

|  |
| --- |
| Vodcast Transcript 02/04/14 |
| Workshop Theme: Academic and Career Partnerships  Workshop Title: Academic & Career Partnerships; benefits, challenges and aspirations  Katie Whitehouse, Careers Consultant, & Lindsay Yardley, Senior Academic & HEA Academic Associate  Faculty of Health, Birmingham City University |
| Slide 1: Academic & Career Partnerships; benefits, challenges and aspirations  LY: Hello my name is Lindsay Yardley  KW: and I’m Katie Whitehouse.  LY: This is a post event recording of a workshop we hosted at the seminar event on 2nd April called Academic & Career Partnerships; benefits, challenges and aspirations.  KW: We are really aware as we talk through the slides from the day that this represents our journey on collaboration and partnership working. We know that you will have your own stories, your own experiences. On the day we were really privileged to have such a wealth of experiences and stories that people shared with us as well. This is just one journey that we want to share with you.  Slide 2: What do career staff do?  KW: So first of all we would like you to stop and think for a moment. If you are an academic professional just stop and pause the video for a moment and think about what you think careers staff do in their role?  Slide 3: What do academic staff do?  KW: Now it’s the turn of careers staff. So if you are a career professional just pause the video for a moment and think about what you understand that academics do in their role?  Slide 4: Delegates thoughts…  KW: What you will see on the slide now is some of the feedback that we had on the day from the delegates who attended. This represented some initial thoughts. We only gave a short amount of time for this activity on the day so it was literally people’s initial thoughts and ideas.  KW: We found it interesting observing later when looking at the list they came up with, that some things we thought that might have been on there weren’t on there. So partnership working, networking didn’t feature on any of the lists. Although I am sure it is something that many of you are involved in within your role. Also being creative, innovative or suggesting new ideas for practice didn’t feature on the lists.  KW: What we also thought is that there could be some overlap between the two sides. I am sure careers staff, or part of our role is to keep up-to-date with current practice and information. As well as academic staff doing that. I am sure that academic staff are involved in keeping up-to-date with practices to do with careers in one form or another within their role.  LY: Just as research is important in career staff roles as well – isn’t it? KW: Absolutely, absolutely, lots of overlap between the two roles.  Slide 5: What could we achieve if we worked together?  KW: So the real focus for our session is to think about what we could achieve if we worked together? We have the two roles and what they do separately. But if we worked together, or more closely together for the students that we work with?  Slide 6: Our journey  KW: So as I say this represents our journey and what we achieved through partnership working. We had an initial meeting when Lindsay took over the lead for the transition module for nursing students. I don’t know if you want to say something at this point about that.  LY: Yeah…At the time where I became module leader I was really keen to find out what different stakeholders thought; students who had undergone the module, what teaching staff, what career staff thought? So Katie and I had an initial meeting. And what I was very keen to do was find out more about Katie, more about her role, what it was that she did offer. And also some of her ideas about, you know if there was this wonderful magic wand and a blank canvas what would you do differently?  LY: So as I said I was really keen to listen to Katie’s ideas…I don’t know if you want to say what you used to do? Yes…  KW: So what I used to do with the module was two hour sessions in large lecture theatres with students; probably about two hundred plus. On topics such as application forms and interview techniques. I used to just come in deliver my sessions and come out again. I hadn’t got the information or insight to know what was happening around those lectures. What other support the students were getting or how that fitted into the module.  KW: It was really fantastic to meet with Lindsay and to learn a lot more about where the module fitted in. The ideas for making changes to the module and changes to the sessions I was delivering. Because although the students were getting the information it was really hard to feel that you had really reached all of the students with what they needed when in large groups.  LY: Absolutely. And very keen to think about how we could embrace…going back to current practice and evidenced based practice…technology enhanced learning, how we could re-design the students learning experience so that the engagement with them on a face-to-face basis was enhanced by lots of different resources that we would go onto co-create together – and have lots of fun doing so!  KW: Yes!  LY: and a few sleepless nights but it was worth it! So what we did was set about transforming the transition to registered practitioner module. It is fair to say that Katie and I stand here representing thousands of students that we have worked with and in particular our module team colleagues so people like Lisa, Claire and Bridget to name but a few. We can’t name everyone but we are so to speak the face of that shared team and shared partnership approach.  