may not have the choice of “not engaging” with international initiatives in the longer term. Whatever the size of an organisation, large or small, and small as in Swansea’s case, there are clear benefits to be gained - no department is too small to participate.

Engaging with international collaborators and partners has brought exciting and meaningful learning experiences and externality to the LTS programme team. It has provided opportunities to travel and enhanced both staff and student

learning experiences. The financial spin offs have also been encouraging and have facilitated the momentum to clear the path for further initiatives.

Most importantly, however, the development of international collaboration has helped enhance the profile of LTS programmes at Swansea and ensured that the “flag” for these programmes flies high within the Business School, beyond the boundaries of Swansea and way beyond the confines of the Severn Bridge.

SkillsActive: The Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Active Leisure and Learning

| **Richard Tobutt**, *SkillsActive*

Introduction

Covering around 90% of the UK economy, Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are independent, employer-led, UK-wide organisations designed to build a skills system that is driven by employer demand. Working in partnership with employers and key stakeholders, SSCs lead and support the industry’s drive to succeed by ensuring the supply of skills to meet industry needs. The collective voice of SSCs is articulated through “The Alliance” which comprises all licensed UK SSCs.

SkillsActive is the licensed SSC for Active Leisure and Learning, which is made up of the following sub sectors: sport and recreation, health and fitness, playwork, the outdoors and caravans. The SkillsActive Wales Executive Committee provides SkillsActive with an employer-led focus and a strategic direction within a UK policy framework, and is comprised of key employers and stakeholders from across Wales’ active leisure and learning sector. This committee also oversees the delivery of the SkillsActive Wales Action Plan 2008-2011 and its associated programme of work.

SkillsActive is working to create a culture where both employers and individual employees recognise the need for professional development and improved skills. Through up-to-date analysis of the labour market, SkillsActive can identify and predict skills needs in the sector and advise employers on recruitment and retention, whilst driving effective investment from policy makers and funding agencies. While we are working to increase the demand for skills, it is crucial that this increased demand can be met. SkillsActive is also working with funding agencies, training providers and policy makers to maintain and improve qualifications, apprenticeships and vocational programmes.

SkillsActive is therefore in a unique position in that it can work as the central link between all active leisure and learning sector partners, as well as representing the needs of the sector to the Government, maintaining communications with awarding bodies, service providers, funding agencies and policy makers.

The Sector Skills Agreement (SSA)

SkillsActive has brokered a Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) between the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and employers across Wales’ active leisure and

learning sector. The Welsh Assembly Government Skills and Employment Strategy entitled *Skills That Work for Wales* states that “Sector Skills Agreements produced by SSCs will map out the skills needed by employers in each sector and show how these skills can be supplied” (2008, p. 68). So, it can be suggested that SSAs bring together employers and providers/funders of education and training, with the key purpose of developing a more demand-led system of public investment in skills for the sector, combined with an increase in employer commitment to skills.

As a direct result of extensive industry consultation, the SkillsActive SSA identified the following priorities as the key solutions required to tackle the issues and challenges that the sector faces:

- improve recruitment and retention of the workforce
- upskill and professionalise the existing workforce
- match training supply to employer demand
- redirect and secure new funding for training to meet employer needs
- increase sector investment in our people

The SkillsActive Wales SSA was launched in the summer of 2006, and since then SkillsActive has been working with the key stakeholders, including the Welsh Assembly Government, Careers Wales, Job Centre plus, Wales TUC and HEFCW, to implement the underpinning collaborative action plans that were brokered in an attempt to address the issues and challenges identified above. However, it is important to stress that SkillsActive are currently engaged with both the UKCES and the Welsh Assembly Government's department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) to determine the key deliverables that will be monitored and evaluated in the future. So SkillsActive will be producing a revised Action Plan for Wales that will be drawn from the various SSA Action Plans that currently exist.

Workforce Profile for Wales: A Summary

Linked to the SSA process, analysis for the Sector Skills Assessment (SkillsActive, 2010) provides a detailed profile of the active leisure and learning sector and an examination of employer skill needs. In this labour market intelligence, it is suggested that the active leisure and learning sector accounts for around 2.2% of total employment in Wales or 29,500 people (accounting for around 4.8% of the UK sector employment). Supporting the paid workforce is also a significant number of volunteers, particularly in sport; evidence suggests that sport is the largest single sector for volunteering. There are around 80,000 coaches operating across Wales and around 70% of these are volunteers.

The Sector Skills Assessment also showed that there were 2,400 business establishments operating across Wales' active leisure and learning sector, and this statistic has been put forward following analysis of data from the Office of National Statistics including the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Gross value-added output of the active leisure and learning sector in Wales in 2004 equalled £400 million. The active leisure and learning sector in Wales accounted for 1.1% of total output in Wales in 2004, which suggests that the sector has slightly more importance to the Wales economy than it has across the UK (0.9%). Sector output in Wales also accounted for 5% of the total UK active leisure and learning output. Overall, employment growth in the sector in Wales has outperformed that of the Welsh economy as a whole. On average, employment has grown almost two and a half times faster than that of the Welsh economy, and it is forecast to continue to grow until 2014.

Key Programmes of Work

1. Developing Key Sector National Occupational Standards (NOS)

SkillsActive works together with employers, partner organisations and industry experts to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS) across the active leisure and learning sector, and these NOS define the skills and knowledge which are required to work in particular occupations. The NOS can then be used in the development of training or qualifications and they can also be used in employment to develop job descriptions and person specifications, and to create continuing professional development programmes for staff.

SkillsActive are currently working with employers, trade associations and key stakeholders to develop and consult with on a range of NOS including Officiating at the Elite Level in Sport (Level 4), Leisure Management (Level 3), Sports Development (Level 3) and Tackling Crime through Sport.

2. The Sector Qualifications Strategy (SQS)

The Sector Qualifications Strategy (based on the SSA) will indicate what learning provision and qualifications are required to meet those needs. The Assembly Government will also expect new vocational qualifications and units to reflect the Sector Qualification Strategy. Following a period of consultation with key stakeholders, SkillsActive has finalised its Action Plan for Wales which has been approved by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

3. The Work Based Learning Pathways (WBLP)

As part of the 14-19 agenda in Wales, SkillsActive is working in partnership with the Assembly Government to pilot "Work Based Learning Pathways" which allow young people (aged 14-16) to combine their academic studies with a blend of vocational orientated learning and work experience. SkillsActive are currently working with the 14-19 networks within Cardiff, Gwynedd, Ynys Mon, Denbighshire, Pembrokeshire, Vale of Glamorgan, Conwy and Neath Port Talbot, as part of a phased roll out. SkillsActive will also be working with the Assembly Government to explore developments with the Principal Learning Qualifications (due to start in Sept 2011) that will be integrated through the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification.

4. Simplifying the Qualifications Structure for the Health and Fitness Industry

Over the past year, SkillsActive has been working with the health and fitness industry to revise the qualification structure for the Register of Exercise Professionals (www.exerciseregister.org) to ensure that it accurately reflects the job roles in the exercise and fitness sector. The result of this work is a set of revised National Occupational Standards that underpin the qualifications recognised as giving entry to the Register. These standards are in

the final stages of production following a recent consultation event that was held for key employers and stakeholders from across Wales' health and fitness sector. It is anticipated that the standards will be available for both training providers and awarding bodies later in the year.

For more information go to www.skillsactive.com

References are available at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Welsh Tourism and Events – Links to Learning and Teaching

Diane O'Sullivan,
Programme Leader, and
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Glamorgan

Exploring the link between tourism and events has been a focus of staff at Glamorgan Business School (GBS) for over a decade, the first published research appearing in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* in 2002. This work explored links between festival tourism and sustainable economic development and was followed in the same year by a project commissioned by the National Trust in Wales which sought to value the historic environment in Wales; consequently by a project which considered the role of food and tourism in rural Norfolk for the Queen's Awards for Enterprise undertaken between 2002-2004; and, an evaluation study in 2007 which reported on the Cardiff 2005 Festival initiative for Cardiff City Council. In 2007, a presentation to the Australasian Regional Sciences Association considered the contribution of the historic environment to regional competitiveness in Wales and, in 2008/9, an independently funded project mapped Wales' 22 unitary authorities' engagement with festivals and special events and considered economic, social capital, network-building and entrepreneurship issues, culminating in two papers published consecutively in those years.

From its outset provision at GBS was developed under the umbrella discipline "leisure" and began with two conjoined awards in Tourism Management and Sport Management. As participant demand has driven the need for ever more focussed awards, the programme

expanded to include Tourism and Marketing and Sport Development. In 2007 the first participants were welcomed to the latest addition, an award in Event Management. As the first cohort reach their final year of study, this short paper reflects on the links between tourism and events in Wales and considers the implications for learning and teaching programmes at GBS.

Conceptualising Learning and Teaching around Event Management – Imagineering?

