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A Role Playing Approach to the Recruitment and Selection of Learning Technologists

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CCCU, Learning & Teaching Enhancement

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ALT Annual Conference 2015: Shaping the Future of Learning Together

8-10 September 2015
University of Manchester, Manchester

Our institutional context

- C of E Foundation | Post 1992 University | Million+ Group

- 4 x Campuses across the County of Kent | 4 x Faculties | School-based

- Predominantly offers courses for Public Sector careers

- @ 18,000 FTE Students | @ 3000 FT & PT Staff (1600 Academics)

- 5 x Learning Technologists | Learning & Teaching Enhancement (a central service)

Learning Technology Team values:

- **Grounded in Pedagogy | Mediated meaningfully through Technology**

- **Importance of Working in Partnership with Students & Staff**

- **Supporting learning technology as an enabler to student learning**

- **Being a 'critical friend' to Staff in relation to TEL aspirations / ambitions**

- **Critical + Research Informed Practice -> Research, Evaluation & Dissemination**

How we used to assess candidates

1) Presentation to Learning Technology Team

- 20 minute presentation

- 10 minute Q&A

2) Interview

- 45 minutes to a panel of 4 or 5 (inc. DoL&T, HoLT, Academic, HR rep)

However:

- Tests candidate's presentation skills

- Tests candidate's research & literature review skills

How we now assess candidates

1) Role Play Scenario with Learning Technology Team

- 5 minute presentation on Blended Learning to fictitious BA Heritage Studies programme team (inc. PD, 2 x ML, PA, Student)

- 25 minute discussion with a fictitious BA Heritage Studies programme team

- Considerable development in creating role-play scenario, role definitions, character backstories, types of questions – to ensure candidate equity

2) Interview

- 45 minutes to a panel of 4 or 5 (inc. DoL&T, HoLT, Academic, HR rep)

Which:

- Tests candidate's presentation skills + research & literature review skills

- Demonstrates how they would work with a Programme Team

- Demonstrate how well they lead / broker / negotiate

- Conveys a complex array of skills & characteristics to be a Learning Technologist

What our candidates thought of the new process

How the candidates felt?

"apprehensive"

"nervous"

"...interviewers taken candidate nerves into consideration"

"...difficult to prepare for"

"...[what] the interviewers might be looking for"

"...I kept remembering things that I hadn't done very well"

"...the brief gave me an insight into facets of the role"

How suitable is the process?

"...a good way of assessing candidates"

"...it did not feel too 'artificial'"

"...situates...important aspects of LTs role in an authentic way as possible"

"...appreciate the diversity of roles involved in delivery of a programme"

Can improvements be made?

"however...team members need to feel confident in role-playing"

"...having an academic member of staff present...might be a useful"

"...translating the model to an electronic context for overseas candidates"

The Human Resources perspective

- Getting **more information / evidence** as to the candidate's suitability.

- The candidate may **enjoy and excel** in this exercise, esp. if they don't like interviews.

- Sending role-play brief out in advance will give candidates a **chance to understand what is expected and prepare accordingly.**

- Similarly, the brief may **put some candidates off** (arguably, a **potential 'weeding out' process**).

- Risk of **losing potentially good candidates** who are overwhelmed by this exercise.

Other approaches to recruitment & selection

- 1 hr **Unseen Task** – Develop a guidance document on developing and implementing an online degree programme (Loughborough College)

- 45 min **Scenario** & **Questions** followed by **Interview** (Edge Hill University)

- A **Scenario Task** (prioritisation, delegation, etc.), **PechaKucha** presentation, present **portfolio of previous work** to team (University of Plymouth)

- A **Mini Teaching Session** (on a particular topic, e.g. Digital Literacy, Social Media) to a diverse range of colleagues followed by a 45 min **Interview** (University of Derby)

- An **Unseen Task** followed by **Interview** (University of Essex)

- An **Interactive Demonstration** (L&T benefits of a web-based tool of candidate's choice) to a diverse range of colleagues followed by **Interview** (Edinburgh Napier University)

