Student perceptions and development of employability skills in a multidisciplinary, level 4 science module

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Outline

1. Background
2. Context
3. Research questions and approach
4. Results and Discussion
5. Conclusions
Background

The national picture

• Employability skills have to be embedded in all HE courses
• Key review – Wakenham, 2016
• Skills development is strongly linked to Personal Development Planning (PDP)
• Students are encouraged to self-assess skills, and then reflect to plan improvements.
  • E.g. Kolb’s Learning Cycle

Image credit: https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/doctoralcollege/training/eresources/teaching/theories/kolb
Skills development on S112

- **Science: concepts and practice**
  - New, multidisciplinary module from Oct 2017
  - 60 credits
  - FHEQ Level 4
  - Focussed on **skills**

- Students regularly self-assess skills using a **radar diagram**
  - Required in each of 6 assignments, with reflection
Context

We looked at two groups of Learning Outcomes

1. **Collaborating with others ...**
2. Self reflection and planning...
Research Question 1 and Approach

To what extent do students demonstrate development of employability skills through S112?

Tutor Focus Group

Assignment submissions

Student Questionnaire
Research Question 2 and Approach

What are students’ perceptions of their employability skills development through S112?

Student Questionnaire

Tutor Focus Group
Results and discussion

Initial quantitative results

• Analysed student self assessment scores in assignments
• Analysed student opinions of radar diagrams using Likert scale

1. These are interim results – to be enriched by qualitative data
2. Results from free text questions, and tutor focus group to be analysed (thematic analysis)
Results and Discussion

Student assignments (n = 19) : Collaborating with others

Percentage frequencies of change in score

- B/C Aware
- Digi cont
- Teams
- Comment
- Contribute
Results and Discussion

Student assignments (n = 18): Self reflection and planning

Percentage frequencies of change in score

Legend:
- Ref Prac
- Ref F/back
- PDP
- Time man

02/01/2024
Results and Discussion

Student questionnaire (n = 115; 18% response rate)

• Of the skills we looked at:
  • > 80 – 85% thought they were “important” and “developed well by the module”, except…
  • Business and Customer Awareness (31% and 37%)

• 93% used the radar diagrams tool
  • Of these, 65 % only used them to complete an assessment
Results and Discussion

Student Questionnaire

Percentage agreement on radar diagram questions

- Easy to understand
- Easy to use
- Easy to see progress
- Focus on improvement
- Assess skills
- Develop skills
- Used to get marks

Legend:
- Agree
- Neither
- Disagree
Conclusions

- Students showed improvement in self-assessment scores, except Business and Customer Awareness
  - Questionnaire supports this - least valued skill
  - Embed at qualification level, not module
- Most engaged with radar diagrams to gain marks
- Majority found radar diagrams usable and understandable
- <50% students found value in radar diagrams for PDP
- Future work: qualitative data analysis on tutor focus groups and open questions from questionnaire
References


• Higher Education Policy Unit (2015) Employability; *Degrees of Value, [online]* https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2015/12/10/2928/ (accessed 18th Apr 2019)


Any questions?...

Thank-you for attending

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