Taking Advantage – teaching on Coventry University's employability modules

Sally Patalong

Subject Librarian

Coventry University

s.patalong@coventry.ac.uk

The Add+Vantage Scheme

- 2006 Coventry moved to a 6 module structure

- Add+Vantage employability modules implemented

- Over 150 modules developed by University Careers and Student Employability Service in collaboration with academic departments

- 2008/9 over 9,000 1st 2nd and 3rd year undergraduates taking Add+Vantage modules

Add+Vantage modules:

- Provide an opportunity to choose additional modules to enhance your employability prospects

- Provide structured support to help you develop your career management skills via the online Employability Learning Programme (ELP)

- Provide opportunities for you to improve and develop employability competencies such as decisiveness, adaptability and initiative

- Compulsory for all except health professionals
- 10 credit module with 'sister' skills module
- 1 per year in term 1 or 2
- Pass required for progression
- ELP + a subject of interest
- Chance for the library to develop credit bearing modules

Library involvement

- Initial thoughts – another way to approach information literacy?

- Second thoughts – a level 3 module about information in the workplace?

- Third thoughts – do what is requested in order to remain a player!

Academic bureaucracy!

- Module information descriptor
- Module guide/student handbook
- Assessments
- Assessment marking criteria
- Internal moderation
- External examiner
- Registers/online content/pastoral care

Information: fact or fiction? - 1

- Team:
  - Carolyn Haresign
  - Sharon Mouanda
  - Lisa Lawrence
  - Hannah Perkins
  - And me!

Structure and content:

- Hierarchy of information
- Critical evaluation
- Social and political bias
- Library resources
- Internet resources
- Trade versus academic literature
- 2 Guest speakers

Assessment

- Group presentation on the *process of finding information*
- 500 word individual reflection
- 1,500 word essay
- ELP webfolio in PebblePad

Technology

- CUOnline (WebCT/Blackboard Vista) module web
- Talis List
- PebblePad

What went wrong

- Blocked students
- Non-attenders
- Diverse student group – timetable issues
- Guest speakers
- Technology issues
- Lack of engagement with ELP
- Lack of experience on our part

What we got right

- "Expanded knowledge of library resources and how to use them efficiently"
- "Good useful information for the future"
- "Quick response to emails was helpful"
- "CW + Presentation well structured. We were told what was expected by us + by what time with plenty of warning"
- "I like the way all the students were always mixed up, gave a chance for us to get to know each other"
- *Learning their names*

Information: fact or fiction? - 2

- Judith Thompson, Sue Marshall and Nikki Phillips join the team

- No guest speakers

- More time in class for group work

- Looked at different types of information individually

- Evaluation checklist in PebblePad

- Engagement with ELP – discussions in class, formative feedback

- Assessment remained the same

Information in the Workplace

- Evaluation of information
- Introduction to ELP
- Mind maps/swot analyses
- Specialist search engines/Subject gateways/Open access journals
- Legal implications – copyright, patents and standards
- Public libraries and local government information
- Guest speakers – yes, really!

Assessment

- 1,500 word briefing paper
  - Imagine how helpful it would be if, on your first day in a new job, one of your colleagues gave you a briefing paper about where to go to get information that will help you to do the job. I want you to write that briefing paper.

- ELP webfolio

What worked well – levels 2 and 3

- Lots of group work
- Lots of activities – e.g. '<u>Statements</u>' , Newspaper evaluation
- Bringing in elements of the ELP programme – particularly the session on mind maps at   level 3

- Giving students the opportunity to ask questions about ELP and giving formative feedback on their work

- Refreshments!

- Quality of level 2 group presentations far better than last year

What didn't work

- Level 3 not particularly relevant for some of the students – e.g. the probation officer and the session musician
- The material in PebblePad
- The timing of the sessions
- The guest speakers!!!!!! (Yes, I know)
  - Excellent presentations, but no audience

Student feedback – Level 2

- I intend to use my future artwork to inform people and the <u>information</u> used should be as factual as possible. The perfect module for me

- The description interested me and I thought it would be relevant to my course (and it has been)

Student feedback- level 3

- I think it would be useful if all third years got a lecture on information in the workplace so that all students would know where to look for information when he/she is in the workplace

- Any ELP work is very helpful because no-one seems to know exactly what there [sic] supposed to be doing

- The lecture on copyright and patent libraries was very interesting as I learnt a lot
- I think information in the workplace is a really useful advantage module because it teaches you where to look for information when a student is not at university any more.
- The lecture on patents, copyright, public libraries was very helpful as I became aware of a lot of information I have taken for granted in the past

