Preparing sport graduates for employment: satisfying employers' expectations.

Abstract

Purpose
The purpose of this paper is to explore from an employer's perspective the skills, attributes, and capabilities required of a sports graduate, whilst also discovering how a student is expected to demonstrate these skills in the context of a sports organisation.

Design/methodology/approach
This study adopted a qualitative interpretive case study approach through the use of face to face interviews with six employers from sports organisations involved in the delivery of sport. Interviews lasted between 30-42 minutes and were recorded. This was followed by a thematic review to allow for common themes to be selected and represented. The results were then reviewed and evaluated by a further six industry professionals and nine sports educators.

Findings
The results suggest employers primarily seek enterprise/ entrepreneurship skills, together with an articulation of a 'sports graduate' mind-set. This mind-set is described by the employers as being something which is demonstrated through a combination of behaviours and attributes. The paper concluded that the use of case studies and classroom based challenges where students have to respond to and solve problems by the very nature of the activity is optimal.

Originality/Value
The originality of this paper lies in the context of study, and the integration of enterprise and entrepreneurship skills that are needed for the changing world of work in sport. The value of the papers is in both the employer's description of the graduate mindset and also examples of how the skills can be applied in the context of sport.

Keywords: enterprise skills; employability skills; employer perceptions

Article classification: Research paper

Introduction

The UK remains one of Europe's biggest employers in sport, (Eurostat 2017) and in 2012 this accounted for just over 2% of the European Union's (EU) total employment (European Commission, 2012). In absolute terms, the sports industry in the EU contributed 4.46 million employees in 2012, of whom 610,000 people (13.7%) resided in the UK (EC *ibid*). This represented a little over a 100% increase in UK sport-related employment between 1985-2012 and 440,000 sport-related jobs being reported by Sport England in 2013. It is therefore not surprising that the sports industry is fast becoming a highly significant employer of people worldwide and presents today's graduates interested in a career in sport with some very diverse avenues to explore for employment from those that existed 20 years ago.

With such extensive employment and self-employment opportunities emerging in sport, universities keen to develop employable graduates need to explore the idea of what this means across the sector. Matlay (2006) suggests that subject-specific research is required on employability and enterprise as much of the existing literature is commonly generic and it would seem there is a paucity of scholarship relating to the sports field that is comparable to the extensive literature geared towards alternative disciplines within universities (e.g. Tourism

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and Leisure; Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson (2006), Architecture; Sara (2006), Engineering; Chua (2014) and Business (Freudenberg, Brimble and Cameron 2011). Mindful of this growth in the sport industry, this paper will set out the sports labour landscape through exploring current literature to show its diverse nature, and then consider the skills required of a sports graduate today, concentrating on organisations involved with the delivery of sport in communities.

The changing sports labour market

According to Hoye et al., (2015) there are three distinct sports sectors that can be articulated, that include firstly, private sometimes referred to as the commercial sector (Gratton and Taylor, 2000). Public that can be sometimes referred to a government funded sector and thirdly, voluntary or third sector organisations (Allock, 2010) which include non-for profit or social enterprises. What follows in this review is a very brief appraise of each of the three sectors in relation to employment.