An undergraduate degree in Event Management was conceptualised at GBS in 2006, largely in response to tourism graduate employment destinations. Early thinking from the development team concluded that the academic content of the new programme must be firmly embedded at the start and that participants should experience an excellent business management degree combined with specialisation in both broad (tourism) and specific (event management) disciplines. With this unanimously agreed, the debate soon centred on how much practical experience should be built into the programme. The team were aware of programmes around the country which seemed to be almost entirely theory based so that participants only gained practical experience outside their award, on an almost voluntary basis; and, of programmes which appeared to focus on covering as many practical topic-based elements (combinations of venue management, hospitality management, conference management) as possible with a less obvious academic theme or framework. The development team determined that the new programme at GBS should be built upon the strengths of its parent discipline (managing the visitor economy) and should also take a pluralistic approach to practice, allowing for participants with interests across the diverse range of event management to accommodate their own interests wherever they might lie. From this starting point the GBS undergraduate degree programme in Event Management emerged.

Programme Structure – Theory in Practice

The Event Management award was designed to facilitate exposure to event practice at every level of study. At Level 4 participants are given the opportunity to observe practice at close quarters by participating in two annual events offered locally by Cadw, the historic environment service of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). Assessment of participant involvement involves developing skills of observation and reflective practice. Participants keep a reflective log for six weeks before the event, during the implementation

of the event, and during preparation and delivery of the group presentation to a panel of practitioners. At Level 5, 40 credits, Event Planning gives participants the opportunity to plan and stage events from feasibility through to making a competitive pitch, implementation and evaluation. This framework facilitates a focus on putting theory into practice and forces participants to deal with real issues including health and safety, law, marketing, budgeting and managing people. During 2009-10, participants were able to link their events to the newly developed Glamorgan Business School fund raising project branded "Glam Gift". This initiative raised money for Oxfam across the School and the event management participants were given an opportunity to shine... "to do their stuff". At Level 6, participants undertake a module developed to facilitate the critical analysis of strategic issues in event management with input from practitioners involved in policy issues from the local through to the national level. Contributors have included willing and generous representatives of the private, voluntary and public sectors, including people from the newly established Major Event Unit at WAG. Complementing this focus on event management in practice, participants share core modules in tourism with tourism management participants. These introduce concepts of the phenomenon and its sector components at Level 4, address issues of managing the visitor experience for sustainable development at Level 5, and address the dynamic nature of emergent issues in tourism such as crisis management and the role of heritage in the visitor economy.

Implications for learning and teaching in Leisure, Sport, Tourism and Events (LSTE)

The revalidation process undertaken in 2007 enabled the team at GBS to undertake a critical evaluation of all five undergraduate degrees in the leisure, sport, tourism and events programme. The validation team were aware of the limitations of offering five awards with a relatively small core teaching team of four staff (three events/tourism and two sports). However, the team is complemented by a range of specialists from within the Faculty of Business (in areas such as marketing, accounting and HRM) and from other faculties (in areas such as science, sociology and coaching). The event management and tourism management degree awards have a generic first year, allowing participants to get a feel for both subject areas and then make a choice before specialising in year two. This has been a particular strength of the programme from the learning and teaching perspective, providing participants with flexibility in their choice of subject. The revalidation process enabled the team to reconsider the philosophy of the programmes a critical factor in both marketing and retention in HE. The current tourism and events awards now better reflect the specific issues in the tourism and events industries via both their title and content, with modules such as Accounting for LSTE and Managing People in LSTE reflecting this change. The shift to modules that deal specifically with the issues pertaining to LSTE rather than taking a more generic business focused approach appears to have had a significant impact on the learning and teaching agenda and was reflected in the results for the 2009 National Participants Survey, which saw tourism as a subject area ranked 7th out of 45 subject areas from across the five University of Glamorgan faculties. Participants ranked tourism at Glamorgan Business School in the top quartile for all but one of the seven assessed categories, citing only resources as an area in need of improvement.

The Future

The future of the tourism and events programme at Glamorgan will be affected by many factors. UCAS statistics for events courses continue to show a year on year growth of approximately 10%, in spite of the continuing effects of the economic downturn and the intense competition across the HE sector. Tourism, as an undergraduate subject,

has remained relatively static in recent years. The LSTE team has responded to this challenge by seeking to work with the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) to explore the potential for CIM accreditation on the Tourism and Marketing award. Employability remains a central focus for both tourism and events awards in GBS. 2010 will see the introduction of a new work-based employment module. In partnership with local tourism and events organisations the module will give participants the opportunity to undertake a placement without the commitment of an extra year of study. 2010 will also see the appointment of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership Associate Development Officer at the new Cardiff "The Story" Museum, supervised from within the LSTE team. This creates a number of opportunities for the LSTE cohort with many project links already established and the possibility of placements for participants with an interest in both cultural events and museum/heritage management. The LSTE team believe that advances in technology are critical for employability and this is now reflected in a specific technology-focused module at year three. In addition, an Emerging Themes in marketing module which explores, in particular, the emergence of social networking, not only as a communicative medium but also as a medium that can engage applicants, is now well established within the programme.

The future for tourism and events at GBS will be challenging, with cuts in funding streams and the effects of the economic downturn hitting participant choice and creating fierce competition across the HE sector. That said, the LSTE team at GBS believes that tourism and events are inextricably linked both academically and practically and that awards designed from an applied perspective which balances theory with practice are likely to be well placed to deliver effective learning and teaching.

References are available at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Looking for Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship in Higher Education – More Than a Word Search

Dr Jane Claricoates,
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The higher education agenda is broadening; we are now required not only to provide students with high-level knowledge and skills to enable them to practise their chosen discipline, but to do so as global citizens and to contribute knowingly to a sustainable society. Such aspirations require a rethink of higher education and of its values and goals.

It is more than a year since all higher education institutions (HEI) in Wales concluded a unique piece of work to assess the contribution of their curricula to Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship* (ESDGC). What did we do? Did we look in the best places? Did we look in the right way? What did we learn?

Background

Early in 2008, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) provided funding to each HEI in Wales to complete a self-assessment of the contribution to ESDGC of their curriculum. The exercise was standardised between institutions to the extent that we used common software developed by the Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS) at Cardiff University, and a reporting proforma provided by HEFCW. Otherwise, institutions designed their own approach to the task. Individual HEIs submitted their reports by the end of 2008, and the Higher Education Academy produced a pan-Wales overview in June 2009.

What Did We Do?

The STAUNCH (Sustainable Teaching Audit for University Curricula in Higher Education) software is based on Excel; units of curriculum (modules) are listed and each is scored on a scale of 1-3 for each of 36 ESDGC criteria (keywords) covering environmental, social, economic and cross-disciplinary themes. The scores represent the depth of treatment of each criterion in the curriculum unit. The software then calculates summary statistics to give an integrated measure of the relative contribution (scope and depth) of the curriculum to ESDGC for each unit of analysis (schemes, departments, whole institution).

At Swansea University we complemented the STAUNCH survey with staff interviews to validate the STAUNCH results, and with a web-based student survey to triangulate the provider-generated results against those from a learner perspective.

What Did We Find?

The STAUNCH software was in its pilot phase during this study and despite some technical limitations the results obtained have been valuable to all institutions at a practical and strategic level. They continue to inform national ESDGC policy and institutional arrangements and practice.

At each HEI the STAUNCH analyses indicated a wide range in the scope and depth of treatment of ESDGC concepts within and between modules, disciplines, departments and institutions. Some of this might be expected, perhaps a reflection of differing and historically-grounded rationales and goals behind individual disciplines. The majority of curriculum-based ESDGC was somewhat cursory.

More positively, all institutions discovered, when looked at through the STAUNCH ESDGC lens, that relevant curriculum was being offered in some unexpected places. The analyses further highlighted areas where an ESDGC contribution was not so much in evidence as might have been hoped for. Engineering and health science, for example, proved to be rich in ESDGC-relevant curricula, whereas computing, arts and humanities were less so, despite their significant opportunities to contribute. Sustainable solutions require innovation in social organisation and systems, and detailed, considered, attention to the powerful motivators that influence us as individuals and societies, as well as to technological developments. Done well, ESDGC is a guiding, cohesive force in such progress, and HE has a significant, but as yet apparently unfulfilled, contribution to make to it. The STAUNCH analyses have helped HEIs in Wales to clarify at a strategic level where improvements can begin.

The staff interviews conducted at Swansea enriched the STAUNCH approach and made it clear that much more ESDGC provision was on offer at the University than was evident from the STAUNCH analyses alone, based as those were on module descriptors that had not been written with ESDGC terms of reference in mind.

In ESDGC terms, some areas of curriculum content and its attendant pedagogy were found to be making an identifiable contribution although this was not evident from the STAUNCH analyses. Notably, teaching staff did not speak of their curriculum or pedagogy in ESDGC terms and were surprised to learn that they were, indeed, engaging with ESDGC. This was

especially true for non-environmentally-related curriculum areas. Development Studies and Engineering were the exceptions in this regard; there, links with sustainable development, global citizenship, or both, were explicit.

