Improving employability through Research Informed Learning: enhancing student engagement on a vocational outdoor degree.

Inspire: Sharing Great Practice in Social Science Teaching and Learning.
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Three decades as an Outdoor Sector professional.

Academic & Researcher.
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Vocational Outdoor Courses

Typical Applicants’ Profile

- Often mature applicants
- Industry backgrounds
- Non-traditional portfolio of qualifications
- 18-20 year olds with limited experience
- Perception that undergraduate provision should be ‘practical’
- Conflate undergraduate with instructor training
Course Expectations

Skills Distribution Expected (Actual)

- Academic 20% (78.8%)
- Technical 80% (21.2%)
Limitations.

Problems with this Expectation

- Undermines graduate status within the Outdoor Sector
- Devalues graduate status in professional areas outside the Sector
- Undermines credibility for postgraduate courses
Pedagogy

Aim

Network students and employers to improve practice knowledge and employability

Face-to-face negotiation of real-life research informed projects

Support development of self-confidence to shape practice knowledge

Improve Learnacy through RIL

Become more effective independent learners
Using Research Methods to Emphasize the Constant Interplay Between Theory and Practice
The Process – Changing Cultures

- Student Centred Assignments
- Dissertation Classes Years 1 & 2
- IOL Conference and Employer Visits
- Poster Presentations – Viva Voce
- Student Mentors
- Research Conference
Critical Friends
Professor Colin Beard.
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Professor Peter Stokes.
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Research Methods.