Whilst 76% of England's total sport employment is currently positioned in the private/commercial sector (Sport England, 2010), Gratton and Taylor (2000) suggest there are two main contributors; services and sports goods. The commercial sector as an employer for graduates is flourishing with reported growth rates in sport retail employment of 18% between 2003 and 2008 (Sport England, 2010) and reports of an increase in private sector employees across 94% authorities (ONS, 2015). However, in the UK along with this growing industry come a need for more highly regarded skills and competencies (Kaplan, 2014). On the other hand, the public sector in sport has the mandate to support the provision of suitable sporting opportunity (Trenberth, 2012) and is representative of 13% of England's total sport-related labour market (Sport England, 2010). Such sport organisations therefore span local, regional and national agencies, as well as specialist sport quangos which lie outside civil service remits but receive funding from the government (e.g. UK Sport, Sport England and National Governing Bodies) (Taylor, Doherty and McGraw, 2015). Accordingly, these organisations are all required to operate within their own entities, whilst conforming to the ever-changing political boundaries around sport and its delivery (Parent, O'Brien and Slack, 2012). Significant political changes and reform have consequently altered the sport policy trajectory from a framework whereby UK government highly regulates the public sector of sport, to a more market-led system in which government somewhat detaches itself from the decision making process (MCVET 2008; King, 2014). Public sector workers therefore have to evolve to meet these new demands of the workplace, by being more entrepreneurial and output focussed. Consequently, students need the ability to cope with the uncertainty of their work environment and demonstrate a respond to a rapidly changing sector in a way never expected of their counterparts (Wickramasinghe and Perera, 2010).

The final sector to consider is the voluntary arena and in similar ways to its public sector counterpart, this sector contributes 11% of all sport-related employment in England (Sport England 2010). In addition, it also contributes 70,000 social enterprises that now exist employing approximately 1.5 million people throughout the UK (BMG Research, 2013) and operate across a broad-spectrum of industries that range from education to health and social care (Villeneuve-Smith *et al.,* 2013). Ratten (2011) proposes that social entrepreneurship in the sports domain commonly emerges through the design and delivery of novel initiatives that often offer entrepreneurial solution to cater to the rapidly shifting societal demands (Ratten and Babiak, 2010). This sector by its very nature requires graduates who have that ability to be creative and the drive and determination to see bring ideas to fruition (Ratten, 2011).

Hence, the sport labour market landscape of 21st century is changing with the delivery of sports witnessing a shift from public to private sector (Wickramasinghe and Perera, 2010), which gives rise to new challenges for academia. With what appears to be now a more varied range of options of graduate employment in sport, there are still concerns raised over the

intense competition of an already congested labour market (Tomlinson 2008). There is a greater pressure now on universities to offer practical application of skills in the context of a student's future employment (Jones and Jones, 2014), making sport a very difficult subject due to the range of employment opportunities outlined already in this paper.

Graduate skills for today's world

With these changes in the labour market landscape come the creation of new roles for students and the potential of a non-linear career (Wickramasinghe and Perera, 2010). This, in turn, puts a growing pressure on universities to display their graduates' readiness to enter the world of work (Bridgestock, 2009). In 2012 the Wilson Report suggested that 'Graduates of today just don't have the necessary skills to meet the needs of business today', therefore development of employability and the enterprise aspects of a student's profile have become important across many UK universities' curricula as there is significant evidence that both are valued by employers and other stakeholders (Dearing, 1997). As the number of graduate jobs dropped between 2006 - 2009 during the recession employers now demand more from graduates looking for them to be a 'good fit' with their business in terms of skills, attributes and behaviours (Business, Innovation and Skills 2015).

Employability has long since been described in terms of a set of skills, knowledge and attributes (Yorke and Knight, 2004), including skills such as planning, prioritising, problem-solving, self-management, communication, and attributes such as willingness to learn, taking risks and self-confidence. Yorke (2006) describes employability as a two-layer model, firstly, the graduate's readiness for work, equipped with the skills commonly documented (Lowden, Hall, Elliot and Lewon, 2011) and secondly, their ability to demonstrate their professional knowledge. Archer and Davison (2008) also advocate this professional knowledge but further propose that a graduate must be able to develop the links between professional knowledge and the application of the skills within the professional context.

