

TLC Project Assessment Case Study

Assessment Strategy	<p>For this assignment students were collectively required to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake research as directed, working either with a peer or in a small group; 2. Explain and reflect on the research process, including safety and ethical considerations when gathering data; 3. Investigate the extent to which the annual Sport and Exercise Sciences research conference contributed to students' academic development; 4. Explore and document the key highlights of the conference and outline areas for improvement for subsequent years; 5. Analyse and document the findings in the form of a poster.
Subject and module	<p>Sport and Exercise Sciences Subject Area - Essential Academic Skills for Studying Sport and Exercise</p>
Useful for students who are:	<p>Getting acquainted with and developing their understanding of basic research procedures</p>
Keywords	<p>Research skills, Social skills, Organisational Skills, Research conference, Learning by doing.</p>
Assessment activity	<p>Students had to work in small, tutor-allocated groups and were required to undertake basic research in one of the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewing of keynote speakers or seminar presenters or the conference organiser; - Conducting focus groups with selected level 1, 2 and 3 Sport and Exercise Sciences students; - Canvassing the views of all students via the completion of questionnaire studies per student cohort.
How does this assessment improve student learning?	<p>It has been noted by undergraduate Sport and Exercise Sciences students that the learning of various research skills, especially methods of data collection and analysis of empirical data, is a recurring difficulty. Students highlighted that due to the theoretical mode of learning about research</p>

	<p>methods they experienced a considerable degree of difficulty embracing the actual, practical value of research techniques and procedures. Moreover, they also expressed that their engagement with primary data was limited during their level 1 studies which curbed their learning process.</p> <p>The assignment tackled the above issues by providing hands-on experience for students in dealing with the collection and interpretation of raw scientific data.</p>
Underpinning assessment theory links	Reversed vaccination theory of education (see Postman & Weingartner, 1969, p. 21)
What went well	<p>The major benefit of this assignment is that students gained first hand experience and, consequently, understanding of the challenging nature of scientific research, whereby they developed a considerable degree of appreciation and enthusiasm for learning and practicing research skills. This is a significant achievement as research skills modules are generally considered abstract and, in turn, often inaccessible by both level 1 and 2 students.</p> <p>More importantly, this assignment helped students realise that on the successful completion of the level 1 research module their acquaintance with research methods and methodology would not come to its end. In fact, they began to appreciate that learning was a process not simply a phase or an inoculant, after the reception of which one becomes immune and would not need to be concerned with that specific subject matter any more (Postman & Weingartner, 1969).</p> <p>This assignment required level 1 students to get in contact with students from other levels and, thus, it increased the cross-level cohesion in the department. By virtue of this, the success of the assignment was partially due to the support level 1 students received from their level 2 and 3 counterparts.</p> <p>In addition, the students made invaluable comments and observations regarding the structure and organisation of the Sport and Exercise Sciences'</p>

	<p>research conference, which will be thoroughly considered next year when the organisation of the conference will take place.</p>
<p>What could be improved</p>	<p>The assignment was logistically challenging by virtue of the large number of relatively small student-based research groups. Moreover, since the students were taught only a limited range of data analysis techniques, it impacted upon their final analysis and interpretation of raw data. However, these skills will be revisited and further developed in their Level 2 research skills studies. Despite the limited data analysis students demonstrated, this assignment is seen as an appropriate catalyst for the next stage of research skills studies.</p> <p>The weighting of the assignment was only 25% of a 20 credit module in 2006/07, which appeared to be low when taking into consideration the amount of work the assignment involved. In light of this observation and feedback from the students, the assessment strategy of the level 1 Essential Academic Skills for Studying Sport and Exercise will have to be revisited and restructured by increasing the weighting of this assignment from 25% to 50%. This will include the addition of a poster <i>defence</i> to further facilitate student differentiation in grading.</p>
<p>What support for staff is needed to implement this method of assessment?</p>	<p>In order to implement this assessment the subject area needs to organise a student research conference on an annual basis that has monetary and time-related ramifications. Therefore, the subject area will need to make both financial and administrative provision. Financial support can be ensured by the annual budgetary planning whereas administrative support can be obtained by getting students involved in the organisation of the event.</p> <p>Each student group required extra, individualised tutorial sessions that added to the teaching load of the staff member coordinating the assignment.</p>
<p>What support for students is needed to implement</p>	<p>For level 1 students undertaking this assessment needed additional, mostly, logistical support in the</p>