The staff interviews revealed that some significant understanding of and enthusiasm for underpinning ESDGC principles were being effectively deployed, under existing curriculum guises. This finding was echoed by other HEIs in Wales, but all agreed that across the HE sector in Wales as a whole, a deeper critical disciplinary engagement with ESDGC concepts was limited. At Swansea University, in some cases excellent curriculum contributions are the result of the enthusiasm and skills of individual tutors, in others they arise from a departmental or disciplinary policy. All HEIs agree that staff buy-in is essential to achieve high quality ESDGC.

In most cases, even where curriculum and pedagogy were found to align with ESDGC principles, the scope of the treatment was limited, and it was rare to find teaching that included the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the academic subject under focus.

Staff consistently referred to their lack of knowledge and understanding of ESDGC and what it might mean in practice for their teaching. Very encouraging was the high level of enthusiasm among a majority of teaching staff for embedding ESDGC principles into their teaching; they expressed a strong wish to gain the necessary expertise and felt that expertise was, indeed, required to clarify the relevance of their curriculum to ESDGC and to identify opportunities for its inclusion in their teaching. The confidence to do so was also often lacking.

Student responses were very interesting because in most cases they did not match exactly the provider perspective of the ESDGC contribution of their curriculum. They indicated that students do not readily make the links themselves between sustainable development and global citizenship, and the detailed academic content of their chosen discipline. When such links are made explicit, students are receptive and, further, motivated by that perspective. Where links between sustainable development and their curriculum were made explicit (within Pure & Applied Ecology and Engineering, for example) we received more and more positive responses than for those disciplines where the teaching was not thus contextualised. Students indicated their anxiety about sustainability issues relating to their own personal and professional lives, but did not themselves make the connections with their curriculum. In short, many of our students are not currently being helped to understand how they can use their disciplinary interests, skills and knowledge to become professional agents of change towards a more sustainable future.

More Than a Word Search

The ESDGC study in Wales gives us much to think about, including practicalities and principles; indeed it leads us to

reconsider the purpose of our HE intervention in a globalised and rapidly-changing world.

At a practical level we find that there is significant staff enthusiasm for a rethink of curriculum to incorporate ESDGC principles and that staff seek specialist ESDGC support to do so. We learn that our ESDGC provision would benefit from greater attention to its pedagogy, not least because we need to enable students to more thoroughly and confidently critique the tenets and approaches of their chosen disciplines, to ensure their alignment with sustainable development and global citizenship needs. We can begin this, perhaps rather simply, by contextualising our curriculum content and practice, and by making more explicit its relevance to such needs. In so doing it seems the students will not only be helped to integrate their academic learning with their professional practice, but also to inform their private decision-making.

A Couple of Final Thoughts

Any deep consideration of curriculum content or of a discipline in terms of its ESDGC contribution requires an exploration of values: what is it that we hold most valuable and hence, what values forge our goals? This question exists within all our individual and collective decision-making and behaviours. This is why a search for ESDGC is more than a matter of words. It is more properly a matter of meanings; further, of interpretations. Hence the subjective and discursive nature of sustainable development and global citizenship – we don't yet understand their meanings sufficiently well. Academic rigour is clearly appropriate to the achievement of accurate understandings and interpretations, but it is perhaps as much to the scope of our enquiries, and to the processes by which these are enabled or disabled, that we should direct some serious attention as a critical component of ESDGC as a transformative undertaking.

Interestingly, the Welsh Assembly Government has adopted Sustainable Development as its central organising principle and locates ESDGC within the "Wellbeing of Wales – Lifelong Learning" policy area. This reflects the nature of ESDGC as an educational response which addresses the complexity of securing our individual and collective wellbeing into the future, and recognition of its cross-cutting and lifestyle-connected qualities. Further, it hints at the landscape, as yet largely unexplored, in which we might direct some of our search efforts when looking to progress ESDGC.

Endnote

* In Wales, we use ESDGC in place of the more usual ESD or Efs (Education for Sustainability) to make explicit the inescapable social and global dimensions inherent in any sustainable development and, therefore, their rightful inclusion in any meaningful education that aims to prepare learners to participate in such.

References are available at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Keeping Sustainability Holistic – Global citizenship in Higher Education for Sustainability Curriculum

Kim Polistina, *Symbiotic Systems, Education, Consultancy and Research*

There are two equal components to Education for Sustainability in Wales – sustainable development and global citizenship (www.esd-wales.org.uk). Education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC) in Wales aims to find ways to raise awareness and action to address the consequences of our lifestyle choices and prepare us for sustainable living in the 21st century as global citizens (Hutt, 2008). The Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) policy, strategic visions and action plans highlight their commitment to ESDGC and have seen the development of common understandings for ESDGC in the school and youth sectors, draft common understanding in the Adult Community-based Learning (ACL) sector, and the recent Staunch audit for ESDGC implementation in Welsh higher education (HE) institutions. These documents (see WAG website for further details) also provide the foundation for HE curriculum reform to extend the lifelong educational process in these two sustainable education components. The successful establishment of a Regional Centre of Expertise on ESD (RCE Wales) exhibits the resolute support from HE in Wales to the implementation of ESDGC across Wales. However, the task of attributing global citizenship an equal platform to sustainable development in education requires all parties to possess a high level of cultural literacy. This is particularly important at the HE and Research Higher Degrees (RHD) levels where critical thinking, action, and social and cultural change are integral parts of the curriculum.

Cultural literacy includes cultural competence but adds to it the ability to critically reflect on, and if necessary bring about change in, one's own culture. It also includes the ability to critically analyse the behaviours of dominant cultures in relation to other cultures; the impact of globalisation on local cultures around the world, for instance. Some of the key skills required for cultural literacy and becoming global citizens are cross-cultural awareness, local cultural awareness, critical reflection and critical action, and personal skills for coping with being change agents. So how does this translate into HE praxis?

The enormous cultural diversity that exists on Earth, where cultures manage to fulfil human needs from the local environment in ways which are often highly sustainable, presents a threat to hegemonic consumerism-based cultures.

The critique of one's own culture that arises in cultural awareness dialogues may, however, present a cognitive dissonance which many find disconcerting and they can quickly dismiss critical ideas to maintain belief in the insidious perpetuation of dominant ideologies portrayed through popular media.

This cognitive dissonance can be dealt with by changing the nature of learning for cultural awareness. Rather than learning about other cultures, a deeper and more respectful learning for sustainability can be gained by "paralleling" different cultural traditions, beliefs and social systems with the consumerist cultures of the West, and then using this learning as a tool for critical reflection on aspects of sustainability in both cultures (Western and the paralleled culture).

One example of such a project is the co-operation between Ugandan local communities, and Welsh Water and WaterAid (see Watkins and Welsh Water 2009). In this partnership, the Ugandan communities continued their cultural outdoor lifestyles but worked with outside agencies to enhance sustainable living practices and increase the quality of life for communities in relation to health, education, environmental protection and conservation (Watkins 2009). Sustainable technologies from both Western and Ugandan cultures were combined with the sustainable local Ugandan traditional lifestyles and environmental practices to implement sustainable development. This project can be seen as an example of a beneficial use of cultural literacy for sustainability, as it does not use sustainable development for the sole purpose of increasing trade and growth for Western countries, but rather to maintain local cultural and social sustainability.

A contrasting example employed to raise awareness of the insidious nature of colonialist and neo-liberalist notions of sustainable development is to involve learners in critical analysis of how sustainable development is represented by transnational corporations. An example that could be used is the Kenco coffee advertising, which claims that the company assists local communities in sustainable development through their trade with them. The Kenco image of sustainable development is predominantly Western with Western-style houses popping up out of rainforests, Western-style classrooms (desks and blackboards) in the middle of a culture with an exceptionally good natural environment for learning outside the classroom, and water gushing out of a Western style irrigation system indicating that it is possible to waste a valuable resource now that it is "on tap". The underlying message is that "valuable", "better" or "progressive" development involves becoming more like the (unsustainable) societies of the west. Again, examining Shell's misappropriation of sustainable development terminology is evident when we scrutinise their claims of commitment to sourcing "sustainable fuel" when their main focus on

technological research is simply allow them to “drill deeper” and longer into the earth to obtain more [sustainable] oil retrieval rather than intensify the focus on renewable sources of fuel (Shell, 2010).

Once initial critical dialogue is established and accepted by learners then discussions can move onto topics such as race and sustainability, establishing a local sense of place and cultural identity, community versus individualistic cultural value systems, imperialist definitions of sustainability, neo-liberalism and sustainable development, and the impact of globalisation on local cultures. Having learners’ research government cultural protocols from other countries is also extremely useful in coming to an understanding of the complexity of cultural issues and the importance of cultural literacy for sustainability (e.g., Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development, 1999).

The ability to accept and respect knowledge within local cultures and communities is also necessary for developing cultural literacy. There may be knowledge and skills for living sustainably that are already embedded in the traditions of local cultures and passed on inter-generationally through non-formal education (Bowers, 2003). Outdoor learning (rather than simply outdoor pursuits) is particularly suitable for drawing on the grassroots expertise in sustainability found in local communities (Polistina, 2003).