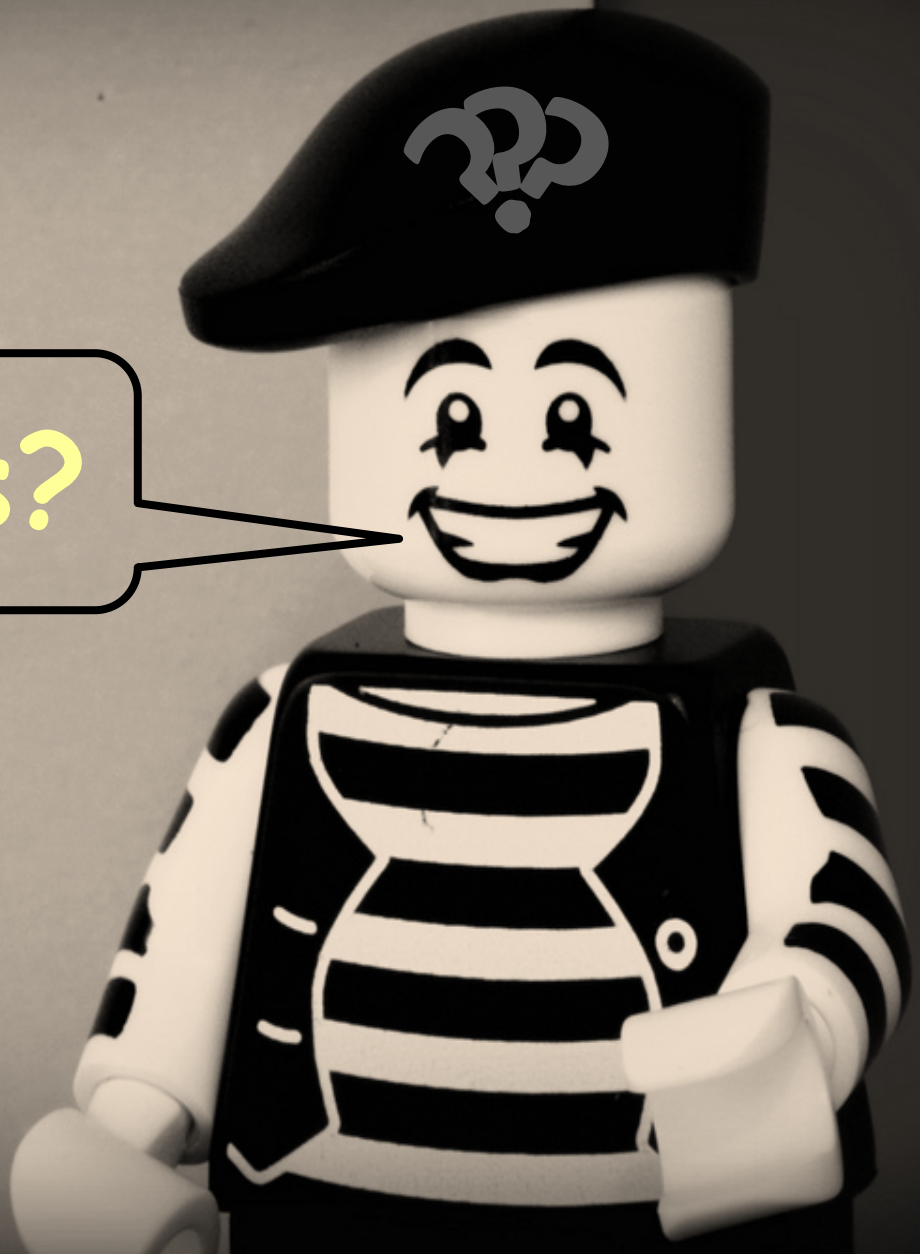*A big thank you to colleagues on Twitter & Heads of e-Learning Forum (HeLF) for their generous contribution*

Disclaimer

No LEGO minfigures were harmed during the making of this presentation

...honest!

References & Resources

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