**

**Review of Contemporary Practice:**

**Employability and Assessment**

**Patsy KempContents Page**

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**Introduction:**

The purpose of this project was to produce a critical review of contemporary practice in the fields of hospitality leisure sport and tourism with regard to employability, and to investigate the rationale and methodologies used for its assessment. The project ran for three months between September and November 2011.

Higher education has changed over the past twenty years, with an increase in student numbers, the widening participation agenda and the rapid growth and adoption of new technology. So it is no surprise that many aspects of teaching and learning practice have come under scrutiny, and that many changes have been discussed, implemented and experienced in this area. Part of this change has been a growth in awareness of employability, and the role of higher education in creating graduates who are ready for work and able to progress successfully beyond education. Another dimension has been the exploration of differing forms of assessment, as the number and type of student has changed. As will be seen below, several universities received funding as Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) in the areas of employability and assessment, usually separately, but the literature and this small study of practice indicate that the two have a growing relationship to each other. Gillett and Hammond (2009) point out that the growth of interest in employability has to some extent coincided with the desire and need to explore innovative forms of assessment method over this period.

But what about the assessment of employability skills?

Knight and Yorke (2004) state that many of the achievements that employers value resist assessment. The whole area is ‘fraught with difficulty’ and ‘highly problematic.’ They argue strongly that the more complex learning goals involved in developing employability cannot be captured by the high-stakes (summative) assessment routines, such as examinations, that are in common use. They emphasise the need for ‘knowing students,’ that is those who are assessment literate and well-informed. These students should be aware of what formative assessment is doing and why they should expect to do more peer and self-assessment. Assessment is not just about grades, and teachers cannot be the judge of all achievement. Low stakes formative assessment, useful in developing and evaluating employability skills and attributes, is not to be taken lightly. They also advocate the use of PDP, encouraging students ‘to reflect on their learning, needs and developmental plans as a whole’.

This review will investigate to some extent how these sorts of issues have developed over the years since 2006 in the HLST community. In the context of developing employability, what kinds of assessment are used? Are the old summative methods completely unsuitable in this area, or can they form part of a more complex assessment system which does contribute to life at work? Are today’s students assessment-aware? Are they employability-aware? Do they feel that assessment methods can and do contribute to their employability skills and attributes? What themes emerge when we look at employability and assessment together?

The first section of this report contains a review of articles from journals, chapters from books, and other resources found in a search for work on graduate attributes/employability-related assessment in HLST and events management teaching.

The second section of the report contains some analysis of the questionnaires sent out in October 2011. In total, ten members of staff from different universities responded to the request for a response to the questionnaire (see Appendix 1). 40 students from two universities responded to a different set of questions (see Appendix 2). 3 of the students were postgraduates from one university and 37 were undergraduates from another.

**Methods:**

Searches for recent literature (2006 to 2011) were made using internet searches (Google, the Higher Education Academy and the HLST websites) and database searches (SCOPUS and ERIC). Search criteria included various combinations of the following:

* Employability
* Graduate attributes
* Assessment
* Hospitality
* Leisure
* Sport
* Tourism
* Events Management

Given the short duration of the project, judgement had to be made on the range of articles to include. Selection has been made from relevant journals, publications and websites, largely but not exclusively from the UK, according to relevance to subject areas and the two main themes, assessment and employability. The work is presented according to its origin. Key words and concepts have been drawn from each journal article, and themes emerging have been assembled.

**SECTION ONE**

**Literature Review**

**Material from journals**

***JoHLSTE***

**Allin, L. (2010) Linking research, teaching and learning within the**

**discipline: Evaluating student learning through “real**

**life” research in sports development, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education, 9(1), 92 – 100***

**DOI:10.3794/johlste.91.261**

Linking research and teaching by embedding real life evaluation research into the sports development curriculum was seen to be a valuable learning experience. Student views indicated that they were developing a more complex understanding, developing research skills, developing contacts and employability. This paper shows a strong link between assessment methodology and employability development.

Assessment/employability key words: “real life” research skills; assessment for employability

**Aggett, M. and Busby, G. (2011) Opting out of internship:Perceptions of hospitality, tourism and events management undergraduates at a British University, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education, 10(1), 106 – 113***

**DOI:10.3794/johlste.101.310**

This paper tracks the decline in popularity of the work placement, despite the employability advantages undertaking this entails. It explores the barriers to pursuing placements. Although no direct link to assessment methods, it is a significant paper.

Assessment/employability key words: decline in internship in HT and Events in UK

**Barron, P. (2007) Hospitality and Tourism Students’ Part-time Employment: Patterns, Benefits and Recognition, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education 6(2), 40 – 54***

**DOI:10.3794/johlste.62.150**

Explores the student desire for more recognition of part-time employment commitments through provision of flexible teaching methods, part-time contracts and formal credit for their experience. This has implications for assessment and for employability development.

Assessment/employability key words: recognition for part-time employment

**Brookes, M. (2010) An evaluation of the impact of formative feedback podcasts on the student learning experience, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education, 9(1), 53 – 64***

**DOI:10.3794/johlste.91.238**

Research into students’ use and perception of podcasts with perceived benefits and performance on module. Most students felt that podcast feedback after lectures had a positive impact on academic performance and helped to develop transferable skills. Not a strong link with employability.

Assessment/employability key words: formative feedback; technology

**Martin, A., Fleming, J., Ferkins, L., Wiersma, C. and Coll, R. (2010) Facilitating and integrating learning within sport studies cooperative education: Exploring the pedagogies employed by students, academics and workplace supervisors, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education, 9(1), 24 – 38***

**DOI:10.3794/johlste.91.239**

This article covers the integration of on-campus with off-campus learning, and the lack of research in this area. It raises interesting points when considering assessment and employability; do we assess the acquisition of knowledge and experience gained on work experience in the classroom? How well do we integrate the two elements? The need for reflection, critical evaluation and writing skills emerges, and the gap in student awareness of the link between what they might have been doing to develop these skills in their studies, and the workplace experience when they realise they need them.

Assessment/employability key words: workplace learning; integration

**Martin, E. and McCabe, S. (2007) Part-time Work and Postgraduate Students: Developing the Skills for Employment? *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education 6(2), 29 – 40***

**DOI:10.3794/johlste.62.133**

This article is thought- provoking. The research results prompt important questions:

Do we have appropriate postgraduate curricula, in which adaptability, flexibility, self-confidence, team-building and communication skills are stressed and given enough coverage? Is it possible that students don’t recognise the skills that they develop as being relevant or useful for their future careers and development?

Assessment/employability key words: postgraduate skills development

**Martin L., West, J. and Bill, K., (2008) Incorporating Problem-Based Learning Strategies to Develop Learner**

**Autonomy and Employability Skills in Sports Science Undergraduates, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education 7(1), 18 – 30***

**DOI:10.3794/johlste.71.169**

Problem-based learning (PBL) develops knowledge through presenting real life scenarios and problems to study, before students have been given any theory. It develops co-operative group behaviour, responsibility for individual learning and other employability skills. This article studied the effects of PBL over a 12 week period on learner autonomy, and student perceptions of opportunities to develop employability skills through this approach. It concludes with the suggestion that practitioners might like to consider whether the use of traditional pedagogic styles, focusing on outcome rather than process, might reduce student autonomy.

Assessment/employability key words: problem-based learning; innovation in pedagogy

**Robinson, R., Barron, P. and Solnet, D., (2008) Innovative Approaches to Event Management Education in Career Development: A Study of Student Experiences *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education 7(1), 4 – 17***

**DOI:10.3794/johlste.71.170**

There are no direct links to assessment here but some useful insights into how higher education might better prepare its students for some of the complexities of a career in events management. Student comments arising out of their placement experiences are telling: ‘the piece of paper is not that important, experience matters!’ and ‘the events industry does not yet understand the value of core skills sets (delivered at university) in management. Part of what has to be done is the bridging of the gap between academe and industry.