this method of assessment?	<p>form of arranging locations (appropriate rooms) for the data collection procedures (e.g. focus groups) to take place.</p> <p>Students also received additional preparation in terms of contacting potential research subjects (e.g. external speakers) and thus e-mail correspondence between students and their subjects were rigorously monitored by the assignment tutor.</p>
What are the time implications?	<p>There were no specific time implications as the research conference took place during reading week when there were no formal lectures held and thus students could freely manage their time as regarded the data collection.</p>
Other resource implications?	<p>Digital voice recording devices could aid the data recording and analysis process by transferring the storage and handballing of raw data onto a computer platform.</p>
What are the risks?	<p>In order for the assignment to work, the running of the research conference must be ensured.</p> <p>A larger student population may make this assignment difficult, if not impossible, to manage.</p>
How can these be minimised?	<p>Preplanning of the organisation of the research conference in terms of both budgetary and human resources-related needs.</p> <p>When the number of the student cohort undertaking this module raises, the number of students involved in research groups could be increased. This, however, would work only up to a certain point and it is to be noted that this assignment would probably not be manageable with a large student body.</p>
Implications for dyslexic students?	<p>Dyslexic students seemed to cope well with the assignment as it had only a small written component (production of a poster). Moreover, since students worked in groups, they could correct each other's spelling and grammatical errors.</p> <p>Support for dyslexic students was also available via NEWI Student Services.</p>
Institution where this was trialled	<p>NEWI, University of Wales</p>
Lecturers	<p>Dr Gyozo Molnar and Jackie Bryson</p>

CATS	25% of 20 credit in 2006/07; 50% of 20 credit in 2007/08
Level	One
Compulsory/optional	Compulsory
Relationship to other modules	This module underpins the level 2 Research Skills module and, thus, directly linked to students' continuous methodological development, the pinnacle of which is the dissertation.
Delivery pattern	This is a 20 credit module that is front loaded, meaning that most of the lectures and the seminars take place in the first semester as students must acquire those skills that are essential for studying at undergraduate level as soon as possible. In the second semester, the focus shifts from essential learning skills to basic research skills and methods.
Student profile Year 2006/7	In 2006/07 there were 40 students enrolled on this module. Those students were pursuing either a Sport and Exercise Sciences or a Sport Development degree.
Learning outcomes assessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explain the process of conducting qualitative and quantitative research - Undertake basic analysis of qualitative and quantitative research
References	Postman, N. and Weingartner, C. (1969). Teaching as a Subversive Activity. New York: Dell Publishing.

Essential Academic Skills - Coursework 3	
Assignment Title:	A critique of SES's research conference
Learning outcomes to be assessed in this piece of coursework:	
LO3: Explain the process of conducting qualitative and quantitative research.	
LO4: Undertake basic analyses of qualitative and quantitative research.	
Assignment brief:	<p>The Sport & Exercise Sciences' 4th annual research conference will take place on Tuesday 20th February. This conference is a good opportunity to reinforce academic knowledge transfer and our research culture. This academic forum will follow a formal conference setting to provide staff members and, especially, students with valuable academic experience.</p> <p>Presenters will include guest speakers from Loughborough University (From Bobby Sands to Lawrie Sanchez: The Making of a 'National' Sports Stadium for Northern Ireland), Sports Coach UK (UK Action Plan for Coaching: Implications for Sports Science and Coaching) and level three Sport and Exercise Sciences students. The detailed conference programme will be released and electronically distributed a week prior to the conference.</p> <p>This assessment will require you to evaluate the views of a range of participants on their perceptions of the success, or otherwise, of the conference.</p> <p>You are required to collectively (<u>90 marks</u>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake research as directed, working either with a colleague or in a small group. Explain, and reflect on, the research process including safety considerations when gathering data. 2. Investigate the extent to which the conference contributed to student academic development. 3. Explore and document the key highlights of the conference and detail areas for improvement for subsequent years. 4. Analyse and document your findings in the form of a poster.