THIS YEAR

LIBRARY
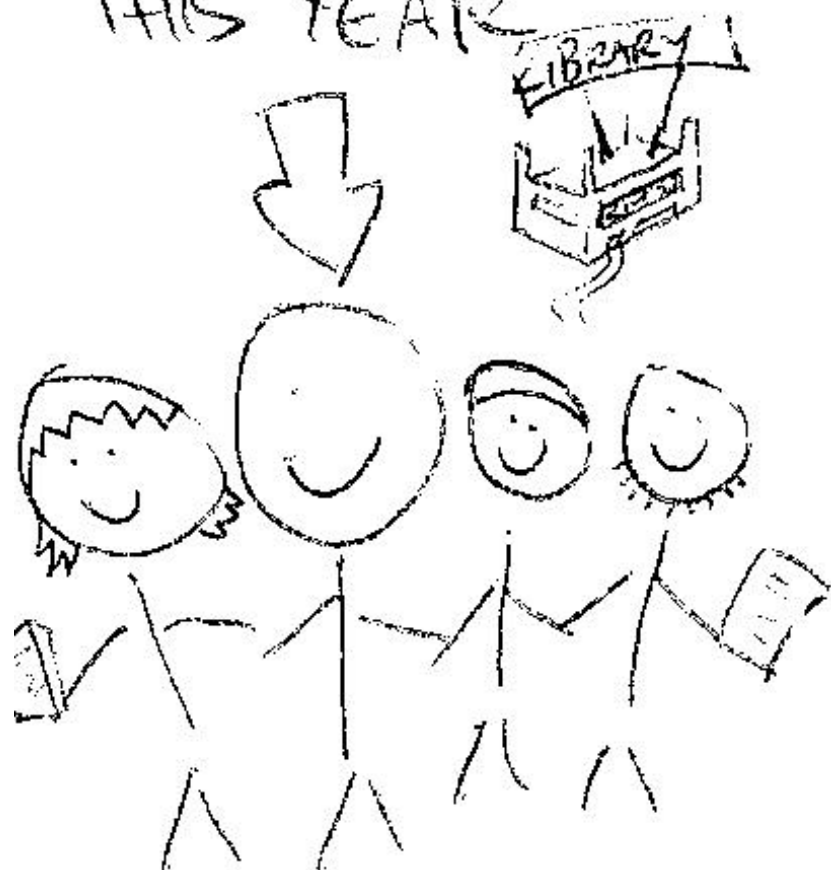
LAST YEAR

?
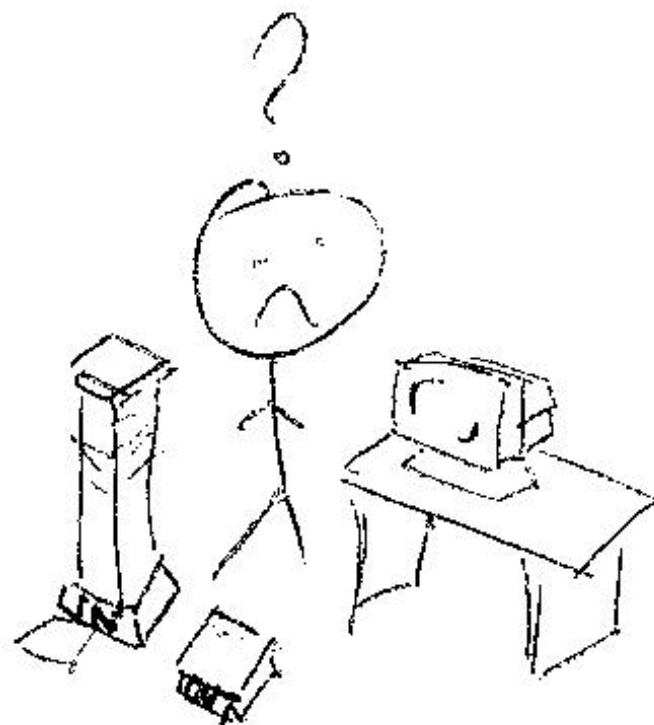
Thoughts

Add+Vantage in its present incarnation is not really working and clearly is not liked by many students

Academics have objected to the idea of Careers staff designing modules

Employers think it is an excellent idea

It is a wonderful opportunity for library staff to get to know students

Add+vantage makes me die a little inside.   👥 Join

Wall   **Info**   **Discussions**   **Photos**

Basic Info

Name:	Add+vantage makes me die a little inside.
Category:	Organizations - Academic Organizations
Description:	Add+Vantage and ELP. 2 words that'll strike apathy and confusion into the hearts of many Coventry Uni students. Intended to make those who already have a perfectly decent degree more employable, but in reality does nothing but enrage and bore said students.
	We are led to believe partaking in these courses will make take us to the top, that no employer will be able to resist these pinicles of academia. But why someone doing a degree in mathematics would need to know how to make stuff in Second Life has never been explained.
	So I say enough, no more pointless wasting of our time! Add+vantage and ELP must stop (or at least be voluntary). Don't we have enough to do/worry about without these useless modules clogging up out time? (read less)
Privacy Type:	Open: All content is public.

Contact Info

Location:	Coventry, United Kingdom

Information

Category:
Organizations - Academic
Organizations

Description:
Add+Vantage and ELP. 2 words that'll strike apathy and confusion into the hearts of many Coventry Uni students. Intended to make those who already have a perfectly decent degree more employable, but in reality does nothing but enrage and bore said students.

- Are students at level 2 who aren't already on vocational courses like occupational therapy, really ready to be thinking seriously about the workplace?
- There seems to be a difference in students when they reach level 3 – more critical, more questioning – when does this happen and why?
- Level 3 students seem ready to look to their future
- Should we be looking at a compulsory employability module at level 3?

Next year…

- Level 2 assessment changing

- Role change – need more support from colleagues

- More time spent on ELP related activities

- No guest speakers!

In conclusion

- Taken advantage of Add+Vantage to raise the library profile and deliver credit bearing modules – a big step

- Broadened subject librarians' horizons by requiring them to move out of their comfort zones and explore new worlds

- Developed a level 3 module which could be scaled up to form a significant part of an compulsory employability module

- Taken a small step towards developing lifelong information literacy awareness

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