LY: So what we did in particular and Katie and I spent a lot of time on was re-designing the students learning experience particularly in relation to their employment and employability. We co-designed a learning resource pack that at the time was called ‘getting the job that you want and being successful in your role’. Each of the module themes, and that was one of four themes, was broken down into a series of sub-topics. Where several resources were created. And Katie is going to tell you just a handful of some of those now.  KW: Yes…so for the employment module, the getting the job that you want module (theme). We looked at resources around application forms. So there was a checklist around completing application forms, there were sample CV’s and how to write an effective CV. And then there was a mock interview process and mock application and interview process with mock interview questions as well.  KW: We recorded some bite-size vodcasts to support each of those topics as well. So that students could play them and listen to them in their own time.  LY: Absolutely. And not only could they play and listen to the vodcasts they could repeatedly go back to this e-learning resource pack. We also did things like make sure that we co-authored the lesson plans around this. So also guiding other staff in supporting students about how we wanted students’ employability to be facilitated and developed.  Slide 7: Ups and downs  KW: So we all thought that sounded fantastic and really excited about the changes to the module but obviously once you try things out you can continually learn from how things transpire in practice. So we call this bit ‘trial and respond’. So we tried things out and then we responded to some of the challenges that we came across.  KW: So what we found initially that there was a reduction in the number of face-to-face career appointments being booked. That wasn’t something we had planned for or that we wanted. Now that may have been that students were getting all of the information they wanted from the module. But we did suspect there were a lot of students needing that individual support.  KW: So we re-introduced some short slots where I would still go into the sessions and meet with the students. Tell them about the careers service and encourage them to make use of that service. And that has led to or now we have seen an increase in the careers appointments again. So that was quite successful.  LY: Absolutely. And as Katie said it was never our intention for that to happen but we learnt from that process. Equally what we found, and this has been consistent in the last eighteen months, is that theme three in particular, which is the students’ employability theme, actually consistently rates the highest out of all of the module themes. As students have fed-back around about 98% of all cohorts. And we work with students anything from one hundred and fifty to four hundred and fifty students in a cohort. 98% have said that their employability theme has either been excellent or very good. We have been delighted with the impact that’s had and how students have fed-back to us.  KW: One of the things, looking at the evaluations, we had real positive feedback which is fantastic. Another change that we looked at based on student feedback was with one of the activities which was around sharing their personal statements and job applications and peer-reviewing those. I don’t know if you want to say anything…  LY: Yes. When we first introduced, or Katie mentioned previously careers based sessional activities had been delivered to large groups of students. We wanted to encourage smaller group student work, more action learning sets and more active engagement and peer reviewing assessment. So Katie and I co-created job application checklists that were based on best practice NHS guidance. Then designed a lesson plan so that students would work in their action learning sets to peer review each other’s’ draft mock application forms.  LY: What we learnt through that process was that some, only a small number, but enough to warrant thinking about our options. So some students were a little bit concerned about sharing their personal data on the front page of the students application form. So again back to that trial and respond as we called it. What we did was revise the lesson plan so that students were presented with a series of options. They could bring their draft job application form and share it completely in full on the premise that they must absolutely maintain and respect each other’s confidentiality.  LY: Or that students could share the majority of their application form but remove the personal details section. Or if students didn’t want to share their application form at all with anyone else they could use the checklist to review their own job application form. So we revised it and bounced back with a series of options. And interestingly now that we present those options most students are actually really happy to share the information. Which as they recognize is a really valuable learning experience.  LY: The only other one thing I would add quickly is that this is a peer assessed activity. All students get the opportunity to submit their job application forms. They get written and verbal feedback at a mock interview that they also get written feedback on. The mock interview panels are made up of careers staff, and academic staff, practice staff and in some instances service users as well.  