Examples of how formal education can incorporate local grassroots educators include initiatives such as local elders describing the traditional agricultural practices of the region, local mothers working directly with learners for health and sustainability in an outdoor walking group or organic garden, land owners explaining the installation of micro-hydro schemes, and representatives from sustainable communities demonstrating renewable energy and waste systems used on their property. By engaging in collaborative projects such as these, as primary formal educators, we are able to take a step back, enabling local people to become the educators.

Contrary to a culture of specificity and difference, is one of hyper-culture and indifference. This hyper-culture is detrimental to sustainability literacy as it silences the need for self-critique, self-reflection, or reflection on the trajectory that society is taking. Critical reflective thinking is a dialogue between learners and educators on aspects of cultural or social discourse; it considers the experiences of the group as a whole and provides a way of accounting for ourselves (Ghaye & Ghaye, 2001).

One possible exercise to encourage critical reflection and thinking consists of providing learners with a piece of discourse about sustainability from popular media, for example magazines or websites. Learners write whether they agree, disagree, like, dislike, understand or are confused by the information being provided. Once learners have written down their comments, they take them home without discussing them. At home they are instructed to forget what they have written and reflect on the information from another person’s perspective, for example a Buddhist, a single mother, the managing director of a multi-national company, a teenager, or a father in a community in Tanzania. By the time they come back to the group they will have several different perspectives on the same piece of information. Learners are then able to develop innovative, achievable and sustainable actions for cultural and social change based on a holistic examination of the situation.

Whilst a cultural shift towards sustainability is being sought globally, in Western society we do not live in a culture that supports the types of widespread changes, diversity of cultural systems or challenges to the status quo that are required for change to occur. Learners need to “survive” being change agents.

Ultimately, the educator becomes a facilitator and enabler of change rather than a disseminator of knowledge. Learners require practical research skills, critical thinking and implementation of critical action skills, understanding of bullying and harassment and human communication and public speaking and debating skills. Mentoring projects through involvement in local and globally in sustainability and global citizenship networks can build learner’s self-confidence, self-esteem and independence. Being part of a group with shared values can provide learners with valuable social support for their work as cultural change agents and a healthy release for the stresses that they will experience. This social interaction can also encourage a sense of pride in their knowledge and ability to bring about change whilst being mindful of their responsibility as a global citizen.

In conclusion, the WAG has a strong commitment to education for both sustainable development and global citizenship as equal components in sustainable education. To enable educators in HE to implement a global citizenship curriculum, a high level of cultural literacy is required. This article has provided some examples of how this cultural literacy can be included in HE curriculum and praxis in the hope that learners become respectful global citizens in their process of implementation of local and global sustainability.

This paper is adapted from the Cultural Literacy chapter written for The Handbook for Sustainable Literacy (Polistina, 2009)

References are available at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Developing Coaching Pedagogy: Curriculum Innovations on a Masters Programme

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Recent research in sports coaching has confirmed interactive experience within practical coaching contexts as the principal knowledge source of both neophyte and experienced coaches (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004; Nelson & Cushion, 2006). Despite this recognition, the vast majority of academic and professional coach education programmes continue to be taught along traditional didactic lines (Jones & Turner, 2006). The purpose of this article is to identify and reflect upon how, in the last three years, we have developed the core modules of the MSc Coaching Science programme at UWIC in an attempt to better engage our students with the realities of coaching while ensuring better integration of theory and practice. This process has been facilitated by three separate HLST Network funded pedagogic development projects which have focused on pedagogies that involve action research, problem-based learning and socio-drama. In the following paragraphs, we outline the foci of the different initiatives and how they have impacted on the curriculum and the subsequent student experience.

The first project to be considered employed an action research framework in a direct attempt to bridge the gap between practice and theory in student coach development. Action research involves alternating action and reflection in a cyclic or spiral way to achieve integration of theory and practice. It seeks change (action) and understanding (research); hence its relevancy for what we are trying to achieve. This module was structured around a set of practical experiences and theoretically driven discussion groups, with the intent of developing in students an awareness of how theory can and should be reflected in practice. In the module students were introduced to a particular theoretical position each week, with the expectation that they would integrate that theory into their practice in the upcoming week. Echoing Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning approach, the students then shared their experiences in structured discussion groups during the following class. A qualitative researcher went to each session to record the conversations and discussions, while the views of both students and teachers were gathered through focus group interviews at the end of the module. One of the theories given to the students had also served as the focus of a separate HLST Network pedagogic research project in 2005/06 (Morgan & Kingston, in press) which evaluated the effects of an intervention programme to promote a mastery motivational climate (Ames, 1992) on student learning experiences in an undergraduate practical soccer module. Other theories

provided on the module in question included role theory and impression management (Goffman, 1959); orchestration (Jones & Wallace, 2005), virtue theory (McIntyre, 1985), teaching styles (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002), shared leadership (Jones & Standage, 2006), and social exchange (Blau, 1986).

Although there were certainly some aspects to be worked on, the students were unanimous in agreeing that the module, as well as developing what they knew about their subject matter (coaching), also made them think more about their actions. This was particularly so in relation to inspiring or engaging others' learning (i.e., the children/athletes they were coaching). They were also able to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of what they did in their practice, and how their interactions shaped and "scaffolded" the learning environment. This was in addition to learning how others (and the theory) handled similar issues. There was also a feeling among the students that it was vital to attend all sessions for fear of missing out on their individual learning experience. The staff were also very positive about the module, citing better and more continuous student engagement. The result here then, was a seeming convergence of practice and theory, which has obvious implications for coach development, not only in ensuring the provision of contexts and structures within which professional communities of practice can prosper, but also in giving coaches access to the theoretical "resources necessary to learn what they need to learn in order to take actions and make decisions that fully engage their own knowledgeability" (Wenger, 1998, p. 10).

In 2007/08 the addition of a second core coaching module was considered to be an essential curriculum development in order to further the student experience in this area. The rationale for this was based on general agreement amongst the teaching team and certain members of the sports coaching fraternity that the dynamic and intricate nature of coaching precludes any "painting by numbers" plans that practitioners can easily follow (e.g., Saury & Durand, 1998; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004; Jones & Wallace, 2005). Consequently, it was felt that there was a need to develop the ability to coach holistically, that is, viewing coaching as a complex social activity which involves a myriad of interacting variables (Jones & Turner, 2006). Holistic coaching considers coaching not as multi-disciplinary, comprising unconnected strands of differing content knowledge but as interdisciplinary, where such knowledge meet, interconnect and dissect. The nature

of coaching is, therefore, seen as integrated rather than compartmentalised. It was subsequently decided that one way in which the goal of coaching holistically could be realised was through the introduction of a problem-based learning (PBL) module (Jones & Turner, 2006).

PBL is an approach to teaching which uses realistic, problematic scenarios and subtle tutor questioning, to challenge and to instil critical ways of thinking in students, (Jones & Turner, 2006). Specific benefits claimed for the approach include: (a) developing students' ability to make decisions and solve problems; (b) raising awareness of the complexity of real world issues; (c) allowing exposure to several bodies of knowledge; (d) developing the ability to extend learning beyond the presented problems; (e) generating the desire to think holistically across disciplines; (f) increased integration of theory and practice; and (g) developing individuals who are better able to learn effectively throughout their professional lives (Boud & Feletti, 1991; Drinan, 1991; Barrows, 2004). The module was subsequently structured around problematic scenarios reflecting the complex and integrated nature of coaching knowledge in real-life situations. The emphasis was student-centred, in that there was an expectation that students would take an active part in planning, organising and conducting their own learning within a group framework. As with the previous module, to date, the students have been very positive about the learning experience provided, suggesting that it has opened their eyes to the different roles of a coach, made them think more about the areas they research, while raising both practical issues and improving their understanding of how such issues and action can be informed by theory.

One suggestion from the students for improvement and progression of this module was to develop material that offers an increasing sense of authenticity and/or reality. In response, the teaching team decided to develop visual or physical, as opposed to merely textual scenarios through performance media such as ethno-drama. Currently, therefore, a further HLST Network funded pedagogic research project is underway to use ethno-drama to bring coaching scenarios into the classroom in order to enhance the existing PBL module. In order to achieve this, the UWIC teaching team is working alongside the Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) drama department to develop, produce and perform a series of coaching-based scenarios. Specifically a theatre director/educator will collaborate with trained actors to dramatise coaching scenes scripted in advance by the UWIC teaching team. This development will further help

innovative pedagogical practice in the MSc Coaching Science programme at UWIC. Ethno-drama has often been promoted as a means of communicating the emotional and contextual complexities of lived experiences (Gilbourne, 2007); hence, it appears pedagogically well suited to stimulate student learning around real life issues encountered by sports coaches. As the dramatised elements of the project will be filmed, the project will also establish an archive that can be used with subsequent cohorts of sports coaching students.

In summary, this brief article has attempted to outline the recent curriculum developments on the MSc Coaching Science programme at UWIC and the role that pedagogic research has played in this process. The ultimate aim is, of course, is to enhance the student experience through the implementation of innovative, interesting and engaging pedagogies. The HLST Network pedagogic research funds have been instrumental in allowing us to make significant strides in achieving this aim; we hope they continue to do so.