You are required to individually reflect on the contribution of others to your assessment task. This should take the form of a 100 word critique, mailed to J.Bryson@newi.ac.uk, describing how you rate the contribution of your colleagues at each stage of the research project. Your mark (10 marks) will be based on the critique undertaken by your peer(s) (50%) and observations made by your Module Tutor (50%).

Working in small tutor-allocated groups, you are required to undertake basic research which will take one of the following forms:

- Interviewing of keynote speakers, seminar presenters and the conference organiser
- Conducting focus groups with selected level 1, 2 and 3 SES students
- Canvassing the views of all students via completion of a questionnaire

Group 1: Interviewing keynote speaker 1

Group 2: Interviewing keynote speaker 2

Group 3: Interviewing conference organiser

Group 4: Interviewing past student speaker 1

Group 5: Interviewing past student speaker 2

Group 6: Interviewing past student speaker 3

Group 7: Interviewing current student speaker 1

Group 8: Interviewing current student speaker 2

Group 9: Interviewing current student speaker 3

Group 10: Interviewing current student speaker 4

Group 11: Focus group with selected level 1 students

Group 12: Focus group with selected level 2 students

Group 13: Focus group with selected level 3 students

Group 14: Questionnaire for use by all year 1 students

Group 15: Questionnaire for use by all year 2 students

Group 16: Questionnaire for use by all year 3 students

Assignment length:	Poster presentation	
Formatting Instructions:	<p>Poster presentation guidance</p> <p>The size of the poster should be a maximum of 140 cm (high) x 100 cm (wide). This is equivalent to two landscape A1 sheets, one above the other. Formatting can be done in PowerPoint, if you wish, but slides will need to be enlarged.</p> <p>For an idea of what a poster should be like, see http://www.sportsci.org/resource/poster/poster.html</p> <p>You might also wish to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lettering on posters should be readable by viewers one metre away. - The message to be presented should not require oral explanation - Posters should not have more than six illustrations - A good poster should not try to make more than one major point - Posters need planning – they should not be put together at the last minute - Aim for clear and simple presentation of data - Literary (as opposed to illustrative) content should be kept to a minimum - The illustrative content should cover around 50% of the available area; hence figures and tables should be large - Avoid non-standard abbreviations and acronyms and excessive use of jargon - Clearly label the order in which your presentation should read - Keep in mind that more does not mean better, so do not overload your poster <p>(Adapted from the Physiological Society Guidelines)</p>	
Assessment criteria	POSTER CONTENT	70 out of 100
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation, and reflection on, the research process including commentary on safety considerations 	25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of findings on the extent to which the conference contributed to student academic development 	25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of findings on the key highlights of the conference and detail areas for improvement for subsequent years 	20
	PRESENTATION of POSTER	20 out of 100
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poster can be read from at least 1 metre away 	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of the poster is interesting and encourages people to come and look closer 	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigation clear 	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text sensible size and amount of text appropriate to convey the message 	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrative content appropriate and easy to understand 	4
	CONTRIBUTION TO THE RESEARCH PROCESS	10 out of 100
Hand in Date:	Group posters submitted to Cynthia Edwards on 21/03/07 by 4 pm. Individual e-mail critique to J.Bryson@newi.ac.uk by 21/03/07 by 4pm.	
Important Information:	90 marks is based on a group mark that which will be equally divided by all group members. When emailing through your critique, under 'Subject' put 'EAS – Group x - Your name'	
Further information and guidance will be provided within lecture time, and supported in tutorial and seminar sessions if required.		