Whilst enterprise and entrepreneurship skills have been described by Gibb (2002) as skills, attributes and capabilities, included in these sets are creativity, taking initiative, self–belief, and negotiation skills. Moreland (2006) argues enterprise skills to be a subset of employability that has for a number of years been a discussion point for many scholars. Nevertheless, enterprise and entrepreneurship have been suggested by Ball (2005) to be the key to the success of many sports' organisations, enabling them to meet the challenges of the changing landscape. It is an accumulation of all these skills plus the ability to apply them to meet industry demand that employers covet in graduates (Jackson and Chapman, 2009). Employers seek graduates who can provide immediate impact on an organisation's operation (BIS, 2015). Adding a further dimension to employability and enterprise skills, Ratten (2010) proposed that, through the context of sport entrepreneurship, there are four emerging areas of interest, innovation, risk taking, a proactive nature and value creation. Academics designing their curricula would do well to include these employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship areas into their plans.

As definitions of employability and enterprise are variant so too are entrepreneurship definitions. Nevertheless the literature in this area is agreed that there is a lack of discipline specific studies (Matlay, 2006). This paper intends to address this gap in the sports sector as previous scholars have written about business subjects (Bennett, 2006: Jones and Pennaluna, 2013) and some with a more business start-up focus (Akpan and Etor 2013).

Approaches to skill development

How employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship are best approached in universities is wide-ranging with no documented single solution that fits the different discipline degree

programmes (Yorke and Knight, 2003). Current thinking is that employability and enterprise skills should be taught as part of the curriculum (Rae, 2007), rather than through stand-alone modules (Fallows and Steve, 2000). A variety of methods and models are widely documented as a means to developing the appropriate skills for employment (Bennett, Dunne and Carre, 2000: Yorke and Knight, 2002). Traditional work placement modules are still evident in many degree programmes where students get first-hand experience of working within an organisation. It is argued by Crebert et al., (2007) that graduate employability should be connected to industry in all aspects of the undergraduate curriculum. In addition, Fleming, Martin, Hughes and Zinn (2009) would suggest that whilst such programmes provide 'a point of difference for the students' for effective learning to take place, structure and clear guidelines are required to allow for effective applied learning to take place.

Cox and King (2006), as part of a re-design of a computing course, developed a skills set specific to a student's career and pathway and then through the course design were able to build a programme that was informed by employers and gave students the opportunity to develop a coherent portfolio of skills. This apparent need to nurture a shared understanding between academics and employers is clearly required (Lowden, Hall, Elliot and Lewon, 2011). How this is facilitated across the disciplines will vary with each being required to establish their own model of academic and employer engagement (Cole and Tibby, 2013). Work to establish this shared view is already evident in some of the disciplines: Computing and Information (Cox and King, 2006): Health (Brewer et al., 2014): Management (Tewari and Sharma, 2011).

Similarly, Jones, Matlay and Martitz (2012) suggest there are different ways that entrepreneurship can became part of a degree programme. Either through the development of entrepreneurial skills and mind-set (Hannon, 2007), or as a course focussed on business start–up (Bennet, 2006). Gibb (2002) argued as part of his early research in this field if universities are to teach entrepreneurship, then more action orientated teaching styles need to be adopted to promote creativity and problem solving by students. Some ten years on, the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (2012) suggested pedagogical approaches for enterprise need to focus on experiential learning and adopt a more active learning approach. Teaching methods such as project work (Rae and Cranwell, 2000) where the experience is hands-on, where students can recognise and act on opportunities (Rae, 2010), and use of technology (Mc Keown, 2006). Arasti, Falavarjani and Imanipour (2010) found that the three most used methods by staff when teaching business and entrepreneurship are lectures, case studies and group discussions, whilst Dinning (2015) identified role play, problem based learning and networking as pedagogies to be used for developing enterprise skills in students. Therefore, education should be learner centred, experiential and discovery type pedagogies (Pittaway and Cope, 2007: Rae, 2010), it should be active (Mwasalwiba 2010) encouraging 'learning by doing' (Race 2015).