References are available at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

HLST Student Competition Winner Announced!

**A team of students from Middlesex University
have won the HLST Student Competition 2010.**

**The competition challenged students to design a new symbol/logo and a one line slogan
representing the meaning of the Olympic Games for young people today.**

The winning entry was created by a team of five BA Business Management students from Middlesex University:
Emma Lampard, Sophia Hadjicosti, Dipak Vaghjiani, Mishaal Al-Moften and Rojob Monsour Ali.

Their logo took inspiration from the Apple, Google Chrome and Burger King logos and used the slogan 'Dare to Dream'.

The logo and written rationale can be downloaded from
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/news/detail/2010/student_comp_winner

Managing Tourism Leisure and Sport Placements: Experiences from Swansea Metropolitan University

Jacqui Jones,
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Overseas student placements have long been an important and integral component of leisure, tourism and sports programmes at Swansea Metropolitan University (SMU). The courses first introduced placements well over 20 years ago as a key feature to develop and progress students' learning and key skills by allowing them to apply their academic studies within the industry.

As a pioneer of placements, Swansea Institute (as it then was), first developed overseas placements through links with the Disney organisation in the late 1980s. At that time, placements and work based learning were a relatively new concept in higher education. The placement programme is virtually unrecognisable from those days with now, on average, 120-200 students undertaking placements every year, and usually well over 60% of these opting to take up international placements.

Students are awarded 40 credits for their placements which are a compulsory component of all HND and degree programmes in Leisure, Tourism, Sports and Events. On return to university, student work-based experiences are used to underpin theoretical studies. Students also have the opportunity of undertaking an additional 1 year sandwich placement as part of a 4-year degree programme or 3-year HND programme, and are able to use these opportunities for graduate placements.

As part of the Swansea Institute QAA Audit (2002) the Institution was commended for its placement management systems and structures. The close working relationship lecturers have developed with industry and a core group of key employers are essential ingredients for the programme's long term success. The industry overseas is particularly impressed by the positive work ethos and guest service culture that the programme instils in the student group.

In the current economic climate, with serious staffing cuts, these relationships with employers have proven essential to the continuation of placements. Some key employers have had to cut drastically placement numbers for university students but SMU has a very strong base of around 20 key employers, and benefits from long term relationships with them. The University has therefore been able to continue to successfully secure suitable placements for students and even reports increased demand in some sectors.

Student demand for specific placements has changed quite dramatically over the years. The programme team have responded quickly to course trends such as increasing interest in sport and hotel placements, and decreasing interest in theme parks. There have been a number of health and safety issues, along with the impact of 9/11 on overseas placements. The University's placement portfolio has therefore changed considerably in order to stay market focused. This has enabled the University to meet student needs and to offer placements with a wide range of organisations both locally as well as with market leaders from across the UK and around the world.

Alumni often move on to management positions, frequently with their placement employers and return to the university to recruit. What follows are two ideal case study scenarios for students, an excellent way to bring learning alive through real life role models.

Damian Jenkins, who graduated in 2001 after studying for an HND in Leisure studies and a BA (Hons) in Leisure Management is an excellent example of the benefits of the placement programme. During his HND studies Damian spent his first placement working for TYF Adventure in his home town of St David's, and in the second year he was keen to take up one of the wide range of overseas programmes on offer. He was successful in securing a position on the highly sought after Disney Cultural Exchange Programme. Damian spent 6 months dressed in traditional costume, welcoming guests to the UK pavilion at the Epcot Centre. In 2001 the University arranged for Damian to spend a season working as restaurant supervisor in the Alton Towers Hotel before returning to the USA on another graduate placement at the Ritz Carlton Club, Aspen Highlands, where he was quickly promoted to supervisor. The placement also provided him with the opportunity to work on a task force at West Palm Beach and assist management with the opening of the Ritz Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation, Georgia. After returning to the UK, just long enough to secure a new visa!, Damian returned to the USA as Assistant Food and Beverages Manager at the Ritz Carlton, Bachelor Gulch, Colorado. He was then seconded to Doha in the Middle East as Restaurant Manager before being relocated back to the US to open the brand new Ritz Carlton, Denver, as Food and Beverages Director and General Manager of Elway's, the hotel's exciting new restaurant opened by John Elway (the Denver Bronco's quarter back). On numerous occasions

Damian has returned to Swansea to share his career experiences with the students as well as recruiting students to work with him at Ritz Carlton.

Christian Davies studied for a BA (Hons) in Leisure Management at Swansea Institute between 1996 and 1999 and, like Damian, made full use of the University's organised placement programme to develop his work-based skills to secure a future management career. His first placement was spent working as a Water Park Trainee at Disney's Blizzard Beach Water Park in Florida, which gave him the basic skills and qualifications required to work in the international leisure industry. He spent his second placement working as a Recreation Intern at Snowmass Club in Colorado. On completing his studies, Christian undertook a graduate placement, once again organised by SMU, working in the restaurant at the exclusive Little Nell Hotel in Aspen, in order to gain food and beverage experience, before undertaking a second University organised graduate placement at the Spa at Ritz Carlton Bachelor Gulch. He was quickly promoted to Spa Supervisor, and when his visa ran out he was relocated to Qatar as Spa Manager before returning to the USA as Spa Manager of Ritz Carlton, Amelia Island, Florida. Christian is now the Spa Director of the Ritz Carlton, Westchester, New York and an excellent role model for today's leisure management students.

The success of the placement programme is not limited to overseas placements and careers. Swansea student Helen Brooks studied Sport and Recreation Management at the Institute from 1994 to 1997, undertaking unpaid placements working for the Sports Development Team in Swansea Council, where she gained a wide range of experiences and vital coaching qualifications. This opened up a number of local opportunities for Helen who is still working for the local authority in sports management. Encouragingly, Helen is just one of a large number of local students whose placement has led to graduate positions, and more recently Helen has provided placement opportunities for current SMU students, as have a number of other locally-based alumni.

The University has enjoyed a close relationship with Challenger Sports, America's Leading Soccer organisation for the past 10 years. This year over 20 students will spend the summer travelling around America coaching soccer, managing camps and living with host families. The experience has seen students progress their coaching skills and develop unrecognisably in terms of their confidence and supervisory abilities.

This year one of the main new placement opportunities for tourism students has been with the Beaver Creek Lodge in Colorado. This is a link which was developed as the new Kessler management team running the hotel have worked with the University for a long time at other properties. Three students spent a very worthwhile summer working there in food and beverages, banqueting and events. Two of the students enjoyed the placement so much that they decided to stay on for a full placement year: one has gone on to spend the winter working on front desk of the hotel, whilst the other has spent the winter working as restaurant supervisor and is then going to spend next summer working in the 5 star Solis Lough Eske Castle Hotel in Ireland. Meanwhile, the third student decided to return to complete the final year of her studies, although the University is now arranging a graduate placement for her with a Kessler Spa Hotel in New Mexico.

Next academic year SMU launches its new Events course with placements at the heart of the programme. New placements have been developed including an exciting integrated placement opportunity with Slebech Park in Pembrokeshire, is a country estate events venue with fine dining, activities and luxury suites

As an integrated component of the degree and HND programmes in leisure, events, tourism and sport, students at SMU are encouraged to use the international placement programme as an opportunity to develop their skills, apply their learning in practice and gain vital industry experience to assist them with their future careers. Whatever their field of study while studying or after graduating, they are able to benefit from a wide range of University organised placements in a variety of locations from Swansea to Sydney, Corfu to California, Paris to Pembrokeshire and Dublin to Dubai. This year the University is likely to help place well over 170 placement students and graduates within the international leisure, tourism, sport and events industries.



Katy Lewis Bayley from Pembrokeshire who undertook her placement on Disney's Cultural exchange programme in 2001 and returned on an SMU organised graduate programme to work at Disney's Epcot Centre from where she moved on to work in Disney reservations. She is now part of the management team at Disney's Typhoon Lagoon Waterpark.

References are available at:

www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Assessment Diaries: Responding to the Needs of Tutors and Students

Cath Jones, Alice Lau and
Rachel Taylor, University
of Glamorgan

Students want clear, specific and consistent communications from tutors on assessment information. The issue of assessment bunching is well documented in the literature and news; however, surprisingly few practical solutions have been provided in tackling such issues. How we manage the assessment process has an impact not only on students but also on both academic and administrative staff. The management of assessment, as Yorke (1998) stated, has received little attention in contrast to assessment methods. Yorke (1998) further asserted that the management of assessment is equally important, especially as students behave increasingly in customer-like ways. This article emphasises that assessment is a multi-faceted process and attention should be given not only to how we assess, how we provide feedback or the standards which we assess against as the last issue of LINK highlighted, but also to the overall management of the assessment process. In a recent "Change Academy project" at the University of Glamorgan, researchers discovered that students were very concerned about the communication around the assessment process. In many cases, students worried about this more than about the assessment itself. For example, Könings et al. (2008) and Nurmi (2003) stated that expectations have an impact on student performance and student perceptions. This article provides a practical example of how one institution tackles the issue of assessment bunching as part of its change process in improving learning, teaching and assessment experience for our students.

