Embedding Work Like Experience in the Curriculum

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BACKGROUND

- > There are practices being applied in higher education to make students ready for the real-world professional graduates, however linking the teaching design to an authentic assessment (AA) structure can be challenging¹.
- > NTU has embedded a unique Assessed work like experience (AWLE)³ in the portfolio assessment to synchronise the WLE design with the assessment structure to measure the impact of teaching activities in developing employability skills in students.
- > In this study, we conducted a qualitative gap analysis from mapping the portfolio with AA framework through perspectives of staff, students and employer and identify areas for improvement in the portfolio to enhance student's readiness for employability^{1,2}.

METHODS

- > We conducted focus groups with students and staff of 3-5 participants involved in the module with AWLE component and a one-one interview with the employer from Walgreens Boots UK.
- > Focus groups and interviews were conducted using structured guide consisting of 5-10 questions.
- > We conducted qualitative thematic analysis to identify the key concepts and themes related to the participant's perceptions about how portfolio makes them ready for real workplace and to identify areas for improvement in the portfolio.

RESULTS % with a 1st or 2:1 % 1st Class Grades % 2:2 Grades % 2:1 Grades % 3rd Class Grades grading ■ 202223 ■ 202324

Figure 1: The figure shows grades from current year compared to previous year. The percentage of first class and 2.1 grades have increased as well as the percentage of fails has decreased. The scores are obtained after student's engaged with employer from Boots. We asked student's feedback in the areas they needed more support. Additional support was provided in 202324.

What would you like to improve or change in the portfolio? "The top skills we are "We would like to change the debate topic to looking for is their something like Technical skills vs. Transferrable skills" technical curiosity, somebody who can "The pros and cons of working in a team" expand our thinking. Are the graduates What are the sections Somebody who come meeting the professional in the portfolio that in with new fresh standard expectations of students need more ideas and be "I think it's actually employers? support with? interested in the area been one of the best and willing to learn. explained pieces of The desire for their work we've done in growth and contribute terms of direct links to to our collective employment" thinking" Did the portfolio help "Lack of understanding for What are the skills and you gain work like first year students to attributes you are "Yeah, the active engagement with employer is understand the meaning experience for future job at high level. I think the students are actively looking in a graduate? and purpose of portfolio and

Looking at the AA framework, please rate the

portfolio piece with level of real life experience

it provides to the students.

engaged because they do have direct contact

with the employer, and they get a direct

feedback from them" The critical reflection and

intellectual engagement is medium level"

THEMATIC ANALYSIS RESULTS

IMPLICATIONS

- > The Authentic Assessment framework was mapped with staff and employer input and the portfolio piece of coursework is graded at medium level of authenticity for most part and with high level of authenticity in the employer facing interaction.
- > The common area for improvement was for the debate topic which was disjointed from the overall theme and purpose of the portfolio. Going forward, we will change the topic of debate as suggested by the students.
- > Second area of improvement is visual example of good and bad portfolios and examples of annotations. Incorporating peer marking of the draft portfolios in the tutorial sessions will further improve the understanding of students.
- > Students, staff and employer all agreed that AWLE in the portfolio is meaningful coursework in providing the skills to the students which prepare them for the real workplace.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Lack of visual aid of a

finalised example to

understand the layout"

opportunities?

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