Assessment/employability key words: core skills; employer engagement

**Scarles, C. (2011) Introducing applied dissertations: Opportunities for industry connection in postgraduate study, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education, 10(1), 37 – 48***

**DOI:10.3794/johlste.101.269**

This paper explores the process of developing a model for applied dissertations in taught postgraduate tourism programmes. Its findings suggest that applied dissertations afford students the opportunity to develop reflectivity and engage in learning through and for work. The process creates a dynamic three-way partnership between student, workplace supervisor and academic which does not suppress the student voice, but allows the demonstration of creativity and innovation.

Assessment/employability key words: applied dissertation; reflection; creativity; employer engagement

***Managing Leisure***

Minten,S. (2010) Use them or lose them: a study of the employability of sport graduates through their transition into the sport workplace. Managing Leisure, Vol. 15, 67-82

This paper explores the complexity of graduate employability and suggests that models focusing solely on creating sports graduates with appropriate attributes to meet employer needs might not be the whole picture. Do employers understand how to use graduates effectively? Implicit in the paper is the need to engage employers in the process of transition between HE and the workplace; this could involve ways of assessing skills. Contains an Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry.

Assessment/employability key words: employer engagement, sport

***Active Learning in HE***

**Gillett, A. and Hammond, A. (2009) Mapping the maze of assessment : An investigation into practice, *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 10(2) 120–137**

**DOI: 10.1177/1469787409104786**

Although not from the HLST community, this is an important paper in this context. Contains a grid offered as “a tool to anyone interested in knowing whether their assessment practices are fit for purpose”. The paper makes a link between the assessment process and employability. Tracks the changes in thinking about assessment at the same time that interest in graduate employability was growing; also, given the variety of assessment methods identified, asks the question “are study skills guides relying on too narrow a base of assessment types?”

Assessment/employability key words: constructive alignment; learner involvement; assessment methods; reflection

**Muldoon, R. (2009) Recognizing the enhancement of graduate attributes and employability through part-time work while at university, *Active Learning in Higher Education,* 10(3) 237–252**

**DOI: 10.1177/1469787409343189**

Graduate attribute development mostly takes place within the formal curriculum. This article presents a case study of the outcomes of an institutional award for student development through extra-curricular activity. There are three categories of extra-curricular activity which qualify for the award: non-accredited learning and training; professional development; and community/voluntary work. The professional development category includes part-time work. This article looks at the range of paid and voluntary work undertaken by students, what they gain from it in terms of graduate attributes and the impact of institutional recognition of it.

Assessment/employability key words: extra-curricular activity,

graduate attributes, institutional award, part-time work

**Leedham, M. (2009) From traditional essay to 'Ready Steady Cook' presentation: Reasons for innovative changes in assignments *Active Learning in Higher Education,* 10(3) 191–206**

**DOI: 10.1177/1469787409343187**

This article describes the reasoning behind changes in assignment types at undergraduate and master’s level at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It discusses external, lecturer-driven and student-driven reasons for innovation in assessment, one of which is to develop the need for transferable skills, Illustrates the link between changes in assessment methods and the employability agenda. Gives useful recommendations for developing new assignments and supporting students with them.

Assessment/employability key words: transferable skills, ‘real world’ applicability, assignment, coursework, essay,

innovative

Zepke, N. and Leach L., (2010) **Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action***Active Learning in Higher Education* 11(3):167–177

**DOI: 10.1177/1469787410379680**

Since the 1980s an extensive research literature has investigated how to improve student success in higher education focusing on student outcomes such as retention, completion and employability. A parallel research programme has focused on how students engage with their studies and what they, institutions and educators can do to enhance their engagement, and hence success. This article reports on two syntheses of research literature on student engagement and how this can be enhanced. It examines student motivation; transactions between teachers and students; institutional support; and engagement for active citizenship.

Assessment/employability key words: student engagement, ‘tough’ assessment, self-belief, active citizenship

**Haigh, J. (2008) Integrating progress files into the academic process: A review of case studies *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 9(1): 57–71**

**DOI: 10.1177/1469787407086747**

This article contains three case studies which are examples of academics learning through experience about the process of personal development planning and how this integrates with current educational provision. The author states that at the time of writing, the progress file was a contested object, which had not yet fulfilled its potential to place the student and their individual learning needs at the centre of the educational process.

Assessment/employability key words: key skills; personal development planning; progress files

**Education + Training**

**Dacre Pool, L. and Sewell, P. (2007) The key to employability: developing a practical model of graduate employability *Education + Training* 49 (4) 277-289**

**DOI: 10.1108/00400910710754435**

This paper introduces the CareerEDGE Model which has since become well-known and used by some universities, bringing together the experience and research of the two authors into employability issues. The key elements in the model are: Career development and learning, Experience (work and life), Degree subject, knowledge, understanding and skills, Generic skills, Emotional Intelligence, using reflection and evaluation to develop these and self-efficacy, self-confidence, self-esteem. Brings together skills and graduate attributes in an approachable model, useful to introduce the concept of employability to students.

Assessment/employability key words: CareerEDGE, skills, graduate attributes

**Ehiyazaryan, E. and Barraclough, N. (2009) Enhancing employability: integrating real world experience into the curriculum *Education + Training* 51 (4) 292-308**

**DOI: 10.1108/00400910910964575**

This paper reports on pedagogical research into the student experience of an integrated approach to enterprise development. It contributes to the wider research on learner engagement in employability and the implications for curriculum design; in the context of assessment and its relation to employability, the authors emphasise the benefits of interdependency in learning, and recommend that employer involvement in assessment and feedback processes within work related learning programmes be given further and fuller consideration.

Assessment/employability key words: enterprise development; employer engagement

**Teaching in Higher Education**

**Sleap, M. and Reed, H. (2006) Views of sport science graduates regarding work skills developed at university, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11 (1), 47 - 61**

A survey of 57 physical education and sport science graduates found that university experience had developed many work skills. Conclusions drawn that skills acquired depend on the ethos of the institution, content of the programme and quality of teaching and learning experiences. Students arrive at university at varying stages of maturity, react differently to particular experiences and need diverse qualities in future jobs.

Assessment/employability key words: self development vs skills development

**British Educational Research Journal**

**Hinchcliffe, G.W. and Jolly, A.,(2011) Graduate identity and employability, British Educational Research Journal, Vol 37 (4), 563-584**

**DOI: 10.1080/01411926.2010.482200**

Significant article which draws attention to a possible student and employer preference for an identity and capability model of employability rather than a skills model. Graduate identity is about potential, and higher education develops a complex capability set that is about values, social engagement, intellect and performance. Suggests that HE might enhance student employability indirectly through the promotion of graduate identity and well-being.

Assessment/employability key words: capability model

**Material from subject specific books**

**Maher, A and Graves, S (2008) *Graduate Employability: Can Higher Education Deliver?* Newbury, Berks: Threshold Press, pp63-65**

This book, emerged from a Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL)5 project, Enhancing Graduate Employability which aimed to pilot employability initiatives in 10 institutions delivering courses in HLST. It provides a very thorough, readable background to the concepts and research carried out around employability prior to 2008, and contains key data on the HLST graduate labour market.

The authors point out the critical importance of assessment in HE and the difficulties of assessing employability given its complex nature. The evidence and theory cited, lead us towards the use of formative assessment, considerate feedback, levels of self-assessment and peer assessment; all more difficult to deliver than summative assessment.

**Graves, S and Maher A (2008) *Developing Graduate Employability: Case Studies in Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism*, Newbury, Berks: Threshold Press**

This book comes from the same source as the previous book and provides 10 case studies from different universities delivering HLST courses. It provides a useful sharing of experience and the assessment of employability is implicit in many of the chapters, but only chapters 3, 8 and 9 address this explicitly.

**Brennan, D.A and Murphy, M.H *Using PDP to track, audit and evidence employability skills* (chapter 3)**

Demonstrates use and results of the University of Ulster Personal Development System, plus some of the difficulties of measuring employability skills and attributes.