Need to learn from the employers

As one of the key stakeholders of graduate employability employers want universities to provide students with a relevant curricular (Singh et al., 2013), and yet are still somewhat disappointed with the work readiness of its graduates (Dinning and Brown, 2015) thus providing an argument that academics and employers need to establish a shared vision as to the meaning of a job-ready graduate for a particular industry. Not only does this involve the skills required but more importantly the application of these skills in the specific workplace (Nova, 2015). Whilst Speight, Lackovic and Cooker (2012) would argue that there is no single solution to the challenges of equipping todays graduates for productive and worthwhile futures, strategies are required and need to be specific. Academics need to have industry-based knowledge to embed the skills in such a way that their application mirrors that of the chosen industry of the graduate (Ball 2005). As long as there is a disconnection between employer and academic, there is a fear that employability and enterprise will continue to be taught as disconnected activities (Rae 2007). Helyer, Evans and Lee (2011) advocate that universities

and businesses need to simplify their language to allow for a shared understanding and enable collaboration between the two in order to develop innovative programmes.

Whilst there are few studies that seek out employers' views on graduate skills in a sport context a recent study by Tasitskari, Goudas, Tsalouchou and Michalopoulou (2017) considered the perception of graduate skills from 201 Greek sports employers. They concluded that personal and interpersonal skills were the most sort after as they were the function of good customer service, together with organisational and time management skills. Similarly, Sleap and Read (2007) in a UK based study, found from a student perspective that organisational, communication and time management were crucial skills needed in the workplace together with personal skill such as self-confidence, initiative self-presentation, drive and planning, suggesting similarities in sport graduate skills between the two countries. With the growing importance of employability enterprise and entrepreneurship skills and approaches to teaching, this study firstly sets out to review the skills, attributes, capabilities and knowledge that a sports employer involved in the delivery of sport requires of a graduate. Secondly to explore how a student is expected to demonstrate the skills in the context of a sports organisation. The originality of this paper exists in the systematic thinking of employability and enterprise skills as well as being in the vanguard for thinking for sport education.

Methodology

This study assumed an interpretive qualitative case study approach (Stake 2008) which allowed the author to develop an understanding of graduate skills required by employers, then through a review and evaluation phase with a different participant group, a protocol aligned with educational design research (Mc Kenney and Reeves 2012) the understanding of graduate skills was affirmed and a model was devised.

Participants

For this study two separate groups of participants were recruited, one group to develop the graduate skills model and a second group to provide evaluation and affirmation of the model. Adopting a similar strategy to recruit participants as Munro and Cook (2008), participants in this study were invited by the researcher to take part from organisations known to the university and personal contacts of the researcher. For the initial stage of the study six employers agreed to participate in the study; it was essential that the participants were representative of sport organisations involved in the delivery of sport. Whilst the geographical location and organisation of participants was not a factor for consideration, all final volunteers were from a range of different organisations within the North West of England, including a private sports organisation, a county sports partnership, a public leisure centre, and a social enterprise. For the second stage sport industry (n=6) and sport academic scholars (n=9) were used to review and evaluated the results amassed. Snowball sampling was used in this stage of the data collection process, in order to amass a larger sample size, both from across the UK and also of participants from beyond the authors network (Noy 2007).

Research Method

University ethical approval for the study was secured, following which all invitations were sent out to employers via email and based upon the response, follow up phone calls were made in order to secure 6 employers operating in the delivery of sport. Interviews took place in the office of the participant over a two month period. Prior to the start of the interview, participants were issued with an information sheet about the research and asked to sign a consent form. Using a semi structured interview approach all interviews lasted between 30-42 minutes and were conducted by a single researcher to ensure research consistency (Pegoraro, O'Reilly and Levallet, 2009). All interviews were audio recorded allowing for files to be downloaded

and the transcribed verbatim, using a professional transcription service. To support the interview process a skills card was created using employability skills described by Knight and Yorke (2004) and enterprise skills offered by Gibb (2002) The card itself removed any links to university terminology such as employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship, so that all interviews were conducted through the discussion of skills rather than the classification of skills that universities tend to use. This is line with Helyer, Evans and Lee (2011) that suggest more simple language needs to be used.

