

For Tina Lannin

Employer Engagement

23 Apr. 09

(This is not a verbatim record)

Key:

T = Teacher

S = Student

C = Comment

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Introduction

Good morning everyone. Mornings are beautiful! We're on day 4 of the course and we've all got used to Smudge! We have Julia who is from Bristol as an observer as she is looking to be one of the next trainers in this course to be taught in Edinburgh. There is also Anne Marie who is going to be leading this session but I will introduce her later.

Domestic Announcements

- On Wednesday, we announced that lunch is available tomorrow but if you would like to have packed lunch you must let us know.
- Check out time of the rooms is 11am but we also finish at 11am so please make sure you are packed up prior to the session. It is acceptable to have your suitcases in the room.
- A lot of people also said they wanted things to run to time. Yesterday, time keeping was quite poor so apologies for this.

C: I think it's been very good!

OK, with that said, I would like to introduce Anne Marie who is a lecturer of Reading University.

Anne Marie

Welcome everyone! I'm coming to talk to you about Employer Engagement.

As for myself, I have been in higher education for 25 years and I have seen many employers come and go. When I joined, it was just after a recession and so a lot of employers were talking about that, so it was interesting that in the 80s, I experienced my own recession first hand. This has helped sculpt my experience in the field of employer engagement.

To start the day off we're going to have a quick 'complete the following sentences' exercise. Please pair up and simply complete these sentences which encourage you to share your opinion about employers.

class discussion commences

T: What do you think employers are?

C: Commanding

C: A vital asset to the economy

C: Important

C: A pest

C: Slave drivers

C: Essential

T: What do you think employers want?

C: ...it now!

C: The best graduates

C: Best quality staff

C: Value for money

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T: What do you think employers need?

C: Us!

C: A bit of flattery

C: Professional interactions

C: A prompt service

C: A skilled and cost effective workforce

T: What does employer engagement mean?

C: A wide range of activities

C: Involvement with the student body

T: Careers services should engage employers because...?

C: They provide freebies!

C: Student employability otherwise we would be isolated from the graduate market.

group exercise ends and Anne Marie continues talking

It is very difficult to get into the mindset of employers as we are so focused on helping our students and that is not what they are about. Their job is simply to recruit people into their vacancies as cost effectively as possible.

For employment engagement, the phrase has only been around for slightly over 2 years. The first discussion of employer engagement was in a letter written by the funding councils in 2008. It addressed a number of issues, with a main one being about employers funding higher education. It also addressed the need for employers to be involved in academic course design so students were learning what would be relevant for the market place.

This year, this issue has been pushed further with emphasis on supporting foundation degrees and thinking of other ways of doing degrees which would be earned quicker. For example, degrees that can be finished in 18 months have been spoken about and certain subjects such as maths being more prevalent in academics as an important skill for the real workplace.

The recession

Any session about employer engagement must refer to the recession as it's so intertwined with it.

video named 'it's the economy stupid' is played but cannot be heard...Anne Marie paraphrases it

What the video is about.

It's a talk by the head of the management school of economics and he says that there are four engines of the economy (Europe, USA, Japan and the emerging markets). He says there are no other recessions that have been like this one as all four economies have collapsed whereas in previous recessions, at least two of the economies have survived to sustain the economy overall in some sort of way.