Conceptualising Curriculum Change: Structuring The Final Year Learning Experience On A Professionally-Orientated Degree Programme In Education Studies.

Roisin Donnelly
Dublin Institute of Technology, roisin.donnelly@dit.ie

Julie Uí Choistealbha
Marino Institute of Education, julie.uichoistealbha@mie.ie

Marian Fitzmaurice
Dublin Institute of Technology, marian.fitzmaurice@dit.ie

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Overview of the study

Qualitative Study: Research Question

• What is the impact on student experience, engagement and progression of the curriculum design of the final year of a non-professional degree programme in education studies?

• Subjective evaluation of 4th year of the BSc in Education Studies Degree

Student online survey and focus group interview; Programme team focus group interview

Indicative Literature

LITERATURE METHODOLOGY

Well established journals
• JTI
• Studies in HE
• Active Learning in HE
• Teaching & Teacher Education
• Educational Action Research

Reference lists
• Professional pathways
• Professionally Oriented
• Curriculum design
• Connected Curriculum
• Education Studies
• Enquiry based
• Capstone Project
• Internship
• ePortfolios

Online databases

Final selection

Timeline to date

Research Design Stages | Date
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Acquire Graduate contact details | November 2015
Review of literature | April 2016
Develop student survey in SurveyMonkey | November 2015
Ethics: Review information letter & participant consent form | Early January 2016
Develop focus group questions for students and staff | January 2016
Student survey to be sent out | By 15/1/16
Conduct two focus group interviews (Students & Staff) | Mid March 2016
Transcribe interviews | End March 2016
Data analysis & interpretation | Mid April 2016

Initial Findings: Students

CHALLENGES
• Stressful; scary; overwhelming; intense; conducting interviews;
• More time on thesis;
• More tutor meetings;
• Academic writing;
• Regular learning journal entries; apprehensive;
• Finding organisation to conduct interviews;
• Securing placement

BENEFITS
• Enjoyable; interesting;
• Link to further study/world of work;
• Career focused/shaping;
• Support; rewarding;
• Practical research;
• RM lectures alongside dissertation;
• Self belief;
• Exchanged ideas;
• Competence

SKILLS
• Communication;
• Problem solving;
• Teamwork;
• Leadership;
• Organisation;
• Time management;
• Motivate others;
• Multitask;
• Courage;
• Interpersonal ability;
• Ability to teach;
• Confidence;
• Idea generation;
• Conduct/analyse research;
• Independence;
• Presentation;
• Theory to practice

Initial Findings: Staff

• Collaboration was central in design and delivery of modules
• Curriculum design supported students to become more independent learners
• Students developed their workplace skills and could talk the language of recruitment
• Students require a significant piece of work experience as part of the degree programme
• There was a lesser focus on innovation first time round but this year the eportfolio has greatly improved the level of innovative thinking
• Research, Internship and Skills modules worked but a module to connect the learning from other years is required
  • Well-grounded in research in fourth year
  • Connection between the theory and the practice
  • Change in the students after internship
  • Isolated (from the rest of the programme)

Mid-point reflections

• How well did the final year prepare students for the path chosen by each on completion of the degree?
• What were they key variables in the programme design and implementation process for the final year from the staff perspective?
• How did the student experience of the final year compare with the intentions of the programme design team?
• After synthesising different perspectives from students and staff on the curriculum design of the final year of the BSc in Education Studies, how is the programme going to be improved?

Next steps

• Consolidate findings
• Implement recommendations
• Continue to innovate