

Title: *Integrating a multidisciplinary approach to curricula delivery through a commercial work based learning environment*

Author(s): Doggart, Lance; Anniss, Ben and Catlow, Sarah

Copyright, publisher and additional information: Copyright © BASES, 2015

DOI:

Reference: Doggart, Lance; Anniss, Ben and Catlow, Sarah (2015) *Integrating a multidisciplinary approach to curricula delivery through a commercial work based learning environment*. *Sport & Exercise Scientist* (46). p. 30. ISSN 17543444

Integrating a multi-disciplinary approach to curricula delivery through a commercial work based learning environment.

L. Doggart, B. Anniss, S. Catlow

Sport based degree programmes are often driven by opportunities that provide transferable skills and real life experiences within the sport industry environment. Furthermore with the focus on employability, employer requirements and career competition, a graduate with a wealth of practical, academic and transferable skill experience would be an asset to any future employer (Pye *et al.*, 2013). Practical and transferable skill experience is often about working as a team and in sport and exercise this will involve working with a range of other professions and professionals towards the same athlete performance goal. Indeed one of the BASES Undergraduate Endorsement Scheme (BUES) competencies is to experience a multi-disciplinary approach to sport and exercise science.

Recently we implemented an opportunity for undergraduate students, across a range of sports degree programmes, to work together and complement their skills in a work based environment. The theme was supporting the injury rehabilitation process using undergraduates from sport and exercise, sports therapy and rehabilitation and strength and conditioning. Sport and exercise science principles underpin sports therapy and strength and conditioning degrees however how these principles are implemented are quite different. The contextualisation of the sport and exercise principles and their application are quite distinctive but are focused towards a similar outcome. A sport and exercise scientist may tend to measure and monitor the impact of the rehabilitation process using quantitative metrics while a sports therapist will often use subjective analysis, observation and clinical markers to obtain the necessary information for injury diagnoses and treatment. The strength and conditioning specialist provide the athlete with an appropriate functional conditioning programme, based around the nature of the original injury, aiming to get the athlete to the pre-injury performance level. With this in mind we integrated a work based learning module (Board *et al.*, 2014) across three separate degree programmes, incorporating the University's commercial sports injury clinic and sport science laboratory. Students from three degree programmes worked as a team to provide an injury diagnostic and rehabilitation service to the local sport and exercise community.

Under appropriate supervision the sports therapists utilised their skills to diagnose the injury and develop an associated rehabilitation program, whilst being observed by the sport and exercise scientists and strength and conditioning students. The process then progressed with the sport and exercise students providing objective quantitative data to support the original diagnoses and identify what, when and how to measure and monitor the rehabilitation program. Finally the strength and conditioning students, observed by the other two groups of students, continued with the athlete rehabilitation through a specific conditioning programme to performance readiness. During the course of the module and rehabilitation programme the clients were monitored once a week by the student multi-disciplinary rehabilitation team.

To date feedback from the students and clients has been overwhelming positive with all clients adhering to the whole prescribed rehabilitation and conditioning programme. Feedback suggested that the clients found the whole experience thorough, and client centred, acknowledging the different skill set each group of

students brought to the work based rehabilitation environment. The interaction between the undergraduates, their developing skill set and the recognition of the distinctiveness of the skill set was also noted via feedback. Most importantly there was a realisation that a team of trainee professionals, providing complementary skills, could affect a series of positive outcomes reflecting the subject knowledge, skill set and transferable skills implicit in the degree programmes.

Using work based learning in this context brings its own challenges none more so than the supervision of the process by academic staff. However the use of injury rehabilitation as a vehicle for a multi-disciplinary cross curricula approach to developing employability skills, including teamwork and communication skills, appears to add value to the student experience through involvement in client based situations. The full value of the experience, in relation to employability, is still to be evaluated however the preliminary feedback suggests a multi-disciplinary student team approach, in this context, could enhance career success in the sport and exercise employment sector.

References

Board, L. *et al.* (2014) The BASES Position Stand on Curriculum-based Work Placement in Sport and Exercise Sciences. *The Sport and Exercise Scientist*, 40, 6-8.

Pye, M. *et al.*, (2013) The BASES Position Stand on Graduate Internships. *The Sport and Exercise Scientist*, 36, 1-3.