Key words: PDP

**Sheehan, C. and Waghorn, L. *Enhancing employability through work-based assessment* (chapter 8)**

Assessment in this project consisted of a problem-based, real life case study. Gives detailed account and analysis of integrating employability assessment into a specific module, with involvement of employer organisation.

Key words: problem-based assessment, employer engagement

**Snape, R., *Personal development planning in the delivery and assessment of graduate employability skills* (chapter 9)**

Points out that students understand the words ‘professional’ and ‘career development’ skills more easily than the word employability. Also highlights the benefits of employer involvement in course delivery.

Key words: PDP

**Becket, N and Kemp, P. (2006) *Enhancing employability in business and management, hospitality, leisure, sport, tourism*, Newbury, Berks: Threshold Press**

The first in the Enhancing series, this book focused exclusively on employability. The chapters move from the wide view, strategic approach to employability taken (at this time, 2006) by some institutions, to the more detailed level of programme and module. Assessment is discussed in varying depths in all the chapters, and the themes outlined above are starting to emerge throughout the book.

Key words: employability

**Kemp, P., Atfield, R. and Tong, R. (2010) *Enhancing learning through assessment in business and management, hospitality, leisure, sport, tourism*, Newbury, Berks: Threshold Press**

Mantz Yorke contributed the introduction to this book and entitled it ‘*Assessing emergent professional expertise’*. He starts with the comment that one of the key aims of HLST programmes, is to allow graduates to develop their expertise as professionals in the world of work. He focuses on the cultivation of professional expertise rather than the development of skills. He goes on to examine the purposes of assessment, academic standards, to make some observations on assessment methodology, assessors’ capabilities (including those of employers), the relationship between theory and practice, the social dimension to assessment, workplace achievement grading and concludes with a comment on the difficulties and challenges of implementing assessment innovation. His comments provide much food for thought.

Nearly all the chapters in the book have relevance to assessment for employability. I quote from the Editors’ Foreward:

‘The first and final case studies come from two CETLs: Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange (ASKe) in Oxford Brookes University and Assessment for Learning (AfL) in Northumbria University. They both highlight the positive impact on learning that engaging students in the process of assessment brings. Allin and Fishwick (Northumbria) showcase an undergraduate Sport Development degree which has adopted a programme-led approach to assessment. O’Donovan (Oxford Brookes Business School) talks of creating an ‘assessment literate’ learning community which contains students who share an understanding of assessment with staff, and who are actively engaged with assessment standards.

The themes of employability and the workplace also run through the book. Work-based learning is directly discussed by two of the case studies , with Beattie at Liverpool John Moores using e-portfolios to develop competences in sports students and Hummel in Heidelberg looking at the nature of assessment strategies and standards for ‘live’ or real world consulting projects in hospitality.

The world of work and its needs thread through several other chapters. Reedy and Mordaunt at the Open University find that new technologies can help in the assessment of some of the difficult skills needed in the workplace, such as collaborative learning. Gordon, then at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, discusses the practical introduction of e-portfolios, and the skills of planning and reflection which students must develop to achieve success both with their portfolios and at work. Rushton, Sparshatt and O’Brien at Sheffield Hallam use formative feedback to support students in the acquisition of transferable skills such as research or analysis. Group work, group processes and peer learning feature - from very different angles - in the case studies of Canterbury Christ Church (Garratt) and University of Westminster/London Metropolitan (Pokorny and Griffiths); the former aims to share assessment practices that engage culturally diverse postgraduate students in team working and thus help them appreciate their peers; the latter explores the complexities – and value - of group work assessment practices, with staff paralleling the student experience. Lean and Moizer from the University of Plymouth Business School use oral de-briefing to encourage good reflection on the ‘virtual’ workplace experience of a computer-based business simulation game, as well as considering the challenges of assessing student learning using this approach.

All the case studies contain some element of innovation – be it technological or methodological - for the writers and their institutions, and introduce us to innovations in practice. Anderson’s chapter (Southampton Solent) looks at the development of inclusive assessment methods not fully dependent on the written word; the chapter by Thomas and Tong of the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC) investigates an innovative way of managing student dissertations in a complex modular system; Baker at the University of the West of England reflects on the key issues arising from the introduction of a new programme of assessment allowing students to gain from meaningful formative feedback. Neil, Wilson and Tong’s case study (UWIC) contains both technological and methodological innovation – it deals with electronic submission of assessment in sport-related research, and explains how feedback was targeted and individualised for each student.

The research carried out by Hatzipanagos at King’s Learning Institute, King’s College London, highlights the tension between supporting and measuring learning; those involved in distance learning ,where the research took place, have been some of those at the forefront of developing formative assessment systems as they cannot easily give feedback any other way. This chapter shares the research done on how far formative assessment activities are used to improve learning, and how this is perceived by tutors and students.’

Key words: assessment, employability

**Kemp, P. and Atfield, R. (2011) *Enhancing graduate impact in business and management, hospitality, leisure, sport, tourism* Newbury, Berks: Threshold Press**

This book aimed to allow its authors to share experience of developing graduates with impact; a concept interpreted by many as very close to that of enabling the growth of employability attributes, and some of the authors discuss assessment. Although they do not always specifically link it to employability and graduate impact, the themes mentioned in the introduction to this literature review make a frequent appearance, viz graduate capabilities

The following is an adaptation from the introduction by Norman Jackson, highlighting the chapter contents:

‘The challenge for teachers is to discover the combination of knowledge, skills, capabilities, qualities, dispositions and other attributes necessary to have effect in the world, and to create the conditions that enable individual students to develop these attributes and integrate them into their professional identity. One way or another all the contributions to this volume are addressing this challenge. An Australian response is reflected in the chapter by Wood (Macquarie University), Daly (University of Canberra) and a large project team from other Australian universities. They use a workshop model to address the development of graduate capabilities, devising teaching and learning resources to cultivate and grade these skills. Morris (Higher Education Academy) explores the link between developing skills for good academic practice and the value of these skills in environments beyond higher education. Later in the book, Robinson and Llewellyn at the University of Leeds argue that the study of ethics, in this case with students of sport and exercise science, contributes to graduate impact by developing a more mature and sophisticated way of thinking than might otherwise be the case.

Goodwin from the University of Leicester shares research carried out in the field of tourism management at the University of Gondar, and discusses the implications of its results and of employer engagement for both Ethiopia and the UK. Pointon at De Monfort University writes persuasively about the need for improvement of the experience of international students who come to study in the UK, before, during and after their time of study. Haddock-Millar, a professional doctoral student, invited co-students from the Middlesex University Mentoring Network to give their perspective on how this initiative is creating opportunities for them to develop their personal and professional impact in the workplace.

In the tourism marketing field, Jones and Headley at Leeds Metropolitan University use a structured assessment to marry their need for the measurement of academic achievement to the outside world’s need for graduates with confidence and understanding of real life business situations. At the London College of Fashion, Gee and Pickard write about the careful construction of curriculum content to create strong relationships within the fashion industry and opportunities for students to interact with this industry at all stages of their degree. The *Small Changes* programme, described by Nield and Simper at Sheffield Hallam University, sends food and nutrition students into the local community, providing benefits to all concerned as well as learning opportunities and employability skills.

Barton and Westwood (University of Strathclyde) take us to the competitive area of the law and preparation of those who wish to become practising solicitors; they explore the work they have done using a virtual learning environment to create the experience of working in a team in a real firm. This allows students to make mistakes and learn lessons, which will give them more confidence and self-knowledge when they start work in the world beyond university.

These three chapters and others, especially perhaps those dealing with volunteering (Anderson and Cameron) give examples of the ‘learning from experience by reflecting upon it’ mentioned earlier. Many of the curriculum and assessment practices described in this book enable students to gain experience of working situations, and give time and opportunity to reflect on them. Ogilvie and Shaw at Manchester Metropolitan University describe how they have taken advantage of the fact that many undergraduates need to work part-time to support themselves, by creating a work-based learning module that incorporates academic learning with that of the very real working situations students find themselves in.