Following some basic introductions, five questions were used as the basis for the semi-structured interview:

1.   What do you look for when recruiting new employees to your organisation, particularly graduates?
2.   Using the prepared skills card, what are the three top skills you look for from each set of skills? Which are the most valuable?
3.   For the top skills identified, how do you think we can develop this at a university level, can you give an example of the type of activity we could use at university to teach this?
4.   How is the skills used in the context of a graduate role within your organisation?
5.   What is the key subject knowledge required to work within your organisation?

The results of the interviews generated a model showing the skills and attributes identified by the six employers. This model was then disseminated to the sport industry professionals and sport academics with the request for them to review and provide an evaluation of the model presented. This second phase of data collection was done through email and participants were asked for written feedback, plus to recommend additional participants to support the snowball sampling methodology.

Data Analysis

Interviews from all the employers were transcribed and key findings that related to the study's objectives were amassed through an interpretive thematic analysis that followed a staged process advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006). Following transcription each account was read and re-read to familiarise the researcher with responses. The initial codes were systematically generated via the annotation of key words and associated phrases. Themed data was then reviewed and refined to ensure the collated extracts for each theme not only appeared to form a coherent pattern, but also reflected the entire data set accurately. The use of the themes then guided the discussion with any definitions being clearly outlined and final pertinent data selected and related it back to the study objectives that were ultimately derived from the preceding investigatory literature. Data from the sport industry professionals and sport academics was then reviewed through a similar process of thematic analysis and the original model was developed to accommodate any new information from these participants. Trustworthiness is a key factor in a qualitative study (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004) and this is demonstrated in this study by the credibility of the participants who all worked in a sport context and the transferability of the findings across a range of sport programmes.

Results

In the first part of the interviews, the six employers gave their perceptions of what their organisations expect of graduates. When asked what employability and enterprise meant in their organisations, they gave very indicative comments, both open ended and pragmatic.

> *…..I think it's about being able to dream and not think anything is too big for you to achieve'* (E3)

> *…..It's about setting up your own business, income and expenditure and all these sorts of things'* (E5)

E1 added that they did not even use this type of language but would use 'innovations' when looking at ideas to grow the business. This finding supported the author's decision to remove such categories as employability and enterprise from the skills prompt card, so that employers were not having to process terminology that was not congruent to their organisation.

Mind-set

The common factor that all participants agreed is that graduates require a certain 'mind-set'. When questioned further as to what they meant by the term, there was a range of explanations given including taking ownership, being responsible for their own work and always looking for ways to improve both themselves and the organisation. Three of the six employers commented that they needed graduates to have a positive outlook - *they just need to 'muck in'* which supports the idea of a graduate being a 'good fit' (BIS 2015), whilst one employer suggested that it was a mind-set related to behaviours. A common word used by five of the employers was passion, a passion for sport, and for the task at hand.

> *…..seeing things through to the end, believing that they can finish what might seem like a hard and endless project. We need graduates who just get on with it, yes they might ask questions, but they show initiative and get on with it. I think this also goes hand in hand with being passionate about your work and actually wanting to be there. The passion could be about sport or it could be about working with young people. I think that's what I mean by mind-set* (E1).

In the review and evaluation stage, four participants questioned whether it was a passion for sport, or more the need to be 'industry savvy', and that in fact a sport graduate looks to be 'similar to other graduates in terms of the skills ' One industry professional suggested;

> *I would need to audit their CV for work experience in sport-related areas to substantiate a term such as passion for sport*

Past scholarship has been centred around the entrepreneurial mind-set (Hannon, 2007; QAA, 2012) rather than graduate mind-set, yet these results do represent some commonality between the entrepreneurial mind–set, which is said to include aspects of personal ambition and goals, personal confidence and resilience, personal organisation and self-discipline, understanding of one's self and ability to tolerate uncertainty, risk and failure and achieve results through working beyond perceived limits QAA (2012).