Slide 8: The ripple effect  LY: Talking about the number of stakeholders that are involved in the mock interviews one of the things we can absolutely and categorically say is that our genuine lived experience is the strengthening of our partnership work. I know that I have undoubtedly learnt so much from working at Katie’s side as I have with my other colleagues and with students. I very much have a greater appreciation of what each of us do. Our differences that should be celebrated but also our similarities. And also how all of these things have really influenced and informed not only what we are doing for students but also our own development.  LY: This has led to a number of joint projects and initiatives. So when Lisa, Katie and I got together at the start of this leadership of a new module we were very keen, very passionate to hear each other’s ideas. And that idea emerged into a very successful bid funded by the Commission for Education Quality. That is a three project objective where we have recruited students who are, oh I’ll get my words out in a minute…who are blogging via video diaries their transitional journey. So the last few months of their nursing programme and into the first twelve months of preceptorship. The blogs are fantastic.  KW: Yeah really, really, good  LY: Hugely informative and we are learning as much from them as the students are very kindly sharing with us. We’ve got media students as part of our project team who are our post production editors. Who are capturing and editing the footage and who have very much been an integral part to our seminar day.  LY: We also hosted nearly qualified workshops or events for our students. Feedback when we reviewed the module as it was suggested that students didn’t feel like there was an end point to their course or a day of celebration. Celebrating the fact that they had worked hard for three years, achieved an awful lot, and developed an awful lot. So we have been actively working on our enhancing student employability project for the past eighteen months. And it is still an on-going initiative. Which we anticipate will be coming to a close or this chapter of it by January 2015.  LY: One of the biggest things for us though in working in a collaborative way. Is that we realized that the theme three that we originally wrote in the new module; which was ‘getting the job that you want and being successful in your role’. We felt still had a bit too much of a slant on employment rather than employability. Through all of this fantastic work we came up with the idea of a framework called the ’Ten Steps to Enhancing Student Employability’.  LY: And it’s a real fruition of our joint efforts and we are delighted to say that has now been launched to a couple of cohorts of students and most recently to students right at the start of year three so that they have the whole of their final year to really hit home and focus on getting themselves ready, as best as they can, with our support and guidance, for their transition.  LY: All of this led to being commissioned by the Higher Education Academy to write a toolkit on enhancing student employability. I have the privilege of being a HEA academic associate and being the kind of person I am encouraged my colleagues to be co-authors. And really reflect and write about our journey. So if you are interested in that toolkit you can access it via this link: [www.heacademy.ac.uk/EHAE](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/EHAE)  LY: What I will say is that there is a whole section devoted to academic and career partnerships. We share some of our pitfalls, some of the things to avoid but most of all celebrate all the things we have spoken about or just touched the surface of. Is there anything else you wanted to add?  KW: No that’s fine.  Slide 9: How did we make it work?  KW: So just some top tips on this slide about how we think we made it work. We think a lot of it came down to that initial meeting realizing that we’d got that shared commitment around being student centered in what we are doing. And the commitment for employability. I think sometimes you can feel on your own chipping away trying to get things done. But when you meet with people with that passion and enthusiasm even with people from different professional background things can start to happen.  KW: We think it’s really important that the right people are together to make things happen. Sharing contacts. Linking in with contacts from across the university to make things happen. The willingness to share and learn from one another. We are from different professional backgrounds, the different knowledge that we can bring, different expertise and be more open to learning from one another.  KW: I know that I have learnt a lot from working alongside Lindsay and the academic staff which has really enhanced my work. Not just with nursing students but across the faculty. I know that you would say the same thing there.  LY: Absolutely.  KW: A lot of trust and respect for one another in the roles that we have. Particularly taking positive risks. We had to step outside of our comfort zone to try things differently. Being prepared that things might not work out or that there might be challenges. But really the rewards really far outweigh those. So taking those risks to do things slightly differently.  LY: Part of that is being confident in challenging one another in a positive way. And actually encouraging, motivating, having a ‘can do’ attitude, yes we can do this. We just need to think about how we are going to do it and put our minds to it. But an important part of that was taking the time to build a relationship with each other and our colleagues. We had to know that we felt safe, as much as we took risks, that we felt safe that we were supporting each other through this process. And ultimately our students who are at the heart of everything that we do.  