The multiple benefits given by volunteering in sport and exercise science are explored by two of the chapters here. As with Nield and Simper in Sheffield, Anderson (University of Wales Institute, Cardiff) and Cameron (University of Abertay, Dundee) show the value that these initiatives can give to a local community as well as giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their effectiveness in a work situation related to their field of study.

Rushton, Lahlafi and Stretton at Sheffield Hallam University take the development of information literacy skills as part of this preparedness for success in the outside world; the results of their work have the added benefit of contributing to the first measure of impact mentioned here, that of a positive impact on academic performance. Nixon and Dray from Liverpool John Moores University describe the World of Work (WoW) programme, which works at both university strategy and programme level, in partnership with employers. This programme goes beyond the boundaries of subject and discipline; it is meeting the challenge of developing graduates who are self-reflective, articulate and highly employable. Drady (University of Sunderland) and Harvey (Newcastle University) describe how they have helped work-experienced management undergraduates tap into their creativity (and the challenges of assessing this). They discuss how this builds confidence, flexibility, and readiness to adapt to different situations.

Key words: graduate impact, employability

**Higher Education Academy HLST Network Resources**

LINK magazine was a bi-annual hard copy publication circulated to all UK universities delivering HLST and Events Management; back editions can be found online (accessed 5/12/11)

***LINK 24, Assessment and Feedback,* Hospitality, Leisure Sport and Tourism Network, November 2009**

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/LINK_Newsletter/link24_assessment_and_feedback.pdf>

**Bell, S., (2009) Leeds Metropolitan University**

**The use of video enhanced feedback in events management education**

Events Management is a highly vocational subject; this article talks of using technology in assessment teaching and learning with a ‘digital native’ student population. It demonstrates how careful formative assessment and feedback can contribute to employability.

Assessment/employability key words: technology; formative; feedback

**Harris, I., (2009) Southampton Solent University**

**Group Assessment: a map of one route through the minefield! (HLST)**

Employers highlight teamwork as a key skill required in graduate employees. Ian Harris provides a useful investigation into the approach taken to group assessment including contribution weighting, enhancing students’ competence in teamwork.

Assessment/employability key words: teamwork, group assessment

**Rumbelow, J., (2009) Bibby Rumbelow Ltd**

**Knowing what you are doing: the challenges and opportunities of work-based assessment in higher education (generic)**

Explores the challenges and opportunities that work-based learning brings to higher education, especially the relationship between knowledge and performance. A perceptive article, discussing the broadening of assessment methods and the need to develop writing skills as well as the skills of the job.

Assessment/employability key words: writing skills; work-based learning

**Tucker, L. and Robson, S., (2009) Leeds Metropolitan University Workin’ progress (sports development)**

Gives insights into the thinking behind the employability focus of BA (Hons) Sports Development course, formerly assessed by dissertation but now with the options of work-based inquiry or team project, to cater for different learning styles.

Assessment/employability key words: work-based inquiry; team project

***LINK 27, Graduates with Impact,* Hospitality, Leisure Sport and Tourism Network, May 2011**

[***http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/LINK\_Newsletter/LinkNewsletter27.pdf***](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/LINK_Newsletter/LinkNewsletter27.pdf)

**Crabtree, R., Northumbria University, and Emery P., (2011) La Trobe University, Australia**

**Producing graduates who are ‘fit for purpose’: a case study of sport management**

This article outlines the reasons behind the need for future investigation by higher education into the sport management industry, and the proposed study to do this. The study will attempt to build a theoretical framework for the future pedagogy and curriculum development of sport management university education, with a careful eye on the industry and its needs. Assessment should be included in this study.

Assessment/employability key words: employer engagement

**Hindley, D. (2011) Nottingham Trent University**

**Sport and Social Inclusion: engaging students in evaluating the social impact of sport (sport and leisure)**

Graduates working in the field of community sports development are expected to have analytical and research skills. The module assessment discussed here requires students to evaluate and existing or proposed sports initiative, entering into a dialogue with the organisation implementing the project. The assessment methodology carefully supports the developing employability of the student.

Assessment/employability key words: employer engagement; assessment for employability

**Sewell, P. and Dacre Pool, L., (2011) University of Central Lancashire**

**CareerEDGE: A practical model of graduate employability (generic)**

This article is written by two people significant in the field of employability and active. The CareerEDGE model is becoming well known; it, and associated work are being used in the practical application of employability development. The article does not directly address assessment methods which might enhance this development, but is a useful component when thinking about this subject and in planning programmes. A following article in this edition of LINK by Lorraine Dacre Pool discusses the development of emotional intelligence, seen by both authors as an important element in employability.

Assessment/employability key words: emotional intelligence, CareerEDGE

**Simper, T. and Nield, K. (2011) Sheffield Hallam University**

**Delivering Appropriate Employment-Related Skills for Graduates of Nutrition**

The authors say that oral viva and case studies may not be highly innovative as assessment methods, but that they are used here to ensure both relevance and reality for employment. Employment in nutrition typically involves advising people about lifestyle and eating habits; the assessment method takes future employment needs into consideration.

Assessment/employability key words: viva; case studies; customer service

**Simpson, J. and Pioli, D. (2011) University College Birmingham**

**E-cases as a vehicle for enhancing employability (HLST and hybrid)**

In the capstone module of Strategic Management, e-case studies allow the gradual assimilation and analysis of data, enabling the student to monitor an organisation through a semester and produce formal strategic assessment of the future of the firm. Elements of this process have been introduced into the module examination, in which students consider the implementation of their selected strategy. The flexibility of ‘real life’ case studies enhances both skills and employability

Assessment/employability key words: e-case studies; authentic material

**Tomkins, A. (2011) University of Gloucestershire,**

**Dare to be different, the story so far! Developing a personal brand in preparation for graduate recruitment (HLST and events)**

The reasoning behind this initiative is that, in the current climate of economic uncertainty, graduates need to demonstrate more than academic competency to stand out in the recruitment market. A powerful taught module, “Career Perspectives”, assessed by the production of a CV and a video or vignette, is used in the final year, to increase student confidence in articulating their employability.

Assessment/employability key words: personal brand; assessment for employability; CV production

***LINK 28, Pedagogic Research 2006 - 2011,* Hospitality, Leisure Sport and Tourism Network, December 2011**

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/linknewsletter>

**Cullen, S., Dowling, S. and Webb, T (2011) University of West London**

**Dissertation supervision: enhancing the experience of tourism and hospitality students**

This project aimed to explore both student and staff needs and expectations of the supervisory process in the dissertation, and evaluate how supervisory practice can be developed. Employability is not directly addressed, but the development of autonomous behaviour and confidence, employability attributes, were noted through the process.

This team have gone on to implement successfully an e-dissertation project.

Assessment/employability key words: dissertation; autonomous behaviour; confidence

**HLST Resource Guides**

**Resource Guide to Dissertation Supervision on taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, Dr Sarah Cullen, University of the West of England**

Primarily concerned with dissertation as assessment.

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/resource_guides/dissertation_supervision.pdf>

(accessed 30/11/11)

**Resource Guide in Entrepreneurship, Tim Savage, University of Wales in Cardiff**

Contains self-assessment guidance in the area of enterprise

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/resource_guides/entrepreneurship.pdf>

(accessed 30/11/11)

**Resource Guide: the development of key skills in education (2002) Peter Burke, University of Nottingham.**

Contains some still valid links and shows background to current work in employability

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/resource_guides/development_of_keyskills_in_higher_education.pdf>

(accessed 30/11/11)

**HLST A-Z**

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/a-zdirectory/assessment>

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/a-zdirectory/employability>

**HLST Pedagogic Research and Development project final reports 2006 - 2011**

Beard, C (2011) Creating Conversations that Engage Students with PDP

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/projects/round_11/r11_beard_final.pdf> (accessed 5/12/11)

This project produced an experiential approach to PPD reflection and action planning, in the form of a set of cards/statements and briefing sheets, that can be widely distributed in HE. It was a collaborative project and used parts of the copyrighted **World of Work** (WoW®) criteria, identified and developed with leading national employers within the UK in conjunction with Liverpool John Moores University.