Skills and personal qualities

Each employer identified a range of key skills and qualities that are important for a graduate in his organisation to be able to demonstrate. Two skills were identified by all employers and confirmed in the review, firstly having the ability to solve problems, with E2 suggesting it was about solving problems, not just identifying them, whilst E 1 suggested that:

> *graduates need to be able to offer us more than one solution. If they can come up with two or three solutions for us to discuss as a team, they will have more impact with our organisation.*

The second skill identified was communication, with E3 commenting '……… I *expect anyone who comes from university to be able to communicate both verbally and written, it is not something I would expect to give time to'.* Other skills identified by at least four of the

employers were creativity, listening skills, planning and prioritising. These results support the earlier findings of Sleap and Read (2007). The top two personal qualities identified by the employers and again confirmed in the review were self-confidence and willingness to learn, E2 commented:

> *We would expect a new member of staff to get involved with most things and have a go; very often we find graduates who think they are there to do one thing and do not see that they should perhaps support other staff in their areas. It is a changing and challenging sector so everyone needs to be continually learning so we can stay ahead.*

Other qualities identified were initiative, adaptability and self-awareness. E6 commented that:

> *We expect graduates to be self-aware in terms of their behaviours, they need to understand their strengths, weaknesses and the gap and know how to fill them so that they can become valued members of our organisation.*

As part of the review and evaluation process by the sport educators and industry professional, skills such as resilience, leadership, listening, empathy, team work, integrity and negotiating were added, Three of the industry professionals suggested that literacy is 'too much of a catch all' and that perhaps a more 'up-to-date one' should be added for example 'digital literacy'. One sport educator noted that

> *…… this model appears transferable to any graduate, so some of the skills identified need further interpretation for a sports graduate*

A common theme from industry professionals was that sport is a 'fast-paced career' requiring a graduate to be 'dynamic and flexible' enabling them to be 'proactive and responsive' to the needs to the communities and customers. Whilst one industry professional commented

> *…… a graduate will require these key characteristics as identified by the diagram but also this visual representation should allow for personal reflection and discussion.*

Figure 1 shows the complete set of results from both stages of data collection, with mind-set as the central part to an employable graduate, followed by a further six competencies that are deemed absolutely necessary. The attributes and skills in the outer circle represent those selected by most of the participants as being required of a graduate. In addition, those skills and competencies that are also described as enterprise and entrepreneurship have been highlighted in blue, as they make up just under 70% of the reported skills and attributes, which is the basis for the originality of this paper

Figure 1 Graduate skills and qualities required by sports employers ©Dinning

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Application of skill and qualities within sport organisations

Half of the employers interviewed said they had experience of working with graduates who might have demonstrated a skill at university but lacked the ability to transfer it into the context of their organisation. Extrapolating from these interviews, the results suggest ways in which a graduate can demonstrate these skills in the work place and also how university lecturers can develop these skills within the curriculum and in particular within the classroom (see table 1).

Examples include using personal development planning, case studies, work-based learning and project experience. However, the common thread is activity that challenges students by promoting problem-solving and creativity and encouraging students to reflect upon their performances.

Table 1: How Students can Demonstrate Skills in the Workplace and how Academic can Develop in the Curriculum: The Employers Viewpoint.

Discussion

Three decades of scholarly activity in the area of employability and enterprise skills has resulted in a set of largely agreed skills, qualities, attributes and behaviours. (Enterprise: Gibb 2002; Employability: Knight and Yorke 2004; Entrepreneurship: Ratten 2010). In reviewing the skills that sport employer's value in the workplace and of graduates when applying for graduate jobs in sport, the findings suggest that sport employers have a preference towards a graduate possessing a mind-set linked to behaviour and attributes before a set of skills. The model identified in figure 1 puts mind-set at the heart of a graduate's capability and as something that includes passion, wanting to be the best, being resilient to change and seeing things through to the end. This mind-set aligns to other authors such as Sleap and Reed (2007), who suggest students need to have 'a drive' and Wickramasinghe and Perera (2010) who suggest that students need the 'ability to cope with change'. Furthermore, this mind-set is similar to the enterprise mind-set described by Gibb (2004) and more recently QAA (2012). Although there is a lack of exploration of this idea it has significance for this paper as it suggests a potential shift from the more traditional employability skills (Knight and Yorke 2004) towards attributes and skills that are more enterprising and dynamic, to support and sustain employment within the sport delivery sectors as it shifts from public to private. The articulated mind-set, attributes and skills will enable a graduate to respond and thrive in the 'fast- paced' sports industry, as described by one industry professional, and be a 'good fit' (BIS 2015). This has implications in the classroom, suggesting there is a need for education that promotes enterprise skills and an entrepreneurial mind-set, Therefore a more contemporary use of enterprise education is required within universities that connects employability and enterprise (Rae 2007)

