

Show and tell 7

Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 11

Presenters: Lorraine Gearing, John Dishman

Presenters' Organisation: Coventry University College

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Our First Year, Their First Year

Abstract:

Coventry University College opened its doors to students in September 2012 and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Coventry University. As we come to the end of this first year, we can reflect upon the unique package that has resulted in significant student retention and achievement. There are a number of innovative practices that distinguish the student experience from that of a traditional university to maximize the opportunity for student achievement. Our goal is to develop a community of good practice and teaching and learning.

Each programme has been set up with a sequential block structure for each module. Full time students study and complete 4 separate modules during each academic year, with high contact hours and in a very structured environment. Of the twenty attendance hours, eighteen are subject specific and two per week are to provide small group tutorials. Typically, there would be between 5 and 7 students in each tutorial. The result of short but intensive study blocks has enabled students to concentrate on a single module, complete assignments whilst the subject is current and have a clear idea of their achievement as they continue their studies. All results are released to students early in the following block of study.

The original target market was the local day student, who wanted to stay in the family home whilst undertaking higher education. Reasons for this choice range between financial considerations and cultural expectation. Surprisingly, the actual student demographic showed nearly a third of students coming from outside the local area. We have observed a much higher than expected retention and progression rate, particularly as we encouraged widening access during this first year and confirmed the majority of places across the clearing² period in August 2012. This is the first year of operation for Coventry University College, however the results suggest that the mode of study has contributed to the success of our students.

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Paper number: 17

Presenters: Liisa Myyry, Taina Joutsenvirta

Presenters' Organisation: University of Helsinki

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Developing exam practices to support professional development during higher education

Abstract:

Proctored closed book exams in class are a classical form of university learning, but still widely used at least in the University of Helsinki. These exams represent testing culture, where the focus is on testing factual knowledge and low-level cognitive skills. Unproctored open book online exams represent assessment culture, which focus on assessing the acquisition of higher-order thinking processes and competencies. Open book online exams demand also teachers to ask for knowledge production instead of reproduction of knowledge.

Earlier studies show that online exams are perceived as a step towards student-centered and constructivist learning, they tend to reduce text anxiety for those suffering high anxiety in class settings, and that they don't seem to increase cheating behavior compared to class exams.

At the faculty of social sciences a pilot of open book online exams was launched to improve the quality of learning. The aim was to support students' professional development - ability to select relevant information from information load and to apply and analyse knowledge and encourage cognitive development right from the first year of their university education. A data (N=110) was collected from the students who took an online exam in 2011-2012 in order to compare the learning experiences between the traditional exams and the online exams.

Concerning the learning experiences, the respondents used approximately the same time to study for the online exam than for the same kind of class exam, but they focused more on understanding, not to memorizing contents. Answering the questions was different due to the open book method: students could focus on applying and combining knowledge. Most students also felt they learned more from the online exam than from the same kind of class exam and they found answering the online exam more professional-like performance than answering to the traditional exam. Some critical comments about online exams were also presented.

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Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 22

Presenters: Andrea Reid

Presenters' Organisation: Queensland University of Technology

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Developing graduate attributes: The first steps towards work-readiness

Abstract:

Globally, universities are becoming increasingly responsive to the importance of graduate employability. Research into what employers are looking for in graduates has shown that more than just theoretical knowledge of the discipline area is required; they want people with the skills and attitudes appropriate to professional life.

For almost 20 years the US National Association of Colleges and Employers has conducted an annual survey to determine which skills are valued by employers and their latest findings show that problem solving, leadership, written communication and team work are among those most valued (NACE 2012). In Australia, these are commonly known as graduate attributes. Essentially, any given university program should be designed to develop these attributes as well as achieve discipline-specific learning outcomes. How graduate attributes are developed in students differs across universities and within programs. However the literature clearly shows that best practice is to embed (and therefore teach and assess) these attributes within discipline teaching (Radloff et al 2008).

This session will report on the strategies which an Australian Business School is employing to begin to develop students graduate attributes across the first year. The session will also cover how student performance of graduate attributes is evaluated, particularly to meet the requirements of accrediting bodies.

References: National Association of Colleges and Employers 2012, Job Outlook 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.naceweb.org>

Radloff, A et al 2008, 'Assessing graduate attributes: Engaging academic staff and their students', in Engaging Students in Assessment, Adelaide, Australia, 20-21 November. Retrieved from <http://www.ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php> Key words: curriculum development, supporting student learning

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Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 37

Presenters: Arto Saloranta, Helena Kasurinen

Presenters' Organisation: Laurea UAS

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Curriculum and course development: Development of career management skills in higher education

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to discuss the concept of employability and how we can enhance the development of career management skills from the beginning of the studies in HE. The future, welfare and competitiveness of Europe will call for employees flexibility and skills to adjust to changing and insecure labor markets. In HE sector-wise and specific competences are emphasized, but general skills and resilience are not included in pedagogic contents and goals. Professional growth or professional development refers to a student's development from a student to an expert.

We claim that employability is connected with resilience of an individual. We will discuss how we can take into account the factors influencing resilience and employability during career counselling process and professional growth. In the educational and career path crucial elements are individuals' positive attitudes towards their future and high self-efficacy beliefs. Besides developing professional skills and competences during studies we believe that also these other capabilities can be trained.

In the session we will introduce a research project in which it is studied how we can promote students' resilience and employability skills. First, it will be explored what kind of abilities students have when they are designing their future career in the early phase of their studies. During the project different activities and interventions will be developed. These activities help students to improve their attributes that increase their resilience. Interventions help students to study the employability factors and explore how the factors influence their possibilities to plan their future and get employed. Besides practices and tasks, workshops dealing with different themes will be organized. The research project will be conducted in Laurea University of Applied Sciences in 2013-2015.

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Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 49

Presenters: Erja Sipilä, Katja Laine, Jaana Hännikäinen

Presenters' Organisation: TUT / Department of Electronics and Communications Engineering

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: New Introduction Studies for First Year Students

Abstract:

It has been discovered that moving from high school to university is challenging for many students. Students ask for among other guidance, scheduling assistance and assistance in finding the most suitable learning methods [1]. In order to meet these challenges the Faculty of Computing and Electrical Engineering (TST) at the Tampere University of Technology started to develop first year studies.

TST decided to start new introductory courses for the first year students. These courses aim to familiarize students to studying at the university, to motivate students to the basic studies, to provide students hands-on experience with simple electrical construction projects, to provide students tools for scheduling own studies and to provide students possibilities for group work.

As a part of the new introductory courses a teacher tutor is appointed for all first year students. This tutoring system before anything aims to improve the contact between students and teachers. In addition via the tutoring the students learn how to work in a group, how to study in an organized matter and how to self-evaluate own learning. In order to improve the contacts between students and working life an excursion with the tutor groups will be made. The excursion improves the students understanding about the future work tasks in the field.

These new introductory courses will be realized during the fall semester 2013.

[1] Pajarre, E., 2012. Minä DI-opiskelijana - Ensimmäisen vuoden opiskelijoiden kokemuksia ja odotuksia yliopisto-opiskelusta. Tampereen teknillinen yliopisto, Yliopistopalvelut, Raportti 7.

http://dspace.cc.tut.fi/dpub/bitstream/handle/123456789/21185/pajarre_mina_di-opiskelijana.pdf?sequence=1