Rogers, D (2011) Minding the gap: developing commercial awareness

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/projects/round_11/r11_rogers_final.pdf> (accessed 5/12/11)

The aim of this project was to develop, evaluate and refine a blend of effective learning, teaching and assessment practices to enhance the commercial awareness of postgraduate students on HLST courses.

Byers, T (2008) Enhancing employability in postgraduate students

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/projects/round_8/r8_byer_report.pdf> (accessed 5/12/11)

Ashford, K (2007) Enhancing the employability of our students

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/projects/round_7/r7_ashford_report.pdf> (accessed 5/12/11)

The project aimed to investigate the employability skills of students and how they could be enhanced via curriculum interventions. Specifically, the project focused on the development of employability skills in sport related courses, and it was anticipated that findings would be relevant across the hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism subject areas and in other subject disciplines.

**Higher Education Academy Material**

**Websites**

[**http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/employability**](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/employability) **(accessed 5/12/11)**

[**http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assessment**](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assessment) **(accessed 24/11/11)**

[**http://search.heacademy.ac.uk/kb5/hea/evidencenet/resources.**](http://search.heacademy.ac.uk/kb5/hea/evidencenet/resources.)**(accessed 5/12/11)**

**There are many resources accessible through EvidenceNet on the HEA website.**

**These are some of the highly regarded publications arising from the Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team (2002-2005)**

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/employability/employability_resources> (accessed 24/11/11)

**Learning and Employability series (2004 - present),**

**Series 1**

*Employability and higher education: what it is – what it is not* – Mantz Yorke

*Employability: judging and communicating achievements* – Peter Knight and Mantz

Yorke

*Embedding employability into the curriculum* – Mantz Yorke and Peter Knight

*Entrepreneurship and higher education: an employability perspective* – Neil Moreland

*Employability and work-based learning* – Brenda Little and ESECT colleagues

*Pedagogy for employability* – The Pedagogy for Employability Group

**Series 2**

*Work-related learning in higher education* – Neil Moreland

*Employability for research postgraduates* – Janet Metcalfe and Alexandra Gray

*Employability and part-time students* – Brenda Little

*Ethics and employability* – Simon Robinson

*Career development learning and employability* – A. G. Watts

*Personal development planning and employability*

*Embedding employability in the context of widening participation* – Liz Thomas and

Robert Jones

**Further HEA material**

[**http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/employability/EEL\_CETLs\_Review**](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/employability/EEL_CETLs_Review) **(accessed 24/11/11)**

Review of good practice in employability and enterprise development by CETLs, Val Butcher, Judith Smith, Jane Kettle, Laila Burton, HEA, January 2011

Mentions teaching and assessment practices as “good practice in supporting learners to enhance their skills in employability and enterprise; provides useful information on work of CETLs (see Employability CETLs section below)

**Other material and websites**

**Employability CETLs (all sites accessed 28/11/11)**

1. CETH

University of Central Lancashire

<http://www.uclan.ac.uk/information/uclan/employability/resources.php>

1. CLSP, Birmingham City University (website not available)
2. E31 CETL in Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability, Sheffield Hallam

<http://employability.shu.ac.uk/>

1. CEPPL University of Plymouth (Professional Placement Learning)

<http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=34273>

1. Bridges, University of Bedfordshire

<http://www.beds.ac.uk/bridgescetl>

1. Institute for Enterprise, Leeds Metropolitan

<http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/enterprise/resources/resources_index.htm>

1. SCEPTrE, University of Surrey (website not available)
2. CCMS, University of Reading

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/ccms/>

1. CEWBL, Middlesex University (website not available)

Assessment CETLs

1. Assessment and Learning in Practice Settings <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/academic/sches/lt/afl/>
2. ALPS CETL partnership, University of Leeds <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/forstaff/news/article/2445/alps-cetl_update%20ForceRecrawl:%200>
3. Write Now was a partnership between London Metropolitan University, Liverpool Hope University and Aston University

<http://www.writenow.ac.uk/core-work/curriculum-assessment-design/>

<http://www.writenow.ac.uk/outcomes/resources/cetl-guide-assessment/>

1. Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange (ASKe), Oxford Brookes University

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/index.html>

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/BrookesAssessmentCompact09.pdf>

**Websites with publications of interest**

**CIHE**

[**http://www.cihe.co.uk/category/themes/key/skills/**](http://www.cihe.co.uk/category/themes/key/skills/)

(accessed 24/11/11)

**Department for Business, Innovation and Skills**

**Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills (2007) World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England, Crown Copyright, Norwich** [**http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/migratedD/ec\_group/37-07-Sk\_b**](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/migratedD/ec_group/37-07-Sk_b)

**(accessed 24/11/11)**

**Wedgewood, M (2008) Higher Education for the Workforce: Barriers and Facilitators to Employer Engagement, DIUS Research Report 08 04**

[**http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/migratedD/publications/D/DIUS\_RR\_08\_04**](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/migratedD/publications/D/DIUS_RR_08_04)

**(accessed 24/11/11)**

**QAA**

All publications page

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/default.aspx> accessed 24/11/11

New Scottish Employability Forum

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/ScottishEmployabilityForum.pdf>

(accessed 24/11/11)

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2008) Hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism benchmark statements <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/HLST08.pdf>

(accessed 24/11/11)

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2011) Assessment practices: A note on three events organised by QAA between October and December 2010

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Assessment_events.pdf>

(accessed 24/11/11)

United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills

UKCES (2009) *The Employability Challenge.* Available from <http://www.ukces.org.uk/publications/employability-challenge-full-report>

Associated case studies

<http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/bispartners/ukces/docs/publications/employability-challenge-case-studies.pdf>

(accessed 27/11/11)

**SECTION TWO**

**Results and Discussion - questionnaires**

**Results of Employability and Assessment Questionnaire for Staff**

**Most questionnaires have been written up as anonymised case studies, based on response to the questions on the questionnaire and in some cases, on a follow-up telephone call. It has been impossible to conceal the identity of one institution, but this respondent agreed to this level of identification.**

**Case 1**

This practitioner works with all levels, undergraduate and postgraduate. She integrates the necessary skills and competences that are needed by graduates into the modules taught and the way students are assessed. She co-ordinates overseas placement activity for sport students, and is currently undertaking a professional doctorate looking into employability skills and competences of sport management students.

She is undertaking an international audit of sport management positions to see what the industry wants of graduates.

No use is made of the USEM (Knight and Yorke, 2002, 2004) or SOAR (Kumar, 2007) models, minimal use of CareerEDGE **(**Dacre Pool and Sewell,2007).

This practitioner feels that the assessment methods used do help to develop key skills and competences, and with explanation, that they are explicit in doing so: methods used are examination, report, essay and case study. This is an applied programme including event management, and the final presentation includes: business plan reports, portfolios, marketing plans and budgets, all of which do enhance employability skills. This practitioner feels that it is important to be realistic with students, and have realistic expectations, while enabling them to make links between their studies and employability. For example, students are not always aware that the research skills they are gaining have any relevance to employability and the world of work.

PDP is used in this institution, but there are many versions of it, it is not assessed and sometimes its relevance is not recognised.

Despite the fact that employability is embedded into some modules, dealt with all the way through the undergraduate experience, this practitioner feels that students have very limited understanding and knowledge about their own employability until the final year. Students come to university for the assessment and their final grade and they want it to be applicable to their vision.

