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Creating paths to confidence, enterprise and employability

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Project Reference Number:	172
Title:	Creating paths to confidence, enterprise and employability
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Email:	m.lintern@plymouth.ac.uk
Description:	<p>Aims of project</p> <p>To develop a 'Boost Your Confidence' programme that is innovative and collaborative, using both existing practice, re-framed and to develop new areas of work capable of cultural change amongst practitioners and confidence development in students/graduates.</p> <p>Background to project (or context)</p> <p>Arose as a result of: A collaborative conference on working together to develop confidence facilitated by Careers, UPC Faculty and Edinburgh Napier University 'Confident Futures' team. A developing interest in using Positive Psychology and, in particular 'Authentic Happiness' (Seligman) and 'Mind Sets' (Dwenk) in our professional practice.</p> <p>Methods used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student Focus Group looking at perceived and projected ideas on how confidence makes a difference; ○ Establishing existing practice in other Universities and learning from this; ○ Drawing on existing practice (Career and Counselling services, in particular; ○ Visiting other HEIs offering Confidence related programmes. ○ Developing a free-standing programme 'Boost Your Confidence in' series. ○ Reframing existing delivery, for example, Graduate Boot Camp to Graduate Confidence, employer delivered workshops to include focus on confidence building. ○ Changing evaluation across the service to include a participant assessed evaluation accounting for shifts in confidence levels.

Results

- Boost Your Confidence programme established and expanding;
- Article for Phoenix Magazine –Association of Career Advisers in Higher Education (AGCAS);
- Dissemination workshop at AGAS Biennial Conference September 2011 Nottingham University – as a result of this workshop we have been able to look at developing a student focussed method of assessment of growing confidence using a simple fulcrum measure developed at the University of Northampton.
- Clear establishment of confidence as an embedded part of the Career and Employability Service culture and practice.
- The deepening of a collaborative culture across services.
- Further training and CPD in Positive Psychology - attendance of Positive Psychology Master Class. Trainers: Positive Psychology trainers www.positivepsychologytraining.co.uk. This course is intended to deepen and enhance the learning from the TF so that we can utilise 'Well-being' and Authentic Happiness theory and practice and bring this into the Confidence Programme.
- As a result of conversations and visits to other universities we are aware that there are wide ranging approaches to this issue including:
 - Building Personal resources - networking and developing confidence;
 - A course for PhD students aimed at easing their transition (by boosting their confidence) into the workplace;
 - A free online tool for first years called Gro which includes a questionnaire and links to resources and action planning to boost and manage confidence;
 - 'Promoting a Positive Image' short 1 hour sessions Professional Confidence at Work", "Dress for Success", "Building a Personal and Professional Brand", "Negotiation Skills", "Public Speaking for Impact" - now rebranding the latter as "Secrets of Confident Communicators;
 - 'Finding you voice' using singing as a means of establishing confidence;
 - Embedding a measure of personal confidence growth on an Engineering Widening Participation programme.

The University of Plymouth would seem to be the only institution using a combination of workshops and embedding 'confidence' into general working practice.

	Legacy In order to ensure sustainability on the Confidence Programme and in CA professional working practice it was decided to use a substantial part of the TF funding on further training in the Confidence and well-being area. Consequently two of the CA's are receiving training in Positive Psychology and materials have been purchased to develop further our MBTI and Mind Sets work. These materials are practical resources for use by all qualified CA's.
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Type of Research:	Development
Web Site:	http://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/ease
Collaborators:	Mandy Burns Janet Gardiner
Keywords:	confidence; managing stress; on-line confidence; well-being; collaboration; knowing yourself and others;
Publications:	