Context

Poor scores in the "Assessment and Feedback" section of the National Student Survey (NSS) are an area of concern for many subjects. The University of Glamorgan closely monitors its NSS results and expects its faculties to put in place action plans if subject scores fall below an internally agreed threshold in any given subject area. In 2005 and 2006 scores for Psychology were as follows:

	2005	2006
The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance	3.2	3.0
Assessment assignments and marking have been fair	3.4	3.3
Feedback on my work has been prompt	2.9	2.8
I have received detailed comments on my work	3.2	3.1
Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand	3.2	2.9

Although these scores were low for the University, they were contextually set against the low-scoring results on these questions for all institutions. However, the level of the results, combined with a drop in 2006 from their 2005 position, meant that the subject staff needed to examine practices and policies to see what could be learned; not least because the staff felt they were already working to team expectations which were particularly professional and student-focused. The Psychology Department at the University of Glamorgan was well aware of the impact that the NSS results has on league tables and student and parent perception of a university course. The Head of Department discussed the issue with all academic staff in the subject and two areas of major concern were highlighted around "Assessment and Feedback" in the survey: timeliness of feedback and the quality of the feedback provided in terms of helping students to improve.

Developing a Solution – Consultation and Expectation

Most universities have a suggested turnaround for student feedback. The University of Glamorgan has in its student charter a 20 day rule for returning assessments. Talking to students, it would seem that the 20 day rule was not always the issue. What was important to them was when an assessment was due back. The response to improving timeliness of feedback by the Psychology team was to develop a diary of assessment and "hand-back" dates for both the students and staff. The assessment diary is a simple but effective way of managing expectations and helping students to manage their time by providing them with an overview on assessment deadlines and when they can expect their feedback to be provided. The Divisional Head for Psychology compiled the pilot diary in consultation with colleagues. A crucial part of the development was to agree targets that were realistic for both staff and students. The diary is simply a list of module codes and titles, dates for assessment submission and return. This information was posted on the VLE and was available at a number of key points in the Faculty. In a parallel process, an electronic task list of all hand-back dates was posted into staff Outlook calendars to alert staff to impending deadlines. Again, this was done in consultation with staff to ensure that expectations were realistic and achievable.

The Head of Learning and Teaching (Undergraduate) undertook an independent scrutiny of coursework to assess the quality and timeliness of the feedback provided. A random sample of coursework across all modules was taken. The Head of Department felt that this process ensured that an individual not from Psychology had access to the full range of feedback and this provided an additional level of independence to that already provided by external examiners. The Head of Learning and Teaching (Undergraduate) also had experience of feedback in other areas of the faculty and was in a position to compare the level provided by Psychology to that from other subjects. All staff engaged fully with the project, did not object to this additional level of scrutiny and were committed to improving the student experience in this area.

Weighing up the Impact and Spreading the Practice

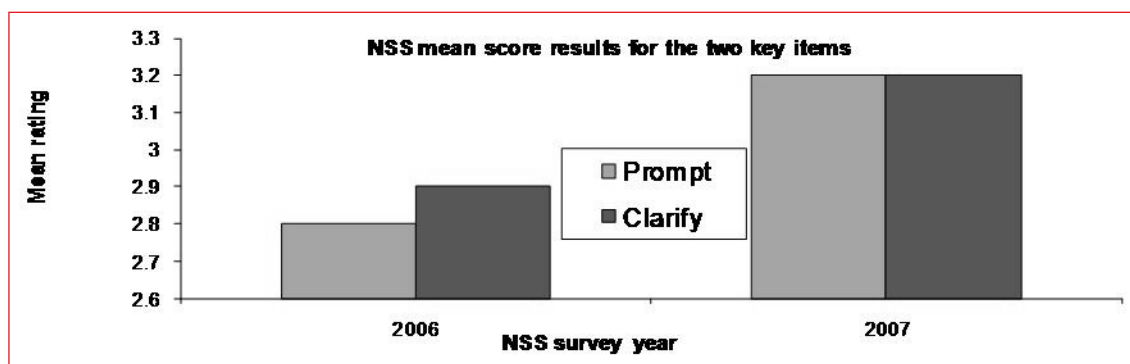
An on-line survey, using Questionmark Perception software, was attached to all Psychology modules on Blackboard during the first year of diary use. It asked students to reflect on their experiences of feedback and assessment. The survey was anonymous and students were only identified by course and year of study. This was conducted by the Head of Learning and Teaching (Undergraduate) in consultation with the Head of Department and the Divisional Head. Both qualitative and quantitative data were captured. The analysis showed a positive reaction to the assessment diary and the timing and quality of feedback. One student commented:

The Psychology tutors are very organised. Staff are helpful and very cheerful even when we get things frustratingly wrong. Staff are working very well together which makes us feel welcome.

The outcomes from the project to date are:

- the assessment diaries manage student expectations, provide clarity and reduces anxiety
- a better understanding of the student experience
- structured organisation of feedback across the modules
- improved scores in the National Student Survey

The following chart shows the contribution of assessment diaries to improving student perceptions of feedback on their course.



Since the initial pilot in Psychology, the assessment diary has been such a success that it has been identified as good practice at the institution's Change Academy project and is now being implemented across all faculties in the institution. The model has now been adopted across the university and a database is being developed to give students a link to their own personalised version of the assessment diary via Blackboard. This gives exact information about when assignments are due for submission and return; automatically generated emails remind both students and tutors when deadlines loom. The clear advantages of this simple intervention have made it established practice at Glamorgan. It is just one way in which we can improve the student assessment experience.

References are available at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Widening Access Initiative for Hospitality Programmes

Andy Roberts, Richard Ward and Kay Howells,
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Recent academic papers on higher education (Reay, 2003; Redding, 2005; Greenhalgh et al., 2006) and the public endorsements given by political figures from both the Welsh Assembly and the Westminster Government support the importance of "Widening Access". Mandelson (2009) stated:

The post 1992 universities have confounded the sceptics, with many justifiably able to claim a badge of excellence for what they do – especially in widening routes to higher skills and providing a new focus for civic pride and urban economic renewal. However, as a society that aspires to offer equal opportunity to all irrespective of social background, we still need to do much to make access to higher education wider and fairer. (Mandelson, 2009, p.2)

In a Welsh Assembly statement on the 21st Century higher education strategy and plan for Wales, Jane Hutt, Welsh Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills said:

I intend to see higher education opened up to many more people through significantly greater diversity and flexibility in programme design, duration and delivery, including more part-time, short, and credit based learning experiences. (Hutt, 2009, p.1-2)

In collaboration with the widening access team at UWIC, the hospitality team have developed "taster short courses" to encourage participation from ethnic minority and low participation groups in the local community.

The Hospitality Industry as a Major Employer in Cardiff

Cardiff City Council (2009) estimated that the hospitality industry (hotels, restaurants, cafés, public houses) in Cardiff employs approx 22% of the City's workforce. This is in line with a national UK hospitality industry employment rate of approx 25% of the workforce. Over the last five to ten years the hospitality industry in Cardiff has seen rapid expansion. Several brand name hotels have either been built or had old premises converted. This, and the recent opening of a Jamie Oliver branded Italian restaurant have made the hospitality industry a major employer (second only to public administration and health) in this capital city (Cardiff Research Centre, 2009). An added benefit is the opportunity for those who have been unable to consider full-time employment, because of, for example, family, child care or disability commitments, to gain employment through part-time working or by staggered shift patterns. UWIC, in particular the Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Events, takes very seriously its commitment to widen access to higher education and learning in the community.

According to the City Council:

The city contains significant numbers of people living in relative deprivation and experiencing multiple forms of deprivation including employment and income deprivation. Some 50,000 Cardiff residents live in the 25% most deprived Electoral Divisions in Wales. (Cardiff Research Centre, 2005, p. 5)

Any directed learning which raises the knowledge levels of individuals and the employability of those individuals must be of benefit to the community as a whole.

Further benefits accrue where individual participants gain confidence in their academic ability and go on to seek out further learning.

Development of the Curriculum

This taster short course was developed by Andy Roberts and Richard Ward, both lecturers in the Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Events in UWIC's Cardiff School of Management (CSM).

The course was timetabled to run over a 10 week period with a learner commitment of 2 hours each week. The course was developed to run on campus to give people who might have previously thought of higher education (HE) as "not for them" the opportunity to experience it and change any negative perceptions. It was timed to run from 6pm in the evening to allow those with other life commitments the opportunity to attend.

The theory of hospitality mixed with practical learning ensured the best learning outcomes for those who attended. The course was structured to allow for all learning styles to be taken into consideration; from classroom based learning, where theory related to the industry was delivered, to the practical kitchen session, where the theory learned in the classroom and how it is implemented in a practical setting were blended. A field trip to the Marriott Hotel in Cardiff was arranged for the participants to allow for a real world view of implementation of theory and practice. This was beneficial as it allowed those who attended the opportunity to see the complete extent of a hospitality operation in full flow and included not just the formal setting of the hotel but also a look behind the scenes. As a result of the visit, part-time work opportunities were discussed.