**Case 2**

In a former job position at the same university, this practitioner was involved in teaching employability-related modules on sports undergraduate programmes, across levels 4 and 5 (Years 2 and 3). In a recent new appointment, he will be working with colleagues from all departments across the institution, and at all undergraduate levels, to see how teaching and learning practices may be enhanced to address the employability agenda more effectively. His report was written before this job started in November 2011.

This university embeds support from the Careers & Employability team in the curriculum in first year sports management programmes. They proactively encourage students to gain work experience in extra-curricular time. This practitioner is a member of the institution Employability Steering group, has produced a new employability tool to be used for all new course design using the UCLAN model and, in the new post, will be developing an employability strategy encompassing a wide range of areas over the next year. Although currently the university does not have a particular approach, through his appointment in the new post he hopes to help them adopt one and find a framework or structure to guide the work going on in a range of areas. In his own teaching, he uses all three models (USEM (Knight and Yorke, 2002, 2004), SOAR(Kumar, 2007), and CareerEDGE **(**Dacre Pool and Sewell,2007).

This practitioner believes that employability is an ongoing process throughout life, and that it is therefore difficult if not impossible to use summative assessment, which only provides a static snap-shot, to this end. It may be possible to assess some components of employability (which is done at this university) but others are more challenging and hard to quantify. Formative methods of assessment provide some hope for the assessment of aspects of employability; he feels that in his institution, at the moment, assessment of employability is both implicit and explicit.

PDP is used on some courses but not all. In the sports management area PDP is assessed by requiring all students to present personal plans and to articulate their progress at several points throughout the year. These tasks are often established as a pass/fail scenario, in which students have to meet set criteria in order to pass, and a certain level of personal judgement is needed by the tutors. While not necessarily objective, this reflects real working practice in which employers will respond to and judge employees differently.

He feels that his students do not know and understand enough about their own employability at the moment. To quote:

“There are mixed messages and levels of understanding of what employability really is amongst staff, so what can we expect from students? Views vary from it being seen as ‘a set of skills’ to ‘about getting a job’ to ‘producing a CV and cover letter’. As staff we need to be consistent with our messages across the entire sector if we ever want students to truly understand about their own employability. They can only know and understand from what they are told or taught; if this is inconsistent then so will their knowledge and understanding be. We are trying to change this here.”

Case 2 believes that student knowledge and understanding can be enhanced by starting with the academic staff and working closely with careers teams and the Student Union. A mutually agreed level of understanding which is consistent in approach but interpreted at a course level should be developed. From there, staff need to be creative in the pedagogies employed and ensure that they are explicit in identifying important areas for students, from the outset, to consider in relation to their own employability. At the same time this should also be implicit, in that staff should then embed certain teaching practices that will help students develop in certain areas.

**Case 3**

This practitioner runs the Food & Beverage (F&B) unit that holds the practical element of the programme; in this way he is involved in supporting employability through teaching. He is working with F&B Management Year 2, Placement Year 3 and CPD Year 4 at the moment. The unit develops technical, interpersonal and other employability skills. They are not involved in careers advice, but they are involved in student placements which are part of the programme in year 3, and in a CPD non-credit unit in the final year to review placement learning and to focus on employment.

This institution is aware of and uses the SOAR (Kumar, 2007) model. It supports the employability of students through pre-placement preparation, the placement, final year sessions on CPD and has a central careers department that supports each course.

Case 3 states that the assessment methods used do “assess for employability” in that the F&B unit assesses technical, interpersonal and communications skills. Many other units assess through presentations, and problem solving, part of the curriculum, is a graduate skill. Assessment of employability is seen as explicit in some units and more implicit in others.

PDP is used in Level I unit (People and Performance); assessment is via a pre-placement portfolio and then a post-placement “diary”. CPD in the final year is NOT assessed.

He feels that his students do know a lot about their own employability, but are still naive about their skills and need to be more confident. This is being worked on through the final year CPD programme, entering competitions and this year they are introducing a final year ‘conference’ for students.

**Case 4**

This practitioner is involved in developing employability through department and university employability initiatives. He works with Level 6 (Year 3) students in this area. He uses Yorke and Knight (39 attributes) as a basis; he has undertaken research and all of these attributes are seen as important, with self-confidence underpinning all the others.

The institution is aware of CareerEDGE **(**Dacre Pool and Sewell,2007) and USEM (Knight and Yorke, 2002, 2004), and the latter is used. Students keep an employability log in which they reflect on the 39 attributes mentioned above. This is marked and therefore he sees the assessment of employability as being explicit. PDP is used at the institution and it is assessed via the employability log and through work experience.

Case 4 sees the staff role as providing ‘realisation’ for the students in the area of employability. Once students realise what the attributes are, then they do know and understand. They need an explanation of what the attributes are about. Knowledge and understanding in this area are developed by getting students to say which attributes they feel confident about and why and where they have demonstrated it. And importantly, by getting them to reflect on attributes that they *cannot* demonstrate, and say how they will plan to improve in this area.

**Case 5**

This practitioner works primarily with Level 5 students (Year 3). She is heavily involved in developing student employability through teaching and assessment as she teaches Human Resource Management and how to analyse labour markets and skills for job roles. She is a visiting tutor for some placement students, and visits volunteers and mentor groups who create events at both level 4 and 5 (Years 2 and 3). She has also created the Citizenship and Employability skills conference which employs a number of students to help run it.

She feels that the assessment methods she uses do assess for employability and cites CV development and interview skills as two skills assessed. The assessment for employability is explicit for placement and non-placement students.

PDP is used at this institution and is assessed via a skills online area via personal tutors at each level and year.

Students here are immersed in industry via volunteering from the first month in level 4 (Year 2), and acquire good knowledge and understanding of their own employability which is enhanced through the completion of case study analysis and ‘live’ experience.

**Case 6**

This practitioner is involved through teaching and assessment by running two units, and team teaching another, and through student work placements in that there is a 40 week placement in the third year. She deals with second and final year students.

She states that, in her university, “The employability agenda is being given more attention than it has received for a long time with the change in fees structure and the inevitable need to look at student recruitment, retention and satisfaction.” She is aware that employability is becoming more of a feature in the university, but is not aware of a particular approach or whether any of the models (USEM (Knight and Yorke, 2002, 2004), SOAR (Kumar, 2007) and CareerEDGE **(**Dacre Pool and Sewell,2007)) are being used.

In answer to the question about whether the assessment methods used ‘assess for employability’, the respondent said, “Some do, in the sense that the assessment itself is often a skill needed to exceed in employment in the students’ chosen area. This is usually undertaken by lecturers who have managed to retain a passion for good pedagogy in the face of increasing pressure to focus on outputs and not teaching. These individuals have a genuine interest in the student experience generally and as such their teaching strategies are fully aligned.” She feels that currently the assessment of employability is implicit, but that now it is on the agenda, so that might change.

PDP is used, and assessed via a portfolio.

Case 6 feels that students do not understand their own employability issues as much as they need to. She thinks that final year students have far better understanding, having worked in industry for a year, however, students who do not know what it is like to have to work seem to find it difficult to grasp the concept or the level of importance and as such do not take things as seriously as they should.

A final comment from this respondent:

“The importance is constantly reinforced in the teaching, the workshops available for students to attend to improve their personal skills are many, there are professional qualifications available for students to study to add to their CVs. The provision is there, the promotion of availability is good, but students’ motivation is often low and they can lack self discipline. Saying this, as the job market worsens, as fees go up attitudes are going to change and I can foresee ‘getting a job when you finish’ is going to be a very important decision-making factor when considering where to go to University and what to study, and students will take some responsibility for their own learning and ultimate success.”

**Case 7**

This practitioner works with Levels 4, 5 and 6 (Years 1, 2 and 3) sport and is involved in developing student employability through teaching and assessment, student work placements and extra –curricular opportunities.

Certain modules through the programme do assess for employability. Students build portfolios of evidence and reflection on work placement in Level 5 and again on a project based module at Level 6. Specific graduate skills are structured across other modules at different levels.