Contextualisation would seem central to how mind-set, attributes and skills can be developed to meet with industry demand (Archer and Davison, 2008: Jackson and Chapman, 2009), so that sport graduates are not seen operating below the industry standard and not held back when it comes to recruitment into graduate level jobs. If university teachers are to respond to the sports industry requirements for graduates, then they need to develop aligned pedagogies that allow students to exercise the necessary skills, attributes and mind-set pertaining to the sports specific industry. Rae and Cranwell (2000) suggested students need to have hands-on experiences such as project work or work based learning experiences (Crebert et al., 2007). However these findings have presented an additional broad range of activities (Table 1) that sport students should be exposed to as part of their curricula to develop the necessary skills and attributes, these include running a live event and authentic classroom-based challenges. The development of employability skills and a graduate mind-set should not be left to chance within a work based learning experience but should be part of the philosophy of the programme and embedded across all the curricular in a way that the activity is contextualised to the discipline allowing students to shape the skills to be industry specific (Moore and Morton 2017). Employer engagement in the development of a curriculum is crucial if university

teachers are to understand the contextualisation of the skills and mind-set required of their graduates

Whilst some skills clearly align to specific activity, it is not as easy to align all aspects of the 'graduate mind-set' in the same way. Passion, seeing things through, positive outlook are not things that can be taught. The findings suggest using Personal Development Planning (PDP) to help students become more aware to understand their mind-set and behaviour to different situations. However, rather than a standalone module, which is very often the case in universities, perhaps PDP would be best placed central to the programme philology of student development, where students are questioned and challenged on the way they apply themselves and how they respond in diverse situations. Employers acknowledged that reflection practice can be incorporated into the curricular which has the potential to be an al. 2001)

In summary, having reviewed the skills employers expect of sport graduates, this papers originality rests with the addition of enterprise and entrepreneurship skills being required for the changing world of work. This provides a basis for a debate on the future of enterprise education and its links to employability. The paper introduces the notion of a graduate mid-set as paramount for a sport graduate and recommends employer driven ideas to be included within the curricular to allow for contextualisation of the activity. Given the growing diverse nature of the sports industry, further studies could consider whether specific skills are required across the different sports sectors, or more specifically how the skills are applied in the context of the different sectors, as these are likely to be different. In addition the author would invite further research on how enterprise and entrepreneurship education are being used on the context of graduate employability.

Conclusion

While there are still many unanswered questions about what makes a successful sports graduate, this article has started to bridge the gap between general employability and enterprise literature and its contextualisation within sport, which is key if universities are to prepare students for the ever changing landscape. The paper reinforces existing thought in the area that curriculum design in sport studies courses must recognise employers' needs if employability and enterprise are to be fostered. Curriculum activities must be orientated both to develop specific capabilities and skills as well as to produce graduates with a mind-set that is attractive to employers. The use of case studies and classroom based challenges where students have to respond to and solve problems by the very nature of the activity is found to be optimal. Students need the ability to demonstrate these capabilities, skills and mind-set if they want to be desired by employers. Enterprise skills and mind-set are at the forefront of this paper's findings, so from the viewpoint of Higher Education there needs to be a joined up framework of employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

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