An essential element of the course design was the inclusion of a tangible learning outcome which could be used to enhance the employability of those who attended. As the hospitality industry is a major employer within the UK, with the Food and Beverage part of this sector playing a key role for income generation, it was felt that a qualification which sought to enhance skills in this area would be advantageous to both the learner and the industry. For this reason a Level 2 certificate in Food Hygiene in catering, accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH), was included in the taught element of the curriculum. This element of the learning culminated in a multi-choice food-hygiene exam paper which all participants sat and passed, thereby raising their own individual knowledge and employability

Marketing the Programme

The UWIC Centre for Personal and Professional Development (CPPD) Widening Access team promoted three programmes developed by the hospitality team, all delivered over a 10 week period. Courses were promoted through networks developed by the Widening Access team, which include community and voluntary organisations who work with black minority ethnic (BME) groups. The students who attended these courses were either refugees or asylum seekers and were encouraged to attend by partner organisations, in particular Refugee Voice Wales, Women Connect First and the Welsh Refugee Council. All the courses were fully subscribed and attendance was excellent. A close liaison between UWIC's Widening Access team and the CSM enabled the students to engage in this valuable experience. When developing and promoting the courses, many of the major barriers to participating in and accessing learning were taken into account. Cost of courses is often an issue when first engaging non-traditional disadvantaged adult learners in learning. Therefore, these courses were all offered free of charge to the learners, funded through UWIC's CPPD Widening Access department, and learners were also reimbursed for their travel expenses and childcare costs. Through evaluation it was clear that the vast majority of participants would not have been able to attend without such intervention.

Participant Profiles

For every student on the Introduction to Hospitality course, English was not the first language, with most of the African students conversing with each other in French. However, their oral English was very good and their passion and interest in developing and improving their education was very important. In theoretical classes they listened attentively and eagerly participated in group discussions, and in the practical food and beverage sessions they showed tremendous curiosity and enthusiasm. On a visit to one of Cardiff's leading hotels they showed great interest and asked many questions. They all completed and passed the Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate. All students completed programme evaluations, which were very complimentary in terms of level, assessment and course content. They also all expressed an interest in future courses and in offering this opportunity to friends and relatives.

Key Benefits and Limitations

The students benefited from being exposed to, and taught in, a university environment. They understood the standards of behaviour and commitment and, most importantly, the levels of literacy and academic standards needed to achieve HE level qualifications. It was clear that they were all interested in HE qualifications, but entry would have to be as mature students with hospitality work experience. In

some instances this was achievable and advice was given on writing CVs and how to complete UCAS applications. Where there were limitations to students achieving appropriate academic standards for HE level, they were recommended alternative courses of action, such as study on further education courses, UWIC's foundation course designed to support and prepare students for Level 1 entry, or working opportunities in the hospitality industry. An interesting issue was the need to develop a portfolio of work experience evidence to prepare in order to gain UK citizenship.

Through the partner organisations, learners who attended received follow up information on further Widening Access courses such as the "Preparing for IELTS" course, delivered in community venues and developed in partnership between UWIC CPPD and UWIC English Language Training Centre (ELTC). This course is ideal for non-first language English speakers who need to gain an IELTS score of level 6 to access UWIC. Also promoted is the CPPD Widening Access UWIC Summer School for adult learners where approximately 60 courses linked to academic study and study skills are offered in community venues and on campus, free of charge for non traditional adult learners.

The opportunity to deliver this taster course was a very positive experience for the lecturers, the CPPD Widening Access team and the participants, and future courses are envisaged. The enthusiasm and genuine interest in gaining employment and qualifications was very encouraging. We hope that the advice we were able to give the participants on work opportunities and education will lead to excellent long-term opportunities in the hospitality sector for these hard working and motivated people.

References are available at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Using Moodle to Meet the Challenges of Assessment and Feedback for 1st year Undergraduate Students

Andy Thomas and Paul Andrews, School of Health and Social Sciences, University of Wales, Newport

Introduction

The School of Health and Social Sciences provides a diverse portfolio of courses such as criminology, counselling and sports coaching. The subject areas draw students from a range of educational, industrial and life experiences, and as a result there is no such thing as a "typical student" who can be assumed to hold a certain level of educational, information technology or employability skills. To address this issue, a school wide module entitled "Skills for the Professional Environment" has been introduced to inform and develop key academic, information technology and employability skills.

About the Skills Module

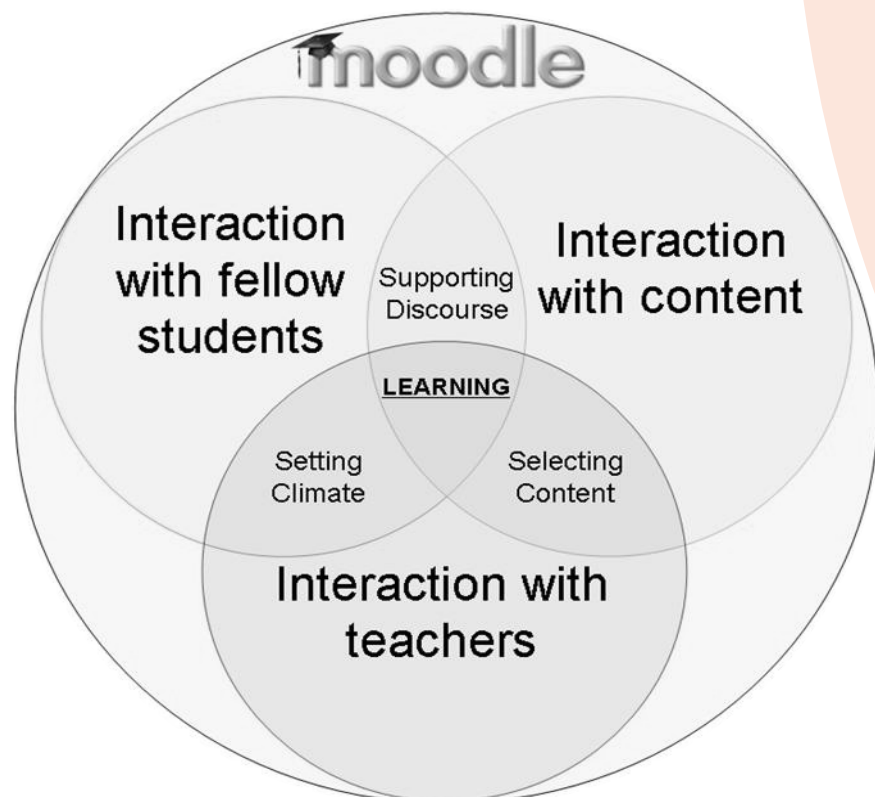
The Module is now in its third year of delivery. It has been developed through normal tutor review and student feedback processes and continues to be well received by students as an important foundation to their academic success. The module is taught to approximately 230 undergraduates in the school and is delivered through a series of lead lectures and tutorial workshops over a 6 week period. The module is intentionally delivered at the beginning of the first academic term in order to provide students promptly with the necessary information and essential tools to prepare them for course specific study.

A teaching team of six academic staff and four auxiliary support staff service this module. Each week starts with a keynote lecture in which short presentations from the teaching team are made addressing key topic areas such as academic writing styles, referencing, plagiarism and team work. When introducing employability issues, guest organisations are invited to discuss voluntary and employment opportunities. Each of the six workshops is arranged to include students from the full spectrum of the school. This learning environment encourages a multidisciplinary approach to learning and gives opportunities to interact positively with students on other courses.

While this has proved to be very efficient in terms of standardising course materials and ensuring consistency across subject areas, we have noted that large student cohorts have increased demands relating to assessment and feedback. In order to deal with these issues, the School introduced a Moodle system at the start of this academic year.

About Moodle

The word Moodle is an acronym, standing for *Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment*. It is a free and open-source e-learning software platform, also known as a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Course Management System (CMS) or a Learning Management System (LMS). Originally launched in 2001, it has a large user base with 40770 currently active sites registered from 207 countries (as of October 2009). Moodle is based around the principle of social



constructivism, allowing students to interact with their lecturers, one another, and the content, at times and places that suit them best.

The Social Constructionist Framework of Education

This approach has proved very popular with educators as it allows them enhance their modules and courses by:

- allowing teachers to provide online course notes and materials that their students can access 24/7 from anywhere in the world
- dramatically reducing the amount of marking and tracking teachers have to do
- allowing students to submit work online, thus speeding up work turn around, resulting in students completing work, projects and courses significantly faster than by using traditional methods
- allowing staff to communicate with students quickly and efficiently both in and out of the classroom
- allowing students to work collaboratively in ways that were not possible before, via the use of wiki's, forums and chat rooms

Moodle itself is developed and maintained by a network of educators and programmers all over the world whose work is coordinated by Moodle HQ, based in Perth, Australia.

How we used Moodle

Moodle allows tutors to build mini interactive websites that can hold learning activities and resources for students to access online. The Skills for the Professional Environment module has been presented to students as an online module using this technology. Although supportive key note lectures and tutorial groups are still used to provide interaction with students, all course materials can be accessed through the University's intranet.