PDP has been used for some while at this institution. Assessment of PDP is explicit at Level 4 (Year 1) as a module, and is used to underpin employability modules at Levels 5 and 6 (Years 2 and 3). It is assessed through reflective presentations, essays, group presentations and portfolios.

Students at this institution vary in their knowledge and understanding of their own employability. The institution runs the WoW® activities which are integrated directly into the programme to enhance employability knowledge.

**Case 8**

This practitioner works primarily with Masters level students and with some level 3 undergraduates (Year 1). She is a member of the Faculty Employability and Work-Based Learning Groups responsible for developing and implementing strategy for programmes and modules. The university careers service has representatives on these groups, and this practitioner also works with Careers to sort out their contribution to induction activities for PG students, and to ensure they are involved at least once in delivery of all PG programmes.

She works with student work placements, having developed WBL modules in new Masters programmes in consultation with both the Placement Unit and the university-wide volunteering service.

She has also developed a 60 credit Masters dissertation which can be undertaken as either a traditional dissertation or as a work-based project. She has built in links with external organisations (e.g. Macmillan Cancer) to the delivery and assessment of Level 3 (Year 1) Events Management module (students pitch ideas to a panel comprising markers and externals for one assessment and for the second they have to evaluate a live event).

She is not familiar with the models and feels that the Careers Service might be more likely to know what the acronyms stand for.

The assessment methods used ‘assess for employability’ in some modules. They test skills that staff think are important for employability, such as independent working, team-working, effective communication, creativity, numeracy, literacy, confidence. Assessment of skills is explicit but staff don’t think it’s helpful to distinguish between academic, transferable and employability skills as they tend to be the same skills set.

PDP is run for undergraduates through the university-wide Graduate Development Programme which is run at programme level and across all faculties. In the Faculty of Business and Law it is mainly integrated into compulsory modules and assessed through those, although the approach varies by faculty. This system is evaluated every year. At Masters level PDP has been run as extra-curricular sessions put on for students but they are looking to integrate into programmes.

Knowledge of their own employability varies considerably by level and by the nature of the student. At Masters level there is a mix of mature part-timers in work, UK/EU full-time and part-time conversion, and a high proportion of full-time international students. All have different levels of understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of individual employability is enhanced through PDP activities, careers talks, a ‘Meet the Employers’ annual event, guest speakers from industry partners as part of the curricula, industry-linked projects, ‘Distinguished Executive Address’ series - where key industry figures give talks in informal settings, and work-based learning modules on some programmes.

**Case 9**

This practitioner is the Work-Related Learning Coordinator for Sport in his institution and in this capacity works with student work placements. He is involved with all levels of study in this work, and is aware of the USEM (Knight and Yorke, 2002, 2004) and SOAR (Kumar, 2007) models, using the former.

LJMU has a clear approach to employability. It offers the World of Work (WoW®) Programme which aims to ensure that every student is equipped with the skills they need to stand out from the crowd and successfully engage in the world of work, either because they possess skills which are highly valued by employers or because they are well equipped to set themselves up in their own business.

More information can be found here - <http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/wow/>

Students complete graduate skills audits and reflect on progression and achievement of elements relating to these skills in various modules across the programmes. The students select a pathway to specialise in Level 5 & 6 (Years 2 and 3) and this selection of a route enables the students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, which is focused in relation to potential career paths. They also have the opportunity to evidence achievement relating to the higher level WoW skills throughout their UG career. The assessment of employability is seen as explicit.

PDP takes place at all levels and is assessed within a variety of modules as a part of assessment criteria.

This respondent believes that the students have some understanding of their own employability, which is developed further as they progress through their studies. This is enhanced through Year Tutor sessions, in PDP sessions, and in Work Related Learning modules

**Case 10**

This practitioner is the postgraduate programmes leader in a Food and Tourism Management Department. She is involved in developing employability by having action learning groups for masters students to discuss how to enhance their employability skills through commercial awareness. She is involved in careers advice through weekly discussions and looking in reputable newspapers and on line job sites. There are no student work placements at this level. This practitioner is aware of USEM (Knight and Yorke, 2002, 2004), SOAR (Kumar, 2007) and CareerEDGE **(**Dacre Pool and Sewell,2007).

At this university there is a section involved in developing student employability skills, through integration into the teaching and learning.

Assessment of employability is implicit in some units; the postgraduate students discussed here read the broadsheet newspapers weekly and analyse or write about industry problems.

PDP is used at this institution and appointed people assess this on behalf of the faculty.

Students do not have much understanding or knowledge of their own employability to start with, but they do develop over the one year postgraduate programmes. Discussion of topical issues in industry and the government, daily reference to top newspapers and online articles, weekly discussion through action learning and making changes develop and enhance their knowledge and understanding.

**Discussion**

**Results of staff questionnaire**

All staff interviewed said that some level of assessment ‘of’ or ‘for’ employability, either explicitly or implicitly, was taking place.

PDP is used in most of the universities concerned (one did not reply to this question). Only one respondent said it was not assessed; methods of assessment mentioned by the others include:

* Personal plans and progress monitoring against these
* Portfolio and diary
* Skills online area
* Reflective individual presentation
* Essay
* Group presentation
* Assessed within module

What arises from staff comments on students’ awareness of their own employability issues is the need for staff, or the institution, to support them all the way through their academic career, and via interventions such as PDP or work placement. Development of employability awareness is not a rapid process.

**Results and Discussion of Employability and Assessment Questionnaire for Students**

Students from two universities completed the questionnaire, 37 3rd or 4th year undergraduates from the University of Gloucestershire and 3 postgraduates from Liverpool John Moores. Both universities have well developed employability strategies in place, with all the Gloucestershire students following the Career Perspectives Programme (<http://resources.glos.ac.uk/subjectsandcourses/undergraduatefields/lsm/descriptors/lsm305.cfm> [accessed 6/12/11)). Given the small sample size, range of institutions and the fact that these students have carefully developed employability programmes in their repertoire, it is impossible to draw meaningful conclusions from the data. However, it is hoped that the information here may be of interest for anyone concerned with employability in HLST.

Approximately one-third of the undergraduate students were studying event management, one-sixth were studying leisure and sport management, and the remainder were studying combinations of hospitality, leisure, sport, events and tourism, with one studying geography and tourism.

**Postgraduate Students**

Of the three postgraduate students, two were studying on a one-year PGCE in physical education and the third was completing a PGCE in Coaching Development, all at Liverpool John Moores University, where they had previously been undergraduates. They have all gone through the WoW® programme (<http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/wow/> [accessed 6/12/11]) and gave this as their example in answer to the question on the opportunity to evaluate or assess their employability skills.

Two of them had experienced PDP, and all three had had a work placement. They all had positive comments to make about both elements, with one saying, “I feel they have had a major impact. Although I didn’t realise it at the time, I did realise it when I updated my SWOT analysis, CV and also when I had to reflect on and evaluate them, I have definitely developed more confidence in my employability skills. I also feel that the skills and work experience I had during higher education helped me develop skills and qualities needed to progress to the PGCE.” Other comments were similar, with one mentioning the identification of areas to improve in order to succeed.

The assessment tasks that the postgraduates felt had helped them in developing employability skills were similar to those expressed below by the undergraduates. One commented that they felt a range of assessments are useful to identify people’s strengths and areas for improvement. Figure 1 shows the postgraduate list and skills developed.

As might be expected, the list of skills and attributes produced by both postgraduate students and the undergraduates surveyed (Figure 2) is very similar to those mentioned by staff (not included as so similar to Figure 2), but the students did not mention creativity/ability to innovate which several of the staff did.

Figure 3 contains a list of the varying ways in which all students (postgraduate and undergraduate) think that their employability skills have been developed at university. Items such as projects specifically to develop employability; dissertations; assignments; working to deadlines; presentations and essay writing appear. It is interesting to note that there is a combination of summative and formative assessment implicit in this list.

