

Institution:	De Montfort University
Programmes:	BSc/BA Environmental Studies
Module:	Environmental Skills II
Activity:	Focus on Employment
Level/Year:	2
Learning hours:	75

Work-related learning outcome(s)

Upon successful completion of this modules students will have:

- developed and demonstrated an understanding of a particular area of employment within the field of the environment;
- researched the skills required to become an effective practitioner within a particular area of employment;
- reflected on their current skill level and how elements of the taught course are applied in work situations;
- developed their skills of communication, reflection and research.

Description of the teaching activity which achieves the learning outcome(s)

During this module students engage in self-reflection activities that are guided by the module tutors and one of the University's careers officers. The students will then chose a potential area of employment related to environmental studies. They will research it, prepare a job application and finally complete a week shadowing a potential employer. During the job-shadowing period they will maintain a reflective diary. On completion of the job-shadowing, students again reflect on how the demands of their chosen employment area relate to their current abilities and the theoretical aspects of their course. Finally, students complete an action plan to gain the skills they need to achieve their career aspirations.

Rationale for the selection of the teaching activity

This module is largely about exploring how an environmental studies student would fit into the workplace. Therefore, it consists largely of guided independent study because we feel this is consistent with most employment situations that our students will encounter. We place emphasis on reflection as we feel that this is a neglected area in many HE environments, yet a skill that it is important in the work place. The placement activity enables students to put their academic studies in context and learn how many of the techniques and knowledge they have are put into practice. Job-shadowing allows students to acquire a variety of skills that are closely aligned with their specific career choice.

Assessment – approach and detail

Students are assessed on the quality and presentation of their curriculum vitae (20%), and their reflective diary and action plan (80%). Students, with guidance from tutors, set their own assessment criteria. They will then mark each other's CVs. This allows them to see different approaches and thus learn from each other.

Reflective practice marks are given for: completeness, detail, level of reflection, relating their experience to the course, relating their reflections to theory, level of research, ability to develop an effective action plan and presentation.

It is important that tutors give advice and guidance with regard to reflective practice. Students should not be expected to be reflectors at an academic level if they have not received training in this technique. If training is not received then diaries tend to be descriptive rather than reflective. Similarly tutors need to be trained in marking reflective accounts. There is a large body of literature on reflective practice in both the nursing and education fields. For example, see Bulman C., *Exemplars of reflection: Other people can do it, why not you too?*, in *Reflective Practice in Nursing: The Growth of the Professional Practitioner*, Oxford Blackwell Science, 1994.

Future developments

In response to students' comments, we are currently planning to use the Student Careers Guidance Officer to a greater extent. We have asked students to submit (prior to assessment) all CVs to the careers office. The Careers Officer will then go through the CVs with each student individually. This allows the students to see the Careers Officer on a one-to-one basis and helps them to improve their CV.

Contact details

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