LY: Perhaps another thing to add is that we were very much keen to explore what were potential assumptions, real or otherwise, about what we think the other one does or doesn’t do. And that was one of the reason we asked that question right at the start of this workshop is that perhaps in all fairness we wouldn’t have answered very differently to our colleagues and you guys did on the day. But what we have learnt is that there is so much more to working in partnership. If Katie does things on her own as a careers adviser and if I do things on my own as an academic member of staff. Yes we achieve things but not as much as we do if we are standing side-by-side with a shared focus and a shared vision. And so say all of us!  Slide 10: Benefits of partnership working  KW: So really we found that the benefits were to everyone really. For students who are at the heart of what we do as we have been saying. And really they are the ones who gain from the shared knowledge and shared experience and the opportunities they had. The feedback from them and also seeing things like the destination statistics and the nursing journeys through the blogs you could really see the difference that was making.  KW: The benefits for our organisation, for Birmingham City University (BCU) and hosting the seminar event and getting people to come to BCU to hear about what we are doing. The wider partners that we work with. So the clinical staff, other academics across the university, careers staff, academic staff. And also the alumni we have got working on some of the projects as well.  LY: Do you want to mention something about the employability working group?  KW: Yes. One of the ripple effects was that we developed the employability working group. Which is a group that includes careers staff, academic staff, and also staff from the local NHS Trusts involved in recruitment and preceptorship as well as alumni representation on that group as well. That has been a really fantastic way of all meeting together, discussing transition and employability. Already we are seeing changes and things happening as a result of that group working together. So that been fantastic.  LY: Absolutely. And it’s important to keep listening to each another. Finding out what the issues are which I think Jane mentioned in her opening address. And working through how we can perhaps influence the changes that are needed. And celebrate what works well and also think about the things that could be done differently.  LY: Ourselves.  KW Yes! So we have learnt a lot from working together which has enhanced our own employability as well as enriched the work that we are doing.  LY: Absolutely. I can honestly say I have learnt as much from Katie and my colleagues and our students as I have shared. I think that really motivates us and invigorates us to carry on learning from one another. It’s actually helped us to overcome some of the more difficult times and also really focus on well… look we have made this difference or we have made this impact. So if we carry one doing this what kind of things can we go onto achieve.  LY: We did this at the event so we promised that we would do this on the video as well ‘high five to that!’  Slide 11: A handful of our top tips  LY: So a handful of our top tips. Do you want to kick start us of?  KW: The first one there about going for coffee and that’s how it all started really going for that first coffee. I would really recommend this. To careers staff out there make contact with academic staff. Invite them for a coffee and the academic side as well. Because that’s where things start. Having a chat, stepping out of your offices and meeting somewhere away from that to talk about employability and where you want to go; that where ideas come from.  LY: Absolutely. I think that helps to share and get to know one another. Meet new contacts and get an idea about the person as well as the role. I think that’s important when you are potentially going to be working in collaboration or in partnership over long periods of time. And when you are implementing change as well.  KW: Yes so some of the things we have mentioned already. So sharing the contacts. Universities are large places to work with lots of different teams and different things happening. So sharing knowledge about that and contacts really helped to move things more quickly.  KW: Being open to suggestions from one another and not feeling like to have got to do things like you always have. Challenging that and taking on board challenges from the other side and being willing to try things out. Which has been really fantastic. And always remembering to say thank you.  LY: Absolutely. I think that’s always been a big part of our philosophy of how we work. We have always been keen to support individual as well as the team success and achievement. And also value and recognize the value and work that a person has put in to something or together as part of a team again for the benefit of the students experience.  LY: On that note we appreciate that this has been a snap shot of some ideas around working collaboratively and in partnership as academic and career staff. We hope that you can see some of the benefits as well as recognize some of the challenges that we have had. But ultimately what impact and the kind of things that this can afford if you work together. Just think about what you can achieve.  KW: We are happy for you to contact us if you want to share your journeys and your experiences as well because that’s how we can learn and continue to learn from one another.  LY: Thank you for listening  KW: Thank you |