Although students might not naturally make the leap, Figure 4 shows the ways in which all the undergraduate students think that employability skills have been assessed at university. Bearing in mind that they are all from the same university, far and away the most popular interventions are the work placement and the career development module (Career Perspectives). PDP receives mostly positive comments from these students, and comments on it are combined with those on the good learning experience received from work placement.

Figure 5 shows a visual breakdown of a set of skills - adapted from Maher and Graves (2008) – mapped against the views of students on how well different assessment methods might help to develop them. This removed the work placement option. It shows that these students still see the essay as important in developing analytical and intellectual skills, whereas the oral presentation, significantly present in enhancing team work, communication skills, practical subject skills, initiative and creativity and flexibility, features less well on developing the intellect! The essay also features quite highly on self-motivation and enthusiasm, self-management, planning and organisation, initiative/creativity. Written exams do not do very well anywhere – their best showing is in analytical and intellectual skills, with a few students seeing their role in self-management and organisation. This analysis is reflected to some extent in Figure 6.

**Figure 1 Assessment type mentioned by postgraduates and skills developed**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Intervention** | **Skills/attributes developed** |
| Presentations (group and individual) | Self-confidence |
| Essay | Critical thinking, writing |
| Posters | Creativity |
| Teaching practice | Communication, creativity, interpersonal skills |

**Figure 2 List of skills/attitudes/attributes/qualities all students surveyed associate with graduate employability**

|  |
| --- |
| Communication skills (written and oral) |
| Ability to work in a team |
| Ability to solve problems |
| Independence, initiative, self-confidence, proactivity |
| Self-management skills (time, decision-making, prioritising) |
| Ability to plan and organise |
| Facility with variety of technology, IT skills |
| Life-long learning skills, willingness to learn |
| Interpersonal skills, personal qualities (working under pressure, keeping calm, friendly, handling complaints) |
| Flexibility, adaptability |
| Commitment |
| Motivation and enthusiasm |
| Numeracy |
| Literacy |
| Self-awareness, self-knowledge |
| Leadership skills |
| Good customer service skills |
| Well qualified; knowledge; insight through degree |
| Ambition, determination, drive to succeed |
| Good attitude, good work ethic |
| Financial skills |
| Professionalism |
| Reliability |
| Experience |
| Emotional intelligence |
| Willingness to challenge self |
| Intellectual and analytical skills |
| Supervisory skills |
| Ability to fit in and help whatever the task |
| Something unique that makes you stand out |
| Delegation skills |
| Training skills |

**Figure 3 Ways all students surveyed see employability skills have been developed at university**

|  |
| --- |
| **Work-based learning** |
| **Projects specifically to develop employability** |
| **Group work experience** |
| **Dissertations** |
| **Whole HE experience, interacting with staff and peers** |
| **Assignments** |
| **Placement year; work experience combined with academic learning** |
| **Mentoring** |
| **Reflection and evaluation** |
| **Organising academic workload, sometimes with p/t job, working to deadlines; multi-tasking** |
| **Development of responsibility for own learning** |
| **Presentations** |
| **Essay writing** |
| **Activities outside academic work** |
| **HE developed confidence/self-knowledge** |
| **Working hard and achieving** |
| **Part-time job in subject studied** |
| **Training others on placement** |

**Figure 4 Ways students see employability skills have been assessed at university**

**Undergraduates**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Intervention | Number of mentions |
| Work placement portfolio; reflection on WP | 15 |
| Career Development Module | 18 |
| Reflective tasks in lectures | 10 |
| Feedback from tutors | 3 |
| Feedback from co-workers/managers | 1 |
| Setting learning agreements | 2 |
| Appraisal | 1 |
| Presentations | 1 |
| Essay | 1 |
| Dissertation | 1 |

**Personal Development Planning and Work Placement experience (undergraduates)**

Of the 37 undergraduates all attending the same university, only two had not done PDP.

Seven students commented specifically on PDP; the rest combined comments on work placement and PDP. The overall feel was that the work placement was a more powerful experience than PDP, but the final comment below makes the link between the two.

“PDP had no impact (work placement has helped dramatically)”

“PDP has enabled me to be reflective and to continue to develop my skills and knowledge”

“PDP has helped to ensure progression and focus”

“PDP gives you time to evaluate both learned skills and personal attributes so you can see where to develop further”.

“PDP gives you a sense where you are and are heading”

“in combination with work placement . . has made me more aware of who I am as an individual and the best ways in which I work”

“PDP helped me understand what I wanted out of the placement experience”

Comments on the work placement were universally positive. This is a representative sample:

“put me in great stead (sic) for the future in the industry I want to work in”

“huge impact on my employability . . . my skills have increased and my confidence in getting jobs has too”

“I have . . .a more professional attitude”

“ work experience has impacted hugely in terms of developing new skills, improving personal attributes . . . gain knowledge broadly in industry and specifically through training”

“more understanding of the leisure and hospitality industry and what employers look for”

“developed self-confidence, understanding of the work environment”

“Although I had a very poor placement experience, I believe it greatly improved my future employability, teaching me patience, tolerance and team working”

“has helped me see how skills gained can be applied outside of studying”

“has given me credible experience within my industry”

“helps you grow, helps you find out if it is what you want to do”

**Figure 5**

**Overview of skills and how students think that assessment methods might enhance them**

**Figure 6**

**Types of assessment that undergraduates view as relevant to future work**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assessment | Number of mentions/skills developed |
| Career Development module tasks | 6/reflection, planning, communication, self-motivation |
| Work placement portfolio | 13/ planning, communication, self-motivation |
| Dissertation | 5/tests all round skills; planning, communication, self-motivation, critical analysis, writing |
| Organising an event | 4/team work, prioritisation, problem-solving |
| Research methods | 2 |
| Group work projects | 6/team work |
| Presentations | 10/self-confidence, team work, communication |
| Assignments | 5/self-motivation, time management |
| Report writing | 7/interpretation and analysis, writing skills, |
| Creating a website | 1 |
| Writing a business plan | 1 |
| Essays | 3/analysis, time management, communication, self-discipline |
| Examination | 2/analysis |

**Conclusions**

The purpose of this project was to produce a review of contemporary practice in the fields of hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism with regard to employability, and to investigate the rationale and methodologies used for its assessment.

It is not easy to answer the question, “How do you assess employability?” The results of the survey indicate a variety of ways in which employability is enhanced in HLST, and the ways in which these interventions are assessed. It is not always clear that employability is being assessed directly, but there is evidence of innovative thinking around the two issues.

The literature review conducted on work completed on assessment and employability between 2006 and 2011 in the HLST and related academic communities, revealed the emergence of the following themes, linking assessment rationale and methodologies with the development of employability:

* involving the learner in the assessment process
* importance of constructive alignment
* use of case studies in assessment
* assessment of work related learning
* oral assessment
* peer assessment
* use of technology in assessment
* formative assessment and feedback used to enhance employability skills
* group assessment to enhance teamwork
* issues around work placement/internship assessment to enhance employability
* employer engagement; employer education (how to use graduates)
* teaching emotional intelligence
* personal brand development
* linking research and learning
* ‘real life’ research and learning
* relevance of assessment to ‘real life’
* “employability learning” outside the curriculum; recognition for part-time work and extra-curricular activity
* Personal development planning (PDP)
* Problem-based learning and assessment
* Teaching and learning resources development to grade graduate attributes
* Assessment of work carried out in local community/volunteering
* Programmes to develop creativity/self knowledge and awareness

The staff survey, carried out largely by questionnaire, covered ten universities and provides a snapshot of practice, and attitudes towards, employability and its assessment. Similarly, the student survey, although it cannot be representative, gives a flavour of student awareness of these issues. It seems clear that employability is very much a concern for staff in HLST, and that many institutions are supporting employability development in their students.

I hope that this has identified some emerging themes in the relationship between assessment and employability. It might also raise some questions of interest for further investigation.

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