The Moodle system provides a wide variety of assessment tools that tutors can use. These include electronic journals, online self marking tests, and online submission of electronic files.

Electronic Journals

One of the main features of this module is the personal development plan (PDP), which each student is asked to complete for the duration of the module. Traditionally this has been done as a paper exercise and then the resulting PDPs collated and handed in for marking at the end of the module. Using Moodle's electronic journal submission it has been possible for students to fill in their entries online using Moodle's

built in text editor, allowing tutors to view and grade each of the weekly entries as they come in. Students are emailed as soon as their entries have been marked, allowing for a greater sense of achievement and progression on their part. This has served as a vital confidence booster to some students who might otherwise be apprehensive about their abilities during their first few weeks at university.

Online Self-Marking Tests

One of our main goals in using Moodle was to reduce the marking workload for the delivery team, and so to help us achieve this we used Moodle's self marking quiz module to make a wide variety of formative and summative on-line assessments. Each summative assessment was time-released so students could only take it after the appropriate content had been covered in class. Once it was released, students were able to complete their assessment at times and places which suited them best. The submission was then marked by the system, allowing staff to spend more time working on improving their learning resources as well as offering additional help and support to students who were failing the tests.

The formative tests were introduced this year to help develop students' ability to use the University's reference system without adding an extra marking burden to the lecturing team. Students simply access the on-line test answering a multiple choice quiz which provides them with instant feedback as to whether they have answered successfully or not. If not, they are given guidance on where they went wrong. Students can retake the test as many times as they wish, as on each occasion the Moodle system generates a new set of questions.

Online Submission of Electronic Files

Previously students had to submit a wide variety of paper based assessments, such as essays, which were collected and processed by the schools administration team before being marked by the delivery team.

As many of our students live off-campus and have outside commitments, they sometimes find it very inconvenient having to travel to the university so they can hand in paper-based work. Using Moodle's online file submission students were able to submit their work electronically, not only saving them time but also eliminating the possibility of work getting "lost in the system".

As is the case with the online journals and self marking tests, students were notified as soon as their work had been marked, again allowing for a much faster turnaround of work than previously possible, which in turn resulted in a greater number of students passing, in a significantly reduced time frame.

Marking and Feedback

Providing feedback to students is always challenging, especially in the higher academic environment. There can often be a substantial time lag between the submission of course work and its return, marked, to the students. During this time student interest in receiving feedback can lessen to just wanting to know what the grades are. In order to speed up this process of feedback delivery the module assessments have been specifically designed to embrace the system tools offered by Moodle. The key advantage of marking online is that the tutors' comments are immediately available to the students. The most profitable feedback for developing students is that which is given in the shortest possible time.

Conclusions

Although it is early on in the academic year to draw final conclusions relating to the success of assessing and providing feedback through Moodle technology, student feedback has highlighted that students have taken to submitting their coursework on-line with relative ease and enjoy being able to access all their work and monitor their progress anytime they wish.

Tutors have reported that marking has been made easier by the absence of paperwork on their desks and advised that the monitoring of student pass rates is easier to identify when several tutors are marking on the same module. If not a solution to all the problems involved with large cohort module marking and assessment, Moodle has provided some additional tools to increase the efficiency of these processes.

First Year Experience Action Set Project

Karen Fitzgibbon, *Project Leader, Higher Education Academy Wales*

In 2008-09 the Higher Education Academy in Wales Institutional Group (comprising the HEA's nominated senior contact responsible for learning and teaching from each Welsh HEI) agreed to establish an action set to share current initiatives and practice designed to support the student first year experience. The University of Glamorgan volunteered to coordinate a special interest group and each institution nominated a member of staff to join the project team. The project became known as the First Year Experience Action Set and over the last academic year participants have worked together to bring a collection of initiatives forward for wider dissemination.

Overview of the Project

The group's overall aim was to share experiences of developing initiatives designed to support and enhance the first year student experience in Wales. We benefited immensely from the very positive approach that all group members took in willingly sharing the good, the bad (and the sometimes ugly) experiences along the way. In order to set some achievable outcomes, the group narrowed the focus of our work towards collecting examples of practice which could be related to either of two themes – communities of practice and student academic engagement.

The literature on student retention in higher education has for many years acknowledged the importance of academic and social integration in student success. Those interested in this literature, and in the themes of communities of practice and student engagement, may find the following a useful starting point: Beder (1997), Tinto (1997), Rhodes and Nevill (2004), Wilcox, Winn and Fyvie-Gauld (2005), Crosling, Thomas and Heagney (2008). A useful overview of the first year experience in the UK was provided by Yorke and Longden (2007).

At the end of the first year, the group were able to publish a practice guide containing selected case studies from each of the participating institutions. The publication provides a taster of a wide range of initiatives within the institutions – from module level right through to institution-wide initiatives. Of course each of the initiatives could be up- (or down-) scaled depending on how they are used. The publication is available in English and Welsh on the first year experience action set wiki (<http://firstyearexperiencewales.wetpaint.com>).

Current Developments

The group have been asked to continue our work for a further year and chosen the two themes to be focused on in 2009-10:

- initiatives to support innovative first year assessment
- enabling employability through the first year curriculum

We are aware of the work already produced by the Academy in these areas, but we are also aware that these particular themes are "hot topics" for higher education (see, for example, <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/students/studentEngagement/Rethinking.pdf>) and are keen to share thoughts and reflections on our current institutional approaches.

Initiatives gathered so far offer a picture of a higher education network that is rich in practice with a range of case studies which point to real innovation in the first year curriculum. We are hopeful that the publication from the group in 2009-10 will be a successful as the current practice guide and look forward to contributing to the dissemination of good practice across the Welsh Higher Education sector.

References are available at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

HLST Annual Conference 2010

“Going for Gold”

Enriching student learning through the 2012 Games

9th November 2010, St Hugh's College, Oxford

With the 2012 Games now fast approaching, this year's conference will explore opportunities presented by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to re-vitalise curricula and enhance student learning opportunities, and to encourage student engagement with learning. Keynote speakers will reflect different perspectives of the Games which can stimulate developmental initiatives:

“Capturing Olympic and Paralympic Values in the Curriculum”

“Critical examination of the Olympic Legacies aspired to by the Games organisers - their relevance in the HLST group of subjects and in HE generally”

“Olympic and Paralympic Research and its implications for curriculum development”

Workshop sessions, from People1st, SkillsActive, Podium and others, will reflect "input" developments from students and their awareness of Olympic issues, and from resources available to support HE learning and teaching. Other workshops will be about current practice or "process" in using the Olympics in learning and teaching, within the curriculum and through non-curricular opportunities.

There will also be a display of posters describing further work in this area its impact. Please see http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/events/annual_conference for more detail.

Programme

- 9.30 Coffee and Registration
- 10.00 Welcome: Clive Robertson
- 10.05 Keynote: Dikaia Chatziefstathiou, Canterbury Christ Church University
- 10.45 Parallel Workshops
- 11.30 Refreshments and opportunity to view posters and exhibition
- 12.00 Keynote: Ian Henry, Loughborough University
- 12.45 Lunch and opportunity to view posters and exhibition
- 14.00 Parallel Workshops
- 14.45 Keynote: Mike Weed, Canterbury Christ Church University
- 15.00 Plenary Discussion
- 15.30 Close

This programme is subject to change.

Learning Legacies Website and 2,012 Students Facebook Group Launched

We are pleased to announce the launch of Learning Legacies, the website of the HLST Olympics Special Interest Group (SIG).

The Olympics SIG provides a forum for sharing ideas, information, resources and good practice, enabling us to capitalise on the opportunities the 2012 Olympiad brings and to ensure that we gain a rich legacy from it. It will establish links with other organisations and agencies in the UK and overseas to ensure access to perspectives, experience and expertise which can benefit us all.

The website contains Olympics news and events, information for students and a growing collection of specially produced Case Studies and Discussion Starters designed to enhance lectures, workshops or seminars – or to be used for engaging student in assignments.

For more information visit the Learning Legacies website

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/learninglegacies>

The Olympics SIG has also launched a Facebook group – “2,012 Students” – to encourage students to discuss and share their ideas about the 2012 London Olympics. The Olympic and Paralympic Games bring a range of opportunities for learning and for personal and professional development, not least to students in higher education.

Whether it is the opportunities for working as a volunteer or for work experience in one of the business sectors associated with the Games; or opportunities in course curricula which have been enhanced through incorporation of Games-related issues and topics; or thinking, perspectives and debate stimulated and informed by the

Olympic and Paralympic Values or by the Legacies to which they aspire... the Games are a rich source for learning.

“2,012 Students” provides a vehicle to share ideas and views of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It also is a place where those who have experienced earlier Games can pass on their experiences and their learning and where those who are looking forward to future Games can share ideas on 2014... 2016...

The group hopes to attract 2,012 members to the group in record time, and then try to beat it for the next 2,012!

We encourage you to pass on this information to students in your institutions and students can get involved by visiting the “2,012 Students” Facebook Group
<http://tinyurl.com/37853ug>

www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst